

**Saturday**  
Rain Showers

45°

**Sunday**  
Mostly Cloudy

49°

See the full forecast on Page B5

**INSIDE TODAY**  
Special Section  
Highlights Upcoming  
Solar Eclipse

# The Sunday Post-Journal

[www.post-journal.com](http://www.post-journal.com)

JAMESTOWN, N.Y.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 30-31, 2024

VOL 198 NO. 198

## 'A Beautiful Story'



Nora and Michael Ludwig riding on the ski lift on the night they got married at the Peek'n Peak resort in Clymer 18 years ago.

Submitted photos

### Local Couple In Search Of Information On Missing Love Letters At Peek'n Peak

BY SARA HOLTHOUSE  
[sholthouse@post-journal.com](mailto:sholthouse@post-journal.com)

CLYMER — A local couple is looking for any more information on what may have happened to their love letters that have been left inside the floorboards of a specific room at the Peek'n Peak Resort in Clymer over the last 18 years.

The couple, Nora and Michael Ludwig, got married at the Peek and have celebrated their anniversary there ever since. This has included the tradition of leaving love letters to each other in the room where they spent their wedding night. This year, when they returned to the resort to celebrate their 18th anniversary the letters were gone.

"We always knew there was a chance of someone finding the letters and throwing them out, I just prayed it wouldn't happen," Nora Ludwig said. "When I opened the door to the room last weekend and saw new flooring, I stopped dead in my tracks. The letters were gone and part of the magic died."

See LOVE LETTERS, Page A7



A more current photo of Nora and Michael Ludwig, with the pile of their letters in between them.

### 2023 Sees 29 Real Estate Sales Top \$1M, Including 11 Private Homes

BY GREGORY BACON  
[gbacon@observertoday.com](mailto:gbacon@observertoday.com)

In 2023, Chautauqua County saw 29 real estate sales of \$1 million or higher, with more than a third of them for single family homes.

The Post-Journal and OBSERVER have been analyzing real estate sales in Chautauqua County. Of the 29 sales that were seven figures last year, 16 were businesses, 11 were residences, and two were sales that included multiple addresses in a single transaction.

By towns, Busti and Chautauqua both had the most with six each. All of Busti's six sales were in the village of Lakewood, while four of Chautauqua town's sales were on the Institution grounds. Ellery had four sales, with one of them in the village of Bemus Point. Ellicott and Pomfret had three sales each, with two of Pomfret's sales in the village of Fredonia. The town of Dunkirk and the city of Dunkirk had two sales each. The city of Jamestown and the towns of Gerry and North Harmony each had one seven-figure sale.

See REAL ESTATE, Page A3



The Gerry Dollar General was one of two new businesses that were sold in 2023 that topped \$1 million.

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Elba Lawson of Jamestown  
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### QUESTION OF THE DAY

Did you go to a ski resort over the winter?

Results may change after publication. View results until midnight or vote at [post-journal.com](http://post-journal.com).

### Today In History

In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward reached agreement with Russia to purchase the territory of Alaska for \$7.2 million, a deal ridiculed by critics as "Seward's Folly."

### A - Local

Deaths A2

Opinion A4-A5

Sports B1-B3

Church D4

### C - BUSINESS

Chamber C3

Classifieds C5-C7

Columnists E3

Nature E4

### E - LIVING

Columists E3

Nature E4

### D - REGION

Church D4

Sports B1-B3

Church D4

## OBITUARIES

**Flora Irene (Oakes) Szabo**  
August 12, 1932-March 28, 2024

Flora Irene (Oakes) Szabo of Coldspring Rd, Randolph, passed away on Thursday March 28, 2024 at UPMC Chautauqua Hospital in Jamestown.

She was born August 12, 1932 in Napoli, NY. She is last surviving child of the late Lemuel Elliott and Sylvia Edna Nurss Oakes.

She grew up in Randolph, NY and graduated from Randolph Central School in 1950.

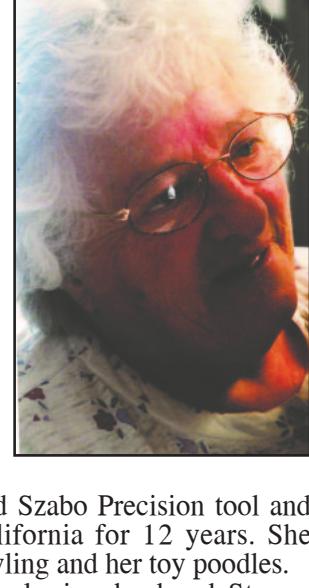
Flora and her husband Steve owned and operated Szabo Precision tool and die in Garden Grove California for 12 years. She loved square dancing, bowling and her toy poodles.

