

ONLY IN NEWSDAY

D/W

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research cuts paused  
for now

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New York City Mayor Eric Adams

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# HOW CHURCH FIGHTS ABUSE TODAY

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says it's taken  
major steps to  
protect  
children, but  
some say they  
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NEWSDAY / STEVE POST

The diocese says the number of cases of abuse has fallen dramatically.

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## TOP STORIES

# Working to stop clergy abuse on LI

Diocese takes action; critics believe more could be done

### ONLY IN NEWSDAY

BY BART JONES  
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The Roman Catholic Church on Long Island says it has taken major steps to protect children from clergy sex abuse and is seeing real progress about two decades after the worst scandal in its history erupted.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre said new measures, such as automatically reporting all allegations to law enforcement, have created one of the safest environments anywhere for children. They point to dramatically falling numbers of reported current cases as evidence the policies are working.

The diocese said it immediately removes from ministry any clergy member accused of sexual abuse when allegations have been deemed credible by law enforcement or church-hired investigators — and announces it at Sunday Masses in the priest's or deacon's parish in front of often-stunned parishioners.

It reports all allegations, regardless of whether they are initially deemed credible, to the local district attorney for potential criminal prosecution, the diocese said. And it has put some 160,000 clergy, employees and volunteers through training aimed at preventing child sex abuse.

The church said it screens candidates for the priesthood to try to prevent potential abusers from getting to the altar in the first place. And if alleged abuse does happen, it has



Victim Richard Tollner believes the church could still do more.

### WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

- **The Roman Catholic Church on Long Island** says it has taken major steps to protect children following the clergy sex abuse scandal that erupted in 2002.
- **The Diocese of Rockville Centre** says that current cases of reported abuse are down.
- **Some critics of the church** agree it has taken significant steps, but others say systemic problems remain.

a confidential hotline for reporting it: 516-594-9063.

"It is arguable that more has been done to actively address and prevent abuse in the Church over the past 20 years than in any other institution," the diocese said in a statement.

Rockville Centre, one of the

largest Catholic dioceses in the nation with 1.2 million baptized Catholics, was facing 600 lawsuits for clergy sexual abuse when it declared bankruptcy in October 2020. Most allegations dated to the 1960s through the 1980s, said diocesan spokesman the Rev. Eric Fasano. The diocese reached a \$323 million settlement with victims in December.

About 40 Catholic dioceses, archdioceses or religious orders in the United States have declared bankruptcy because of clergy sex abuse lawsuits since the scandal broke nationally in 2002, according to Bishop Accountability, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit that tracks accused clergy sex abusers and has been highly critical of the Catholic Church's handling of the scandal. Rockville Centre's payout was the largest of any of them.

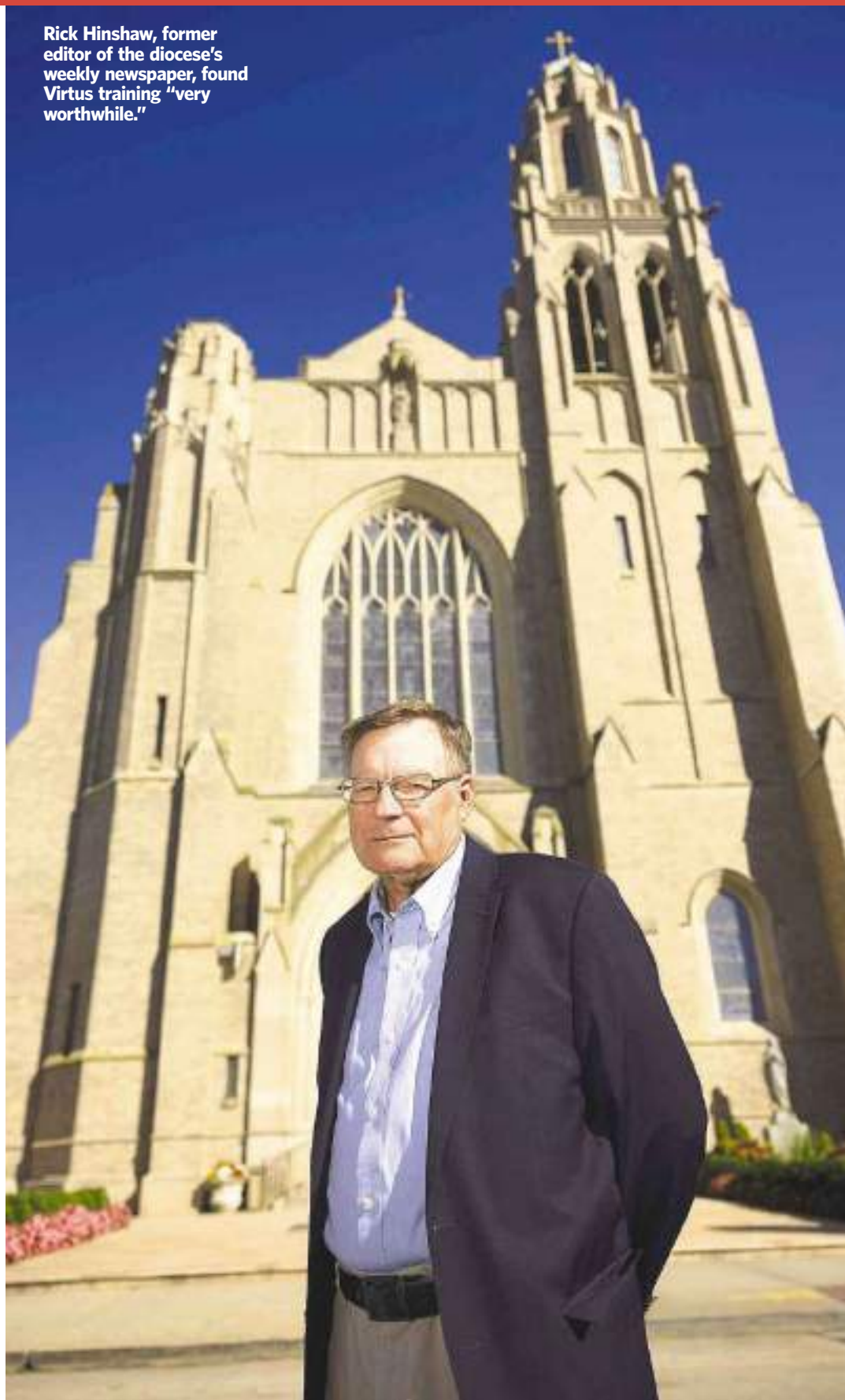
Some Catholics said they believe the diocese's claims of making children safer are exaggerated and that it could do more to root out abusive clergy.

#### Numbers down dramatically

Richard Tollner, a clergy sex abuse victim who headed a committee of survivors during the diocese's recent bankruptcy proceedings, said, "Whatever steps they have taken, I am certain they can do more." He thinks the number of reported abuse cases has gone down in part because "there are more people watching from the public."

Since 2003, two deacons and one priest have been accused of new cases of sexual abuse in the Diocese of

Rick Hinshaw, former editor of the diocese's weekly newspaper, found Virtus training "very worthwhile."



NEWSDAY/ALEJANDRA VILLA LOARCA

Rockville Centre, the diocese said. The case of the priest was reported in 2007. The deacons' cases were reported in 2023, but did not involve children from any church-related setting, Fasano said.

Those three cases over a

two-decade period compare with more than 100 reported cases per decade when the abuse was at its worst in the 1960s, '70s and '80s, according to church officials.

Some Catholics, including some fierce critics of the

church, said they believe the diocese has taken important steps to protect children. While the measures may not be perfect, they are a far cry from practices before the scandal broke, they said.

"It's not ideal. It's not water-

tight. But it's an improvement, and I think that children are safer as a result," said Terry McKiernan, a leader of Bishop Accountability.

Whereas in the past accused priests were quietly shuffled from parish to parish by church officials, according to authorities and a 2003 Suffolk County grand jury report, they are now removed from ministry if an accusation is considered credible, Fasano said.

Critics said abusive priests often can't be criminally prosecuted because it can take years for victims to come forward — sometimes long past the statute of limitations. But, under the new protocol, the priest would be removed and unable to do any more harm if the allegations are credible, the church said.

Fasano said while clergy are presumed innocent during the investigations, "false accusations do occur and can have devastating consequences. Great care is taken, always in cooperation with law enforcement, to protect the safety of the public while preserving the reputation of those who might be falsely accused."

During the bankruptcy proceedings, the diocese submitted to the court a list of accused priests dating to its founding in 1957. McKiernan called that significant, and said not all Catholic dioceses around the country have provided such lists.

The diocese's efforts to make the church safer for children date back to the early 2000s, when numerous allegations of clergy sex abuse emerged.

After The Boston Globe wrote a series of articles starting in early 2002 about the decadeslong scandal in the Archdiocese of Boston, news media exposés quickly surfaced in other dioceses around the country, including in Newsday on Long Island.

By June 2002, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, meeting in Dallas, adopted a series of mandatory reforms that were dubbed "zero tolerance."

The Rockville Centre diocese was among those that signed on.

### Rigorous screening

The diocese now conducts "rigorous psychological screening and training" for candidates to the priesthood and diaconate before and during their seminary training to try to prevent potential abusers from getting ordained in the first place,

Fasano said.

Today, every priest, deacon, employee and volunteer in the diocese must undergo an initial background screening and then a follow-up review every five years if engaged in active ministry, Fasano said.

They must also take part in the "Protecting God's Children Program" run by a company called Virtus, in which they learn how to prevent child abuse and to recognize signs of abuse, Fasano said. The program started in 2003 and continues to be offered daily throughout the diocese, including in Spanish. Those engaged in ministry with children must also take ongoing training by reading a short monthly bulletin.

Children in Catholic schools and religious education programs also now take part in an age-appropriate Virtus program.

Under guidelines established in 2003, clergy, employees and volunteers cannot be alone with a minor. Pastoral counseling and meetings "should be conducted during regular office hours and in professional settings, which should include offices with some open visibility, such as windows in office doors," Fasano said in a statement.

To ensure parishes, employees and clergy adhere to the guidelines, the diocese established an Office for the Protection of Children and Young People. It performs on-site audits and works with trained safe environment coordinators in each parish, Fasano said.

He acknowledged that preventing child sex abuse "demands constant vigilance," but said that "the Diocese is committed to it."

### Debating diocese reforms

Some Catholics on Long Island are still skeptical. Pat McDonough, who worked for the diocese for 30 years in posts including teacher and parish director of religious education, said "programs created to protect children were nothing more than smoke and mirrors. It has always been about protecting the clergy and the assets of the institution."

But others say the church has made progress.

Rick Hinshaw, a former editor of The Long Island Catholic, the diocese's now-defunct weekly newspaper, said he had to complete the Virtus training and found the experi-

See DIOCESE on A4

# Bill to delay special elections in NY axed

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY

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ALBANY — A state bill that could have delayed filling a vacant Republican seat in Congress until November was pulled before a vote on Monday.

Two state sources said Gov. Kathy Hochul persuaded the State Legislature to delay any action on the proposal.

The bill would require all special elections to fill vacated state and congressional seats to be held on Election Day in November. The bill's Democratic supporters said they sought to save money by avoiding separate special elections and to assure a bigger voter turnout.

Republicans, however, said the bill would potentially weaken the GOP's slim majority in Congress. Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-Schuylerville) is President Donald Trump's nominee for ambassador to the United Nations. If she is confirmed by the Republican-controlled Senate, her upstate seat in a heavily Republican district would

be vacant until it is filled by a special election.

Republicans have a 218-215 majority in the House.

Currently, most special elections are filled within 90 days.

The state sources said Hochul, a Democrat, called for a delay in acting on the bill. One of the sources noted Hochul is negotiating with the Republican Trump administration on billions of dollars in federal aid for infrastructure and other programs.

The bill was introduced late Friday and sponsored by Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (D-Bronx) and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers). The bill moved quickly and could have reached the floor of each chamber as early as Monday for approval by the Democratic majorities.

But the Assembly adjourned without taking up the bill. The Senate didn't advance its version of the bill that had moved to the powerful Rules Committee, which could send the measure to a floor vote.

The bill, however, remains

active and could still be sent to votes by the full Senate and Assembly. Hochul, however, would have to sign the bill into law and any attempt to override a veto would be unlikely.

Republicans had called the bill a brazen, politically motivated power grab to rig the electoral system.

"The bill that was introduced to delay the special election for the 21st Congressional District is no longer moving forward," Assemb. Will Barclay (R-Pulaski), the minority leader, said. "It was a terrible piece of legislation in policy and in principle. Thanks to strong pushback from Republican legislators and North Country residents, the bill has been halted."

"Once a seat becomes vacant, a special election should be called at a reasonable time to ensure all New Yorkers have the representation they deserve," Barclay said in a statement.

Stefanik has become an ardent support of Trump and, in a hearing, pledged to continue Trump's "America first" mantra if confirmed as ambassador.

# HOCHUL BANS

## Growing concern Chinese AI app could steal data

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY

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ALBANY — Gov. Kathy Hochul on Monday banned the DeepSeek software from state computer systems over concerns the Chinese artificial intelligence product could steal data and technology secrets in a cyberattack.

Hochul's move comes as academic researchers warn of the potential capabilities of DeepSeek to mount cyberattacks in the United States. Government officials claim the company that produced DeepSeek is linked directly to China.

A similar ban of DeepSeek is being pushed in Congress.

"We're working aggressively to protect New Yorkers from foreign and domestic threats," Hochul said in a statement Monday. "New York will continue fighting to combat cyber threats [and] ensure the privacy and safety of our data,

### WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

■ **Gov. Kathy Hochul has banned the DeepSeek** software from state computer systems over concerns the Chinese artificial intelligence product could steal data and technology secrets in a cyberattack.

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and safeguard against state-sponsored censorship."

DeepSeek is AI that is capable of reasoning through problems like a human. It can be used in many ways, including computer coding. DeepSeek has attracted attention from U.S. companies seeking to capitalize on it, which many experts in the field consider bet-



Terry McKiernan, of Bishop Accountability, believes the church has made "a significant improvement."

# Church compelled

DIOCESE from A3

ence "very worthwhile."

Employees were taught to look for warning signs of possible abuse, such as a child becoming anxious or being reluctant to be in a certain adult's presence, he said. They also learned to be on alert for adults who were inappropriately touching children or inappropriately giving gifts, or who were manipulating situations to be alone with a child.

"It was made clear to us if you see these kinds of red flags, report them to the immediate authorities," Hinshaw said.

"It's very understandable that survivors of abuse would have a hard time crediting the church for anything then or since, because they were not protected, and the feeling of that betrayal is in many cases

never going to leave them," he added. "But looking at it objectively, I think we can see that the church nationwide, but certainly in our diocese, has really been making and continues to make a strong effort to protect children."

Others said any steps the diocese has taken were because it had to, given the overwhelming public outrage over the scandal, and that it has done only the minimum.

"The church has only responded when outside influences have forced a response," said the Rev. Gerard McGlone, a Jesuit priest, psychologist and expert on clergy sex abuse who works at the Georgetown University Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. "This was not something initiated. It was not the church recognizing its sins and then

# DEEPSEEK FROM NYS COMPUTERS



NEWSDAY / J. CONRAD WILLIAMS JR.



AP/ANDY WONG

Gov. Kathy Hochul's move comes as concerns that DeepSeek could jeopardize national security grow.

ter than other AI models and, according to the company that promotes it, far cheaper.

But concerns continue as to whether DeepSeek could extract data that could jeopardize personal, corporate and national security. New York's computer systems hold extensive data, including New Yorkers' personal, tax and health data; information from corporations that is proprietary and shielded from competitors, and public safety resources and strategies.

There is much to be concerned about with about DeepSeek, but also reason for interest in the potential prom-

ise of this new step in AI, said Rob Glew, a professor at McGill University in Montreal who has studied DeepSeek.

## AI could take data

He said governments are concerned a public worker might use DeepSeek to help develop public programs, such as social services.

"These models aren't static, they are data driven," Glew said in an interview with Newsday. "The data you put in is being used to advance, to provide more data for it to learn. . . you typed in some details of an important welfare program. . . but

we don't know where it's going."

He said DeepSeek appears capable of taking some data from one user and using data from other users to secure information that was intended be protected within state computers.

Much of the concern stems from DeepSeek's privacy policies, said Dominic Sellitto, assistant faculty director of the University at Buffalo Center for AI Business Innovation.

He said many AI producers have a policy that states: "Any data you give us, we may sell and share with third parties." Other AI producers address that concern by having different security

levels for government and corporate versions of their products, he said. DeepSeek doesn't appear to have a more secure government-level product at this time, he said. The result is bans by governments.

## 'Public disinformation'

"I think it's relatively in line with the what we are seeing around the world," Sellitto said.

Another concern is in spreading disinformation, such as how it describes issues that conflict with the goals of the Chinese government, or to provide an overly positive view of the government to the world.

"The classic thing is if you ask DeepSeek what happened at Tiananmen Square. It says, 'I don't know about that,'" Glew said of the 1989 uprising against China's communist government. "There is evidence of that public disinformation. . . which seems to be inspired by the manifesto of the Communist Party."

But DeepSeek is also prompting other AI companies to find less expensive ways to provide the benefits of using AI to solve problems and develop ideas, Glew said.

The Washington contact for

DeepSeek wasn't taking questions from reporters.

Last week, a bipartisan bill was introduced into the House dubbed, "No DeepSeek on Government Devices Act." The sponsors said the ban is needed because of China's ability to use the app for surveillance and misinformation.

"The Chinese Communist Party has made it abundantly clear that it will exploit any tool at its disposal to undermine our national security, spew harmful disinformation, and collect data on Americans," Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) said in a statement to The Associated Press.

Co-sponsor Rep. Darin LaHood (R-Ill.) said the federal ban would close "backdoor operations the company seeks to exploit for access."

DeepSeek has already been banned or partly banned for use by government in Texas, Italy, Australia, Taiwan and South Korea, according to the AP.

CHINESE AI  
STARTUP RAMPS  
UP HIRING **A20**

# to act by 'courageous' survivors of clergy abuse

lamenting" them.

McKiernan, of Bishop Accountability, said: "I do think there's been a significant improvement, and I don't think it's out of the kindness of their hearts. They were compelled to do this because survivors were courageous enough to come forward and because" the media exposed the scandal.

McGlone, himself a clergy sex abuse victim, said there are signs the church — and the Diocese of Rockville Centre — have taken the scandal seriously. The bishops conference has commissioned three major studies over the past two decades from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan examining why priests abuse children and what can be done about it.

Marci Hamilton, a professor at the University of Pennsylva-

**It's not ideal. It's not watertight. But it's an improvement and I think that children are safer as a result.'**

— Terry McKiernan, a leader of Bishop Accountability, a nonprofit that tracks clergy sex abuse

nia and founder of the nonprofit Child USA, which fights to protect children, said she gives the Diocese of Rockville Centre credit for steps such as mandatory reporting of allegations to law enforcement and Virtus training.

While her group has not studied Rockville Centre, she suspects it still needs to do more. Her group conducted a study of 32 Catholic archdioceses in the country and found

that none scored above 50% on a policy analysis test. The test evaluates eight areas, such as background screening, whistleblower protection and victims' rights.

"Every organization is doing something right basically. But the question is, have they filled out all of eight domains?" she said. "None of them have all the policies that they need to have a safe space for children."

"They're very eager to move

on," Hamilton added. "They're very eager to say, 'We are now safe for children. Of course we have done everything.' But they haven't."

Rockville Centre could undergo the analysis if it wants, she said. Fasano said the diocese is not familiar with the testing tool but is open to considering it.

McKiernan said it is hard to judge how well Rockville Centre has done in part because it is not very transparent. Its list of accused clergy, for instance, is hard to find on its website and is not complete, he said.

Fasano said the diocese is working to put its list in a more accessible spot, along with Bishop John Barres' apology letter to survivors and other related materials.

McGlone said while dioceses such as Rockville Centre have

taken steps to protect children, it and the Catholic Church in general have failed to address the systemic causes of the problem. They include the formation of priests in seminaries and "clericalism," a system that places priests on a pedestal.

The formation system "emboldens seminarians to be more, not less clerical," feeding the notion their "role is more important than who they are as men," McGlone said.

"They keep infantilizing the men — keeping them and the system stuck in an adolescent level of psychosocial immaturity," he said.

"The church has a great story to tell but the story also has its limitations," he added. "I don't think the response has been sufficient enough. We've done good things, but we have so much more to do."

# Experts: Cuts to NIH

## LI BUSINESSES CALL TRUMP'S PLAN TO PITCH PENNIES COMMON 'CENTS'

ONLY IN NEWSDAY

BY ROBERT BRODSKY  
robert.brodsky@newsday.com

To them, it just makes cents. Some members of Long Island's business community expressed support Monday for a directive from President Donald Trump telling the U.S. Treasury Department to stop minting the one-cent coin.

"For far too long the United States has minted pennies which literally cost us more than 2 cents. This is so wasteful!" Trump said in a post Sunday night on his Truth Social site. "I have instructed my Secretary of the US Treasury to stop producing new pennies."

Michael Clara, co-owner of Ciro's Pizza of East Meadow, said dealing with pennies can be "annoying," especially as most of his business involves credit card transactions.

"We always round down," Clara said before the start of Monday's lunch rush. "We never even take the penny. So we would be OK with this idea."

Tim Kalogeratos, manager of the Apollo Diner, also in East Meadow, agreed and said he'd prefer to come up with a system where customer bills can be rounded out.

"It becomes a deal because there's not enough out there," he said of pennies and the problem of giving customers exact change. "We don't find any. It can be a nuisance."

Trump's idea — part of a wave of cost-cutting initiatives proposed in recent weeks by Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency — is not new.

Former U.S. Mint Director Edmund Moy urged lawmakers during his tenure from 2006 through 2011 to pass legislation ordering the end of the penny. Members of Congress



East Meadow pizzeria owner Michael Clara rounds his bills down.

have repeatedly proposed legislation to suspend or eliminate the one-cent coin from circulation but those bills failed to gain traction, records show.

The half-cent coin, meanwhile, was discontinued by Congress in 1857.

The U.S. Mint said in its 2024 annual report that taxpayers lost \$85.3 million on the nearly 3.2 billion pennies it produced last year. Every one-cent coin, the report states, costs nearly \$0.037 to produce — up from \$0.031 the year before.

While proponents of discontinuing the coin said it will save money and create quicker checkout lines, critics said the plan is penny wise and pound-foolish.

"Many Mint overhead costs would remain and have to be absorbed by other coins without the penny. Also, there would be greater demand for expensive nickels, which means even more costs," Mark Weller, executive director of Washington D.C.-based organization Americans for Common Cents, which in part represents companies involved in penny manufacturing, said in a statement.

The nickel is no bargain with each five-cent coin costing almost \$0.14 to make, according to the U.S. Mint.

Herman Berliner, a professor of economics at Hofstra University, said Monday the overall role of the penny in the U.S. economy is so small the coin would hardly be missed.

"If you look at consumer spending, 86% does not involve cash," Berliner said. "So you're talking about 14% of consumer spending. And that gives you a sense of how minuscule the impact of the penny is."

Matt Cohen, president and chief executive of Melville-based Long Island Association, the region's largest business group, said the penny's time has come and gone.

"It is a common sense win-win to streamline business transactions," Cohen added Monday of a penny production stop. "Pennies will become a collectors' item and President Lincoln, whose birthday is this week, will still be honored on the five-dollar bill."

Ending production of a one-cent coin wouldn't be unique to the United States.

### THE REAL COST OF A PENNY

Factoring in expenses such as minting, administration and distribution to Federal Reserve Board, one penny costs:



**\$0.0369**

Per-unit cost of other coins:

Nickel	\$0.1378
Dime	\$0.0576
Quarter	\$0.1468
Half-dollar	\$0.3397

SOURCE: UNITED STATES MINT

Canada stopped minting its penny in 2012, a move that Canadian government officials said in budget documents that year would save about \$11 million annually.

But a 2017 paper by economist Christina Cheung found Canadian grocery store consumers paid a "tax" of about \$3.27 million due to prices being rounded up on everything from bacon to eggs.

Alison Ritchie, president of the Albany-based New York Association of Convenience Stores, said Monday that elimination of the penny could streamline cash transactions, reducing the time spent counting and handling small change.

"However, this change raises questions about pricing and rounding policies, as well as how it might affect customers who primarily use cash," Ritchie said. "Officials will need to provide clear guidelines to ensure that rounding practices are fair and do not disadvantage consumers or retailers."

With AP

Federal judge's order blocks move by Trump

ONLY IN NEWSDAY

BY NICHOLAS SPANGLER  
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A federal judge Monday temporarily blocked President Donald Trump from imposing cuts to medical research experts said would hobble work on Long Island and across the country intended to help 9/11 survivors and people living with cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases.

A two-page order by Judge Angel Kelley of the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts granted a request for a restraining order filed hours earlier by New York State Attorney General Letitia James and 21 other state attorneys general alleging the cuts violated congressional appropriations law and asking that grant payments continue.

The order sets a Feb. 21 hearing.

In a video posted Monday on X, James said the Trump administration's funding cut "defies Congress, puts lifesaving medical and scientific research at risk and ignores the law."

### Derailing research

Bruce Stillman, a biochemist and cancer researcher who

## Judge:

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge found Monday that the Trump administration hasn't fully followed his order to unfreeze federal spending and told the White House to release all the money.

U.S. District Judge John McConnell ruled that continued struggles to get federal money for things like early childhood education, pollution reduction and HIV prevention research violated his Jan. 31 order. He ordered the Trump administration to "immediately take every step necessary" to fol-

# funds harm research

## WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

- A federal judge Monday temporarily blocked President Donald Trump from imposing cuts to medical research.
- Experts said the cuts would hobble work on Long Island and across the country intended to help 9/11 survivors and people living with cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases.
- The change would cap the maximum "indirect cost rate" research institutions charge the government at 15% of any grant.

serves as director of the non-profit Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, said in an interview that the cuts would derail research at universities and at private institutes like his.

"It's going to decimate science in the United States," he said. At his lab, "we will have to shut down probably about half our research if this persists," he said. The lab's work has helped develop drugs for breast cancer and spinal muscular atrophy, a potentially lethal disorder.

"It keeps children alive who would normally die," Stillman said.

