

**LOCAL**

A new Mexican restaurant, Veracruzana, has opened on Port Watson Street in Cortland.



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**SPORTS**

Tully's Ryan Rauber broke a Section III track and field record that had stood for 20 years Saturday.



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# Cortland Standard

Serving Cortland and surrounding communities since 1867

\$1.25 newsstand

2024 daily No. 46

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024

CORTLAND, N.Y.



AP Photo/Steve Helber

Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally Saturday, in Richmond, Virginia.

## SCOTUS puts Trump back on ballot, nixing ban efforts

By MARK SHERMAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday unanimously restored Donald Trump to 2024 presidential primary ballots, rejecting state attempts to ban the Republican former president over the Capitol riot.

The justices ruled a day before the Super Tuesday primaries that states cannot invoke a post-Civil War constitutional provision to keep presidential candidates from appearing on ballots. That power resides with Congress, the court wrote in an unsigned opinion.

Trump posted on his social media network shortly after the decision was released: "BIG WIN FOR AMERICA!!!"

The outcome ends efforts in Colorado, Illinois, Maine and elsewhere to kick Trump, the front-runner for his party's nomination, off the ballot because of his attempts to undo his loss in the 2020

election to Democrat Joe Biden, culminating in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold expressed disappointment in the court's decision as she acknowledged that "Donald Trump is an eligible candidate on Colorado's 2024 Presidential Primary."

Trump's case was the first at the Supreme Court dealing with a provision of the 14th Amendment that was adopted after the Civil War to prevent former officeholders who "engaged in insurrection" from holding office again.

Colorado's Supreme Court, in a first-of-its-kind ruling, had decided that the provision, Section 3, could be applied to Trump, who that court found incited the Capitol attack. No court before had applied Section 3 to a presidential candidate.

The justices sidestepped the politically fraught issue of insurrection in their opinions Monday, but

some Trump critics pointed to the silence on that topic as a victory of sorts because the court failed to absolve him of responsibility for the Capitol riot.

The court held that states may bar candidates from state office. "But States have no power under the Constitution to enforce Section 3 with respect to federal offices, especially the Presidency," the court wrote.

While all nine justices agreed that Trump should be on the ballot, there was sharp disagreement from the three liberal members of the court and a milder disagreement from conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett that their colleagues went too far in determining what Congress must do to disqualify someone from federal office.

Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson said they agreed that allowing the

See TRUMP, page 6

## Speedy trial denied in attempted murder case, lawyers contend

### Hearing Thursday to determine whether Pittman goes free, or goes to trial

By JACK LAKOWSKY  
Staff Reporter

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Lawyers in an attempted murder case stemming from a shooting in December 2022 in downtown Cortland will argue Thursday whether the case has been delayed so long as to deny the defendant's right to a speedy trial.

Janice Stafford, the attorney for Tyshawn Pittman, is asking Cortland County Judge Julie Campbell to dismiss the indictment against Pittman, as well as Cortland County District Attorney Patrick Perfetti's declaration of trial readiness and certificate of compliance.

Perfetti could not be reached Monday for comment.

Stafford said her clock for a speedy trial began Dec. 17, 2022, the day after the shooting. Pittman, 37, of Cortland, was charged with attempted second-degree murder, first-degree assault, first-degree burglary and second-degree criminal possession of a weapon. Police accused him of shooting his girlfriend's neighbor, Johnessa B. Wing. Police said Pittman backed Wing into a corner in an apartment at 107-109 Main St. during the Dec. 16, 2022 incident.

Campbell said at a November hearing that she expected the trial to begin Jan. 29. It is now set to begin Monday.

Wing told police that Pittman, her neighbor, had been dating her

friend, Desirae Wright. Wright appeared at Wing's door on the night of Dec. 16, "cold and scared of Tyshawn Pittman," Wing told police. Wright then stayed the night at Wing's apartment, and Wing told a Cortland County Department of Social Services worker she feared for Wright's safety.

The next afternoon, Pittman arrived at Wing's door.

"He started freaking out and asking where Desirae was. He proceeded to ask me if I had intercourse with Desirae," she said in her statement. "He continued to walk towards me and into my apartment, yelling that I was violating

See TRIAL, page 6

## Embattled Cortland library director resigns after 4 years

Graney: 'The most fulfilling part for me is helping other people'

By KEVIN T. CONLON  
City Editor

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and TODD R. McADAM  
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Cortland Free Library Director Jen Graney, who has been under fire in recent months for accommodating homeless people at the library, announced her resignation in the library's newsletter.

She cited personal reasons for her decision announced in her "Letter from the Director," in the newsletter dated Monday.

"It is with a heavy heart that I share with you today the news that I am moving on from my position as library director at Cortland Free Library," Graney wrote. "There is so much more I had hoped to do, but at the end of the day, this is an act of self care, which Audre Lorde reminds us is not a matter of self indulgence but rather one of self preservation. I am leaving for the sake of my mental health, to maintain my sobriety, and to prioritize my

overall well-being."

In the past weeks, people have complained about homeless people using the library. The city has no day space for unsheltered homeless people between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., except the lobby of the Cortland County Department of Social Services, so many homeless people go to the library to get out of the cold.

Graney explained her position on encouraging use of the library by homeless people, especially during the winter when the city of Cortland lacked facilities where they could stay safely.

"I've done my best during my time here to address needs our community has related to poverty and homelessness: When I saw an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness, I made it a priority to figure out who our service providers are, where people can go for help, what's available when, etc., so that we can better provide that information to others," Graney noted. "When Cortland County Mutual Aid was looking for an indoors winter location for their Really Free Market, I offered to host them at the library; this season is our fourth. I also sought and provided 'Librarian's Guide to Homelessness' training for library staff through Niche

See GRANEY, page 6

## Planning commission approves 'bong ban'

New law would limit head shops to Riverside Plaza zone

**Have your say**

WHAT: Public hearing on head shops limits  
WHEN: 6 p.m. today  
WHERE: Cortland City Hall, 25 Court St., Cortland

By JACK LAKOWSKY  
Staff Reporter

jlakowsky@cortlandstandard.com

The city will have a public hearing tonight on restricting smoke shops to a zone that conforms to the Riverside Plaza near Interstate 81's exit 11.

That follows a meeting Monday at which the Cortland Planning Commission reviewed and approved changes to the law suggested by the Cortland County Planning Board, which advised the city to clearly distinguish between cannabis retailers and head shops.

"This ties into the smoking ban we already have," Cortland Mayor Scott Steve said before the meeting Monday. The law adopted in January bans sale of tobacco products within 1,000 feet of schools, churches and other facilities that serve children.

The law applies to cannabis retailers, head shops and any related establishments. Those shops, under city law:

Sell, use or display paraphernalia or items designed or marketed for use with tobacco products.

Sell or display inhalants commonly referred to as vaping products.

Offer for sale, use or display products including e-cigarettes or controlled substances.

A head shop may alternatively be known as a smoke shop, a vape shop, a cannabis dispensary, or anything similar in use, the city proposal reads.

Existing businesses affected by the tobacco restriction are grandfathered under old stan-



Jack Lakowsky/Staff Reporter

The city aims to change zoning law to allow sales of cannabis-use paraphernalia, like bongs, only within Riverside Plaza on Clinton Avenue near Interstate 81's exit 11.

dards, and can sell product within the 1,000 feet until it closes or otherwise moves on, at which point the location can't sell tobacco.

However, Steve has said this isn't the case for the proposed paraphernalia restriction, saying existing businesses will have 90 days to comply.

City Attorney A.J. Meldrim said Monday this action comes on the tail of recreational marijuana legalization, passed by the state nearly three years ago. City codes limited marijuana sales to the city's GB-1 zone, around the Riverside Plaza, starting in 2022. This restriction adds paraphernalia to the list.

"This is a local mechanism to make sure

See BAN, page 6

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**WEATHER**



Rain  
Tomorrow's Weather:  
High near 54  
South wind 7 mph  
More on page 2

**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:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 45. South wind around 6 mph. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

### Skies Today

**Tuesday, March 5, 2024**  
 Sunset today 5:59 p.m.  
 Sunrise tomorrow 6:32 a.m.  
 Normal high temperature 37  
 Normal low temperature 19  
 Average temperature 28  
 New moon March 10  
 Forecast for Tuesday, March 5, 2024

### Extended

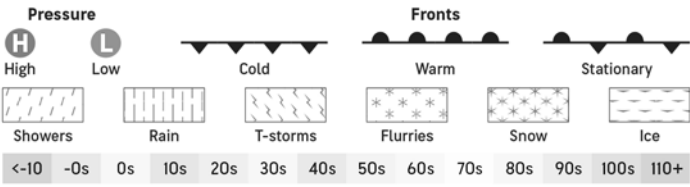
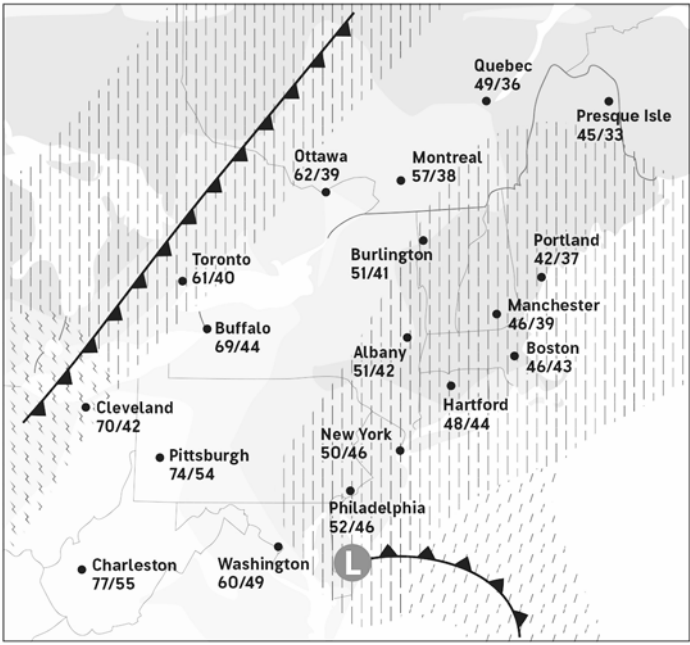
**Wednesday:** Rain. High near 54. South wind near 7 mph becoming northwest in afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 80%.

### City Snowfall

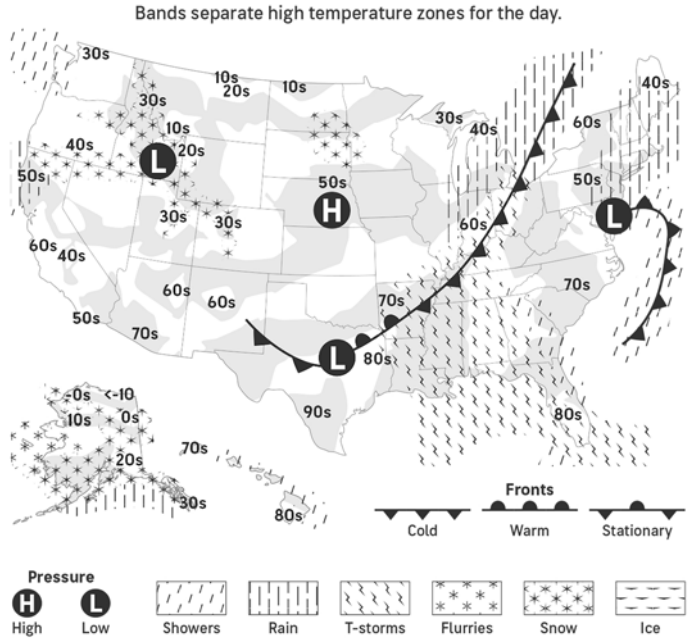
March 2-4 None  
 Season to date 19.5 inches

### Precipitation

March 2-4 0.02 inches  
 Month to date 0.02 inches



### Forecast for Tuesday, March 5, 2024



**NATIONAL SUMMARY:** A cold front will push showers and thunderstorms eastward through the Ohio Valley and the Southeast today. Meanwhile, steadier rain will fall across the Northeast. In the West, spotty snow showers will continue across the higher elevations, while a steadier band of rain and snow is expected to develop from Wyoming to Northern California.

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## Lottery Winners

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

**Numbers:** MIDDAY: 4-8-0, Evening: 6-5-0; **WinFour:** MIDDAY: 8-4-1-2, Evening: 4-6-1-3; **Pick 10:** 2-3-5-7-17-28-29-32-36-38-42-43-44-62-65-66-71-72-74-78; **Take Five:** MIDDAY: 3-4-8-23-35, Evening: 6-10-17-28-30; **Cash4Life:** 5-21-33-44-56, Cash Ball: 3; **Lotto:** 1-13-16-37-47-50, Bonus: 28; **Powerball:** 3-18-27-36-53, Powerball: 12, Power Play: 2

Here are the winning numbers selected Sunday:

**Numbers:** MIDDAY: 9-5-5, Evening: 2-6-9; **WinFour:** MIDDAY: 5-5-3-5, Evening: 0-7-9-0; **Pick 10:** 2-4-7-9-18-19-20-25-28-35-39-47-50-55-58-60-64-66-69-73; **Take Five:** MIDDAY: 6-9-28-32-33, Evening: 15-17-18-32-37; **Cash4Life:** 38-39-46-48-52, Cash Ball: 4

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

**Numbers:** MIDDAY: 0-3-6, Evening: 3-0-3; **WinFour:** MIDDAY: 6-3-7-8, Evening: 8-3-9-5; **Pick 10:** 5-9-17-18-21-28-29-32-33-37-39-51-52-55-60-63-66-71-75-80; **Take Five:** MIDDAY: 7-9-24-33-37, Evening: 7-11-16-23-37; **Cash4Life:** 13-36-41-49-55, Cash Ball: 1; **Powerball:** 36-42-50-52-67, Powerball: 26, Power Play: 2

## 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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 To get the Cortland Standard, call: 607-756-5665  
 (USPS No. 133-580)

Published Tuesday through Saturday (holidays excepted). Periodicals postage paid at Cortland, New York.  
 Cortland Standard Printing Co., owner and publisher. Office and principal place of business: 110 Main St., Cortland, New York. Evan C. Geibel, President, and Jennifer L. Geibel, Secretary, 799 NY-222, Cortland, NY. Stephen A. Geibel, Treasurer, 31 Prospect Terr., Cortland, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the mail address: CORTLAND STANDARD, P.O. Box 5548, Cortland, New York 13045-5548. Telephone for all departments is 607-756-5665.  
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# Judge rejects Sen. Menendez's claims search warrants were unconstitutional

By LARRY NEUMEISTER  
 Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge on Monday rejected U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez's claims that search warrants that led to corruption charges and the discovery of gold bars and cash at his New Jersey home were unconstitutional.

Judge Sidney H. Stein ruled Monday that multiple warrants used to conduct 2022 searches of the Democrat's email accounts and his home were properly sought and carried out.

The senator's lawyers had claimed the warrants were "riddled with material misrepresentation and omissions that deceived the authorizing magistrate judge."

Stein said any omissions in the warrants were not intentional or material and a hearing was not necessary to explore the claims further.

He also denied challenges to search warrants by one of three businessmen charged in the case that also resulted in the arrest of Menendez's wife.

The warrants were issued between January and July 2022, along with a final warrant per-



AP Photo/Alex Brandon, File  
**Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., waits to speak during a Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee oversight hearing, Dec. 6, 2023, in Washington.**

taining to cellular phones last September.

Searches of his home in June 2022 resulted in the discovery of over \$100,000 worth of gold bars and more than \$480,000 in cash — much of it hidden in closets, clothing and a safe, prosecutors said. Photos included in an indictment when authorities first announced charges last September showed cash stuffed

in envelopes in jackets bearing Menendez's name. Investigators also said they discovered a Google search by Menendez for the value of a "kilo of gold" and the DNA of one man prosecutors say bribed him on an envelope filled with thousands of dollars.

Menendez, 70, has pleaded not guilty and said the cash found in the house was personal savings he had put away for emergen-

cies. After his fall arrest, Menendez was forced to relinquish his chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee but said he would not resign from Congress.

His wife, Nadine Menendez, and two businessmen also have pleaded not guilty. On Friday, one businessman facing charges pled guilty in a cooperation deal with prosecutors.

The trial of Menendez and others is scheduled for May. Lawyers for Menendez did not immediately comment on Stein's ruling. A spokesperson for prosecutors declined to comment. In his ruling, Stein wrote that affidavits supporting requests for search warrants only needed to establish probable cause that searches would turn up "evidence, fruits, or instrumentalities of a crime."

He said that threshold was "amply satisfied" by evidence described in the affidavit, including numerous messages between Menendez, his wife and one of the businessmen discussing various services and payments that were to be made to Nadine Menendez in return for the senator's aid to the businessmen.

# Fans gather to say goodbye to Flaco the owl in New York City memorial

NEW YORK (AP) — Dozens of mournful fans of Flaco the Eurasian eagle-owl gathered in New York City on Sunday to say goodbye to the beloved celebrity creature who became an inspiration and joy to many as he flew around Manhattan after someone let him out of his zoo enclosure.

A memorial featuring speeches, songs and poems was held in the late afternoon in Central Park at what organizers call Flaco's favorite oak tree.

Flaco was found dead on the Upper West Side on Feb. 23 after apparently hitting a building.

Testing by zoologists concluded he suffered traumatic im-



AP Photo/Seth Wenig, File  
**A Eurasian eagle-owl named Flaco sits in a tree in New York's Central Park, Feb. 6, 2023.**

pact injuries, but more testing is planned to determine whether he may have been sick.

His death was a heartbreaking end for the birders who docu-

6-foot wingspan perched on tree branches, fence posts, fire escapes and water towers — as well as his hours of hooting.

"With all of this challenging time that is happening all over the world, this bird really became a symbol of hope and brought so many of us together," Breanne Delgado said at the gathering.

David Lei, an avid birder in the city, said losing Flaco was hard to put into words. He said the owl faced the same fate as many other birds in Manhattan — flying into the deceptive windows of tall buildings.

"Flaco was larger than life and is leaving behind a legacy to match," Lei said.

## Obituaries

### Susan Marie Petruso

Susan Marie Petruso of Scottsdale, Arizona, a devoted wife, loving mother and faithful friend, passed away at home in the early morning hours of Sunday, February 25th. Sue, as she was known to her loved ones, was surrounded by her loving husband, her two daughters, her son in law and her nephew at the time of her passing. She was 66 years old.

A native of Cortland, NY, Sue graduated from Cortland High School followed by Brockport University and shortly thereafter moved to Phoenix in 1981 at the invitation of her beloved Uncle Val and Aunt Dottie. This leap of faith set destiny in motion. Sue met the love of her life, Steven, while out one evening with friends. From that chance meeting, the pair went on to share 40 devoted years, two beautiful daughters, Nicole and Stephanie, and countless memories.

Sue will forever be remembered for her sense of humor, her contagious laugh, and how she lived her life with grace and style. Loving and selfless until her very final moments, she was the ultimate friend, wife, daughter and mother. Sue vibrantly radiated a sense of joy that was tangible to all who were lucky enough to know her. Sue's life was filled with cherished friendships from childhood to high school to college to her career and beyond — making her a beloved figure in many people's lives.

Sue's outgoing personality made friends of strangers, and, combined with her determination and drive, helped her to excel in her career — first at Pepsi, then ultimately as a National Accounts Manager for almost twenty years with Schreiber Foods. Known for her style and love of fashion (and not one to stay idle for long), Sue took on the challenge of starting a new career as a Cabi consultant in retirement. Sue was not just smart, she was sharp; and her work ethic was an inspiration to many, most notably her daughters who both have worked tirelessly to achieve advanced degrees and pursue careers in healthcare.

Sue cultivated a beautiful life with a focus on family and friends, travel and a love of good food and wine. Steven and Sue traveled to Italy, Greece, and Ireland with friends, creating lasting memories. An avid cook, particularly of Italian cuisine, she warmly welcomed everyone into her home, spreading joy through her love of cooking. Always the exercise and sports fanatic, she loved her Peloton and her baseball team, The New York Yankees. Not to be forgotten, Sue loved her two dogs, boxers Louie and Lola. It brings us comfort to know they are happily reunited in Heaven.