She is survived by her loving husband Steven Szabo and a son Raymond Szabo of Salem Oregon, and 5 granddaughters.

She was preceded in death by her siblings, Louise (Donald) Boyer, Richard (Peg) Oakes, Ester (Cliff) Carpenter, James (Carm) Oakes, Viola (Harv) Mann and Laura Harrington.

As per Flora's wishes, there will be no services held. Inurnment will be in the Randolph Cemetery. Arrangements are entrusted to the VanRensselaer & Son Funeral Home, 14 Church Street, Randolph.

To send an e-condolence in the guest book log on to [www.vanrenselaerandsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.vanrenselaerandsonfuneralhome.com). In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Chautauqua County Humane Society, 2825 Strunk Road, Jamestown, NY 14701.

**Charles E. "Chuck" Westfall**  
October 1, 1948-March 28, 2024

Charles E. "Chuck" Westfall, 75, of Weeden Road, formerly of Route 394 in Randolph, NY, passed away Thursday, (March 28, 2024) at the Salamanca Nursing Home.

Chuck was born October 1, 1948, in Springville, NY, the son of the late Emil Charles and Lahoma Dilia (Turner) Westfall.

He attended the Cattaraugus High School, and retired in 2013 from the NYS Department of Transportation in Conewango as a truck driver. In earlier years, he worked at the former Borden, Inc. in Randolph, Dresser Rand in Olean and as an over the road truck driver.

Chuck was a talented woodworker and carpenter, who built beautiful furniture and remodeled numerous homes over the years. He and Sharon were a well-known dance couple and he also enjoyed trap shooting, hunting and building things.

He was a life member of the Randolph Rod & Gun Club and National Rifle Association, former social member of the Randolph American Legion Post 181, Randolph VFW Post 6533 and the Brooksville

Florida American Legion. In earlier years, he was a member of the East Randolph Fire Department, taught Bow Hunters Education, Archery safety, he was a pee-wee and midget football official, and had attended the Grace Episcopal Church in Randolph.

He is survived by two daughters, Tammi Lorraine (Santo) Chillemi of Dunkirk and Kelly Jo Johnson (late ralph) of Sinclairville, a son, Troy J. (Debra) Westfall of East Otto and a daughter in law, Carol Westfall of Frewsburg.

He is additionally survived by three siblings; Martin "Butch (Patty) Westfall, Charlotte Grey and Raymond (Tammy) Westfall, 13 grandchildren, Noah, Dillon, Jesse, and Logan Westfall, Olivia, Andrew, and Max Chillemi, Nathan and Jordan Johnson, Carrie Yost, Dustin Textor, Jonathan (Maria) Conklin and Dennis (Christina) Conklin, many great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Sharon Ann (Hill) Westfall in 2022, a son, Robert Westfall, three great grandsons, Oliver James Westfall, Benjamin Robert Westfall and Nathan Textor, a son in law, Ralph Johnson and two sisters; Christine Pascarella and Karen Menger

Please join the family at a Celebration of Life, April 6, 2024 at 12:00 Noon from the VanRensselaer & Son Funeral Home, 14 Church Street, Randolph. Visitation will follow the Noon service until 2:00 PM. The Rev. Colleen O'Conner, pastor of Grace Episcopal Church will officiate. Join the family after 2:00 PM at the Old Tool Tavern in East Randolph for food, friendship and fellowship. To leave a condolence, log onto [www.vanrenselaerandsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.vanrenselaerandsonfuneralhome.com)

In lieu of flowers, memorials contributions in Chuck's memory can be sent to the Randolph Rod & Gun Club "Randolph scholarship trap team", PO Box 252, Randolph, NY 14772.

**Jo Ann Alma (Hanson) Ekdahl**  
May 17, 1942-March 22, 2024

Jo Ann Alma (Hanson) Ekdahl (81) of Ithaca, New York passed away Friday March 22, 2024 surrounded by her adoring family.

Jo Ann was born May 17, 1942 in Busti, New York to Arthur and Alma (Anderson) Hanson. She was raised on the family's farm and enjoyed country life and outdoor activities the entirety of her life. Jo Ann graduated Southwestern Central High School in 1959 and received her Associate Degree from Tompkins Cortland Community College in 1985. She married her Husband on June 9, 1967 and they had two Sons, in 1972 and 1975. The family settled in Ithaca, New York, where she lived until her passing.

Jo Ann spent her entire career as an accountant, bookkeeper, and office manager at various local businesses, volunteering those services to some local not for profits until her passing. She was a member of St. Lukes Lutheran Church and the Friends of the Library.