The change announced Friday by the National Institutes of Health caps the maximum "indirect cost rate" research in-



Bruce Stillman, director of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, said funding cuts would harm research.

stitutions charge the government at 15% of any given grant. The NIH, in a tweet Friday night, described indirect costs as "administrative overhead" but researchers say indirect costs also include scientific computing, medical waste management and lab maintenance.

For fiscal 2023, \$9 billion of \$35 billion the NIH granted nationally went toward "overhead," according to the agency. The new policy applies to current and future grants.

Long Island is a medical research hub, home to research institutions including Stony Brook,

Northwell Health's Feinstein Institutes, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Brookhaven National Laboratory as well as biotech companies. The latest available job numbers for the region, from second quarter 2024, included 8,356 research and development jobs in biotechnology, physical

engineering and life sciences, according to the state Department of Labor. It was not clear how many of those jobs were supported by NIH grants.

## Long Island projects

The region's four congressional districts draw a combined \$220 million in NIH funding for 462 research projects, according to the NIH. Across New York, NIH research grants support almost 30,000 jobs and \$7.97 billion in economic activity, according to United for Medical Research, a coalition of research institutions and health advocates.

U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Glen Cove), whose district includes Cold Spring and Feinstein, said the cuts would jeopardize the nation's global standing as a top destination for scientific researchers.

"The Chinese Communist Party is cheering right now," Suozzi said. "This is going to slow the discovery of new treatments, it's going to destroy the training of the next generation of scientific leaders. . . Why would we want to hamstring one of our greatest strengths, especially when we're facing competition from very dangerous adversaries?"

U.S. Rep. Nick LaLota (R-Amityville), whose district is a major recipient of NIH funding and includes Stony Brook University, did not comment. U.S. Reps. Laura Gillen (D-Rockville Centre) and Andrew Garbarino (R-Bayport) said in statements that they were monitoring the situation.

# Order to unfreeze federal spending not met



President Donald Trump has ordered funding frozen.

low his temporary restraining order over halting its plans for a sweeping freeze of federal funding.

The White House did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

The judge said his temporary restraining order also blocks the administration from cutting billions of dollars in grant funding from the National Institutes of Health.

"These pauses in funding violate the plain text of the (temporary restraining order)," he wrote. "The broad categorical and sweeping freeze of federal funds is, as the Court found, likely unconstitutional and has caused and continues to cause irreparable harm to a vast portion of this country."

The administration has said it was making good-faith efforts to comply with the judge's ruling in a lawsuit filed by nearly two dozen states. But the Justice Department also argued that his ruling only applied to a sweeping spending freeze outlined in a late January memo that has since been rescinded.

The ruling doesn't apply to other spending pauses outlined in different memos, including funds that were part of President Joe Biden's signature climate, health care and tax package.

But McConnell, who is based in Rhode Island and was nomi-

nated by President Barack Obama, said his order blocked the administration from a wide range of funding cuts.

The Republican administration previously said the sweeping funding pause would bring federal spending in line with the president's agenda, and the White House press secretary has indicated some spending halts would continue as part of his blitz of executive orders.

Trump has sought to increase fossil fuel production, remove protections for transgender people and end diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

A different federal judge in

Washington has issued a temporary restraining order against the funding freeze plan and since expressed concern that some nonprofit groups weren't getting their funding.

Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha applauded McConnell's ruling.

"This is a country of laws. We expect the administration to follow the law," Neronha said in a statement.

NO RETURN OF  
GAZANS UNDER  
TRUMP PLAN

A16

# DOJ: DROP CHARGES FOR ADAMS

Memo from Bove says dismiss case 'without prejudice'

BY MATTHEW CHAYES  
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The U.S. Department of Justice under President Donald Trump has directed Manhattan federal prosecutors to drop the criminal case against Mayor Eric Adams.

In ordering the dismissal, the Justice Department argues the case has unduly hampered Adams from assisting with the president's plans to combat immigration and the prosecution was too proximate to the forthcoming mayoral election.

"The Justice Department has reached this conclusion without assessing the strength of the evidence or the legal theories on which the case is based, which are issues on

which we defer to the U.S. Attorney's Office at this time," the memo says.

The case, the memo says, is to be dismissed "without prejudice," which theoretically means it could be brought again.

Adams, who for months has been praising and defending Trump, is scheduled to stand trial in the spring in lower Manhattan, two months before a contested primary in which he is seeking a second term.

The order came from the acting deputy attorney general, Emil Bove, who on Monday sent a two-page letter to the acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York instructing the office to end the case.

It's unclear how the interim U.S. attorney, Danielle Sassoon, will respond, and a filing to drop the charges must be reviewed by a judge.

Neither Adams nor his legal team could be immediately reached for comment Monday evening.

Adams has pleaded not guilty to the charges, which involve accusations of trading campaign contributions and free luxury travel from foreign sources in exchange for municipal favors, including pressuring the FDNY to reverse course on opening an unsafe consulate in Manhattan belonging to the Turkish government.

Adams has said his prosecution is payback for criticizing the Biden administration's handling of the migrant crisis, although the investigation began before the mayor took Biden to task over the crisis.

Trump has endorsed this theory.

"I know what it's like to be persecuted by the DOJ, for speaking out against open borders," Trump said in Manhattan just before the election. "We were persecuted, Eric. I was persecuted, and so are you, Eric."

Trump said last year that

he'd consider pardoning Adams, which would be unnecessary if the case is dropped altogether.

Bove's memo ordering the dismissal says "more recent actions" by the now-former U.S. attorney for the Southern District, Damian Williams, "have threatened the integrity of the proceedings, including by increasing prejudicial pretrial publicity that risks impacting potential witnesses and the jury pool."

Having the prosecution hanging over Adams has "unduly restricted" the mayor from being able to "devote full attention and resources to the illegal immigration and violent crime that has escalated under the policies of the prior Administration," the memo says.

Since being indicted in September, Adams ceased criticizing Trump in public, then began appearing with him and defending Trump as a candi-



New York Mayor Eric Adams

date, president-elect and now as president.

The move by the Justice Department comes after months of palace intrigue over whether Trump would reward Adams for his newfound allegiance.

Since Trump's inauguration, Adams' lawyer Alex Spiro has sought dismissal from the department in Washington, and in recent weeks Spiro and other lawyers met in D.C. with Trump officials, a meeting joined by Southern District prosecutors. *With AP*

# Actions leave \$8.2B from USAID untracked

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Agency for International Development has lost almost all ability to track \$8.2 billion in unspent humanitarian aid following the Trump administration's foreign funding freeze and idling of staffers, a government watchdog warned Monday.

The administration's fast-moving dismantling of the agency has left oversight of the aid "largely nonoperational," USAID's inspector general's office said. That includes a greatly reduced ability to ensure that no assistance falls into the hands of violent extremist groups or goes astray in unstable regions or conflict zones, the watchdog said.

The Trump administration's actions have "significantly impacted USAID's capacity to disburse and safeguard its humanitarian assistance programming," it said, also citing the risk of hundreds of millions of dollars in commodities rotting after staff was barred from delivering it.

The inspector general also noted it has "longstanding con-



United States Agency for International Development workers protest at its D.C. headquarters Monday.

cerns about existing USAID oversight mechanisms."

Meanwhile, the administration and billionaire ally Elon Musk continued their unraveling of the aid agency. The Gen-

eral Services Administration, which manages government buildings, told The Associated Press that it had stripped USAID from the lease on its Washington headquarters.

Staffers — some dressed in USAID sweatshirts or T-shirts — were blocked from going upstairs to their offices Monday. Guards, federal officers and officials stopped some from retriev-

ing their belongings.

"Go home," a man who has identified himself as a USAID official told some staffers. "Why are you here?"

The eviction from the building, which USAID had occupied for decades, follows a court late Friday temporarily blocked a Trump administration order that would have pulled all but a fraction of workers off the job worldwide.

Two workers' groups that sued over the targeting of USAID asked the court on Monday to find the Trump administration in violation of the judge's order, after some workers were still locked out of USAID's systems.

The government's steps suggest it "intends to continue taking potentially irreversible steps to dismantle the agency" before the court can issue a final ruling in the case, the employee associations said. A hearing is scheduled for Wednesday.

MUSK MAKES \$97B OFFER TO BUY OPENAI

A22

# TRUMP MULLING NYC CONGESTION PRICING'S FATE

Report: President suggests killing tolling program

BY ALFONSO A. CASTILLO  
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President Donald Trump said he has the power to “kill” New York’s congestion pricing program in a new interview, but hasn’t made up his mind yet on whether he will do so.

In an interview published Saturday, Trump reiterated his belief that congestion pricing is “really horrible” and “destructive to New York,” but said he wants to continue discussing the matter with Gov. Kathy Hochul before deciding whether or not to repeal the program.

“If I decide to do it, I will be able to kill it off in Washington through the Department of Transportation,” Trump said in the interview with the New York Post. “It’s a lot of power.”

Trump has not provided de-

tails on how he would move to repeal congestion pricing, but plan opponents have urged him to order a more stringent environmental review for the program or to withhold federal transportation funding from the state unless it drops the plan.

It’s the first time since Trump took office that he has publicly acknowledged that he is considering repealing New York’s congestion pricing program, which took effect Jan. 5. Newsday has previously reported that Hochul and Trump have discussed the future of the program and that Trump was considering stopping it.

The tolling program charges most vehicles \$9 for driving below 60th Street in Manhattan. Supporters say the measure is needed to unclog one of the most congested business districts in the world, and to improve air quality and generate funding for mass transit investments.

Opponents, including Trump, have said the new tolls burden working families and could damage New York’s economy.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has said early data



The tolling revenue generated upgrades for MTA services like Convo Access, a program for deaf riders.

indicate congestion pricing is working as intended by significantly reducing the number of vehicles entering Manhattan, speeding up travel times and increasing transit ridership. But Trump, in the Post interview, said the reason traffic is down in Manhattan is “because no one’s coming to the city.”

Trump also acknowledged having discussed congestion pricing recently with Hochul, but would not disclose details of the conversations.

Asked about Trump’s latest remarks, Hochul spokesperson Avi Small said the governor has had “several productive calls with President Trump and is happy to talk with anyone, anytime about how this program is benefiting New Yorkers and the entire metro region.”

Columbia University environmental law professor

Michael Gerrard said he knows of “no legal pathway” for Trump to unilaterally kill congestion pricing, but added: “You can’t count on him following the rules.”

If Trump did order the MTA to take down the tolls, Gerrard said he expects the MTA would put up a fight to keep them in place. “If the secretary of transportation sends a letter to [MTA chairman Janno Lieber] telling him to shut it down, I’m not sure that Janno immediately shuts it down,” Gerrard said. “Unquestionably, it would go to court.”

The revenue generated from the new tolls is earmarked to support \$15 billion in infrastructure upgrades throughout the MTA system, including accessibility projects at New York City subway and Long Island Rail Road stations.

Asked about the potential for Trump to repeal congestion pricing, MTA chief accessibility officer Quemuel Arroyo declined to “opine on what the president is thinking,” but said funding accessibility projects throughout the transit system “is vital.”

The MTA on Monday unveiled its latest accessibility improvement, targeting deaf and hard of hearing transit riders. Convo Access, a partnership with deaf-owned company Convo, is providing users with American Sign Language interpreters on a 24/7 basis via a QR code at every subway and LIRR station, according to the MTA.

After scanning the code, users are connected with a live interpreter through a video call, who will then translate a conversation between an MTA employee and the transit rider.

# NYS launches weekly global disease report

BY JOHN ASBURY  
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The New York Department of Health announced Monday its launching of a weekly global health update report on infectious diseases and threats to public health.

The report, posted on the health department’s website, will detail “ongoing and emerging infectious disease outbreaks” such as avian flu and other threats, for health professionals and the public, the health department said.

Reports will be updated and published every Friday “to track public health trends to prepare and respond to future health emergencies,” state Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said in a statement.

“Protecting public health includes ensuring communities and public health professionals have access to timely, high-quality data and information regarding emerging infectious diseases,” McDonald said. “Public health data are vital to helping states and localities understand the burden and impact of

emerging infections so we can make informed decisions about prevention strategies.”

The second of the first two health reports posted last week noted the outbreak of diseases such as avian flu in New York and around the country. As of last Wednesday, health officials reported 961 cases in livestock in 17 states and 124 cases in poultry flocks in 30 states over the past 30 days. There have been 67 human cases in 10 states since last year, but none in New York, according to the report.

The report also includes in-

formation on the current spread of diseases across the country and worldwide, including measles in Texas and Canada, and Ebola and mpox in the United States from Africa and other places worldwide.

The new report follows a purge of public health data on websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after an executive order by President Donald Trump.

New York State officials did not say if the new global health reports were in response to the CDC purge. The CDC posted

that its “website is being modified to comply with President Trump’s Executive Orders.” An executive order directed the CDC to stop communicating with the World Health Organization or the public.

CDC officials could not be reached for comment Monday.

The CDC website continues to maintain up-to-date statistics on avian flu in poultry and wild birds, including 101,000 ducks infected in Suffolk County last month and infections at live poultry markets last week in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens.

# Sunrise Wind onshore cable near finished

As feds draw line on wind power, LI project advances

**ONLY IN NEWSDAY**

BY MARK HARRINGTON

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Amid ongoing federal scrutiny of wind power, the Sunrise Wind project is moving closer to completion of its 17.5-mile onshore cable in Brookhaven, while a ship is due off the coast of Smith Point this weekend to begin work on the undersea cable.

A recent map and progress report indicates that contractor Haugland Group is well along toward finishing the work of getting encasing cable for the 924-megawatt wind-farm project from a new receiver station in Holbrook

along the Long Island Expressway to Horse Block Road and down William Floyd Parkway to Smith Point.

Temporary pier facilities are built on either side of Narrow Bay between Smith Point County Park Marina and the ocean beach, for use by five transport barges to ferry heavy equipment between the sites. Also this week, a jack-up vessel and a support ship are due in the waters offshore of Smith Point as crews begin horizontal drilling under the beach. The ships will remain in place through mid-March, developer Orsted said.

Offshore crews also will begin undersea "relocation" of 36 boulders in the seabed along the cable route, which ends in the planned array off the coast of Rhode Island/Massachusetts.

A briefing presentation by Haugland indicates that more than 500 people have been put to work building the on-



Temporary pier facilities for Sunrise Wind equipment transport barges are seen at Smith Point.

shore infrastructure for the cable, using more than 700 New York subcontractors and vendors. Haugland estimates more than \$165,000 was spent fueling 200 vehicles at local gas stations for the green-energy project, and that 47 food companies served \$18,000 worth of meals during the work, which started last year.

In Denmark last week, Orsted held a conference call on which its newly named chief executive, Rasmus Errboe, pronounced 2024 a "challenging year" for the company and the nascent U.S. industry. He announced a "reduced investment program" for offshore wind by the company through the end of the decade.

The company also an-

nounced it had taken \$1.9 billion in impairment charges during the year tied to its U.S. offshore business, including for expenses of Sunrise and another U.S. project, Revolution Wind.

Errboe told financial analysts on a conference call that the company is "very closely following all relevant policy developments in the U.S.," tied to President Donald Trump's executive order last month halting new wind-farm leases and reviewing federal processes.

Sunrise and Revolution wind are "active in construction and we are fully committed to moving them forward and delivering on our commitments," Errboe told analysts. "We do not expect that the executive order will have any implications on

assets under construction, but as for assets under development it's a different situation."

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which administers the nation's offshore wind initiatives, last week canceled planned public hearings for another federally permitted project, Vineyard Mid-Atlantic, citing Trump's executive order.

BOEM said it was "implementing President Trump's memorandum temporarily halting offshore wind leasing on the Outer continental shelf," noting the order "also pauses new or renewed approvals, rights of way, permits, leases, or loans for offshore wind projects pending a review of federal wind leasing and permitting practices."

## Special election Feb. 25 for vacated Nassau Legislature seat

BY BAHAR OSTADAN

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Nassau County is gearing up for a special election on Feb. 25 to elect the next legislator to fill a seat in a Democratic stronghold that covers Westbury, New Cassel and Hempstead.

Until last month, Siela Bynoe served as the legislator representing Nassau's 2nd District for 10 years. She is now a state senator in Albany, mostly representing the same communities.

Nassau Democrats have picked Olena Nicks, 32, of Uniondale, to run for the seat. Republicans have picked Karin Campbell, 64, of Westbury.

Nicks, a lieutenant in the Uniondale Fire Department, is an elected trustee for the Uniondale Public Library and a committee member for the Uniondale school district, which fall in District 2. Camp-

bell was the president and a trustee for the Westbury School Board. She ran unsuccessfully against Bynoe in 2023.

"As I embark on this campaign, I understand the communities I am advocating for," Nicks wrote in a statement. "I will be the voice that fights for our neighbors, families, public servants, and local businesses — ensuring that Nassau County remains a place where people can thrive."

Nicks graduated from Uniondale High School, holds a bachelor's degree in business operations from Baruch College and an MBA from American University, according to her campaign website.

"Olena Nicks has a well-earned reputation for getting things done," Jay Jacobs, Democratic Party chair for the state and Nassau County, wrote in a statement. "From her service on the frontlines



Siela Bynoe vacated legislature seat upon State Senate election.

to her fight for affordable housing and stronger communities, Olena has proven she is ready to lead."

Campbell has taught career and technical programs in Nassau schools, and served as house manager for local residential group homes. Throughout the pandemic, Campbell

helped find housing and medical supplies for homeless veterans.

"My entire career has been about helping neighborhoods in my community... Now, I want to bring that same commitment to the Nassau County Legislature to help neighbors by delivering lower taxes, safer streets, more economic opportunity, and real solutions for our veterans and working families," Campbell wrote in a statement.

In her bid against Bynoe in 2023, Campbell said the county should give low-income residents more housing, job training and schooling. She also pledged to support controlling the county's annual spending. According to a statement, her plan includes cutting property taxes.

"[Campbell] will be a fighter for her neighbors as a member of the Nassau County

Legislature," Joseph Cairo, Republican Party chair for Nassau County, wrote in a statement. "Republicans are going to work on overdrive to help Karin Campbell during this campaign and ensure this lifelong community advocate can continue her service."

The district is expected to tweak its borders under Nassau's new legislative map, redrawn after two lawsuits alleged the old map violated and state voting laws.

District 2 will take in Hicksville, lose Nicks' homebase of Uniondale and retain its majority-minority status, according to a review of the new legislative map.

District 2 residents can vote early at the Nassau County Board of Elections in Mineola, the Yes We Can Center at 141 Garden St. in Westbury and Hofstra University in Hempstead between Feb. 15 and 23.

# Feds collected \$400M in '24

## Officials: Eastern District led nation in seized assets

BY NICOLE FULLER  
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The federal prosecutors' office that covers Long Island collected more than \$400 million in asset forfeiture funds last year, making it the national leader in seizing assets allegedly procured through illegal activities, officials said Monday.

The Eastern District of New York, which includes Nassau and Suffolk counties, as well as Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island, ranked first among the 93 federal prosecution districts in the country in fiscal year 2024.

"The forfeiture of criminal assets is an important tool used by law enforcement to deter crime and punish wrongdoers by depriving them of their ill-gotten gains," U.S. Attorney John J. Durham, of the Eastern District, said in a statement Monday. "To the extent possible, forfeited funds are used to compensate victims of crime."

One of the Eastern District's largest forfeiture seizures in

2024 arose from the prosecution of Gunvor S.A., one of the largest commodities trading firms in the world, which pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in connection with a scheme to bribe Ecuadorian officials in order to obtain oil purchasing contracts, federal prosecutors said in a news release.

Gunvor was ordered to forfeit more than \$287 million "in ill-gotten gains," prosecutors said in the news release.

### Seizures turned into revenue

Law enforcement entities on the federal and state levels have long used asset forfeiture to seize cash and property that has allegedly been acquired through illegal activity.

Law enforcement has touted asset forfeiture as a crime deterrent that removes the profit incentive from the equation while also providing funding for law enforcement initiatives.

Critics have argued the system is ripe with abuse and has become a revenue stream relied upon by law enforcement agencies.

In 2023, Newsday reported that federal authorities were investigating how the Suffolk District Attorney's Office used asset

forfeiture funds in undercover money laundering operations during the administrations of ex-District Attorneys Thomas Spota and Timothy Sini.

As a result of the investigation, the district attorney's office was prevented from accessing federal asset forfeiture funds that it had helped seize in conjunction with federal law enforcement entities.

### Suffolk still suspended

Sini denied any wrongdoing under his leadership, saying federal authorities issued subpoenas in 2020 for documents dating back to 2003 — well before his administration — regarding money laundering investigations the district attorney's office did with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

In a statement Monday, Tania Lopez, a spokesperson for Suffolk District Attorney Ray Tierney, said the office is still suspended from participating in federal asset forfeiture programs.

"The Suffolk County District Attorney's office remains suspended from both the DOJ's Equitable Sharing program and Treasury Department Equitable Sharing program," Lopez said in an emailed statement. "These suspensions occurred

on Sept. 21, 2020, under the prior DA Sini."

Lopez added that the office has sought unsuccessfully for readmission to the programs. "Under DA Tierney, the office has applied for reinstatement to these funding programs on multiple occasions," Lopez said. "We have been informed that the office will not be readmitted to these programs, however, while the federal criminal investigation of the forfeiture practices of the former administrations is still ongoing. DA Tierney has worked with Senator Schumer and Representatives Lalota and Garbarino, to urge the DOJ to resolve its investigation so that the 1.5 million people of Suffolk County can access this vital law enforcement funding."

The Nassau District Attorney's office brought in \$4.35 million in asset forfeiture in fiscal year 2024, said Nicole Turso, a spokesperson for Nassau District Attorney Anne Donnelly, in an email Monday.

Federal prosecutors say their asset forfeiture funds generally come from search warrants and forfeiture orders involving alleged transnational criminal organizations and drug cartels as well as financial fraud and political corruption.

## Newsday

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### THIS DATE IN HISTORY

**1945** President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin signed the Yalta Agreement, in which Stalin agreed to declare war against Imperial Japan following Nazi Germany's capitulation.

**1990** South African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in prison. (Mandela would be elected president of South Africa four years later.)

**2008** The Pentagon charged Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and five other detainees at Guantanamo Bay with murder and war crimes in connection with the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

**2013** During a routine meeting of Vatican cardinals, Pope Benedict XVI announced he would resign as pope effective Feb. 28; it was the first papal resignation in nearly 600 years.

**2020** The World Health Organization gave the official name of COVID-19 to the disease caused by the coronavirus that had emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

# LI man charged in Garden City crash that killed 1

BY BRIANNE LEDDA  
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Garden City police arrested a man after he allegedly fled the scene of a crash that left one person dead early Sunday.

The single-car crash into a tree in Garden City around 4:47 a.m. caused "severe body trauma" to rear passenger Marco Antonio Zuniga, Nassau County police said. The 27-year-old man from Long Beach was transported to a hospital where a physician later pronounced him dead.

The crashed 2007 Nissan had been westbound on Stewart Avenue at Nassau Boulevard. The driver fled on foot, according to a Nassau police news release.

Garden City police a short time later arrested the driver, Christian Velasquez-Galeano, 28, of Long Beach, police said.

During his arraignment at First District Court in Hempstead on Monday, Velasquez-Galeano pleaded not guilty to first-degree



Christian Velasquez-Galeano leaves Nassau County police headquarters on Monday in Mineola.

vehicular manslaughter, driving while intoxicated with two previous convictions in the past 10 years, leaving the scene of an accident, four counts of aggravated unlicensed operation of a vehi-

cle, driving without an ignition interlock device and false personation, according to court documents. Judge Madeleine Petrara-Perrin ordered him remanded without bail.

The Legal Aid Society of Nassau County represented Velasquez-Galeano at his arraignment, according to Nicole Turso, a spokeswoman for the Nassau District Attorney's Office.

ISLANDWIDE

# Report: Child care strain on LI

High costs, lack of availability among challenges in NYS

BY NICHOLAS SPANGLER  
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Chronically high child care costs and scant availability continue to put “a financial strain” on families across Long Island and statewide, according to a state comptroller’s office report.

The report, released Thursday, found that though New York’s child care costs are among the highest in the United States, 60% of census tracts were “child care deserts” in 2023, with at least three children younger than 5 for every available slot in a day care or registered home-based provider.

On Long Island, 23 tracts had no child care at all, 14 had a ratio of 10 or more children to a slot, and 24 had 3 to 9.99 children per slot. The report did not identify those tracts, but previously published maps from the state’s Office of Children and Family Services show they are mostly on the East End.

## Cutting into wages

There are 3.7 children under 6 years old for every slot in Nassau and 4.2 in Suffolk according to the state Department of Labor, which based its calculations on 2022

## Complications in care

■ New York’s child care costs are among the highest in the country, and in many areas the number of children far exceeds the number of care slots available, according to a state comptroller’s office report.

■ Even with prices, many day care providers operate on thin margins and pay workers less than they could get in other jobs, the report said.

■ The high costs and limited availability sap the state’s economic strength, driving down employment as parents limit their work or quit jobs to provide child care, Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli said.

census data.

In 2023, according to the latest published Department of Labor data, infant care — the most labor-intensive and expensive type of child care — cost families in Nassau \$21,914 and those in Suffolk \$21,599. The average annual wage at roughly 1,000 child care establishments on Long Island was \$31,875, less than half the average annual wage for Long Islanders overall.

“Even with high prices, many providers operate on thin margins, with financial and regulatory pressures that make expansion or even operating at capacity challenging,” Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli’s report noted. “Staffing remains a perennial challenge, as workers

receive wages and benefits lower than those offered by firms for positions that require less skill and attention.”

## A weakened economy

Those challenges, DiNapoli wrote in a forward, sap the state’s overall economic strength, driving down employment as parents — especially mothers — limit their work or quit jobs to provide child care.

His report hailed a universal child care initiative announced in January by Gov. Kathy Hochul, who said the state would work to provide child care to all families who need it but can’t afford it.

In the interim, she proposed spending more than \$100 million to build more child care centers and to bolster the ranks of teachers to staff them. She also proposed creating a pool of child care teachers and substitute teachers through the state Department of Labor to provide staff to keep child care centers open and to work in new centers that will be built.

The comptroller’s report said state government would need to ensure those resources were used effectively. That will include collecting better information about child care availability, making it easier for families to find care and monitoring the outcomes of spending and tax credits intended to increase the number of child care slots, according to the report.