Susan is survived by her husband, Steven, her daughter Nicole and son-in-law Jonathan, of San Diego, her daughter Stephanie Petruso and partner Anthony Borrelli, her two grandchildren Luca and Enzo Borrelli, as well as numerous nephews, niece, aunts, uncles and cousins. She is preceded in death by her father Joseph DiSanto and mother Edith Pasalugo, of Cortland, NY.

### Jerome Edward DuBois

Jerome Edward DuBois, 63, of Murphy, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024, at home surrounded by family after a long battle with heart disease and cancer.

Jerome was born Dec. 31, 1960, in Cortland, N.Y., to the late Paul D. DuBois Sr. and Ella Mae (Shepard) DuBois. Jerome graduated from Otselic Valley Central School in South Otselic, N.Y., and went on to serve for 17½ years in the Navy and Marine Corps.

His professional career, post military, consisted of several leadership and business management roles in both major retail and food service industries. His strong work ethic and unique approach to training in both personal and professional development of his teams and coworkers consistently led to success, numerous achievements, and strong long-term relationships.

Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Paul Dean DuBois Jr., and two infant sisters, Shannon and Sherri DuBois. He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Melody (Wood) DuBois; son, Joshua DuBois; daughter, Jaimi DuBois; and three grandchildren, Dominic, Alessa and Ezekiel. He also leaves behind his sister, Brenda (Marc) Soules; and brothers, Dennis DuBois of Florida and Terry (Kelly) DuBois of New York. Cochran Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Jerome Edward DuBois.

You may send condolences to the family and sign the guest register at cochranfuneralhomes.com.

### Valerie W. Brown

Valerie W. Brown, of Cortland, passed away on January 7, 2024. She was born April 11, 1948, in Binghamton, the first child of the late Leo H. Wood and Jean Currie Wood.

She is survived by her daughter, Megan Hull (Kevin) of Kansas City, and two granddaughters, Robin and Pippa. She is also survived by her sisters, Nadine, Stephen, Mary, Leo, Christopher, James, Joseph, and Rebecca. Besides her parents, Valerie is also predeceased by her brother Dennis. She has several nieces, nephews, cousins, and a large extended family. Valerie's wishes were that there be no services. However, she did request that donations be made to the Cortland County Historical Society, 25 Homer Ave., Cortland, NY 13045, (607) 756-6071.

## Births

**MRAZ** — A daughter, Aelwynne Mio Frances Mraz, 10 pounds, born Feb. 19 in Marathon to Eleanore Augusta Nelson and Aleister Tanek Javas Mraz.

## LISLE VILLAGE CEMETERY

will hold the annual Lot Holders meeting  
**3/18/2024 7:00 PM** at Lisle Library.

If it's happening in *YOUR* community  
 it's in the  
**Cortland Standard.**

**Police/fire****Car crash leads to DWI charges**

**Accused:** Alana M. Kroner, 25, of Tompkins Street, Cortland

**Charges:** Driving while intoxicated, driving with a blood alcohol content greater than 0.08%, misdemeanors; failure to use designated lane, a violation

**Details:** Kroner was involved in a one-vehicle crash about 2:27 a.m. Saturday on Clinton Avenue in Cortland. Cortland County sheriff's officers said they found her intoxicated.

**Legal Actions:** Kroner was ticketed to appear March 29 in Cortland City Court.

**New Hampton man charged with DWI**

**Accused:** Jared M. Cassel, 23, of New Hampton

**Charges:** Driving while intoxicated, a misdemeanor; refusal of breath test, a violation

**Details:** Cassel was parked about 3:39 a.m. Saturday in front of the Cortland County Public Safety building in Cortland with his hazard lights blinking. Cortland County sheriff's officers approached to see if the driver needed assistance, and said they found him intoxicated.

**Legal Actions:** Cassel was arraigned through Cortland County central arraignment and released without bail pending an appearance March 22 in Cortland City Court.

**City man charged with DWI**

**Accused:** Nickolas D. Santamarina, 32, of Main Street, Cortland

**Charges:** Driving while intoxicated, driving with 0.08% or more blood-alcohol content, misdemeanors; speeding, a violation

**Details:** Cortland County sheriff's officers stopped Santamarina's vehicle about 12:58 a.m. March 2 on Route 13 in Cortlandville. Police said he was intoxicated.

**Legal Actions:** Santamarina was ticketed to appear March 11 in Cortlandville Town Court.

**Man accused of possessing drugs in C'ville**

**Accused:** Kip J. Hoy, 53, Davis Road, Cortland

**Charges:** Driving while impaired by drugs, seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, misdemeanors; failure to keep right and no or inadequate lights, violations

**Details:** Hoy was stopped about 10:57 p.m. Friday on McLean Road in Cortlandville. Cortland County sheriff's officers said. Police said they found Hoy impaired and with illegal drugs.

**Legal Actions:** Hoy was arraigned via Cortland County central arraignment and released without bail pending an appearance Monday in Cortlandville Town Court, for which details were unavailable.

**Cuyler woman charged with possession**

**Accused:** Jolena E. Raymond, 53, of Stockton Road, Cuyler

**Charges:** Two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, misdemeanors; possession of a controlled substance outside original container, failure to notify DMV of address change, depositing refuse on a highway, violations

**Details:** Cortland County sheriff's officers stopped Raymond's vehicle about 7:26 p.m. Sunday on Route 41 in Cortlandville for a traffic violation. Police said they found her with several controlled substances and a suspended driver's license.

**Legal Actions:** Raymond was ticketed to appear March 18 in Cortlandville Town Court.



*Jack Lakowsky/Staff Reporter*  
Cortland's newest Mexican restaurant, Veracruzana, opened Sunday, filling the old Frank and Mary's Diner spot at 10 Port Watson St. Owner Moises Guevara once managed Garcia's Mexican Restaurant, which burned a year ago on south Main Street.

**Mexican restaurant opens on Port Watson**

**From Staff Reports**

The manager of a Mexican restaurant that burned in 2023 on Main Street has opened a new Mexican restaurant in what was an iconic diner that closed in 2021 on Port Watson Street, Cortland.

Veracruzana opened Sunday in the former Frank and Mary's Diner under the ownership of Moises Guevara, who once managed Garcia's Mexican Restaurant on south Main Street, which was heavily damaged by fire last March, and later demolished.

Guevara, out of a job, decided to take the opportunity to start his first business, searching for a year.

Guevara said the store's first day went better than expected — he wasn't able to get the word out, and didn't want to until he got everything squared with the city. Guevara said he got the final OK the day before he opened.

Guevara said along with authentic Mexican

meals, the restaurant serves classic American breakfasts in the morning.

"You have home fries, bacon, sausage, eggs," Guevara said.

Veracruzana takes the former space of Frank and Mary's Diner at 10 Port Watson St.

The restaurant was opened by Frank and Mary Hickey in 1985. It had been diners under different names — including Jim's Diner and Lester's — dating back at least to the 1950s. Frank Hickey had worked at Lester's, which was across the street at the time, starting in 1954, shows a 1986 *Cortland Standard* report. He worked there for about a decade before starting his own restaurants, but returned to buy the diner in 1985 and expand it.

At the time it closed, it was owned and operated by Josh Hartnett and his mother, Cyndi Hartnett, who took over the restaurant after Thomas Hartnett, Josh Hartnett's father and Cyndi Hartnett's husband, died in 2019.

**Schumer in Ithaca to call for help with hospital hack**

**From Staff Reports**

Sen. Charles Schumer was in Ithaca Monday to call on the federal government to help New York hospitals affected by the Feb. 21 cyber attack on a hospital affiliated with Change Healthcare, leaving some hospitals, pharmacies and other healthcare providers unable to promptly collect payments.

"Hospitals are taking significant losses every day as they are unable to process many insurance claims," Schumer said in a statement emailed to media. "In some areas, pharmacies and other entities are having trouble verifying patient eligibility and coverage, and communicating pharmacy prescriptions."

The senator, who was at Cayuga Health Center, said he will demand that the feds "take swift

action ... to use their emergency authorities to cut through the red tape to ensure hospitals get support they need to maintain care for their patients."

He said some hospital systems are losing millions of dollars a day while the hack is not addressed.

Schumer (D-N.Y.) was joined by Cayuga Health President and CEO Dr. Martin Stallone, Elmira-based Arnot Health President and CEO Jonathan Lawrence, Ithaca Mayor Robert Cantelmo and Tompkins County Legislature Chair Dan Klein (D-Danby).

"We can't let a computer hack crash payments for our healthcare systems," Schumer said. "The feds need to provide relief to New York hospitals (as soon as possible)."

**There's no death metal on our new podcasts**

**But you'll find lots of other stuff to hear**

You never know what skills you'll need to call upon in my line of work. The latest? Music.

I was a less than mediocre baritone in the high school chorus. I've been known to belt out show tunes (badly) in the newsroom. My digital radio station includes lots of Beethoven, Louis Armstrong, some really eclectic Celtic musicians and, I'm sort of embarrassed to say, John Denver.

So what business did I have picking the music for our two newest podcasts? None whatsoever. Yet there I was, sitting with Sports Editor Paul Cifonelli, listening to snippet after snippet.

A bit more than a year ago, we began producing podcasts at [www.cortlandstandard.com](http://www.cortlandstandard.com). We started with the sports department, in part because high school athletics gives us an endless supply of interesting people to talk to and in part be-

cause Paul has a background in sound and radio production, and he knew more than the rest of us about the technical aspects of podcasting.

Every couple of weeks, he or sports reporter Matt Czeizner would sit with a sports luminary and chat, giving you a new insight into the local sports scene. As we did that, we learned both the technical and creative aspects of building a show that's not written in black and white.

I have experience in non-reading media, but not a lot. I wrote a few scripts for commercials and podcasts in my marketing days; I produced a pair of live streamed political debates of local candidates a couple of years ago — with the excellent technical help of the Cortland High School Video Club. It was enough to help me understand that preparation is everything, even for a 20-minute podcast.

The host needs to understand the background, frame open-ended questions that can lead to a discussion, and learn how to keep on track sources whose minds might wander, and when

**EDITOR'S NOTES**

*How a daily newspaper works every day.*

**BY TODD R. McADAM**

to go off-track to pursue something interesting. It helps to have about 17 times more information than one thinks one will need.

It is almost exactly like conducting an interview.

After Paul and Matt figured it out, we asked them to show the rest of us, and now we're spreading our wings.

A couple of weeks ago, city desk reporter Margaret Mellott sat with Brendan O'Bryan of the Cortland County Industrial Development Agency and the Business Development Corp. in a podcast timed for release with our annual Outlook edition.

They discussed the economic

**Family seeks answers in fatal Solon crash**

**By KEVIN T. CONLON**  
City Editor

kconlon@cortlandstandard.com

Two aunts of a 21-year-old woman who died in a December car crash on a rural road in the town of Solon said Monday they are frustrated that authorities have not provided enough information.

Christa M. Delaney died shortly before 4 a.m. Dec. 27 after the car she was in failed to negotiate a curve on Stillwell Road, hit a tree and caught fire. Delaney's identity was not released by the Cortland County Sheriff's Office until Jan. 29 after police conducted an investigation and received the results of laboratory tests.

The lone survivor of the crash, Isaac Faircloth, 21, who was living in Cortland at the time, was charged the day of the accident with fourth-degree grand larceny, a felony, and second-degree obstructing governmental administration, a misdemeanor, in Solon Town Court.

Faircloth was also charged in Cortland City Court with violating an order of protection. Oswego City Court Judge James M. Metcalf issued a one-year order of protection on March 16, 2023.

Cortland County sheriff's officers responded to the report of the accident at 3:53 a.m. Dec. 27.

One of them was diverted to a residence a third of a mile away on Stillwell Road for a report of a man pounding on the door. When the officer arrived, Faircloth said he had been in an accident.

"The individual stated that he was trying to save her and that he was trying to pull her out of the car. I asked the individual if she was still in the car when he left and he said that the car was so hot and it was burning him up so he went to get help," Sgt. Christopher Estep wrote in a statement. "I asked him where she was in the car and he replied stating that she was unconscious. I asked him where and he stated she was in the driver's seat."

Faircloth did not initially cooperate with police and would not identify Delaney during several interviews in the hours after the crash, according to statements by police filed in Solon Town Court.

Charlotte Delaney of Fulton, an aunt to Christa Delaney, said she has been unable to get information about the case from the Cortland County District Attorney's Office or the sheriff's office.

"There's nothing I can do,"

she said. "They (the District Attorney's Office) won't return phone calls. The investigator said he won't talk to me."

Lt. Garry Williams of the Cortland County Sheriff's Office took issue Monday with that assessment and said false information was circulating on social media.

"We've spoken with the mother of the deceased," Williams said. "We brought the mother in. She was provided some information. She has facts."

Williams said Christa Delaney's mother has a direct telephone number for one of his investigators and she can call anytime for information.

The investigation continues and Williams asked anyone with information regarding Faircloth and Delaney between 1 and 3:53 a.m. Dec. 27 to call the department's Criminal Investigation Division at 607-758-6151. Police believe they were in the area of the city of Cortland, towns of Cortlandville and Solon and the village of McGraw.

The District Attorney's Office could not be reached for comment Monday.

Ashley Delaney of Fulton, another aunt to Christa Delaney, said the family had filed a request for records with the courts under the state Freedom of Information Law but they did not receive a reply. However, state Freedom of Information Law does not apply to courts.

The family has spoken to a victims' advocate about the case, Charlotte Delaney said.

"We're seeking justice for Christa and we're not getting anywhere," she said. "I strongly believe Isaac's going to get away with violating a restraining order."

While Faircloth told police that Christa Delaney was driving the car at the time of the crash, police have not said who was at the wheel and Charlotte Delaney questions who was driving.

"They still haven't told me who was in the driver's seat," she said. "They won't give me answers."

Charlotte Delaney said she heard the charge of violating an order of protection had been dismissed in City Court and that the other charges in Solon Town Court would not result in any jail time. According to City Court, Faircloth still has a court appearance scheduled for March 27 but no details were available. Solon Town Court did not have office hours on Monday and the status of charges in that court was unavailable.

to improvise.

Lily volunteered to have a friend do a death metal scream, followed by someone thrashing on a guitar, but publisher Evan Geibel nixed that. Death metal, he said, really isn't the brand we want to convey.

Lily got over the disappointment.

Our preliminary schedule is to alternate the two new podcasts with the existing sports podcast. As we gain skill, we hope to create them more often.

Long gone are the days when journalism is about one medium: newspaper, magazine, radio or TV.

Today's journalists need to understand several, because technology has made that possible for everyone. So we're taking advantage of it. And I invite you to take advantage of it, too, and check out the podcasts at: [www.cortlandstandard.com/podcasts/](http://www.cortlandstandard.com/podcasts/).

Just no death metal.

*Todd R. McAdam is managing editor of the Cortland Standard. He can be reached at [tmcadam@cortlandstandard.com](mailto:tmcadam@cortlandstandard.com).*



## WORKING IT OUT

By KEVIN  
CONLON  
City Editor  
kconlon@  
cortlandstandard.com

## We all share experiences

I have written for daily newspapers since 1985. For most of that time, I wrote news articles and I rarely received any feedback. Even with a byline, I always felt anonymous, to a large degree.

That was fine with me. I learned early in my career that the work is more important than recognition.

Writing a column for more than five years has been a lot different and I'm not sure if I will ever be completely comfortable with it. People actually let me know how they feel about my columns. They are not very controversial, but they are sometimes very personal.

I assume that we all have many similar experiences, so what I find interesting or funny will probably be interesting or funny to other people.

After I wrote an article about concerts that I have attended over the years, a co-worker sat down in a chair next to my desk in the newsroom and told me about concerts he had been to, including one we had both been at in Buffalo many years ago.

When I wrote an article about a friend who had died on 9/11, another co-worker told me about someone she knows who was affected that day.

Another time, a local woman, who I have known for years and who has been very helpful as a source of information for stories, sent me an email after reading a column. It included photos of a record album commemorating the New York Mets in their first World Series year in 1969 and a Rheingold beer sign that featured images of the team from that era. The Mets were my first love in sports as a kid.

Even a column about something as mundane as buying a roof rack from a scrapyard for my sport utility vehicle brought an email from a reader who could relate to parts of it.

This column helps me share experiences with readers and just as I had hoped it would, it can stir some memories in others.

Maybe none of us are as anonymous as we'd like to think.

*"Working It Out" is a column by City Editor Kevin T. Conlon that runs every week. Disclaimer: This is not an advice column. I am not an expert at anything. I rarely do things the easy way and the last thing you should do is follow my example.*



"BAKED, by Artisans," a self-serve cafe in Artisan Elements Collective in Homer, opens at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

## Artisan Elements to open cafe on Wednesday

By LILY BYRNE  
Staff Reporter  
lbyrne@cortlandstandard.com

Some days, you may want a quick breakfast; but maybe you don't want the drive-through and the plastic cup. At Artisan Elements Collective, you can browse art and artisan goods from area vendors, and then sip a coffee with a friend, in mismatched mugs.

Artisan Elements Collective, at 77 S. West St. in Homer, gives artisans and creators a space to sell their wares. On Wednesday, it will open a cafe with locally sourced coffee, baked goods and grab-and-go meals.

"We get a ton of complaints in the store from customers saying they have nowhere in town to sit down and have a cup of coffee with their girlfriend," said owner Amber Oursler. "They are sick and tired of going through the drive-through. They want to sit down and chat with their spouse or their friend, without spending \$85 on dinner together."

"BAKED, by Artisans" will be open at 8 a.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and 10 a.m. on Saturdays. It will be closed Sundays.

A different selection of baked and catered products will be

delivered weekly. Baked goods will be available, such as cupcakes and cookies, and breads will rotate out, such as a fig and honey bread and hot focaccia.

"I think we logged 42 different blends of sourdough bread," Oursler said.

Food for home-use will also be for sale, including lavender, herbs, spices, extracts, jams, jellies and honey.

"It's going to be a really fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants menu, which is awesome," she said. "It's fresh-made food, so if we sell out of food on the first day, it won't come back until next week. It's here when it is, and it's not when it isn't."

Mismatched, thrifted baskets, mugs, tables and chairs fill the space.

"It's really going to be a low-key establishment where people can come in, sit, chill and relax," she said. "We are small and we are intimate. ... I don't want people to be nervous if they spill a coffee."

When the weather gets nicer, she plans to add outdoor seating on the patio and garden.

"We're gearing towards the cybercafe," she said. "There will be WiFi for people to come in and sip a coffee or tea while they do their emails, or parents

can chill here and scroll on their phone while their kids are at sports practice.

Homer resident Alyssa Wakula used to sit down and drink a coffee all the time at Origins in Homer, but it has since closed and reopened as a drive-through kiosk nearby.

"The cafe serving locally sourced food and coffee is true to Homer's values of supporting the local community and economy," Wakula said.

Coffee will be delivered daily by Homer-based company Grounds4Pounds. Vanessa Vestal, owner of Grounds4Pounds, donates \$2 from each bag sold to area animal shelters.

"I wanted to be able to reach out to animals who have been let down by the people who were supposed to love them the most," Vestal said. "It just breaks my heart. I wanted to be able to give back to local shelters and spay and neuter programs, because they show animals compassion while they are in between homes."

"I love that it's local people," Vestal said. "It's all fresh. They're not getting anything that was processed through a store with a middleman; it's coming directly from the artisans that live locally."

Lily Byrne/Staff Reporter

## Ask Amy

By Amy Dickinson

© 2023 The Chicago Tribune



## Legal woes worry ex-wife

DEAR AMY: I was so sad and embarrassed to learn that my ex-husband was involved in corporate crimes during the time we were married.

One of two cases and the related court dockets and evidence reveal participation in a complex scheme that resulted in the plaintiff company being awarded a huge settlement.

I quietly left the marriage and took a work assignment halfway across the country to escape my former husband's erratic behavior, irresponsibility, and terrible work ethic.

I had no idea he was committing crimes, in my home and under my nose — a common scenario, as I now understand it, when it comes to wives of white-collar criminals.

A second corporate fraud case is now on the docket. I am aware that these crimes materially impacted many people far and wide.