Jo Ann is survived by her Husband Earl Willard Ekdahl of (57) years of Ithaca; her Sons Bradley Earl Ekdahl (Brandy Blackburn) of Prattville, Alabama; Carl Arthur Ekdahl of Middlesex, New York; Grandchildren Zaccary Ekdahl (Leah Stevens) of Phoenix, Arizona; Evelyn Ekdahl of Middlesex, New York; Nephew Danny Hanson (Pam Hanson), Nieces Michelle Firth (Bryce Kimmel), Lisa Bovard, Lynette Evans (Allan Evans), Elaine Nelson, Jessica Nonkes (Steven Nonkes) and Ann Kimmel (Mark Kimmel) and Cousin Christine Stuart.

Jo Ann Ekdahl will be remembered as a humble servant of God who never failed to put the needs of others before her own, a devoted wife, a loving mother and an example to be admired.

Services will be held at St. Luke Lutheran Church of Ithaca on April 1, 2024 with calling hours to begin at 10:00 AM with funeral following at 10:30 AM. Further, additional, or other services will be announced.

**Louis Gossett Jr., 1st Black Man To Win Supporting Actor Oscar, Dies At 87**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Louis Gossett Jr., the first Black man to win a supporting actor Oscar and an Emmy winner for his role in the seminal TV miniseries "Roots," has died. He was 87.

Gossett's first cousin Neal L. Gossett told The Associated Press that the actor died in Santa Monica, California. A statement from the family said Gossett died Friday morning. No cause of death was revealed.

Gossett's cousin remembered a man who walked with Nelson Mandela and who also was a great joke teller, a relative who faced and fought racism with dignity and humor.

"Never mind the awards, never mind the glitz and glamour, the Rolls-Royces and the big houses in Malibu. It's about the humanity of the people that he stood for," his cousin said.

Louis Gossett always thought of his early career as a reverse Cinderella story, with success finding him from an early age and propelling him forward, toward his Academy Award for "An Officer and a Gentleman."

Gossett broke through on the small screen as Fiddler in the groundbreaking 1977 miniseries "Roots," which depicted the atrocities of slavery on TV. The sprawling cast included Ben Vereen, LeVar Burton and John Amos.

Gossett became the third Black Oscar nominee in the supporting actor category in 1983. He won for his performance as the intimidating Marine drill instructor in "An Officer and a Gentleman" opposite Richard Gere and Debra Winger. He also won a Golden Globe for the same role.

"More than anything, it was a huge affirmation of my position as a Black actor," he wrote in his 2010 memoir, "An Actor and a Gentleman."

He had earned his first acting credit in his Brooklyn high school's production of "You Can't Take It With You" while he was sidelined from the basketball team with an injury.

"I was hooked — and so was my audience," he wrote in his memoir.

His English teacher urged him to go into Manhattan

to try out for "Take a Giant Step." He got the part and made his Broadway debut in 1953 at age 16.

"I knew too little to be nervous," Gossett wrote. "In retrospect, I should have been scared to death as I walked onto that stage, but I wasn't."

Gossett attended New York University on a basketball and drama scholarship. He was soon acting and singing on TV shows hosted by David Susskind, Ed Sullivan, Red Buttons, Merv Griffin, Jack Paar and Steve Allen.

Gossett became friendly with James Dean and studied acting with Marilyn Monroe, Martin Landau and Steve McQueen at an offshoot of the Actors Studio taught by Frank Silvera.

In 1959, Gossett received critical acclaim for his role in the Broadway production of "A Raisin in the Sun" along with Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee and Diana Sands.

He went on to become a star on Broadway, replacing Billy Daniels in "Golden Boy" with Sammy Davis Jr. in 1964.

Gossett went to Hollywood for the first time in 1961 to make the film version of "A Raisin in the Sun." He had bitter memories of that trip, staying in a cockroach-infested motel that was one of the few places to allow Black people.

In 1968, he returned to Hollywood for a major role in "Companions in Nightmare," NBC's first made-for-TV movie that starred Melvyn Douglas, Anne Baxter and Patrick O'Neal.

This time, Gossett was booked into the Beverly Hills Hotel and Universal Studios had rented him a convertible. Driving back to the hotel after picking up the car, he was stopped by a Los Angeles County sheriff's officer who ordered him to turn down the radio and put up the car's roof before letting him go.

Within minutes, he was stopped by eight sheriff's officers, who had him lean against the car and made him open the trunk while they called the car rental agency before letting him go.

"Though I understood that I had no choice but to put up with this abuse, it was a terrible way to be treated, a humiliating way to feel," Gossett wrote in his memoir. "I realized this was happening because I was Black and had been showing off with a fancy car — which, in their view, I had no right to be driving."

After dinner at the hotel, he went for a walk and was stopped a block away by a police officer, who told him he broke a law prohibiting walking around residential Beverly Hills after 9 p.m. Two other officers arrived and Gossett said he was chained to a tree and handcuffed for three hours. He was eventually freed when the original police car returned.