Experts said problems with the American child care system

have been apparent for years, even if the precise solutions have not.

“There’s a broken economic model of how we . . . have treated child care as a private arrangement between a family and a provider, which mathematically doesn’t work for a lot of families,” said Pete Nabozny, policy director of Rochester-based The Children’s Agenda advocacy group.

In New York, “care is simultaneously too expensive for families, the industry is too low-paying to attract the workforce that is needed and, because of that, they don’t have the physical infrastructure,” Nabozny said.

## Challenges on Long Island

While some of the biggest challenges exist in sparsely populated, less affluent upstate areas, Long Island is not immune. The state’s Child Care Assistance Program caps its income limit for family assistance at 85% of the state’s median income, ruling out many Long Islanders, Nabozny said. The program’s income limits vary by family size.

For a family of five, the limit is \$126,012.77. Median household income for Suffolk County in 2023, the last year for which census data was published, was \$128,329, and in Nassau County it was \$143,408.

Shoshana Hershkowitz, of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care, a coalition of parents and educators, said the availability of affordable

child care varied considerably in a region as large as Long Island. Hershkowitz cited a child care facility in Montauk that was threatened with closure last year because of financial losses.

“Thirty families would have been without a child care option anywhere near them,” Hershkowitz said.

But Ken Girardin, research director for the Albany-based fiscally conservative Empire Center for Public Policy, said while some of the state’s problems stemmed from external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and a falloff in immigration in the 2010s that cut the child care labor pool, many state interventions had “made things exponentially worse.”

## ‘No amount of money’

The state’s minimum wage increases caused some of the industry’s workforce problems, Girardin said, and popular initiatives like universal pre-K undercut the industry by diverting some 4-year-olds from private to public programs. Those older children had made some care facilities financially viable because they required less hands-on supervision than toddlers and infants, he said.

Also, while state subsidies had made child care more affordable for some families, according to Girardin, they also increased demand overall.

“There is no amount of money that the state can throw at this and be completely satisfied,” he said.

## Snow again? It’s starting to pile up

A shopper walks past piles of snow in Manhasset on Monday. More snow is in the forecast Tuesday, with 2 to 3 inches possible, according to the National Weather Service. More storms are also expected later in the week.



# OUR TOWNS



HOWARD SIMMONS

Hillside Islamic Center wants to expand by enlarging its building and parking area.

## NEW HYDE PARK

# Town files appeal notice for mosque

N. Hempstead trying to block expansion of Hillside Islamic Center

BY JOSHUA NEEDELMAN  
joshua.needelman@newsday.com

The Town of North Hempstead has filed a notice of appeal in response to a ruling last month in its case against the Hillside Islamic Center, signaling the legal battle over the mosque's proposed expansion could continue.

State Supreme Court Judge Erica Prager last month ruled in favor of the New Hyde Park-based mosque, which had challenged the town's decision to block the Center's planned expansion.

The center in June 2023 had presented the town board a site plan to add a third level to its building and create additional parking.

After public hearings, the board voted against the proposal in January 2024, citing some residents' concerns about traffic congestion and street parking.

Hillside filed an Article 78 lawsuit — which is used to appeal decisions made by state, city or other local governments — challenging the board's decision. Prager, in her ruling in favor of the mosque, wrote the resolution for the site plan should be “remanded to the town board with the direction to grant

the initial application.” The board's rejection of the proposed expansion was “arbitrary and capricious,” Prager wrote.

But the town did not consider the resolution at its board meeting last Tuesday, which was one day after it filed the notice of appeal in the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court for the Second Judicial Department.

A town official said the board now has six months to appeal the ruling.

“We are exploring the Town's options with outside counsel and then will advise the Supervisor and Town Board,” Town Attorney Richard Nicoletto said in a statement.

The town has so far paid \$51,131.75 in legal fees to Uniondale-based attorney Sahn Ward, according to records obtained through a Freedom of Information Law request.

Abdul Bhuiyan, chairman of Hillside's board of trustees, said in an interview an appeal would represent a “waste of community money” because it would cost both sides more in legal fees.

“The judge looked at it very thoroughly and the verdict was very clear,” Bhuiyan said. “We all need to realize this is the right of people of all faiths, and as elected officials, they are to accommodate it to the best of their ability, instead of becoming a hindrance.”

Kathleen Deegan Dickson, the attorney representing the mosque, did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

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## PORT WASHINGTON

# Town proposes code changes

Possible alterations to zoning worry dozens of residents

BY JOSHUA NEEDELMAN

joshua.needelman@newsday.com

Some Port Washington homeowners are concerned that proposed changes to the Town of North Hempstead's zoning code — the subject of a public hearing Tuesday — could lead to increased development and the privatization of the peninsula's waterfront along Main Street.

The hearing will be held by the town to consider changes to the code for its waterfront business district, which spans about 10 acres along Main Street from Sunset Park to Dolphin Green and includes the privately owned Inspiration Wharf.

The code, as it reads now, calls for mixed-use buildings consisting of “retail, office, hotel/boatel and/or restaurant space on the lowest floor and residential units on the upper floor.”

The new legislation would change permitted uses to “mixed-use building(s) or development,” remove some requirements and add “public or private marina” as a possible use.

The latter is a point of contention for Shahnaz Autz, president of the local Mitchell Farms Neighborhood Association.

“If you leave it open-ended, you have completely lost control,” Autz said in an interview. “This is what we’re asking. What is the benefit to the community that you considered before your changing this code?”



Commercial properties along Main Street in Port Washington's waterfront business district lie vacant.

Supervisor Jennifer DeSena said in a statement that Inspiration Wharf was the impetus for the proposed change. “The restrictions on the waterfront business district have been the topic of debate for years and as a result, there’s been no real progress at Inspiration Wharf. The Town took steps in the right direction in 2020, but we need some minor revisions to make it workable.”

The code was last amended in October 2020 after a two-years-plus moratorium on development in the district. A steering committee consisting of residents and local business owners had helped devise the code alongside Councilmem-

ber Mariann Dalimonte, who represents Port Washington.

Autz, who was part of the steering committee, said she wasn’t made aware of the latest proposed changes until after the town board passed a resolution Jan. 8 setting the date for Tuesday’s public hearing. It is scheduled for 10 a.m. at Town Hall.

A petition signed by at least 650 people called for a delay to the public hearing, as well as a meeting between community leaders, DeSena and Nancy Shahverdi, the town’s commissioner of planning.

Autz echoed that request during public comment ahead of the Feb. 4 town board meeting.

“There’s very little time for us to understand what this change really means for the Port Washington waterfront on the ground and in actual planning,” Autz said during the meeting.

DeSena said that Dalimonte had responded to Autz’s concerns over email.

“We will be able to give additional answers to your questions,” DeSena said, in reference to Tuesday’s public hearing.

“With all due respect, we asked the specific questions and we haven’t really gotten the answers that would be clear to us,” Autz said.

Dalimonte declined a request for comment.

## ISLANDWIDE

## FORECAST: 2 STORMS TO BRING SNOW

After waking up to snow on Super Bowl Sunday, Long Islanders may have to shovel themselves out again on Wednesday and Thursday mornings as a pair of storms are forecast to hit the region.

A storm system will pass to the south of Long Island Tuesday evening, bringing with it 2 to 3 inches of snow, according to John Cristantello, a National Weather Service meteorologist with the weather service’s Upton office. The snow is expected to start falling Tuesday between 7 and 10 p.m. and will probably end by daybreak Wednesday, he added.

Yet another storm system will pass over Long Island on Wednesday, according to the Cristantello. The precipitation that falls late Wednesday will begin as snow, but then change to sleet overnight and probably end as rain on Thursday, according to Cristantello.

High temperatures will climb from the mid- to upper-30s on Tuesday and Wednesday, and then reach above 40 on Thursday, the weather service forecast.

Friday — Valentine’s Day — should remain dry with high temperatures in the mid-30s. But this will be a brief reprieve, as the weather service forecasts more precipitation Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

— NICHOLAS GRASSO

# LI man pleads not guilty in stabbing death of ex-girlfriend

BY JOHN ASBURY

john.asbury@newsday.com

A Roosevelt man pleaded not guilty Monday to a grand jury indictment alleging that he stabbed his ex-girlfriend more than 30 times in front of their 2-year-old son.

Prosecutors said Jose William Funes-Zabala, 43, was arraigned on the indictment of second-degree murder, criminal possession of a weapon and misde-

meanor child endangerment charges, following the Oct. 5 killing of Brenda Guadalupe Alfaro-Alcantara, 29, in her basement apartment on Botsford Street in Hempstead.

Authorities said Funes-Zabala waited to visit their son until an order of protection, filed by Alfaro-Alcantara, had expired.

Prosecutors said Funes-Zabala and Alfaro-Alcantara got into an argument when he

learned she was dating someone else and he attacked her while their son watched in the same room.

“We are committed to ensuring justice for Brenda and her loved ones as we prosecute this case,” Nassau County District Attorney Anne Donnelly said in a statement.

Brian Carmody, an attorney representing Funes-Zabala, said Monday afternoon that he intends to pursue a psychiatric de-

fense of “extreme emotional disturbance” to potentially reduce the charges to manslaughter.

The couple had previously lived together in the same apartment as part of a three-year relationship, officials said. Funes-Zabala allegedly stabbed her about 35 times.

Investigators believe Funes-Zabala walked out of the apartment about 7 p.m. on Oct. 5 with blood on his face, leaving the child behind. Relatives later

found the boy and Alfaro-Alcantara in the apartment when they were unable to reach her, prosecutors said. The boy was found unharmed, according to prosecutors.

Homicide detectives arrested Funes-Zabala the next day at Nassau University Medical Center. Funes-Zabala could face 25 years to life in prison if convicted. He is due back in court Feb. 27 and was ordered remanded in custody without bail.

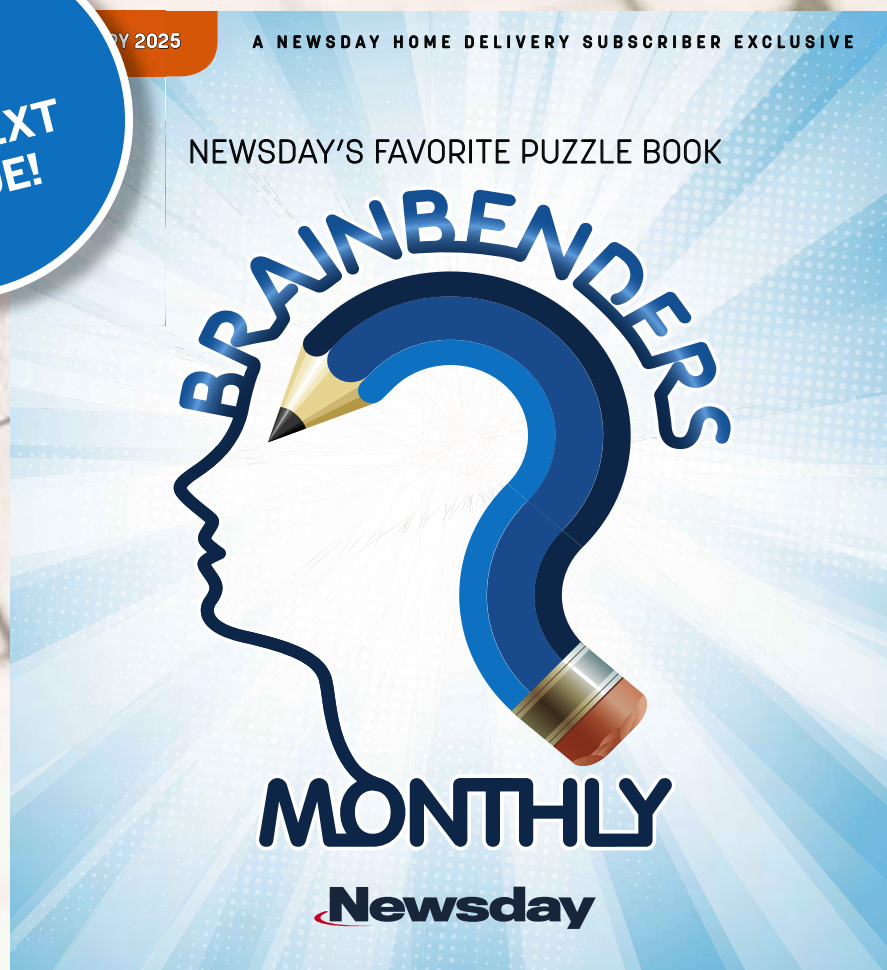
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**Newsday**

# Hamas delays hostage release

Accuses Israel of obstructing key provisions of deal

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Hamas said Monday it will delay the further release of hostages in the Gaza Strip after accusing Israel of violating a fragile ceasefire that now faces its most serious crisis since it began three weeks ago.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under heavy pressure to secure the release of remaining hostages after three Israelis freed Saturday came home emaciated after 16 months in captivity.

President Donald Trump said the precarious ceasefire agreement should be canceled if Hamas doesn't release all the remaining hostages it is holding in Gaza by midday on Saturday.

In comments to reporters as he signed a series of executive orders, Trump said it was ultimately up to Israel. But he warned that "all hell is going to break out" if the remaining hostages aren't released, and added that he feared many were dead.

Trump also said, however, "I'm speaking for myself. Israel can override it."

Hamas said its plan to delay the next hostage release "until



Relatives of Israeli hostages protest outside of Israel's Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv on Monday.

further notice" depended on whether Israel "abides by its obligations."

The announcement came as Palestinians and the international community seethed over Trump's recent comments that Palestinians from Gaza would not have a right to

return under his proposal for the United States to take over the war-torn territory.

In an effort to improve relations with the Trump administration, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday ended a controversial system that paid stipends to the families

of Palestinian prisoners, including those convicted in deadly attacks on Israel. The United States and Israel have said the so-called "martyrs fund" rewarded violence against Israel.

The sides have carried out five swaps since the ceasefire went into effect on Jan. 19, free-

ing 21 hostages and over 730 Palestinian prisoners. The next exchange, scheduled for Saturday, called for three more Israeli hostages to be freed in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

An Israeli official said Netanyahu was consulting security officials after the Hamas announcement. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said Netanyahu also pushed forward a scheduled meeting of his Security Cabinet to Tuesday morning from later in the day.

A judge granted Netanyahu's request to postpone his testimony in an ongoing corruption trial on Tuesday due to the security situation.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Hamas' plan to delay the next release of hostages was "a complete violation" of the ceasefire agreement and that he instructed the Israeli military to be on the highest level of alert. The prime minister's coordinator for hostages said the Israeli government intends to live up to its end of the agreement.

Hamas spokesman Abu Obeida said on social media that Israel has obstructed key provisions of the ceasefire by not allowing Palestinians to return to northern Gaza, carrying out strikes across the territory and failing to facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid.

## Trump: No right of return for Gazans under 'ownership' plan

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump had said Palestinians in Gaza would not have a right to return under his plan for U.S. "ownership" of the war-torn territory, contradicting other officials in his administration who have sought to argue Trump was only calling for the temporary relocation of its population.

Less than a week after he floated his plan for the United States to take control of Gaza and turn it into "the Riviera of the Middle East," Trump, in an interview with Fox News' Bret Baier that was set to air Monday, said "No, they wouldn't" when asked if Palestinians in Gaza would have a right to return to the territory.

It comes as he has ramped up

pressure on Arab states, especially U.S. allies Jordan and Egypt, to take in Palestinians from Gaza, who claim the territory as part of a future homeland.

"We'll build safe communities, a little bit away from where they are, where all of this danger is," Trump said. "In the meantime, I would own this. Think of it as a real estate development for the future. It would be a beautiful piece of land. No big money spent."

Arab nations have sharply criticized the Trump proposal, and Trump's latest words were released a day before he is set to host Jordan's King Abdullah II at the White House on Tuesday. In addition to concerns about jeopardizing the long-held goals of a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Egypt and Jordan have privately



A member of the Egyptian security forces directs traffic on Monday as displaced Palestinians cross toward northern Gaza.

raised security concerns about welcoming large numbers of additional refugees into their countries even temporarily.

Trump's comments risked jeopardizing the already tenuous ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza after 15

months of war, with the existing framework for negotiations calling for the massive humanitarian and reconstruction assistance for civilians in Gaza.

After Trump's initial comments last week, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt and Secretary of State Marco Rubio respectfully insisted that Trump only wanted Palestinians relocated from Gaza "temporarily" and for an "interim" period to allow for debris removal, the disposal of unexploded ordnance and reconstruction.

A senior Hamas official blasted Trump's latest remarks about the United States' ownership of Gaza as "absurd."

Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' politico bureau, said these comments "reflect a deep ignorance of Palestine and the region."

## VATICAN: U.S. PLANS TO GUT USAID COULD KILL MILLIONS

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican's charity said Monday that U.S. plans to gut USAID were "reckless" and could kill millions, while Pope Francis' point man on development urged the Trump administration to remember Christian principles about caring for others.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, a Czech-born Canadian Jesuit, is one of the cardinals most closely associated with Francis' pontificate and heads the Vatican office responsible for migrants, the environment, the church's Caritas Internationalis charity and development.

Caritas on Monday warned that millions of people could die as a result of the "ruthless" U.S. decision to "recklessly" stop USAID funding, and hundreds of millions more will be condemned to "dehumanizing poverty."

USAID is the main international humanitarian and development arm of the U.S. government and in 2023 managed more than \$40 billion in combined appropriations, accounting for around 40% of the global aid budget. The Trump administration and billionaire ally Elon Musk have targeted USAID hardest so far in their challenge of federal government spending: A sweeping funding freeze has shut down most of USAID's programs worldwide, though a federal judge on Friday put a temporary halt to plans to pull thousands of agency staffers off the job.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Czerny said every incoming government has the right to review its foreign aid budget, and even to reform an agency like USAID. But he said it's another thing to dismantle an agency after it has made funding commitments.

One of USAID's biggest nongovernmental recipients is Catholic Relief Services, the aid agency of the Catholic Church in the United States.

# VP makes international debut

## Paris AI summit is first; Germany conference next

The Associated Press

PARIS — JD Vance stepped onto the world stage this week for the first time as U.S. vice president, using a high-stakes AI summit in Paris and a security conference in Munich to amplify Donald Trump's aggressive new approach to diplomacy.

The 40-year-old vice president, who was just 18 months into his tenure as a senator before joining Trump's ticket, is expected, while in Paris, to push back on European efforts to tighten AI oversight while advocating for a more open, innovation-driven approach.

The AI summit has drawn world leaders, top tech executives, and policymakers to discuss AI's impact on global security, economics, and governance. High-profile attendees include Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing, signaling Beijing's deep interest in shaping global AI standards.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday the Paris AI summit is "a wake-up call" for a European strategy to get competitive in a tech world now dominated by the United States and China.

Macron also called on "sim-



AP/THOMAS PADILLA

**Vice President JD Vance, seen in Paris, is expected to push for open approach to AI before attending security conference in Germany.**

plifying" rules in France and the European Union to allow AI advances, citing sectors like health care, mobility, energy, and "resynchronize with the rest of the world."

### Vance's debut abroad

Vance has signaled he will use the Paris summit as a venue for candid discussions with world leaders on AI and geopolitics.

"I think there's a lot that some of the leaders who are present at the AI summit could do to, frankly — bring the Russia-Ukraine conflict to a close, help us diplomatically there — and so we're going to be focused on

those meetings in France," Vance told Breitbart News.

Vance is expected to meet separately Tuesday with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, according to a person familiar with planning who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

On Tuesday, Vance will have a working lunch with Macron to discuss Ukraine and the Middle East. Vance, like Trump, has questioned U.S. spending on Ukraine and the broader approach to isolating Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump promised to end the

fighting within six months of taking office.

Vance's diplomatic tour continues in Germany, where he will attend the Munich Security Conference and press European allies to increase their commitments to NATO and Ukraine and may meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Vance also addressed what he called an "evil trend" in Europe toward censorship.

"We want people to be able to speak their minds, and we believe that free and open debate is actually a good thing. Unfortunately, a lot of our European friends have gone the wrong direction there," he said.

### Fostering AI advances

The summit, which gathers major players such as Google, Microsoft and OpenAI, "is the first time we'll have had such a broad international discussion in one place on the future of AI," said Linda Griffin, vice president of public policy at Mozilla. "I see it as a norm-setting moment."

A global public-private partnership named "Current AI" will be launched to support large-scale initiatives that serve the general interest.

Nick Reiners, senior geotechnology analyst at Eurasia Group, noted an opportunity to shape AI governance by "moving away from this concentration of power amongst a handful of private actors and building this public interest AI instead."

## Rare 'Einstein ring' of light spotted around galaxy

The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Europe's Euclid space telescope has detected a rare halo of bright light around a nearby galaxy, astronomers reported Monday.

The halo, known as an Einstein ring, encircles a galaxy 590 million light-years away, considered close by cosmic standards. A light-year is 5.8 trillion miles.

Astronomers have known about this galaxy for more than a century and so were surprised when Euclid revealed the bright glowing ring, reported in the journal *Astronomy and Astrophysics*.

An Einstein ring is light from a much more distant galaxy that bends in such a way as to perfectly encircle a closer ob-

ject, in this case a well-known galaxy in the constellation Draco. The faraway galaxy creating the ring is more than 4 billion light-years away.

Gravity distorted the light from this more distant galaxy, thus the name honoring Albert Einstein. The process is known as gravitational lensing.

"All strong lenses are special, because they're so rare, and they're incredibly useful scientifically. This one is particularly special, because it's so close to Earth and the alignment makes it very beautiful," lead author Conor O'Riordan of Germany's Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics said in a statement.

Euclid rocketed from Florida in 2023. NASA is taking part in its mission to detect dark energy and dark matter in the universe.



Europe's Euclid telescope spotted this rare ring of light surrounding center of galaxy NGC 6505, which is 590 million light-years away.

## EDITORIAL

## Stony Brook needs its FEMA money

■ **MEMBERS OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD** are experienced journalists who offer reasoned opinions, based on facts, to encourage informed debate about the issues facing our community.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Stony Brook University Hospital, Stony Brook University and the Long Island State Veterans Home submitted more than \$195 million in claims for reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Since 2022, the institutions have sought to be paid back for thousands of expenses for equipment, supplies, labor and more. Private hospitals and universities that incurred similar costs to respond to a grave emergency could seek money directly from FEMA, and already have been reimbursed. But because Stony Brook is a state-regulated operation, it has had to work through New York's Division of the Budget in a cumbersome process that requires the state to communicate with FEMA.

So, despite repeated requests to the state and to elected officials for assistance, the hospital, university and veterans home are still waiting. To date, we know of one reimbursement — for \$105,000 — that's been released. That's \$105,000 out of \$195,000,000 — or 0.05%. It's no wonder that Stony Brook University Hospital has had financial difficulties as a result of the reimbursement delays, forcing it to rely on a loan from the university.

It's unclear where exactly the blockages are occurring. Is FEMA too slow to reimburse, even years after the end of the pandemic? Is the state not acting with urgency in its own role as middleman? Neither is acceptable.

Since taking office, Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine has attempted to maintain an



NEWSDAY / JOHN PARASKEVAS

**Stony Brook University and Stony Brook University Hospital together are Suffolk County's largest employer.**

open and positive relationship with Gov. Kathy Hochul — a good effort that should serve him, and the county, well. He wrote a letter to Hochul advocating for the reimbursement late last year. But he heard nothing in return. The only update came from a Hochul spokesman, who told the editorial board this week that her administration is “working closely with our federal and local partners to expedite payment . . .”

It shouldn't take two or three years to “expedite payment.”

Stony Brook University and Stony Brook University Hospital together are the county's largest employer, with thousands of faculty, physicians and staff. Together, their impact ripples through the county and the region, in the thousands of students they teach and patients they treat, and the research they facilitate and the businesses they build. During COVID, Stony Brook University Hospital was a critical source of help and, like so many others, faced challenges getting personal protective equipment, retaining and hiring staff, and isolating and treating patients.

Now, the hospital and university need state and federal officials to help them. Romaine thankfully has shed a spotlight on the situation. Now, Hochul must ensure her budget office has done its job and then work with federal officials to get the money into Stony Brook's coffers. With the future of FEMA and other federal funding sources in doubt, Long Island's important institutions shouldn't need to wonder whether money they've been owed for years will ever come their way.



POLITICALCARTOONS.COM / DAVE WHAMOND

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## LETTERS

### Fatality sentences should be longer

Why is the minimum sentence in a fatality not equal to at least the age of the victim? For example, Amandeep Singh gets 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> to 25 years in the wrong-way, drunken driving killing of teens Drew Hassenbein and Ethan Falkowitz, both 14 [“Max prison time in double-fatal crash,” News, Feb. 8].

Singh should serve a minimum 28 years to make up for the lifetime of the two boys. They will never get a chance to experience life, but Singh, at 36, would still have a chance, even after serving 28 years.

How awful would it be if he gets out after 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> years. It's a slap in the face to the victims' families. A minimum sentence should never be less than the age of the victim in a fatality.

— KATHY QUINN, BETHPAGE

### Defunding USAID a contemptible act

The decision by President Donald Trump's administration to defund the U.S. Agency for International Development is a disgrace [“Judge deals Trump, Musk USAID setback,” News, Feb. 8].

It should be our nation's mission to help clothe and feed the world's poorest. Overall, we are a wealthy nation and can afford the small part of the budget that helps the impoverished.

People across this country should be speaking out loud against this plan while the

government wants to allow tax breaks to the already wealthy.

Many of us are tasked with following the Beatitudes, something our president likely would not recognize if he saw it. Shame on us.

— MARY NEGRA, EAST SETAUKET

Tens of thousands of government employees are being told to or asked to resign. How does this help the economy? Would it not be a drain on the system with many having to apply for unemployment insurance and food assistance? It does not make any sense.

— MARK STYSIACK, RIDGE

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POINTS OF VIEW

# Varied views on affordability in NY

OPINION

## Make school meals free for all students to lower the cost of living for families

BY PHILIP R. RAMOS  
Guest essay

From the white sand beaches of Nassau County to the luxurious mansions of the Hamptons, Long Island is often seen as a land of only riches. Yet for many, reality is far more complex.

As a lifelong resident of Long Island, I've witnessed firsthand how the rising cost of living strains our community. Reflecting on my own experience as a single father raising young twins, I deeply understand the challenges working families face every day.