I am now wondering if I should remain silent about my departure from the marriage, or take a few proactive measures to share with those that were once in our common circle of friends and colleagues that I was neither aware nor would I have ever condoned such illicit and predatory acts.

From what I am reading, a divorce from a white-collar criminal is often perceived as a means for the wife to protect her interests, all the while standing by her man.

For better or for worse, I am not that person, and I am increasingly uncomfortable that this could be the perception.

What should I do?  
— Amy in SC

**DEAR AMY: Because you feel so strongly about this, you should claim your own narrative, using your own words and writing down the story you want others to know. But for now, do this only for yourself.**

**I don't think it is wise to publicly note any details about your ex-husband's crimes, until these crimes are completely settled through the courts and you receive current and competent legal advice directed only to you.**

**The last thing you want to do is somehow accidentally ensnare or implicate yourself in the situation you are trying to maintain your distance from.**

**Your actual friends know you and understand your situation. The people in your former circle who may have "perceptions" about your divorce? Didn't you leave these perceptions behind when you left your previous life behind? Because the fact is, you did leave the marriage in order to protect your own interests. And — good for you.**

DEAR AMY: My godson is getting married soon and since he and his fiancée live in a small apartment, they are not listed on any bridal registry.

However on their wedding website, they suggest that if guests want to make a donation to honor their wedding, to give their gift to a local clinic that performs abortions.

I do not condemn their choice of being pro-abortion, but to place that on their wedding invitation is beyond my belief.

I will not give to an abortion clinic (my choice).

I was planning on giving them a wedding check and will be upset if it goes to an abortion clinic.

What should I do?  
— Wedding Dilemma

**DEAR DILEMMA: Many couples suggest causes for their wedding guests to donate to in their honor. Clinics offering abortion services also offer many other important reproductive health services to women.**

**If you don't condemn this couple's stand on abortion, then surely you wouldn't condemn their choice to donate their own money toward supporting a clinic.**

**And if you give them money for their wedding gift, this money will no longer be your money, but their money, to spend as they choose.**

**In lieu of cash, you could give them your Aunt Bertha's old gravy boat, but they could then turn around and sell it and donate the proceeds.**

**My point is that you don't have the right to control where the gift you give to them lands.**

**A gift card to a local restaurant or establishment that aligns with their interests (aside from abortion services) might make you feel better.**

*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.*

## On Gardening

# Angelonia: Let the celebration commence

By NORMAN WINTER  
Tribune News Service (TNS)

The National Garden Bureau has designated 2024 as the "Year of the Angelonia" and I am in full celebration mode. As I was preparing for my contribution to the celebration, I was however sent into taxonomic trauma.

For the last 26 years of deep love for the angelonia, or summer snapdragon, I have told everyone via newspaper, radio and TV that they were in the Scrophulariaceae family. Since most gardeners don't like those words, I modified or simplified it to the snapdragon family. Somebody however, has tinkered with green industry happiness and moved angelonia to the Plantaginaceae or plantain family.

I immediately reached out to my friend Dr. Allen Ownings, horticulture professor emeritus with the LSU AgCenter. I said did you know this, or better yet, did you do it? He said, as I expected, that the taxonomist group had done it. This reminded me that someone once said taxonomists have to eat too!

I know what you are thinking, does this mean the angelonia or summer snapdragon is now related to the hosta or plantain lily? The answer is



Chris Brown Photography/TNS

**Angelface Cascade angelonia can get 8 to 14 inches tall, with a spread of 30 inches. They are exceptional in hanging basket recipes like this one.**

no, as the hosta or plantain lily is in the Asparagaceae or Asparagus family. You see where I am going with this.

So, then you are suspecting the angelonia or summer snapdragon who is in the plantain family must be related to plantain bananas. That would also be no, as bananas are in the Musaceae or banana family. At this point I would warn bananas to not get too comfortable.

Supposedly DNA fingerprinting led to this family annulment and there were a lot more that fell prey: Penstemon, Linaria, Digitalis, Snapdragon, Veronica and no doubt more that mere mortals wouldn't understand. I have to add though, somehow Nemesis and Diascia stayed in the Scrophulariaceae or Figwort family.

But back to our celebration the Year of the Angelonia or Summer

Snapdragon. Twenty-six years ago was the first time I wrote about Angelonia. Never did a new plant cause such excitement. This gave the South a summer plant that bloomed all summer and looked like a snapdragon or foxglove. It was so good that the University of Florida recognized Hilo Princess as the Plant of the Year.

Now every company has their own series. Proven Winners has the Angelface series with three distinct types, Standard, Super and Cascade. They are tough as nails and will bloom all summer. The standard reaches 18 to 30 inches tall with an 18-inch spread. The super is indeed that, with the ability to reach 30 to 40 inches tall and a spread up to 16 inches. The cascade group can reach 8 to 14 inches in height with a spread of up to 30 inches.

The Angelface series has won just under 100 awards and offers gardeners the best for the landscape, or mixed containers where they can be used as the thriller, spiller or filler. The cascade group provides hanging basket design options that will take your visitors' breath away.

Follow Norm Winter on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy.

## Notebook

### Registration open for Girls Day Out

YWCA's Girls Day Out, a day of activities for girls 10 to 14 will be 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 9, a day after International Women's Day, at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

Registration for the event includes:

A career fair with women from the greater Cortland area.

A ukulele lesson.

An art project with a local artist.

A science exploring the environment.

An end-of-day pool party.

The event costs \$10, but scholarships are available. Register by Friday at <http://tinyurl.com/yjkk2ve5>.

### Duplicate bridge results

Linda Christy and Jim McConnell won the weekly duplicate bridge game with 16 points.

Barb Gage and Chuck Kasten were second with 14 points. The average for the game was 12 points.

The group next plays at 10 a.m.

Friday at the Cortland YWCA.

### Chess Club

#### meets Thursdays

The Cortland Chess Club meets 6 to 8 p.m. Thursdays at the Cortland Free Library, 32 Church St.

Players of all levels are welcome to participate.

## Other Opinions

The following editorial, compiled by The Associated Press for members, provides an opinion that has appeared in the last week in a newspaper from around New York state.

### Albany Times Union on not meddling with the Protective Services Unit

Gov. Kathy Hochul has continued her predecessor's practice of interfering with the detail tasked with protecting her.

Former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's 2021 downfall provided many valuable lessons about abuses of power and what governors should and should not do. It would take hours to detail them all, so we'll stick for today to just one: Governors should not meddle in the personnel decisions of the State Police unit assigned to protect them.

Unfortunately, Mr. Cuomo was among the many state executives to have used the Protective Services Unit as something akin to a palace guard, treating troopers almost as servants. As detailed by several Times Union reports, the Democrat and many of his predecessors instructed troopers to run errands, walk dogs, ferry his children and more. Officers who balked at assignments would often face gubernatorial demands that they be transferred.

Even by the standards of prior governors, Mr. Cuomo's abuse of the unit appeared to be extraordinary. For example, reporting by the Times Union's Brendan J. Lyons revealed that during his (almost) three terms, members of the detail would often be ordered to transport the governor's children back and forth to Hyannis Port in Massachusetts, to and from colleges and airports, and for other personal errands.

Toward the end of his tenure, Mr. Cuomo was also accused of urging that a female trooper be transferred to his protective detail, despite her lacking the required qualifications for the job, because he found her physically attractive. According to a report by the state attorney general's office, the governor sexually harassed the trooper once she was reassigned to the unit. The report alleged he kissed her on the cheek and engaged in other unwanted touching that included "running his hand across her stomach, from her belly button to her right hip."

That episode was an extreme example, certainly, but offers a reminder of why governors must stick to protocol and avoid meddling with personnel decisions involving the unit. Its troopers are there to protect the governor, their office and nothing more. They are not gubernatorial gofers, personal assistants or confidantes. They are professionals assigned to an important task.

Alas, as Mr. Lyons reported, interference with the unit has continued under Gov. Kathy Hochul. Her office recently pushed for the promotion of the newly appointed head of the Protective Services Unit, and also directed the superintendent return an investigator to the detail who had been removed on the recommendation of a staff inspector.

While Ms. Hochul's office has declined to answer specific questions about those matters, a spokesman said that "all personnel decisions at the New York State Police are made by the superintendent." Unfortunately, evidence suggests otherwise.

To be sure, the level of meddling from Ms. Hochul's administration does not approach the extreme interference by Mr. Cuomo, or from other prior New York governors. Nevertheless, it is disappointing that a governor who promised a clean break from the ethical breaches of her predecessor would continue with practices that violate protocol and chain of command.

Governors must not meddle with the State Police unit assigned to protect them. It is no more complicated than that.

## Your Opinion

### Some '3 unrelated law' history

To the Editor:

As head of the (College) Hill Neighborhood Association from the early 1990s through 2009, I was very involved in getting the zoning code's definition of family — commonly known as the "more than three unrelated" or "functional family" code — enacted.

Cortland's definition of "family" includes a "presumptive evidence" clause which lists the criteria used to determine whether a group of four or more persons who are not related by blood, marriage or legal adoption are living together as the functional equivalent of a traditional family. The "Blood or Bills" headline on the front page of the Feb. 27 *Cortland Standard* is misleading because it does not accurately reflect Cortland's specified criteria, and it implies a false dichotomy.

Even in the early 2000s, we recognized that not all families are traditional ("Blood") and that simply sharing expenses ("Bills") does not necessarily mean that you are functioning as a family.

That same article states Mayor Scott Steve said some of the definition was written without approval of the Common Council.

Cortland used Poughkeepsie's definition which had been recommended as a successful model. While the council did not write this definition, they reviewed it, discussed it (including a very well attended public hearing) and voted to adopt the definition. The NYS DOS website still references the Poughkeepsie definition today, noting that it has met with success in the courts.

The suggestion to base the number of tenants on the property's square footage was also discussed back then. It was rejected by everyone except some landlords because it was inconsistent with the goal of maintaining the level of density of population in an R-1 (low density residential) zone. According to the NYS DOS website, "Preservation of the character of single-family areas remains a legitimate purpose of zoning."

Hopefully this historical context provides some clarification for today's discussions.

Vivian Bosch  
Cortlandville

## Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, March 5, the 65th day of 2024. There are 301 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:

On March 5, 1953, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin died after three decades in power.

On this date:

In 1770, the Boston Massacre took place as British soldiers who'd been taunted by a crowd of colonists opened fire, killing five people.

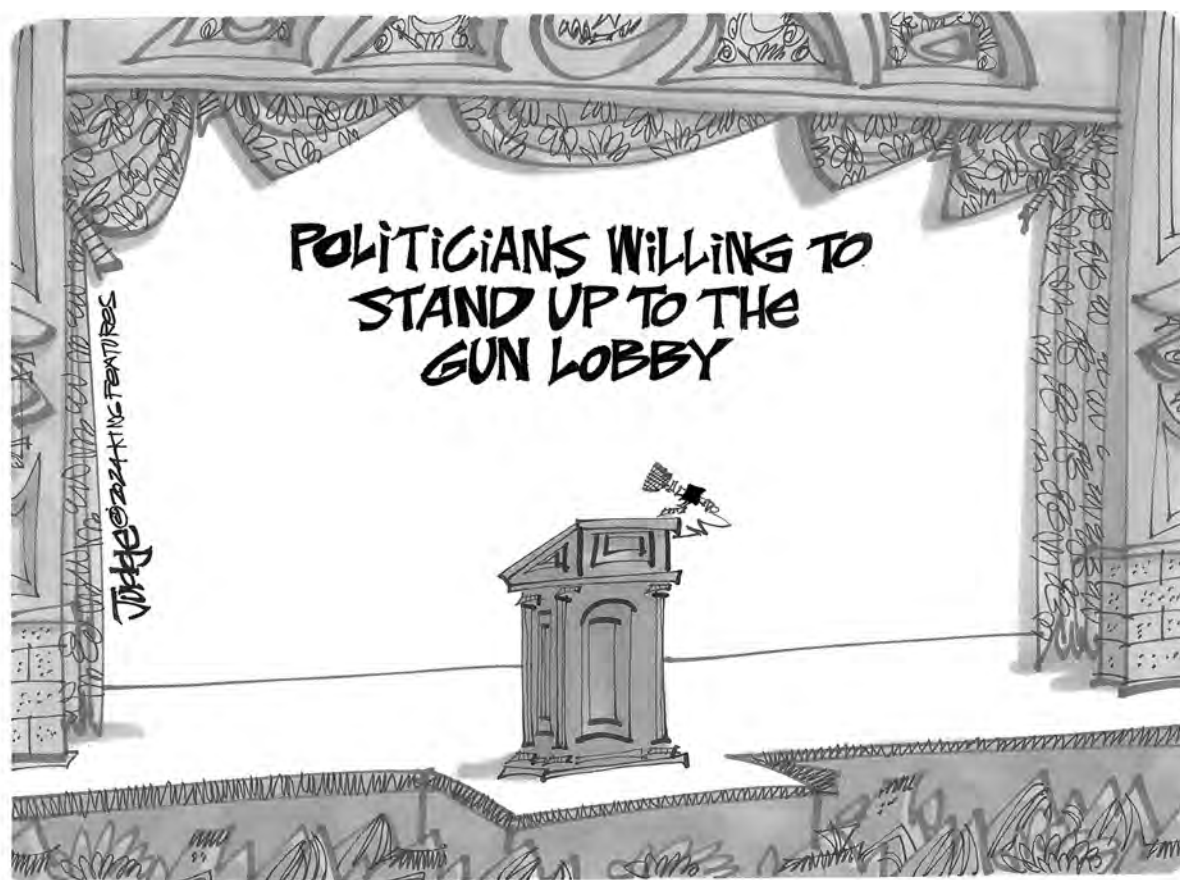
In 1849, Zachary Taylor was inaugurated as the 12th president of the United States. (The swearing-in was delayed by a day because March 4 fell on a Sunday.)

In 1868, the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson began in the U.S. Senate, with Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase presiding. Johnson, the first U.S. president to be impeached, was accused of "high crimes and misdemeanors" stemming from his attempt to fire Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton; the trial ended on May 26 with Johnson's acquittal.

## 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.



On Feb. 23, when I first sat down to write this column, Google's new Gemini AI was having problems that seemed mostly amusing. The internet had discovered that it would generally refuse to create pictures of any all-white groups, even in situations where it was clearly called for, such as "draw a picture of Nazis." Gemini also insisted on gender diversity, even when drawing popes. But this insistence on diversity ran in only one direction: It was willing to draw female popes, or homogenous groups of people of color.

Suddenly, everyone on social media seemed to be provoking Gemini to produce crazy images and posting the results. On Feb. 22, Google shut down the image-generation feature.

This did not solve the problem.

The blunder was understandable. When building a large language model, or LLM, you have to deal with the risk that when someone asks to see, say, a doctor, the chatbot will produce images that are less diverse than reality — for example, betting that a doctor should be white or Asian, because a majority of U.S. doctors are. That would be inaccurate, and might discourage Black and Hispanic kids from aspiring to become doctors, so architects use various methods to make them more representative, and maybe, judging from Gemini's output, a little aspirationally overrepresentative.

A human graphics editor does this kind of thing automatically. But this kind of judgment is hard to cultivate, which is why

Republican I tried too controversial, even Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, who had stood up to President Donald Trump's election malfeasance. It had no trouble condemning the Holocaust but offered caveats about complexity in denouncing the murderous legacies of Stalin and Mao. It would praise essays in favor of abortion rights, but not those against.

Google appeared to be shutting down many of the problematic queries as they were revealed on social media, but people easily found more. These mistakes seem to be baked deep into Gemini's architecture. When it stopped answering requests for praise of politicians, I asked it to write odes to various journalists, including (ahem) me. In trying this, I think I identified the political line at which Gemini decides you're too controversial to compliment: I got a sonnet, but my colleague George Will, who is only a smidge to my right, was deemed too controversial. When I repeated the exercise for New York Times columnists, it praised David Brooks but not Ross Douthat.

I am at a loss to explain how

of Obama-era regulations that were smothering our economy, helping unleash the prosperity that has many Americans wanting to return Trump to the Oval Office today. Every Trump legislative accomplishment — from passing criminal justice reform, to opportunity zones to rebuild our inner cities, opioid and sex-trafficking legislation, and the Right to Try law — has McConnell's fingerprints on them.

McConnell broke with Trump when he needed to, however. He refused Trump's repeated demands to eliminate the legislative filibuster at a time when Republicans controlled the White House, Senate and House.

Most important, McConnell emerged as the critical voice in Washington, and the Republican Party, in support of Reaganite leadership on the world stage. He secured Senate ratification for the expansion of NATO to include Finland and Sweden, and is pushing back on GOP isolationist opposition to U.S. support for Ukraine in its brave fight against Russian aggression — a fight he will continue to lead before stepping down.

This only scratches the surface of achievements that span nearly four decades, and his work is not yet finished. But when it is, Mitch McConnell will be remembered as a giant of the Senate and a hero of the conservative movement.

Then, when Trump took office and nominated Neil M. Gorsuch — a judge of unquestioned qualifications and temperament — Democrats decided to filibuster his nomination. It was a grave miscalculation, and McConnell capitalized, convincing his Republican colleagues that they had no choice but to extend the Democrats' precedent and eliminate the filibuster for Supreme Court nominations. "I argued to my people if this guy can't get 60 votes then nobody a Republican president nominates is going to get 60 votes," McConnell told me at the time. "That's what allowed me to get people who were reluctant and complaining about using the nuclear option four years earlier to do it."

If Democrats had not overplayed their hand, and had McConnell not skillfully exploited their error, Gorsuch would never have been confirmed — and neither would Brett M.

## Google AI exposes tech's leftist bias

Megan McArdle



It takes decades for a human to become an adult who instinctively knows it's a good idea to diversify images of doctors, but not of Nazis. Google, facing a major threat to its core business model, and presumably eager to get a product out before ChatGPT gobbled up more of the AI market share, perhaps rushed out a model that isn't yet fully "grown up." And on the scale of things, "draws too many Black founding fathers" isn't much of a problem.

That's the story I was telling myself — and planned to tell you — on Feb. 23. Unfortunately, though, once Google shut down Gemini's image generation, users turned to probing its text output. And as those absurdities piled up, things began to look a lot worse for Google — and society. Gemini appears to have been programmed to avoid offending the leftmost 5 percent of the U.S. political distribution, at the price of offending the rightmost 50 percent.

It effortlessly wrote toasts praising Democratic politicians — even controversial ones such as Rep. Ilhan Omar (Minn.) — while deeming every elected

## A giant of the Senate

Marc A. Thiessen



court's conservative majority.

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It was a grave miscalculation, and McConnell capitalized, convincing his Republican colleagues that they had no choice but to extend the Democrats' precedent and eliminate the filibuster for Supreme Court nominations. "I argued to my people if this guy can't get 60 votes then nobody a Republican president nominates is going to get 60 votes," McConnell told me at the time. "That's what allowed me to get people who were reluctant and complaining about using the nuclear option four years earlier to do it."

If Democrats had not overplayed their hand, and had McConnell not skillfully exploited their error, Gorsuch would never have been confirmed — and neither would Brett M.

Kavanaugh or Amy Coney Barrett. Conservatives owe the Supreme Court's 6-3 majority, and all the consequential decisions it has produced, to McConnell.

While the Supreme Court hears only about 80 cases a year, the federal appeals courts have final say on about 60,000. McConnell's Republican majority confirmed more than 200 judges to the lower courts during Trump's term — including 54 circuit-court judges, the most confirmed in a president's first term in four decades. As President Biden's former chief of staff Ron Klain complained, those judges "will be deciding the scope of our civil liberties and the shape of civil rights laws in the year 2050 — and beyond." Amen to that.

McConnell handled policy fights with the same virtuoso acumen. After Trump's election, McConnell ushered through the first comprehensive tax reform in three decades, and helped repeal the wet blanket

Google released an AI that blithely anathematizes half its customer base, and half the politicians who regulate the company. It calls management's basic competency into question, and raises frightening questions about how the same folks have been shaping our information environment — and how much more thoroughly they might shape it in a future dominated by LLMs.

