

LOCAL
Cortland County legislators are making progress on a new elevator for Dwyer Park and a bridge in Homer.



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SPORTS
While missing a key starter, Cortland girls basketball earned a 44-16 win over Mexico Tuesday.



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Cortland Standard

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2024 daily No. 27 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024 CORTLAND, N.Y.

City to reduce speed limit on Miller Street

Change to cope with traffic from drug treatment clinic

By JACK LAKOWSKY
Staff Reporter

jlakowsky@cortlandstandard.com
The Cortland Common Council voted Tuesday to reduce the speed limit on Miller Street to 25 mph from 30 mph, preparing for increased traffic from a methadone clinic to be created on nearby Euclid Avenue.
The vote was 6-1 with Alderperson Troy Beckwith (R-7th Ward) opposing. However, before the limit takes effect, the city will conduct a study to make sure the law causes no unreasonable changes to the area, Cortland Mayor Scott Steve said.
“That has to happen before the signs go up,” Steve said.
Beckwith said the logic didn’t add up, saying most people who use the clinic will walk or pay for a ride. Miller Street parallels Homer Avenue, on the edges of Wards 1 and 6.
“Nothing against the residents of Miller Street, but I can’t support this,” Beckwith said.
Steve said concerns about more cabs and rideshares are what compelled the city to move the ordinance ahead. The street also has a daycare

facility, Here We Grow.
After the vote, Steve said the city could look into what it would take to reduce speeds citywide, a likely intensive effort needing collaboration with the state. Cortland City Attorney A.J. Meldrim said streets exclusively under city jurisdiction need no state involvement.
Meldrim said Miller Street will be a good test for more reductions, whether comprehensive or piecemeal.
Steve said he’s making an effort to put electronic speed monitors on Miller as another enforcement tool.
Miller Street resident Kristie Rainbow spoke before the vote, saying she was grateful for the reduction but noticed one of the signs, still covered in black plastic, is behind a tree, due to be obscured when the tree blooms.
“That won’t do you any good,” Rainbow said.
Rainbow asked for more police presence and for more aggressive enforcement of parking laws.
Alderperson Seth Thompson (D-5th Ward) said more enforcement and higher fines would be further speeding deterrents.
“I know of one town in Central New York where there’s always a cop in their village, and you better slow down,” Thompson said. “It’s legendary.”

Under these hunting contest bans, prizes for kills are no more

By ALEX BROWN
Stateline.org (TNS)

Last weekend, 50 hunters gathered in New York’s Mohawk Valley to take aim at the local coyotes. A hunting club offered prizes for the largest male and female carcasses, paying out \$400 to the winning contestants.
The event was among the last sanctioned animal hunting contests in the state, following lawmakers’ passage of a ban on such events that will take effect later this year.
“There’s growing awareness of these contests and the damage they’re causing ecologically,” said Renee Seacor, carnivore conservation director with Project Coyote, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting carnivore species. “Public attitudes on wildlife

management are shifting.”
New York became the 10th state to ban or limit wildlife hunting contests with the December enactment of the new law. Oregon’s wildlife agency also imposed a ban last year on such events on state lands. So far, the bans have largely been passed in Democratic-led states. In some states, including Nevada, wildlife commissions — which are often stacked with hunting proponents — have rejected petitions to ban the practice.
So far this year, Illinois and New Jersey are following New York’s lead by seeking to ban contests through legislation rather than state agency rules. The Humane Society of the

See HUNTING, page 6



Patrick T. Fallon/AFP/Getty Images/TNS

A coyote stands on a snowbank near the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area after record snowfall from winter storms in Mammoth Lakes, California on April 6, 2023.

Daughter pleads not guilty to mother’s murder in Solon

Bail continued at \$50,000 cash, \$1 million bond

By JACK LAKOWSKY
Staff Reporter

jlakowsky@cortlandstandard.com
Ariela Thran pleaded not guilty Tuesday to murdering her mother, whom she’s accused of beating to death in December or early January at her mother’s Solon home.
Thran, of Granby, is accused of second-degree murder. Cortland County Public Defender Kevin Jones entered the plea on her behalf at her arraignment in Cortland County Court.
Jones and Cortland County District Attorney Patrick Perfetti both said they still have much evidence and other information to share, including forensics from state investigators.
Court documents read Thran struck Patricia Allison Halverson multiple times on the head with an undetermined object.
She was arrested Jan. 6. Court documents conflict on the date of the incident at 4425 Wildman Road — on or about Dec. 27 or on or about Jan. 3.
Court documents show the Cortland County grand jury found sufficient evidence to try Thran, alleging she intentionally beat Halverson to death on Halverson’s Solon property, a 66-acre former Methodist camp at the end of Wildman Road. The lot includes several buildings; a main lodge with a three-sided floor-to-ceiling fireplace, 11 dorm-style rooms, multiple restrooms, a chapel, a recreation center, a pole barn, an amphitheater with a stage and several on-site cabins, reports the website Estate.com.
Jones requested that Cortland County judge David Alexander halve Thran’s bail, now \$50,000 cash or \$1 million bond, saying his client has no criminal history and is a low flight risk.
“The defendant is charged with a



Jack Lakowsky/Staff Reporter

Ariela Thran, seated, accused of killing her mother in Solon, holds back tears as court officers escort her out of her arraignment Tuesday. She pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder.

class A violent felony,” Perfetti told the judge. “Her financial resources are part and parcel of the decedent’s estate.”
Perfetti said due to the nature of the charges, Thran’s bail should be kept the

same. When he said this Thran began to cry, court officers bringing her tissues. Alexander continued the bail, telling Jones he may reduce it in the future after seeing more information.

Trump not immune from prosecution in ‘20 election case, appeals court says

By ERIC TUCKER
and ALANNA DURKIN
RICHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals panel ruled Tuesday that Donald Trump can face trial on charges that he plotted to overturn the results of the 2020 election, sharply rejecting the former president’s claims that he is immune from prosecution while setting the stage for additional challenges that could further delay the case.
The ruling is significant not only for its stark repudiation of Trump’s novel immunity claims but also because it breathes life back into a landmark prosecution that had been effectively frozen for weeks as the court considered the appeal. Yet the one-month gap between when the court heard arguments and issued its ruling has already created uncertainty about the timing of a trial in a calendar-jammed election year, with the judge overseeing the case last week canceling the initial March 4 date. Trump’s

team vowed to appeal, which could postpone the case by weeks or months — particularly if the Supreme Court agrees to take it up. The appeals panel, which included two appointees by President Joe Biden and one Republican-appointed judge, gave Trump a week to ask the Supreme Court to get involved.
The eventual trial date carries enormous political ramifications, with special counsel Jack Smith’s team hoping to prosecute Trump this year and the Republican front-runner seeking to delay it until after the November election. If Trump were to defeat Biden, he could presumably try to use his position as head of the executive branch to order a new attorney general to dismiss the federal cases he faces or potentially could seek a pardon for himself.
Tuesday’s unanimous ruling is the second time since

December that judges have held that Trump can be prosecuted for actions undertaken while in the White House and in the run-up to Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol.
The opinion, which had been expected given the skepticism with which the panel greeted the Trump team’s arguments, was unsparing in its repudiation of Trump’s novel claim that former presidents enjoy absolute immunity for actions that fall within their official job duties.
“For the purpose of this criminal case, former President Trump has become citizen Trump, with all of the defenses of any other criminal defendant,” the court wrote. “But any executive immunity that may have protected him while he served as President no longer protects him against this prosecution.”

The judges said the public interest in criminal accountability “outweighs the potential risks of chilling Presidential action,” turning aside the claim that a president has “unbounded authority to commit crimes” that would prevent the recognition of election results or violate the rights of citizens to vote.
“We cannot accept that the office of the Presidency places its former occupants above the law for all time thereafter,” the judges wrote.
A Trump spokesman said Tuesday that Trump would appeal the ruling “in order to safeguard the Presidency and the Constitution.” And in a post on Truth Social after the ruling was issued, Trump insisted that a president “must have Full Immunity in order to properly function and do what has to be done for the good of our Country.”
The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit took center stage in the immunity dispute after

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WEATHER



Partly sunny
Tomorrow’s Weather:
High near 47

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ONLINE



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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.



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Weather

Local

Rest of today: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 28. Light south wind.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 47.

Thursday night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 34.

Friday: A chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 49. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

Friday night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 38. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

Extended

Saturday: A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 48. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Saturday night: A chance of showers before 1 a.m. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 34. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40.

Sunday night: A chance of rain and snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Skies Today

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Sunset today 5:24 p.m.

Sunrise tomorrow 7:12 a.m.

Normal high temperature 30

Normal low temperature 13

Average temperature 22

New moon Feb. 9

City Snowfall

Feb. 5-6 None

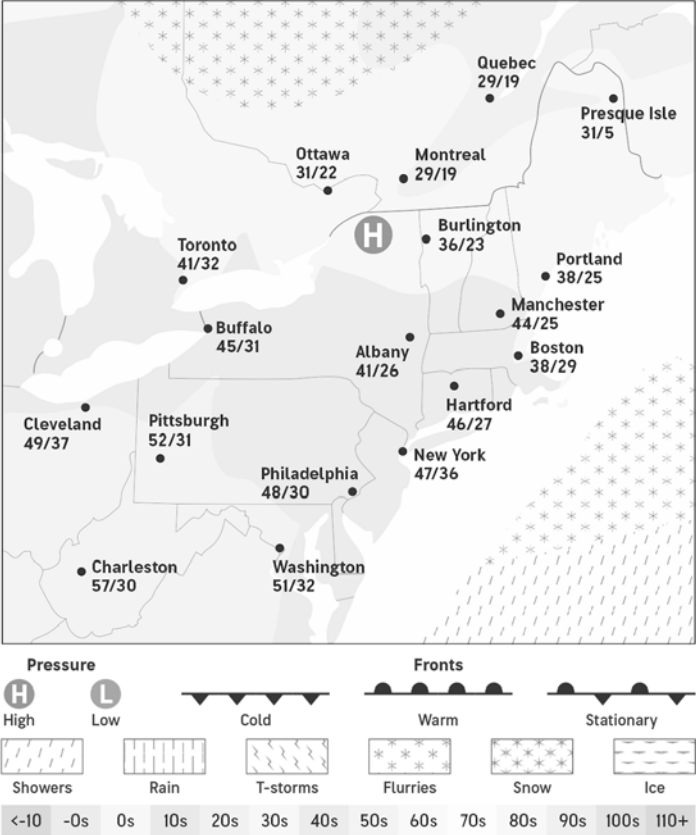
Season to date 16.5 inches

Precipitation

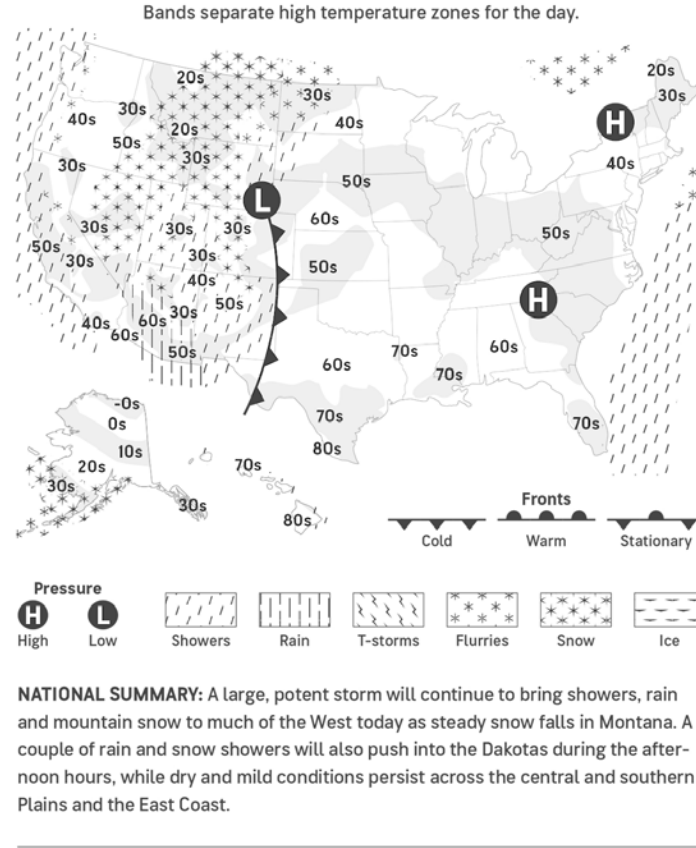
Feb. 5-6 None

Month to date 0.01 inches

Forecast for Wednesday, February 7, 2024



Forecast for Wednesday, February 7, 2024



NATIONAL SUMMARY: A large, potent storm will continue to bring showers, rain and mountain snow to much of the West today as steady snow falls in Montana. A couple of rain and snow showers will also push into the Dakotas during the afternoon hours, while dry and mild conditions persist across the central and southern Plains and the East Coast.

Lottery Winners

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

Numbers: Midday: 5-7-0, Evening: 6-0-5; **WinFour:** Midday: 7-0-6-3, Evening: 3-2-9-0; **Pick 10:** 5-11-14-16-18-21-26-39-41-44-46-50-51-55-58-62-63-64-75-79; **Take Five:** Midday: 8-11-33-35-38, Evening: 2-7-9-19-26; **Cash4Life:** 2-3-13-22-23, Cash Ball: 4, **Mega Millions:** 2-10-31-44-57, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 4

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.

Cortland Standard

Evan C. GeibelPublisher and Editor

Todd R. McAdamManaging Editor

Patti Walts Business Manager

Ray Marsh Operations/Plant Manager

Mindy Lawrence..... Advertising & Marketing Manager

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VILLAGE OF DERUYTER:

The Village of DeRuyter is committed to providing Fair Housing within constitutional limitations to all Village residents. The Federal Fair Housing Law prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status. If any individual or family feels that they have been discriminated against in obtaining suitable housing of their choice or if anyone requires additional information regarding Fair Housing, they can contact the Village Mayor, Fair Housing Officer, at (315) 852-9625, Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

Records

Toby Keith, country singer-songwriter, dies at 62 after stomach cancer diagnosis

By KRISTIN M. HALL
AP Entertainment Writer

Toby Keith, a hit country crafter of pro-American anthems who both riled up critics and was loved by millions of fans, has died. He was 62.

The “Should’ve Been a Cowboy” singer-songwriter, who had stomach cancer, died peacefully Monday surrounded by his family, according to a statement posted on the country singer’s website. “He fought his fight with grace and courage,” the statement said. He announced his cancer diagnosis in 2022.

The 6-foot-4 singer broke out in the country boom years of the 1990s, writing songs that fans loved to hear. Over his career he publicly clashed with other celebrities and journalists and often pushed back against record executives who wanted to smooth his rough edges.

He was known for his overt patriotism on post 9/11 songs like “Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue,” and boisterous barroom tunes like “I Love This Bar” and “Red Solo Cup.” He had a powerful booming voice, a tongue-in-cheek sense of humor and range that carried love songs as well as drinking songs.

Among his 20 No. 1 Billboard hits were “How Do You Like Me Now?!,” “As Good As I Once Was,” “My List” and “Beer for My Horses,” a duet with Willie Nelson. His influences were other working class songwriters like Merle Haggard and he tallied more than 60 singles on the Hot Country chart over his career.

Throughout the cancer treatments, Keith continued to per-



Keith

form, most recently playing in Las Vegas in December. He also performed on the People’s Choice Country Awards in 2023 as he sang his song “Don’t Let the Old Man In.”

“Cancer is a roller coaster,” he told KWTW during an interview aired last month. “You just sit here and wait on it to go away. It might never go away.”

Keith worked as a roughneck in the oil fields of Oklahoma as a young man, then played semi-pro football before launching his career as a singer.

“I write about life, and I sing about life, and I don’t overanalyze things,” Keith told The Associated Press in 2001, following the success of his song “I’m Just Talking About Tonight.”

Keith learned good lessons

in the booming oil fields, which toughened him up, but also showed him the value of money.

“The money to be made was unbelievable,” Keith told the AP in 1996. “I came out of high school in 1980 and they gave me this job December of 1979, \$50,000 a year. I was 18 years old.”

But the domestic oil field industry collapsed and Keith had not saved. “It about broke us,” he said. “So I just learned. I’ve taken care of my money this time.”

He spent a couple seasons as a defensive end for the Oklahoma City Drillers. But he found consistent money playing music with his band throughout the red dirt roadhouse circuit in Oklahoma and Texas.

“All through this whole thing the only constant thing we had was music,” he said.

Obituaries

John E. Cogswell

John E. Cogswell, born in Cortland, NY, on August 24, 1948, passed away January 24, 2024, at the age of 75. An educator, author/illustrator, and professional gold- and silver-smith for over 40 years, John leaves behind friends, family, colleagues, and the innumerable students, whose lives he enriched with his generosity and kindness.

He is predeceased by his beloved wife of more than 35 years, Barbara Chapman, his parents, Edward G and Mary Cogswell, and is survived by his brother James Cogswell, of Taylor, NY; sister, Karen Stevens (husband Duane) of Christiansburgh, VA; brother, Steven Cogswell (wife Nancy) of Las Vegas, NV; brother, and Michael Cogswell (wife Deanna) of Constantia, NY, as well as several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

John was known for his dry sense of humor and gentleness, his unwavering dedication to preserving the craft of metal-smithing through education, and for his insistence that chalkboards are superior educational tools to whiteboards.

John found a love of art from his father, who built bodies for Brockway Trucks as a welder and sheet metalworker but who kept work and home separate. In his second semester at college, John saw a basic jewelry making class listed and immediately signed up for it.



He later discovered that the teacher had, herself, only a two-day weekend workshop to learn what she was to teach, but her honest, enthusiastic and humorous approach were enough; John fell in love with the materials, tools, and processes. A guest instructor introduced John to forging metal and he soon found himself driving several hours each way, every Saturday, to study with him. John converted the attic of an old, rented farmhouse into a modest studio. It was unheated, and in winter, so cold his pickle (a solution used to clean heat-darkened metal) would often be frozen, come morning, but he generated enough heat hammering (and with his forge) to keep warm.

A local watchmaker saw John’s work and offered him a job, and he would soon begin teaching for the first time, sponsored by a local arts and crafts association. A voracious reader, John soaked up every bit of metalworking knowledge he could on his own, until eventually deciding to go back to school, attending SUNY New Paltz. While there, John was invited to assist one of his professors, becoming Kurt Matzdorf’s protégé and studio assistant. He began getting invitations to conduct workshops elsewhere. A natural-born educator, John believed teaching was a way to give back, in thanks for what others had taught him, and encouraged his own students to do the same.

In addition to teaching at institutions such as the Parsons School of Design, the Pratt Institute, Hofstra University, and SUNY, John would go on to teach hundreds of workshops around the country throughout his long career, sharing his vast experience with thousands of students. His book “Creative Stonesetting” (Brynmorgen Press), is considered a seminal work in the field, inspiring metalsmiths around the world.

John’s professional work focused on hand-forged and fabricated jewelry, silverware, and hollowware. He was frequently commissioned to craft ceremonial objects for churches and synagogues, such as communion cups, candelabras, hanukki-ahs and tzedakah boxes. He delighted in how malleable metal could be and had an immaculate attention to detail, taking particular pride in subtleties, such as how a properly polished cup would bring a warm glow to sacramental wine.

John was an inductee of the National Metalsmiths Hall of Fame (housed at The Arts Center in St. Petersburg, Florida), and was a Touchstone Center for Crafts 2007 Artist of the Year. His art has appeared in numerous exhibitions and publications, and is included in many public and private collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the Jewish Museum (New York), and the Ackland Museum of Art (Chapel Hill).

John and his wife Barbara were cat lovers, caring for many feral and rescue cats through the years. They were generous supporters of the arts and of education. John served on the boards of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) and Brookfield Craft Center (CT), and on the advisory board of Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts (TN). He held a key role at the 92nd Street Y (NY) as their Director of Jewelry and Metalsmithing, for nearly two decades.

No public services will be held. The family encourages donations in his memory to any of the non-profit arts and education institutions with which John was involved, including Haystack Mountain School (ME), Brookfield Craft Center (CT), Touchstone Center for the Crafts (PA), Penland School (NC), Florida Society of Goldsmiths (FL), and Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts (TN), or to your local catch-neuter-and-release program for cats.

Bradley ‘Brad’ Griffin

Bradley “Brad” Griffin, 91, of Groton, passed away peacefully at home on February 5, 2024.

Brad was born October 3rd, 1932, in Ossining, NY to Anne Marie LaPeer and Walter Jacob Griffin. He graduated from Ossining High School in June 1950. He entered active Army service that included 13 months in Korea. His last assignment was as crew chief of the 8057th Air Ground Liaison Unit. He was later commissioned and transferred to serve as an officer of the United States Naval Reserve.

Before finishing college, he found employment as a janitor, laborer, foreman, bank bill collector, and as a guard at Sing Sing prison.