Alarming, according to the non-profit Feeding America, nearly 45,000 children on Long Island struggle with food insecurity — a stark truth we cannot ignore.

On Long Island and across New York, this scourge of childhood hunger extends from the home to school cafeterias.

More than 260 schools — over 132,000 students — across Long Island have been left out of New York's recent expansion of free school meals.

Thanks to historic investments in the state budget, more than 383,000 students statewide gained access to free breakfast and lunch over the last year. I represent a district where every school offers meals at no cost to all students, but the rest of Long Island isn't so lucky. More students were left behind on Long Island than in any other region in the state.

It's easy to think that these are students in well-off families who don't need assistance, but the truth is that many of the households left behind struggle to make ends meet. A family of four making \$58,000 a year is not eligible for free school meals if their school was not included in the state's expansion. Meanwhile, according to United Way, a family of four on Long Island needs at least \$91,776 annually just to cover basic costs such as housing, health care, and child care.

One effective and efficient way to improve affordability for families is to make school meals available at no cost to all students. By treating school meals the same way we do textbooks, bus rides, and school-issued technology, families will save around \$165 per month per student in groceries. As the cost of living on Long Island continues to climb, putting this kind of money

back in parents' wallets is a game-changer.

As I've seen firsthand, a cafeteria where every student can choose a meal on equal ground, without regard to cost or income, is a cafeteria where no child goes hungry. Students walk in, pick up a nourishing meal, sit with friends, and eat — free of stigma or worries about accruing meal debt for their families.

School administrators also benefit. Relieved from tracking down meal debt, they can redirect attention and resources toward working with kitchen staff on creative menu options and making meals more accessible. Less paperwork means they can also take advantage of New York's farm-to-school program that allows them to source ingredients from local farmers.

The benefits from universal school meals extend beyond the cafeteria and administrator's office. Studies show that test scores go up, school climate improves, and students' mental and physical health improve.

Lowering the cost of living for working parents helps them create a brighter future for their kids. Much of the foundation for that brighter future is laid at school, ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Gov. Kathy Hochul has included free school meals in this year's budget proposal.

The time for action is now. Let's make free breakfast and lunch for all students a reality in New York.

■ **THIS GUEST ESSAY** reflects the views of Philip R. Ramos (D-Brentwood), deputy speaker of the New York State Assembly who represents the 6th Assembly District.



## Lawmakers must pass a state spending cap to rein in runaway budgets, help taxpayers

BY MARIO R. MATTERA  
Guest essay

Gov. Kathy Hochul's proposed \$252 billion budget for 2025-26 is nothing more than a reckless spending spree, scattering taxpayer

dollars across special interests with little regard for long-term sustainability. Lawmakers must take decisive action to rein it in. But asking legislators in Albany to exercise fiscal restraint has never worked.

We need a spending cap — a proven solution that has worked in other states and one that was adopted for schools and localities in New York more than a decade ago. It's time for the state government to hold itself to the same standard it

forces on everyone else.

The effectiveness of spending caps is not a theory; it's a fact. In 2012, New York implemented a property tax cap that successfully curtailed school district tax increases from an average of 6% annually to about 2%. Meanwhile, states that have implemented spending caps consistently maintain lower taxes and more controlled expenditures than those that have not. The data is clear: Spending caps work.

Yet, despite the success of local spending caps, the state government has refused to apply the same discipline to its own budget. The hypocrisy is staggering. Albany had no problem forcing schools, counties, and towns to limit their spending, but when it comes to its own bud-

get, it operates with no guardrails.

This lack of restraint has allowed spending to balloon to dangerous levels, especially after the flood of federal COVID-19 relief money. That temporary infusion of cash gave New York politicians an excuse to increase spending by a shocking 39% over just five years. But unlike Washington, Albany cannot print money, and now that the federal aid has dried up, taxpayers are left holding the bag for permanent spending increases that were never sustainable in the first place.

Put this in perspective: Had New York implemented a 2% spending cap in 2012 — the same cap it imposed on schools — when the enacted state budget was \$132.6 billion, our budget today would be \$172 billion instead of \$252 billion. That's an \$80 billion difference. In contrast, Florida — despite having 4 million more residents and no state income tax — manages to operate with a budget that is half the size of New York's. And yet, Florida's roads are better, its students score higher on tests, and its taxpayers are keeping more of their hard-earned money.

Without a spending cap, there is no discipline, no accountability, and no incentive for lawmakers to prioritize effectively. Albany continues wasting money with little regard for long-term consequences. Every year, spending levels increase, and once new spending becomes part of the budget, it is nearly impossible to roll back. This cycle must end.

The State Legislature must pass a bill introduced this year that would establish a much-needed cap on state spending. This legislation would rein in New York's fiscal recklessness and prevent Albany from continuously overburdening taxpayers with unnecessary and unsustainable expenditures. Enacting this bill is a crucial step toward restoring fiscal responsibility and ensuring a stable economic future for New York.

Critics have been right to sound the alarm on Gov. Hochul's unsustainable budget. But the real solution isn't just temporary belt-tightening — it's systemic reform. New York must implement a permanent spending cap to protect taxpayers and restore fiscal responsibility in Albany.

New Yorkers deserve better than skyrocketing taxes, runaway spending, and bloated budgets that benefit bureaucrats more than hardworking families. A spending cap is not just good policy — it's common sense. The time for excuses is over. The time for action is now.






■ **THIS GUEST ESSAY** reflects the views of Mario R. Mattera (R-St. James), who represents the 2nd District in the New York State Senate.



Much of this year's discussion in Albany centers on ways to deal with the affordability crisis.

NEWSDAY / THOMAS A. FERRARA

	S&P 500	6,066.44
		+40.45
	DOW	44,470.41
		+167.01
	NASDAQ	19,714.27
		+190.87

## STOCKS RISE AMID NEW TARIFF THREATS

U.S. stocks rose Monday as Wall Street took President Donald Trump's latest threat on tariffs in stride.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.7%, coming off a losing week that was bookended by worries about how potential tariffs could push up inflation and threaten the economy. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 167 points, or 0.4%, and the Nasdaq composite rallied 1% as Nvidia and other Big Tech stocks led the way.

The bond market also remained relatively firm, with Treasury yields making only modest moves after Trump said over the weekend he would announce 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports, as well as other import duties later in the week.

Fear around tariffs has been at the center of Wall Street's moves recently, and experts say the market likely has more swings ahead. The price of gold, which often rises when investors are feeling nervous, climbed again Monday to top \$2,930 per ounce and set another record.

However, Trump has shown he can be just as quick to pull back on threats, as he did with 25% tariffs he had announced on Canada and Mexico, suggesting they may be merely a negotiating chip rather than a true long-term policy. Trump has already gone ahead with 10% tariffs on China.

Stocks of U.S. steel and aluminum producers jumped Monday, banking on expectations tariffs could help their profits.

—AP

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# Refunds block sale

## Court: Repay entry fees to residents of Harborside

BY JAMES T. MADORE  
james.madore@newsday.com

A federal bankruptcy judge on Monday ordered new negotiations aimed at securing money to pay the \$130 million in entrance-fee refunds owed to residents of The Harborside and the families of deceased residents.

To provide time for the talks, Judge Alan S. Trust postponed by eight days a hearing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Central Islip, where he could decide whether an \$80 million sale of the Port Washington retirement community moves forward. The hearing will now happen on Feb. 20.

The judge issued an order calling for "a mandatory settlement conference" on Wednesday in place of the hearing.

Among the parties required to attend are The Harborside's management, its builder and sponsor Amsterdam Continuing Care Health System Inc., bondholders and other creditors, and the chairwoman of the Harborside Residents Council.

The parties are "to attempt in good faith to resolve the issues concerning the motions [before the court] and entrance-fee refund claims of current and former residents, and the rejection of tenant residency agreements," the judge wrote in the three-page order.



A view of the troubled Harborside community in Port Washington. Its sale has been held up in a dispute over fees owed to residents.

Trust set a Feb. 18 deadline to receive a report on the talks, adding it should contain information "only about settlements reached," not offers made or rejected.

The judge's order comes about seven weeks after he vowed in court not to approve the sale of The Harborside to its only bidder, Focus Healthcare Partners LLC, until some provision is made for the entrance-fee refunds.

### Judge's mandate

"I'm not going to approve the sale to Focus until all the pieces of the puzzle are brought together," Trust said in December.

Executives at Chicago-based Focus have said it wouldn't pro-

vide additional funding for the entrance-fee refunds and has no say over how the \$80 million in sale proceeds are used.

Manhattan-based Amsterdam Continuing Care has said through an attorney there is no money for refunds. Two years ago, Amsterdam pledged \$41 million toward refunds as part of a proposed sale of The Harborside to Life Care Services Communities LLC in Iowa. That transaction fell apart last fall in a state regulatory dispute.

Many of The Harborside residents, whose average age is 90, sold their homes to pay the entrance fee, which is between \$527,250 and \$2.2 million under one type of contract offered in 2021. The facility has

filed for bankruptcy three times in 10 years and had about 180 residents last fall.

### Offer from Westbury Bristol

Separately, on Monday, the owner of the Bristol at Westbury offered to house the 36 Harborside residents who must move by March 14 because the facility's assisted-living apartments, nursing home and dementia unit are slated to close.

Steven Krieger, a founding partner at B2K Development in Jericho, said The Harborside residents would receive 90 days free rent and free moving expenses to the Westbury Bristol, according to a copy of a letter sent to Gov. Kathy Hochul and obtained by Newsday. B2K owns the Westbury Bristol, which offers independent- and assisted-living apartments and dementia care.

"As you have stated, no one is going to find themselves on the street as a result of The Harborside failure, and we seek to be an ally in that commitment," Krieger told the governor.

The 140-unit Westbury Bristol received an additional 15 years of tax breaks from the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency in return for setting aside 28 units with affordable rents for the duration of the tax savings. The facility saw its occupancy rate fall to around 50% during the COVID-19 pandemic, Krieger told the IDA board last year.

A Hochul spokesman said the governor's office "appreciates the opportunity for Harborside residents to consider the Bristol at Westbury."

## DeepSeek ramps up hiring in China

Bloomberg News

DeepSeek, the Chinese startup that stunned markets with an AI model on par with OpenAI's, is aggressively recruiting specialists in a sign of its rapidly expanding ambitions.

The company advertised over the weekend for at least a half-dozen jobs focused on the frontier field of AGI, or artificial general intelligence. Positions included data experts, deep-learning researchers, a legal chief and even an intern

for \$70 a day. The roles are mainly located in Beijing, though some will be based out of the startup's home city of Hangzhou in eastern China.

The postings offer a glimpse into DeepSeek's ambition to remain at the forefront of Chinese AI and compete with global rivals.

Tech executives including OpenAI chief Sam Altman and SoftBank Group Corp. founder Masayoshi Son have portrayed AGI as a sort of industry holy grail. AGI refers to AI that understands,

learns and applies knowledge across a range of tasks. Unlike more specialized models such as ChatGPT, AGI refers to general cognitive abilities similar to those of humans, sparking fears that AI could surpass human intelligence and run amok.

DeepSeek joins players including OpenAI, Anthropic and Alphabet Inc.'s Google that have articulated plans to explore the field. Reclusive DeepSeek founder Liang Wenfeng has been quoted in interviews touting the field.

In ads posted over the weekend, DeepSeek sought a head of legal to help build a risk governance framework for AGI and lead communication with government agencies, regulators and research institutions.

For the deep-learning research job, the Chinese company prefers applicants that have "achieved good results in industry competitions."

Among the best-paid roles was that of AGI researcher, which could pull down \$172,000 annually, according to the most recent ads.

**LI People  
ON THE MOVE**



LAURA BRETT

**Julie Alberti**, of Cold Spring Harbor, director of family services at Strata Alliance in Ronkonkoma, has been appointed executive director of **CMM Cares** in Ronkonkoma.



DISCOVER LONG ISLAND

**Courtney Guiry**, of Huntington, senior manager of public relations and communication at **Discover Long Island** in Hauppauge, has been promoted to director of public relations and communications.



DISCOVER LONG ISLAND

**Brianna McEnroe**, of Kings Park, director of social media and branded content at **Discover Long Island** in Hauppauge, has been promoted to vice president of brand and innovation.

— DIANE DANIELS

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# UPGRADES COMING TO SMITH HAVEN

New stores, improvements slated for 2026

BY TORY N. PARRISH  
[tory.parrish@newsday.com](mailto:tory.parrish@newsday.com)

Smith Haven Mall is slated to get a multimillion-dollar makeover, as the owner of the Lake Grove property focuses on sprucing up its second-tier malls.

The redevelopment will add stores, dining destinations, an outdoor plaza and amenities, said the mall's owner, Simon Property Group Inc. The Indianapolis-based real estate investment trust also owns two other Long Island malls — Roosevelt Field in Uniondale and Walt Whitman Shops in Huntington Station.

The Smith Haven project “is a complete revitalization of the entire mall,” Mark Silvestri, president of development at Simon, told Newsday in an interview Monday.

The “entire interior of the mall is going to be redone. Food court’s going to be refurbished, all the common areas, the seating landscaping, the outdoor plazas will all be refurbished,” Silvestri said.

The redevelopment will begin this summer and is expected to be completed in 2026, according to Simon.

For years, Simon invested in its top-performing retail properties, like Roosevelt Field. But now the company is focusing on its second-tier, or class B malls, and bringing in better tenant mixes, Simon CEO David Simon told analysts during an earnings call last week.

“We still think we have an opportunity because, frankly, we’ve been organizationally very focused on . . . the A’s. We do think there is real effort, we think [and] growth for us in the B’s where we’re investing our dollars. So, that’s a big program for us in ’25 and ’26,” he said.

**New tenants**

The B malls are important assets in communities, he said. “It’s a combination of . . . updating the look, feel of the place, restaurants, tenants; everyone changes a little bit differently,” said Simon, citing Smith Haven

**RENDERING**



SIMON PROPERTY GROUP INC.

Plans for Smith Haven Mall in Lake Grove include new flooring, dining and amenities.



RICK KOPSTEIN

Owner Simon Property Group says it is investing in its class B malls, including Smith Haven, which was built in 1969.

Mall as an example.

Incoming tenants at the mall include women’s clothing retailer Zara, which will open in a “massive” space in 2026; Golf Lounge 18, which will open in March; and cookware store Sur la Table, which will open in the fall, Simon said in a statement Monday.

Car-themed burger eatery Ford’s Garage opened its first New York restaurant in November at the mall.

In 2023, Stony Brook Medicine took over the space that Sears vacated in 2020. Clothing store Primark opened a 32,700-square-foot store in 2023 in part of the first-floor space that JCPenney vacated in 2019.

Silvestri declined to disclose the specific amount that

Simon will spend on Smith Haven Mall’s revamp.

**Revamping B malls**

Mall owners nationwide are putting more focus in sprucing up their class B malls, particularly as the cost of construction has skyrocketed in the past few years, and residents may push back against new developments in their communities, said Alexander Goldfarb, managing director and senior research analyst in the Greenwich, Connecticut office of Piper Sandler & Co., a Minneapolis-based investment bank.

Built in 1969, the 1.2 million-square-foot Smith Haven Mall has 130 stores and straddles Lake Grove and Smithtown. Simon bought the mall in 1995 and completed a \$75 million renovation in 2007 that in-

involved replacing the former Stern’s building with an open-air “lifestyle center” that included The Cheesecake Factory, Barnes & Noble and Dick’s Sporting Goods.

Smith Haven Mall had a high occupancy rate, 97.7%, as of Dec. 31, 2023, according to Simon’s latest annual report, released in March.

Simon owns or has an interest in 229 properties in North America, Asia and Europe. The largest mall operator in the United States, the company owns about one-third of the top 300 malls in the nation, said Kevin Brown, senior equity analyst at Morningstar Research Services LLC, a financial services firm in Chicago.

A class A mall has a mix of high-end and national tenants, moderate tenant demand for space, above-average sales from tenants and minimal vacancies for the anchor spaces, while class B malls are solid properties with average sales productivity, declining vacancy rates and often one or more anchor vacancies, according to Green Street Advisors, a Newport Beach, California, real estate information provider.

It’s easier to make a B mall stronger than it is to turn it into an A mall, Brown said.

“It’s more about finding ways to sustain and reinvigorate the life of the B mall. Because if you kind of allow a B mall to . . . flounder a bit and just assume, ‘Oh, we’ll just continue it as a mall as is, it will slowly go the route of C malls,’” he said.

Class C malls have insignificant sales productivity, low occupancy and weak foot traffic.

# Musk bids \$97.4B for OpenAI

AI company's CEO declines to sell, but counters with low-ball offer for X

The Associated Press

A group of investors led by Elon Musk is offering about \$97.4 billion to buy OpenAI, escalating a legal dispute with the artificial intelligence company that Musk helped found.

Musk and his own AI startup, xAI, and a consortium of investment firms want to take control of the ChatGPT maker and revert it to its original charitable mission as a nonprofit research lab, according to Musk's attorney Marc Toberoff.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman quickly rejected the deal on Musk's social platform X, saying, "no thank you but we will buy Twitter for \$9.74 billion if you want."

Musk bought Twitter, now called X, for \$44 billion in 2022.

Musk and Altman, who together helped start OpenAI in 2015 and later competed over who should lead it, have been in a long-running feud over the startup's direction since Musk resigned from its board in 2018.

Musk, an early OpenAI investor and board member, sued

the artificial intelligence company last year, first in a California state court and later in federal court, alleging it had betrayed its founding aims as a nonprofit research lab benefiting the public good. Musk had invested about \$45 million in the startup from its founding until 2018, Toberoff said in court last week.

Musk and OpenAI lawyers faced off in a California federal court last week as a judge weighed Musk's request for a court order that would block the ChatGPT maker from converting itself to a for-profit company.

U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers hasn't yet ruled on Musk's request but in court said it was a "stretch" for Musk to claim he will be irreparably harmed if she doesn't intervene to stop OpenAI from moving forward with its planned transition toward becoming a for-profit corporation.

But the judge also raised concerns about OpenAI and its relationship with business partner Microsoft and said she



POOL VIA AP / FRANCK ROBICHONP



GETTY IMAGES / TNS / KENNY HOLSTON

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, left, refused a bid for the AI company from investors led by Elon Musk.

wouldn't stop the case from moving to trial as soon as next year so a jury can decide.

"It is plausible that what Mr. Musk is saying is true. We'll find out. He'll sit on the stand," she said.

Along with Musk and xAI, others backing the bid include Baron Capital Group, Valor

Management, Atreides Management, Vy Fund, Emanuel Capital Management and Eight Partners VC.

Toberoff said in a statement that if Altman and OpenAI's current board "are intent on becoming a fully for-profit corporation, it is vital that the charity be fairly compensated for what

its leadership is taking away from it: control over the most transformative technology of our time."

Toberoff added that Musk, as an OpenAI co-founder and successful tech leader, "is the person best positioned to protect and grow OpenAI's technology."

## Fed appears more likely to wait on rate cuts

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The odds of further interest rate cuts this year by the Federal Reserve dwindled last week as unemployment fell and more officials say they want to see how new policies from the White House affect the economy.

While Fed officials penciled in two rate cuts this year at their December meeting, economists and Wall Street investors are increasingly skeptical, with some predicting no reductions at all this year.

On Friday, economists at Morgan Stanley said they now expect just one rate cut in 2025, and investors also expect just one — in July — according to pricing in futures markets.

Fewer cuts could translate into a longer period of elevated mortgage rates and high costs to borrow money for everything from autos to credit



BLOOMBERG / AL DRAGO

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is due to testify before House and Senate committees on Tuesday and Wednesday in Washington.

cards. Still, mortgage rates are closely tied to the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which can move independently of the Fed's actions.

The shifting expectations

come as Chair Jerome Powell heads to Capitol Hill for two days of testimony this week, beginning Tuesday, before House and Senate committees that oversee the central bank

and the financial industry. Fed chairs are required by law to appear before Congress twice a year.

Members of Congress may urge that he cut rates more quickly. He will also likely be grilled about issues that are taking a higher profile under the Trump administration, such as crypto regulation, banking regulation, and allegations of "de-banking."

### Questions about 'de-banking'

De-banking is the practice of banks shutting down customer accounts because they believe they pose financial, legal or reputational risks to the banks. Some crypto executives have charged that Biden administration regulators pressured financial firms to target their industry for de-banking.

Regarding interest rates, Fed officials have suggested recently that after cutting their key rate

three times at the end of last year — to about 4.3%, down from two-decade high of 5.3% — they are likely to be on hold for an extended period, though none will specify how long that might be.

### 'Sideways' inflation

On Friday, Fed Governor Adriana Kugler said the labor market was "stable" and that "gives us a little bit of time to make some decisions." She noted that inflation has "moved sideways" since the fall and is above their 2% target.

She added that potential policy changes from the Trump administration have added uncertainty to their outlook for the economy. Economists have said that widespread tariffs, and the deportation of immigrants that Trump has also promised, could push up inflation. Others argue that Trump's deregulatory policies could, by increasing supply, reduce prices.

## BIZBUZZ

### NATION

#### Lyft plans robotaxis in Dallas

Dallas is set to be the first stop for a new robotaxi effort by Lyft. The ride-hailing app plans to bring vehicles using Mobileye Drive technology to Dallas as soon as 2026, David Risher, CEO of the ride-hailing company, said in a post on X. Other cities are set to follow with a partnership that includes a Japanese auto and the fleet-financing company Marubeni. "We selected Dallas in part because of its long history in embracing forward-looking technology and its deep roots in the tech sector," said CJ Macklin, senior manager of communications at Lyft. Robotaxis are gaining more attention as technology improves and consumers look for new methods to get around their neighborhoods and cities. Elsewhere, Tesla is planning a service for Austin, Texas, Elon Musk said last month. Under the new Lyft program, riders would have the opportunity to be paired with an autonomous ride directly through the Lyft app before being picked up by one of Marubeni's vehicles.

#### Natural gas to fuel AI needs

Pipeline operator Energy Transfer LP will provide as much as 450,000 million British thermal units per day of natural gas to supply a CloudBurst data center near San Marcos, Texas, Energy Transfer said Monday. Gas plant operators, producers and pipeline companies are vying for opportunities to satisfy a surge in demand needed to operate artificial intelligence programs. Gas-fired plants have emerged as the most competitive power solution because they're far cheaper and faster to build than reactors and, unlike wind and solar, can operate around the clock. The gas supply would be enough to generate as much as 1.2 gigawatts of electric power for at least 10 years, according to the company statement. CloudBurst designs, builds and operates energy infrastructure for artificial intelligence.

### WORLD

#### McDonald's global sales rise

McDonald's Corp. sales rose in the fourth quarter after growth in the chain's international business made up for a decline in the United States. Global same-store sales climbed by 0.4%. That snapped two straight negative quarters for McDonald's



BLOOMBERG / DAVID PAUL MORRIS

Transportation companies are expanding plans for driverless taxi cabs. Above, a Waymo autonomous taxi in San Francisco in 2023.

prompted by customers cutting down on restaurant outings and boycotts following the Israel-Hamas war. U.S. sales were the weak spot, falling 1.4% in the quarter. Guest counts grew slightly, but the average order size shrank from a year ago, when higher prices helped buoy checks. In the quarter, McDonald's contended with an E. coli outbreak in the United States that killed one person, sickened more than 100 and spooked customers. The U.S. result was offset by the company's two international divisions, with the business that includes Japan and the Middle East posting a 4.1% increase in same-store sales. In the Middle East, trends are positive largely because they are being compared with 2023, when sales slumped due to the outbreak of the war, chief financial officer Ian Borden said on a call with analysts. The company warned that the impact on results could continue until the conflict concludes. The chain plans to expand by 1,800 restaurants in 2025. It ended 2024 with 43,477 restaurants around the world, a roughly 4% increase from the prior year.

#### Two new hospitals for India

The family of billionaire Gautam Adani will donate \$686 million to build two 1,000-bed not-for-profit hospitals in India in partnership with Mayo Clinic Global Consulting, the conglomerate said in a statement Monday.

The first of these campuses, called Adani Health City, will be built in Ahmedabad. The other will be built in India's financial hub of Mumbai. The projects will be implemented through the Adani Group's not-for-profit health care arm. The integrated health care campuses will comprise super-specialty hospitals, a medical college with an annual intake of 150 undergraduates and more than 80 residents, and research facilities.

#### Musk orders buoy company

Elon Musk's Space Exploration Technologies Corp. has propelled the shares of a small British telecom-equipment maker to a 16-year high. Filtronic PLC, based in Sedgefield, England, said Monday it had received an order worth \$20.9 million from SpaceX — the fourth contract from the rocket maker, a key customer. Shares in the company rallied as much as 15% on Monday to the highest since May 2008. The stock has soared almost 700% in the past two years, giving it a market capitalization of \$284 million and making it the best performer on London's FTSE AIM All Share Index over that period. Satellite internet services like Starlink are becoming more important as they can provide high-speed connectivity to places that are underserved by traditional internet providers, such as rural communities, conflict zones or areas where infrastructure has been damaged by natural disasters. Before Monday, Filtronic had already received three batches of orders from SpaceX, totaling \$37.1 million.