But I actually think Google might also have performed a public service, by making explicit the implicit rules that recently have seemed to govern a great deal of decision-making in large swaths of tech, education and media sectors: It's generally safe to punch right, but rarely to punch left. Treat left-leaning sources as neutral; right-leaning sources as biased and controversial. Contextualize left-wing transgressions, while condemning right-coded ones. Fiscal conservatism is tolerable but social conservatism is beyond the pale. "Diversity" applies to race, sex, ethnicity and gender identity, not viewpoint, religiosity, social class or educational attainment.

These rules were always indefensible, which is why they rarely were defended outright. Humans are master rationalizers, and it was always easy to come up with some ostensibly neutral reason that certain kinds of views, and people, kept getting deplatformed from social media, chased out of newsrooms, or excluded from academia. And if the research and journalism thus produced supported the beliefs of its authors, well, I guess reality has a liberal bias.

McConnell broke with Trump when he needed to, however. He refused Trump's repeated demands to eliminate the legislative filibuster at a time when Republicans controlled the White House, Senate and House.

Most important, McConnell emerged as the critical voice in Washington, and the Republican Party, in support of Reaganite leadership on the world stage. He secured Senate ratification for the expansion of NATO to include Finland and Sweden, and is pushing back on GOP isolationist opposition to U.S. support for Ukraine in its brave fight against Russian aggression — a fight he will continue to lead before stepping down.

This only scratches the surface of achievements that span nearly four decades, and his work is not yet finished. But when it is, Mitch McConnell will be remembered as a giant of the Senate and a hero of the conservative movement.

McConnell handled policy fights with the same virtuoso acumen. After Trump's election, McConnell ushered through the first comprehensive tax reform in three decades, and helped repeal the wet blanket

of Obama-era regulations that were smothering our economy, helping unleash the prosperity that has many Americans wanting to return Trump to the Oval Office today. Every Trump legislative accomplishment — from passing criminal justice reform, to opportunity zones to rebuild our inner cities, opioid and sex-trafficking legislation, and the Right to Try law — has McConnell's fingerprints on them.

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# GRANEY

continued from page 1

Academy. I continue to work to educate others while attempting to maintain a welcoming environment at the library. This has proven challenging and more support is needed, including additional library staff to better monitor activity in the building.”

Graney became director of the Cortland Free Library in January 2020, just weeks ahead of the coronavirus pandemic’s arrival and the economic shutdown it brought with it. Before coming to Cortland, she had been director of research and grants at Fayetteville Free Library and research and development librarian with the Central New York Library Resources Council. She received her master of library and information science in 2017 from Syracuse University.

Libraries are also crucial community spaces where people can work, play, learn and collaborate, she said when she started the job, adding she wanted to create a nurturing, welcoming environment for people to learn and grow.

“The most fulfilling part for me is helping other people,” she said then.

Graney defended her policy, without getting into the controversy that surrounded it.

“If you’re reading this, you likely already know that public libraries are America’s most (small-d) democratic institutions,” she wrote. “We are open to everyone. We are a reflection of our community, its values and its needs. As we find ourselves in the midst of a crisis of need, we have seen an increase in people forced to live their private lives in public, and we have experienced the challenges that brings from all angles.”

Graney said that she will help prepare for her successor.

“Over the next few weeks, I’ll be working to document as much as I can for my successor, and I’ll provide input to the board on next steps as they seek an interim and permanent replacement,” Graney wrote.

“A Note from the Board of Trustees” was printed directly under Graney’s letter in the newsletter.

“The board will promptly seek an interim solution so as to be thoughtful about conducting a search for new leadership,” the board’s letter stated. “We ask for your patience, understanding, and forbearance, and for your



Todd R. McAdam/Managing Editor

**Cortland Free Library Director Jen Graney announced she was stepping down on Monday. She became director of the library, pictured, in January 2020, just weeks before the coronavirus pandemic arrived.**

support of our excellent library staff at this difficult time.”

Lauren Mossotti-Kline, the president of the library’s board of directors, said Graney had set March 29 as her departure date.

“We will want to have an interim in place by that date,” she said Monday evening. That person, by state law, must have

a master of library sciences degree.

“We are proud of the leadership Jen demonstrated and all she’s accomplished; it’s with sadness that we received her resignation, but we fully understand what led her to submit it,” Mossotti-Kline said in a later statement.

“In response to the questions, suggestions and concerns that have been brought to our attention as of late, we have formed an ad hoc committee who will work to examine what is within the library’s control and make recommendations to the board for moving forward,” she continued. “In addition to looking

at concerns affecting the library directly, they will also work as a catalyst to drive external action and support.”

Graney listed the library’s successes under her leadership.

“I’m proud of all I’ve achieved since starting this position in January 2020, including navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and its myriad policy fluctuations and unprecedented closures; lowering barriers to access by eliminating overdue fines, ending CFL’s use of a collection agency, and allowing people to obtain limited-access library cards; recommending and implementing a new phone system, a new time management system, and a new e-newsletter platform; launching the Community Reads program; launching our digitization project; designing and launching an updated website; allocating time during the year for staff development; and applying for and receiving various grants, including \$10,000 from the American Library Association and \$600,000 in construction aid from New York State,” she wrote.

She also praised and thanked her staff and thanked the library’s volunteers, supporters, board members and patrons.

## TRIAL

continued from page 1

him and disrespecting him.”

He pointed a gold-colored .32-caliber revolver. She looked down the barrel and turned her head.

He then shot her, she told police. According to her statement, he yelled, “Don’t call the police or you will die.” She then walked out and called 911.

After the incident, Pittman left the building, and police

said he was not found inside during their search. Police and other first responders blockaded parts of downtown Cortland and Pittman was later found in his friend’s apartment at 89 Main St. and arrested.

New York criminal procedure law says a felony must be brought to trial within six months of the beginning of the criminal action. However, many actions can stop the clock, including motions by

the defense, the sudden unavailability of evidence, pre-trial motions and appeals and other legal steps.

The clock stops when the prosecution declares it is ready for trial, regardless of when the trial is actually scheduled.

Stafford wouldn’t say when the speedy trial deadline was, saying that’s for the judge to decide.

Stafford said soon after she

filed the motion to dismiss under the speedy trial rule, Perfetti’s office requested to postpone next week’s trial, wanting a four- to six-week extension.

“That’s over and above the fact that they’re already out of time,” Stafford said.

If Stafford prevails, it would be another in a string of dismissals of Perfetti’s cases.

In December, the state Court of Appeals dismissed the case

of Michael Bay, who faced trial accused of attacking his mother. The court cited trial readiness and speed issues on the prosecution’s part.

There have been 21 criminal cases in Cortland County dismissed due to trial readiness issues, Perfetti said in December. Staff shortages prevent his office from providing evidence and documents to defendants’ counsel within a reasonable time, he said.

## BAN

continued from page 1

we’re doing things the right way,” Meldrim said.

Meldrim said the term head shop is a bit informal, but it works as a catch-all for the types of businesses the city wants to further regulate. City Code Enforcement Capt. Roy Everett said most retailers of this type in the city comply with the law.

“I don’t want to lump them all together,” Everett said Monday. “But there are a few out there that’ve been in trouble.”

## TRUMP

continued from page 1

Colorado decision to stand could create a “chaotic state by state patchwork” but said they disagreed with the majority’s finding a disqualification for insurrection can only happen when Congress enacts legislation. “Today, the majority goes beyond the necessities of this case to limit how Section 3 can bar an oathbreaking insurrectionist from becoming President,” the three justices wrote in a joint opinion.

It’s unclear whether the ruling leaves open the possibility that Congress could refuse to certify the election of Trump or any other presidential candidate it sees as having violated Section 3.

Derek Muller, a law professor at Notre Dame University, said “it seems no,” noting that the liberals complained that the

majority ruling forecloses any other ways for Congress to enforce the provision. Rick Hasen, a law professor at the University of California-Los Angeles, wrote that it’s frustratingly unclear what the bounds might be on Congress.

Hasen was among those urging the court to settle the issue so there wasn’t the risk of Congress rejecting Trump under Section 3 when it counts electoral votes on Jan. 6, 2025.

“We may well have a nasty, nasty post-election period in which Congress tries to disqualify Trump but the Supreme Court says Congress exceeded its powers,” he wrote.

Both sides had requested fast work by the court, which heard arguments less than a month ago, on Feb. 8. The justices seemed poised then to rule in Trump’s favor.

Trump had been kicked off

the ballots in Colorado, Maine and Illinois, but all three rulings were on hold awaiting the Supreme Court’s decision.

The case is the court’s most direct involvement in a presidential election since Bush v. Gore, a decision delivered a quarter-century ago that effectively handed the 2000 election to Republican George W. Bush. And it’s just one of several cases involving Trump directly or that could affect his chances of becoming president again, including a case scheduled for arguments in late April about whether he can be criminally prosecuted on election interference charges, including his role in the Capitol riot. The timing of the high court’s intervention has raised questions about whether Trump will be tried before the November election.

The arguments in February were the first time the high

court had heard a case involving Section 3. The two-sentence provision, intended to keep some Confederates from holding office again, says that those who violate oaths to support the Constitution are barred from various positions including congressional offices or serving as presidential electors. But it does not specifically mention the presidency.

Conservative and liberal justices questioned the case against Trump. Their main concern was whether Congress must act before states can invoke the 14th Amendment. There also were questions about whether the president is covered by the provision.

The lawyers for Republican and independent voters who sued to remove Trump’s name from the Colorado ballot had argued that there is ample evidence that the events of Jan. 6

constituted an insurrection and that it was incited by Trump, who had exhorted a crowd of his supporters at a rally outside the White House to “fight like hell.”

They said it would be absurd to apply Section 3 to everything but the presidency or that Trump is somehow exempt. And the provision needs no enabling legislation, they argued.

Trump’s lawyers mounted several arguments for why the amendment can’t be used to keep him off the ballot. They contended the Jan. 6 riot wasn’t an insurrection and, even if it was, Trump did not go to the Capitol or join the rioters. The wording of the amendment also excludes the presidency and candidates running for president, they said. Even if all those arguments failed, they said, Congress must pass legislation to reinvigorate Section 3.

The case was decided by a court that includes three justices appointed by Trump when he was president. They have considered many Trump-related cases in recent years, declining to embrace his bogus claims of fraud in the 2020 election and refusing to shield tax records from Congress and prosecutors in New York.

The 5-4 decision in Bush v. Gore case more than 23 years ago was the last time the court was so deeply involved in presidential politics. Justice Clarence Thomas is the only member of the court who was on the bench then. Thomas has ignored calls by some Democratic lawmakers to step aside from the Trump case because his wife, Ginni, supported Trump’s effort to overturn the 2020 election results and attended the rally that preceded the storming of the Capitol by Trump supporters.

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# CDC shortens COVID-19 isolation period, here's what you should know

By MIKE STOBBE  
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK — Americans who test positive for COVID-19 no longer need to stay in isolation for five days, U.S. health officials announced Friday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its longstanding guidance, saying that people can return to work or regular activities if their symptoms are mild and improving and it's been a day since they've had a fever.

The change comes at a time when COVID-19 is no longer the public health menace it once was. It dropped from being the nation's third leading cause of death early in the pandemic to 10th last year.

Most people have some degree of immunity to the coronavirus from vaccinations or from infections. And many people are not following the five-day isolation guidance anyway, some experts say.

"Our goal here is to continue to protect those at risk for severe illness while also reassuring folks that these recommendations are simple, clear, easy to understand, and can be followed," said Dr. Mandy Cohen, the CDC's director.

However, some experts worry that the change may increase the risk of infection for older people and others who are more vulnerable to getting seriously ill.



AP Photo/David Goldman, File

**McKenna Shuster works on a linocut art print which she does as a hobby in her home on the last night of a two-week self-isolation while recovering from symptoms of COVID-19 in Somerville, Massachusetts, on March 26, 2020.**

at nursing homes and other health care facilities is staying the same. That includes a recommendation that medical personnel stay home at least seven days after symptoms first appear, and that they test negative within two days of returning to work.

The agency is emphasizing that everyone should still try to prevent infections in the first place, by getting vaccinated, washing their hands, and taking steps to bring in more outdoor fresh air.

## IS THERE OPPOSITION TO THIS CHANGE?

Yes, and even some who understand the rationale for the change have concerns.

"My biggest worry in all of this is that employers will take this change in guidance to require employees to come back to work ... before they are ready to, before they feel well enough, and before they are not likely to pose harm to their co-workers," Nuzzo said.

COVID-19 remains especially dangerous to older people and those with other medical conditions. There are still more than 20,000 hospitalizations and more than 2,000 deaths each week due to the coronavirus, according to the CDC. Those 65 and older have the highest hospitalization and death rates.

Last week, the CDC said seniors should

get another dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

## WILL SCHOOLS CHANGE THEIR RULES?

Not necessarily. Schools and child care providers have a mixed record on following CDC recommendations and often look to local authorities for the ultimate word. And sometimes other goals, such as reducing absences, can influence a state or district's decisions.

When California eased its guidance, it encouraged kids to come to school when mildly sick. It also said students who test positive for COVID-19 but don't have any symptoms can attend school.

## IS THIS THE FIRST CHANGE FOR ISOLATION GUIDELINES?

No. The CDC originally advised 10 days of isolation, but in late 2021 cut it to five days for Americans who catch the coronavirus and have no symptoms or only brief illnesses. Under that guidance for the general public, isolation only ended if a person had been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and if other symptoms were resolving.

## On Nutrition

# Questions answered on recipe, probiotics

By BARBARA INTERMILL  
Tribune News Service  
(TNS)

We're out horse camping in the Hill Country of Texas. And since this is our second year here with horses and dogs in tow, we are officially what locals here call "Winter Texans." At least for the next few weeks, we're off the grid...but not really. We have electricity and running water, woo-hoo! And we are surviving without television and cell service unless we walk to the top of a hill. So I think this week is a good one to answer letters from readers.

Sue S. in Nebraska writes: "I tried the granola bar recipe you put in the Lincoln Journal Star paper. I cut the recipe in half. The only thing I changed was pure olive oil instead of canola oil. I cooked them the proper temperature and time. But when I tried to cut it they pretty much crumbled. So now I use it in yogurt treats. But just wondering what I did wrong."

Doesn't sound like you did anything wrong, Sue. Except the recipe was for granola, not granola bars. So yes, it should be crumbly.

Brian S., also from Lincoln, asks: "Can you please provide some trusted clinical studies, books or journals that have to do with how pre- and probiotics are not destroyed by stomach acids or shelf life in order to actually

be useful for improved gut-biome health? What is a best practice for the amounts and types of live micro-organisms?"

I'm not sure anyone has all the answers to your questions, Brian. One of the reasons is that the number of bacteria—both good and bad—that reside in our digestive tracts probably exceeds the national debt. To discover from these trillions of microorganisms which particular genus (such as Lactobacillus), species (such as acidophilus) and strain (such as NCFM) is best for each individual health condition is extremely tricky. Plus, each of us has a unique collection of these various organisms. As you mentioned, it's important to know that the product you swallow is going to still be alive after it makes its way through our digestive tract. You can begin by checking the number of CFU's (Colony Forming Units)—live organisms—a product contains. Scientists are also studying the use of various capsules to help probiotics survive the trip through stomach acids.

Look for brands that have research to back them up for the specific reason you are looking for. Activia probiotic yogurt, for example, provides more than 18 clinical studies to back up the specific culture used in their products marketed for digestive health.



Katie Workman via AP

**This November 2021 image shows homemade granola in New York.**

# Newborns diagnosed with syphilis at high rates, reports CDC

By JOEL STREED  
Mayo Clinic News Network  
(TNS)

A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that looks at sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has some concerning news, especially when it comes to syphilis. While cases of other STIs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea, have decreased or seen modest increases, syphilis has jumped 80% in the four years from 2018 to 2022.

Dr. Stacey Rizza, a Mayo Clinic infectious diseases specialist, says syphilis is a bacterial infection that is primarily transmitted through sexual contact. But she says it also can be transmitted from an expecting mother to the baby.

"So if a mother has syphilis, whether she knows it or not,

while she's pregnant and is not diagnosed and treated, she can transmit that to her fetus, and the baby can be born with syphilis," says Dr. Rizza. This is also known as congenital syphilis, and according to the CDC report, cases of syphilis among newborns rose 183% between 2018 and 2022.

Dr. Rizza says the baby may be born asymptomatic, "but can go on to develop manifestations of syphilis later, within weeks, months or even years, after they're born. But, unfortunately, many times it causes abnormalities in the baby, even when they're born. They can have abnormalities in their liver and their spleen, they can have rashes, they can have abnormality in the structure of their face, in the brain, and particularly involving the eye."

# Without Medicare Part B's shield, patient's family owes \$81K for 1 air-ambulance flight

By TONY LEYS  
KFF Health News  
(TNS)

Debra Prichard was a retired factory worker who was careful with her money, including what she spent on medical care, said her daughter, Alicia Wieberg. "She was the kind of person who didn't go to the doctor for anything."

That ended last year, when the rural Tennessee resident suffered a devastating stroke and several aneurysms. She twice was rushed from her local hospital to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, 79 miles away, where she was treated by brain specialists. She died Oct. 31 at age 70.

One of Prichard's trips to the Nashville hospital was via helicopter ambulance. Wieberg said she had heard such flights could be pricey, but she didn't realize how extraordinary the charge would be — or how her mother's skimping on Medicare coverage could leave the family on the hook.

Then the bill came. The Patient: Debra Prichard, who had Medicare Part A insurance before she died.

Medical Service: An air-ambulance flight to Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Service Provider: Med-Trans Corp., a medical transportation service that is part of Global Medical Response, an industry giant backed by private equity investors. The larger company operates in all 50 states and says it has a total of 498 helicopters and airplanes.

Total Bill: \$81,739.40, none of which was covered by insurance.

What Gives: Sky-high bills



Lisa Krantz/KFF Health News/TNS

**Alicia Wieberg's mother, Debra Prichard, took an air-ambulance flight to Vanderbilt University Medical Center last year before her death. The flight cost \$81,739.40 — and none of it was covered by insurance.**

from air-ambulance providers have sparked complaints and federal action in recent years.

For patients with private insurance coverage, the No Surprises Act, which went into effect in 2022, bars air-ambulance companies from billing people more than they would pay if the service were considered "in-network" with their health insurers. For patients with public coverage, such as Medicare or Medicaid, the government sets payment rates at much lower levels than the companies charge.

But Prichard had opted out of the portion of Medicare that covers ambulance services.

That meant when the bill arrived less than two weeks after her death, her estate was expected to pay the full air-ambulance fee of nearly \$82,000. The main assets are 12 acres of land and her home in Decherd, Tennessee, where she lived for 48 years and raised two children. The bill for a single helicopter ride could eat up roughly a third of the estate's value, said Wieberg, who is executor.

The family's predicament stems from the complicated nature of Medicare coverage.

Prichard was enrolled only in Medicare Part A, which is free to most Americans 65 or older. That

section of the federal insurance program covers inpatient care, and it paid most of her hospital bills, her daughter said.


But Prichard declined other Medicare coverage, including Part B, which handles such things as doctor visits, outpatient treatment, and ambulance rides. Her daughter suspects she skipped that coverage to avoid the premiums most recipients pay, which currently are about \$175 a month.

Loren Adler, a health economist for the Brookings Institution who studies ambulance bills, estimated the maximum charge that Medicare would have allowed for Prichard's flight would have been less than \$10,000 if she'd signed up for Part B.

The patient's share of that would have been less than \$2,000. Her estate might have owed nothing if she'd also purchased supplemental "Medigap" coverage, as many Medicare members do to cover things like coinsurance, he said.

Nicole Michel, a spokesperson for Global Medical Response, the ambulance provider, agreed with Adler's estimate that Medicare would have limited the charge for the flight to less than \$10,000. But she said the federal program's payment rates don't cover the cost of providing air-ambulance services.

"Our patient advocacy team is actively engaged with Ms. Wieberg's attorney to determine if there was any other applicable medical coverage on the date of service that we could bill to," Michel wrote in an email to KFF Health News. "If not, we are fully committed to working with Ms. Wieberg."