He attended NYS Teachers College and transferred to Cornell University, from which he graduated in 1961. He began his career with the NYS Conservation Department in the Adirondacks and retired as Regional Supervisor in Central New York with the NYS DEC.

His memberships included The Wildlife Society, The American Fisheries Society and the American Wildlife Research Foundation. He was a Freemason, a member of Westchester Lodge 180 where his father and grandfather belonged. He had been a member of the Lansing Lions and a coach in the Lansing Recreation program. He served on the Park Commission and the Town of Lansing Planning Board.

He had been a competitive rifle and pistol shooter since in Junior Rifle Club and was a past president of The Interstate Pistol Association and had competed at the National Matches. As a pilot, he had been a member of the East Hill Flying Club and the Airplane Owners and Pilots Association. He had been a member of the Met and Tri-Cities Opera Guilds. He was a life member of the Lansing Historical Association and served as Secretary. He presented programs of history locally and authored articles and was the co-author of “Voices from Connecticut Hill” with Brumsted and Fischers, published by Cornell Press.

A resident of Lansing since 1970, he was the owner of Highland Harbor Farm whose activities included a Christmas tree plantation and a licensed shooting preserve.

He is survived by his wife D. Juanita Ostrander Griffin; his sons, Pieter Griffin (Meredith) of Hastings, NE and Daniel Griffin (Robyn) of Interlaken, NY; several grandchildren; stepchildren: Donald (Marcia) Slocum, Richard (Kim) Slocum, David (Sarah) Slocum, Dale (Paula) Slocum, Juanita Drake (Matt Bevier); and several additional grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Brad was predeceased in death by his first wife Judith Lutes.

Calling hours will be Monday, February 12th, 2024 at the Shurtleff Funeral Home, 103 Lincoln Avenue, Groton, NY, from 12:00 to 2:00 PM, with a funeral service to follow at 2:00 PM. Interment, with military honors, will follow at Groton Rural Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial donation can be made to the Friends of the Groton Public Library, 112 East Cortland St. Groton, NY 13073. Condolences may be shared at www.shurtleffservices.com.

Death Notices

STRICKLAND — James W. Strickland, 83, of Dryden, died on Feb. 6, 2024, at the Groton Community Health Care Center, Groton. In keeping with his wishes, there will be no services. Arrangements have been entrusted to the Marathon Memorial Chapel, Marathon.

Loren (Smiley) and Karen Prince

of Bridgeport (formerly Tully) will celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary on February 8, 2024.

They were married at the Homer Baptist Church in Homer, NY. They celebrated with a cake and coffee reception before heading to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon.

Smiley, the cookie man, retired from driving bus for Tully Schools and delivering Archway cookies. Karen retired from Dermody, Burke and Brown, CPA office as an office manager. She also was the church organist at Tully United Community Church.

In retirement, they enjoy spending time with friends and family, golfing, traveling, volunteering and watching sporting events.

Their children are Krista (Robert) Ventrone of Bridgeport and David (Susan) Prince of Tully. They are so proud of their grandchildren, Danielle (Jacob) Greiner, Mackenzie (Garrett) Halko and Joshua Prince along with a great-grandson.

Kevin Conlon
City Editor
news@cortlandstandard.com

Racker to host autism-friendly build your own marble run

By MARGARET MELLOTT
Staff Reporter

mmellott@cortlandstandard.com
Click, clack and the marble rolls down the track — maybe a race to the finish line, or maybe down a funnel — who’s to say? Make it your own.

Racker, which offers supports to people with disabilities and their families, will host its first build your own marble run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at 882 Route 13, Cortlandville. A second session will be offered 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday at

3226 Wilkins Road, Ithaca. The free event is a part of Racker’s Autism Lending Library.

“Not only will the event be an inventive way to play, but also will help foster problem-solving skills and creative solution making,” said Lyndsey Paulin, family support services contract manager and housing navigator for Racker.

“The mission of Racker’s Autism Lending Library and Sensory Rooms are not only to offer a sensory space and the ability to borrow items, but also to host

a variety of activities, events and trainings that help support families of all kinds with socializing, learning, and having fun together with other families,” she added.

About 1 in 36 children — 2.78% — have autism, reports the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It’s also four times more common among boys than among girls.

“The reason why activities like this one are important for those with autism is for them to have a chance to engage in

If you go

WHAT: Build your own marble run
WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday
WHERE: The Saturday session is at 882 Route 13, Cortlandville; the Sunday session is at 3226 Wilkins Road, Ithaca

what is called ‘sensory play,’” said Sally Colletti, president of Advocates for Autism, a non-profit aimed at creating social opportunities and offering guid-

ance to people with autism and their families in the Southern Tier. “That is, where the sensory system of touch, sight and sound are activated within a controlled environment such as this event organized by Racker centers. When the sensory system is activated at the same time as the use of prompts for language, children are more apt to have meaningful engagement with their peers.”

Paulin said the organization saw an increase of patrons coping with loneliness during the

pandemic, but hopes events like this will encourage people to get back out again. Rates of loneliness rose to 21% from 6% pre-COVID, reports a 2021 study published by the National Institute of Health.

“During the pandemic, we saw more than ever the impact loneliness and isolation can have on the families we support and we are hopeful to offer something for everyone this year as we reintroduce our newly revamped programs and reimagined spaces,” Paulin said.

Around the towns

Cortland ReUse reopens

Thrift store Cortland ReUse quietly reopened for business Friday, marking the end of a 3 1/2-month move from Cortlandville to Cortland, Cortland ReUse Board President John Zelson said.

“We’re very excited to do a fun grand opening with food and music, but that won’t be for a while,” Zelson said Tuesday.

For now, Cortland ReUse isn’t accepting donations until it clears space in its new store at 186 Homer Ave. The one on McLean Road in Cortlandville closed in October, and the new site was supposed to open in November, but the building had plumbing issues. Zelson hoped to open by Christmas, but that was thwarted too. All that’s in the way now are some inspections.

“We’re seeing a lot of our regulars,” Zelson said. “It’s really great seeing people participate in ReUse, keeping stuff out of the landfill and getting our neighbors something useful.”

— Jack Lakowsky

McGraw church plans pancake breakfast

McGraw United Methodist Church will have a pancake breakfast from 7 to 11 a.m. Feb. 17 at the church, 20 E. Main St. The menu includes pancakes with maple syrup, eggs, bacon, sausage, coffee, tea and juice. The breakfast costs \$10 for adults, \$9 for seniors, \$5 for kids 6 to 12 and free for children 5 and under.

The event supports church activities, including its food pantry, Halloween trunk-or-treat and AA meetings.

Tompkins County

seeks county attorney

Tompkins County is accepting applications until Feb. 25 for county attorney, who provides legal advice to the County Legislature, administration and various departments and advisory boards.

“A successful candidate will be able to provide advice and guidance to the Legislature on important and wide-ranging topics,” said Legislature Chair Dan Klein (D-Danby). “This role is a unique opportunity to be a leader while practicing several areas of law. As I mentioned in this year’s State of the County address, hiring a great county attorney is a top priority for this year.”

The County Attorney directs and manages all aspects of the County Attorney’s office including case referrals, assignments, and staffing. The County Attorney obtains outside counsel and resources in the event that additional expertise is needed on a topic. The County Attorney’s work helps shape the legal landscape of Tompkins County and contributes to the wider community as well as the government organization. For details, go to www.tompkinscivilservice.org/civilservice/vacancies.

NY state announces free fishing days

New York will have six free fishing days in 2024, the governor announced this week.

They will be:

Feb. 17 and 18, Presidents’ Day weekend.

June 29 and 30.

Sept. 28, National Hunting and Fishing Day.

Nov. 11, Veterans Day.

On those days, the state’s fishing license requirement for freshwater fishing will be waived.

“The Free Fishing Days program provides a great opportunity for aspiring anglers to try freshwater fishing for the first time or former anglers to reconnect with one of America’s favorite pastimes,” Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a release. “New York is blessed with an abundance of freshwater lakes, ponds, streams and rivers, allowing for memorable fishing experiences that increase tourism and benefit the economy.”

The Free Fishing Days program began in 1991 to give people who might not fish a chance to try the sport at no cost, to introduce people to a new hobby, and to encourage people to support conservation by buying a fishing license.



Margaret Mellott/Staff Reporter

The East River Crossing bridge over the East Branch of the Tioughnioga River in Homer is set to be replaced as a steel, two-lane bridge. Ninety-five percent of the cost would be covered by state and federal funding.

Legislators mull new Dwyer Park elevator, Homer bridge

By MARGARET MELLOTT
Staff Reporter

mmellott@cortlandstandard.com

Cortland County legislators considered two quotes Tuesday to replace the Dwyer Park pavilion elevator, however, legislators delayed a decision to first answer questions.

Also, legislators recommended a second supplemental agreement with the state to replace the East River Crossing bridge in Homer.

The Buildings & Grounds Committee discussed two bids to replace the 20-year-old Dwyer Park pavilion elevator, both from companies based in Syracuse — Syracuse Elevator Co., charging \$77,200, and Accessibility Solutions, Inc., charging \$73,854.

Cortland Repertory Theatre leases the space for its summer programming, and while there are no immediate concerns, CRT wouldn’t be able to operate without the elevator.

“If you look at the current size, and

look at the equipment, and you look at everything — they’re both comparable to each other,” said Buildings and Grounds Superintendent Allen Pankhurst. “The only difference is Syracuse Elevator wanted us to do all the demo and remodeling, putting it back together again. The Accessibility Solutions — they’ll do all of it.”

Syracuse Elevator would charge an additional \$8,750 for the demolition and remodel.

Legislators approved in September spending up to \$100,000 to replace the elevator.

However, legislators still had questions about the bids and decided to wait on a recommendation.

“We’ll check into their service record and review ... and if proprietary equipment is used in either,” said committee Chair Paul Heider (R-Cuyler, Solon, Truxton).

Heider said he hopes to consider selecting a bid in a special session

before the Feb. 22 legislature session.

Also Tuesday, the Highway Committee recommended, 5-0, spending \$111,000 to acquire rights of way to allow the county to replace a bridge on East River Crossing over the East Branch of the Tioughnioga River in Homer. Legislators Cathy Bischoff (D-Cortland) and Keith VanGorder (R-Cortland) were absent.

“New York state was originally going to do the right of way acquisition, but they didn’t really have time to put their schedule,” said Highway Superintendent Charlie Sudbrink.

The bridge, built in 1913, will be replaced after it was found in poor structural condition when it was inspected last September, state Department of Transportation data show. The new bridge will be steel and have two lanes.

Ninety-five percent of the cost would be funded by the state and federal governments.

DeRuyter Central School honor rolls

Here are the honor rolls for the 20-week marking period at DeRuyter Central School:

GRADE 6

Principal’s List: T. Winters, O. Randall, C. Gallerrani, M. Hawk, I. Scott, T. Richardson, M. Darrow, L. Near, B. Carrigan, M. Pforter

High Honor: C. Collier, M. Escobar-Perez, J. Gallerrani, K. Darrow, A. Pforter, M. Cox, L. Barber, M. Allen III, T. Doubleday

Honor Roll: I. Ralicki

GRADE 7

Principal’s List: L.

Stone-Smith, B. Townsend
High Honor: M. Sartwell, M. Alicky, R. Bartholomew, B. Walden, L. mead, A. Ramirez
Honor Roll: G. Denkenberger, K. Smith

GRADE 8

Principal’s List: A. Whalen, E. Bragg, R. Amidon, I. Gallerani, M. Murphy

High Honor: D. Dunagan, N. Kent, H. Henry, A. Stanton, M. Shoemaker

Honor Roll: M. Weeks

GRADE 9

Principal’s List: C. Prince, E. Haggart, C. Mil-

lett, J. Shutts
High Honor: H. Schlafer, A. Mead, D. Vicari, S. Pforter, E. Hayes, H. Near, G. Coon
Honor Roll: C. Rowe, C. Judson, C. Moffett, M. Phillips

GRADE 10

Principal’s List: J. Hanafan, R. Richardson, J. Millett, D. Whalen, A. Rodriguez, S. Compton

High Honor: M. Amidon, E. Chapman, J. Baxter, L. Marshall, G. Barber, M. Woods

Honor Roll: A. Russell, B. Hurlbert, H. Sabin

GRADE 11

Principal’s List: J. Haggart, C. Wilken, D. Baker

High Honor: C. Greene, P. Near, C. Bowman, D. Baker, G. Miller

Honor Roll: B. Burdick, J. Prince, O. Tytler, I. Pagano, S. Rodriguez, M. Russell, B. Murphy, B. Sperat, M. Eldridge, M. Hathaway

GRADE 12

High Honor: S. Nicholas, L. Escobar-Perez, N. Buchovecky, L. Chisholm, W. Pforter, C. Marshall

Honor Roll: J. Bragg III, A. Leonardo, M. Marshall, N. Whitt

Police/fire

One injured by gunfire in Homer

State police are investigating an incident Monday evening in which a person was shot in the leg in Homer, troopers said Tuesday.

Police were called about 6:25 p.m. to 2632 Route 13, Homer, for reports of shots fired. Troopers and Cortland County sheriff’s officers arrived to find one person with gunshot wounds to the leg.

He was taken to Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, state police said.

The gun was secured and the incident remains under investigation.

Police plan patrols for Super Bowl

Cortland County police agencies will take part in a high-visibility campaign this weekend in connection with the Super Bowl.

Police plan extra patrols from Friday through Sunday to reduce impaired driving, the Cortland County Sheriff’s Office announced.

Drivers can reduce the risk by downloading a state-created application at www.stopdwi.org/mobileapp.

Fabius man charged with felony mischief

Accused: Travis J. Eldridge, 39, of Fabius

Charges: Third-degree criminal mischief, a felony; second-degree criminal trespass, a misdemeanor; second-degree harassment, a violation

Details: Eldridge unlawfully entered a South Avenue home about 11:45 p.m. Dec. 29, broke a window and physically harassed a 30-year-old man inside, Cortland police said. He was arrested about 5:26 p.m. Saturday.

Legal Actions: Eldridge was arraigned in Cortland City Court and released without bail pending an appearance Feb. 21 in city court.

City man charged with mischief, endangering

Accused: Zachariah A. Maxwell, 25, of 44 Rickard St., apartment H16, Cortland

Charges: Fourth-degree criminal mischief, endangering the welfare of a child, misdemeanors

Details: During a domestic dispute about 6:55 p.m. Sunday, Maxwell kicked and broke a television in the presence of two children under 9, Cortland police said.

Legal Actions: Maxwell was arraigned in Cortland City Court and released without bail pending an appearance Feb. 21 in city court.

Man found with fentanyl on Main St.

Accused: Andrew M. Mott, 28, homeless

Charges: Seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a misdemeanor

Details: Mott was arrested about 12:28 a.m. Saturday outside 76 Main St., Cortland, on a bench warrant, Cortland police said. Police said they found him with a small quantity of fentanyl.

Legal Actions: Mott was arraigned in Cortland City Court and released without bail pending an appearance Feb. 21 in city court.

City man charged with death threat

Accused: Michael L. Williams, 24, of 76 Clinton Ave. Apt. 12, Cortland

Charges: Second-degree aggravated harassment, a misdemeanor

Details: Williams threatened to kill a 19-year-old woman he knew about 9:42 p.m. Friday while on a FaceTime call, Cortland police said.

Legal Actions: Williams was arraigned in Cortland City Court and released without bail pending an appearance Feb. 24 in city court.

Here’s why these home cooks love meal kits

By SHARYN JACKSON
Star Tribune (TNS)

MINNEAPOLIS — Jessica Bergman lives alone, but she doesn’t cook alone. There is an imaginary friend in her kitchen, one who has strong opinions, it would seem, about her cooking habits.

“She doesn’t like to use two pans,” said Bergman, as she pulled down a skillet that hangs over her stove in her northeast Minneapolis apartment.

“She expects you to have different kinds of vinegar,” she said, while whisking a sauce.

And, as Bergman followed instructions to roll up an omelet and slice it into thin strips, “This is something pretty she likes to do.”

That friend, in theory, is Martha Stewart. Bergman regularly cooks with meal kits from Marley Spoon, a brand Stewart endorses.

“I just call it Martha Stewart’s meal kit,” said Bergman, who works in corporate learning and development. “It sounds like Martha’s delivering it to you.”

Of course, Stewart isn’t really there, but with her advice on the recipe cards and her face plastered on advertisements, she helps distinguish this meal delivery service from the dozens that have sprung up in the past few years.

It’s been more than a decade since Blue Apron and HelloFresh first popularized the idea of meal kits. They all tend to operate the same way: Answer questions about your food preferences, make the first recurring payment, choose your meals, and get weekly shipments of food.

Those early brands remain some of the biggest names in an increasingly crowded field, where they’ve been joined by Marley Spoon, Gobble, Green Chef and more. And those are just the meal kits where you dice, chop and assemble everything yourself.

As consumers seek more ease, speed and convenience, some of these services streamline the cooking process by sending premade sauces, cooked grains and casserole dishes ready to pop in the oven. Others ship fully prepared meals right to your door.

“There are so many options,” said Wendy Foty of Minnetonka.

Foty began ordering prepared meals from CookUnity shortly before a knee replacement that largely kept her out of the kitchen for a couple of months. She

and her husband, Tom, were both impressed with the chef-designed meals.

“It tastes like it’s home-cooked,” Tom Foty said. “And not so much like a TV dinner.”

The pandemic helped create a new market for prepared food in a class far beyond Lean Cuisine. When restaurants first shut down, they cleared out their larders by selling raw ingredients and semi-prepared foods like sauces and salad dressings to customers. Even after they reopened, some restaurants found that their customers had formed new eating habits.

“Once we went back to indoor seating, that takeout service was still present,” said Jeff Lakatos, the former executive chef of ie-Italian Eatery in Minneapolis.

When he moved on to start his own business, he decided to give customers more of what they wanted: restaurant-quality food, easy and fast. He launched Earnest Provisions a little more than a year ago, and sells two customizable meals per week for delivery or pickup in Mendota Heights. The only work on the part of the customer is warming it up in the oven.

“There’s no cooking and there’s no chopping. Everything is just ready to go,” Lakatos said.

In Bergman’s kitchen, she was preparing stir-fried curry rice noodles for lunch. She trimmed the ends off snow peas, and chopped Chinese broccoli, an ingredient she was using for the first time.

Bergman likes the act of cooking, especially with a teacher like Stewart.

“There are some techniques I’ve learned that I maybe would have thought was fancy, even just zesting lemon and lime,” she said.

Bergman has used a variety of meal delivery services for about seven years. So far, this one is her favorite. The recipes are novel, she said, and the food feels healthy and veggie-packed. The meal kits cut back on food waste and save her money, too.

“I’m a single person. I have so much food waste if I’m having to buy full portions of everything,” she said. “And for me, with the time savings of not having to go run to the store, the cost difference is negligible.”

Plus, the kits come with their own famous cooking coach.

“I do feel like Martha’s in my kitchen.”



Anthony Souffle/Minneapolis Star Tribune/TNS

Jessica Bergman, a longtime Marley Spoon user, prepares one of their meal kits of stir-fried curry rice noodles with Chinese broccoli and peanuts for lunch as she worked from home.



Photo provided by Wikimedia Commons

Carrot cake is simple to make, either with or without raisins, and surprisingly good for you, as cakes go.

Dining with memories: With this cake, I thee wed

By TODD R. McADAM
Managing Editor

tmcadam@cortlandstandard.com

Chefs often say that we eat first with our eyes, a reminder that appearance matters. I disagree; I think we eat first with our memories.

The date was July 6, 1990. It had been a hot, busy day, turning into a steamy, busier night. The wedding was the next day; I was making the cake.

My fiancée and I didn’t want the standard white cake with a fondant frosting. That’s like eating sawdust with a plastic coating. We wanted something delicious, distinctive, perhaps even a little quirky — like us. We wanted to have our cake, and eat it, too.

We decided on carrot cake. Easy enough to make, nearly bullet-proof in fact. It’s sweet, succulent and packed with vitamin A, so surprisingly good for you.

I used three heart-shaped pans that I haven’t used since, although they remain in my cupboard. My sister-in-law agreed to decorate. The evening



was adorned with a small flower display rather than some plastic thingamabob. People cleaned their plates.

Fast forward 33 years, six months three weeks and an odd number of days. My wife and I harvested a cornucopia of carrots: 30, maybe 40 pounds. Much of the harvest is still sitting in a cooler in the garage. We’ve had carrot soup, glazed carrots, mashed carrots, steamed carrots, roasted carrots. I’m out of ideas.

Then I think about that night, and I pull out my recipe book. I use my better cake pans, but the result is as good, or better, than even my memory can make that cake of a lifetime ago.

The cake reminds me of why I married my wife. Both are sweet, succulent and surprisingly good for me.

Valentine’s Day is coming. Maybe I’ll make it again with the old pans.