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## MARKETGUIDE

### Newsday LI Index

Company	Close	Change
Arbor Realty Trust (ABR)	13.7	-0.05
ACRES Commercial Realty (ACR)	18.71	0.13
Broadridge Financial Solutions (BR)	242.34	1.92
BRT Apartments (BRT)	17.64	0.17
Dime Community Bancshares (DCOM)	32.65	-0.09
Esquire Financial Holdings (ESQ)	84.49	-0.83
Frequency Electronics (FEIM)	17.33	0.36
Flushing Financial (FFIC)	14.75	0.05
Flagstar Financial (FLG)	12.29	-0.02
First of Long Island (FLIC)	13.77	-0.01
1-800-Flowers.com (FLWS)	8.1	0.05
Fonar (FONR)	16.01	0.41
Global Industrial (GIC)	23.68	-0.24
Hanover Bancorp (HNVR)	26.06	0.3
Henry Schein (HSIC)	78.9	-0.1
Kimco Realty (KIM)	22.14	-0.25
Lifetime Brands (LCUT)	5.11	-0.24
MSC Industrial (MSM)	80.56	0.34
Nathan's Famous (NATH)	86.1	1.75
Napco Security Technologies (NSSC)	26.04	0.31
One Liberty Properties (OLP)	25.82	-0.19
Park Aerospace (PKE)	14.34	0
Postal Realty Trust (PSTL)	13.49	-0.04
Veeco Instruments (VECO)	24.62	0.24
Verint Systems (VRNT)	26.26	0.58

### Other local stocks

Company	Close	Change
Air Industries Group (AIRI)	4.23	0
AmpliTech (AMPG)	2.56	0.24
Applied DNA Sciences (APDN)	0.17	0
BioRestorative Therapies (BRTX)	2.44	0.14
Can B (CANB)	0.03	0
CPI Aerostructures (CVU)	4.77	0.31
CVD Equipment (CVV)	3.89	0.3
Data Storage Corp. (DTST)	4.15	-0.08
Enzo Biochem (ENZ)	0.54	-0.02
Forward Industries (FORD)	6.22	-0.23
Gyrodyne (GYRO)	9.29	-0.06
Intelligence (IDN)	2.67	-0.04
Intelligent Protection Management (IPM)	2.08	0.1
Manhattan Bridge Capital (LOAN)	5.67	-0.07
Mobiquity Technologies (MOBQ)	3.85	-0.03
Orbit International (ORBT)	4.02	0
ProPhase Labs (PRPH)	0.26	0
Power REIT (PW)	1.21	0.05
Research Frontiers (REFR)	1.4	-0.04
Scientific Industries (SCND)	1.04	0.01
Singularity Future Technology (SGLY)	0.94	-0.09
Surge Components (SPRS)	2.3	0.01
United-Guardian (UG)	10.85	-0.35
Vasomedical (VASO)	0.12	0
Beyond Air (XAIR)	0.44	0.02

## LONG ISLAND

## Howard DeMartini, 82, Suffolk GOP leader

BY MATTHEW CHAYES  
matthew.chayes@newsday.com

Howard DeMartini, a master political tactician who did two stints as Suffolk Republican chairman and helped unseat Democrats across the county, has died. He was 82.

DeMartini died Saturday in home hospice, in Fort Myers, Florida, where he had relocated nearly 25 years ago from Sayville, according to his stepson Chris Brown, of Sebring, Florida. The cause was glioblastoma, a kind of brain cancer, from which he fell ill in December.

Newsday once called DeMartini, who was active in Suffolk politics, campaigns and government circa the last quarter of the 20th century, one of Long Island's shrewdest political operatives. He led the party from 1991 to 1995 and then again in 1999.

DeMartini also once headed Suffolk's off-track betting operation, where he increased revenues turned over to the county by millions, cut the workforce, modernized and consolidated facilities, and opened branches in Bay Shore and Bohemia inspired by spires at Churchill Downs, according to Newsday's archives, from which his public history was drawn for this obituary.

#### Coming to prominence

DeMartini came to prominence by helping mastermind Peter Cohalan's primary victory over the then-county executive,



Howard DeMartini, seen in 1999 at OTB offices that he oversaw.

John V.N. Klein, in 1979.

In his first stint as party chairman, he also helped get back the county executiveship, unseat two Democratic congressmembers, Thomas Downey and George Hochbrueckner, and Democratic Assemb. I. William Bianchi, and took back control of Huntington town.

At the end of the decade, DeMartini returned to head the county party, which was tarred by scandal, after his predecessor was federally indicted — and later imprisoned — for charges related to bribery and partaking in a stolen-truck chop shop oper-

ation, Newsday reported in 1999, a time when polls showed that the public trusted Democrats more than Republicans on certain key issues.

But DeMartini predicted change was afoot, explaining: "There is a certain resentment about what has happened to this country."

"It's time to get back to work, and it's time to avoid the distractions that are going on in Washington and locally, and it's time to focus on the Republican message to the voters of this county," he told Newsday. "And that message is: We are the party that sta-

bilizes taxes, improves economic growth and cares about protecting our environment."

Howard Charles DeMartini was born May 25, 1942, in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, to Adele (Gardella) DeMartini, a homemaker, and Howard DeMartini, a lithographer who volunteered in local politics. The family moved to Valhalla when DeMartini was a boy and in the 1970s he moved to Sayville, according to his stepson, who provided the biographical details for this obituary.

DeMartini graduated in 1960 from Archbishop Stepinac High School, in 1964 from La Salle University in Pennsylvania, with an economics degree, in 1965 from Ohio State University, where he got a master's in economics, and later Harvard's Kennedy School.

He served on the Hudson River Valley Commission and as chief of staff to a state senator, Caesar Trunzo. DeMartini was also an Islip deputy town supervisor and deputy county executive.

#### Candidate boot camp

DeMartini would run his county-legislature candidates through a boot camp akin to what national parties typically did for congressional hopefuls.

Held in a basement conference room at the Ronkonkoma Holiday Inn near Long Island MacArthur Airport, in the morning there were lectures on how to door-knock, send out direct mail and make television ads. Then, after lunch, candi-

dates heard about the budget, how the legislature worked, and what issues could make Democrats vulnerable.

Although he wasn't one of George Pataki's early supporters, DeMartini helped Pataki clinch the governorship in 1994, and Pataki later appointed him to the OTB.

Jesse Garcia of Medford, the current Suffolk County party leader, was a committeeman in the 1990s and voted for DeMartini each time he ran. Garcia recalled how DeMartini was an early adopter of then-nascent technology — robocalls, the internet, search engines — to execute successful political campaigns.

"He was amazing at tactics and strategy. That's where his forte was," said Garcia, who recalled how the two would stay in touch in DeMartini's retirement.

Along with his wife Helen (Gabriel) of 42 years and stepson, DeMartini is survived by a daughter, Denise DeMartini-Griffin of Boston, stepsons Patrick Brown of Flemington, New Jersey, and Kenneth Brown of upstate Rensselaer; a sister, Lauren Steppe of Ocala, Florida, and four grandchildren.

He was predeceased by son David DeMartini.

A previous marriage, to Mary Jane Marmo, now of Albany, ended in divorce.

A funeral service is set from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Feb. 22 at Harvey-Engelhardt in Fort Myers, with cremation to follow.

## WORLD

## Gyalo Thondup, 97, Dalai Lama's brother, Tibetan diplomat



AP / ASHWINI BHATIA

Gyalo Thondup, seen in 2008, pushed for Tibetan cause.

The Associated Press

NEW DELHI — The elder brother of the Dalai Lama and former chairman of the Tibetan government-in-exile in India, Gyalo Thondup, who led several rounds of talks with China and worked with foreign governments for the Tibetan cause, has died. He was 97.

Thondup died at his home in Kalimpong, a hill town in the Himalayan foothills of eastern West Bengal state, on Saturday evening, media reports said. No other details were immediately released about his death.

Tibetan media outlets credited Thondup for networking with foreign governments and

praised his role in facilitating U.S. support for the Tibetan struggle.

The Dalai Lama led a prayer session for Thondup at a monastery in Bylakuppe town in India's southern state of Karnataka on Sunday where the spiritual leader is currently staying for the winter months.

He prayed for Thondup's "swift rebirth," in accordance with Buddhist traditions, and said "his efforts towards the Tibetan struggle were immense and we are grateful for his contribution."

Thondup, one of six siblings of the Tibetan spiritual leader and the only brother not groomed for a religious life, made India his

home in 1952 and helped develop early contacts with the Indian and U.S. governments to seek support for Tibet. In 1957, Thondup helped recruit Tibetan fighters who were sent to U.S. training camps in subsequent years, a report by the U.S.-funded Radio Free Asia said.

According to RFA, Thondup was primarily responsible for liaising with the Indian government, including with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, when the Dalai Lama escaped to India in 1959. He also played a key role in establishing Tibetan leaders' relations with U.S. officials.

Thondup began discussions between Tibetans and Chinese leaders in 1979, in a departure

from his earlier approach, which sought an armed struggle against Chinese control of Tibet. The meeting laid a basis for a series of formal negotiations between the Dalai Lama's official envoys and the Chinese leadership that continued until they were halted in 2010.

In an interview with RFA broadcast in 2003, Thondup said neither India nor the United States would be able to solve the Tibetan issue, and that progress could only come through face-to-face talks with Beijing.

Thondup served as chairman of the Tibetan government-in-exile based in India's northern hillside town of Dharamshala from 1991 to 1993.



## HIDATO

FIND THE PATH - SOLVE THE PUZZLE

[www.hidato.com](http://www.hidato.com)

Diff: ★★★★★

Previous solution

The goal is to fill the grid with consecutive numbers that connect horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Each puzzle has only one possible solution. The first and last numbers of a puzzle will be in circle markers.

[www.whatzit.com](http://www.whatzit.com)

## WHATZIT?

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

Out and about

## UP & DOWN Words™

By David L. Hoyt  
Art: Russell G. Hoyt

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### CLUES

- Shine about for that " \_\_\_\_\_ Lights"
- It's played under lights
- "Bring it!"
- Available
- Return a phone message
- Check out
- Where to find lyrics

### Monday's Answer

- |             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| 1. ANIMATED | MOVIE |
| 2. MOVIE    | CLIP  |
| 3. CLIP     | ART   |
| 4. ART      | CLASS |
| 5. CLASS    | ACT   |
| 6. ACT      | ON    |
| 7. ON       | TOP   |

TODAY'S WORD -- GRATIN

(GRATIN: GRAT'n: A crust formed on food that has been cooked with cheese, as under a broiler.)

Average mark 19 words  
Time limit 25 minutes

Can you find 23 or more words in GRATIN?  
The list will be published tomorrow.

YESTERDAY'S WORD -- JAEGER

- |        |        |       |       |
|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| jaeger | ease   | sage  | sere  |
| jeer   | erase  | sager | serge |
| ager   | gear   | saree |       |
| agree  | grease | sear  |       |
| eager  | rage   | seer  |       |

RULES OF THE GAME: 1. Words must be of four or more letters. 2. Words that acquire four letters by the addition of "s," such as "bats" or "dies," are not allowed. 3. Additional words made by adding a "d" or an "s" may not be used. 4. Proper nouns, slang words, or vulgar or sexually explicit words are not allowed. Contact Word Game creator Kathleen Saxe at kzsaxe@gmail.com.

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CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

"NWGO Z WJSG PJC CJVB. Z FEBU  
GJU IDUB DR TWDTDIJUG ZTG TKGJA  
JOC CJOTG UD UWG 'IZDO XZOH'  
BDEOCUKJTX.' - PIJXG IZSGIV

Previous Solution: "I'm from the same planet as David Bowie" / "It's a real comfort zone ... to feel alien" - Tilda Swinton

TODAY'S CLUE: U = vowels, E = evens, O = odds

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Answer to Previous Puzzle



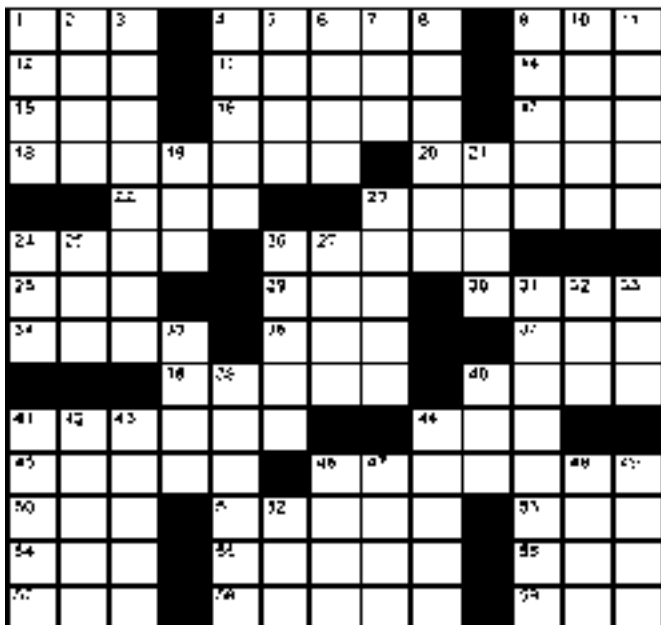
- |                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4 Bit of greenery | 10 Beautify                 |
| 5 Actor — Aida    | 11 Orbiting body in space   |
| 6 — cherry        | 19 Nise                     |
| 7 Permit          | 21 — Mertz of "I Love Lucy" |
| 8 Compositions    | 23 Complete                 |
| 9 Soprano         | 24 Recipe                   |

ACROSS

- 1 Pointer
- 4 Costly fur
- 9 — and cheese
- 12 "Diamonds — Forever"
- 13 Works at
- 14 Commotion
- 15 Took off
- 16 Talks wildly
- 17 — -com
- 18 Abounding
- 20 In flames
- 22 Carry with effort
- 23 Cruel ruler
- 24 Walked on
- 26 Came to be
- 28 Tentative taste
- 29 Illuminated
- 30 Dimple
- 34 Versifier
- 36 "Give — — whirl"
- 37 Likewise not

DOWN

- 38 Perfect
- 40 Circular
- 41 Customer
- 44 Sheep's cry
- 45 Wan
- 48 Beat
- 49 decisively
- 50 Rest
- 51 Willow rod
- 53 Achieved
- 54 Publishing workers (Abbr.)
- 55 Type style
- 56 Cup handle
- 57 Actor Billy — Williams
- 58 Stockholm denizen
- 59 Abbr. on maps



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WORD SCRIMMAGE

1<sup>st</sup> DOWN

N<sub>3</sub> P<sub>5</sub> I<sub>2</sub> T<sub>2</sub> T<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub> R<sub>7</sub>

2<sup>nd</sup> DOWN

R<sub>2</sub> R<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub> E<sub>1</sub> U<sub>3</sub> U<sub>3</sub> U<sub>3</sub>

3<sup>rd</sup> DOWN

5<sup>th</sup> Letter +3 PTS

I<sub>2</sub> D<sub>3</sub> L<sub>3</sub> A<sub>2</sub> T<sub>2</sub> C<sub>5</sub> E<sub>1</sub>

4<sup>th</sup> DOWN

4<sup>th</sup> DOWN +30 PTS

F<sub>7</sub> D<sub>3</sub> E<sub>5</sub> C<sub>5</sub> T<sub>2</sub> I<sub>2</sub> I<sub>2</sub>

TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN JUDGES TOTAL = 233  
AVERAGE GAME 190-190 PTS

Directions: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each scramble. Add points to each word or letter using scoring directions. Given letter needs get a 50-point bonus. All words can be found in Webster's New World College Dictionary.

2-11 NEA

Previous solution

1<sup>st</sup> DOWN = 80  
2<sup>nd</sup> DOWN = 85  
3<sup>rd</sup> DOWN = 83  
4<sup>th</sup> DOWN = 114  
AVERAGE GAME 260-260 PTS

C O N V E X  
A W A I T L O  
G A M B L S T  
E A R I N G S

# Doobie Brothers, Buffett band to play LI

Two acts co-headlining Aug. 10 show at Northwell at Jones Beach Theater

BY RAFER GUZMÁN  
rafer.guzman@newsday.com

The Doobie Brothers will play Northwell at Jones Beach Theater on Aug. 10 in support of their upcoming album, "Walk This Road."

The yacht-rock icons will be supported by The Coral Reefer Band, which backed the late **Jimmy Buffett** for more than 50 years and has continued to perform his songs even after his death in 2023. Presale tickets for the show start Tuesday at 10 a.m. and general-public tickets go on sale Friday at 10 a.m. at thedoobiebrothers.com.

The Jones Beach show is part of a 19-date North American tour that kicks off Aug. 4 in Detroit, according to a news release from the band. The tour will be preceded by six warm-up dates in the U.K. and Ireland, including an already sold-out show at London's Hyde Park on July 13 as part of the final concert from **Jeff**

Lynne's ELO. More North American dates for The Doobie Brothers are expected to be added.

"Walk This Road," slated for release June 6 on Rhino Records, is being touted as the first new studio album from the four current Doobies — **Michael McDonald**, **Patrick Simmons**, **John McFee** and **Tom Johnston** — in more than 40 years. (Other recent albums have featured differing lineups or focused on previously released material.) Of the album's 10 songs, at least three have already been made available for streaming, including the bluesy title track (featuring **Mavis Staples**), the upbeat ballad "Call Me" and "Lahaina," which features **Mick Fleetwood** and was released as a single in 2023.

"We're so looking forward to the 2025 Summer tour!" Simmons said in a statement. "Doobies and Reefers, hmm . . . sounds like a perfect match!"



PATRICK MCBRIDE

General-public tickets for The Doobie Brothers' 19-date North American tour go on sale Friday. The band's current lineup is Michael McDonald, from left, John McFee, Tom Johnston and Pat Simmons.



Louisiana native Jon Batiste performs the national anthem before the Super Bowl at New Orleans's Caesars Superdome on Sunday.

AP / GEORGE WALKER IV

## Batiste's Super Bowl anthem highlighted family

The Associated Press

**Jon Batiste** transformed the Super Bowl stage into a symphony of creativity, debuting new music, reimagining "The Star-Spangled Banner" and shining a global spotlight on his wife's creative vision.

As Batiste performed the national anthem Sunday, the multitasking musician played a piano adorned with a colorful butterfly painting by his wife, **Suleika Jaouad**, who came up with the idea while making their documentary "American Symphony." Her artwork, the city's resilience after the New Year's attack, and the memory of his late veteran grandfather all fueled his performance.

"This was powerful. The spirit

came over me," Batiste told The Associated Press after his performance at the Caesars Superdome. On Monday he unveiled "My United State," a two-track project featuring "Star-Spangled Blues" and "Notes from My Future Self."

"It's the first time in the history of the anthem that had samples included in it," said Batiste, a Louisiana native who is a Grammy and Oscar winner and former bandleader for the "The Late Show with **Stephen Colbert**." "We almost couldn't clear the main sample that I wanted until the night before."

Batiste, 38, said his reinvented national anthem draws from "Drag Rap" by The Showboys — better known as the Triggerman beat — a

staple of New Orleans bounce and hip-hop culture. He aimed to showcase the city's rich culture and heritage while putting his own stamp on a song that was first echoed at the Super Bowl in 1967, performed by The Pride of Arizona, the Michigan Marching Band and the UCLA Choir.

Over the years, the anthem has been re-imagined by music legends like **Whitney Houston**, **Diana Ross**, **Billy Joel**, **Beyoncé** and **Lady Gaga**.

"It's a lot of pieces to the puzzle," Batiste said. "They all come in different tempos and melodies. It's a whole lot of things that wouldn't never work together unless it was framed by the American ideal. I wanted to capture it in an arrangement. Just in the sound."

hot  
date

FRIDAY

Backstreet Boys perform on NBC's 'Today.'





DAVID MEISENHOLDER

Elmont's Ebubenna Nwabudu, right, and Davon White of Roslyn go up for a rebound on Monday during a Nassau League AA-V boys basketball game at Elmont.

## SCOREBOARD

### BOYS BASKETBALL

#### Nassau League I

Massapequa.....8 11 19 17 --55  
 Hempstead.....7 21 14 15 --57  
 HEM: Davis 27, Collins 17, Plaskett 7, Karimu 4, Molina 2. Totals 9-12-57. MAS: Neary 18, Byrnes 14, VanRoten 10, Pastier 8, Leszczak 5. Totals 16-5-55. Three-pointers: HEM 12 (Davis 6, Collins 5, Plaskett); MAS 5 (Neary 2, VanRoten 2, Leszczak).

#### League II

Port Washington.....10 17 11 17 --55  
 Academy Charter.....7 5 7 9 --28  
 PW: Shanahan 17, Clemmons 8, White 6, Abend 5, McCarvill 5, Gannon 4, Edelstein 3, Vulpis 3, Daly 2, Tessler 2. Totals 24-1-55. AC: Kelly 8, Coles 6, Alford 5, Dorismond 2, Martinez 2, Maxwell 2, Thompson 2, Stanley 1. Totals 9-3-28. Three-pointers: PW 1 (Vulpis); AC 3 (Coles 2, Alford).

#### League IV

Division.....11 3 9 8 --31  
 Sewanhaka.....13 16 13 18 --60  
 SEW: Fresnel 16, Metellus 13, Anderson 11, Gurley 6, Orenville 5, Boothe 4, Spaulding 3, Giannola 2. Totals 17-4-60. DIV: Faton 10, Faisal 7, Lanyo 4, De La Cruz 3, Francis 2, Stewart 2, Tomala 2, Mirelis 1. Totals 11-1-31. Three-pointers: SEW 4 (Gurley 2, Orenville, Spaulding); DIV 1 (Faton).

Calhoun.....15 16 9 14 --54  
 Carey.....15 9 10 11 --45  
 CAL: Bhunut 17, Facciponti 11, Pierre-Charles 8, M. Weidenbaum 7, Hutchinson 5, Ibrahim 4, Beltre 2. Totals 12-7-54. CAR: Yussuf 14, Persaud 12, Degan 7, Subero 5, Boubis 4, Lonergan 2, Kunkel 1. Totals 15-4-45. Three-pointers: CAL 7 (Bhunut 3, Pierre-Charles 2, Facciponti, M. Weidenbaum); CAR 4 (Yussuf 2, Degan, Subero).

#### League V

Roslyn.....13 8 8 13 7 --49  
 Elmont.....8 9 11 14 13 --55  
 EL: Edwards 17, A. Brown 13, Nwabudu 12, Barnes 4, Kelly 3, K. Brown 2, Cook 2, Muhammad 2. Totals 21-0-55. ER: Kupper-Smith 25, Kenyon 9, D. White 6, K. White 6, Rubin 3. Totals 10-7-49. Three-pointers: R 7 (Kupper-Smith 3, Kenyon 2, D. White 2).

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

#### Nassau Conference AAA-I

Herricks.....7 13 12 10 --42  
 Massapequa.....16 9 20 11 --56  
 MAS: Appleton 16, Schiereck 9, Garguilo 8, Grosso 8, Erker 5, Donovan 4, Domingo 2, Morrow 2, O'Neill 2. Totals 18-5-56. HER: Begawala 21, Madden 7, Sethi 7, Darr 3, Shiu 3, Cherian 1. Totals 3-9-42. Three-pointers: MAS 5 (Appleton 2, Schiereck 2, Garguilo); HER 9 (Begawala 6, Sethi 2, Darr).  
 Academy Charter.....7 4 2 6 --19  
 Syosset.....16 20 22 15 --73  
 SY: S. Schneider 19, McKay 13, J. Schneider 11, Falk 6, Lieberman 6, Matthews 4, Nelmes 4, Furukawa 3, Ramkishun 3, Abraham 2,

Keschner 2. Totals 24-8-73. AC: Thomas 14, Nafiu 4, Ward 1. Totals 9-0-19. Three-pointers: SY 8 (J. Schneider 3, Lieberman 2, Furukawa, McKay, S. Schneider).

Academy Charter.....0 1 7 2 --10  
 Port Washington.....8 15 1 4 --28  
 PW: Rivera 8, M. Rochester 7, Ahmuty 4, Capobianco 3, Hillman 3, Spielman 2, Frisch 1. Totals 6-5-28. AC: Ward 5, Duffy 3, Nafiu 1, Sainiene 1. Totals 1-2-10. Three-pointers: PW 5 (Rivera 2, Capobianco, Hillman, M. Rochester); AC 2 (Duffy, Ward).

Hicksville.....9 3 5 23 --40  
 Uniondale.....17 19 20 10 --66  
 UDAL: Talmadge 20, Adisa 18, Saintyl 14, Green 10, Coleman 4. Totals 25-4-66. HI: Parda 17, C. Perrucci 6, Gonzales 4, S. Perrucci 4, Berg 3, Mantzaris 3, Dammes 2, Charan 1. Totals 11-3-40. Three-pointers: UDAL 4 (Adisa 2, Saintyl 2); HI 3 (Berg, Parda, C. Perrucci).

#### Conference AA-III

Manhasset.....11 13 11 9 --44  
 Bethpage.....11 7 13 9 --40  
 MAN: Perfetto 22, M. Williams 6, Brigid 4, Lambert 4, D. Williams 4, Liu 3, Busch 1. Totals 12-4-44. BPG: Cusack 25, Scuggs 6, Kelly 5, Casey 3, Cossaro 1. Totals 10-5-40. Three-pointers: MAN 4 (Perfetto 3, Liu); BPG 5 (Cusack 2, Casey, Kelly, Scuggs).

Roosevelt.....0 3 2 8 --13  
 Garden City.....15 14 6 11 --46  
 GC: Patrissi 8, Brantuk 6, Finnell 6, Kenny 4, Parisa 4, B. Santopietro 4, Wilde 4, Mullally 3, Ruoff 3, Costa 2, Palmer 2. Totals 21-1-46. ROO: Rawlings 7, Chappelle 2, Jackson 2, Leme 2. Totals 4-1-13. Three-pointers: GC 1 (Ruoff); ROO 1 (Rawlings).

#### CHSAA

Sacred Heart.....19 20 16 12 --67  
 Bishop Loughlin.....10 12 22 11 --55  
 SH: Miller 31, Forgiene 16, Thieke 7, D'Allesandro 5, Freidermann 4, Menard 2, Williams 2. Totals 17-6-67. Three-pointers: SH 6 (Miller 5, Forgiene).

#### Non-Conference

Great Neck South.....11 10 9 4 --34  
 Wheatley.....15 15 5 10 --45  
 WHE: Kovios 17, Shinder 8, Sparacia 6, Lysohir 5, Pak 5, Almiroudis 4. Totals 9-7-45. GNS: Ad. Cho 13, Ak. Cho 13, Covitt 4, Flores-Ramirez 2, Murad 2. Totals 7-5-34. Three-pointers: WHE 7 (Kovios 3, Sparacia 2, Lysohir, Shinder); GNS 5 (Ak. Cho 3, Ad. Cho 2).

### BOYS BOWLING

#### Nassau Team Championships - at Garden City

##### Division I

Bellmore-Merrick 6,620.....Sewanhaka 6,453.....Clarke 6,046

##### Division II

Seaford 6,228.....Island Trees 5,188.....Malverne 5,146

#### Suffolk Team Championship - at Sayville

East Islip 6465.....Longwood 6,182.....Commack 6,154

### GIRLS BOWLING

#### Suffolk Team Championship - at Sayville

East Islip 5,981.....Longwood 5,785.....Smithtown 5,345

## IN BRIEF

### NBA

#### Nets rout shorthanded Hornets

Nic Claxton scored 16 points and the Nets pulled away after LaMelo Ball was lost to another ankle injury and beat the Charlotte Hornets, 97-89, on Monday night at Barclays Center.