## Your Dental Health

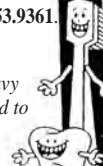
by Dr. Baljinder Singh  
and the Cortland Dental Team

### HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS ORAL HEALTH

The acids found in alcohol and the sugars in many mixers can damage your teeth. Drinking alcohol also causes additional health problems that create higher risk for oral health issues. Regular drinkers are at higher risk for tooth decay and loss, while heavy drinkers are three times as likely to have permanent tooth loss. Alcohol causes dehydration and dry mouth, which reduces the saliva that helps wash away food and bacteria. Dry mouth causes more plaque, tartar, and tooth decay. Heavy alcohol consumption weakens the immune system, making it harder to fight infections like gingivitis (gum disease) and periodontitis (advanced/chronic gum disease). Periodontal disease is one of the most common oral health effects of regular, long-term alcohol consumption.

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P.S. Both gum disease and heavy alcohol consumption are linked to heart disease, mouth cancer, and strokes.



# One California county ditched its vote-counting machines. Now a supporter faces a recall election

By ADAM BEAM  
Associated Press

REDDING, Calif. — Voters in this rural California county have twice voted for Donald Trump by wide margins while electing staunch conservatives to their local governing board, even going so far as to boot some from office who were deemed not conservative enough.

But that string of victories at the ballot box has not been enough to instill confidence in the county's election system — not when Trump and his allies have repeatedly spread false claims about rigged elections and voter fraud, even in deep red Shasta County.

The Northern California county, known mostly for Lassen Volcanic National Park and views of the snow-capped peak of Mount Shasta, abruptly got rid of its ballot-counting machines last year. They were made by Dominion Voting Systems, the company at the center of debunked conspiracy theories about how Trump lost the 2020 presidential election.

Instead, the conservative majority on the board of supervisors directed the county's small election staff to count ballots by hand, a task experts say is unrealistic given the tens of thousands of ballots returned in countywide elections across dozens of races.

A mountain of criticism followed, capped by the Democratic-dominated state Legislature stepping in last year to

pass a law that strictly limited ballot hand counts, a move that short-circuited any attempt to do that in Shasta's municipal elections last fall. Today, voters get to have their say on the county's direction since a slate of far-right conservatives who question the validity of elections took control of local government two years ago.

They will decide whether to recall Kevin Crye, a member of the conservative majority on the Shasta County Board of Supervisors that voted to get rid of the tabulators.

The recall has become a referendum not just for Crye, but also for the push to hand-count ballots that has been gaining popularity across rural America in response to baseless claims of widespread fraud tied to ballot-counting machines.

The controversy has divided voters, compelling county residents such as Mark Oliver to stand on a busy street corner in the rain on a recent chilly afternoon holding a sign urging people to vote yes on the recall. A resident of the county for 30 years, he has never before gotten involved in local politics.

"I feel like if we're not engaged, then you're going to have these kind of extremists who are just going to run rampant around here," he said.

The trouble started after Trump disputed the 2020 presidential election results, prompting suspicion among the president's followers. That outrage wound up at the doorstep of the



John Deaton joins a demonstration calling for the recall of Shasta County First District Supervisor Kevin Crye during a rally in Redding, California, on Feb. 20. Crye is one of the board members who voted to get rid of the county's ballot-counting machines in favor of counting ballots by hand.

Shasta County Registrar of Voters, where dozens of skeptical election watchers would show up to question staff members as they counted ballots.

In June 2022, with many of the far-right candidates losing in local primary races, a group of people walked in the back door of the elections office and started yelling at the clerk, said Joanna Francescut, the assistant

registrar of voters.

"I felt they were trying to intimidate us for doing our job," Francescut said.

Today's recall election could offer a clue of rural America's reaction to the false election claims Trump and his allies have peddled since he lost his reelection bid in 2020.

That drumbeat has had a deep impact on conservative voters:

Polls have consistently shown a solid majority of Republicans believe Biden was not legitimately elected. And the effects have been playing out in conservative regions across the country.

In Gillespie County, Texas, where the entire election staff quit just months before the 2022 midterms, volunteers plan to hand-count ballots from today's

presidential primary.

In New Hampshire, at least a dozen communities will be debating hand counts during their annual town meetings in March. A group of far-right Republicans in North Dakota is gathering signatures for a November ballot measure that would, among other things, require hand-counting of ballots statewide.

As in other places, distrust of government surged in Shasta County during the COVID-19 pandemic, when schools and most businesses closed. A group calling itself a militia started raising the temperature in local public meetings. During one meeting in 2020, a man told county supervisors, "You have made bullets expensive. But luckily for you, ropes are reusable."

Amid the tensions, Shasta voters elected three far-right members to the five-member board of supervisors: Patrick Jones, Chris Kelstrom and Crye, who formed a new majority. Recall organizers said they are targeting Crye because the other two members of the majority are up for reelection in November, while Crye's term has two years left.

An unapologetic Trump supporter, Crye is careful how he talks about the former president's election-denying claims. He said he prefers hand-counting ballots because "one person can affect a handful of votes. One person with a machine can affect thousands."

## Haley says she no longer feels bound by GOP pledge to support nominee

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley said Sunday she no longer feels bound by a pledge that required all GOP contenders to support the party's eventual nominee in order to participate in the primary debates.

The Republican National Committee had made the pledge a prerequisite for all candidates, and nearly every major contender signed, except for Donald Trump, the current front-runner, who skipped the debates.

When Haley, Trump's lone remaining major challenger for the nomination, was asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" whether she was compelled to honor that commitment, she said, "No. I think I'll make what decision I want to make."

She said "the RNC is now not the same RNC" as it was at the time of the debates. She also maintained that she has always said she had "serious concerns" about Trump, for whom she served as U.N. ambassador.

The RNC is in the midst of major changes, with the chair, Ronna McDaniel, set to leave the job on Friday. She was Trump's hand-picked choice to lead the RNC shortly after the 2016 election, but Trump now is poised to install loyalists atop the organization. He has announced his preference for North Carolina GOP Chair



Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley speaks at a Republican campaign event in Raleigh, North Carolina, Saturday.

Michael Whatley, a little-known veteran operative, to replace McDaniel. Trump also has picked his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, to serve as committee co-chair.

Haley dismissed questions about whether she would drop out and eventually endorse Trump.

"Right now, my focus is, 'How do we touch as many voters? How do we win?'" she said. "I want the American people to see that you don't have

to live this way. There is a path forward. And we can do it with someone who can put in eight years, that can constantly focus on results and not the negativity and the baggage that we have right now."

Trump on Saturday continued his march toward the nomination, winning caucuses in Idaho and Missouri and sweeping the delegate haul at a party convention in Michigan.

Trump's count is now 244, compared with 24 for Haley. A

candidate needs to secure 1,215 delegates to clinch the nomination.

Today, 16 states will hold primaries on what will be the largest day of voting of the year outside of the November election. Trump is on track to lock up the nomination days later.

"I've always said this needs to be competitive. As long as we are competitive, as long as we are showing that there is a place for us, I'm going to continue to fight," Haley said.

## Trump escalates migrant rhetoric

By BILL BARROW  
and JILL COLVIN  
Associated Press

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — Former President Donald Trump on Saturday further escalated his immigration rhetoric and baselessly accused President Joe Biden of waging a "conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America" as he campaigned ahead of today's primaries.

Trump has a long history of trying to turn attack lines back on his rivals in an attempt to diminish their impact. Biden has cast Trump as a threat to democracy, pointing to the former president's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election. Those efforts culminated in the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as his supporters tried to halt the peaceful transition of power.

Trump, who has responded by calling Biden "the real threat to democracy" and alleged without proof that Biden is responsible for the indictments he faces, turned to Biden's border policies on Saturday, charging that "every day Joe Biden is giving aid and comfort to foreign enemies of the United States."

"Biden's conduct on our border is by any definition a

conspiracy to overthrow the United States of America," he went on to say in Greensboro, North Carolina. "Biden and his accomplices want to collapse the American system, nullify the will of the actual American voters and establish a new base of power that gives them control for generations."

Similar arguments have long been made by people who allege Democrats are promoting illegal immigration to weaken the power of white voters — part of a racist conspiracy, once confined to the far right, claiming there is an intentional push by the U.S. liberal establishment to systematically diminish the influence of white people.

Trump leaned into the theory again at his rally later in Virginia, saying of the migrants: "They're trying to sign them up to get them to vote in the next election."

"Once again Trump is projecting in an attempt to distract the American people from the fact he killed the fairest and toughest border security bill in decades because he believed it would help his campaign. Sad," Biden campaign spokesman Ammar Moussa said in a statement.



Trump

## Judge: Ariz.'s proof of citizenship voting laws not discriminatory

PHOENIX (AP) — A federal judge is upholding provisions of new Arizona laws that would require counties to verify the status of registered voters who haven't provided proof of U.S. citizenship and cross-check voter registration information with various government databases.

In a ruling Thursday, U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton concluded Arizona legislators did not discriminate when they adopted the laws and the state does have an interest in preventing voter fraud and limiting voting to those individuals eligible to vote.

"Considering the evidence as a whole, the court concludes that Arizona's interests in preventing non-citizens from voting and promoting public confidence in Arizona's elections outweighs the limited burden voters might encounter when required to pro-

vide (documentary proof of citizenship)," she wrote.

However, Bolton said the requirement for individuals using a state registration form to include their state or country of birth violates a provision of the Civil Rights Act and a section of the National Voter Registration Act. Doing so, she explained, would result in the investigation of only naturalized citizens based on county recorders' subjective beliefs that a naturalized individual is a non-citizen.

The lengthy ruling summarized testimony from a bench trial in late 2023 at which experts testified about Arizona's history of voting discrimination. That included literacy tests effectively precluding Native American and Latino voters from participating and voter roll purges in the 1970s and 80s that created barriers for

minorities to re-register to vote.

That was the past, the judge wrote, noting there was no evidence presented by the plaintiffs reflecting an intent by lawmakers to suppress voter registrations of members of minority groups or naturalized citizens when they considered the bills in 2022.

The laws were passed amid a wave of proposals that Republicans introduced in the wake of Joe Biden's 2020 victory in Arizona over Donald Trump.

In an earlier ruling, Bolton blocked a requirement in Arizona law that people who use a federal voter registration form provide additional proof of citizenship if they want to vote for president or use the state's vote-by-mail system. The judge had ruled those provisions were trumped by a 1993 federal voter registration law.



Voters deliver their ballots to a polling station in Tempe, Arizona, on Nov. 3, 2020.

She also had ruled that a 2018 consent decree prevents Arizona from enforcing its new requirement to reject any state voter

registration forms that aren't accompanied by proof of citizenship. The decree said Arizona may not reject an otherwise valid

state voter registration form without proof of citizenship, but rather must register such an applicant for federal elections.

Arizona is required to accept the federal registration form, but anyone who does not provide proof of citizenship is only allowed to vote for president, the U.S. House or Senate. The federal form requires people to swear they are U.S. citizens, but there is no proof requirement.

Federal-only voters have been a subject of political wrangling since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that Arizona cannot require documentary proof of citizenship for people to vote in national elections.

The state responded by creating two classes of voters: those who can vote in all races and those who can vote only in federal elections.

## High School Track &amp; Field

## Tully's Rauber breaks Section III track record at state championships



Tully's Ryan Rauber, left, runs in the 300-meter dash Saturday at Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex on Staten Island. Rauber finished sixth in the federation and second in the public high school division while also breaking a Section III record.

Photo provided by Michelle Rauber

By PAUL CIFONELLI  
Sports Editor

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Tully junior Ryan Rauber broke a 20-year-old Section III record twice in the boys 300-meter dash to finish sixth in the state after entering as the No. 19 seed Saturday at the New York State Indoor Track & Field Championships at the Ocean Breeze Athletic Complex.

Rauber needed a big performance to reach the finals and did that by breaking the section record with a time of 34.70, good for second in his heat and sixth overall. He then missed first place in the finals by 0.01 seconds, besting his personal record with a 34.61-second race. That put Rauber in sixth place in the federation and second in the public high school division.

Cortland's Bryan Honan and Michael Dearie each competed in the boys weight throw. Honan placed ninth with a long throw of 58 feet, 5.5 inches and Dearie came in 19th with a toss of 54 feet, 9.75 inches.

Dryden's Reagan Burnham took part in the girls Intersectional Medley Relay, running the 1,000-meter leg. Burnham finished her leg in 3:16.50 and helped her team finish 12th with an overall time of 11:04.29.

Honan and Dearie will join teammates Jack Phelan and Isabella Sisting at the Nike Nationals Saturday at The Armory in New York City. Honan and Dearie will throw in the boys weight throw, Phelan will compete in the boys long jump and Sisting, an eighth grader, will compete in the girls 60-meter dash.

## SUNY Baseball

## Red Dragons baseball tops Elmira 10-4

By FRAN ELIA  
Contributing Writer

SUNY Cortland exploded for eight runs in the bottom of the sixth to erase a two-run deficit Saturday and the nationally 17th-ranked Red Dragons defeated visiting Elmira 10-4 in a non-league baseball matchup at Wallace Field.

Mat Bruno finished 3-for-4 with a homer, double, four RBI and two runs scored. He homered in the first to give Cortland an early 1-0 lead, and his three-run double capped the Red Dragons' eight-run fifth. JJ DeLawder and Mitchell Kelly each drove in two runs in the fifth. DeLawder's two-run double gave Cortland a 4-3 lead and Kelly followed with a two-run double to make it 6-3. The Red Dragons' first run in the inning came on an Adam Mieczkowski bases-loaded walk.

Tommy Lynch, the third of five Cortland relievers, earned the win to improve to 2-0. He entered in the top of the sixth with the Red Dragons down 3-1 and runners on first and second and retired all six batters he faced over two innings, three by strikeout.

Elmira (4-3) was led by Nick Lees, who hit two solo homers.

The Soaring Eagles tied the game at 1-1 in the second on a Lees' round-tripper and took a 3-1 lead in the fourth on Connor Stone's two-run homer. Lees' second homer came in the top of the eighth. Jack Finnerty started and allowed one run on two hits in three innings.

Jarek Podest took the loss after giving up four runs in two-plus innings.

Cortland (4-4) will head to California for a seven-game spring break trip, starting with a three-game series at California Lutheran March 8-10, followed by a single game at La Verne on March 12 and a three-game set at Chapman March 14-16.

Chapman is currently ranked 16th nationally and La Verne is ranked 17th.

Fran Elia is the Sports Information Director at SUNY Cortland.

## SUNY Cortland Ice Hockey

## SUNY mens hockey at Plymouth St. for 1st NCAA game

By FRAN ELIA  
Contributing Writer

The SUNY Cortland mens ice hockey team has earned a spot in the 13-team NCAA Division III tournament and will travel to Plymouth State University in New Hampshire for the opening round at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Cortland (18-8-2) is making its first-ever NCAA tournament

appearance. The Red Dragons earned an NCAA automatic bid after winning the SUNYAC tournament championship game this past Saturday at Plattsburgh State, 3-2 in overtime. Cortland's 18 wins are one shy of tying the school record set during a 19-9 campaign in 1992-93.

The Red Dragons are led by 10th-year head coach Joe

Cardarelli. Over the past three seasons from 2021-24, Cardarelli has guided the Red Dragons to three straight SUNYAC playoff appearances and a combined record of 49-27-5. Plymouth State (23-2-2) earned an NCAA automatic berth after defeating Fitchburg State 3-0 in the finals of the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference

(MASCAC) tournament. The Panthers won their fifth straight MASCAC crown and will be making their seventh NCAA appearance. Plymouth State's 23 wins this year matches the school record set during a 23-4-1 campaign last year.

The winner of Saturday's game will travel to Utica University (23-2-3) for the national

quarterfinals on March 16. The national semifinals and finals will be held on March 21 and 23 at Trinity College's Koeppel Community Center in Hartford, Connecticut. Cortland is 5-2 all-time versus Plymouth State. The last time the teams met was in a two-game series in 2009 at the Tilton School in New Hampshire, with Plymouth State win-

ning both games, 4-3 in overtime and 5-4. The previous year, Cortland swept the Panthers 8-4 and 4-1 in Cortland, and the Red Dragons also won twice at home in 1998 and once at the Potsdam Invitational in 1995.

Fran Elia is the Sports Information Director at SUNY Cortland.

## Red Dragon womens hockey to make NCAA tourney debut

By FRAN ELIA  
Contributing Writer

The SUNY Cortland womens ice hockey team has earned a spot in the 11-team NCAA Division III tournament and will host Elmira College in the opening round 7 p.m. Wednesday at Alumni Arena.

Cortland (20-5-2) is making its first-ever NCAA tournament appearance. The Red Dragons earned an NCAA au-

tomatic bid after winning the inaugural SUNYAC tournament championship game this past Saturday at Plattsburgh State, 2-1 in overtime.

Cortland's 20 wins ties the school record that was established last season (20-7).

Elmira (20-7-1) punched its NCAA ticket with a 2-0 win over Southern Maine in the finals of the New England Hockey Conference playoffs Saturday

at Elmira. The Soaring Eagles qualified for the NCAA playoffs for the 18th time overall and second time in three years. Elmira has won three national titles (during its first two seasons as a varsity program in 2002 and 2003, as well as in 2013), finished as runner-up four times (2005, 2009, 2015, 2018) and advanced to the semifinals on four other occasions.

The winner of Wednesday's game

will travel to Amherst College (21-3-2) for the national quarterfinals on Saturday.

The national semifinals and finals will be held on March 15 and 17 at one of the remaining schools.

Cortland and Elmira split two games during the regular season. Elmira won at home, 3-0, on Nov. 21 and Cortland posted a 2-1 win at home on Jan. 16 for the team's first-ever victory over the

Soaring Eagles.

That game marked the 200th career win for Cortland head coach Rick Fighera. His overall record of 208-185-31 includes a 98-73-11 mark in eight seasons at Cortland along with stops at RIT (1995-97) and the University of Maine (1997-2004).

Fran Elia is the Sports Information Director at SUNY Cortland.

## Cortland mens hockey wins SUNYACs with OT goal

By FRAN ELIA  
Contributing Writer

PLATTSBURGH — Junior forward Anthony Bernardo scored 9:13 into overtime to lift fourth-seeded SUNY Cortland to a 3-2 victory Saturday over host and third-seeded Plattsburgh State in the championship game of the 2024 SUNYAC mens ice hockey tournament.

Cortland (18-8-2) claimed its first-ever SUNYAC title and earned an automatic berth into its first NCAA Division III tournament. The Red Dragons' 18th victory is one shy of tying the school single-season mark set during a 19-9 campaign in 1993-94. Bernardo, who also scored the game-winning goal in a 3-2 victory at top-seeded Geneseo in last week's semifinals, was named the tournament MVP. He was joined on the all-tournament team by senior forward Nate Berke and senior goalie Jack Riedell and Plattsburgh's Ryan Bonfield, Bennett Stockdale and Ryan Hogg.

Riedell made 41 saves, including six in overtime, and Berke finished with a goal and an assist. Bonfield scored Plattsburgh's goals, both in the third period, and Jacob Hearne made 31 saves.

Sophomore forward Colby Seitz put Cortland on the board 11:28 into the second period, scoring off assists by Berke and junior forward Domenico Settimo. Plattsburgh evened the game on a Bonfield power-play goal, assisted by Luke Jirousek and Paul Bryer, just 58 seconds into the third.

Cortland took a 2-1 lead with 3:38 left in regulation when Settimo won a faceoff directly to Berke, who scored on a one-timer from the slot. Plattsburgh pulled Hearne for an extra attacker with 1:15 remaining, and the move paid off when Bonfield found the net, assisted by Stockdale and Tio A'ddario with 31 seconds left to knot the game at 2-2.

The Red Dragons scored the winning goal almost midway through the first overtime when senior forward Cameron Knowlton sent a centering pass from the right side to Bernardo, who backhanded a shot through the five-hole to set off the Cortland celebration. Senior forward Jona Hildreth earned the secondary assist on the goal.

Fran Elia is the Sports Information Director at SUNY Cortland.