CARROT CAKE

Beat together:

5 eggs
2 tsp. baking soda
1 1/2 cups honey
1 cup vegetable oil

Sift together and add:

3 cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
3/4 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. allspice
2 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp. ground cloves

Fold in:

3 cups shredded carrots
1 tsp. vanilla
A pinch of salt

Place batter in 9- by 13-inch pan, greased and floured. Bake at 325 degrees for 40 minutes or until a toothpick poked into the center comes out clean.

Dukkah: one versatile condiment

By MEREDITH DEEDS
Star Tribune (TNS)

I was introduced to dukkah, an Egyptian nut and spice blend, at a culinary conference years ago, and quickly became obsessed with this unique condiment and its warm spices. So much so that it’s become a pantry staple that finds its way into all kinds of dishes.

Although there are many variations, the most commonly used ingredients in dukkah are sesame seeds, coriander, cumin and coarsely ground nuts.

It’s most frequently used in Egypt alongside extra-virgin olive oil as a

dip for warm bread, but dukkah is one of the most versatile condiments you’ll ever have in your kitchen. It can be used as a topping for hummus, yogurt dips or tahini sauce. Dukkah can be sprinkled over scrambled eggs, a green salad or avocado toast. It can be a crunchy coating for fish, chicken or beef.

I love to brush lamb chops with pomegranate molasses and coat them in dukkah before roasting.

Dukkah also can be sprinkled over the top of roasted vegetables, think thick wedges of butternut squash

brushed with a mixture of olive oil and honey and roasted until lightly browned and tender.

The wedges are arranged on a bed of arugula, sprinkled with a pistachio dukkah and drizzled with a little more olive oil and honey. Lemon wedges are served alongside it for a bright, acidic note that highlights the flavor of both the squash and the dukkah.

It’s a sophisticated side dish that’s easy to make, especially if you already have the dukkah on hand. If you don’t, you’ll want to seek out this one-of-a-kind spice blend.

Family friends poach vacation rental off Southern coast

DEAR AMY: For over a decade my family and another very close family of friends, “The Smiths,” have vacationed together on our favorite island off the Southern coast.

Our children view them as family and adore the parents and their children (who are exactly the same age as ours).

The Smiths are much more affluent than we, and owned their own home on the island for many years while we rented a house nearby.

Last year they sold their home (for an enormous profit, I might add), so now they must also rent a home for our beloved trip.

Imagine our surprise when we learned this year that they booked the very same rental house we have used for several years for themselves.

This is incredibly hurtful, but especially because we have been in a very tumultuous financial situation and depended on the significant “repeat renter discount” we received from the

unit owners to rent their home.

While we obviously understand that we have zero right to control a rental unit, we are extremely sad and frankly heartbroken that our friends seemed to have no sense of this possibly being hurtful or undermining toward us.

We are unsure of how to move forward.

Should we say something about our hurt feelings just to clear the air?

Should we say nothing and take the hint that maybe they don’t feel the same way toward us as we do about them and not go on the trip this year?

Or should we just act like nothing’s wrong and pay for a more expensive rental and let it go?

— Sad and Confused in CT

DEAR SAD AND CONFUSED: It is almost impossible to imagine that these savvy homeowners on a vacation island are unaware of how attached annual renters

become to their usual rental property. Regular renters are often prized by landlords, who offer discounts to good and reliable annual tenants as both rewards and incentives. Oftentimes, landlords will give their “regulars” a right of first refusal before they open up their property to new tenants; I wonder why your landlord didn’t do this for you.

So yes, “The Smiths” choice to snap up this rental for themselves leaves you scrambling (choice island rentals often book up many months in advance of the season).

You could respond to this

by saying, quite frankly, “You guys snapped up the house we’ve been renting, and now we’re scrambling to find a new rental for our time on the island. I’m not sure we’ll be able to find a place we can afford, so if you know of anything, please let us know. We’re going to have to leave our plans up in the air for now. This is a bummer for us, and we’re all disappointed.”

Ask
Amy

By Amy
Dickinson

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The Chicago Tribune



I was thrilled to finally get

an offer and accepted the position. I’m supposed to start in two weeks. Well, as luck (and Karma) would have it, I’ve also just received a solid offer from another firm, and this one pays more and is probably a better fit for me. This brings on an ethical dilemma. Do I have to go with the first offer, or can I decline it, even after accepting it?

— Blessed with Choices

DEAR BLESSED: Congratulations, and welcome to the “when it rains, it pours” club.

This situation surely happens with some regularity, as candidates pursue many job leads at once.

You are obligated to work in the position that is best suited for you. Not only is this best for you, but I doubt any potential employer really wants to be your second and lesser-paid choice.

Accept the second-offered position, and once your acceptance is verified and you have a solid start-date, contact the

initial company to tell them that you are going to renege on their offer. Apologize for the inconvenience to them, but say honestly that you feel obligated to accept the offer that is best suited for you.

— Happy Ex

DEAR AMY: “Stressed” objected to her ex-husband attending games and school events for their children during her custodial time. Thank you for pointing out that, “Your co-parenting plan is not equivalent to having a restraining order.” Both parents should work as a team, no matter what.

— Happy Ex

DEAR HAPPY EX: Some estranged parents cannot (and should not) share space. But those who can absolutely should.

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

Our Opinion

Seeing ‘those people’

Making the homeless people sheltering at the Cortland Free Library invisible would be so, so easy. And for far too many Cortland residents, it would be desirable. David Thompson has shown we cannot.

Thompson was once homeless, and during that period he created pieces of truth and beauty he would leave wherever he was: the library, a convenience store, a coffee shop. Now that he’s been through rehab and is getting back on his feet, his art now adorns the gallery at the library, showing that what lies in one’s soul is not always reflected in the baggage one must carry.

People complain about homeless people congregating at the library, but perhaps they should be grateful. Cortland Free Library, and Director Jen Graney, offer everyone a chance to sit, rest a bit, perhaps contemplate some art, read a book or use a computer. They offer safety. They offer dignity.

The library does this under the auspices of creating a “third space,” a place that’s neither work nor home where anyone can feel welcome. And for people with neither work, nor home, the space the library provides is a life-saver.

But we do hear the complaints. Some are afraid, as if bags of belongings will leap up and punch them. Some are concerned that noise might be elevated. Some don’t like the sharps disposal units in the bathroom, although that seems a safer alternative for the entire community than to simply let a needle decorate the floor, the sidewalk outside or anyplace else in Cortland.

We suspect people are more uncomfortable than afraid, although we do concede that police responded to the library 134 times in 2023, up from 32 calls in 2022. Only one of those calls was for an incidence of violence — someone displaying a knife. The vast majority of calls were noise complaints, or welfare checks. People are uncomfortable because anyone with compassion doesn’t like facing someone else in distress, particularly when one can do little about it.

We can almost sympathize with patrons for whom seeing homeless people might be disturbing; we can almost understand why they might want homeless people to be somewhere else, or invisible. We’ve seen that tendency with so many disenfranchised populations: people of color; ethnic or religious minorities; queer people; people with disabilities.

One can almost hear the complaint: “Yes, *those people* have a right to exist, but couldn’t they exist somewhere else, where I don’t have to see them?”

That’s why we’re grateful for Graney and the library. Through a simple act of compassion, opening their doors, they show the rest of the greater Cortland area what their neighbors must endure, and how we might better respond.

The problems that culminate in homelessness are complex. Addiction is a part, so perhaps is mental illness. Just as the problems are complex, so are the solutions. Not everyone can abide by rules of a homeless shelter. Even a “low-threshold” shelter, with few rules, would treat only the symptoms, and even that for just a few of the people who need help. To address homelessness, the community must consider how to reduce addiction, how to provide opportunity, how to support people who might need a little more support than others.

That takes time to create, deep consideration of what resources are available and hard decisions about what priorities to set.

But each person without a home, particularly without shelter of any kind, has an individual story to tell. Not all are addicted; not all are ill.

But like Thompson, they all have a sense of beauty and a dream of a better time — as everyone does. Perhaps that’s why people are uncomfortable: They see the dreams stymied, the beauty dulled and they see how very similar homeless people — *those people* — are to them.

Go to the library. Support it. Check out a book or DVD; take part in a program — the kids’ story hour the other day was fun to watch. Look at Thompson’s art in the gallery and understand that all those people in the library — homeless or housed, child or adult, patron or employee — have inside them the same beauty that Thompson does.

And understand: *Those people* are you.

Your Opinion

Private route won’t fix Social Security

To the Editor:

In her Jan. 31 opinion column (“A broken socialist dinosaur”), Star Parker quotes a 2023 Social Security press release which states that its funds will be depleted in 2034 and retiree benefits will drop. Parker then goes on to solve the problem with a completely unrealistic, naive plan — to make automatic Social Security payroll deductions optional and let people choose between Social Security and private retirement plans.

The premise is that private plans could invest in stocks and make more money and “build wealth.” In particular, she states, this would particularly benefit low income workers, including many Black workers.

Ironically, appearing in the same issue of the *Cortland Standard* is the article, “NYC joins pledge to erase billions in medical debt.” According to the article, “an estimated 100 million people in the US carry some form of health care debt.” Further, “working-class families have to choose between paying their medical bills or some of the basic essentials that they need to go through life.” So, Ms. Parker, do you really think that a family in such a situation is going to put money in their retirement account instead of paying for their immediate essential needs?

Social Security was first enacted as a safety net by Franklin Roosevelt in 1935 after the Great Depression. Benefits are now weighted so that those persons with lower past earnings receive a proportionately higher benefit than those with higher earnings. That would generally not be permissible in private insurance plans.

While it is true that our Social Security system is running out of funds, Parker’s plan is useless. An increase in payroll tax of 2 percent would be sufficient to allow full payment of the scheduled benefits for the next 75 years.

To Parker, any government involvement in people’s lives is socialism and should be eliminated. How simplistic!

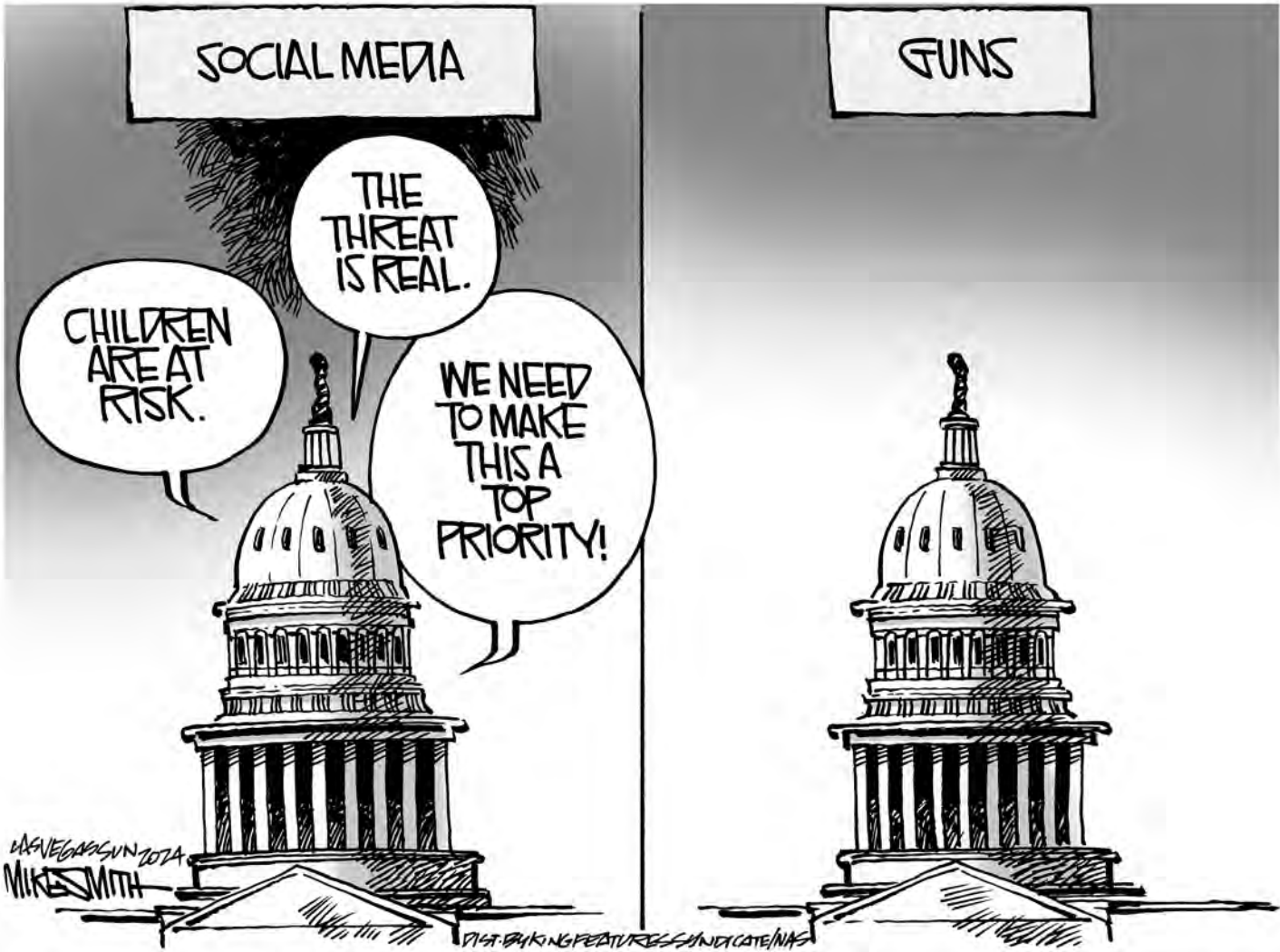
Jim Weiss
Freetown

Good Old Days

February 7, 1974

Cortland Senior High School PTA members who are parents of senior class students have been working on the Fashion Show and Card Party to raise money for scholarships for this year’s graduating seniors.

To put on the event, scheduled for Feb. 14 in the school gymnasium, and to support the scholarship fund, the committee has received help and cooperation from many businesses in the community, such as Burgess Clothing Store, The Bridal Room, The Rose Company, Sarvay Shoes and Harts and Flowers.



Just what we need, another wall

Jim
Hightower



we should wall off America’s Canadian border.

Meanwhile, nearly all residents living along that 5,500-mile boundary fear the political wall-mongers more than the imaginary threat of foreigners surging across illegally. “People have always been coming through Canada,” says a clerk at a general store in far-north New Hampshire. Scoffing at the silly political hype, she says: “I don’t think the residents are really worried.”

But Chicken-Little politicians won’t be shooed off by reality. After all, they still have the east, west and gulf coasts to shut off — so expect them to propose razor wire for the entire U.S. shoreline. Their ridiculousness makes Fromholz’s satire seem rational!

The shameful greed of the Solano County gold rush

Farming can be a deeply satisfying life; you’re connected directly to nature, you are your own boss, and you do work that’s real, benefitting humanity.

But then there are the pests — such as invasive bugs, monopolistic profiteers ... and a new, exceptionally destructive plague: billionaires. Yes, flocks of predatory ultra-billionaires, wanting not just to gouge farmers but to take away their farms.

The crassest example of this land grab is happening now in Solano County, California, a bucolic agricultural area just north of San Francisco. A gaggle of narcissistic Silicon Valley tech titans with maximum bank accounts and minimal eth-

ics has arrogantly (and surreptitiously) been spending nearly a billion dollars in an investment hustle to buy out and pave over every farm in the county.

Led by a former Wall Street huckster literally known as “Golden Boy,” the titans pose as altruistic futurists intending to turn this rural county into a magical technetronic haven of urban affluence and sophistication. Agriculture, they say, is the low-yield economy of yesterday, wasting valuable real estate on farming. So, farmers must sell out and get out of the way, allowing so these capitalist visionaries to grow a new “Mega-City of the Future.”

But not everyone in Solano was charmed, with many refusing to sell to Golden Boy. So, flush with self-entitlement, the Silicon Valley Money Lords are trying to muscle the uppity rural holdouts by suing them for — get this — refusing to sell their farms! The lawsuit is BS, of course, but it’s meant to crush the farmers with legal fees.

Altruistic visionaries? In a note soliciting others to invest in this thuggish thievery, one of the billionaires bluntly touted the syndicate’s real motivation, gushing that the Solano land grab can be spectacularly profitable for investors.

there is a corresponding responsibility. The universal rights the founders of our nation claimed in our Declaration of Independence have corresponding universal responsibilities.

We must remember the quote attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, “America is great because America is good. If America ever stops being good, it will stop being great.”

This does not mean that our nation should take on the impossible task of being the world’s policeman.

But as we saw, and too soon have forgotten, on the horrible day on Sept. 11, 2001, there are evil people in this world hostile to us who celebrate death to advance their own power.

Israelis saw it in the vicious Hamas attack last Oct. 7.

When those who love to kill to advance their own power see Americans retreat, when they see demonstrations at America’s leading universities celebrating terrorism, who condemn those in our country and abroad who live free and responsible lives, so we encourage and empower evil.

As good retreats, evil advances. It is a natural truth.

Let’s not forget what is written at the memorial to the Korean War in Washington, D.C. “Freedom is not free.”

Freedom is not free

Star
Parker



of military power by branches of service from “very weak” to “very strong.”

The results: Army, “marginal”; Navy, “weak”; Air Force, “very weak”; Marine Corps, “strong.”

The report summarizes saying “In the aggregate, the United States’ military posture must be rated as ‘weak.’ ... As currently postured, the U.S. military is at significant risk of not being able to defend America’s vital national interests with assurance.”

We look to the Middle East now and see increased aggression from proxies of Iran.

Three U.S. Army reserve soldiers were killed in Jordan by a drone attributed to an Iran-backed militia in Iraq. As the daughter of an Air Force retiree, I find this particularly emotionally painful.

Ships are being attacked in the Gulf of Aden area by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

And there was the horrible, savage attack on Israeli civilians on Oct. 7 by Iran-supported Hamas.

A backdrop to all of this is the conflict raging in Ukraine, the result of aggression by Russia.

The headline is that we have enemies, and these enemies are energized when they perceive the United States as weak and confused.

There is a lot of rhetoric now about so-called “globalization” and “endless wars.”

Some call for a retreat inward by our nation and want to label international engagement as not “conservative.”

But it is just the opposite.

A conservative worldview recognizes there is truth and that for every right we claim

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.

TRUMP—
continued from page 1

the Supreme Court in December said it was at least temporarily staying out, rejecting a request from Smith’s team to take up the matter quickly and issue a speedy ruling. But the high court could yet decide to act on a Trump appeal.

There is no timetable for the Supreme Court to act, but the justices are likely to seek Smith’s input before deciding whether to keep the legal rulings against the former president in place. If the court declines to consider the appeal, U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan would be able to restart the trial proceedings.

If on the other hand the Supreme Court accedes to Trump’s request, any timetable it establishes would determine how much longer the trial might be delayed. If the court grants Trump’s request without speeding up the appeals process, Trump would likely have until early May before he would need to file his full appeal. But the justices could set much quicker deadlines for reaching a final decision. The Supreme Court has previously held that presidents are immune from civil liability for official acts.

House vote to impeach Homeland Security
Sec. Mayorkas fails, thwarted by defections

By LISA MASCARO
AP Correspondent

WASHINGTON — In a dramatic setback, House Republicans failed Tuesday to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, forced to shelve a high-profile priority — for now — after a few GOP lawmakers refused to go along with the party’s plan.

The stunning roll call fell just a single vote short of impeaching Mayorkas, stalling the Republicans’ drive to punish the Biden administration over its handling of the U.S.-Mexico border. With Democrats united against the charges, the Republicans needed almost every vote from their slim majority to approve the articles of impeachment.

A noisy, rowdy scene erupted on the House floor as the vote was tied for several tense minutes, 215-215. Several Republican lawmakers — led by the impeachment’s chief sponsor, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia — surrounded one of the holdouts, Wisconsin Republican Mike Gallagher, who



AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough, File
Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas testifies during a hearing on threats to the homeland, Oct. 31, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

refused to change his vote.

With the tally stuck, Democrats shouted for the gavel to close out the vote.

“Frustrated,” said Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, “but we’ll see it

In the end, three Republicans opposed the impeachment, and a fourth Republican switched his vote so the measure could be revisited. The final tally was 214-216.

The outcome was another dismal result for the House Republicans who have repeatedly been unable to use their majority power to accomplish political goals, or even to keep up with the basics of governing.

Johnson, who could afford only a few defections from his ranks, had said earlier he had personally spoken to Gallagher and another GOP holdout, acknowledging the “heavy, heavy” vote as he sought their support.

“It’s an extreme measure,” said Johnson, R-La. “But extreme times call for extreme measures.”

Not since 1876 has a Cabinet secretary faced impeachment charges and it’s the first time a sitting secretary is being impeached — 148 years ago, Secretary of War William Belknap resigned just before the vote.

The impeachment charges

against Mayorkas come as border security is fast becoming a top political issue in the 2024 election, a particularly potent line of attack being leveled at President Joe Biden by Republicans, led by the party’s front-runner for the presidential nomination, Donald Trump.