Cam Johnson and Day'Ron Sharpe each added 14 points for the Nets, who won for the fifth time in six games in the best stretch of their first season under Jordi Fernandez. This was their second easy victory over Charlotte during that span.

Moussa Diabate had 21 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Hornets before he was forced out of the game with a right eye abrasion.

#### Young, Irving All-Star subs

Atlanta guard Trae Young is headed to the NBA All-Star Game after all, and Dallas guard Kyrie Irving has been picked once again. Commissioner Adam Silver announced that he has added Young to the All-Star roster as an injury replacement for Milwaukee forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, who will not be able to play because of a calf injury. Later Monday, Silver chose Irving as the injury replacement for his Mavs teammate Anthony Davis, who is out with a groin injury.

### ALPINE SPORTS

#### Shiffrin dealing with PTSD

Mikaela Shiffrin says she is dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder following a crash in November and will not defend her gold medal in giant slalom at the Alpine skiing world championships in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria. The American holder of a

record 99 World Cup wins suffered a deep puncture wound when she fell in a giant slalom race on Nov. 30 in Killington, Vermont, causing severe trauma to her oblique muscles.

"I'm mentally blocked in being able to get to the next level of pace and speed and putting power into the turns," Shiffrin said in an audio message shared with The Associated Press.

### GOLF

#### Tiger WDs after mother's death

Tiger Woods abruptly withdrew from the Genesis Invitational at Torrey Pines on Monday, saying he was still processing the death of his mother. Kultida Woods died unexpectedly last Tuesday at the age of 80. "I planned to tee it up this week, but I'm just not ready," Woods posted on social media. "I did my best to prepare, knowing it's what my mom would have wanted, but I'm still processing her loss."

Woods, the tournament host of the Genesis Invitational, said he hoped to be at Torrey Pines later in the week and "appreciate the continued kindness since my Mom's passing."

### COLLEGE BASKETBALL

#### Irish No. 2 in women's rankings

Notre Dame moved up to No. 2 in The Associated Press women's basketball Top 25 on Monday. The Fighting Irish replaced South Carolina in the second spot behind UCLA after the Gamecocks lost, 66-62, to Texas. It is Notre Dame's best ranking since the team was No. 1 on Jan. 21, 2019. The Bruins remained the unanimous No. 1 choice. The Longhorns climbed to third with their victory. — AP



Tiger Woods with his late mother Kultida after he won the Western Open in 1997. His mother, whom he called a "force of nature," died unexpectedly Feb. 4 at 80.

# ★ Murray, Hernandez win titles

## Aiello, too, in first girls wrestling championship

BY MATT LINDSAY  
matt.lindsay@newsday.com

Brooke-Lynn Murray was overcome with emotion.

The West Babylon junior, who represents Bay Shore, defeated Rocky Point senior Ava Capogna by 6-4 decision in the 138-pound final of the first Suffolk County girls wrestling championship Monday night at Comsewogue High School. When the final buzzer sounded, she immediately let out an echoing roar, matching the reaction of the crowded gym.

Murray and Capogna are two of the girls wrestling pioneers on Long Island. Though both have been wrestling for several years, the two had never wrestled each other.

"I didn't know that she would go this weight until the middle of this week and it threw me off," Murray said. "I was doubting myself a lot. My coaches have been telling me, 'You're better than you think you are. Use your ability and you'll know.' As soon as I won, I believed in myself and that emotion came out."

Capogna scored two take-downs for an early 4-0 lead, but Murray got her own takedown before the end of the first period. She scored two more take-downs, with the winning take-



Bay Shore's Brooke-Lynn Murray, left, gets the win over Rocky Point's Ava Capogna at 138 pounds in the Suffolk wrestling championships. Murray will have shot at state crown on Feb. 27 in Albany.

down coming with 55 seconds left.

Murray won both of her earlier matches by technical superiority — a 12-0 win in 3:49 over Aylin Davila (Town of Huntington) in the quarterfinals and a 10-0 win in 3:13 over Julia Zuchowska (Rocky Point) in the semifinals.

Murray (31-3) is the only girls wrestler from West Babylon. She was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament, which was originally

scheduled for Sunday but was postponed due to snow.

"I had a meeting with my principal and my superintendent and they said, 'In history, you're going to be looked at as the first girl on a varsity wrestling team.' To be a county champ in the same year is absolutely amazing," Murray said.

Murray will have a chance to become one of the first official state girls wrestling champions on Feb. 27 at MVP Arena in Al-

bany.

At 126 pounds, Julianna Hernandez is back and feeling good. The Newfield freshman who wrestles for Rocky Point suffered an ankle injury in December that caused her to miss about four weeks.

Hernandez defeated Bellport senior Caitlin Maragioglio by 8-3 decision for the 126-pound title. Hernandez struggled early to get Maragioglio (24-5) down to the mat but found her footing late in

the first period, taking a 4-1 lead into the second.

"She's very strong and she's an incredible worker," Hernandez said. "That was a really good match. I definitely was expecting because I know how great she's gotten."

Hernandez (12-1) pinned Sachem North's Jazenia Rodriguez in 11 seconds in the semifinals. Hernandez's sister Zoey, a seventh-grader, was the 94-pound runner-up, losing by 10-0 technical superiority in 2:55 to Bellport's Olivia Anello. Her older sister, sophomore Madison Hernandez, suffered a dislocated elbow in the 145-pound semifinals and was unable to finish the match.

"We worked really hard to place in the counties and hopefully go to states together," Julianna Hernandez said. "Now she's out due to an injury and it's tough. But she'll be back and better next year."

Glenn senior Taylor Aiello has watched her brother, Tommy, rack up three county titles and a state championship in the last three years. Now she has a county title of her own. Aiello, who represents Town of Huntington, defeated Bay Shore's Melania Turano by 10-0 technical superiority in 1:38 for the 132-pound title. Aiello (8-1) was last year's Long Island champion at 126 pounds.

"I'm really happy they were able to sanction it for my senior year," Aiello said. "It feels real. Last year, we had the Long Island championships after states. This feels so much better."

# Bhunut's strong second half propels Calhoun

Riley Bhunut stepped up for Calhoun boys basketball, scoring 10 of his game-high 17 points in the second half to lead the Colts to a 54-45 win Monday over Carey in Nassau IV. Luca Faccioponti added 11 points for Calhoun (11-8), which has won nine of its last 10 games as the Colts move to 10-4 in league play.

David Yussuf led Carey (9-12) with 14 points. Kelvin Persaud had 12 points for the Seahawks. **Sewanhaka 60, Division 31:** Nehemy Fresnel had 16 points, 14 rebounds and four blocks to lead Sewanhaka (16-4) to a Nassau IV victory. Braylon Metellus added 13 points, 11 rebounds and three steals and Dante Anderson had a double-dou-

ble with 11 points and 10 rebounds. Isaiah Faton had 10 points for Division (6-14).

### Saturday's games

**Hempstead 57, Massapequa 55:** Amare Collins hit a three-pointer with 31 seconds to tie the game before Joden Plaskett forced a steal and Jonathan Davis made a three to give Hempstead (9-10) the lead for good in Nassau I. Davis finished with 27 points while Collins added 17.

John Neary led Massapequa (9-10) with 18 points.

**Uniondale 54, Hicksville 39:** Dylan Hickman scored 25 points to lead Uniondale (13-5) in Nassau I. John Osorno scored 16 points for Hicksville (7-12).

## ROUNDUP

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

**Garden City 46, Roosevelt 13:** Marisa Patrissi had eight points for Garden City (18-2) in its Nassau AA-II win. Grace Brantuk and Kyle Finnell added six points apiece for the Trojans. Malia Rawlings led Roosevelt (1-18) with seven points.

### Saturday's games

**Sacred Heart 67, Bishop Loughlin 55:** Maggie Miller racked up 31 points, eight rebounds and five assists to lead Sacred Heart in the CHSAA. Fran Forgione added

16 points and seven rebounds. Colleen Thieke contributed seven points and led the team with 12 rebounds and six assists.

**Uniondale 66, Hicksville 40:** Shy'Ann Talmadge picked up a double-double with 20 points and 10 rebounds while Eniola Adisa added 18 points and eight assists to lead Uniondale (6-10) in Nassau AAA-I. Zahara Saintyl added a double-double with 14 points and 12 rebounds while dishing out six assists. Kelsey Green contributed 10 points and eight rebounds in the win. Caitlin Parda led Hicksville (3-16) with 17 points.

**Massapequa 56, Herricks 42:** Savanna

Appleton scored 16 points to lead Massapequa (14-6) in Nassau AAA-I. Sofia Begawala made six three-pointers and scored 21 points for Herricks (10-9).

**Wheatley 45, Great Neck South 34:** Sam Kovios scored 17 points to lead Wheatley (7-12) in non-league. Kara Shinder added eight points and four blocks in the win. Adora and Akira Cho scored 13 points each for Great Neck South (9-10).

**Syosset 69, St. John's Prep 41:** Samantha Schneider scored 31 points, hitting seven three-pointers, to lead Syosset (17-2) to a non-conference win. Kate Nelmes added 17 points and Jaylah McKay scored 13.

# Edwards keys league title win

Scores 17 points; Elmont pulls away in OT with 13-2 run

BY BEN DICKSON  
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Check box No. 1 for the reigning state Class AA boys basketball champions.

With the Nassau League AA-V title on the line Monday, Elmont trailed after each of the first three quarters and was tied with Roslyn at the end of regulation.

But the host Spartans played championship defense in the four-minute overtime, allowing just two points in the first 3:44 of the extra session to prevail with a 55-49 victory over the Bulldogs. Elmont outscored Roslyn 13-7 in the period to clinch the AA-V crown.

“The next game we play is going to be the next check, and after that, hopefully the next check,” Elmont coach Ryan Straub said. “But we’re just going to keep playing, practicing game by game and who knows what can happen? We have a special group here.”

Senior forward Nassir Edwards scored 17 points, senior guard Arlyn Brown added 13



Nassir Edwards, driving to the basket, helped Elmont take its first step toward repeating as state champs.

and senior center Eubenna Nwabudu had 12 for Elmont (17-3, 13-1). Brown scored six points in overtime and Nwabudu had five.

Elmont opened overtime on a 13-2 run and led 55-44 with 27.5 seconds left.

“The difference about this year is that we don’t really have one main guy who takes all the shots. But we have a lot of dogs,” Brown said. “A lot of guys who are ready to fight and battle all the time.”

Nwabudu said: “We’re trying

to just build a culture. From last year, that was to start it. We’re just trying to build a culture for now, for the future and beyond.”

Roslyn senior forward Zach Koppersmith scored a season-high 25 points, including 10 in a fourth quarter that featured

DAVID MESENHOLDER

## SCORECARD

ELMONT	55
ROSLYN	49

seven lead changes. The Bulldogs fell to 15-5 overall and 11-3 in the league.

Koppersmith hit a free throw to extend Roslyn’s lead to 40-38 with 1:26 left in regulation. Brown made a layup to tie it 10 seconds later and Edwards followed with a layup to give Elmont a 42-40 lead with 45.5 seconds to go. Koppersmith answered five seconds later with a transition layup to tie it at 42.

Brown’s potential go-ahead jumper missed with 4.4 seconds left. Koppersmith’s ensuing half-court heave hit the ceiling with 0.5 seconds left, giving Elmont one last fourth-quarter chance — an alley-oop layup that was missed by Edwards at the buzzer.

“We’re a different team [from last season], but with the same identity,” Straub said. “We’re going to lock up on defense and just play our tails off, and we will trust what happens from there. But this group might be a little bit scrappier than last year. So, hey, as long as we have the heart and the hustle and all that, we’re going to be in good shape.”

# Perfetto, Manhasset feel ready for playoffs

BY OWEN O'BRIEN  
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Manhasset has been the hunted team in the girls basketball Nassau Class AA playoffs as the top seed in each of the previous three seasons. That has resulted in two county final appearances, including a county and Long Island title. Although Manhasset won't be in the same position for the post-season this winter, the team doesn't see a reason it can't have a similar result.

“We’re very motivated,” sophomore guard Danielle Perfetto said. “We know being Manhasset that we always need to be there. We need to be at that standard. It’s obviously not nice knowing we’re going to have a lower seed, but it doesn’t demoralize us as a team. We’re always ready to compete.”

SCORECARD	
MANHASSET	44
BETHPAGE	40

Manhasset will enter the Nassau Class AA playoffs off a three-game winning streak, capped off with a 44-40 victory over host Bethpage in Nassau Conference AA-III girls basketball action on Monday.

Manhasset finished the regular season at 12-8 overall, including 9-5 in the conference. Manhasset will learn its seed later in the week, but remains focused on the goal of returning to the final for the third straight year.

“I think they are motivated to get back there,” coach Lauren Sadeh said. “I think they know what’s at stake in terms of our history and what has happened the last couple of years. We’ll definitely

be on the lower end of seeding this year, but all it takes is a couple of good plays to get on a roll and I think anyone can beat anyone on any given day.”

Perfetto was integral to Monday’s victory with 22 points. After Bethpage cut Manhasset’s lead to 35-33 early in the fourth quarter, Perfetto made a three-pointer to start an 8-0 run over 1:24 as Manhasset took a 43-33 lead with 5:22 left in the fourth quarter.

“She made a couple big threes for us to get a little bit of life offensively when it didn’t really seem like anything else was working,” Sadeh said. “She’s been our workhorse.”

Kate Cusack finished with 25 points for Bethpage.

“We definitely needed that win,” Perfetto said. “It was a tight win, but it felt good to get that heading into the playoffs.



Danielle Perfetto hit a big three down stretch to give Manhasset breathing room in win over Bethpage and finished with 22 points.



GM Lou Lamoriello seems open to contract talks with Brock Nelson, a pending free agent who, at 34, probably has one lucrative deal left.

# 5 QUESTIONS

## FACING ISLANDERS AT BREAK

BY ANDREW GROSS  
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The micro is the Islanders entered the NHL's two-week break for the inaugural 4 Nations Face-off Tournament on a two-game losing streak following a tough road trip to Winnipeg and Minnesota on back-to-back nights.

The macro is the Islanders went into the hiatus having won 11 of their last 16 to reinsert themselves into the race for an Eastern Conference wild-card spot. They are four points behind the Red Wings for the second spot with the Blue Jackets, Bruins and Rangers also above them in the

conference standings.

There are just six games remaining before the NHL trade deadline on March 7.

So it leaves a fair amount of questions before the Islanders resume their season against the Stars on Feb. 23 at UBS Arena, with the team expected to resume practicing next Tuesday.

Here are five:

### 1. Buyers or sellers?

A month after Lou Lamoriello again expressed his deep belief in his team's ability to be a playoff contender, the team's resurgence has only affirmed the president/general manager's opinion, even given the

current injury issues.

"I feel good about this team," Lamoriello said on Jan. 9. "I feel good about this coaching staff."

But Lamoriello must juggle a number of intertwined and moving parts before deciding on the best course of action.

Top-six forwards Brock Nelson and Kyle Palmieri are pending unrestricted free agents. Top-liner Mathew Barzal is injured and sidelined indefinitely. Three of the six regular defensemen are sidelined, so coach Patrick Roy is dressing Dennis Cholowski but barely using him, putting heavy minutes on the other five blue-liners. Goalies Semyon Varlamov and Magnus

parent in negotiations with the player and his agent about what the team's best offer will be so Nelson and agent Ben Hankinson may find it prudent to use the open market to set Nelson's worth.

Plenty of speculation has linked Nelson, from Warroad, Minnesota, and the Wild for next season.

### 3. How quickly – and how many – injured players can be expected back?

The list of wounded is long: Barzal (lower body/injured reserve), Varlamov (lower body/long-term injured reserve), Hogberg (upper body/injured reserve), defensemen Noah Dobson (lower body/LTIR), Ryan Pullock (upper body/IR), Scott Mayfield (lower body) and Mike Reilly (heart condition/LTIR).

Barzal just underwent a surgical procedure, believed to be on his left kneecap, and remains out indefinitely. Varlamov was skating on his own but suffered a setback and went back into a "total rehab situation," per Lamoriello. Hogberg might be close to ready when the season resumes.

Lamoriello said the hope was for Pullock and Dobson to resume skating during the break but Mayfield, listed as day-to-day, is probably the closest to returning among the defensemen.

"We'll use this break to just to kind of reset and hopefully get a couple of guys back," Palmieri said. "Refresh ourselves physically and mentally."

### 4. What to do with Anthony Duclair?

The well-traveled Duclair was expected to be a key offensive contributor after signing a four-year, \$14 million deal. But he has not scored a point in seven games — a brutal statistic with Barzal out — and has just two goals and three assists in 21 games since returning from a 29-game absence for a lower-body injury. His skating, usually one of his strengths, is noticeably sluggish.

It will be difficult for Roy to keep him on the top line unless Duclair rebounds quickly.

### 5. What's best to maximize Simon Holmstrom's play?

Holmstrom, the 23rd overall pick in 2019, is finally blossoming into a key offensive contributor as he's shown increased confidence in his shot. He has 14 goals and 16 assists in 48 games, including four goals in his last seven games.

Perhaps Holmstrom deserves a shot on the top line.

Sunday, Feb. 23

Stars at  
Islanders

TV: MSGSN, 7:30 p.m.  
Radio: WRHU (88.7),  
WRCN (103.9)



Hogberg are both injured, too.

If he's a buyer, Lamoriello likely needs both a defenseman and a forward and, possibly, an extra goalie. Lamoriello's track record suggests he'll either be a buyer or stand pat at the trade deadline, thus risking losing Nelson and Palmieri for no return.

### 2. Can Brock Nelson be signed?

There certainly seems to be a willingness on Lamoriello's part to engage now in contract extension talks. But Nelson turns 34 at the start of next season and this will almost certainly be his last chance to cash in on a lucrative deal, especially with the salary cap rising by \$7.5 million to \$95.5 million next season and possibly up to \$113.5 million by 2027.

Lamoriello typically is trans-

JIM MCSAC



Igor Shesterkin has been up and down all season and now has an upper-body injury but should be ready to go when team returns from break.

# 5 QUESTIONS

## FACING RANGERS AT BREAK

BY COLIN STEPHENSON  
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The Rangers pulled off another comeback Saturday in their last game before the NHL's 4 Nations Face-Off break, once again rallying from down a goal in the third period and beating the Columbus Blue Jackets — one of the teams they're battling for a wild card playoff spot — 4-3.

The important bonus in that game was that Will Cuylle's winning goal, coming with 1:39 remaining in regulation, kept the Blue Jackets

from earning even the consolation point a team gets from just making it to overtime.

Montreal, Detroit, Boston, the Islanders and Philadelphia all lost that night, too, and all in regulation. And Montreal lost again Sunday in regulation, so the Rangers reached the break three points out of the last playoff spot, with 27 games left.

Can they make up those three points after the break, and grab a playoff spot? Sure. But there are some questions they'll need to answer.

### 1. Is Igor Shesterkin healthy, and will he be himself?

The 29-year-old goaltender is currently dealing with an upper-body injury, apparently suffered in his last game, Friday's 3-2 loss to Pittsburgh. The injury is supposed to keep him out 1-2 weeks, but luckily for him — and the Rangers — that timeline comes while the league is shut down anyway. Presumably he'll be good to go when the season resumes. That had better be the case, first of all, and then, when he comes back, the Rangers will need him to be peak Igor.

He's 18-19-2, with a 2.87 goals-against average and a .906 save percentage right now, and he's

55 games. He's supposed to be a 30-goal, point-per-game player, at the very least, so he's well off that pace. But in the five games leading into the break — the five games since J.T. Miller joined the team — Zibanejad had two goals and six assists. Most of that came as a right wing on Miller's line, before he played third-line center against Columbus. If Miller's addition has switched Zibanejad on — and if he gets an added boost from a successful 4 Nations tournament for Sweden — the Rangers will be in business.

### 3. Can they find a way to get off to better starts?

Nineteen times this season they've allowed a goal within the first five minutes of a game (that's 34.5% of games, which seems bad). They've scored in the first five minutes seven times (12.7%). They're 5-12-2 when they give up a goal within five minutes and 5-2 when they score within five minutes. (There was one game where they gave up two goals within the first five minutes and scored one. They lost that one.)

### 4. Can they string some wins together?

Since their turnaround began at the start of 2025, they have gone 11-5-3. That's good, sure, but they haven't won as many as three games in a row since Nov. 14-19. They'll be playing most of the teams they're battling against for a playoff spot down the stretch, so the opportunity is there to make up ground on their competition. A winning streak or two would help.

### 5. What can GM Chris Drury pull off at the trade deadline?

Drury's done well at the last three deadlines, adding pieces who've definitely improved the team for the final stretch and playoffs. And he's remade the team on the fly this season in trading away Jacob Trouba, Kaapo Kakko and Filip Chytil, and bringing back Urho Vaakanainen, Will Borgen and the most important of all, Miller. But Drury had better have some more tricks up his sleeve, especially with all the cap space he has to play with. This team could really use a legit top-six scoring winger and maybe a big left defenseman. And, depending on where Zibanejad plays, maybe a third-line center, too.

Saturday, Feb. 22

Rangers  
at Buffalo  
TV: MSG, 5:30 p.m.  
Radio: WHSQ (880)



been up and down all season, especially since signing the eight-year, \$92 million contract extension in December that will make him the highest-paid goalie ever. He's been vintage Igor at times, but at other times, he's been just average. The Rangers aren't going anywhere if he's just average.

### 2. Will that surge Mika Zibanejad finished pre-break continue?

Not all of the Rangers' problems are directly because of the down season Zibanejad's been having, but frankly, a lot of them do stem from it.

The former No. 1 center, who's under contract for five more seasons after this one at an average cap hit of \$8.5 million, has 11 goals and 37 points and is minus-24 after

JIM MCISAAC

# ★ Blowout loss in rearview

Knicks put focus on Indiana not Celtics' drubbing



**Barbara Barker**

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**T**he Knicks are trying to look forward not back.

There was a lot of talk Monday at Knicks practice about the Eagles celebrating their Super Bowl win, about the injury status of OG Anunoby and Mitchell Robinson, and about what the Knicks need to do to beat Indiana in Tuesday's game in Indianapolis.

OK, there was also some talk about Boston, but for the most part Knicks players reacted like a team ready to move on from the embarrassing 131-104 blowout loss to the Celtics on national television Saturday.

"It's one game in an 82-game season," Josh Hart said after practice Monday. "To be too hung up on that is idiotic. We could win tomorrow by 30 and everyone is super excited and we're the best team in the league. Or we could lose by 30 and you know we have wasted talent and we should blow it up and figure it out. I think it's idiotic to judge or base a season on a game-by-game basis."

Added Jalen Brunson: "We can't just dwell on what just



Jalen Brunson acknowledges Knicks took beating from Celtics and Jaylen Brown but refuses to dwell on it.

happened. Obviously, we lost. We got our [butts] kicked. But how do we move forward from that? We just can't sit there and feel sorry for ourselves."

As bad as the Knicks looked Saturday night — and make no mistake, except for a brief period in the third quarter, they looked really bad — they still have won seven of their last nine games. What's more, they are in a position to head into the All-Star break with their best record, winning percentage-wise, since 1996-97 when they were 34-14 (.708) at the break.

The Knicks (34-18, .654) need to win one of their two remaining games — Indiana on the road Tuesday and Atlanta at Madison Square Garden Wednesday — to head into All-Star weekend with the franchise's best record in 28 years. Should they lose both games, the Knicks' winning percentage would still be their best since 2012-13 (32-18, .640).

Of course, that's not the only reason the Knicks should want to close out the first part of the season with a few wins. Just like a team wants to close out

the first half of a game with a big bucket or two, it would help for the Knicks to knock out some wins before taking a seven-day break.

"It's a long season," coach Tom Thibodeau said. "It doesn't change. Focus on each game. You learn from each game. Sometimes you fall short, and when you fall short you have to make the necessary corrections and get ready for the next one."

"You don't want to be looking behind you. You don't want to be looking down the road.

Tuesday



**Knicks at Indiana**

**TV:** MSG, TNT, 7:30 p.m.

**Radio:** WHSQ (880)

You want to be looking at exactly what's in front of you, and so that's served us well so far. Just keep getting better."

What's directly in front of the Knicks is a tough game against the Pacers, the team that knocked them out of the playoffs last year with a Game 7 win at Madison Square Garden in the conference semifinals. The Pacers (29-22) got off to a rough start this season but enter Tuesday's game 13-4 in their last 17 games.

It seems likely that the Knicks will again be without OG Anunoby, their elite perimeter defender whose absence was felt big-time against Jayson Tatum's Celtics.

Thibodeau said that Anunoby and Mitchell Robinson went through "parts of practice" but still aren't ready. Anunoby has missed the last three games with what was initially described as a sprained foot but has since been clarified as a toe issue. Robinson hasn't played since undergoing ankle surgery in the offseason.

No matter who is playing, Brunson says it's important for the Knicks to get their momentum back before All-Star Weekend.

"Just focus on tomorrow and move on from there," said Brunson, an All-Star starter. "Don't want to go on break too early."

## DONCIC JOINS LeBRON IN LINEUP TO HELP LAKERS ROLL OVER JAZZ

BY GREG BEACHAM  
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Luka Doncic scored 14 points in limited playing time during his debut with the Lakers on Monday night, joining their starting lineup alongside LeBron James and immediately getting into the flow during Los Angeles' 132-113 victory over the Utah Jazz.

Doncic got multiple standing ovations from a Los Angeles crowd wearing thousands of gold T-shirts with his name and No. 77. He scored 11 points while the Lakers streaked out to a 25-point half-time lead, and he sat down for good with 3:07 left in the third quarter with the Lakers far ahead in their sixth consecutive victory.

The Slovenian superstar's

first bucket was a three-pointer in the opening minutes on his second shot for the Lakers. Doncic finished with five rebounds and four assists — none prettier than a three-quarter-court strike to James for a layup late in the first half.

The game was Doncic's first in nearly seven weeks since he strained his left calf on Christmas with the Mavericks, who shocked the sports world by trading their 25-year-old centerpiece and NBA scoring champion. The grateful Lakers gave up Anthony Davis and Max Christie.