## SUNY womens hockey nets SUNYAC title in overtime

By FRAN ELIA  
Contributing Writer

PLATTSBURGH — Graduate student forward Elena Eichmann scored 2:33 into overtime as the nationally ninth-ranked SUNY Cortland womens ice hockey team defeated host and fourth-ranked Plattsburgh State 2-1 Saturday to win the 2024 SUNYAC championship game.

Cortland (20-5-2), the second seed, won the title in the SUNYAC's inaugural year sponsoring womens hockey and has earned an automatic bid into the 11-team NCAA Division III playoffs. The Red Dragons will be making their first-ever NCAA tournament appearance.

Cortland tied the school record with its 20th win of the season, matching the mark of last year's 20-7 Red Dragon squad. Plattsburgh (22-4-1), the tournament's top seed, will await a possible NCAA at-large berth. The Cardinals had their streak of 10 straight conference titles snapped; Plattsburgh won five ECAC West crowns from 2013-17 and five Northeast Women's Hockey League (NEWHL) crowns from 2018-20 and 2022-23. Three of those NEWHL championship-game wins came at home versus Cortland (2-0 last year, 4-3 in overtime in 2022 and 5-0 in 2019).

Cortland junior goalie Molly Goergen was named the SUNYAC Tournament MVP after stopping 26 of 27 shots on goal, including some point-blank saves in the third pe-

riod. She was joined on the all-tournament team by Eichmann and graduate student forward Dany Donegan. Donegan assisted on both goals to improve her career totals to 33 goals and 68 assists for 101 points, making her just the second Red Dragon to reach the career 100-point mark. Plattsburgh was represented on the all-tournament team by goalie Lilla Nease, who finished with 19 saves, along with defenseman Kendall Wasik and forward Julia Masotta. After a scoreless first period, Plattsburgh took the lead on a power-play goal from Mae Olshansky, assisted by Ciara Wall and Masotta, with 9:47 left in the second. Cortland answered about three and a half minutes later on its own power-play tally when junior forward Mia Hlasnick controlled a deflected puck and buried a shot from just inside the left faceoff circle. Donegan and sophomore defenseman Kayla Persinger earned assists on the play.

Cortland's overtime game winner came on the only shot on goal by either team during the extra session. Donegan won a faceoff to Nease's left, with the puck trickling just a few feet in front of her. Eichmann swooped in and deposited a shot that found its way through Nease and into the left side of the net to set off a Red Dragon celebration.

Fran Elia is the Sports Information Director at SUNY Cortland.

College Basketball

# Houston stays strong at No. 1, Kansas drops out of top 10



Houston guard Emanuel Sharp, left, and guard Jamal Shead celebrate during the second half of a game against Oklahoma on Saturday, in Norman, Oklahoma.

AP Photo/Garett Fisbeck

By JOHN MARSHALL  
AP Basketball Writer

Houston still has a tight grip on No. 1 in the AP Top 25.

The Cougars received 52 first-place votes from a 62-person media panel in the poll released Monday to hold the top spot for the second straight week.

UConn moved up a spot to No. 2 and had six first-place votes to leapfrog No. 3 Purdue, which had four first-place votes. Tennessee and Arizona rounded out the top five.

Houston moved to No. 1 for the first time this season a week ago and won both of its games last week: a 67-59 home win over Cincinnati and, thanks to Jamal Shead's last-second shot, a win at Oklahoma 87-85.

Houston is still leading the country in KenPom's adjusted defensive efficiency despite giving up 85 points to the Sooners. The win allowed coach Kelvin Sampson to have a triumphant return to Norman, where he coached from 1994 to 2006.

UConn had a nice bounce back after being knocked from the No. 1 spot following a six-week run, blowing out Seton Hall 91-61 at home for its first outright Big East title in 25

years. The Huskies, the reigning national champions, had not won even a share of the Big East regular-season title in 18 years.

"The hardest thing to do is to be excellent over the course of three, four months in a brutal, hard league," UConn coach Dan Hurley said.

Purdue dropped a spot despite an 80-74 win over Michigan State that clinched a share of a second straight Big Ten title. The Boilermakers have a two-game lead with two games left.

FADING JAYHAWKS

Kansas spent the first three weeks at No. 1 and has been in the top 10 for three years.

Consecutive losses last week ended the Jayhawks' run.

Kansas fell seven spots to No. 14 in this week's poll, its worst ranking since hitting No. 15 midway through the 2020-21 season. The Jayhawks were in the top 10 for 55 straight weeks, which had been the longest active streak. Houston now has the longest active top-10 run at 36 straight weeks.

Losses to No. 20 BYU and No. 11 Baylor ensured Kansas can't win the Big 12 regular-season title. The Jay-

hawks have seven conference losses for the first time in 21 years under coach Bill Self.

RIISING AND FALLING

No. 15 Baylor and No. 19 Gonzaga had the biggest climbs among teams in the poll this week, each moving up four spots. No. 23 Saint Mary's had the biggest drop, losing six places after Gonzaga ended the Gaels' 16-game winning streak.

IN AND OUT

BYU moved back into the poll after dropping out last week, coming in at No. 20 after wins over Kansas and TCU. Florida dropped out from No. 24 after losing at No. 17 South Carolina.

CONFERENCE WATCH

The Southeastern Conference and the Big 12 each have five ranked teams after BYU re-entered the poll and Florida dropped out.

The Big East has three, followed by the Big Ten, Atlantic Coast, Pac-12, Mountain West and West Coast conferences with two. The Atlantic 10 and AAC each have one.

National Hockey League

# Trade deadline nears and flurry of trades are expected with playoff berths at stake

By STEPHEN WHYNO  
AP Hockey Writer

Last Friday's game between the Philadelphia Flyers and Washington Capitals had the potential to upend not only the playoff race in the Eastern Conference but the NHL trading market with the deadline coming up fast.

Despite the 5-2 Capitals win, Washington is now expected to sell after falling flat in a loss to Arizona two days later. The Flyers could do some deals because it is unexpectedly in a playoff spot with less than six weeks to go in the regular season.

With many teams in limbo, the weekend provided some much-needed clarity around the league one year after the 2023 trade season featured a ton of big-name players changing places well before the deadline. Expect a flurry of activity as the week goes on ahead of the Friday 3 p.m. deadline.

"Everybody's kicking tires," Coyotes general manager Bill Armstrong said Sunday. "I think there were some big guys that went early and everybody's trying to put some pieces together on their team that will help it and people are trying

to look for the best value possible."

There is value to be found at just about every position for Stanley Cup contenders looking for an upgrade.

Need a scoring winger? How about Pittsburgh's Jake Guentzel. A No. 1 goaltender? Calgary's Jacob Markstrom is signed through 2026. A do-it-all fourth-line center? Washington's Nic Dowd is under contract for two potential playoff runs. Defensesmen? Philadelphia has three pending free agents in Sean Walker, Nick Seeler and Marc Staal.

"We're still open," Flyers GM Daniel Briere said Friday night in Washington. "There's been a lot of discussions. There's a lot going on. You've seen what's happened in the market. There's obviously a lot of defensesmen that are gone now, so we're getting a lot of calls on our guys."

Dallas last week got arguably the best defenseman available in acquiring Chris Tanev from the Flames and didn't have to give up a first-round pick to do it. Calgary's Noah Hanifin could also still be traded, along with Capitals veteran Joel Edmundson, among others at the position.



Flyers' Nick Seeler, left, and Ottawa Senators' Vladimir Tarasenko collide during the first period, Saturday, in Philadelphia.

AP Photo/Matt Slocum

What might start the dominos falling? Pittsburgh lost at Calgary and Edmonton on back-to-back days, which could push GM Kyle Dubas closer to being a seller after he said their play would determine how he approaches the deadline.

By the time bitter rivals face off Thursday in Pittsburgh, the rosters of the Capitals and Penguins could look drastically different.

"Our priority would be the future of our club," Capitals GM Brian MacLellan said. "All de-

isions will be based on (that). It's not, 'Hey, we're going to go out and rent a guy for the playoffs.' We're not in that game. We're here to look for opportunities to find more young players, add more young players to our roster and compete."

SUNY Cortland Mens Lacrosse

# Red Dragon mens lacrosse wins home opener

By DAN SURDAM  
Contributing Writer

The SUNY Cortland mens lacrosse team opened up the home portion of its schedule with a 14-7 victory versus Scranton Saturday afternoon at Grady Field. The Red Dragons improved to 2-0 with the win, while the Royals dropped to 1-4.

For the second straight game, Cortland's starting attack unit accounted for 10 goals. Sam Rothman led the offense with five goals and an assist. Caden Yancey recorded four goals and an assist and Kole Stuver

contributed a goal and two assists.

Matt Franzoni scored the first two goals of his career for the Red Dragons. Josh Michel tallied a goal and an assist, Tucker Macknik netted his first career goal, Ryan Scanlon and Ryan Smith each collected two assists and Klay Stuver added an assist.

Goalie Travis Wagner registered 13 saves and allowed six goals in 57:11 for Cortland. Charlie Falowski stopped two shots over the final 2:49 in his first collegiate action. Rich Finn won 13-of-17 face-

offs and scooped up a game-high eight ground balls. Aidan McHugh was successful on 4-of-6 face-offs and collected four ground balls. Klay Stuver pitched in with seven ground balls, Macknik collected five ground balls, Christian Lembo finished with five ground balls and two caused turnovers and Conner Gallagher was credited with four ground balls.

Matthew McAree paced Scranton with four goals. Joe Boyle recorded a goal and two assists, Colin Hughes and Myles McCutcheon each netted a goal and Jason Kozak picked

up an assist.

Goalie Declan Allen turned aside 10 shots for the Royals. Andrew Lord secured three ground balls and caused two turnovers. McCutcheon, John O'Connor and Celine Pierce collected four ground balls apiece, while McAree and Pat McCormack each scooped up three ground balls.

The Red Dragons opened up a 6-3 lead after the first quarter of play as Rothman and Franzoni each netted a pair of goals. Cortland took an 8-4 lead into intermission. Yancey scored, Rothman tallied a man-up goal

and McAree scored just before the horn.

The Red Dragons took control of the game in the third quarter, increasing their advantage to 11-5 with Michel, Rothman and Yancey picking up goals. The lead grew to 14-5 midway through the fourth quarter as Stuver, Yancey and Rothman each scored a goal before McAree added his third and fourth goals late for the 14-7 final.

Dan Surdam is the 2024 Lacrosse Contact at SUNY Cortland.

TC3 Basketball

# TC3 men end run in regional semis against top seed

By PETER VOORHEES  
Contributing Writer

The Tompkins Cortland Community College mens basketball season came to an end Saturday in the semifinal round of the NJCAA Region 3 tournament, as the Panthers came up short in their bid to upset top-seeded Herkimer Community College on the Generals' home court. After leading much of the back-and-forth game, the Panthers just couldn't finish the game out, falling to Herkimer by a final score of 83-75.

Tompkins Cortland, the tournament's No. 4 seed, ends the season with a record of 17-9.

Things started hot for the Panthers, with Khai Pugh, Damari Johnson and Bryan Viscaino each connecting on a 3-pointer in the first two minutes of action.

Herkimer responded to the fast start and came back to take a 10-9 lead, the first of four lead changes in the first half. Neither team was able to run away from the other, with the Panthers holding the biggest lead of the half at 29-20. The first twenty minutes ended with Tompkins Cortland ahead 37-34.

Johnson opened the second half with another 3-pointer, kicking off a sometimes-frenetic second half that featured five ties and nine lead changes in the first 12 minutes. As the game entered its

final ten minutes, a run of lead changes on four consecutive possessions put Herkimer ahead 61-60.

The spread grew to 65-60 with 7:00 left, but the Panthers kept within striking distance. The Herkimer lead peaked at 78-67 with 2:20 left, but the Panthers had a last push to try to knock off the Generals.

Kobe Nwosu found Pugh for a lay-up and, after a defensive rebound by Viscaino, Johnson drained his seventh 3-pointer of the day to make it 78-72 with 1:11 left. A turnover by Herkimer on the inbound pass gave the Panthers a chance to pull even closer, however the 3-pointer rimmed out and was re-

bounded by Herkimer.

After a foul, Herkimer made 1-of-2 free throws and the Generals were able to add another bucket to stretch the lead back to nine at 81-72, essentially icing the game with under a minute to play.

Johnson's seven 3-pointers set a new program playoff record and were part of his 27 points and 8 rebounds. Pugh had another double-double, his 17th of the season, with 15 points and 13 rebounds. Viscaino added 12 points and Javonte Long had a team-best 7 assists.

Peter Voorhees is the Sports Information Contact at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

Shooting

MCGRAW LONG JOHN LEAGUE			
Week 9			
Trap			
Mike Rice	48	Jeff Joslin	45
Kevin King	48	Jim Duncan	44
Chris Pollicemi	46		
Skeet			
Mike Rice	47	Jeff Steinhoff	43
Charlie Parks	44	Jeff Joslin	43
Chris Stull	43		
Low 7 Club			
Dillon McCumber		Charles Rice	
Tim Joslin		Bradlee Small	
Rob Rutter		Kyle Forshee	
Mitch Eichorst			
HOMER FROSTBITE LEAGUE			
Week 9			
Trap			
Tony Johnson	48	Luke Kniskern	43
Mike Tracy	45	George Tario	43
Robert Conger	45		
Skeet			
Robert Conger	45	Mike Tracy	45
Jason Root	46		
Small Gauge Skeet			
Bill Sulliff	44	Tony Johnson	41
George Tario	44	Steve Lucas	38
Greg Fuller	41		
Last Bird Club			
Luke Kniskern			
Paul Van Valkenburg		Dave Parmier	
FINGER LAKES AREA TRAP LEAGUE			
Week 9			
Dryden			
Jim Fellows	50	Chris Stull	49
Mark Patton	50	Jefferson Adams	48
Evan Wirih	50	Dennis Bobbette	48
Mike Woodworth	50	Mike Rice	48
Jake Anderson	49	Jim Smiley	48
Chad Landon	49		
Standings			
Lansing	2,135	Millport	2,056
Dryden	2,134	Seneca	2,037
Interlaken	2,083	Newfield	2,001
Sullivan Trail	2,068	Trumansburg	1,975
Corning	2,062		
Dryden's Mark Patton			
won the league High Gun with 425 targets hit.			
BLODGETT MILLS WINTER LEAGUE			
Week 9			
Frito Fellows	50	Jim St. Pierre	48
Brian Homer	49	Mike Siner	48
Mike Rice	49	Pat Anderson	47
Jake Anderson	48	Cliff Haaf	47
Dennis Bobbette	48	Pat Reilly	47
Shawn Ellsworth	48	Alex Wisniewski	47

NHL

	EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
a-Florida	62	42	16	4	88	206	147
a-Boston	63	36	13	14	86	212	175
m-N.Y. Rangers	62	40	18	4	84	206	172
m-Carolina	61	36	19	6	78	201	172
a-Toronto	61	35	18	8	78	225	194
Detroit	61	33	22	6	72	216	195
Tampa Bay	63	33	24	6	72	214	213
m-Philadelphia	63	32	23	8	72	190	186
N.Y. Islanders	60	26	20	14	66	180	201
Washington	60	28	23	9	65	160	193
New Jersey	61	30	27	4	64	202	214
Pittsburgh	59	27	24	8	62	174	166
Buffalo	62	29	29	4	62	183	187
Montreal	61	23	28	10	56	173	219
Ottawa	59	25	31	3	53	195	212
Columbus	61	21	30	10	52	184	223
WESTERN CONFERENCE							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
p-Vancouver	63	39	17	7	85	224	176
c-Winnipeg	60	39	16	5	83	187	144
c-Dallas	63	37	17	9	83	225	190
c-Colorado	62	37	20	5	79	227	194
p-Edmonton	59	37	20	2	76	212	172
p-Vegas	62	33	22	7	73	201	185
Los Angeles	60	31	19	10	72	188	162
Nashville	62	35	25	2	72	199	190
St. Louis	61	32	26	3	67	176	187
Calgary	60	30	25	5	65	189	187
Minnesota	62	29	27	6	64	194	208
Seattle	60	26	23	11	63	166	171
Arizona	61	25	31	5	55	180	201
Anaheim	61	22	36	3	47	162	216
San Jose	60	15	39	6	36	129	235
Chicago	61	15	41	5	35	125	218
(a, c, m, p)-top three in their division							

NBA

	EASTERN CONFERENCE			
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Boston	48	12	.800	—
Milwaukee	41	21	.661	8
Cleveland	39	21	.650	9
New York	36	25	.590	12½
Philadelphia	35	25	.583	13
Orlando	35	26	.574	13½
Miami	34	26	.567	14
Indiana	34	28	.548	15
Chicago	28	32	.467	20
Atlanta	26	34	.433	22
Brooklyn	24	37	.393	24½
Toronto	23	38	.377	25½
Charlotte	15	46	.246	33½
Washington	9	51	.150	39
Detroit	9	51	.150	39
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	42	18	.700	—
Minnesota	43	19	.694	—
Denver	42	19	.689	½
L.A. Clippers	39	21	.650	3
New Orleans	36	25	.590	6½
Sacramento	34	25	.576	7½
Phoenix	35	26	.574	7½
Dallas	34	27	.557	8½
Golden State	32	28	.533	10
L.A. Lakers	33	29	.532	10
Utah	27	34	.443	15½
Houston	26	34	.433	16
Memphis	21	41	.339	22
Portland	17	43	.283	25
San Antonio	13	48	.213	29½
x-clinched playoff spot				

## Eagles' Kelce retires after 13 NFL seasons

By DAN GELSTON  
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Jason Kelce needed only seconds to burst into tears.

Kelce's eyes flooded each time he relayed a story about backyard football games with his brother, the love he felt from his parents and the devotion of his coaches — even a band teacher — that shaped him along way. But it was his career with the Philadelphia Eagles that choked up Kelce the most. The Super Bowl. The parade. His beloved offensive line coach.

All of the memories, the wins, the brotherhood — both with his fellow Eagles players and younger brother Travis, a tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs — consumed Kelce to the point where he needed about 45 minutes to reach the inevitable conclusion that everyone inside a crowded auditorium knew was coming from the moment a news conference was announced.

It was time to retire. The 36-year-old Kelce officially called it quits Monday at the Eagles' NovaCare Complex, ending a 13-year career spent entirely with Philadelphia in which he became not only one of the great centers of his era who played a key role in the franchise's lone Super Bowl championship but a beloved Philly personality and popular podcast host.

"Let's see how long this lasts," said Kelce, wearing a sleeveless Eagles T-shirt, before he burst into tears and needed several moments to compose himself at the news conference attended by his parents, Ed and Donna, wife Kylie and Travis, who was wearing sunglasses inside the auditorium. Eagles coach Nick Sirianni sat behind reporters.

Kelce was a sixth-round pick out of Cincinnati in the 2011 draft. The burly, bushy-haired and bearded Kelce has been a stalwart of the offensive line since he was drafted and as an Iron Man after he missed most of the 2012 season with a partially torn MCL and torn ACL.

## Broncos: QB Wilson to be released next week as league year begins

By ARNIE STAPLETON  
AP Pro Football Writer

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The Denver Broncos told Russell Wilson on Monday that they're going to release him next week, just 18 months after signing the Super Bowl-winning quarterback to a five-year, \$242 million contract extension.

The Broncos still owe Wilson his \$39 million salary for 2024 minus whatever he'd sign for with another team, which would likely be the veteran's minimum salary of \$1.21 million.