Record numbers of people have been arriving at the southern border, many fleeing countries around the world, in what Mayorkas calls an era of global migration. Many migrants are claiming asylum and being conditionally released into the U.S., arriving in cities that are under-equipped to provide housing and other aid while they await judicial proceedings which can take years to determine whether they may remain.

The House Democrats united against the two articles of impeachment against Mayorkas, calling the proceedings a sham designed to please Trump, charges that do not rise to the Constitution’s bar of treason, bribery or “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

HUNTING

continued from page 1

United States estimates that such contests kill more than 60,000 animals every year.

In addition to coyotes, hunting contests have targeted bobcats, foxes, crows, squirrels and many other animals that lack the strict regulations applied to traditional game animals such as deer and elk.

Advocates of the bans say the contests are pointless killing sprees fueled by bloodlust and cash, based on outdated perceptions that some species — primarily coyotes — are “nuisance” animals.

But some hunters fear the bans are part of a broader effort to crack down on hunting opportunities. Steven Rinella, a hunting advocate renowned for his “MeatEater” TV show and podcast, noted that contests must fall within existing rules set by wildlife managers.

“Any of the individuals who are participating in these contests could at any time be out doing the exact same practice,” he said in an interview. “To target the competitive derby component in this is basically just saying, ‘I disapprove of hunting, and this is a thing I can go after and win.’”

Brian Gray, president of the Mohawk Valley Coon and Cat Club, said contests such as the

one his hunting club held last weekend help sustain the organization’s membership.

He intends to continue holding contests once the ban takes effect, organizing by word of mouth to avoid state enforcement “unless someone tattles.” If challenged, Gray said, he intends to relabel the event a “photography contest,” with prizes for the best photos of dead coyotes instead of for the carcasses themselves.

“Some of our guys have \$6,000 scopes on their rifles, and they’re never going to get to use them for anything else,” he said. “This club has been in my family since the ‘40s, and I don’t want to lose it.”

COYOTES UNDER FIRE

For much of America’s history, predator animals such as coyotes and wolves were viewed as troublesome varmints and subjected to state-sponsored extermination campaigns. While this practice cleared vast landscapes of wolves, grizzly bears and other animals, coyotes only became more abundant.

Coyotes respond to hunting pressure by dispersing and birthing larger litters, as author and historian Dan Flores describes in his book “Coyote America.” While coyotes once lived only in the arid West, the efforts to eradicate them have

driven them to every corner of the North American continent. They’ve filled the ecological niches left vacant in places where wolves and cougars were killed off, and they’ve learned how to thrive in cities, with abundant prey of rats and mice.

“The American public has long regarded this animal as something like a cockroach with fur,” Flores said in an interview. “But our attempts to wipe them out triggered an evolutionary response from them to scatter and spread.”

Wildlife experts say efforts to protect livestock and pets by shooting coyotes only causes more breeding from surviving animals — which results in coyotes that are less schooled about avoiding conflict with humans.

“There’s the suggestion that these animals are really bad for us, but you can’t shoot your way out of that,” said Barbara Baker, chair of the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission, which outlawed hunting contests in 2020.

Hunting advocates counter that the species’ resilience proves coyotes can be hunted sustainably.

Gray, president of the hunting club in New York, blamed coyotes for killing livestock and pets in Mohawk Valley, but said there has been no decline in those attacks following hunt-

ing contests that killed scores of coyotes. He asserted residents should be allowed to fight back.

In many states, even those that have banned contests, hunters can shoot as many coyotes as they please with few restrictions on seasons or weaponry.

A GROWING MOVEMENT

California became the first state to ban hunting contests in 2014, following a vote from state regulators.

“Most ethical hunters object to these contests,” said Mike Sutton, who was serving as president of the California Fish and Game Commission at the time. “They’re inconsistent with our current understanding of predator ecology, and they give hunters a bad name.”

Tony Wasley serves as president of the Wildlife Management Institute, a conservation group with roots in the hunting community, and holds leadership roles in several hunting-related organizations. He supported an effort to ban hunting contests when he served as director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife in 2021.

In testimony before the Nevada Wildlife Commission, he noted that the agency’s role is to recruit more hunters, who supply much of the agency’s budget through license fees. That task, he said, is made difficult

when images of mass slaughter circulated on social media tarnish their public image.

“I fear what indiscriminate killing says about hunters or the ethics of hunting more broadly,” he said in an interview. “To verminize every coyote and say that [killing it] is some benefit to another species would be difficult to substantiate.”

Despite Wasley’s support, the proposal to ban hunting contests was rejected by the agency’s commission, which by law is made up predominantly of hunters and anglers.

Tommy Caviglia, who was the commission’s vice chair at the time, argued that few members of the public are even aware of the contests, the Nevada Current reported, saying the proposal was driven by the “anti-hunting side of the world.”

While some individual hunters have spoken in favor of the contest bans, organized sporting groups have largely remained silent or opposed them as a “slippery slope” to further hunting limitations.

“Hunting is already highly regulated, and people don’t understand the amount of nuance that there is,” said Torin Miller, senior director of policy with the National Deer Association, a nonprofit that advocates for wildlife habitat and hunting.

“All of these contests have to occur within the bounds of seasons and bag limits that agencies have put in place.”

Miller said that contest bans should be decided by wildlife agencies, not legislators.

STATE BANS

In December, New York became the fourth state to enact a ban through legislation, following Maryland, New Mexico and Vermont.

The bill passed 88-53 in the New York Assembly, and 46-15 in the Senate.

“This does not serve a wildlife management purpose,” said Assemblymember Deborah Glick, the Democrat who sponsored the bill. “There were hunters who felt it gave them a black mark and distorted what people thought of hunters.”

Some lawmakers who opposed the bill said the ban illustrates a growing urban vs. rural divide.

“It fails to understand and simply ignores the impact on the heritage and traditions of many rural upstate communities, farmers, and local environments and economies,” said Republican state Sen. Tom O’Mara, according to The Press & Sun-Bulletin.

The New York bill followed an agency decision in Oregon to ban contests on state lands.

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Strike averted as Nevada union settles before Super Bowl week

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A union representing hospital-ity workers says it has reached a tentative agreement with six more hotel-casinos in downtown Las Vegas and called off a strike deadline for another.

The agreements averted a Monday morning walkout as the city kicked off Super Bowl week.

The Culinary Workers Union announced Saturday that it had reached a tentative five-year contract with the Golden Nugget, Binion's, Four Queens, Fremont and Main Street that covers about 1,000 workers.

The union reached a tentative agreement Sunday with Downtown Grand, which represents about 200 workers.

The culinary and an associated bartenders union are being given more time to reach an agreement with Virgin Las Vegas, an off-Strip resort.

In a statement, Culinary Union Secretary-Treasurer Ted Pappageorge said that a pact is expected "in the coming weeks."

The Las Vegas Strip's three largest employers — MGM Resorts International, Caesar Entertainment and Wynn Resorts — reached deals late last year with the union that covered 40,000 members, narrowly averting a historic strike.



AP Photo/John Locher, file

Members of the Culinary Workers Union rally along the Las Vegas Strip, Aug. 10, 2023, in Las Vegas.

The union then turned its attention to winning the same contract terms for workers at other hotel-casinos in Las Vegas.

Since early January, the union had settled negotiations with most of those properties including Circus Circus, Sahara Las Vegas, the Strat, Circa Re-

sort and downtown's El Cortez.

But after hitting a snag in negotiations with some of the remaining casinos, the union announced last week that it would go on strike if tentative contracts weren't in place by 5 a.m. Monday.

The NFL's 58th championship game is expected to bring

some 330,000 people to Las Vegas this week, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

The Culinary Union is the largest in Nevada with about 60,000 members statewide. It negotiates on behalf of its members for five-year contracts.

Supplier finds another problem with Boeing 737 Max fuselages

By DAVID KOENIG
AP Airlines Writer

Boeing discovered another problem in some of its 737 Max fuselages that may delay deliveries of about 50 planes in the latest quality gaffe to plague the giant aircraft manufacturer.

Boing said late Sunday that an employee of a supplier alerted managers about improperly drilled holes. The head of Boeing's commercial airplanes division said some planes that have not yet been delivered to airlines will need to be reworked, but he said the issue did not affect the safety of Max jetliners that are already flying.

The revelation of new quality issues involving Boeing planes came as another leading airline executive took aim at the manufacturer.

The president of Emirates, a major international airline based in Dubai, told the Financial Times he has seen "progressive decline" in Boeing standards, which he blames on management mistakes — including putting financial performance over engineering excellence.

"They have got to instill this safety culture which is second to none," Tim Clark told the newspaper. "They've got to get their manufacturing processes under review so there are no corners cut, etc. I'm sure (Boeing CEO) Dave Calhoun and Stan Deal (chief of Boeing's commercial-airplanes division) are on that ... this is the last chance saloon."

Clark is the latest industry executive to criticize Boeing, adding to pressure on Calhoun, who became CEO after Dennis Muilenburg was fired during the fallout from two deadly crashes involving Max 8 planes. In all, 346 people were killed.

The latest quality issue involves two holes that were incorrectly drilled in the window frames of some Max jets. The problem was reported by Spirit



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File

A Boeing 737 Max jet prepares to land at Boeing Field following a test flight in Seattle, Sept. 30, 2020.

AeroSystems, a major supplier that provides Boeing with fuselages for the Max.

"While this potential condition is not an immediate safety issue and all 737s can continue operating safely, we currently believe we will have to perform rework on about 50 undelivered planes," Deal said in a letter to employees.

Boeing and Spirit AeroSystems are facing intense scrutiny over the quality of their work after an Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9 was forced to make an emergency landing on Jan. 5 when a panel called a door plug blew out of the side of the plane shortly after takeoff from Portland, Oregon.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the accident, while the Federal Aviation Administration investigates whether Boeing and its suppliers followed quality-control procedures.

The NTSB is expected to issue a preliminary report on the Alaska Airlines blowout this week.

Shares of the The Boeing Co., already down 20% this year, slipped another 2% in midday trading Monday.

Problems with Boeing jets have opened a potential rift with some of its biggest customers. United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby said last month that the carrier will consider alternative aircraft in the future, and Alaska Airlines CEO Ben Minicucci said, "I am more than frustrated and disappointed. I am angry."

Alaska and United Airlines are the only two U.S. carriers flying the Max 9. They reported finding loose hardware in door plugs of other planes they inspected after the accident. The FAA grounded all Max 9s in the U.S. the day after the blowout. Two weeks later, the agency approved the inspection and maintenance process to return the planes to flying.

By Monday, 94% of the Alaska and United Max 9 had been inspected and cleared to return to service, according to the FAA.

The FAA's deputy associate administrator for aviation safety, Jodi Baker, said Monday that the FAA has stepped up oversight of Boeing's 737 factory in Renton, Washington. She said the FAA is in the early stages of updating its procedures, including doing more "surveillance"

of factory workers instead of relying on "audits" of the manufacturer's work.

"We can actually talk to employees and figure out what is motivating them, what are they concerned about," Baker told reporters, "and that allows us to get a better sense of the safety culture actually at the employee level."

The accident on the Alaska Max 9 is already affecting Boeing in other ways.

The Arlington, Virginia-based company said last week it was withdrawing a request for a safety exemption for a new, smaller model of the Max. Boeing had asked the FAA last year to let it begin deliveries of Max 7s before the company redesigned an anti-ice system that in some conditions can cause overheating of engine inlets, which could cause them to break off during flight.

The FAA has ordered Boeing to limit production of 737s to 38 per month until the regulator is satisfied that quality concerns are being met. Boeing had hoped to boost production to 42 per month this year — generating cash and meeting demand from airlines for new planes.

McDonald's: Growth will moderate in '24

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

After three years of exceptional sales growth, McDonald's appears to be returning to Earth.

The Chicago burger giant said Monday it expects its same-store sales — or sales at locations open at least a year — to rise 3% to 4% this year, which is in line with historical averages. That's down from double-digit gains in 2021 and

2022 and 9% growth last year.

"I think we are moving into a 2024 that's going to look more like what you would have considered a typical year prior to COVID and all the things that have gone on," McDonald's President and CEO Chris Kempczinski said Monday during a conference call with investors.

McDonald's shares dropped 3.5% in early trading.

McDonald's got a glimpse

of what's to come in the fourth quarter when it lost sales in the Middle East and other markets due to the war in Gaza and saw fewer visits from lower-income consumers in the U.S.

McDonald's global same-store sales rose 3.4% in the October-December period, well below the 4.7% increase Wall Street was expecting, according to analysts polled by FactSet.

Customers in the Middle East

were angered after McDonald's Israel — which is operated by a local franchisee — announced in October it was providing free meals to Israeli soldiers. In response, some franchisees, like McDonald's Oman, announced donations to relief efforts in Gaza. Sales have since dropped in Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia and Indonesia as well as countries with large Muslim populations like France.



AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File

In this Feb. 24, 2010, file photo, an eBay logo is seen at their offices in San Jose, California. Online retailer eBay Inc. will cut about 1,000 jobs, or an estimated 9% of its full-time workforce.

Shifting economic environment fuels a spate of layoffs

The U.S. economy is humming and there are hundreds of thousands of jobs being added every month. In a stunning burst of hiring to start the year, the nation added 353,000 jobs in January, shrugging off the highest interest rates in two decades that have been put in place by the U.S. Federal Reserve in part to cool off hiring and spending.

The unemployment rate is hovering at 3.7%, just above a half-century low.

At the same time, layoffs continue to arrive across almost every sector in 2024 as companies adjust to a shifting economy, including Monday.

Job cuts in tech and retail follow a massive ramp-up in hiring during the COVID-19 pandemic — when people spent more time and money online. Now, many companies are reducing headcounts to help lower costs and bolster their bottom lines. Many still have more workers than they did a few years ago.

Here's where some of the job cuts have taken place in recent weeks.

ESTEE LAUDER LAYOFFS

Estee Lauder is cutting 3% to 5% of its global workforce. The downsizing, which will affect as many as 3,100 workers, will be made by July, Estee Lauder said. The company employed 62,000 workers worldwide, according to its latest regulatory filing.

REI LAYOFFS

REI is laying off 357 workers, mostly in the outdoor retailer's headquarters and distribution centers. In a letter to employees, CEO Eric Artz noted that "outdoor specialty retail has experienced four quarters of decline — and that trend has been worsening." While REI was able to outperform this for much of last year, he said, this trend caught up to the company in the fourth quarter, and difficult conditions are expected in 2024.

LEVI'S LAYOFFS

Levi Strauss & Co. is slashing its global corporate workforce by 10% to 15% in the first half of the year — as part of a two-year restructuring plan that seeks to cut costs and simplify its operations, the denim giant said. The layoffs on the same day Levi's unveiled a proposed 10-year extension to the naming rights for Levi's Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers, in a \$170 million deal.

MICROSOFT LAYOFFS

Microsoft is laying off some 1,900 employees in its gaming division, according to an internal company memo. The job cuts — which represent about an 8% reduction of Microsoft's 22,000-person gaming workforce — arrive just over three months since the tech giant completed its \$69 billion purchase of video game maker Activision Blizzard.

SNAP LAYOFFS

The owner of Snapchat is cutting approximately 10% of its worldwide workforce, or about 530 employees, the latest tech company to announce layoffs. Snap Inc. said in a regulatory filing that it currently estimates

\$55 million to \$75 million in charges, mostly for severance and related costs. It expects the majority of the costs to be incurred in the first quarter.

TIKTOK LAYOFFS

TikTok said its shedding dozens of workers in its advertising and sales unit. A spokesperson for the company confirmed that the social media platform is cutting 60 jobs. TikTok, which is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, did not provide a reason for the layoffs.

RIOT GAMES LAYOFFS

Video game developer Riot Games, which is behind the popular "League of Legends" multiplayer battle game, is trimming 11% of its staff. The company, which is owned by Chinese technology giant Tencent, said 530 jobs were being eliminated.

EBAY LAYOFFS

Online retailer eBay Inc. will cut about 1,000 jobs, or an estimated 9% of its full-time workforce, saying its number of employees and costs have exceeded how much the business is growing in a slowing economy.

WAYFAIR LAYOFFS

Online furniture seller Wayfair is cutting about 1,650 jobs, or 13% of its global workforce. The restructuring is set to reduce team sizes across the company and reduce seniority in certain roles with the company planning to "rebuild with modified leveling" this year, CEO and co-founder Niraj Shah said.

MACY'S LAYOFFS

Macy's is laying off about 3.5% of its total headcount, which amounts to roughly 2,350 employees. The iconic department store is also closing five locations in Arlington, Virginia; San Leandro, California; Lihue, Hawaii; Simi Valley, California; and Tallahassee, Florida.

GOOGLE LAYOFFS

Google said it was laying off hundreds of employees working on its hardware, voice assistance and engineering teams. The cuts follow pledges by executives of Google and its parent company Alphabet to reduce costs. A year ago, Google said it would lay off 12,000 employees or around 6% of its workforce.

AMAZON LAYOFFS

Twitch, which is owned by Amazon, is cutting more than 500 jobs in a bid to save on costs. The video streaming platform's CEO Dan Clancy said in an email to employees that even with cost cuts and growing efficiency, the platform "is still meaningfully larger than it needs to be given the size of our business."

Amazon-owned online audio-book and podcast service Audible is laying off about 5% of its workforce. In a memo sent to employees, Audible CEO Bob Carrigan said that the company is in good shape, but faces an "increasingly challenging landscape." In addition, Amazon's Prime Video and MGM Studios unit, is trimming hundreds of employees as it cuts back in areas that are not delivering.

Grammy ratings up 34% from ‘23 with almost 17M watching

By MARK KENNEDY
AP Entertainment Writer
NEW YORK — An average of 16.9 million viewers tuned in to see performances by Miley Cyrus and Billie Eilish and watch Taylor Swift make history at the Grammy Awards on Sunday, the largest audience for the telecast in four years and another consecutive an-

nual increase for a show that is recovering from its pandemic declines.
Ratings were up 34% on Sunday across CBS, Paramount+ and other digital platforms from last year, and with delayed watching included was expected to amass over 17 million viewers.
The telecast peaked with

18.25 million viewers during the In-Memoriam segment, with performances by Stevie Wonder, Annie Lennox, Jon Batiste and Fantasia Barrino.
The numbers Sunday easily beat the 12.4 million people who tuned in to watch Harry Styles, Lizzo and Bad Bunny perform during the show in 2023, along with a tribute to 50

years of rap history.
That’s another year of growth seen under host Trevor Noah, who has hosted since 2021. Live viewership was 8.8 million in 2021 and 8.9 million in 2022. The numbers this year are closer to pre-pandemic levels: Music’s showcase night was seen by 18.7 million people in 2020.
The upward trajectory is in

stark contrast to the fate of the Emmy Awards earlier this year: That telecast on Fox reached a record low audience of 4.3 million viewers.
This year, Grammy viewers watched Miley Cyrus powerfully belt out her megahit “Flowers,” which won record of the year, and Billie Eilish’s gentle piano ballad from “Bar-

bie,” “What Was I Made For?,” which was crowned song of the year. The album “Midnights” earned Swift her fourth career Grammy for album of the year, a record.
Live television viewership has declined across-the-board over the past few years, with pro football one of the few events to buck the trend.

Movie review

Wim Wenders’ ‘Perfect Days’ is a sublime study of character

By JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer
Wim Wenders’ “Perfect Days” is set among the crowded skyscrapers of Tokyo and the quiet urban parks that Hirayama (Kôji Yakusho) traverses daily in his job cleaning public toilets. But where the movie resides, really, is Yakusho’s face.
In this gently sublime film, Hirayama steps outside his humble apartment each morning and gazes up at the sky with a smile radiating gratitude. Hirayama says little throughout the course of Wenders’ quiet, quotidian film. Little happens. Yet Yakusho’s warm presence speaks volumes in a film where less can mean profoundly more.
Wenders, the 78-year-old German filmmaker, has long had a preference for troubled loners. Think of Harry Dean Stanton’s dusty drifter in “Paris, Texas,” or Bruno Ganz’s terminally ill man in “The American Friend.” But the Wenders’ movie that “Perfect Days” most recalls is “Wings of Desire,” where melancholy angels watched over Cold War-era Berlin and spoke of testifying “day by day for eternity.” “Perfect Days” has no such supernatural element, but its gaze is likewise attuned to what’s beautiful and meaningful in everyday living.
Each morning, Hirayama wakes, puts on his blue sanitation jump suit and neatly drapes a white towel around his neck. He drives his van from public toilet to public toilet, where he takes remarkable care in his work. He uses a small mirror to see the underside of a toilet bowl.
“How can you put so much into a job like this?” says Takashi (Tokio Emoto), Hirayama’s younger, less scrupulous coworker.
Hirayama’s days are rigorously routine but lively with variation. While driving through the elevated highways of Tokyo, he selects a cassette tape from a rack above the sun visor. Patti Smith, Lou Reed, the Kinks, the Animals or Nina Simone play as he rides. Usually, Hirayama, analog through and through, is driving against the traffic.
He’s a lover of trees, and each day on his lunch break takes a photograph of the branches above him, with light pouring through. With the care of a surgeon, he plucks a tiny seedling, places it in a small paper sack, and adds it to his nursery at home. At night, he reads Faulkner.
Eventually, a niece (Arisa Nakano) turns up, followed by Hirayama’s estranged sister (Yumi Aso). But Wenders’ film, which is nominated for best international film at the



This image released by Neon shows Kôji Yakusho, left, and Arisa Nakano in a scene from “Perfect Days.”