After a full week to settle in

and to return to full strength, Doncic joined James, Austin Reaves, Rui Hachimura and Jaxson Hayes as starters for the streaking Lakers, who had won 11 of 13 even before adding a five-time All-NBA selection to their lineup. Doncic played only 23 minutes as the Lakers bring him back deliberately from his injury. His legs aren't quite there yet — he went 1-for-7 on three-point attempts in his debut — but his playmaking immediately meshed with his new teammates.

Coach JJ Redick, who played alongside Doncic for 13 games in 2021 with the Dallas Mavericks, was eager to see what Doncic

would do in his much-hyped debut with his new team. "Excitement level is high," Redick said. "I don't think anything in our approach or game plan for Utah changes. It is always a challenge in-season to integrate, and we have to be able to give each other patience for that."

Doncic didn't disappoint: His first touch was an alley-oop assist to Hayes, and he hit his three-pointer moments later. He was serenaded with "Luka! Luka!" chants at the first dead ball, and several times thereafter.

That crowd included Dirk Nowitzki, who overlapped with Doncic for one season in Dallas and served as his mentor.

# GOV THREATENS HEARINGS OVER TV DISPUTE

Hochul demands answers in letter sent to Altice

BY NEIL BEST

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Gov. Kathy Hochul on Monday expressed exasperation over what she called the “ridiculous dispute” that has kept MSG Networks off Optimum TV since Jan. 1 and directed the Department of Public Service to ensure consumers are being treated fairly.

“Enough is enough!” she said in a news release that announced the DPS had sent a letter to Altice, parent company of Optimum TV, requesting information and a plan for addressing the matter. If the company does not respond within five days, the department plans to schedule public hearings.

Altice removed MSG Networks, which carries Knicks, Rangers, Islanders and Devils games, from Optimum TV at 12:01 a.m. on Jan. 1.

The sides have sought a new carriage agreement since then without success.

“New Yorkers are proud

sports fanatics, and blocking Knicks, Rangers and Islanders fans from watching programming they’ve paid to watch is simply unconscionable,” Hochul said in the release.

“Denying fans access to live sports because of a ridiculous dispute between Optimum and MSG is unfair to New Yorkers and our patience has expired. This has gone on for long enough — it’s time for both sides to get back to the negotiating table and resolve this for the good of New Yorkers!”

In the letter, which is addressed from Department of Public Service CEO Rory Christian to Chris Bresnan, Altice’s senior director of government affairs, Christian asked Altice within five days to do the following:

- Describe in detail what cost-neutral option(s) Optimum intends to offer to those customers impacted by this programming dispute, when such option(s) will be available, and how customers can enroll.

- In the alternative, acknowledge if Optimum intends to provide those impacted customers a service credit for services they are no longer receiving.

- Finally, explain how Optimum intends to communicate its cost-neutral option(s)



Gov. Kathy Hochul said “enough is enough!” about MSG Networks-Altice dispute that began on Jan. 1.

NEWSDAY / J. CONRAD WILLIAMS JR.

and/or customer credit information throughout its New York service territory.

The letter then read, “In the event that your response does not demonstrate customers are being held harmless during this dispute, you are hereby notified that the Department will conduct hearings as part of its ongoing review of this matter.”

Christian said in the news release, “Governor Hochul is giving voice to New York sports fans who are frustrated that they cannot view all their cable channels, and who should be entitled to a refund for services that they are unable to access or be provided with cost-neutral alternatives.

“The Department of Public Service will work diligently to ensure the cable companies protect customers.”

In response to the governor’s release, Altice issued a statement that read, in part, “Since January 1, Optimum has been fo-

cused on limiting customer disruption by proactively engaging with customers to provide personalized assistance and alternative solutions for sports fans and non-sports fans alike.”

The statement later added, “We look forward to working with Governor Hochul to fix the outdated programming model that does not align with how consumers watch TV today. In the meantime, while we help customers by offering a variety of more options, MSG Networks has done nothing to make their content more affordable and has made no effort to assist impacted fans.”

MSG Network released a statement that read, “We applaud Governor Hochul’s engagement and ensuring local sports fans have access to MSG Networks’ programming. We remain ready to negotiate with Optimum or enter binding arbitration to immediately bring our games back on the air.”

Last week, New York Attorney General Letitia James and her New Jersey and Connecticut counterparts sent a letter to Altice USA CEO Dennis Mathew demanding that the company issue refunds for the programming that has been missed during the dispute.

Altice has provided reduced bills and in some cases gift cards worth hundreds of dollars to customers who call to complain or threaten to leave for competitors. But Altice has not provided a blanket refund for pulling MSG Networks.

Both cable companies such as Altice and regional sports networks such as MSG Networks have suffered from the era of so-called “cord-cutting.”

The current dispute affects about 1 million homes in the metropolitan area, with Long Island being particularly hard hit because it has such a high concentration of Optimum TV customers.

## St. John’s on the rise: No. 9 in AP Top 25

BY ROGER RUBIN

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St. John’s now stands in some very rare air.

The Red Storm moved up to No. 9 in the AP poll released on Monday, gaining three spots after defeating then-No. 11 Marquette at the Garden and then-No. 19 UConn on the road. Those stand as their two most significant victories of the season. Both

Wednesday



St. John’s at Villanova  
TV: FS1, 6 p.m.

were Quad I wins, a metric that plays a factor in selecting the NCAA Tournament field.

St. John’s was last ranked No. 9 in the final AP Top 25 poll of the 1998-99 season after it

reached the NCAA Tournament Elite Eight. The Red Storm did appear as high as No. 8 twice that season.

The Red Storm (21-3, 12-1) play Wednesday night at Villanova (14-10, 7-6) in what should be their chance at a fourth Quad I win. They play on Sunday against No. 24 Creighton at the Garden.

Creighton is a new entry to the national rankings after

wins over Providence and Marquette, which fell to No. 18. Connecticut dropped out of the Top 25.

### ■ Big East award for Luis

St. John’s RJ Luis Jr. was named the Big East Player of the Week. He averaged 19.0 points, 9.0 rebounds and 2.0 steals as the Storm won twice to extend their winning streak to 10 games.



Simeon Wilcher and Storm rose three spots after two big wins.

newsday.com

NEWSDAY, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2025  
SINEMATH/AP

# Need a QB to be super

Until Giants, Jets land one, they'll remain grounded



Tom Rock

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**T**he 2025 season is afoot and the Eagles already are in the lead.

When asked after Sunday's game if he had imagined he could win Super Bowl LIX in his first year with the Eagles, Saquon Barkley said, "Why not?"

Then he upped expectations, quickly turning his attention to Super Bowl LX in San Francisco next year and saying: "Why not start our dynasty?"

That's the last thing other teams around the league want to hear, especially ones like the Giants and Jets, who aren't even in the starting blocks.

Neither of the two local squads has the one key ingredient that has made every champion for most of this century rise up: a winner at quarterback.

The Giants' roster is bare of the position until free agency and the draft roll around, starting next month, and the Jets seem to have decided that they are going to rebuild without 41-year-old future Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers. Reports of their imminent divorce circulated on Sunday just before the Eagles trounced Kansas City, 40-22, at the Superdome.

It's really no mystery why the Giants and Jets have struggled so much to get to where Kansas City spent most of the past decade and where the Eagles have ascended for the second time in eight seasons (along with a Super Bowl appearance in which they lost by three points to Kansas City two years ago).

"In order to win in this league, you need a quarterback," Hall of Famer Michael Strahan, a former Giant and now an analyst for Fox, said a few days before this Super Bowl. "Look at the teams in this game, look at all the teams in the playoffs. You need a quarterback. The Giants have struggled in that department. That's



Don't give up hope, Giants and Jets fans: Jalen Hurts went from second-round pick to Super Bowl MVP.

first and foremost."

Strahan didn't say it, but that obviously goes for the Jets, too.

"If you do that," he said of finding someone to play that critical position at a high level, "anything is possible in this league. We won a Super Bowl and we finished the regular season 9-7. We sucked. But we got hot at the right time, and that's what matters."

Kansas City and Philadelphia certainly proved that quarterbacks don't have to come right at the top of the draft. Patrick Mahomes had to wait until the 10th overall pick to hear his name called by Kansas City and then sat one full season before taking the field as a regular starter. All he's done is play in five Super Bowls in those seven seasons since, winning three of them.

Jalen Hurts, the MVP of Sunday's Super Bowl, was a second-round pick. Now he's a Super Bowl champ.

"I've been able to use every

experience and learn from it," Hurts said on the Fox broadcast with the confetti still falling on him. "The good, the bad, all of it. Using it as fuel to pursue my own greatness. I couldn't do any of these things without the guys around me."

That's certainly true, but the Eagles couldn't have done it without Hurts. He completed 17 of 22 passes for 221 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 72 yards to break his own Super Bowl record for a quarterback (he ran for 70 two years ago). He scored one touchdown on the ground, too.

How long will it take for the New York teams to get to that point? It can happen quickly, as the Texans and Commanders have shown with breakneck turnarounds in recent years, sparked by finding stability and stardom at that one position.

But it might take some time. The Giants don't have that with general manager Joe Schoen

and coach Brian Daboll pretty much entering a win-or-else season.

The Jets have a little bit more grace with the direction they go as first-year general manager Darren Mougey and coach Aaron Glenn take control of the organization. Regardless of the direction they decide to go in during the upcoming months, they already will be lagging behind the rest of the league.

The Eagles clearly are the kings of the Giants' division and the Jets are up against the Bills, Dolphins and Patriots, a team that disappointed in 2024 but seems to have that key ingredient.

Kansas City may not have won a third straight title, but it isn't going anywhere. And the Eagles? They already know what they want to do.

"Let's run this [expletive] back," coach Nick Sirianni said.

The Giants and Jets? They're not running anywhere yet.

## FOX: RECORD AUDIENCE FOR BIG GAME

Fox Sports is projecting a Super Bowl record average audience of 126 million U.S. viewers across television and streaming platforms for Philadelphia's 40-22 victory over Kansas City on Sunday night.

The game was televised by Fox, Fox Deportes and Telemundo and streamed on Tubi as well as the NFL's digital platforms.

Fox's projections included Nielsen's early numbers and streaming data from Tubi and the NFL. Updated and more complete numbers were expected on Tuesday.

It would be the second straight year the Super Bowl has reached a record audience. Kansas City's 25-22 overtime win over San Francisco last year averaged 123.7 million on CBS, Nickelodeon, Univision and streaming platforms.

According to Fox, the audience for this year's game peaked at 135.7 million in the second quarter. The early data projects 14.5 million watched on streaming platforms, including 13.6 million on Tubi, where the game was available for free.

Some of the increase can be attributed to a change in the way viewers are counted. This is the first year Nielsen is measuring out-of-home viewers for all states but Hawaii and Alaska. It was previously the top 44 media markets, which covered 65% of the country. The ratings also include Nielsen data from smart TVs along with cable and satellite set-top boxes.

After two straight years of close Super Bowls, this one wasn't close. But it also had President Donald Trump and Taylor Swift in attendance. Trump is the first sitting president to attend a Super Bowl.

### ■ One for the 'books

BetMGM Sportsbook and Caesars Sportsbook reported that the Super Bowl was the most-bet single sporting event in their histories.

Caesars also said it was the first Super Bowl in which more game parlays were bet than the more traditional straight wagers. — AP

GETTY IMAGES / JAMIE SQUIRE

# YANKS' HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

As camp looms, they're ready to go without Soto

BY ERIK BOLAND  
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It did not take the Yankees long to swivel after losing Juan Soto to the Mets, who gave the All-Star outfielder the largest contract in the history of professional sports.

"Look, it's not going to stop us from hopefully going to put together another great team," Aaron Boone said during December's winter meetings, speaking two days after Soto agreed to a 15-year, \$765 million deal to head to Queens (the Yankees had offered \$760 million over 16 years). "There's different ways of doing it."

The Yankees, who qualified for their first World Series since 2009 last season and fizzled out in five games against the Dodgers, acted quickly in traveling the different route Boone referenced.

Already with a solid rotation, the Yankees' first post-Soto move was to bolster it, signing All-Star lefthander Max Fried to an eight-year, \$218 million contract. Not long after, the Yankees added to another strength, their bullpen, using their sudden surplus of starting pitching in sending Nestor Cortes to the Brewers for closer Devin Williams. Later in the winter, the Yankees added righty reliever Fernando Cruz and, just recently, brought back



AP / SCOTT KANE

Paul Goldschmidt is coming off worst season of career and is one of Yankees' biggest questions this year.

lefthander Tim Hill, an effective addition last season.

"It's about run prevention and run creation," general manager Brian Cashman said in December.

The pitching moves should — emphasize the word "should" — aid in run prevention.

But what of run creation?

That is among the central questions facing the Yankees as pitchers and catchers report to Tampa on Tuesday for spring training (position players report five days later).

There is no outright replacing Soto who teamed with Aaron Judge to form the most electric 2-3 batting order punch in the big leagues.

"That dynamic with those two," one rival AL bench coach said during the winter meetings, "there was nothing like it. You literally sat in the dugout with the thought, 'When are those two coming up again?' Sometimes it seemed like they were coming up every freakin' inning. It felt that way. It was always on your mind. And I guarantee whoever was pitching [on his mind] too."

With the unicorn that was Soto-Judge now extinct, questions abound how the offense functions this season. The Yankees prioritized pitching and defense after the loss of Soto but didn't leave the offense unaddressed.

The club swung a trade for outfielder/first baseman Cody Bellinger. The longtime target of the Yankees is likely to start in centerfield with Judge switching back to rightfield. They also acquired veteran Paul Goldschmidt to serve as the everyday first baseman.

The 29-year-old Bellinger is a two-time All-Star and former NL MVP, winning the award as a member of the Dodgers in 2019. Four of Bellinger's last five seasons since winning the MVP haven't been up to his standards — he hit .266 with a .751 OPS last season — but the far bigger question is Goldschmidt.

By any objective measure,

Goldschmidt, a seven-time All-Star, four-time Gold Glove winner and the 2022 National League MVP (with the Cardinals), is one of the best first basemen of the last 15 years. But he turns 38 in September and is coming off the worst season of his career, hitting .245 with a .716 OPS in 154 games. Goldschmidt did hit .293 with an .842 OPS in his last 43 games, perhaps an indication he recaptured what appeared to have been lost.

"I think I can still play at a really, really high level," he said Jan. 2 in a Zoom call after his signing became official.

To use a phrase that gets plenty of traffic this time of year, on paper, the Yankees enter spring training with a better top-to-bottom pitching staff than what they had last season and, even without Soto, the possibility of an overall deeper lineup than in 2024.

The latter, though, won't be possible without more growth shown by third-year shortstop Anthony Volpe and second-year catcher Austin Wells, not to mention the Yankees finally finding out exactly what they have in hyped prospect Jasson Dominguez, who will be given every opportunity to win the starting job in leftfield.

It was Goldschmidt who perhaps put it best in early January when asked about the potency, on paper, of the lineup he would be joining.

"We're going to find out," he said. "It's not in my genes to make a prediction. We definitely have the talent."

MLB REPORT

# Sabathia to enter Hall as Yankee

CC Sabathia will get his wish when he is enshrined into the National Baseball Hall of Fame on July 27. His plaque will feature a Yankees logo on the cap, the Hall announced on Monday.

Sabathia said when he was elected to the Hall last month that he wanted his plaque to have a Yankees logo on it. The lefthander spent the final 11 seasons with the Yankees after

signing as a free agent in 2009, when he led the franchise to its most recent World Series title. Sabathia spent the first 7½ seasons with Cleveland before a midseason trade to Milwaukee in 2008.

"I don't think I'd be sitting here today if I wasn't drafted by the Cleveland organization," Sabathia said after his induction. "I'm very thankful to Milwaukee

for trading for me and having that run that I had there, but this is home. I found a home in the Bronx, and I don't think I'll ever leave this city."

The Hall of Fame makes the final choice on which team logo — if any — goes on a new inductee's plaque.

Former Mets reliever Billy Wagner, for example, will be enshrined a member of the Hous-

ton Astros, where he spent the first nine seasons of his 16-year career. Wagner also played for four other teams, including the Mets from 2006-09.

"Everything began here for me," Wagner said of Houston.

The other members of the Class of 2025 and their cap choices are Dick Allen (Phillies), Dave Parker (Pirates) and Ichiro Suzuki (Mariners).

Suzuki played for the Yankees from 2012-2014. — ANTHONY RIEBER

■ Reds to honor Rose

Pete Rose may be on baseball's permanently ineligible list, but the late hit king's No. 14 will be on the Reds' uniforms this year. Cincinnati posted a photo of the patch on X on Monday with the message "14 on our side all season." — AP

# ALVAREZ ON MIGHTY METS:

Catcher takes big swing right off bat at camp

BY TIM HEALEY

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PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — At a time of year ripe for talking the talk, Francisco Alvarez opened spring training with a grand declaration Monday, the official report date for Mets pitchers and catchers.

“We are the best lineup in baseball,” he said after taking batting practice and catching a bullpen session for new starting pitcher Clay Holmes. “We can fight with any team.”

And here’s the thing: There is a chance Alvarez is right.

It isn’t so clear-cut as to be stated as fact, but for mid-February optimism, it’s easy to see where he is coming from.

Consider that last season, the Mets ranked seventh in the majors with 4.74 runs per game, well above average. Then they added Juan Soto, one of the top handful of hitters in the game, to a group that largely returned.

With a top half of a lineup that features — in some order — Francisco Lindor, Soto, Brandon Nimmo, Pete Alonso and Mark Vientos, the Mets have a lot to like. Mix in Jesse Winker/Starling Marte as a designated hitter platoon that looks good on paper, a potential bounce back for Jeff McNeil and what Alvarez is sure is going to be a big leap forward, and the Mets could be a wrecking ball against opposing pitching staffs.

Re-signing Alonso — whose two-year, \$54 million contract is expected to be made official any day now — was the finishing touch.

“It’s going to be a great lineup,” Alvarez said. “We have Pete, we have a little bit of everything. We have hitting guys, we have power hitters, we have everything.”

The flip side is, of course, that maybe Lindor doesn’t repeat his career year, maybe Alonso’s dip in power last season was a red flag, maybe Vien-



Francisco Alvarez said he feels “way stronger” than last season, which he called the worst year of career.

tos gets exposed in his second full season — all variables that will play out over the next eight (or nine) months.

Alvarez is one of those uncertainties. Coming off what he described as the worst year of his baseball life, he said he feels “way stronger” than he did at points in 2024, when left thumb surgery interrupted his sopho-

more season.

He improved over his rookie year by some measures — his average jumped from .209 to .237, his OBP by a similar margin — but experienced a drop-off in slugging. He totaled 11 home runs, down from 25 the previous year, and in August lamented that “I don’t feel powerful.”

Still just 23 years old, Alvarez said he focused in recent months on improving his mental game, which failed him during his slumps.

“I lost my mind for a little bit. I think it’s normal,” Alvarez said. “Everybody has those moments. So if I have bad moments this year, it’s not going to affect me like last year.

“We have Pete, we have a little bit of everything. We have hitting guys, we have power hitters, we have everything.”

— Francisco Alvarez

“My mind is going to be way stronger than last year. This game is a mental game. That is a key for this year for me.”

Consistency, which would figure to help the psychological side, was a goal for Alvarez and hitting coach Eric Chavez.

“I said [to Alvarez], in a couple of years, you will be the best-hitting catcher in the league,” Chavez said last year. “But you gotta learn how to hit first. Let’s get your hit tool down and the power will come.”

If the Mets really do have the best lineup in baseball, Alvarez probably will be a major reason why.

“I feel way stronger right now,” Alvarez said. “I feel way better. My thumb is feeling way better. So I think this year I have no excuses for anything.”

**Notes & quotes:** Although position players don’t need to report until Saturday, Lindor is among the few in camp already . . . Dominican reliever Huascar Brazoban, who has had visa-related delays in the past and missed all of spring training with the Marlins last year, had no such issues this time around and was an on-time arrival . . . Manager Carlos Mendoza is set to speak to reporters for the first time on Tuesday, with president of baseball operations David Stearns to follow Wednesday . . . With the introduction of their new blue pullover road alternate jersey, the Mets took the blue home alternate out of the rotation . . . Tylor Megill, 6-7, looked cramped as he rolled up in a sedan, a rental until his personal vehicle arrives. “It makes me feel like Shaq,” he said.

# 'BEST LINEUP' IN THE GAME

## Rotation has time to find its footing

 **David Lennon**  
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**A**PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. s questions swirl around another rebuilt Mets rotation, one of baseball's majestic aces was just down the road from the team's spring training complex Monday morning.

But as much as the stunningly fit Sandy Koufax — now 89 years young — still looks like he could anchor a big-league staff, he was not among the pitchers to report at Clover Park. Koufax was having coffee with Terry Collins, the last manager to get the Mets to an NLCS before Carlos Mendoza did back in October.

Collins, of course, deployed a far different rotation, relying on a promising homegrown stable that was supposed to set up the Mets into the next decade: Matt Harvey, Jacob deGrom, Noah Syndergaard and Steven Matz. Instead, they watched those dreams gradually disintegrate, providing yet another cruel lesson in the fragility and fickle nature of starting pitching.

Current president of baseball operations David Stearns wasn't around for those franchise-crushing developments. Nor was he at the helm when owner Steve Cohen tried to skip a few steps by blowing cash on a pair of quickly fading future Hall of Famers in Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander.

But Stearns, for the second straight season, is behaving like someone trying to thread the



NEWSDAY/ALEXANDRA VILLA LORCA

**Clay Holmes threw a bullpen session on Monday in Port St. Lucie as the Mets attempt to turn the former Yankees closer into a starter.**

needle with his rotation, bypassing Max Fried (\$218M) and Corbin Burnes (\$210M) in favor of using strategic mid-commitment, highly-motivated investments to hopefully bridge the gap with maturing prospects. It's a risky gambit, but with minimal financial downside, and Stearns — with Cohen's blessing — is no doubt emboldened by hitting the jackpot last year, when his short-term deals all paid off in surprising fashion.

Subtracting the injured ace Kodai Senga, who pitched a total of 10 1/3 innings all season (including playoffs), Stearns paid roughly \$43 million for the core of the 2024 rotation — equal to the price tag for one season of either Scherzer or Verlander.

This year? Presumably Senga is back, at a cost of \$15 million, followed by the re-upped Sean Manaea (\$25M), Frankie Montas — who takes the vacated Luis Severino spot at a cost of \$17M — and Stearns' nearly \$13 million dice roll on converting former Yankees closer Clay Holmes into a starting pitcher.

On paper, that certainly doesn't sound like a World Series rotation. But in mid-February, it doesn't have to be just yet. Stearns also is banking on David Peterson's upward trend along with depth pieces like Tylor Megill, the newly signed Griffin Canning, last year's deadline acquisition Paul Blackburn and highly touted prospects like Brandon Sproat, Blade Tidwell and Nolan McLean.

Not convinced? We don't blame you. Which is why a potential trade for someone like front-liner Dylan Cease has to remain on the radar, given the Padres' front-office turmoil, and Stearns needs to keep his chips handy.

At the moment, however, the Mets really trust in a process that transformed last year's handful of questions marks into a rotation that was tied for fourth in the National League in ERA (3.91) with the Padres, while clocking the third-most innings (892 2/3) behind East rivals Atlanta (904 1/3) and Philadelphia (903).

No one would have predicted that a year ago, especially when Senga disappeared to the IL with a shoulder injury before even throwing a Grapefruit-League pitch. But what everyone else labeled a disaster, the pitchers saw as opportunity, and that's the same mindset this February on the eve of spring training.

"I think competition brings out the best in guys," said Canning, who's vying for a back-end spot after compiling a 4.78 ERA in 94 career starts (and five relief appearances) for the Angels.

The Mets believe it's much more than that. Last season, Manaea, Severino and Jose Quintana were all pitching for their next contracts, which probably helps explain why all three registered their most innings in years. The oft-injured Montas, like Severino, has the ability to flip this one season into a much more lucrative multi-year deal. And if Holmes, who turns 32 in March, succeeds as a starter, he'll have the chance to double his annual salary for years to come after 2026.

Since Cohen's takeover, the Mets have become an industry leader in modern analytics, upgrading to cutting-edge technology and increasing personnel in those departments. It's a big part of their identity now — and sales pitch, as Canning detailed after Monday's workouts. But as Canning threw a bullpen alongside Holmes, it was a reminder of Stearns constantly trying to find a competitive edge in the margins, even as he operates a \$320 million payroll that ranks second in MLB.

Holmes, who flunked out of his closer's role in the Bronx, is one of Stearns' biggest gambles to date when it comes to a rotation role. He's hedged that bet by knowing Holmes could still go back to being a setup man, if necessary. But for now, he's penciled into a starting spot, and charting that journey is going to be one of the more fascinating spring training storylines for the Mets.

"It's a difficult transition," said reliever Ryne Stanek, who mentioned that the Holmes maneuver was a topic of conversation Monday among some of the Mets. "It's not always going to be a linear thing. It's probably going to have some times when innings limits come up. I don't know if that's the case — I don't know their plan. But it's hard to add 125 innings to somebody's tally from the year before. But he's a big, physical guy. If anybody can do it, it's someone like him. That looks like it makes sense to me."

Consider the Mets' whole rotation a work in progress at this point. Aside from Koufax, no sure things showed up Monday in Port St. Lucie.

### LOTTERY

**Pick 10:** 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 32, 36, 42, 62, 69, 71, 77.

**Daily number:** 889.  
**Win4:** 5559.  
**Take 5:** 1, 6, 10, 14, 26.  
**Midday daily:** 736.

**Midday Win4:** 8913.  
**Midday Take 5:** 2, 3, 13, 17, 21.  
**Sat. Lotto:** 1, 12, 41, 51, 52, 55.  
**Bonus:** 14.

**Fri. Mega Millions:** 4, 24, 32, 41, 55.  
**Mega Ball:** 16. **Megaplier:** 2.  
**Cash4Life:** 13, 15, 17, 20, 55.  
**Cash Ball:** 3.

**Mon. Powerball:** 2, 17, 18, 29, 43.  
**Powerball:** 3. **Power Play:** 3.

# Newsday **Sports**

## **LENNON: Remodeled Rotation**



Francisco Alvarez took optimistic cuts and Clay Holmes began to reinvent himself as starter when Mets pitchers and catchers reported to Port St. Lucie.