**Thomas Francis Nupp**  
October 5, 1946-March 28, 2024

Thomas Francis Nupp, 77, of 79 Campbell Avenue, passed away Thursday March 28, 2024, in Heritage Park Rehab and Skilled Nursing.

He was born October 5, 1946, in Olean, NY, the son of the late Jack and Sally Persichini Nupp.

Tom attended St. James School as well as Jamestown High School.

He was a veteran of the US Army.

He was always a hard worker. In addition to his jobs at Proto Tool and Dawson Metal, Tom had a passion for hot rods and autobody repair.

He was a member of Der Kobblers Club. He enjoyed going to car shows, Stateline Speedway and socializing with his friends and family. He was known for having a sense of humor and cracking jokes. Fun was had by all when Tom was in your presence.

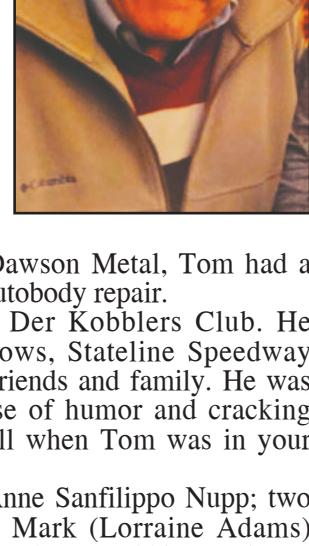
Surviving is his wife Anne Sanfilippo Nupp; two sons Timothy Nupp and Mark (Lorraine Adams) Nupp; several nieces and nephews and his puppies.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his beloved wife of many years Geraldine Diminuco Nupp, who passed away in 2015.

A celebration of life will be announced at a later date.

Memorials may be made to American Heart Association.

You may leave words of condolence at [www.lindfuneralhome.com](http://www.lindfuneralhome.com).

**Snow-Covered Bodies Of 2 Men From Senegal Found In NY Woods Near Canadian Border**

MOOERS, N.Y. (AP) — Two men from Senegal froze to death were found in the snow of a wooded area close to the Canadian border, New York state police said.

The bodies of Abdoulaye Ndoye and Ndongo Sarry, both 25 years old from Dakar, were found Monday in the border town of Mooers. A Border Patrol agent was on a routine search in the woods when a canine detected a body under the snow, and then a second body, state police said in a release Thursday.

Authorities did not say why they believed the men were in the woods, though their bodies were found in a rural part of northern

New York that has become increasingly popular for people trying to cross illegally into the United States from Canada by foot.

Autopsies determined the cause of death to be hypothermia due to exposure in a wet and cold environment. A coroner ruled the deaths accidental, according to police.

State police were investigating.

The number of illegal crossings at the northern border is small compared to the southern border. The northern border is expansive and unfortified, but illegal crossings can be perilous, especially in the winter.

In December, the body of a 33-year-old woman was found in a northern New York river after a crossing.

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## The Post-Journal

Covering The Way You Live

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Established 1826The Jamestown Morning Post  
Established 1901The Post-Journal  
Merged 1941

MICHAEL C. BIRD

PUBLISHER

JOHN D'AGOSTINO

REGIONAL EDITOR

JOHN WHITTAKER

MANAGING EDITOR

"Truth Above All Else"

## Resurrection Brings Hope To All Of Us

"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.'

So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord" - and that he had said these things to her.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

- John 20:1-23 ESV

This biblical passage serves as inspiration for hundreds of millions of Christians throughout the world who celebrate the resurrection of Christ on this most sacred of holidays.

It is the spirit of hope and renewal that Christians and people of all faiths should embrace and celebrate today.

Revel today in promises kept, and maintain untiring hope and faith that struggles, violence and hatred shall pass.

May you and your family be blessed with health, happiness and togetherness today and in the coming year.

Happy Easter!

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

Did you ever participate in Battle of the Classes when you were a student?

Yes  
18.40%

No  
81.60%

The Question of the Day can be found by visiting our website, [www.post-journal.com](http://www.post-journal.com). These results were taken before our press deadline; results may change later in the day.



Cal Thomas

## Checking The Black Box

Two men with decidedly different political outlooks have been my go-to sources on race in America. They are Dr. Thomas Sowell of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., professor and director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University.

Dr. Gates has just published his latest book, "The Black Box." The title is a reference to a box on hospital forms for newborns which one must check to confirm their race. Gates rightly calls this an "absurdity," largely because there are no racial "purebreds," and regardless of how we look on the outside, we are all equal on the inside.

My first reaction upon reading his book was surprise that I didn't learn much of what he writes about in high school or college. My second reaction was anger because I didn't. One reason, I think, is that all of my teachers were white and textbooks sanitized the past in order to promote a "my country right or wrong" patriotic narrative.