Oscars and opens in theaters today, is largely uncluttered by plot or exposition. Instead, we’re invited to ponder Hirayama’s serene, monastic existence — to admire the joy he finds in the mundane and the attentiveness he gives to the things he values.
Is he running from the world or in its thrall? Wenders, who co-wrote the film with Takuma Takasaki, is a longtime admirer of Japan; in his 1985 documentary “Tokyo-Ga,” Wenders traveled to Japan to pay homage to the great filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu. Much in “Perfect Days,” filmed in boxy academy ratio, radiates with a similar spirit of minimalistic wisdom.
That’s a great credit to Yakusho, the great Japanese actor, whose soulfulness fills the empty spaces of “Perfect Days.” It may sound like an art house enterprise but any-

one could connect with Wenders’ film. My 8-year-old daughter accompanied me on my second watch; that she hung with the movie from start to finish, I think, is because Yakusho’s Hirayama is a character to love.
Wenders was initially drawn to the project by Tokyo’s exquisite public toilets, which are light years more artfully designed than the few you can even find in most American cities. In that way, they’re a symbol of civic good. And so is Hirayama, who in his life and work, in plant life and cassette tapes, fully encapsulates the definition of custodian.
“Perfect Days,” a Neon release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for some language, partial nudity and smoking. Running time: 123 minutes. Four stars out of four.

Swift announces new album while accepting award

By MALLIKA SEN and BETH HARRIS
Associated Press
LOS ANGELES — Forget her “Reputation.” Taylor Swift has a whole new album coming out.
Accepting the Grammy for best pop vocal album, Taylor said she’d been keeping a secret for two years.
“My brand-new album comes out April 19. It’s called ‘The Tortured Poets Department.’ I’m going to go and post the cover right now backstage,” she announced.
And so she did.
On her Instagram, Swift posted a black-and-white image of her reclining across pillows. The top half of her face and lower half of her legs are cut off in the low-contrast image.
“All’s fair in love and poetry...” her caption read. In a little over an hour, the Instagram post alone had amassed nearly 7 million likes — a figure that swelled to an apt 13 million in under a day.
“And so I enter into evidence / My tarnished coat of arms / My muses, acquired like bruises / My talismans and charms / The tick, tick, tick of love bombs / My veins of pitch black ink,” read what appeared to be handwritten lyrics posted after the album cover.
Inside Los Angeles’ Crypto.com Arena, Swift’s album announcement elicited screams from the upper levels.
Swift had provoked mass speculation earlier in the night when her site seemed to go down. Some theorized she was gearing up to release “Reputation (Taylor’s Version),” but cryptic clues on the “crashed” site indicated that might be a misdirect.
And so it was.
The site’s back up now, focused around the upcoming



Swift

album, with preordering and merchandise options.
The album will feature 16 tracks, with some editions offering a bonus track, “The Manuscript,” according to product descriptions.
This will be Swift’s 11th studio album, not counting her re-recordings. Her last original album was “Midnights,” released in October 2022. Since then, she’s launched the billion-dollar Eras Tour and released “Speak Now (Taylor’s Version)” and “1989 (Taylor’s Version).”
Swift was accepting the Grammy for “Midnights” when she made the surprise announcement. She later picked up album of the year, the show’s final award, for the album.
“I would love to tell you this is the best moment of my life, but I feel this happy when I finish a song, or when I crack the code to a bridge that I love, or when I’m shortlisting a music video, or when I’m working with my dancers,” she said after accepting her album of the year award from Celine Dion. With it, she broke the record for the most wins in that category (her other albums of the year: “Fearless,” “1989” and “Folklore”).
As she walked the red carpet in custom Schiaparelli Couture, she paid homage to her album title, donning a Lorraine Schwartz choker with a small clock embedded. And yes, the time was set to midnight — even if the viewer had to tilt their head to see the hands pointing to “12.”
While a nod to the album — and reminiscent of the “tick, tick, tick” in “The Tortured Poets Department” post — the watch seemed particularly apt, given the superstar’s seemingly packed schedule over the next week.

Sundance Film Festival

In ‘A Real Pain,’ Kieran Culkin is an emotional time bomb

By ADAM GRAHAM
The Detroit News (TNS)
There’s real pain in “A Real Pain,” and real pleasure, too.
Jesse Eisenberg’s drama about a pair of cousins on a Holocaust tour through Poland premiered at this year’s Sundance Film Festival, which wrapped up its in-person and online screenings last month. It’s one of a handful of movies from the festival I watched virtually from the fest.
Eisenberg, who wrote and directed the movie (it’s his second film, following 2022’s “When You Finish Saving the World”), stars as David Kaplan, a neurotic-to-the-core New Yorker who joins his cousin Benji (Kieran Culkin) on a guided tour through Poland, where their grandmother survived the Holocaust. Benji couldn’t be more different than David: where David is inward, Benji is outward, and he’s the biggest personality in the room, the guy who will say whatever is on his mind and make everyone around him feel alive. But the key to Culkin’s electrifying performance — he’s outstanding in the movie — is the emotional tightrope he constantly walks. Yes he’s big and lovable but he’s also extremely emotionally volatile. He feels more than everyone else in the room, and with those highs come crashing lows.

“A Real Pain” is built around his character and how he moves through spaces, and it’s a funny, sad, touching and relatable character study about a big-hearted, larger-than-life personality, the kind of person we’ve all known, whose emotional registers run very hot and very cold, sometimes at the same time.
Culkin, so slick and oily throughout his four seasons on “Succession,” shows a different side of himself here, and it’s no doubt a performance and a movie you’ll be hearing more about in the months to come. The movie was picked up out of Sundance for \$10 million by Searchlight, which will release the movie in theaters later this year.
Elsewhere in the virtual ‘Dance, “Skywalkers: A Love Story” soared high. It’s a documentary about a pair of high-climbing rooftopers, people who scale extremely tall buildings and post photos of their death-defying feats on social media, working very hard for your Likes. “Skywalkers” concerns Russians Angela Nikolau and Vanya Kuznetsov, who were rooftoping separately before they became the sport’s premier power couple. Their ultimate goal is to ascend to the top of Malaysia’s Merdeka 118,



Photo by Charles Sykes/Invision/AP

Kieran Culkin attends the premiere of “A Real Pain” at the Eccles Theatre during the Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 20, in Park City, Utah.

the second-tallest building in the world, which is topped by a spire with a ladder that itself takes 90 minutes to climb.
Directors Jeff Zimbalist and Maria Bukhonina frame “Skywalkers” as a romance, a caper and a heist film, and it contains jawdropping footage of views that most humans will never get a chance to see with their own

two eyes. The movie was acquired by Netflix and will likely be released later this year.
The creepy, unsettling documentary “Eternal You” details the ways in which AI is bringing back loved ones from the dead, and offering virtual chats with them from beyond the grave. At least that’s what a handful of tech companies are offering: The

chance to say those things you didn’t get to say to those who are no longer with us, all through an online service which uses data and mined information to mimic human speech and texting patterns, to approximate conversations with your mom, your cousin, or your dearly departed spouse. Do these conversations put users at ease? Sometimes,

sometimes not, and “Eternal You” is another example of AI and the way it’s changing our lives, and even our afterlives. It will make you shudder.
“Union” is a minimalist, sharply observed documentary about efforts to unionize at a Staten Island Amazon fulfillment center, and directors Brett Story and Stephen Maing let the players and their actions tell the story with minimal interruptions. There are no talking head interviews and few expository explainers, instead the filmmakers let their boots-on-the-ground doc speak for itself. Chris Smalls, an Amazon worker who led the charge to unionize the Amazon facility after he was fired from his job, emerges as the center of the story, and it’s a charged tale of workers’ rights at a key time in the American workforce.
René Pérez Joglar gives a vulnerable performance as a father who only sees his daughters once a year in “In the Summers,” a raw and scrappy drama from writer-director Alessandra Lacorazza Samudio. She focuses on two sisters who visit yearly with their dad in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and their stilted interactions with their father over the years and how it affects their lives.

High School Girls Basketball



Matt Czeitner/sports reporter

Cortland's Katie Harris prepares to make a pass against Mexico Tuesday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School. Harris had eight points in the Purple Tigers' 44-16 win.

Short-handed Purple Tigers earn comfortable win over Mexico

By MATT CZEITNER
Sports Reporter

mczeitner@cortlandstandard.com

The Cortland girls basketball team held visiting Mexico to just 16 points and the Purple Tigers overcame a slow offensive start and won 44-16 Tuesday at Cortland Junior-Senior High School.

Cortland went into Tuesday's game without starting point guard Kendall Mack, who is a key piece in the team's offense. Mack leads the team in assists (60) and is second in points (165). The Purple Tigers' offense looked a bit stagnant in the first half without her, only scoring four points in the first

quarter and 13 before halftime.

Claire Turner scored the lone four points for Cortland in the first quarter. Valerosa Gambitta scored four in the second quarter, with Katie Harris adding three and Kartyr Hubbard adding two.

The Purple Tigers' strong defense was what carried them early, holding Mexico to two points in the first quarter and two in the second. If not for a buzzer beater from the Tigers before halftime, they would have been held scoreless.

Being without Mack Tuesday was not ideal, but Cortland welcomed the challenge against a tough divisional opponent.

"Kendall is a key piece and on offense she's our director," Cortland head coach Janice Meyer said. "We knew it would be a bit tougher out there without her out there. I don't like playing without her, it has never happened as long as I've been coaching her. But I also look at it as an exciting moment to see who can step up and handle it."

Cortland's offense stepped up in the second half with 13 points in the third quarter

See SCHOOLS, page 11

H.S. Boys Basketball

McGraw clinches share of CCL title

By PAUL CIFONELLI
Sports Editor

pcifonelli@cortlandstandard.com

The McGraw boys basketball team snapped a three-game losing streak with a 46-42 win over Madison Tuesday night at McGraw High School. The win gives the Eagles at least a share of the CCL title and a chance to win it at 7 p.m. Thursday at home against Cincinnatus. A Cincinnatus win would make the Lions and Eagles co-champions.

McGraw held off Madison, another team that was in league title contention, thanks to some stellar defense.

The Eagles held Madison's high-powered offense 14 points below its season average of 55.9.

"Our good defense turned into good offense," senior center Jaydon Bassett said.

The Eagles led 20-17 at halftime, but senior guard Caleb Epp sat most of the half with two fouls. Epp began taking over after the break, scoring 11 of his team-high 16 points in the second half. He was getting to the rim and finishing around Madison's three 6-foot-4 bigs.

"You've got to think and know what you're doing before you go in," Epp said. "Then it's just creating the contact, getting up there and finishing strong."

Epp's burst was what McGraw needed, as the Eagles opened up a 35-25 lead through three quarters.

"It's everything because we've been stagnant on offense lately," McGraw head coach Jamey Crumb said. "We're not even top 10 in scoring (in Class D) any more, but our defense is what carries us."

Bassett, Riley Van Liew and Mason Allen had to do battle with the Madison big men all game and gave them all they could handle.

Bassett still managed 10 points, six rebounds, an assist and three steals, Van Liew had

McGraw 46
Madison 42

three points, two boards, an assist and three steals and Allen contributed four points and two boards.

"There's a lot of physical contact going up every time," Bassett said. "They're swatting and swatting. And I couldn't make my free throws."

"I think they did awesome," Crumb said. "Every single one of them was outmatched a little bit size-wise. We just played tough and got around them when they could."

Madison made a comeback attempt in the fourth, with the Blue Devils getting it to 43-40 with 28.8 seconds left. Blair Mulcahy got fouled and made one of two, then Madison's Jacob Burns got a bucket to make it a two-point game. McGraw's Dylan Truman was put in the game to knock down two free throws and did just that with 5.1 seconds left to seal the deal.

Both teams struggled from the line, with McGraw going 10-for-24 and Madison 8-for-18. This has been a theme for the Eagles and Crumb has suffered through all of the missed foul shots.

"It's probably about three years every time they do that and it seems to happen way too often," Crumb said.

Epp also had four rebounds and four assists to go with his 16 points. Calob Sutton added five points, six boards, three assists and a steal, Dylan Truman notched five points, Blair Mulcahy had three points and three assists and Noah Heath contributed a steal.

The Eagles are happy to have a share of the league title, but want to beat their rival to secure the CCL all for their own.

"Thursday's game means everything," Epp said. "We're up a half game, so it means everything."



Paul Cifonelli/sports editor

McGraw's Jaydon Bassett, left, gets out of teammate Caleb Epp's way Tuesday night at McGraw High School. Epp scored 16 points and Bassett had 10 in the Eagles' 46-42 win.

NCAA

Labor victory for Dartmouth basketball players only start of path to a union deal

By JIMMY GOLEN
AP Sports Writer

BOSTON — A ruling that gives the Dartmouth basketball team the right to unionize has far-reaching implications for all of college sports — from the quaint, academically oriented Ivy League to the big-money football factories like Michigan and Alabama.

But it's not time to cut down the nets just yet.

Although Monday's ruling by a National Labor Relations Board official put the players on the path toward a union, they have a long way to go — years, maybe — before they would be able to sit down with the school and negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

Dartmouth has said it will appeal the regional official's decision to the full NLRB; an-

other loss for the school there could send the case into the federal courts, where an outcome is unlikely before most of the current players have picked up their diplomas and moved on to jobs that are unlikely to include professional athlete.

Only then would the two sides sit down and decide what the players are worth.

And others will be watching. "We are excited to see how this decision will impact college sports nationwide," Dartmouth players Cade Haskins and Romeo Myrthil said in a statement on Monday after NLRB Regional Director Laura Sacks agreed that they are employees of the school. "We believe that other athletes will recognize the opportunities this ruling presents and will be inspired to follow suit."

Here is a look at what happened — and what's next — in the fight for college athlete rights:

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The NCAA has long maintained that college players are "student-athletes" — a term designed to perpetrate the pretense that education comes first. But in Power 5 leagues like the Big Ten and Southeastern Conference, football is a billion-dollar business that looks more like the NFL than the glee club or other extracurricular activities on campus.

The amateur model is under attack on several fronts, including a 2021 Supreme Court ruling that opened the door for athletes to be paid; in response, the NCAA loosened rules to allow players to profit from

their celebrity. The NCAA is also facing at least six antitrust lawsuits, including one brought last week by attorneys general from Tennessee and Virginia that challenges how recruits can be compensated for their name, image and likeness.

In a different NLRB proceeding, football and basketball players at Southern California say they are employees of the school, the Pac-12 Conference in which they play and the NCAA. That hearing resumes later this month.

At Dartmouth and its Ivy League brethren, though, the "student-athlete" paradigm might actually be accurate.

Dartmouth doesn't give out athletic scholarships, the program loses money — the

See NCAA, page 11

College Football

Football powers support SC athlete compensation bill

By JEFFREY COLLINS
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Clemson football coach Dabo Swinney, South Carolina football coach Shane Beamer and Coastal Carolina football coach Tim Beck all came together at the Statehouse to urge lawmakers to pass a law allowing their schools to directly compensate their athletes.

The call for name, image and likeness legislation came Tuesday in a South Carolina House education committee hearing.

It passed unanimously after the committee started the meeting with a group photo — coaches in the front and lawmakers in the back. The bill now goes to the House floor; the Senate hasn't taken up the matter yet.

The three football coaches were joined by more than a dozen from other sports.

They packed the hearing room, and South Carolina women's basketball coach Dawn Staley and men's basketball coach Lamont Paris prowled the halls of the House's office building

to meet with legislators before the meeting started.

The bill would overhaul a law passed a few years ago when name, image and likeness laws were just starting. It would allow universities to work with companies or others who want to make NIL offers. The school could also evaluate the deals and give advice to athletes. It is similar to proposals in other states.

"We have been limited in our NIL involvement through the ever-changing guidance from the NCAA, and that has left our

student-athletes trying to figure out much of this on their own — navigating complex MIL opportunities without trained guidance," Swinney told the committee.

Beamer thanked lawmakers for their consideration, saying passing the bill was vital to keep teams in the state competitive. Republican House Education and Public Works Committee chair Shannon Erickson, of Beaufort, rattled off the nearly dozen national titles won by coaches at the meeting or seen

earlier in the day in football, women's basketball, mens soccer, equestrian and baseball.

"It is something we deal with daily. It is also ever changing, daily," Beamer said.

The bill is also needed for lesser known, smaller teams, Coastal Carolina women's basketball coach Kevin Pederson said.

On his team, one player gets a few smoothies through her deal and a second gets bathing suits. The law would allow the school to work for better deals for all.

"They need an advocate who loves them the way I love them. They need an advocate who will push for them the way I push for them," Pederson said.

The outcome was certain before the gavel came down to open the meeting. Republican Rep. April Cromer from Anderson walked up to Swinney and shook his hand.

"This might not have been necessary. We were going to pass it anyway," she said as Swinney, Beamer and Beck all laughed.

National Hockey League

Jake Oettinger stops 47 shots as Stars edge Sabres 2-1

BUFFALO (AP) — Jake Oettinger stopped 47 shots and Sam Steel scored midway through the second period, helping the Dallas Stars beat the Buffalo Sabres 2-1 on Tuesday night for their fourth straight victory.

Matt Duchene also scored as

Dallas celebrated Joe Pavelski's 1,300th NHL game by continuing the team's strong play of late. The 39-year-old Pavelski, a Wisconsin native, became the seventh U.S.-born player to reach that career milestone, and 69th overall.

The Stars improved to 5-0-1 in its past six games and 9-2-1 in its past 12 in opening a three-game road trip.

Tage Thompson scored for Buffalo, which blew its fourth chance of the season to win three straight. The Sabres

haven't won three straight since a three-game run spanning April 6-10 last season.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen stopped 28 shots in an outing between well-rested teams that had both been off since Jan. 27. Though not tested as often as

Oettinger, Luukkonen was sharp in keeping the score close during a third period in which the Stars failed to capitalize on a pair of two-man advantages, one spanning 89 seconds and the other 18 seconds.

The Stars scored first on

Duchene's power-play goal 3:58 in, and never trailed despite being outshot 32-12 through two periods and 48-31 overall.

Steel scored the go-ahead goal with 10:56 left in the second, and a little over three minutes after Thompson tied the game.

Womens College Basketball

Caitlin Clark's 60-point game in high school was sign of things to come

By ERIC OLSON
AP Sports Writer

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Caitlin Clark's skills were so advanced when she was in grade school that her parents signed her up to play on boys teams. By the time she entered middle school she was well-known in basketball circles across Iowa.

This was long before Clark became one of the faces of womens basketball and, now, on the cusp of setting the NCAA Division I scoring record.

Clark was in sixth grade when Jan Jensen first heard about her. Not long after, Iowa's associate head coach and chief recruiter went to watch the prodigy from West Des Moines.

She saw a confident player making pinpoint passes often too hot for her teammates to handle, someone who was creative on drives to the hoop and of course someone willing to launch the deep 3-pointers that would become her signature and one of the reasons she's one of the United States' highest-profile female athletes.

"It didn't take but a second, maybe a minute," Jensen said. "That little step-back sassy 3, this little seventh-, eighth-grader. Yeah, she's diff. You could just tell. They're easy to identify but really hard to get. Everybody can see the true, true ones. The trick is to get them."

Clark needs 66 points to break the NCAA career record of 3,527 by Washington's Kelsey Plum (2013-17). The Hawkeyes play Penn State at home on Thursday. With an average of 32.4 points per game, Clark is on track to break the record at Nebraska on Sunday or Feb. 15 at home against Michigan.

"I didn't predict this to happen, but just knowing her work ethic, knowing her passion for the sport, knowing her fearlessness, I'm really not surprised," said Kristin Meyer, who coached Clark from 2016-20 at Dowling Catholic High in West Des Moines.

"More than anything, I'm so happy for her to get to accomplish all of these things, to grow the sport and to grow the popularity of womens basketball



Basketball player Caitlin Clark stands with head coach Kristin Meyer at the girls state tournament at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines, Iowa, Feb. 25, 2020.

and also the state of Iowa."

The daughter of Brent Clark and Anne Nizzi-Clark grew up as the middle child in a sports-centric family. Caitlin said when she first started playing basketball, she would cry after every game her team lost.

"That's because of how much I cared," she said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm like 6 years old and it didn't matter, obviously. But it mattered to me."

That passion for winning took root when she and brothers Blake and Colin played board games and all kinds of sports against each other. She recalled a basement Nerf basketball game with Colin that got overheated.

"I just threw him into the

wall," she said. "He went flying and his head slapped into it. He put his hand back and it was just full of blood. He runs upstairs to my mom. She goes and gets a bunch of staples in his head."