# RECHARGED BATTERY

**'Way stronger'  
Alvarez says  
Mets have  
'best lineup  
in baseball'**

**STORIES, A42-43**

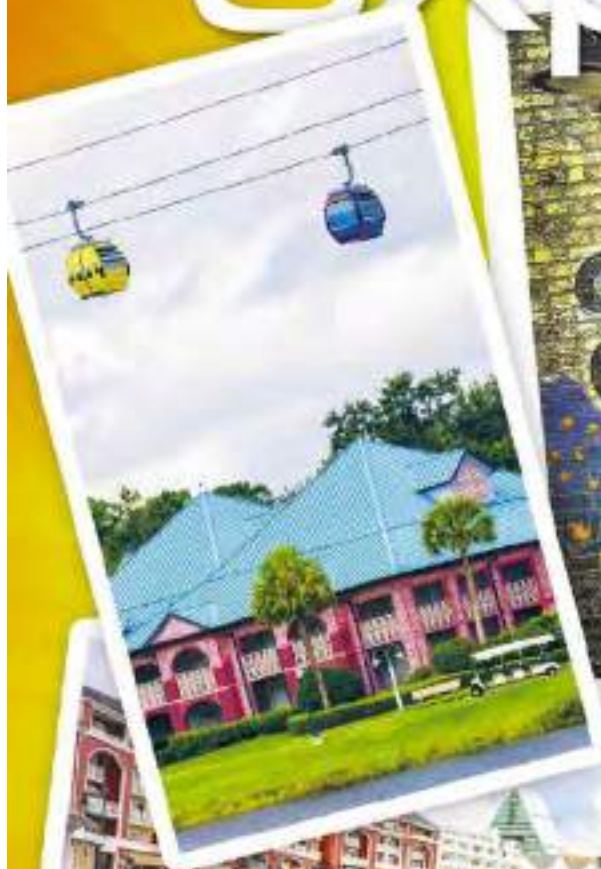
NEWSDAY / ALEJANDRA VILLA LOARCA

 **5-ON-5: ISLES, RANGERS QUESTIONS**

**A36-37**



# explore LI



## Budget

# MAGIC

TRAVEL WRITER SCOTT VOGEL SHARES HOW YOU CAN VISIT DISNEY WORLD ON THE CHEAP

**B2**

# DISNEY on a minnie

## 20 ways to save on your February break escape

BY SCOTT VOGEL

scott.vogel@newsday.com

If you haven't visited Walt Disney World in a minute, prepare yourself for sticker shock: a single day's ticket to the Magic Kingdom during February break can set you back a whopping \$169, with the other parks not far behind. And stays at resorts are priced at hundreds of dollars per night.

Indeed, the cost of everything at the Happiest Place on Earth has gone up, from food and drink to souvenirs, which is why it's not uncommon to see visitors sporting T-shirts like "Most Expensive Day Ever" or "Hakuna No Dolla: It Means No Money for the Rest of Your Stay."

Thankfully, however, as Newsday discovered during a recent Orlando jaunt, there are lots of ways to enjoy Disney on the cheap.

**1. FLY FROM MACARTHUR** Flights from Long Island's best-kept secret start at just \$39 in February on Frontier Airlines.

**2. CONSIDER OFF-SITE HOTELS** Disney World's resorts are charming, convenient and (usually) costly, but there are deals aplenty only a few miles from Cinderella's castle, especially along State Road 535 near I-4, where I paid just \$62 a night for a stay at Cypress Pointe Resort (pool with faux volcano included).

**3. TIME IT RIGHT** Prices on everything from park tickets to hotel stays are lower in the winter, aka the months you'll most need a Florida vacation.

**4. GET A CHEAP CAR RENTAL** Orlando's car rental market is the largest in the world, and one in which fierce competition can often mean compact cars renting for less than \$20 a day. Check the agencies themselves or Priceline or Hotwire for the best prices.

**5. TRANSPORTATION IS KEY** Luckily, there are lots of ways to get around the Kingdom for free. Disney Springs (see below) is the nerve center for a free bus system so extensive, it rivals that of a small city.

**6. TAKE THE MONORAIL** Ostensibly for those staying at Disney's dozens of



You can find lots of restaurants, free live music and more at Disney Springs in Orlando. And the parking is free.

resorts, anyone can hitch a ride, explore the properties and take advantage of even more free transport. For instance, from three of the resorts — the Polynesian, the Grand Floridian and the Contemporary — you can travel by free monorail to the Magic Kingdom, Epcot and more, or just ride for the fun of it.

**7. TRY THE SKYLINER** From others, you can take advantage of Disney's free Skyliner tram service, which glides between a number of resorts and offers fine aerial views of the parks.

**8. CROSS THE LAGOON** And then there's the large network of free water taxis and ferries, offering beautiful trips across Disney World's lakes and lagoons, especially at night.

**9. PARK AT DISNEY SPRINGS** It's a sprawling outdoor mall with lots of

surprisingly good food and drink options, and, crucially, parking is free. All those rental cars have to live somewhere while you're visiting the Magic Kingdom, but they don't have to live at the Magic Kingdom, which charges \$30 for park visitors not staying at Disney World resorts. Instead, park for free at Disney Springs and take a bus to the Contemporary resort, then transfer to the free Disney monorail. You'll be at the Magic Kingdom in minutes.

**10. GET THERE EARLY** Physical exhaustion and sensory overload are an essential part of the Disney experience, but things are quieter at 9 a.m. — an hour before the parks and most of the Springs is open. Enjoy the silence and fortify yourself for the day ahead at Everglazed Donuts, where good cups of coffee go for about \$4 and ginormous doughnuts for \$4.95.

**11. CHECK THE SCHEDULE** Much of the Springs' musical entertainment is both free and freewheeling, like the Strolling Piano, which roams the complex with a pianist in tow, and one with a passion for Dylan and the Beatles, at least on the day we visited.

**12. GO DURING HAPPY HOUR** Disney might be the last place you'd expect to find a happy hour, much less one with high-quality, low-cost adult beverages, but at Paradiso 37, a Latin-themed restaurant, margaritas made with fresh fruit juice and Corazon tequila go for \$9. And happy hour starts at . . . 11 a.m.

**13. PLAY AT THE LEGO STORE** Its incredible collection of large Disney-themed sculptures is worth a visit all on its own — don't miss Sorcerer Mickey or a giant dragon in the adjacent lagoon — but the Springs' Lego store also has free play stations featuring enormous piles of bricks of every color and configuration. Elbow your way past the 5-year-

**ON THE COVER** From left, the Disney Skyliner; one of the many boats to get you around Disney World; writer Scott Vogel in Disney Springs; and the BoardWalk Villas.

# budget



LANDEE DADDONA

Taking a captain-guided tour in an amphibious car at Disney Springs will set you back \$120. But watching the spectacle of the cars zipping around is free.



LANDEE DADDONA

## VIDEO

Scott Vogel explores Disney on the cheap  
newsday.tv

olds and build a car to race on Lego's makeshift track.

**14-15. GRAB A PICK-UP & STAY FOR THE MUSIC** Want to turn a cup of joe into a fleeting souvenir? Head to Joffrey's, where the lattes are \$5.39 and for a few pennies extra, a barista will etch your favorite Disney character or even a selfie into the foam. Multiple musical genres + multiple bands, each playing multiple sets + the Springs' multiple open-air venues = lots of free music whatever your taste.

**16. SEEK OUT A VALUE PIE** At Summer House on the Lake, which opened in 2023, California is the stated cuisine, but it's the good-value pizzas (starting at \$19.95) that diners are raving about, thanks to the pies' fresh ingredients and cracker-thin, leopard-spotted crusts.

**17. VISIT THE ART WALK** The Springs' Art Walk is little more than an alleyway, but its walls lined with

large-scale works by truly talented muralists are worth a look, if only for the welcome contrast they provide to Disney's temple of merch.

**18. SAVE ROOM FOR TAPAS** What's better than visiting celebrated chef Jose Andres' Jaleo? Visiting during sangria hour, which thankfully lasts most of the day (11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and features spiced wine that's frozen and on tap (\$7 a glass), along with a selection of wallet-friendly tapas to include patatas bravas (\$5) and cups of gazpacho (\$5.50).

**19. GRAB A FREE SAMPLE** Skip the crowds lining up for hot fudge sundaes at the Springs' Ghirardelli soda fountain and head to the retail shop next door, where you'll find loads of cute chocolate souvenirs and, most days, an employee handing out free squares of chocolate goodness.

**20. WATCH THE WATER** Floating around a lake in a flooded car is not much fun, as anyone who's watched wall-to-wall hurricane coverage on The Weather Channel will readily attest. But you know what is fun? Watching other people pay for the privilege at the Springs' Boathouse Orlando, the only place in the world where you can see rare amphibious cars in action (word is they can reach speeds of 70 mph on land and 7 knots in the water). Only a few thousand of the vehicles were ever made (in Germany in the '60s) and captain-led 20-minute rides set patrons back \$120 a carload, but landlubbers can take in the weird spectacle without taking the plunge — for free.

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## gearwatch

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SATECHI

## Connecting devices never easier than with Satechi's Hub

**WHAT** Satechi Mobile XR Hubs with Audio and with microSD **WHAT THEY DO** Connecting accessories to devices like iPads and iPhones has never been simple. The limitations can be attributed to the access the devices provide, along with the accessories available. Satechi's new Mobile XR Hubs enable users to connect, power, play and charge devices and accessories with ease.

**THE COST** \$44.99 for each

**AVAILABLE FROM** satechi.net

**WHAT'S HOT** The Mobile XR Hub with Audio brings back something Apple took away from us years ago: the 3.5-millimeter audio jack. Now you have the wired connection to deliver high-quality sound through wired headsets.

This hub also supplies built-in mic functionality for recordings, calls or whatever is needed from a mic.

The Mobile XR Hub with microSD gives your mobile device a memory card slot to transfer videos and photos to the card. This can be used to share photos with other devices or free up digital space.

The audio model measures 2.42-by-0.93-by-0.35 inches, with 0.56 ounces of weight and 0.57 ounces for the memory card version, making them pocket-size portable devices.

The Mobile XR Hub with Audio has three ports: one USB-C PD Port, which supports up to 100-watt charging, and USB 2.0 data and audio support. A second USB-C port supports 4K @ 60 Hz visuals on an external monitor and USB 3.0 up to 10 Gbps speeds. The 3.5-mm audio port provides input and output, along with volume control.

Both hubs connect to the devices with a built-in USB-C connection.

**WHAT'S NOT** The card is not included with the microSD hub.

—Tribune News Service

## gamereview



DRAGNEK &amp; FRIENDS

Lok is based on a puzzle book that teaches players magical words that are used to clear puzzle spaces.

## Not exactly Wordle

## Lok's mysterious language and secret powers

BY GIESON CACHO

The Mercury News (TNS)

**T**he new word game Lok, based on the critically acclaimed puzzle book, introduces players to a mysterious language that uses a 26-letter Latin alphabet.

The goal at each level is to color in all the letters by incorporating them into magical words. The first word players learn is "Lok," and when it's spelled out, they color in those letter boxes and one additional letter block anywhere on the board. By running through each word and its accompanying puzzles, players learn how those simple rules can be bent and twisted.

For example, if blocks are already colored in from a previous action, they act as bridges as long as the word flows in one direction. Those lessons become more important the further players advance in the campaign. They learn that the second word "Tlak" lets them color in two adjacent tiles, and another word, "Ta," lets players fill in tiles of one-letter type.

Meanwhile, "Be" gives players the opportunity to change a blank tile with any letter they choose while "Lolo" has the ability to mark out tiles in a diagonal line.

Lok starts off simple but it grows more complex as the developers weave in more words and concepts. It especially grows harder when developers introduce "X," which acts as a connector allowing players to switch directions while spelling a word. Fortunately, the letter X is never used up when incorporated to form a word.



**PLOT** Color in the magic words.

**RATED** E for Everyone

**DETAILS** Free with in-app purchases; Steam, Android, iOS

**BOTTOM LINE** As it gets more complicated, you may have some cross words.

The puzzle solving feels like a word search at times, and at other moments it's like a chess game where you have to attain a checkmate in a limited number of moves. Players look through the puzzles for the right magic words and figure out how they interact and interlock for the next move. It involves planning and flexible thinking, but the fun in these games is the a-ha moment when players grind through trial and error for a solution or stumble upon a

move they never considered before.

Gracar and Sala, the developers, wrap their puzzle game in the conceit of learning a magical language and they fill it with cute characters to bring life into the proceedings. The idea is that the Lok-lings can only live on blackened tiles and as players run through each world, they give them more real estate to expand and build their civilization.

Like much of the game, the hand-drawn imagery subtly conveys a narrative but there's no written story. In the same way, the campaign removes the hand-holding as players grow comfortable with the gameplay, but it does so to its detriment.

Lok has areas where the difficulty jumps or where the developers throw so much at players that it can be overwhelming.

The puzzle design, and the system of how concepts are taught, need more polish.



# How to ease your dog's fear of car rides



**MY PET WORLD**  
Cathy M. Rosenthal

cathy@petpundit.com

**Q** I have a 3-year-old Shih Tzu mix that has brought tremendous joy to our household. The one major issue is her anxiety when traveling in a car. She pants incessantly throughout the ride but is fine as soon as it's over. It doesn't matter if it's a 5-minute trip or a longer drive.

We've tried over-the-counter and veterinarian-prescribed medications with no success, as well as the Thundershirt anxiety jacket, which didn't help. Do you know any other methods we could try to overcome her fear? — **Larry, East Norwich**

**A** Car anxiety is a common issue for dogs, and it can be frustrating when traditional remedies don't work. While it may take some patience and experimentation, there are strategies you can try to make the ride less stressful for her.

First, make sure she is not experiencing car sickness,

which can make any dog anxious. There are over-the-counter car sickness products you can try.

Second, try desensitization and counterconditioning. This involves gradually helping her associate the car with positive experiences. Start by sitting in the car with her without turning on the engine. Bring along some of her favorite treats, toys, or even a stuffed KONG with peanut butter to distract her and reward her for calm behavior. Spend 5 minutes in the car the first time and work up to 15 minutes. Once she's comfortable with this step, move on to turning on the engine without driving, continuing to offer rewards. Slowly progress to short trips — perhaps just around the block — as her comfort grows. Over time, this gradual exposure can help shift her perception of the car from a source of stress to one of positive reinforcement.

Next, create a comfortable and secure environment in the car. Some dogs feel safer in a crate, which can act as a den-

like space. Adding a blanket or bed to the crate and covering it with a light sheet can reduce visual stimuli and might make her feel more secure. If she's not crate-trained or doesn't enjoy being confined, consider using a dog booster seat to see if that makes her feel safe.

Calming supplements and pheromones can help some dogs feel more relaxed without sedating them. While these are not guaranteed to work for every dog, they could be a helpful complement to these other strategies. Additionally, consider using calming music or white noise specifically designed for dogs. There are even playlists on streaming platforms tailored to help pets relax during stressful situations.

Before car rides, a good exercise session can also help reduce anxiety. A brisk walk or some playtime can burn off excess energy and may leave her more relaxed and less likely to focus on the stress of being in the car. During the ride, offering her a long-lasting

chew or puzzle toy can serve as a healthy distraction and keep her mind occupied.

Please know that you're not alone in dealing with this issue, and many pet owners face similar challenges. The key is persistence and finding what works best for your dog's unique personality. I hope these suggestions help provide happier and more relaxed car rides in the future.

**Q** We wanted to share our experience with your Dec. 22 column about cats peeing outside the litter box. Our 9-year-old Russian blue cat, Scout, exhibited similar behavior years ago. A year after the issue began, Scout suffered a disk rupture that temporarily left his hind legs paralyzed (he's mostly recovered now, except for a limp). During that time, managing his accidents was challenging, and we resorted to using paper and dog training pads to catch the pee.

Eventually, we created a special litter box for him using a large storage bin. We cut an opening in the side to make it easy for him to access. It worked wonderfully, and Scout has been using it ever since. Now at 17 years old, he's doing great!

— **Mike, Las Vegas**

**A** It's wonderful to hear Scout is doing so well at 17 and that your creative solution worked. Using a large storage bin as a litter box is a fantastic idea and one that I often recommend to others. Some cats prefer larger boxes with more space, and accommodating their preferences can make all the difference. For older or mobility-challenged cats, cutting a low entry point can make it even easier to access.

Thank you for sharing your success story — it's always inspiring to hear how devoted pet owners find solutions to help their beloved pets.

**SEND YOUR PET QUESTIONS, STORIES AND TIPS** to cathy@petpundit.com. Please include your name, city, and state.

## readerphotos

Send us your great animal photo. It may appear on this page. Send to [petphotos@newsday.com](mailto:petphotos@newsday.com)



**DAPPER DOGGY.** Pierogi, an American bully, is all decked out in his heart bow tie and ready for Valentine's Day.

Photo by **Christie Miegler**, of Seaford



**LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.** Stella, a 9-year-old Pembroke Welsh corgi, snuggles up to her Valentine.

Photo by **Lynn Wolf**, of Old Westbury

**YOU GOTTA HAVE HEARTS.** Autumn gets ready for Valentine's Day with some cool, oversized shades.

Photo by **Diane Biegler**, of Commack

# Aging for the long run

## Resistance training can benefit older women

BY DR. TRISHA PASRICHA  
Special to the Washington Post

**My mother suffered a hip fracture in her 60s, and things went downhill from there. As I approach menopause, what can I do to prevent this from happening to me?**

Start resistance training. Start now in any amount. You're never too old, too young or too weak to start.

You don't have to weight train at a gym if you don't want to. Resistance training is any exercise where you work against an external force. There are many moves that achieve this — with or without weights: squats, planks, pushups, dead lifts, glute bridges and more.

Resistance training can help address two critical issues of aging that disproportionately affect women: loss of muscle mass and bone density. These two are often linked, with increases in muscle strength helping prevent bone mineral density loss.

But most adults aren't meeting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guideline of doing muscle-strengthening activities at least twice a week. About 27% of adult women meet the mark, and that number plummets to around 17% among women 65 or older.

Low-impact activities such as walking or non-weight-bearing activities, such as water aerobics or cycling, are wonderful for reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease as well as providing other health benefits. But they might not be enough to help women age well.

Remember, any resistance training is better than none, so start slowly and find the exercises you most enjoy. I started out with 3-pound weights at home that I'm very proud of.



**Working with light weights at home can help prevent bone mineral density loss.**

GETTY IMAGES

### IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BUILD MUSCLE

Muscle mass loss starts well before menopause, usually in our late 20s and 30s. But you can make improvements at any age. In a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1994, researchers conducted a randomized controlled trial of nursing home residents — where the average age was 87 years old — and found that resistance training was not only feasible but highly effective in building muscle and counteracting frailty.

And a large analysis of more than 100 studies found that whether you're lifting heavy or light weights, a man or a woman, young or old, or doing it just once a week versus several times a week, you'll experience substantial gains in strength and muscle mass.

Many studies on the benefits of resistance training tended to look at "high-intensity" exercise, such as in the nursing home study, but don't let that intimidate you: It means participants aimed for 80% of their

maximum possible effort while maintaining proper form.

### KEEPING BONES HEALTHY AS YOU AGE

During the first five years after menopause, bone density loss is devastating and swift — as much as 20% of women's baseline disappears. Consider this: 1 in 2 postmenopausal women will have a bone fracture from osteoporosis, or loss of bone mineral density, during their remaining lifetimes.

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for osteoporosis in women 65 or older. But osteoporosis is one of those diseases that lurks under the surface: You may not know you have it until you get that scan — or worse, break a bone. This means if you wait to act, you've lost critical time to prevent a bad outcome.

A 2021 study analyzing more than 66,000 female participants in the Women's Health Initiative, a landmark reproductive health study funded by the National Institutes of Health, found that about 44% of trau-

matic fractures — meaning after an obvious fall or injury — occurred between ages 55 to 65. That same age group experiences about 34% of non-traumatic fractures — that is, a bone fracture that occurs spontaneously, simply because the bone is weak.

Many types of exercise have been shown to help older women maintain healthier bones, but greater physical stress, like the kind experienced during resistance training, causes a strengthening of the bone's internal architecture.

Randomized controlled trials have found that regular resistance training among sedentary postmenopausal women significantly improves bone mineral density in the hip and spine. Those who did no resistance training kept on losing bone.

### HOW TO START RESISTANCE TRAINING

Talk to your doctor about the best form of resistance training for you. If you already have osteoporosis or joint problems, lighter impact train-

ing, such as with resistance bands, may be a better choice. You may also benefit from exercises to improve balance.

■ **At the gym:** For people with a new 2025 gym membership, try this 15-minute weight-training routine. Heavy weights aren't actually necessary: Studies have confirmed that lighter loads used until your muscles feel tired are also effective. Aim for as many repetitions as you can until your muscles are too tired to continue — something called volitional failure — then stop and move on.

Experts say once you can comfortably repeat a move 25 times, it's time to try moving up to a higher weight. Also, it's worth noting that many gyms have trainers who specialize in working with older people.

■ **With weights, at home:** You don't really need much equipment, but if you want, get an exercise mat, resistance bands and possibly a kettlebell or a set of weights — light or heavy.

■ **Without weights, from just about anywhere:** Start with simple moves such as lunges, squats, crunches, holding a plank, and triceps dips. These exercises are all part of the science-backed 7-minute workout — and can be done in a tiny space, no fancy equipment required.

### WHAT I WANT MY PATIENTS TO KNOW

When I was in medical school, many of my patients who were hospitalized for months on end — with complications ranging from stroke to sepsis — often had a similar start to their saga: They were doing perfectly fine until one day, they broke a bone. Then they became chronically weaker and other bones broke soon thereafter.

Medical complications started to snowball, keeping them bouncing in and out of hospitals and rehabs for months on end. My own observations fit with the data: Studies have found that 25% of people older than 65 who suffer from a hip fracture die within a year. We need badly to get ahead of that curve.

*Dr. Trisha Pasricha is an instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School.*



# An orange so nice, it's named twice

Premium Health News Service

**D**id you know that citrus fruits are among the few fruits in season during the winter? Not long ago, the joys of taste-testing some unique citrus were limited to the coldest season, but now we can enjoy many citrus fruits (and their many benefits) all year long. One delicious type of orange that you may not be familiar with is the cara cara orange. A relatively new kid on the block, the cara cara has a flavor profile that might just make it your new favorite citrus.

## WHAT ARE CARA CARA ORANGES?

Originally discovered in Venezuela in the 1970s, cara cara oranges are also known as red-fleshed navel oranges. A relative of the blood orange, they are a cross between the Brazilian Bahia navel orange and the Washington navel orange. In the United States, they primarily grow in California during the winter.

The flesh of the cara cara is a deep pink-red color with subtle notes of orange, reminis-

cent of a cross between a grapefruit and a blood orange. These oranges combine a sweet, tangy flavor with so little acidity that you may forget you're eating citrus.

## ARE CARA CARAS GOOD FOR YOU?

As if the flavor and appearance of the cara cara orange weren't enough, they are loaded with nutrition. Every cara cara will provide heaps of vitamin C, vitamin A, fiber, potassium and antioxidants, including lycopene — responsible for the orange's vibrant color. The other nutrients in this gorgeous orange will help boost your immune system, maintain healthy eyesight, regulate your digestion and keep a healthy fluid balance.

## DELICIOUS WAYS TO TRY THEM

With all this enticing information about the cara cara, you may be itching to give them a try. Here are some super ways to incorporate them into your daily routine:

- Peel and eat them just as is, or hand juice them for the perfect pick-me-up — in the morning or as an afternoon snack.
- Slice them and add to oatmeal or

yogurt, or use them as pancake toppings.

- Create a healthy twist on the Orange Julius with a smoothie of cara caras.
- Use them as a crowd-pleasing topper for a hearty winter salad with pomegranate, kale, fennel and walnuts.
- Zest and juice them to make a vinaigrette for salads and roasted vegetables or a marinade for meat, poultry, fish or tofu.
- From jazzed-up cranberry sauce to a deliciously savory demi-glace for a fancy meal, cara cara oranges can add the perfect zest and sweetness to almost any sauce.
- Spice up your weekend get-together with a cara cara orange cocktail.
- Give your old cranberry orange muffin recipe a tuneup by subbing in cara cara for the classic navel orange. They also pair well in cookie, cake and ice cream recipes.

Regardless of the weather outside, you can create brightness in the kitchen by experimenting with cara cara oranges. With their brilliant color, sweet flavor and impressive nutrition profile, you and your family will fall in love with them.



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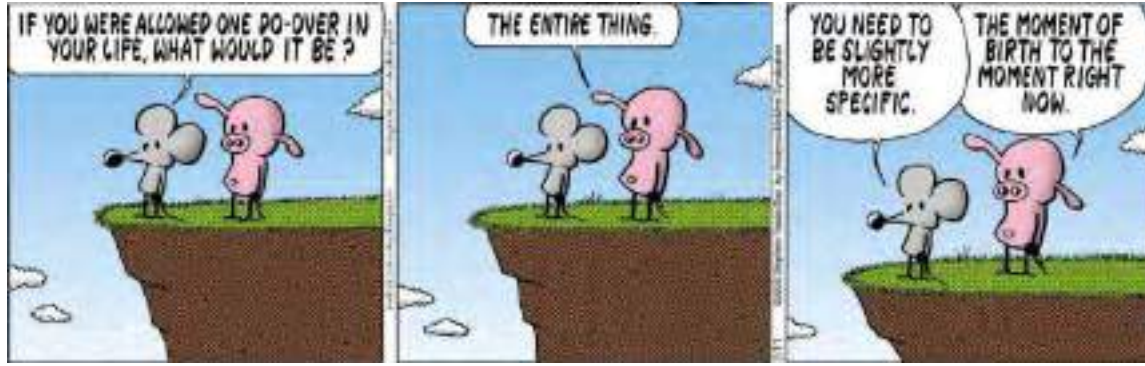
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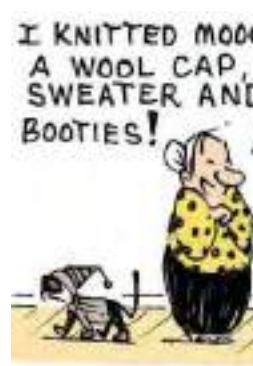
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