Dr. Gates uses the black box as a metaphor for how African Americans were once "locked in" when it came to expressing themselves in writings and, in some instances, locked themselves in by accepting this type of racial censorship as "the way it is."

As with his other books and PBS films, Dr. Gates exposes not only the thoughts and beliefs of some of the nation's Founders, but of equal importance he uncovers the works of African American slaves and other Black people who were often censored by white society.

It is hard to believe in today's world that the writings of some Black authors had to be validated by committees made up of white people, the rationale being that many believed "Negroes" too dumb to be able to express themselves. The opposite, of course, is true as the author brilliantly shows us.

Practically everyone knows about Thomas Jefferson's flaming phrase in the Declaration of Independence: "...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator

with certain unalienable Rights..." but how many know Jefferson's beliefs about Black people? In his "Notes on the State of Virginia" (1785), Jefferson claimed their racial features, intellect and morals were "fixed in human nature" and so must necessarily be ruled over "by the fine mixtures of red and white." There's more from that work and it's even worse.

"Consider this paradox," Dr. Gates writes: "Blackness was an arbitrary category invented by Europeans and Americans in the Enlightenment to justify the horror show of Black subjugation ... the very concept of race is the child of racism." Thanks to advances in DNA research, "what we popularly call 'race' is a social construct." As has been said by others, the only true race is the human race.

About "The Philosophy of History," published in 1837, Dr. Gates writes, "G.W.F. Hegel wrote that Africa 'is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit.'" Hegel claimed - falsely - "that Africa lacked a tradition of writing, either in European languages or indigenous African languages ... (like others) He ignored the Black written tradition in Arabic at the University of Timbuktu. It didn't fit his thesis."

It didn't fit his thesis could be said about supporters and practitioners of the slave trade and Jim Crow laws that kept Blacks from voting in the South.

"The Black Box," along with the writings of Thomas Sowell, ought to be mandatory reading in every high school and American University, in large part to make up for the suppressed writings of talented and intelligent Black people of the past. They deserve the attention and praise most were denied in their time.

Readers may email Cal Thomas at [tcaeditors@tribpub.com](mailto:tcaeditors@tribpub.com). Look for Cal Thomas' latest book "A Watchman in the Night: What I've Seen Over 50 Years Reporting on America" (HumanixBooks).

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Llewellyn King

## A Capitalist Solution To A Social Crisis

The housing crisis, spread across the United States, is most easily measured in terms of human cost. At the low end are families, working families, forced to go without a roof, to live in cars on the streets, and in tents or municipal shelters.

However, there are other costs, primarily to young people. Costs like getting married and living with parents or living in a group house long past the age when that is an adventure.

A significant cost of the housing crisis is labor mobility.

One of the great strengths of the American workforce has been its preparedness to relocate, unlike parts of Europe where the workers have demanded that the work come to them.

This mobility fed the growth of California. Today, it is feeding the growth of Texas, although housing stress - particularly in Austin, the dynamic capital - is beginning to be a problem.

Mobility is a feature that made America America: its restlessness, its sense of seeking the frontier and moving there.

According to Dowell Myers, professor of policy, planning and demography at the University of Southern California, whom I interviewed on the television program "White House Chronicle" in 1985, 21 percent of the population relocated annually; now it is down to 8 percent.

According to Myers and other experts, the housing shortage has existed since the Great Recession of 2008 to 2009. This has been multifaceted and includes a shortage of money available to lend to builders, labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, and, particularly, local exclusionary laws.

To architects and developers I have spoken to, those laws are the biggest problem: the mostly smug, leafy suburbs don't want new townhouses or apartments. That introduces underlying issues of class and race. Two of the most dreaded words in the suburbs are "affordable housing."

According to Myers, the answer is to build "luxury" housing rather than designated low-income housing.

It is a view I have espoused for years. Build upscale housing that caters to the middle class, and as people move up, more housing will become available at the bottom. It is capitalism at its simplest: supply and demand at work. At present we have too much demand and not enough supply.

An extraordinary thing about the housing crisis is that it is crippling the nation and changing its social as well as its labor dynamics is why isn't this a prominent issue in this presidential election year?

It is an issue that could bolster candidates

because things at the federal level can be done. Here is a problem that affects all. Where are the political solutions coming from the top? Where are the political reporters asking the candidates, "What are you going to do about housing, a here-and-now crisis?"

Public housing comes pre-stigmatized. The answer is the market. It isn't a free market because it is inhibited by the fortress-suburb mentality. Still, there is enough room for the market to accelerate to build more houses with just a little federal incentive.

Some of the most attractive homes in New England are in converted mills and factories. These grand structures have been turned into what Realtors call "residences."