Meyer was preparing for her first year as Dowling High coach in 2016 when she first heard about a "stud eighth-grader" who would be joining the team.

"I was, 'OK, that's nice. We'll have a good player,'" Meyer said.

And then she went to watch Clark's AAU club the spring before her freshman year — "Oh, she's real good," Meyer remembers thinking — and realized she would build her first team around Clark.

Coaching Clark was some-

times a challenge, Meyer said, because she was so advanced in her skills and basketball IQ. As has happened during her career at Iowa, Clark would show frustration if the target of one of her passes wasn't ready to catch it or if a play didn't unfold as designed.

"There were times the competitiveness of her kind of took over or she wasn't as patient," Meyer said, "but every high schooler has to grow through some things and, looking back, her skill level was on a different level than other people, so it was harder for her at times."

Clark, who never won a high school state title, ranks No. 4 on the Iowa high school five-on-five career scoring chart with



Iowa guard Caitlin Clark dribbles during the first half of a game against Maryland, Saturday, in College Park, Maryland.

2,547 points. Many Iowa schools played six-on-six into the 1980s and '90s.

Clark's AAU team, the All-Iowa Attack, won the 2018 Nike GEYBL national championship and was runner-up in 2017 and 2019. She won gold medals at the international level with the USA Under 16 and U19 teams.

One of her few disappointments — and another source of motivation — came the summer after her sophomore season when she was left off the 12-player roster for the USA U17 team.

"She's one who loves a challenge and then responds to it," Meyer said. "She took a big step between her sophomore and junior year, and a lot of that was due to not making the team."

Clark was Gatorade National Player of the Year after averaging 32.6 points per game as a junior. Her defining high school game came late that season at Mason City, where she made a state-record 13 3-pointers, on 17 attempts, and scored 60 points,

one off the state record.

By then, Clark was a consensus five-star prospect and receiving attention from almost every major program. The Hawkeyes ultimately won out over Notre Dame.

Megan Meyer (no relation to Kristin), who played AAU ball with Clark and was her teammate at Iowa for a year, was one of the Mason City players who tried to defend her. Mason City was no pushover, and most of Clark's shots were contested in the 32-minute game.

"I remember thinking, 'How in the world can somebody score 60 points in a high school basketball game?'" Megan Meyer said.

Clark hit six 3s and scored 25 points in the first quarter alone. When the game ended, the Mason City student section lined up to get her autograph, same as fans do after Iowa games now.

"That game, I'm sure, had a lot of foreshadowing of what was to come," Jensen said.

Syracuse dismisses Williams



AP Photo/Adrian Kraus

SYRACUSE (AP) — Syracuse forward Benny Williams, left, is defended by North Carolina State guard DJ Horne during the first half Jan. 27, in Syracuse. On Tuesday, Syracuse University dismissed Williams from its mens basketball program. The school announced Williams' exit without disclosing the reason for the 6-foot-9 forward's removal. The statement announcing the decision said "everyone involved with the program wishes Benny the best."

Williams had been suspended for the first two games of Syracuse's season because of a violation of team rules.

He was averaging 5.4 points, 3.9 rebounds, 1.2 assists and 17 minutes in 18 games this season. Williams had 7.2 points, 4.1 rebounds and 22.3 minutes per game last season.

Syracuse (14-8, 5-6 Atlantic Coast Conference) hosts Louisville (7-15, 2-9) today.

NBA

Brunson injured, Knicks hold on to beat Memphis

By PAT PICKENS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jalen Brunson had 27 points and eight assists before exiting with an apparent ankle injury, Donte DiVincenzo had 32 points, and the New York Knicks hung on for a 123-113 win over the short-handed Memphis Grizzlies on Tuesday night.

Isaiah Hartenstein had 17 points and eight rebounds and Precious Achiuwa scored 17 as the Knicks shot 55.8% and won for the 10th time in their past 11 games, improving to 16-3 over their last 19 games.

Brunson, who was serenaded with "M-V-P!" chants throughout the night from the home crowd, appeared to injure his ankle when he was fouled by G.G. Jackson with 5:31 left. He did not return.

Seven Grizzlies players scored in double figures, led by Vince Williams Jr.'s 19 points. Jackson had 16

points, and David Roddy chipped in 15 points for Memphis, which dropped its sixth straight game despite outscoring New York 39-26 in the fourth quarter.

Despite continuing to miss starters Julius Randle (dislocated shoulder) and OG Anunoby (elbow inflammation), the Knicks never trailed. New York shot 63.6% in the first half, building a 70-46 halftime lead led by Brunson's 19 points on 8-for-14 shooting.

Memphis entered play with an NBA-high 282 games lost due to injury and ranks last in offensive rating and points per game. It trailed by 26, 103-77, with 9:11 remaining before roaring back with nine fourth-quarter 3-pointers that cut the deficit to four, 113-109, with two minutes left.

But DiVincenzo scored eight of New York's final 10 points, including a crucial 3-pointer that extended the Knicks' advantage to seven.

MAVERICKS 119,
NETS 107

NEW YORK (AP) — Kyrie Irving scored 36 points in a dazzling return to Brooklyn exactly one year after he was traded to Dallas, leading the Mavericks to a 119-107 victory over the Nets on Tuesday night.

Luka Doncic had 35 points, 18 rebounds and nine assists as the Mavericks' guard tandem took turns hitting some deep 3-pointers in the second half when the Nets were trying to make a run. Doncic quickly shed the mask he began the game with to protect a nasal contusion and just missed his 10th triple-double of the season. Irving was booed when he touched the ball in the early going, though he turned those to cheers after finishing one of his drives for a reserve layup or hitting one of his six 3-pointers — and when he rose high to slam down a lob pass in the third quarter.

National Football League

Super Bowl expected to smash betting records. Nearly 68M plan to wager

By **WAYNE PARRY**
Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Nearly 68 million American adults — about 1 in 4 — plan to bet on this year’s Super Bowl, setting a record by a wide margin, according to the gambling industry’s national trade association. Figures released Tuesday by the American Gaming Association include bets placed with legal outlets, as well as with illegal bookies and online operations in other countries.

The volume of betting participation is projected to be 35% higher than last year, which was the previous record.

Bettors plan to wager an estimated \$23.1 billion on this year’s Super Bowl, up from \$16 billion last year, the group predicted.

Of that, about \$1.5 billion is projected to be bet with legal outlets, the group said, citing consensus estimates from various sources. That is in the same ballpark as the \$1.25 billion in legal bets projected by Irvine, California-based research firm Eilers & Krejcik Gaming.

Sports betting is legal in 38 states plus Washington, D.C.

“There’s a good chance that every Super Bowl for the next ten or so years will be the most bet Super Bowl thanks to the underlying growth of regulated sports betting in the U.S.,” said gam-



Matt Smircich, of Hamburg, New Jersey, makes sports bets at the Hard Rock casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Friday.

bling analyst Chris Grove, a partner at Eilers & Krejcik Gaming.

Sunday’s game will feature the de-

fending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs against the San Francisco 49ers in a rare rematch from four years

ago. The 49ers are favored by 2.5 points, meaning they would have to win the game by 3 or more points for bets on them to be winners.

Conversely, if the Chiefs win, or if they lose by no more than 2 points, bets on Kansas City would win. Those odds are from FanDuel Sportsbook, the official odds provider for The Associated Press.

The romance between Chiefs star tight end Travis Kelce and pop superstar Taylor Swift might be helping drive interest in this Super Bowl. About 73% of adults say they plan to watch the game this year, about 10% higher than in recent previous years.

“I think the ‘Taylor Swift effect’ will be more obviously felt in terms of the total number of people watching and betting on the game than it will be in the total dollars bet on the game,” Grove said. “But there’s little doubt that sportsbooks will be seeing Swifties sign up that otherwise would not have given sports betting a second thought.”

Likewise, Cait DeBaun, a vice president with the American Gaming Association, said Swift could be one of several reasons for increased betting on this year’s Super Bowl, along with “the compelling matchup,” the game being held in Las Vegas, the nation’s betting capital, and the growing availability of legal sports betting in the U.S.

Everyone hopes the Chiefs-49ers game won’t come down to an officiating call

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
AP National Writer

San Francisco 49ers CEO Jed York was asked the other day what comes to mind when he thinks back to his team’s Super Bowl loss to Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs four years ago, and he quipped: “I mean, I remember Nick Bosa getting held on third-and-long — and that not getting called.”

So perhaps it would be understandable if York wasn’t thrilled to learn the referee in charge back then, Bill Vinovich, will be wearing the white cap in Las Vegas for the Niners vs. Chiefs championship rematch on Sunday, too. One of the biggest fears when it comes to the biggest sport’s biggest games might just be that a high-profile bad call or

no-call will play a role in the result — and each of the past two Super Bowls did have key, questioned rulings in the late stages.

“The reality is, if something happens in the Super Bowl, that is going to stay with you the entire offseason. That is going to really direct and control the narrative around the finish. You can have a great year and you can have smooth sailing — and then something goes wrong in the Super Bowl, and that’s all people are going to remember,” said Dean Blundino, who was a replay official for two Super Bowls before a stint as the NFL’s head of officiating. “There’s no doubt that is a major, major concern.”

Team owners, front-office executives, coaches and players don’t want that.

Neither do fans — or gamblers (who, aside from a vested interest in the final score, can wager on the total number of penalty yards or which coach will challenge a call first in the Super Bowl).

Neither does the league. And neither do those wearing the black-and-white uniforms.

“No official wants to be part of the story,” said Mike Pereira, who worked on the field for NFL games and later oversaw all of the league’s officiating. “None of them.”

It’s bad enough when an error comes in the regular season, dominating next-day conversation, as seemed to happen repeatedly in 2023-24. It’s worse when it comes in the postseason. Worst of all is when it appears to directly affect a key game’s outcome.



Jets head coach Bill Parcells complains to side judge Mike Pereira at the conclusion of a game against the Dolphins in Miami Nov. 9, 1997. Parcells was arguing a call late in the fourth quarter that was ruled as an incomplete pass to wide receiver Wayne Chrebet.

Giants hire ex Titans defensive coordinator Bowen

EAST RUTHERFORD (AP) — New York Giants coach Brian Daboll took his time interviewing defensive coordinators before choosing Shane Bowen.

Daboll formally hired Bowen on Tuesday, finding an experienced replacement for veteran coordinator Wink Martindale. The Giants and Martindale parted ways last month after Daboll

fired two of Martindale’s defensive assistants. Bowen spent the previous six seasons in Tennessee. The Titans promoted him to defensive coordinator in 2021 after he spent his first three years as the team’s outside linebacker’s coach.

Tennessee led the league this season in red zone scoring defense — allowing touchdowns on 37.7% of drives inside

the 20-yard line — goal-to-go scoring (42.9%), and third down conversation rate in the red zone (23.4%).

During Bowen’s tenure as DC, the Titans allowed the fewest rushing yards in the NFL (89.7 yards a game) and allowed a league-low 3.70 yards per attempt.

Daboll interviewed at least eight can-

didates for the job before picking Bowen. The 37-year-old Bowen became available when head coach Mike Vrabel and his assistants were dismissed after the Titans finished 6-11 and last in the AFC South. The Giants also hired another Titans assistant by naming former Tennessee offensive coordinator Tim Kelly as the team’s tight ends coach.

SCHOOLS

continued from page 9

and a dominant 18-3 run in the fourth to close out its win.

The Purple Tigers saw production from many, with all eight players that touched the court scoring. Gambitta scored 10 points in the final-quarter surge and finished with 14 to lead her team. Turner added 11 points, with seven coming in the second half. Harris finished with eight points, Zee-Anna Sweat had three and Hubbard, Aubree Larkin, Lily Yang and Lily Tinker had two apiece.

Harris was big for Cortland Tuesday. Meyer was looking for a player to step up with her starting point guard absent from the lineup and Harris did just that. The head coach also liked the looks the offense was getting, particularly in the second half. She saw good signs from her team up and down the bench, something she is hoping will give them confidence moving forward.

“I am happy with the offense,” Meyer said. “Katie Harris stepped up majorly and took on the role shooting. Kartyr, Katie, Tinker, Zee all got great looks. We’ve just got to keep finding them those looks and get them comfortable to put those points up.”

“It’s just about being confident and knowing that every time you get the ball, we’re looking to score,” Meyer added. “Maybe it’s not you, but you’re looking for the next score. It’s just getting into that mentality not to rely on our three seniors, and I think today that really started to come together.”

Cortland’s defense continues to perform at a high level with Tuesday’s win. The Purple Tigers allowed their second-lowest point total of the season against Mexico with 16. The season-low for points allowed is 15 against Windsor on Dec. 28. Over the last three games, they have allowed a total of 63 points with 22 against Chittenango, 25 against Westhill and 16 on Tuesday.

Meyer was happy with Tuesday’s defensive performance and knows what the team needs to do consistently to be successful down the stretch.

“We got the job done and our defense listened and dealt with the challenge,” Meyer said. “We did well, but at times we got caught standing up straight, had some silly reaches and missed some rotations. That’s what we do sometimes, and it can hurt us down the stretch. Those are the behaviors that we need all the time. We need to get into that

deep help or getting back on weakside transition.”

Cortland plays again at 6:45 p.m. Friday at home against Norwich.

GIRLS BASKETBALL SYRACUSE WEST 58, HOMER 56

Syracuse West made two of three free throws with 0.3 seconds left to send Homer to its fourth loss in a row. The Trojans led 43-39 through three quarters before Syracuse West came back. Lauren Franco had a team-high 18 points for Homer.

Izzy Small went for 10 points, Lizzie McCloy netted seven points, Kaylee Darling had six points, Eila Spanbauer and Maddie Morgan scored five points apiece, Anya Gofkowski had three points and Brayden Partigianoni had two points.

MARATHON 33, SOUTHERN CAYUGA 31

Abby Ensign hit a buzzer-beating jumper from the baseline to give Marathon, now 12-5, the win in a low-scoring affair. The senior guard scored a team-high 10 points for the Olympians, who led 18-6 at halftime.

Addie Oram knocked down three triples for nine points, Catherine Newkirk contributed eight points and Anna Hoyt

made two 3-pointers for six points.

TULLY 71, FABIUS-POMPEY 30

Grace McKenna and Ella Polak combined for 38 points as Tully moved to 13-4 on the season. McKenna scored 20 points and Polak had 18 and the Black Knights opened up a 57-17 lead through three quarters.

Sammy Morgan made three threes for nine points, Rachel Daddona contributed eight points and Mary Earley, Gabby Flatt, Gwyn Wilbur and Anna Pierce scored four points apiece for Tully.

BOYS BASKETBALL INSTITUTE OF TECH. 82, HOMER 45

Homer couldn’t slow down a potent ITC offense, falling behind 27-13 after a quarter and 63-39 through three. Wyatt Wilbur led the Trojans’ offense with 19 points.

Kaden Durham and Mitchell Earle each scored eight points, Tyler Van Etten scored six points and Max Franco had four points for Homer.

**MARATHON 41,
SOUTHERN CAYUGA 40**
Marathon’s defense held Southern Cayuga to just eight

points in the fourth and the Olympians knocked down four free throws to seal the narrow win. Jake Byron paced Marathon with 17 points and Zach Birdsall contributed 10.

Colton Oram, Camdyn Kashuba and Austin Poth all scored four points in the Olympians’ win. Marathon was without starting point guard Bryce Hartman.

CANDOR 57, GROTON 37

No additional details were reported.

FAITH HERITAGE 66, DeRUYTER 56

No additional details were reported.

MORAVIA 59, UNION SPRINGS 49

Abram Wasileski became the school’s all-time leading scorer with 17 points in a big IAC win. Moravia is now 15-3 on the season.

Kyler Proper also added 17 points, Aiden Kelly notched 10 points, Drew Nye scored nine points and Riley Jones had six points for the Blue Devils.

INDOOR TRACK & FIELD CORTLAND

Bryan Honan and Jack Phelan

NCAA

continued from page 9

school claims, though the players dispute that — and athletes are expected to prioritize their academic responsibilities before sports. The school says playing on the basketball team is not a job; it’s like participating in the orchestra or Model United Nations.

But the players argued that the school exerts enough control over them to make them employees, and Sacks agreed.

“Because Dartmouth has the right to control the work performed by the Dartmouth mens basketball team, and the players perform that work in exchange for compensation, I find that the petitioned-for basketball players are employees,” she wrote.

WHAT’S NEXT?

First, the mens basketball team will vote on whether to form a union. The outcome of the election does not seem to be in doubt, considering that all 15 members of the team signed the petition last fall asking to join Local 560 of the Service Employees International Union, which already represents some other employees at the school.

But even if the union drive passes, there are other hurdles.

Assuming Dartmouth doesn’t drop its appeal and recognize the union, the matter goes to the full NLRB. In a previous case involving the Northwestern football team, the board overturned the initial ruling (on a technicality that doesn’t apply here). That appeal took about 15 months, though the Dartmouth players hope for a quicker ruling because it’s a presidential election year with the possibility that the makeup of the board will flip Republican in January.

Even if the full board affirms Sacks’ decision, the school could turn to the federal courts — a process that could delay the resolution for several years. If the players ultimately win — or if Dartmouth drops its opposition — only then would they be able to negotiate on a collective bargaining agreement.

And all that does is give them the chance to argue they are worth more to the school than free gear and lunch money.

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

The Dartmouth players want to be paid \$20 an hour, like the cafeteria workers on campus, with the school paying their health care premiums.

But should they win, the implications are likely to spread throughout college sports.

Other teams on the Hanover, New Hampshire, campus could chose to unionize. And rather than cede to Dartmouth the recruiting edge of a salary and benefits, the rest of the Ivy League could be prompted to accept unions as well. (The other option would be to boot Dartmouth from the Ivy League — which seems an unlikely, and temporary, reprieve.) And if Dartmouth basketball players are ultimately deemed employees, that makes it much more difficult for schools with big-time sports to prop up the “student-athlete” model. Those future NFL and NBA stars could make millions more if the NCAA business model goes away.

both won sectional titles Tuesday, with Honan winning the boys weight throw with a 54-foot, 10-inch throw and Phelan topping the field in the boys long jump with a 42-foot, 5.25-inch leap.

Honan also finished second in the shot put and Michael Dearie was third in the shot put and second in the weight throw.

Isabella Sisting set a new school record in the girls 55-meter dash with a time of 7.87 seconds. Rileigh Madden finished third in the pole vault and fourth in the long jump, Ashley Merritt tied Madden for third in the pole vault, Alivia Reif finished fifth in the shot put and Campbell Bush was sixth in the 55-meter hurdles.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE BOYS BASKETBALL Cincinnati at LaFayette, 6:30 p.m. today Cincinnati at McGraw, 7 p.m. Thursday	GIRLS BASKETBALL Groton at Candor, 7 p.m. today Marathon at Oxford, 7 p.m. Thursday Tully at LaFayette, 6 p.m. Thursday
GIRLS VOLLEYBALL No. 10 McGraw at No. 7 New York Mills, 6 p.m. today No. 6 Weedsport or No. 11 Westmoreland at No. 2 Tully, 6 p.m. Thursday	BOYS VOLLEYBALL Herkimer at Cincinnati, 5:30 p.m. Thursday
INDOOR TRACK & FIELD Homer at Onondaga Community College, 4:30 p.m. today Tully at Onondaga Community College, 4:30 p.m. Thursday	BOWLING Cortland, Homer at Strike N Spare Lanes, 3:30 p.m. today

Zelenskyy signals shakeup of Ukraine’s military leadership is imminent at a critical point in war

By **ILLIA NOVIKOV**
and **SAMYA KULLAB**
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he is thinking about dismissing the country’s top military officer as part of a broader leadership shakeup, a possibility that has shocked the nation fighting a war to end Russia’s invasion and also worried Ukraine’s Western allies.

Zelenskyy confirmed in an interview with Italian broadcaster RAI TV released late Sunday that he was thinking about removing Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the popular commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s armed forces. He said he was contemplating the move to ensure the country remains led by individuals who are “convinced of victory” against Russia.

“A reset, a new beginning is necessary,” Zelenskyy said. The review is “not about a single person but about the direction of the country’s leadership.”

“I’m thinking about this replacement, but you can’t say here we replaced a single person,” Zelenskyy said. “When we talk about this, I mean a replacement of a series of state leaders, not just in a single sector like the military. If we want to win, we must all push in the same direction, convinced of victory. We cannot be discouraged, let our arms fall. We must have the right positive energy.”

Zelenskyy’s comments were his first acknowledgement of Zaluzhnyi’s possible firing. The potential ouster of the general already has caused an uproar in Ukraine and delighted the Kremlin as the war approaches

its second anniversary.

Zaluzhnyi is widely respected among Ukrainian service members and considered a national hero. He is credited with stalling Russia’s full-scale invasion in the early days of the war and expertly pushing back Moscow’s troops.

Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko criticized the possibility of Zaluzhnyi’s firing, saying it was due to the general’s leadership that “many Ukrainians truly trust the armed forces.”