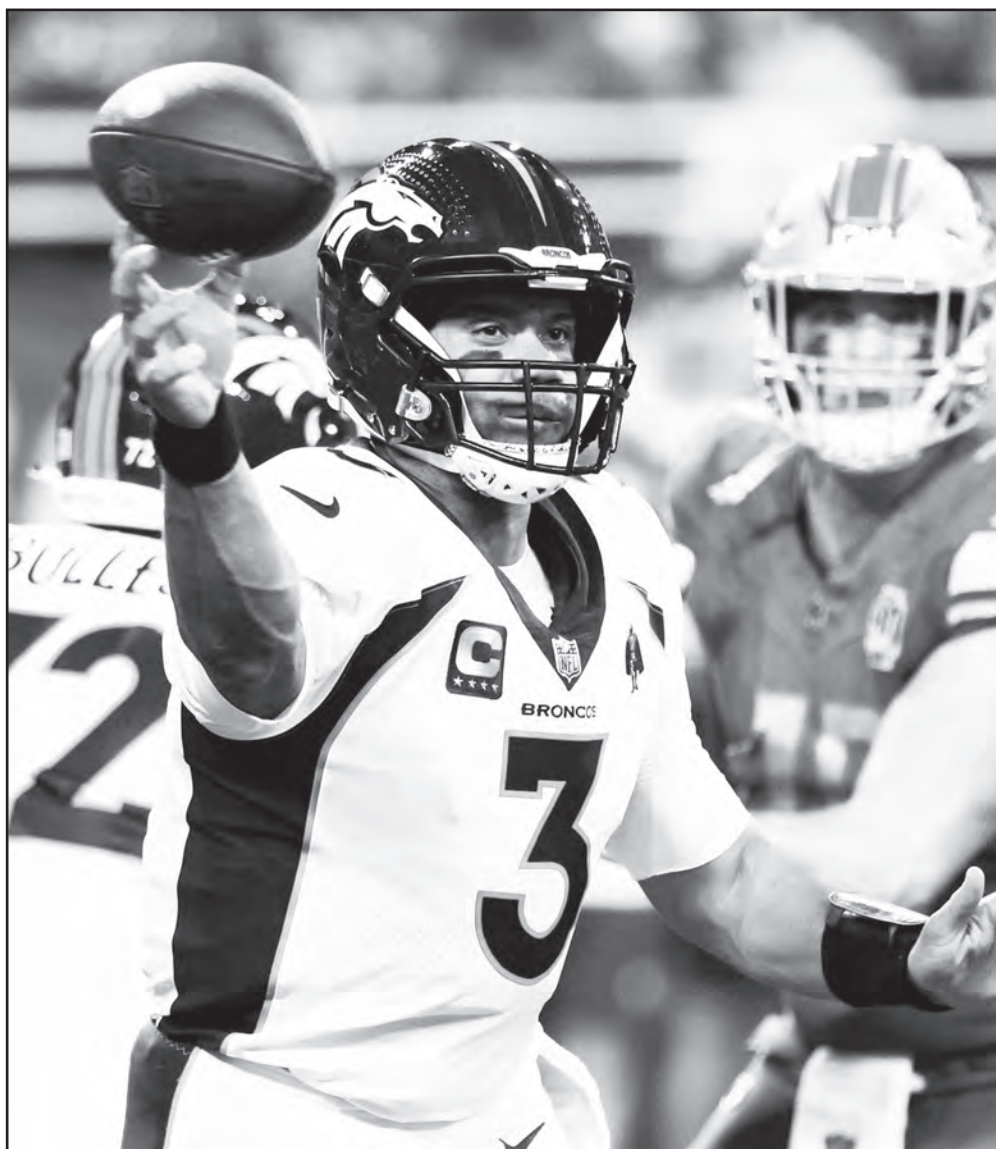
One potential landing spot is Pittsburgh. The Steelers are set to visit Denver next season.

The Broncos also will take a record \$89 million hit in dead cap charges over the next two seasons.

Wilson enjoyed a bounce-back year last season under new head coach Sean Payton, throwing for 26 touchdowns with eight interceptions in 15 games.

But it wasn't good enough and Payton benched him for Jarrett Stidham for the final two games. Stidham went 1-1 and the Broncos finished 8-9, their seventh straight losing season and their eighth in a row outside the playoffs.

Payton hinted at an impending split at the NFL scouting combine last week when talking about Denver's long string of middling quar-



AP Photo/Duane Bursleson, File

Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson throws against the Lions, Dec. 16, 2023, in Detroit.

terbacks and suggested his job was to make sure "the next one" was the right QB

to lead the Broncos back into contention.

Wilson, who had gone ra-

dio silent on social media at Payton's request a year ago, resumed sharing videos of his

workouts and over the weekend he removed all Broncos references from his profile on X (formerly Twitter).

Wilson was acquired in 2022 from the Seattle Seahawks, where he won a Super Bowl title after the 2013 season, for a bevy of draft picks (two first-rounders and two seconds) and players (Drew Lock, Noah Fant and Shelby Harris).

He signed a nearly quarter-billion dollar extension before playing a single down in Denver and then went 4-11 in his first season under coach Nathaniel Hackett, who was fired after 15 games.

Payton had Wilson dial back his social media presence a year ago and a focused and fit Wilson showed up to training camp 20 pounds lighter.

He went 7-8 before being benched. Wilson contended the Broncos had threatened to bench him for the final nine games if he didn't push back his \$37 million injury guarantee in his contract.

He declined to adjust his contract and started seven more games before getting benched in what Payton insisted was a football move, not a financial one.

Wilson's \$37 million salary for 2025 would have become guaranteed if he were still on Denver's roster on March 13, the start of the league's new year.

## Major League Baseball

## Wheeler, Phillies reach \$126M, 3-year deal for 2025-27



AP Photo/John Bazemore, File

Phillies starting pitcher Zack Wheeler works from the mound against the Braves, Oct. 9, 2023, in Atlanta.

By DAN GELSTON  
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Zack Wheeler turns 34 in May and just celebrated with his wife the birth of the couple's third child.

He has more games to win for the Philadelphia Phillies and a World Series title to chase for Citizens Bank Park. But Wheeler doesn't want to pitch deep into his 30s — "old, old," as the ace right-hander put it — so he told his agent he wanted a new contract to be short and he wanted one with the Phillies.

Wheeler got what he wanted: one of the richest deals in baseball history.

Wheeler and the Phillies agreed Monday on a \$126 million, three-year deal for 2025-27 that has the fourth-highest average salary in baseball history at \$42 million.

The Phillies' ace gets \$23.5 million in 2024, the final season of a \$118

million, five-year agreement that is among the best free agent contracts in Phillies history.

"I've really just enjoyed being here in Philly," Wheeler said. "The fans are the best. Playing in Citizens Bank in October, there's nothing like it."

Wheeler's average salary trails only Los Angeles Dodgers two-way star Shohei Ohtani (\$70 million), Texas pitcher Max Scherzer (\$43.33 million) and Houston pitcher Justin Verlander (\$43.33 million), the latter two who signed their deals with the New York Mets.

"I was happy he got over the 40 million mark because he's one of the best pitchers in baseball the last couple of years," first baseman Bryce Harper said. "So he definitely deserves it, man."

Wheeler has led the NL in strikeouts and innings during his four seasons after missing time with injuries

while with the Mets from 2013-19. He also leads all pitchers in wins above replacement (WAR) while with the Phillies at 19.3, per FanGraphs.

After he missed the 2015 and 2016 seasons following Tommy John surgery, Wheeler has made 90 starts the last three seasons.

An NL Cy Young Award runner-up in 2021, Wheeler also won a Gold Glove last season.

"What it tells us is we think Zack is as good as anybody in baseball right now," president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski said. "For us right now, when we look over the last handful of years, we think Zack Wheeler is as fine a pitcher in the game of baseball."

The new deal for Wheeler adds yearly salaries of \$42 million. He gets a hotel suite on road trips and agrees to make a \$100,000 charitable contribution each year.

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## 2015 AL MVP Josh Donaldson says he's retiring

(AP)— Josh Donaldson says he's retiring after a 13-year career in which he was voted the 2015 AL MVP and was selected to three All-Star Games.

The 38-year-old announced his plans Monday during an appearance on "The Mayor's Office," a podcast hosted by former major league first baseman Sean Casey.

Donaldson is a free agent after splitting last season between the New York Yankees and Milwaukee.

"It's sad because I'll be not able to go out there and play the game that I love anymore, but it's also a very happy time that I get to be around the family and kind of take that next chapter in life," said Donaldson, who noted that he got married during the offseason.

Donaldson was among the top third basemen from 2013-17 with Oakland and Toronto.

He finished fourth in the AL MVP balloting with Oakland in 2013 and won the award with Toronto two years later. During that 2015 season, Donaldson hit .297 with 41 homers and an AL-

leading 123 RBIs. Donaldson also led the AL in total bases (352) and topped the majors in runs (122) that season while helping the Blue Jays reach the AL Championship Series, where they lost to Kansas City.

Donaldson earned three straight All-Star appearances from 2014-16 and was fourth in the AL MVP balloting in 2016.

After injuries limited him to 113 games in 2017 and 52 games in 2018, Donaldson signed a \$23 million, one-year contract with Atlanta and was 11th in the NL MVP voting after batting .259 with a .379 on-base percentage, 37 homers and 94 RBIs.

He signed a \$92 million, four-year contract with Minnesota at age 34 but his play tailed off. Donaldson hit .222 with 60 homers, 171 RBIs, a .748 OPS and a 24.3% strikeout rate over that deal.

Minnesota dealt Donaldson to the Yankees ahead of the 2022 season.

Donaldson hit .142 with 10 homers and 15 RBIs in 33 games with the Yankees last year.

# If you're poor, fertility treatment can be out of reach

By MICHELLE ANDREWS  
KFF Health News (TNS)

Mary Delgado's first pregnancy went according to plan, but when she tried to get pregnant again seven years later, nothing happened. After 10 months, Delgado, now 34, and her partner, Joaquin Rodriguez, went to see an OB-GYN. Tests showed she had endometriosis, which was interfering with conception. Delgado's only option, the doctor said, was in vitro fertilization.

"When she told me that, she broke me inside," Delgado said, "because I knew it was so expensive."

Delgado, who lives in New York City, is enrolled in Medicaid, the federal-state health program for low-income and disabled people. The roughly \$20,000 price tag for a round of IVF would be a financial stretch for lots of people, but for someone on Medicaid — for which the maximum annual income for a two-person household in New York is just over \$26,000 — the treatment can be unattainable.

Expansions of work-based insurance plans to cover fertility treatments, including free egg freezing and unlimited IVF cycles, are often touted by large companies as a boon for their employees. But people with lower incomes, often minorities, are more likely to be covered by Medicaid or skimpier commercial plans with no such coverage. That raises the question of whether medical assistance to create a family is only for the well-to-do or people with generous benefit packages.

"In American health care, they don't want the poor people to reproduce," Delgado said. She was caring full-time for their son, who was born with a rare genetic disorder that required several surgeries before he was 5. Her partner, who works for a company that maintains the city's yellow cabs, has an individual plan through the state insurance marketplace, but it does not include fertility coverage.

Some medical experts whose patients have faced these issues say they can understand why people in Delgado's situation think the system is stacked against them.

"It feels a little like that," said Elizabeth Ginsburg, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Harvard Medical School who is president-elect of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, a research and advocacy group.



Joaquin Rodriguez/KFF Health News/TNS

Years after she had her first child, Joaquin, left, Mary Delgado found out that she had endometriosis and that IVF was her only option to get pregnant again. The news from her doctor "broke me inside," Delgado says, "because I knew it was so expensive."

Whether or not it's intended, many say the inequity reflects poorly on the U.S.

"This is really sort of standing out as a sore thumb in a nation that would like to claim that it cares for the less fortunate and it seeks to do anything it can for them," said Eli Adashi, a professor of medical science at Brown University and former president of the Society for Reproductive Endocrinologists.

Yet efforts to add coverage for fertility care to Medicaid face a lot of pushback, Ginsburg said.

Over the years, Barbara Collura, president and CEO of the advocacy group Resolve: The National Infertility Association, has heard many explanations for why it doesn't make sense to cover fertility treatment for Medicaid recipients. Legislators have asked, "If they can't pay for fertility treatment, do they have any idea how much it costs to raise a child?" she said.

"So right there, as a country we're making judgments about who gets to

have children," Collura said.

The legacy of the eugenics movement of the early 20th century, when states passed laws that permitted poor, nonwhite, and disabled people to be sterilized against their will, lingers as well.

"As a reproductive justice person, I believe it's a human right to have a child, and it's a larger ethical issue to provide support," said Regina Davis Moss, president and CEO of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, an advocacy group.

But such coverage decisions — especially when the health care safety net is involved — sometimes require difficult choices, because resources are limited.

Even if state Medicaid programs wanted to cover fertility treatment, for instance, they would have to weigh the benefit against investing in other types of care, including maternity care, said Kate McEvoy, executive director of the National Association of Medicaid Di-

rectors. "There is a recognition about the primacy and urgency of maternity care," she said.

Medicaid pays for about 40% of births in the United States. And since 2022, 46 states and the District of Columbia have elected to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage to 12 months, up from 60 days.

Fertility problems are relatively common, affecting roughly 10% of women and men of childbearing age, according to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Traditionally, a couple is considered infertile if they've been trying to get pregnant unsuccessfully for 12 months. Last year, the ASRM broadened the definition of infertility to incorporate would-be parents beyond heterosexual couples, including people who can't get pregnant for medical, sexual, or other reasons, as well as those who need medical interventions such as donor eggs or sperm to get pregnant.

The World Health Organization de-

fining infertility as a disease of the reproductive system characterized by failing to get pregnant after a year of unprotected intercourse. It terms the high cost of fertility treatment a major equity issue and has called for better policies and public financing to improve access.

No matter how the condition is defined, private health plans often decline to cover fertility treatments because they don't consider them "medically necessary." Twenty states and Washington, D.C., have laws requiring health plans to provide some fertility coverage, but those laws vary greatly and apply only to companies whose plans are regulated by the state.

In recent years, many companies have begun offering fertility treatment in a bid to recruit and retain top-notch talent. In 2023, 45% of companies with 500 or more workers covered IVF and/or drug therapy, according to the benefits consultant Mercer.

But that doesn't help people on Medicaid. Only two states' Medicaid programs provide any fertility treatment: New York covers some oral ovulation-enhancing medications, and Illinois covers costs for fertility preservation, to freeze the eggs or sperm of people who need medical treatment that will likely make them infertile, such as for cancer. Several other states also are considering adding fertility preservation services.

In Delgado's case, Medicaid covered the tests to diagnose her endometriosis, but nothing more. She was searching the internet for fertility treatment options when she came upon a clinic group called CNY Fertility that seemed significantly less expensive than other clinics, and also offered in-house financing.

Based in Syracuse, New York, the company has a handful of clinics in upstate New York cities and four other U.S. locations.

Though Delgado and her partner had to travel more than 300 miles round trip to Albany for the procedures, the savings made it worthwhile. They were able to do an entire IVF cycle, including medications, egg retrieval, genetic testing, and transferring the egg to her uterus, for \$14,000. To pay for it, they took \$7,000 of the cash they'd been saving to buy a home and financed the other half through the fertility clinic.

She got pregnant on the first try, and their daughter, Emiliana, is now almost a year old.

## With NYC trash bin rule, only rats sorry to see the garbage go

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City's tradition of piling garbage bags on the sidewalk for pickup is going the way of the dinosaur.

As of Friday, all 200,000 businesses in the Big Apple are required to put out their bags of trash in garbage bins, as communities across the country and world have long done.

The requirement is the next phase in the city's efforts to curb what Mayor Eric Adams' administration has called a "24-hour rat buffet" of trash on sidewalks.

The city in August started requiring restaurants, convenience stores and bars to use a sturdy trash can with a secure lid and extended the requirement to chain stores the following month.

Now every city enterprise, including mom-and-pop shops, must comply. In the fall, residential buildings with nine or fewer units will come under the mandate.

Eliminating the mounds of trash that come from larger residential buildings is still a work in progress. Starting in spring 2025, all buildings in a handful of neighborhoods in Manhattan will be required to use outdoor receptacles as part of a pilot project.

Adams announced last month that the city will eventually roll out trucks capable of lifting and emptying large on-street containers, which will be needed to accommodate all the waste from high-density buildings. While common elsewhere, they will be a departure for New Yorkers accustomed to the sight of sanitation workers tossing in bags by hand.

Commercial trash makes up nearly half of the some 44 million pounds of refuse collected by the city each day, according to Adams, who has made combating the city's rodents a focus.

City officials will issue warnings to businesses for the first month of the new mandate, and will begin issuing summonses in April, Sanitation Commissioner Jessica Tisch said in media appearances Friday morning with Adams.

Joshua Goodman, a spokesperson for the city sanitation department, said the only requirement for businesses is that they use a solid bin with a secure lid.

Businesses must work with their waste hauler to find out what kind of receptacle they should use, because business trash is collected by private haulers, not the city.



AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File

In this Sept. 17, 2015, photo, an open and overflowing garbage container is seen next to a park in the Chinatown neighborhood of New York.

## Georgia GOP says religious liberty needs protection. Dems warn of discrimination

By JEFF AMY  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia Republicans are voting to protect religious rights from being trampled by state and local governments, while Democrats warn that the long-disputed measure opens the door for people and groups to discriminate against LGBTQ+ people in the name of religion.

The Senate voted 33-19 for Senate Bill 180 last week, sending it to the House for more debate.

It's a new flareup in an old debate in Georgia, where lawmakers eight years ago passed a different version of the measure. Then-Gov. Nathan Deal, a Republican, vetoed it in 2016 under pressure from members of the business community who said they feared it would hurt their ability to attract employees and tourists.

This time around the measure is being pushed in an election year when all lawmakers are up for reelection and Republican leaders have become more conservative.

The bill mirrors a 1993 federal law, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which says that a government must show a compelling interest to force someone to go against their sincerely held religious beliefs and, when it does so, must use the least restrictive means possible.

Republican Sen. Ed Setzler of Acworth said Georgia needs its own religious protection bill because the federal law doesn't protect against attacks on religion by state and local governments. That means a local government might deny things like permission to distribute religious literature or a zoning permit for a church without giving enough deference to religious freedom, supporters say.

"It simply makes the government pause and think, do we have a compelling interest in this, and if we do, are we accommodating people's reli-



Matthew Pearson/WABE via AP

Georgia state Senator Kim Jackson, D-Stone Mountain, speaks in opposition of SB 180, The Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act, during Crossover Day on Feb. 29 in Atlanta.

gious faith in every way possible," Setzler said.

Opponents warn that people and private groups will use the law to do things like deny birth control coverage to their employees, and that the legislation could blow holes in local laws that ban discrimination.

"We are one of only three states in the nation that don't have an anti-discrimination law," said Sen. Kim Jackson, a Stone Mountain Democrat. "We don't have protections set in place if someone tries to abuse this law."

Jackson, who is lesbian, also said she fears more personal repercussions: that she could be denied service at her adopted son's daycare, for example, or a room at a hotel or even towing service if broken down at the side of the road.

In some cases she might win a lawsuit later, Jackson said, but she — and others — stand to suffer in the meantime.

"Legislation like this is an invitation. It's an invitation to Georgians to consider how they want to discriminate. It's a permission slip," Jackson said. "If there is anyone who you love, when people look at them, they think they're different than the norm, this legislation puts them at risk."

Opponents also say the law could be bad for the economy by driving out LGBTQ+ residents and companies that employ them. The Metro Atlanta Chamber and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce released a joint statement opposing the measure, saying that after decades of promoting Georgia as a destination for business, the bill "would

undermine the state's strong reputation we have built together."

Setzler, a longtime supporter of the measure, calls such fears overblown.

"Never has a RFRA statute been used to back up invidious discrimination," he said, adding that the law would be applied on a case-by-case basis without any prejudgments.

Christian conservative groups celebrated the bill's forward movement after years of little progress.

"This development is a profound statement that Georgia values and safeguards the right of its citizens to practice their faith without fear of government overreach," said Cole Muzio, the president of Frontline Policy, a conservative group close to Republican Gov. Brian Kemp.





## Influx of firefighters and cooler weather in Texas Panhandle keep wildfires in check

By VALERIE GONZALEZ  
Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas — An influx of hundreds of firefighters and more favorable weather conditions on Monday helped authorities in the Texas Panhandle keep the largest wildfire in state history from threatening more homes and communities, fire officials said.

Strong winds spread flames and led to the evacuation of the small town of Sanford on Sunday while airplanes dropped fire retardants to stop a blaze that was quickly contained thanks to hundreds of firefighters who were deployed on the ground, said Deidra Thomas, a spokeswoman for the Hutchinson County Emergency Management.

“Yesterday had we not had the resources we had, that fire could have been catastrophic,” Thomas said Monday. “We’re in a really good position today and tomorrow and hopefully through the rest of the week.”