Using the word "residences" instead of "apartments" denotes something desirable. So be it: If it works, do it.

Much of the rehabilitation of the industrial properties in New England and nationwide has gone in tandem with tax incentives. In one case, these were enough for the developers to produce 250 apartments from one mill in Rhode Island. Up and down the country, abandoned industrial properties require little zoning hassle to be repurposed.

USC's Myers, who says every kind of housing is needed, points out that building for those who can afford to buy works in another way: It inhibits gentrification and social upheaval as the poor are pushed out of their old neighborhoods, something which, by the way, has been very apparent in Washington.

The use of urban space is changing, shopping centers are failing, and office buildings are losing their luster, and that means housing opportunities.

Repurposing isn't the only answer, and a lot of new housing is needed. Still, there is huge evidence that repurposing works from the factories of New England to the lofts of Manhattan - desirable housing has been created from the debris of the past.

Building anything anywhere isn't a simple matter, but once the financial incentives are gotten right, things begin to move. It will take decades to fix the housing problem, but that should be accelerated now.

Llewellyn King is executive producer and host of "White House Chronicle" on PBS. His email is [llewellynking1@gmail.com](mailto:llewellynking1@gmail.com) and you can follow him on Twitter @LlewellynKing2. He wrote this for InsideSources.com.

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Gary Varvel  
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John Stossel

## What If You Come Home To Find Strangers Living In Your House?

What if you come home and find strangers living in your house?

I assumed you order the squatters out, and if they resist, call the police, and they will kick them out.

Wrong.

Pro-tenant laws passed by anti-capitalist politicians now protect squatters. If a squatter just lies about having a lease, the police won't intervene.

"It's a civil matter," they'll say. "Sort it out in court."

Great. Court might cost \$20,000.

Or more. And courts are so slow, eviction might take years.

In my state, New York, homeowners can't even shut off utilities to try to get the squatter out. That's illegal. Worse, once a squatter has been there 30 days, they are legally considered a tenant.

This month, NYC police arrested a homeowner for "unlawful eviction" after she changed locks, trying to get rid of a squatter.

"Squatter rights," also known as "adverse possession" laws, now exist in all 50 states. As a result, evicting a squatter legally is so expensive and cumbersome that some people simply walk away from their homes!

Flash Shelton may have a better idea.

His mom wanted to sell their house after his dad died. But while they were selling it, squatters moved in.

Shelton did what I would have done - called the police. But the police said there was nothing they could do.

So he tried a new tactic: out-squat the squatter.

"I just felt, if they can take a house, I can take a house," Shelton says in my new video. "I could go in as the squatter myself, (and) gain possession of the property."

When the home invader left for a few hours, Shelton went in and changed the locks. Only then did the squatters leave.

Now Shelton's started a business, SquatterHunters.com, where he tries to help others get their houses back.

"People think of squatters as homeless, destitute," I say.

"They are not homeless," answers Shelton. "They're criminals ... people taking advantage of the system."

In fact, one squatter he pushed out was Adam Fleischman, who started the Umami Burger restaurant chain. Fleischman told Shelton, "I'm a victim here." He even called the cops.

"He felt that since he had possession of the house," says Shelton, "That he had the right to call law enforcement and have me removed."

I tried to reach Fleischman to hear his side of the story. No luck.

"Where does he hear that he has this right to squat?" I ask Shelton.

"The city was telling him this," says Shelton.

But now Shelton was a squatter, too, so he was protected by the same pro-tenant law.

Still, only when Shelton threatened to bring friends to the house as back-up did Adam Fleischman leave.

In Los Angeles, a woman claimed to be a "caretaker" for an elderly homeowner, who said she didn't want the woman in her home. So, she gave Shelton a lease. While the squatter was out, Shelton changed the locks.

"But the squatter is still there?" I ask Shelton.

"Still there," he says, "Climbing through the window because she doesn't have access to the main house."

She's now been there for two years!

Shelton says his team will move in and get rid of the squatter.

"How do you know that will work?" I ask.

"Because once I take possession," says Shelton, "Then she'll have to fight in court to try to get back in. Most likely she won't do that."

Why do squatters feel entitled to other people's property?

Probably because people hate landlords. They listen to silly people like Marxist New School professor Miguel Robles-Duran, who calls landlords "parasites" who "provide no social value." Popular TikTok socialist Madeline Pendleton adds that landlords have "guaranteed forever incomes, without having to put in any labor."

No labor? Who does she think buys the land; pays lawyers to decipher the excessive regulations; hires architects, carpenters, plumbers and electricians; pays the taxes; manages the property, etc.?

It's infuriating!

I'm glad people like Flash Shelton fight back.

Every Tuesday at [JohnStossel.com](http://JohnStossel.com), Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom. He is the author of "Give Me A Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media."