“Today is a moment when politics might prevail over reason and country’s interests,” Klitschko said on social media. The mayor of Ukraine’s capital city has been a vocal critic of Zelenskyy. The presidency in turn has accused Klitschko’s office of inefficiencies.

It is unclear who might replace Zaluzhnyi and if his successor would command the same level of respect from Ukraine’s troops and foreign defense leaders. His firing could risk degrading morale at a critical time in the war.

According to Ukrainian and Western media reports, Zelenskyy asked Zaluzhnyi to resign last week, but the general refused. Zaluzhnyi has not commented publicly on the reports.

Tensions between him and the president have been rising since a much anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive, which was launched in June with the help of an array of Western weapons, failed to produce major territory gains in Russian-occupied areas, disappointing allies.

Ukraine now is grappling with ammunition and personnel shortages while Russia is on the



Ukrainian Presidential Press Office via AP
In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, visits the Zaporizhzhia region, the site of fierce battles with the Russian troops in Ukraine, Sunday.

offensive, mounting relentless attacks.

Four people were killed and at least one was injured in a Monday afternoon strike over the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine, the head of the local military administration said.

The need for a broad mobilization to beef up the number of Ukrainian troops has reportedly been one of the areas of disagreement between Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi.

Zelenskyy said at the end

of last year that he had turned down the military’s request to marshal up to 500,000 people, demanding more details about how the mobilization would be organized and paid for.

A rift between Zaluzhnyi and Zelenskyy first broke into the open in the fall when the general acknowledged in an interview with The Economist that the fighting with Russia had stalled. The president strongly denied that was the case.

For his part, Zaluzhnyi has

published two essays laying out his vision for how Ukraine can win the war. In his writings, he said it was critical for Ukraine to have air superiority, to extending its efficiency in countering enemy artillery, to build up reserves and to increase electronic warfare capabilities.

Dutch Defense Minister Kees de Vries announced Monday that the Netherlands was preparing six additional F-16 fighter jets to give Ukraine on top of 18 the country had previ-

ously pledged.

Ukraine’s “aerial superiority is essential for countering Russian aggression,” Ollongren said in a message on X, formerly Twitter. Denmark also has promised to donate 19 F-16s to Ukraine.

Lt. Gen. Serhii Nayevo, the commander of the Ukrainian military’s joint forces, said Monday that the country was set to receive missiles with a range 186 to 310 miles along with the F-16s as part of upcoming defense aid packages from its allies, according to Ukrainian news agency RBK-Ukraine.

Ukraine desperately needs more Western military assistance as Russian forces maneuver from many directions along the drawn-out war’s 900-mile front line. House Republicans in the U.S. are moving forward with a military spending package that provides aid to Israel but leaves out more help for Ukraine. Zaluzhnyi’s dismissal could fuel further uncertainty among Western allies.

Russia has rejoiced at the prospect, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that the talk about Zaluzhnyi’s dismissal exposed rifts in the Ukrainian leadership.

The Ukrainian Pravda newspaper reported Monday that Zelenskyy also was considering the removal of General Staff Chief Serhii Shapoval.

Zaluzhnyi on Monday congratulated Shapoval on his birthday and posted a picture of them together on Facebook.

“It will still be very difficult for us, but we will definitely never be ashamed,” Zaluzhnyi wrote.

Pakistan’s election resembles a coronation or a sure bet, leaving voters disillusioned

By **RIAZAT BUTT**
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan is holding parliamentary elections this week but many voters are disillusioned and wonder if the balloting can bring any real change in a country mired in political feuding, a seemingly intractable economic crisis and resurgent militancy.

Forty-four political parties will compete on Thursday for a share of the 266 seats in the National Assembly, or the lower house of parliament, with an additional 70 seats reserved for women and minorities.

After the election, the new parliament will choose the country’s next prime minister. If no party wins an outright majority, then the one with the biggest share of assembly seats can form a coalition government.

WHY DOES IT LOOK LIKE A SURE BET?

Many experts agree that in Pakistan’s political landscape today, there really seems to be only one top contender for the post of premier — Nawaz Sharif, a three-times former prime minister who has returned to the country and been absolved of past convictions.

Sharif came back last October after four years of self-imposed exile in London to avoid serving prison sentences. Within weeks of his return, his sentences were thrown out and his convictions overturned.

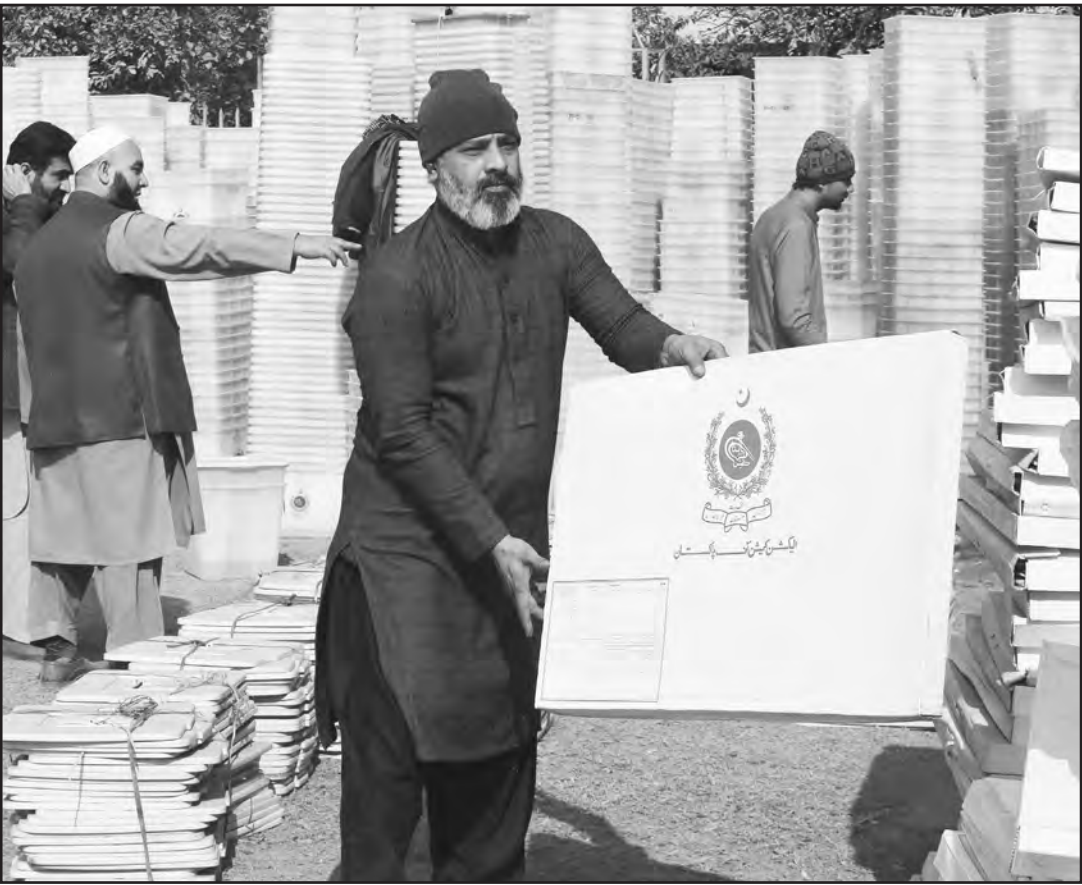
His archival, former Prime Minister Imran Khan, a cricket hero turned Islamist politician who was ousted in April 2022, is behind bars and banned from contesting the vote.

And although Khan has a significant grassroots following, it’s the intensity of his downfall and the ease of Sharif’s return that have led many to believe the outcome has been already decided.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Nuclear-armed Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world and an unpredictable Western ally. It borders Afghanistan, China, India and Iran — a region rife with hostile boundaries and tense relations.

For the international community, a strong and stable Pakistani government means a better



AP Photo/Muhammad Sajjad
Workers prepare ballot boxes and other materials before dispatching them in polling stations for the upcoming general election on Thursday, at an election commission office in Peshawar, Pakistan, Monday.

chance of containing any unrest, addressing economic challenges and stemming illegal migration.

And though anything can happen on election day, both Sharif’s Pakistan Muslim League and Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have led lackluster campaigns over the past few weeks — something experts say only feeds into the general apathy among some 127 million eligible voters.

That could come back to haunt Pakistan’s next government and set the stage for an even more intense brain drain and more political trouble ahead, as well as violent protests. And that in turn would only benefit Islamic militants.

A GROWING BACKLASH AGAINST THE ELITE

Khan’s May 2023 arrest triggered destructive rampages on a scale unseen since the 2007 assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Khan’s supporters blamed the military for his demise and set about wrecking military buildings and property — a strong message of defiance in a country where the

army wields huge influence.

The authorities responded with mass arrests, a crackdown on Khan’s party, and the introduction of military trials for civilians. The clampdown appears to have broken some of that spirit, though a recent pre-election rally in the southern city of Karachi, where police were forced to disperse Khan’s supporters with tear gas, showed that some were ready to fight for him.

Military affairs scholar Ayesha Siddiqi warns of more instability as the anti-establishment sentiment grows. “People are angry,” Siddiqi said. “The dislike of the army has increased tremendously, and it’s more noticeable.”

DANGERS OF APATHY

A year ago, Khan was still a free man rallying for a comeback while Sharif, ousted in 2017 over corruption allegations and banned for life from holding public office, was in London, seemingly out of the picture.

Now the tables have turned. Khan is in prison while Sharif’s

return and the absolution that followed — compounded with an election campaign he only launched on Jan. 15 — positioned him as the security establishment’s preferred candidate.

Pakistan isn’t known for holding free and fair elections. Ballot-stuffing, voter intimidation and other forms of electoral fraud have been commonplace in the past.

First-time voter Noreen Khan, who works in an Islamabad beauty salon, said she holds little hope for a free vote and believes there is no way Khan’s “party will be allowed to win” — despite its popularity.

Farzana Shaikh, an associate fellow at the London-based think tank Chatham House, says much seems “all too familiar” in this election.

“Nothing is shocking to those who have followed Pakistani politics,” she said and added that although there is a strong sense of déjà vu, she cannot remember so much division in the runup to an election.

“The political climate is the most polarized we have seen in Pakistan’s history,” she said.

King Charles III to halt public duties amid cancer therapy

By **JILL LAWLESS**
Associated Press

LONDON — Britain’s King Charles III has been diagnosed with cancer and has begun treatment, Buckingham Palace said Monday. Less than 18 months into his reign, the 75-year-old monarch will suspend public engagements but will continue with state business, and won’t be handing over his constitutional roles as head of state.

The palace didn’t disclose what form of cancer the king has, but said it’s not related to his recent treatment for a benign prostate condition. The palace said “a separate issue of concern was noted” during Charles’ treatment for an enlarged prostate last month, when he spent three nights in a London hospital.

“Diagnostic tests have identified a form of cancer,” it said in a statement.

“His Majesty has today commenced a schedule of regular treatments, during which time he has been advised by doctors to postpone public-facing duties,” the palace said. “Throughout this period, His Majesty will continue to undertake State business and official paperwork as usual.”

The king is being treated as an outpatient, the palace said.

It said Charles, who has generally enjoyed good health, “remains wholly positive about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible.”

The palace added that the king “has chosen to share his diagnosis to prevent speculation and in the hope it may assist public understanding for all those around the world who are affected by cancer.”

Charles became king in September 2022 when his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, died at the age of 96 after 70 years on the throne.

News of the king’s diagnosis comes as his daughter-in-law Kate, Princess of Wales, recovers from abdominal surgery that saw her hospitalized for about two weeks.

Kate is still taking a break from royal duties as she recovers. Her husband, Prince William, who is heir to the throne, also took time off to help look after the couple’s three children, but is due to preside over an investiture ceremony at Windsor Castle and a charity dinner on Wednesday.

Charles took the throne intending to preside over a slimmed-down monarchy with fewer senior royals carrying out ceremonial public duties.

But with Charles and Kate both temporarily sidelined, Prince Harry self-exiled to California and Prince Andrew largely banished from view because of his friendship with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the royal “firm” risks becoming severely overstretched.

The king personally called both William and Harry — as well as his siblings Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward — to share news of his health.

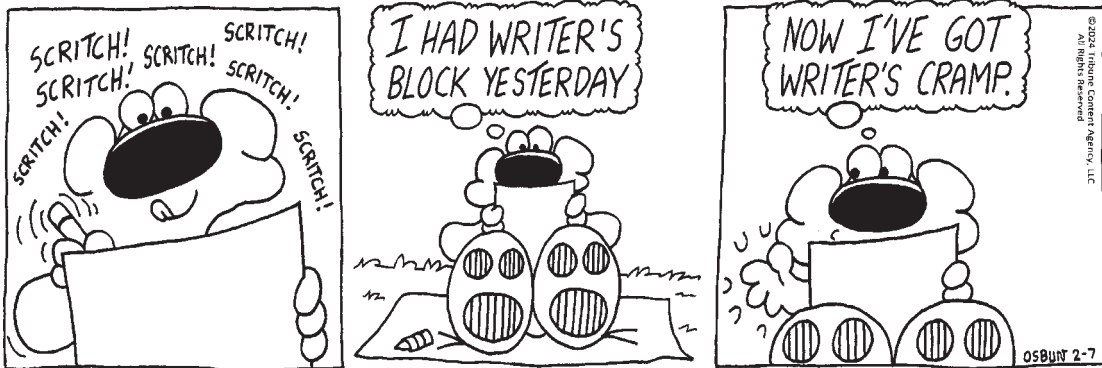
Harry, who quit royal duties in 2020, has spoken to his father about the diagnosis and “will be traveling to U.K. to see His Majesty in the coming days,” said the office of Harry and his wife, Meghan. U.K. political leaders sent messages of support. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak tweeted: “Wishing His Majesty a full and speedy recovery. I have no doubt he’ll be back to full strength in no time and I know the whole country will be wishing him well.”

U.S. President Joe Biden, traveling in Las Vegas on Monday, said he had just learned about Charles’s diagnosis and said he hopes to speak with him, “God willing.”

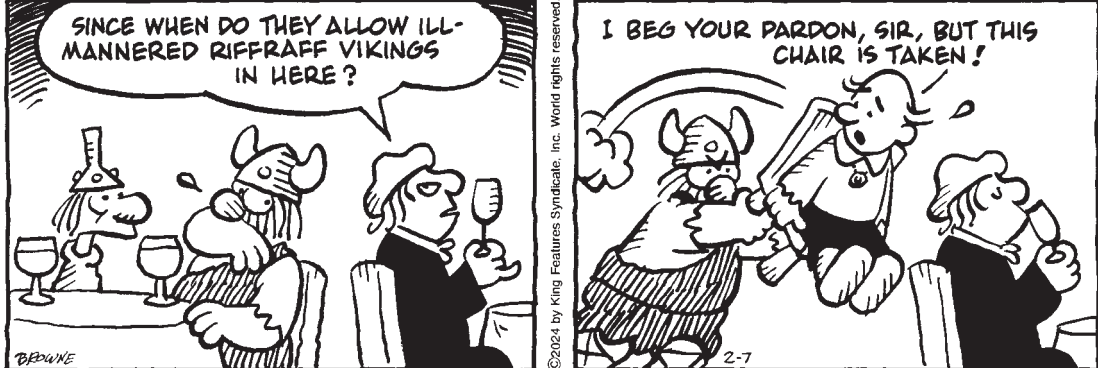
“I’m concerned about him,” Biden told reporters.

The president later posted on X, formerly known as Twitter: “Navigating a cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship takes hope and absolute courage. Jill and I join the people of the United Kingdom in praying that His Majesty experiences a swift and full recovery.”

ANIMAL CRACKERS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



BABY BLUES



HI AND LOIS



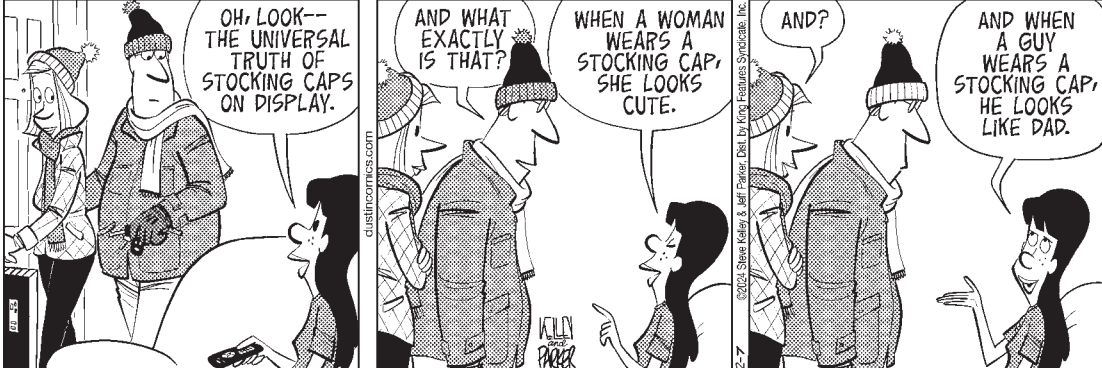
BEEBLE BAILEY



MUTTS



DUSTIN



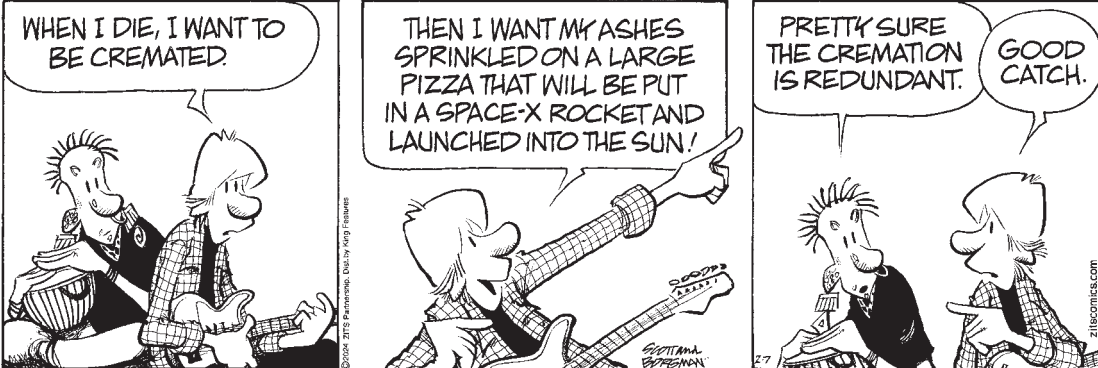
TIGER



GARFIELD



ZITS



Astrological Forecast

By Magi Helena

Thursday, February 8, 2024

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Do not waste hard-earned cash on a passing whim or on a new model just because it's the latest tech. Dig deeper to do some real homework beforehand, or just decide to tough it out with the tried and true for now.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): The latest, greatest inventions can entertain you or could force a change in your routines. You might not need to employ every strategy to achieve hopes and dreams. Wait until the facts are obvious before making a decision.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): If you look on the bright side you might find something valuable. Even a bad situation can be worth dealing with if you are familiar with those who are involved. Understand that someone's facade may just be only that.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Have faith that karma will eventually work in your favor if you make an effort to do the right thing. Fretting about things doesn't help but strategizing does. Avoid making financial decisions or signing loan agreements now.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Unflagging optimism and co-operation can be useful at the right time and place. Try to work through challenging situations while holding onto confidence in the final goal. Remember that conditions can and will always change.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): When you fear criticism it is tempting front or try to appear to be more than you are. Don't hide your talents and true nature; be honest about your background. You might discover some interesting or important facts.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): One of your haunts could be buzzing with a high-profile situation. Unless the matter concerns you, stay in your own lane. Your own performance could be scrutinized, so focus on resolving any issues which may be present.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): If you use common sense you can probably cut through. You might be in close touch with your situation and hyperalert for subtle signals. It may be worthwhile to heed the words of a wise and experienced partner.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You might be placed in a difficult position; some people may seem too critical while others may seem too vague. If something feels too good to be true it might have a hidden flaw you can't pinpoint immediately.

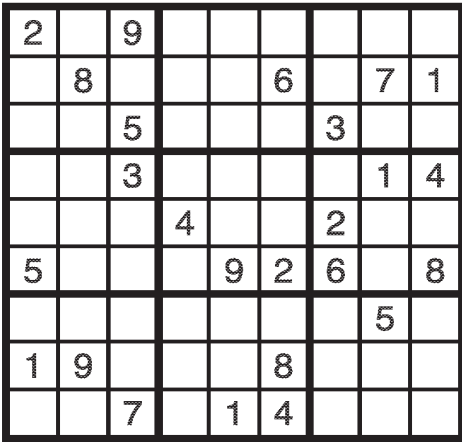
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It isn't whether you win or lose but how you play the game. Play to win, always, but also be warm and inclusive toward all contenders. Keep your money in your pocket unless there is a real emergency.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't initiate impulsive changes or you might cause unforeseen problems. Fortunes may have been looking up lately but beware of a financial situation that indicates you may not be quite as well off as you thought.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't paint yourself into a corner by voicing unasked-for advice, criticism or doubt. The stakes get higher with mounting responsibilities. Be as authentic as you can be, even if you think someone is trying to work you.