“The weather is going to be favorable, the winds are going to be much lower, the humidity is coming up, and that’s fantastic news for us.”

Although officials have not released an official cause of the largest fire, the Smokehouse Creek fire that scorched more than 1 million acres and destroyed dozens of homes near the towns of Stinnett and Canadian, a lawsuit filed Friday in Hemphill County alleges a downed powerline near the town of Stinnett on Feb. 26 sparked the blaze.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of Stinnett homeowner Melanie McQuiddy against Xcel Energy Services Inc. and two other utilities, alleges the blaze started “when a



Annie Rice/Lubbock Avalanche-Journal via AP

Smoke is seen outside of Canadian, Texas, from the Smokehouse Creek Fire, Monday.

wooden pole defendants failed to properly inspect, maintain and replace, splintered and snapped off at its base.”

A spokesperson for Xcel said in a statement there is no official determination for the causes of any of the fires in the Texas Panhandle and that investigations are ongoing.

As of Sunday afternoon, the Smokehouse Creek fire was 15% contained and two other fires were at least 60% contained. Strong winds, dry grass and unseasonably warm temperatures fed the blazes.

A cluster of fires have burned across more than 1,900 square miles in rural areas surrounding Amarillo. The largest blaze, Smokehouse Creek, accounting for nearly

1,700 square miles, spilled into neighboring Oklahoma.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas on Sunday said the federal government has devoted funds, equipment and personnel to assist with battling the fires, but warned more extreme weather could be coming.

“More than a million acres have burned. And we are in winter, and this is the largest fire in Texas history,” Mayorkas said during a CNN interview. “We, as a country and as a world, have to be ready for the increasing effects of extreme weather caused by climate change. It’s a remarkable phenomenon, and it will manifest itself in the days to come, and we have to prepare for it now.”

## Contract Bridge

### A costly play

East dealer.

East-West vulnerable.

**NORTH**

♠ A J 4

♥ 9 8 3

♦ A J 9 5 2

♣ J 6

**WEST**

♠ 7 6 2

♥ J 6 4 2

♦ 7 4

♣ 10 8 5 3

**EAST**

♠ Q 10 9 8 3

♥ Q 7 5

♦ K 6

♣ A 7 2

**SOUTH**

♠ K 5

♥ A K 10

♦ Q 10 8 3

♣ K Q 9 4

The bidding:

East South West North

Pass 1 NT Pass 3 NT

Opening lead — seven of spades.

The opening lead is frequently the most important play of a hand, but unfortunately it is often only a shot in the dark. This is particularly true when the opening leader has no useful information from the bidding to guide him to the most effective lead.

West had little to go on in the present case and decided to try to find his partner’s best suit by leading a spade. This proved very successful when declarer, seizing the

opportunity for what looked like a free finesse, played the jack from dummy, covered by East with the queen.

Declarer took the king and tried a diamond finesse, losing to the king. East forced out the ace of spades, and South eventually went down one after East scored the ace of clubs as well as his remaining spades.

West’s shot-in-the-dark spade lead turned out very well, but only because declarer misplayed the hand. His play of the jack at trick one was clearly wrong, since it opened the door to defeat when he could have assured the contract simply by playing low from dummy.

Though he had no good reason to suspect a short-suit lead from West, South should have provided against that contingency by resisting the impulse to play the jack on the opening trick. He could then try the diamond finesse, not caring a tinker’s damn if it lost, since East would be unable to make a damaging return.

South could then force out the ace of clubs to guarantee at least 10 tricks and could do so without risking the contract. The “free finesse” thus wasn’t free at all. On the contrary, it proved very costly.

Tomorrow: The philosophy of defense.

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### HELP WANTED

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OCM BOCES has a need for a Director of Athletics to be located at the Section III Office, Brittonfield Park and the Main Campus. Successful candidate will be responsible for the administration of Section III and coordination with both Section and OCM BOCES leadership teams. Valid New York State Certificate of Advanced Studies is required. Applications accepted online only. Register and apply at: [www.olasjobs.org/central](http://www.olasjobs.org/central). For information, please visit our website at [www.ocmboces.org](http://www.ocmboces.org). EOE

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**Maintenance Technician**  
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[Jbfield@lafayetteschools.org](mailto:Jbfield@lafayetteschools.org)  
**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS**  
March 29, 2024  
or until position is filled  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**Cemetery Summer Helper Wanted**  
Village of McGraw  
Cemetery is looking to hire three (3) Part Time Summer Cemetery Helpers from 7-12 Monday thru Friday. Must be 18 years or older and must possess a current New York State Drivers license. All applications must be returned by April 1, 2024. Position starting around the middle of May to the middle of October weather permitting. Applications are available at the Village of McGraw Office, Cemetery Street.  
Village of McGraw Clerk  
Lori Aiken  
February 27, 2024

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST I**  
OCM BOCES has a need for an Itinerant Occupational Therapist I in district-based classrooms located throughout Onondaga County. Qualifications: Licensed and currently registered as an Occupational Therapist. Applications accepted online only. Register and apply at: [www.olasjobs.org/central](http://www.olasjobs.org/central). For more information regarding this vacancy please visit: [www.ocmboces.org](http://www.ocmboces.org) EOE

### HELP WANTED

NOW HIRING:  
Town of Lapeer highway department is seeking a full-time employee available immediately. Must have a clean Class A or B license and background check. Starting pay \$21.00 per hour plus benefits. Send resume to Town of Lapeer 2685 Clarks Corners Rd, Marathon, NY 13803. More info call 607-849-3808.

**Recreation Leaders Needed**  
The Village of McGraw is looking for a Recreation Leader and assistant Recreation leader for the 2024 Summer Program. Must be able to work well with children, able to create a schedule calendar of program events for each day. Able to schedule trips. The program will run for approximately 7 weeks, 5 days a week M-F, 9 AM - 4 PM. Applications are available at the Village of McGraw Office, Cemetery St. McGraw Applications must be submitted by April 1, 2024.  
Village of McGraw Clerk  
Lori Aiken  
February 27, 2024

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# They're TV's ghosts, networks somehow surviving with little reason to watch them

By DAVID BAUDER  
AP Media Writer

NEW YORK — The list of memorable characters and personalities who entered popular culture through cable television is long: Honey Boo Boo, Tony Soprano, Lizzie McGuire, Don Draper, Jon Stewart, Beavis and Butt-Head, Chip and Joanna Gaines, SpongeBob SquarePants.

Pick your own favorites. Chances are there won't be many more to join them.

Few cable and satellite networks are a force anymore, the byproduct of sudden changes in how people entertain themselves. Several have lost more than half their audiences in a decade. They've essentially become ghost networks, filling their schedules with reruns and barely trying to push toward anything new.

Says Doug Herzog, once an executive at Viacom who oversaw MTV, Comedy Central and other channels: "These networks, which really meant so much to the viewing public and generations that grew up with them, have kind of been left for dead."

As they fade, so are the communities they helped to create.

## WHAT HAS BEEN LOST?

Pockets of success remain, notably with lifestyle and news programming. And it's not like there's nothing to watch. You'll find more options on Netflix than a diner menu.

Yet something undeniably has been lost. Stewart's triumphant return to Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" this winter only begs the question: Did it really have to be this way?

Cable TV primarily took flight in the 1980s, breaking the iron grip of ABC, CBS and NBC. Essentially the first fragmentation of media, cable brought people with common interests together, says Eric Deggans, NPR television critic.

"People who were previously marginalized by the focus on mass culture suddenly got a voice and a connection with other people like them," Deggans says. "So young mu-



This undated image released by HBO shows the cast of the series, "The Sopranos," from left, Tony Sirico, Steve Van Zandt, James Gandolfini, Michael Imperioli and Vincent Pastore.

sic fans worldwide bonded over MTV, Black people and folks who love Black culture bonded over BET, middle-aged women bonded over Lifetime and fans of home remodeling convened around HGTV and old-school TLC.

Nickelodeon and Disney became de facto baby sitters. CNN, Fox News Channel and MSNBC changed the nation's political discourse. ESPN occupied sports fans. HBO and Showtime, and later networks like FX and AMC, offered edgier fare that broadcasters shied away from.

Networks were endlessly malleable, too. Once MTV recognized there wasn't much money in music videos — people would change channels when a song they didn't like came on — the network became a relentless arbiter of cool. Generations had their own touchstones in programs like "Punk'd," "The Osbournes" and "Total Request Live."

Now MTV is a ghost. Its average prime-time audience of 256,000 people in 2023 was down from 807,000 in 2014,

the Nielsen company said. One recent evening MTV aired reruns of "Ridiculousness" from 5 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

The general interest USA Network's nightly audience tumbled 69% in the same time span, and that was before January's announcement that viewer-magnet "WWE Raw" was switching to Netflix.

Without favorites like "The Walking Dead" or "Better Call Saul," AMC's prime-time viewership sunk 73%.

The Disney Channel, birthplace to young stars like Miley Cyrus, Hilary Duff and Selena Gomez, lost an astonishing 93% of its audience, from 1.96 million in 2014 to 132,000 last year.

TBS, TNT, History, Lifetime, FX, A&E, BET, E! Entertainment, Syfy, Comedy Central, VH1 and Discovery have all lost at least half of their 2014 audience.

For many, most of the schedules are big blocks of reruns: "Seinfeld" and "The Office" on Comedy Central, "The Big Bang Theory" and "Young Sheldon" on TBS. Tyler Perry

movies dominate. Cheap and cheesy nonfiction fills time: "90 Day Fiance," "Prison Brides," "Married at First Sight," "Contractand: Seized at the Border." That's not appointment TV. It's accidental. Ghosts.

## MAYBE THIS ROAD WAS INEVITABLE

With the explosion of Netflix, the giant companies that dominate the entertainment industry saw that as the future. To a large extent, they've concentrated time, energy and resources on these services, launching a competition that still hasn't shaken out — no one knows yet how many streaming services the market will support and which ones will survive.

Was the downfall of cable the inevitable result? "That's the gazillion-dollar question," Herzog says.

"The conglomerates, they definitely jumped the gun, I think, in shifting their assets away from the cable networks and left them as zombies," says Michael Schneider, television editor at Variety. "They're paying the price."

# Dave Bautista wants to be an actor, rather than a big movie star

By ADAM GRAHAM  
The Detroit News  
(TNS)

On screen he's the center of attention, a hulking mass with a bodybuilder's physique and an air of cool mystique surrounding him. He can play quiet and brooding or loud and boisterous, and either way it's difficult to take your eyes off of whatever he's doing when the camera's rolling.

But off screen, Dave Bautista says he's unassuming and even a bit shy, and he says it's been a long road learning to accept himself and feel at home in his own (heavily inked) skin.

"There was a time in my life, like kinda into my 40s, when I just became comfortable with being uncomfortable," says Bautista, on the phone last month from the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. He's sheepish enough that even saying the name of the hotel out loud produces a slightly embarrassed chuckle from the star.

But he's earned his right to be there, as well as his status as the thinking man's pro wrestler-turned-actor of choice. Over the last decade, he's built up an impressive resume of roles, working with directors such as Sam Mendes (the 2015 James Bond adventure "Spectre"), Zack Snyder ("Army of the Dead"), M. Night Shyamalan ("Knock at the Cabin") and Rian Johnson ("Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery").

He also played Drax the Destroyer in three "Guardians of

the Galaxy" movies (as well as a pair of "Avengers" titles), and now he's on screen, along with seemingly one-third of Hollywood, in the blockbuster-igniting "Dune: Part Two." It's his third pairing with A-list director Denis Villeneuve, whom he credits with elevating his acting chops, as well as his ambitions.

"I originally started pursuing acting because I realized what a bad actor I was," says Bautista, who turned 55 in January.

He got into it after kicking around World Wrestling Entertainment, where he wrestled as Batista, "The Animal," beginning in 2002.

He collected 10 championship titles during his time with WWE, but he had a ways to go before transitioning his in-ring accomplishments to big-screen success.

Early on in his acting career — he was still wrestling at the time — he appeared in a movie "strictly as a favor to a friend," he says, and the experience left such a bad taste in his mouth that he had to wash it out.

"I went and I did this film and I thought it was going to be easy, and as I was doing it, I was mortified at how bad I was," he says, without calling out the name of the production. "I was self-conscious, I was embarrassed, and I left that film feeling so unsatisfied that I wanted to prove it to myself that I could be better."

That began a long journey for Bautista, which continues to this day.

## LEGALS

**CORTLAND COUNTY NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**  
LML COATING, LLC Articles of Org. filed NY Sec. of State (SSNY) 1/22/24. Office in Cortland Co. SSNY design. agent of LLC whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 4113 Suarez Rd., Cincinnati, NY 13040, which is also the principal business location. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

**CORTLAND COUNTY NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**  
Notice of Formation of Viva M Fox, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 02/07/2024. 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 SSNY: 4232 Sweeney Road, Cortland, NY 13045. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

**CORTLAND COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION SUBJECT TO PERMISSIVE REFERENDUM TO USE RESERVE MONEY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Board of the Town of Truxton, at a regular meeting held on September 20, 2023, adopted a resolution subject to permissive referendum, the purpose of which is to use Reserve funds, not to exceed \$83,296.63 for the purchase of a 2024 Ford F-550 XL Regular Cab 4x4.

By the order of Truxton Town Board  
Lloyd Sutton, Supervisor  
February 21, 2024

**CITY OF CORTLAND BID NOTICE**  
The Cortland Housing Authority is accepting bids for the following:  
**ASBESTOS REMOVAL**  
for 2-one bedroom apartments in the city of Cortland. Specifications may be obtained from the Maintenance Office at 42 Church Street, Cortland, NY, or email lboyce@cortlandha.com to request a bid packet.  
**Bids are due back no later than 3:00 p.m. local time March 20, 2024.**  
Questions about the project may be directed to Ella M. Dilorio, Executive Director, at 607-753-1771, ext. 223. The owner accepts the right to accept or reject all bids and to waive any informalities in the bidding process. MBE/WBE/DBE/MWBE & Section # business are welcome.

**VILLAGE OF DERUYTER LEGAL NOTICE**  
NOTICE OF ELECTION  
The following is a true and exact list of candidates for offices to be filled in the Village of DeRuyter election to be held on  
March 19, 2024  
At the Fire House at  
1663 Cortland Street, DeRuyter,  
from Noon to 9:00 pm.  
Independent Nomination:  
  
Trustee (1)  
Two Year Term  
Heidi Foster  
757 Railroad Street  
DeRuyter, NY 13052  
  
Ardene Tiffany  
Village Clerk/Treas.

**CITY OF CORTLAND BID NOTICE**  
The Cortland Housing Authority is accepting bids for the following:  
**ASBESTOS AIR MONITORING**  
for 2-one bedroom apartments at 42 Church St. Specifications may be obtained from the Maintenance Office at 42 Church St., Cortland NY or email lboyce@cortlandha.com to submit your bid.  
**Bids are due back no later than 3:00 p.m. local time March 20, 2024.**  
Questions about the project may be directed to Ella M. Dilorio, Executive Director, at 607-753-1771, ext.223. The owner accepts the right to accept or reject all bids and to waive any informalities in the bidding process. MBE/WBE/DBE/MWBE & Section 3 business are welcome.

**CORTLAND COUNTY NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**  
THE VAULT GRAND VENUE ON MAIN LLC, Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 05/08/2023. Office loc: Cortland County, SSNY has been designated as agent upon whom process against the LLC may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: The LLC, 35 Main St, Cortland, NY 13045. Reg Agent: Carrie E. White, 35 Main St, Cortland, NY 13045. Purpose: Any Lawful Purpose.

**CITY OF CORTLAND NOTICE OF FORMATION OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY**  
Notice of Formation of CNY WEBS LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/30/2024. 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 CNY WEBS LLC, 12 Pearl Street Cortland, NY 13045. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

**CORTLAND COUNTY REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL LEGAL NOTICE**  
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that County of Cortland does hereby solicit sealed proposals for the **Shredding Services** in accordance with specifications on file in the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature.  
  
BIDS SHALL BE enclosed in a sealed envelope marked "REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - Shredding Services", and mailed or otherwise delivered to reach the Clerk of the Legislature, Cortland County Office Building, 60 Central Avenue, 3rd Floor, Room 306, Cortland, NY 13045 on or before 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 3, 2024. Any questions regarding the request for proposal shall be submitted in writing by no later than the close of business on March 27, 2024 in accordance with specifications on file in the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature. All bid materials, addendums and responses will be posted on the County website at: <http://nycortlandcounty.civicplus.com/Bids.aspx>.

All bids received will be publicly opened at 11:30 a.m., April 4, 2024 in Room 306 of the Cortland County Office Building. Bids must be submitted to the correct address to be accepted.  
  
The County of Cortland reserves the right to reject and or waive any and all proposals and to waive any irregularities in procedure.  
  
By the Order of the Cortland County Legislature.  
  
Savannah Hempstead  
Clerk of the Legislature  
Date: February 29, 2024

# An Oscars comeback? How the academy went global and found its footing again

By LINDSEY BAHR  
AP Film Writer

For a few years, the Oscars looked to be hanging on by a thread. Viewership was plummeting. The pandemic didn't help. And the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the organization behind Hollywood's biggest night, kept finding itself on the wrong side of the conversation, whether it be #OscarsSoWhite, envelope-gate, the blip that was the popular Oscar, the untelevised awards or the slap.

Then a funny thing happened: Interest started increasing both in and outside the academy. It seemed people were excited about the movies and, they hope, the Oscars again.

"It's been an amazing year for film in general," film academy CEO Bill Kramer said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "Our art form has never been more relevant."

The scope, and wide public embrace, of the 10 films nominated for the best picture prize this year are proof.

There is big studio fare, small intimate indies, two international films and two bilingual ones. And whether or not you think "Barbie" was snubbed in a few other categories, it still has people talking and debating what will happen at the 96th Oscars on March 10.

"There's a lot of great energy around the movies of 2023 and the show this year. So we're extremely hopeful and excited," Kramer said. "The show is shaping up to be remarkable."

Academy President Janet Yang chimed in that the "Barbie"-themed Jimmel Kimmel promo spot has over 35 million views, and the telecast is riding several years of ratings increases.

## A UNIFYING MOMENT

After some rough patches, the Oscars may have finally met the moment. But that comes as no surprise to the academy's leaders, who have been working behind the scenes to foster this kind of evolution as they approach their 100th year. Both Kramer and Yang, who assumed their positions in 2022, are looking at the organization as a global entity. They're not on the defensive



President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Janet Yang, left, and CEO of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Bill Kramer, pose for a portrait during the 96th Academy Awards Oscar nominees luncheon on Feb. 12, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California.

anymore, instead pushing toward the future.

"We're very unique in the sense that we represent all the disciplines of the industry. No other organization can say that," said Yang. "We feel like we are in a potentially strong leadership position to unify. ... We hear from members all the time 'How can we have more inter-branch meetings?' They just want to gather, and we can bring this."

Nearly a century ago, unification wasn't part of the plan. In fact, Louis B. Mayer got the idea to start the academy in part to counteract unionization efforts, under the pretense that it would help set standards. In reality, he envisioned the studio heads setting these standards with only their own interests in mind. Mayer's dream evaporated quickly, however, and by the 1930s, writers, actors and directors were all forming unions.

As proof of how far they've come, last year during the strikes, the academy took the initiative to host two member conversations about pressing topics: one about artificial intelligence and another about how the strikes were impacting members from tradi-

tionally marginalized communities.

"We felt that it was our responsibility," Kramer said. "And we are in a position to actually do this, to create a space for our members to have honest, safe conversations around these topics."

## A MORE DIVERSE ACADEMY...

The academy as a catalyst for change is not new: They have longstanding programs for helping emerging artists (Academy Gold, the Nicholl Fellowship in screenwriting and the Student Academy Awards among them). And its aggressive move to diversify its membership was in place before Yang and Kramer started, in response to #OscarsSoWhite and public exposes about its own ranks being largely older white men.

They've also taken more proactive steps in recent years to impact the industry they give awards to, including implementing the best picture inclusion standards that went into effect this year. Now there are more than 10,500 members in the academy, representing more than 75 countries.

Anthony Nese/HBO via AP