## GUEST ESSAYS

# Positive News On The Housing Front

BY ROLLAND KIDDER

My wife often reminds me that I see too much from the negative side of things...and she is probably right. So, this week, feeling the warmth of Spring and the promises of Easter as a backdrop...I am focusing on some positive developments locally as to our housing situation.

Just to set the stage. The fact is that close to 40% of the housing stock in Chautauqua County was built prior to 1940 (the year I was born.) That means that it is old. Dealing with that is a challenge in any community.

With that in mind, I was pleased to read in the newspaper recently of actions being taken by the Mayor and Jamestown City Council dealing with rent-

al properties but also with "nuisance" problems like vacant lots, "zombie" houses, and the like. The City seems to be empowering itself to take on these issues.

Another positive development was the recent Report by the Chautauqua County Partnership for Economic Growth (CCPEG) establishing a "Housing Market Assessment and Development Strategy" for the whole county. CCPEG is a partnership of government and the private sector (including foundations) to tackle economic development in a cooperative way at the county level.

I would first give this report a "plus" rating because it does not try to sugar coat the problem. Not only do we have a lot of old housing, we also have a large portion of our population who have a hard

time paying for good housing: "Approximately, 53% of Chautauqua County households earn less than the annual income needed to comfortably afford homeownership, including mortgage and utilities."

The second, and more positive take from the Report, is that the Partnership has agreed to help local municipalities in addressing the housing problem. This is important because many local communities just don't have the staff and expertise to deal with their housing issues.

For example, the partnership will assist municipalities in submitting applications to the state to become qualified for aid under the "Pro-Housing Communities" program or in making application for federal homebuilding aid

which is "family-oriented and in a safe location near employment opportunities."

Most local communities don't have the financial resources to attack housing blight in a systematic way by themselves ... they will need access to state and federal assistance.

We know that there are no easy answers to our housing problems. There is also no doubt that when we look at vacant lots and broken-down or vacant houses that we wish there were a solution to it.

Decades ago, while working and going to grad school in Chicago, I found that one of the best solutions to housing problems there was the presence of effective and active community/neighborhood organizations. Hopeful-

ly, as things progress here it will also stimulate more community engagement in the job of improving our neighborhoods.

I remember years ago when Prime Minister "Maggie" Thatcher introduced a new housing program in Great Britain to encourage home ownership. People said it couldn't be done - but a lot did get done.

We can get it done here too. These recent developments locally as to housing are a good thing. Another positive is that when you fix up a home or build a new home in an old neighborhood, you don't have to worry about public infrastructure. The sewer, water, natural gas and electric utility services are already there.

*Rolland Kidder is a Stow resident.*

## READERS' FORUM

### It's Up To Locals To Safeguard Their Interests In Chautauqua Lake

To The Reader's Forum:

This matter will impact all of us, particularly those fortunate enough to own property - be it a home, cottage, or trailer - along the picturesque shores of our beloved lake. For over two decades, this lake has been a cherished part of our lives. My children have grown up here, and our affection for it runs deep enough that we've made the decision to relocate here permanently and establish a business. However, our plans are now uncertain due to the intentions of New York State (NYS) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