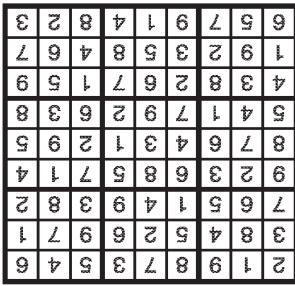
IF FEBRUARY 8 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: You might be picking up the pieces after a whirlwind change or unexpected disruption but you may also notice numerous benefits during the next three to four weeks. Although it is tempting to take the low road, focus on practical ways to achieve material security and use your street smarts to set things right. Singles might meet someone looking for a permanent partner, and those looking for a job or new career could find one that fits like a glove while you are likely to be at your most attractive. By proving your trustworthiness and keeping promises, your public image can shine like a lighthouse beacon in March.

Sudoku



Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!



ANSWER:

Cryptoquote

A XYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

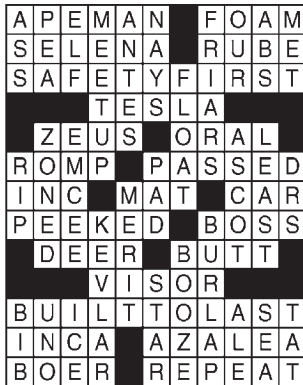
2-7 CRYPTOQUOTE
R MUWPE AZLP WDP ARKWZLP MU
WDRELREH WDWZ KMAPWDREH
WDZW RK MNBRMTK WM AP
RK ITKW ZK MNBRMTK WM
PBPSFMEP PJKP. — VDRAZAZEXZ
EHMYR ZXRVDPR
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: KEEP YOUR FACE ALWAYS TOWARD THE SUNSHINE — AND SHADOWS WILL FALL BEHIND YOU. — WALT WHITMAN

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

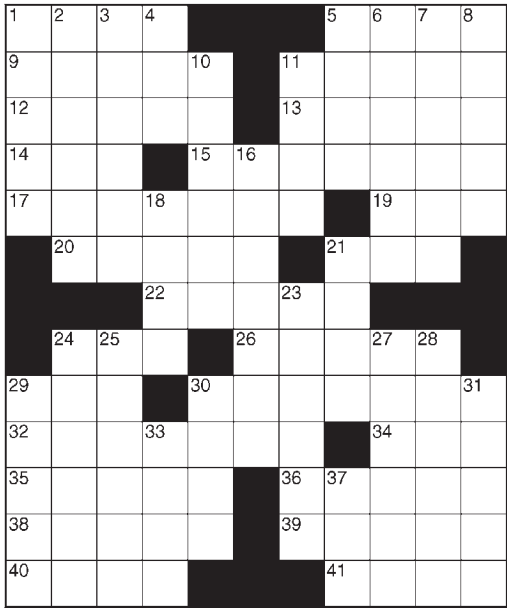
ACROSS 38 "— my case" 39 Belly feature 40 Car ding 41 Polite guy

DOWN 1 Words to learn, for short 2 Phone part 3 Hap-hazard 4 Sis's sib 5 Captivated 6 Ring combo 7 React to a ghost 11 Cow-hand's place 12 River vessel 13 Met work 14 Help out 15 Did some scheming 17 Dried by dabbing 19 Method 20 "The Hobbit" dragon 21 Male cat 22 Forge worker 24 Bible boat 26 Impetuous 29 Hearty brew 30 Like some spoons 32 Stopped flowing 34 Unrefined 35 Indian coin 36 Relish tray choice



Yesterday's answer

8 Like an elm grove 10 Nose part 11 Crucifix 16 Like good hand-writing 18 Gofer's work 21 Not this 23 Trampled 24 Charm 25 Resume business 27 Try hard 28 Angel's home 29 Bitter 30 Proofing note 31 Resided 33 Final, for one 37 Fall back



Word of the Day

quotidian (kwoh-TID-ee-un)

Definition: (adj.) Something described as quotidian occurs every day or occurs routinely or typically. More broadly, quotidian is used as a synonym of commonplace and ordinary.

Example: The article offers suggestions on how to gamify quotidian tasks.

— Courtesy Merriam-Webster Online

NY state aid to schools expected to change, legislators say

By BARBARA O'BRIEN
The Buffalo News (TNS)
NEW YORK — Many public school superintendents were stunned and dismayed when they learned their districts could get less state aid next year under the budget proposed by Gov. Kathy Hochul.
After the 2024-25 budget process plays out, they may harbor less anxiety.
That's because state legislators were surprised, too, and expect changes in the school aid proposal presented last month.
"I really kind of doubt that most of my colleagues are going to be interested in honoring her request," Assembly Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, D-Buffalo, told The Buffalo News.
The feeling is bipartisan.
"I think it's horrible," state Sen. George M. Borrello, R-Sunset Bay, said of the school aid proposal. "I think it's going to change."
The statewide teachers union that endorsed Hochul's election also hopes it happens. The New York State United Teachers said in a statement that the school aid proposal contains "broken promises and backtracking."
"Call them what you want; these are cuts," said Melinda Person, NYSUT president. "Once again, the state is turning its back on its support for our students and our communities."
Hochul's \$233 billion proposal would change part of the school aid formula used to dole out foundation aid, the main pot of money that helps districts with operating costs.
Districts were expecting the inflation adjustment to be 4.1%. The governor changed the method of calculating inflation by taking the average inflation for the last 10 years, throwing out the lowest and highest year, and came up with a 2.4% adjustment.
The governor also did away with "hold harmless" or "save harmless," which guarantees a district would not receive less aid than it did the previous year.
"This took us by surprise," said state Assemblyman Bill Conrad, D-Tonawanda, a member of the Assembly's Education Committee.
"We thought the hold harmless portion was going to leave things as they were from the previous year," Conrad told The Buffalo News.
More than 300 of the nearly 700 districts in New York would lose aid as a result, he said.
Fourteen districts in Erie and Niagara counties would receive less foundation aid than they got last year. Nine of the 39 districts in Erie and Niagara counties would receive less total aid under the governor's plan, and seven would get increases of under 1%. A three-year phase-in of fully funding the foundation aid was completed last year, which is why the teachers union sees the proposal as backtracking.
"It took less than a year after the legacy victory of fully funding foundation aid for that promise to be broken, and we now return to the same old fight for the resources all our schools desperately need," Person said in the NYSUT statement.

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Contract Bridge
When to cover an honor

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ A Q
♥ A 7 2
♦ 10 8 7 6 3
♣ 10 4 2
WEST
♠ J 10 6 3
♥ J 8 4
♦ 9 2
♣ 9 8 6 5
SOUTH
♠ 9 8 7 4
♥ K 9 5
♦ A K
♣ A Q J 3

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 3 NT
Opening lead — three of spades.
There is no simple rule governing the question of when a defender should cover an honor with an honor. In general, a defender covers when his side may gain a trick by doing so and does not cover when it might cost him a trick to do so.
Consider this deal where East wins the opening spade lead with the king and returns the five to dummy's ace. Declarer leads the ten

of clubs from dummy, and the question is whether East should cover with the king.
In the given situation, he should. Observe what happens when he doesn't. The ten wins, and a club continuation gives South four club tricks and the contract. But if East plays the king on the ten, South makes only three club tricks and goes down one, since West's nine becomes a stopper in the suit.
East has nothing to lose by covering, but stands to gain, depending on declarer's club holding. If, for example, South has A-Q-9-3, A-J-8-3, Q-J-8-3 or his actual holding, the failure to cover costs a trick, while covering gains a trick.
Declarer can sometimes foil the defense by not leading an honor in the first place. Thus, in the present case, once South appreciates the futility of leading the ten because East will play the king if he has it, he should lead the deuce instead.
When the queen wins, South returns to dummy with a heart and again leads a low club (not the ten). As it happens, East is forced to play the king, and South's worries are over.

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How 2 sentences in the Constitution rose from obscurity to ensnare Donald Trump

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI**
Associated Press

DENVER — In the summer of 2020, Gerard Magliocca, like many during the coronavirus pandemic, found himself stuck inside with time on his hands.

A law professor at Indiana University, Magliocca emailed with another professor, who was writing a book about overlooked parts of the Constitution's 14th Amendment. He decided he would research the history of two long-neglected sentences in the post-Civil War addition that prohibit those who "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" from holding office.

Magliocca posted a copy of his research — which he believed was the first law journal article ever written about Section 3 of the 14th Amendment — online in mid-December of 2020, then revised and re-posted it on Dec. 29. Eight days later, President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to prevent the certification of his loss to Joe Biden. Magliocca watched as Republicans such as Sens. Mitch McConnell and Mitt Romney described the attack as an "insurrection."

That night, Magliocca composed a quick post on a legal blog: "Section Three of the Fourteenth Amendment," he wrote, "might apply to President Trump."

Just over four years later, the U.S. Supreme Court will have to determine whether it does. On Thursday, the nation's highest court is scheduled to hear arguments over whether Trump can remain on the ballot in Colorado, where the state's Supreme Court ruled that he violated Section 3.

It's the first time in history that the nation's highest court has heard a case on Section 3, which was used to keep former Confederates from holding government offices after the amendment's 1868 adoption. It fell into disuse after Congress granted an amnesty to most ex-rebels in 1872.

Before the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, even many constitutional lawyers rarely thought about Section 3, a provision that isn't taught at most law schools and hadn't been used in court for more than 100 years. Legal scholars believe the only time it was cited in the 20th century was to deny a seat in Congress to a socialist on the grounds that he opposed U.S. involvement in World War I.

The clause's revival is due to an unlikely combination of Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, all rediscovering 111 words in the nation's foundational legal document that have now become a threat to the former president's attempt to return to office.

THE FIRST TARGETS

Once she had dried her tears after watching rioters storm the Capitol, Norma Anderson sat down with one of the multiple copies of the Constitution she keeps around her house in the Denver suburbs and reread the 14th Amendment.

"I made the connection," Anderson, now 91, said in an interview.

Anderson is a former Republican leader of Colorado's General Assembly and state Senate, and eventually would become the lead plaintiff in the case now before the Supreme Court. The evening of Jan. 6, she read the provision that prohibited anyone who swore an oath to "support" the Constitution and later "engaged in insurrection" against it, or provided "aid and comfort" to its enemies, from holding office.

Anderson didn't yet have the chance to spread the word beyond her own circle, but in the days after Jan. 6, thanks to scholars such as Magliocca and the University of Maryland law professor whose book project had inspired him, Mark Graber, Section 3 started its slow emergence from obscurity.

"We were the two people doing a little work on Section 3," Graber said of Magliocca and himself. "We thought this is real interesting; it makes great chitchat at the American Legal Historians Society." He added, "Then Donald Trump did academics a favor."

Though the provision was occasionally mentioned, conversation in Washington and the legal profession in general remained dominated by Trump's second impeachment — where he was acquitted by the Senate after 43 Republicans voted not to convict him.

It took months before the first mention of Section 3 in a public document. Free Speech For People, a Massachusetts-based liberal non-profit, sent letters to top election officials in all 50 states in June 2021,



AP Photo/John Minchillo, File

Trump supporters participate in a rally in Washington, Jan. 6, 2021, that some blame for fueling the attack on the U.S. Capitol. On Thursday, the nation's highest court is scheduled to hear arguments in a case involving Section 3 of the 14th Amendment, which prohibits those who "engaged in insurrection or rebellion" from holding office.

warning them not to place Trump on the ballot should he run again in 2024 because he had violated the provision.

None of them took action, part of a general silence in reaction to the group's arguments.

"People were just treating it as something that was not serious," recalled John Bonifaz, the group's co-founder.

In January 2022, Free Speech For People filed a complaint in North Carolina to disqualify Republican Rep. Madison Cawthorn under Section 3 for his involvement in the rally that preceded the Capitol attack. But Cawthorn lost his primary in that year's midterms, mooted the case.

At the same time, another liberal watchdog group was starting its own Section 3 campaign.

After Jan. 6, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics, also known as CREW, in Washington was focused on Trump's impeachment and other possible legal penalties against those who participated in the Capitol attack before exploring other remedies, said its chief counsel, Donald Sherman.

By January 2022, the group decided to test Section 3 in court.

"It wasn't just Trump we were focused on," Sherman said in an interview. "One thing we've been very careful about is we don't think it's appropriate to pursue outside or longshot cases."

Looking for a lower-level defendant, Sherman's organization zeroed in on Couy Griffin. The subject of one of the earliest Jan. 6 prosecutions, Griffin already has a rich legal record. He was recorded in a restricted area of the U.S. Capitol as head of a group called Cowboys for Trump. Griffin was convicted of illegally entering the Capitol, but acquitted of engaging in disorderly conduct.

He still served as a commissioner in a rural New Mexico county, which kept CREW's attention on him. On Sept. 6, 2022, a New Mexico judge ordered Griffin removed from his position. It was the first time in more than 100 years an official had been removed under Section 3. Griffin has appealed to the Supreme Court.

CREW prepared to turn to other Section 3 targets. But it quickly became clear Trump would be next. He announced his campaign for president on Nov. 15, 2022.

'IS THIS FOR REAL?'

Both Free Speech For People and CREW had similar discussions about how to challenge a presidential candidacy. They knew the complaints would have to come at the state level because federal courts have ruled that citizens can't challenge presidential criteria in that venue.

The two groups began scouring state ballot laws, looking for a place that allowed the rapid contesting of a candidacy. CREW settled on Colorado.

It had a clear process for a quick challenge in trial court that would be fast-tracked on appeal to the state Supreme Court.

After a brief trip to Denver checking on potential local lawyers to lead the challenge, Sherman and another CREW attorney, Nikhel Sus, contracted Martha Tierney, a veteran election lawyer who also served as general counsel of the state Democratic Party.

"Hmm, that's a longshot," Tierney recalled thinking. She signed up, anyway.

Tierney wasn't acting as the Democratic Party's lawyer, but CREW wanted to balance its team with someone from the right. Sherman reached out to Mario Nicolais, a former Republican election lawyer who had left the party over Trump.

Nicolais' first interaction with Sherman was a direct message about the case on X, the social media network previously known as Twitter. Nicolais thought it could be from a crank.

"Is this for real or is this from somebody just angry at the president?" Nicolais recalled wondering.

Then he saw Sherman was with CREW — an organization he considered serious. In Nicolais' office hangs a copy of his first appearance on the front page of The Denver Post, when he beat CREW's local chapter in a case before the Colorado Supreme Court.

Nicolais was in charge of recruiting plaintiffs. The attorneys wanted Republicans and independents, not only because they were eligible to vote in Colorado's Republican primary but also to keep the case from being seen as partisan. Anderson, the former state lawmaker, signed on right away.

On Sept. 6, 2023 — one year from the disqualification of the New Mexico county commissioner — Anderson's was the lead name of the six plaintiffs on the 105-page complaint filed in district court in Denver.

HISTORIC RULING

Scott Gessler got the call from Trump's team that day. A former Colorado secretary of state, Gessler was one of the go-to Republican election lawyers in the state.

Trump's campaign had been fending off scores of Section 3 lawsuits across the country, often from fringe players such as John Castro, a write-in Republican presidential candidate from Texas who had filed numerous ones against Trump.

This case was more serious. The Denver judge who got CREW's complaint, Sarah Block Wallace, said she was obligated to hold a hearing under Colorado election law.

In the five-day hearing, which took place in late October and early November, two officers who defended the Capitol testified, along with a University of California professor who was an expert in right-wing extremism, two Trump aides and several other witnesses. One was Magliocca, who laid out the history of Section 3.

Trump's attorneys were pessimistic, expecting Wallace, who had a history of donating to Democrats, to rule against them. Trump's top

spokesman, Jason Miller, addressed reporters outside court, complaining that the plaintiffs had intentionally filed in a liberal jurisdiction in a blue state.

Trump's lawyers filed a motion asking Wallace step aside because before becoming a judge, she had made a \$100 donation to a liberal group that had declared Jan. 6 was an "insurrection." She declined.

"I will not allow this legal proceeding to turn into a circus," Wallace said as the hearing began.

Testimony was occasionally interrupted by sirens from a fire station around the corner from Wallace's courtroom. Security was an ever-present concern.

About a half-dozen sheriff's deputies stood guard throughout the trial, and the plaintiffs had reached out to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

To handle much of the examination and argument, Tierney and Nicolais had brought on a new firm of trial lawyers, whose lead partner was former Colorado Solicitor General Eric Olson.

Wallace issued her decision on Nov. 17. She ruled that Trump had "engaged in insurrection" but found that — contrary to Magliocca's testimony — it wasn't certain that the authors of the 14th Amendment meant it to apply to the president. Section 3 refers to "elector of President and Vice President," but not specifically to the office itself.

Wallace was hesitant to become the first judge in history to bar a top presidential contender from the ballot unless the law was crystal clear.

"It was a loss that only a lawyer could love," Sus recalled.

CREW was just a legal sliver away from victory — it just needed the Colorado Supreme Court to uphold all of Wallace's ruling besides the technicality of whether the president was covered.

A COURT DIVIDED

The seven justices of the state's high court — all appointed by Democrats from a pool chosen by a nonpartisan panel — peppered both sides with pointed questions at oral argument three weeks later.

On Dec. 19, the court announced it would issue its ruling that afternoon. Sean Grimsley, one of Olson's law partners who also had argued the case, was in Washington, at the memorial service for former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, for whom he had clerked.

The ruling, which was 4-3, came down while Grimsley was on the flight back, frantically checking his phone via the plane's wi-fi. They had won. Grimsley leapt from his seat and dashed back several rows, where he high-fived a fellow O'Connor clerk who was on the flight.

Eight days later, Maine's Democratic secretary of state barred Trump from that state's ballot under Section 3.

That decision and Colorado's are on hold until the U.S. Supreme Court rules.

US to restrict visas for those using spyware on journalists

By **AAMER MADHANI** and **FRANK BAJAK**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration announced Monday it is rolling out a new policy that will allow it to impose visa restrictions on foreign individuals involved in the misuse of commercial spyware.

The administration's policy will apply to people who've been involved in the misuse of commercial spyware to target individuals including journalists, activists, perceived dissidents, members of marginalized communities, or the family members of those who are targeted. The visa restrictions could also apply to people who facilitate or get financial benefit from the misuse of commercial spyware, officials said.

"The United States remains concerned with the growing misuse of commercial spyware around the world to facilitate repression, restrict the free flow of information, and enable human rights abuses," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement announcing the new policy. "The misuse of commercial spyware threatens privacy and freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Such targeting has been linked to arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings in the most egregious of cases."

Biden issued a executive order nearly a year ago restricting the U.S. government's use of commercial spyware "that poses risks to national security."

That order required the head of any U.S. agency using commercial programs to certify that they don't pose a significant counterintelligence or other security risk, a senior administration official said. It was issued as the White House acknowledged a surge in hacks of U.S. government employees, across 10 countries, that had been compromised or targeted by commercial spyware.

A senior administration official who briefed reporters ahead of Monday's announcement would not say if any particular individuals were in line to immediately be impacted by the visa restrictions. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House.

Officials said the visa restriction policy can apply to citizens of any country found to have misused or facilitated the malign use of spyware, even if they are from countries whose citizens are allowed entry into the U.S. without first applying for a visa.

Under U.S. law, visa records are confidential, so the State Department is not expected to publicly name individuals impacted by the policy.

Ron Deibert, the director of University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, a pioneer in exposing spyware mercenaries, called the White House announcement an "important step towards accountability" given that makers of the malware can rebrand and avoid sanctions. He said he wishes the U.S. could publicly "name and shame" those involved.

Still, Deibert said he's hopeful the measure would "bring some tangible pains to those people who profit from the horrific abuses of spyware, and the domestic and transnational repression that it facilitates. Other countries should follow the U.S. lead."

While the use of commercial spyware by autocratic governments in the Middle East in particular has been rampant, its abuse in recent years in countries including Mexico, Poland, Greece, Spain, Thailand and Hungary against journalists, lawyers and political activists has alarmed the human rights community.

Perhaps the best known example of spyware, the Pegasus software from Israel's NSO Group, was used to target more than 1,000 people across 50 countries, according to security researchers and a July 2021 global media investigation, citing a list of more than 50,000 cellphone numbers.

The U.S. has already placed export limits on NSO Group, restricting the company's access to U.S. components and technology.

Pegasus spyware was used in Jordan to hack the cellphones of at least 30 people, including journalists, lawyers, human rights and political activists, the digital rights group Access Now announced last week.

The hacking with spyware made by Israel's NSO Group occurred from 2019 until last September, according to Access Now. It did not accuse Jordan's government of the hacking. Amnesty International also reported that its forensic researchers had determined that Pegasus spyware was installed on the phone of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi's fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, just four days after he was killed in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018. The company had previously been implicated in other spying on Khashoggi.



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks during a news conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the State Department, Jan. 29, in Washington.