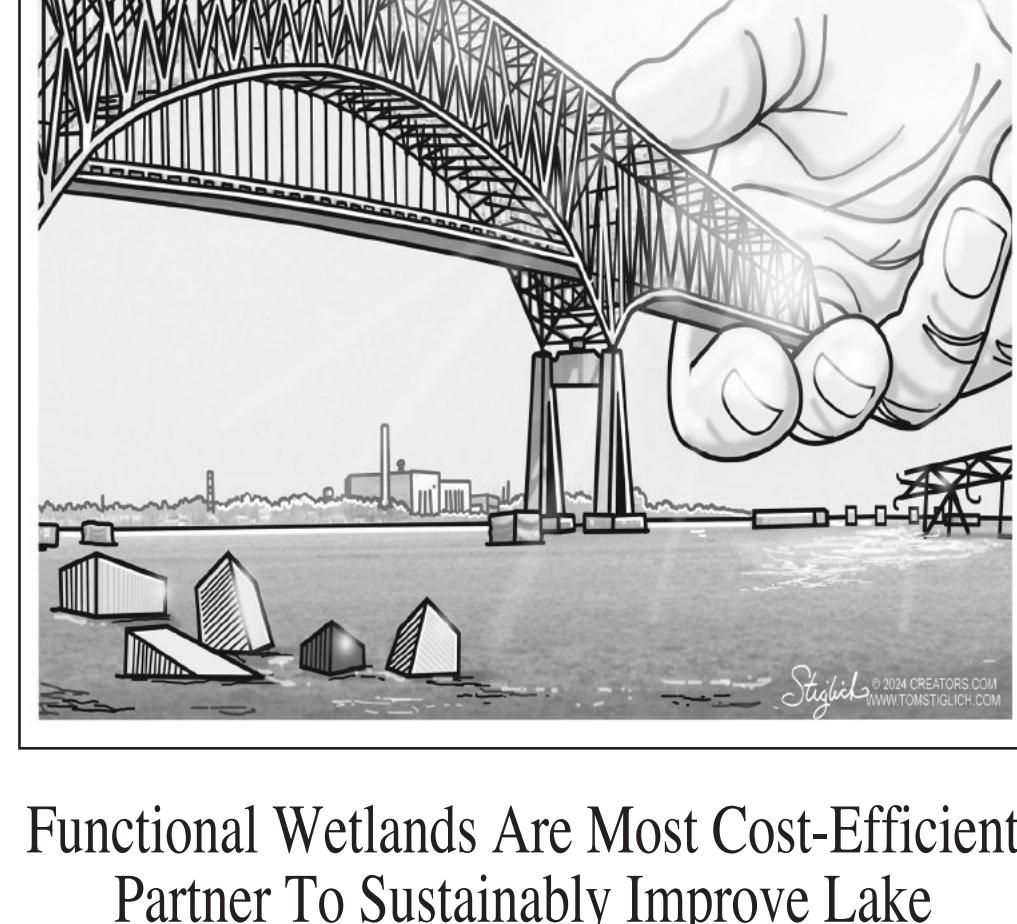
Some believe that the proposed classification will improve the lake's health, but I beg to differ. How does inaction equate to improvement? Currently, we're able to manage weed growth through various means, but there's no guarantee we'll be allowed to continue these efforts. This isn't about politics or a lack of concern for the environment. Sometimes, what seems beneficial on paper simply doesn't align with reality.

The truth is, this region already faces economic challenges, and the lake sustains much more than just fish life. Its scenic beauty drives income for local marinas, restaurants, stores, and attractions. The proprietors of these businesses are our neighbors. If the lake loses its appeal to tourists, they'll cease to visit, causing a ripple effect of financial strain. Businesses will shutter, and our community will suffer collectively. The stakes are too high.

I, for one, lack confidence in the DEC and NYS's consideration of our best interests. It's up to us to safeguard our own interests. Who desires more regulations, restrictions, and permits? Certainly not me. Do you relish the idea of applying for permits, only to wait and hope for approval? And let's not forget, these permits won't come free of charge.

I urge you to take action - pen a letter, make a call, or send an email - to convey to NYS, the DEC, and your local representatives that this cannot be allowed to proceed. Our lake must remain just that - a lake.

*Annmarie Schneider  
Greenhurst*



### Functional Wetlands Are Most Cost-Efficient Partner To Sustainably Improve Lake

BY TWAN LEENDERS

Despite the recent rhetoric regarding the impact of a potential wetland designation on some parts of Chautauqua Lake, we simply do not have enough information at this time to do more than speculate. One aspect of these discussions, however, is already abundantly clear - although not necessarily presented that way. It is the critically beneficial role that our remaining wetlands play in the health of Chautauqua Lake.

There are many different types of wetlands and just as many ways to define each. However, as stated on the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's website, in essence wetlands are simply the areas where land and water meet. They are the areas where upland plant and animal communities transition into the submerged areas where aquatic species thrive. Simply put, the vegetated shoreline areas right above and below the waterline.

Some 500 years ago, Chautauqua Lake would have looked very different from how it appears now. Just like any other lake in the region, it would have been part of a hilly, forested landscape, occupying a low spot and receiving water from spring-fed tributary streams and from snowmelt and rainwater that runs downhill. The vegetated areas along the water's edge of lakes and tributary streams constitute a critical component of a healthy watershed. These vegetated wetlands function as the kidneys and the immune system of the lake. They filter out pollutants and absorb nutrients as they flow downhill, converting those nutrients into healthy native plant growth before they reach the lake. They capture sediment between the roots of the wetland vegetation before it enters the open water and creates problems. In addition, these extensive root systems also anchor the shorelines and floodplains, protecting them from collapsing or eroding when exposed to wave action, flooding, or storm events. Furthermore, the structural complexity of a wetland's vegetation and its small channels and pools forms numerous microhabitats where fish, ducks, mammals, but also beneficial micro-organisms, mussels, and other invertebrates, can shelter, feed, reproduce, and sustain the complex ecosystem of its adjacent lake.

Ongoing settlement and development in the region caused dramatic changes in the uplands, removing all our old-growth forests, and implementing new agricultural practices and other land uses that caused increased flow of sediment and nutrients downhill with every rainstorm. As long as Chautauqua Lake and its tributaries were still bordered by vegetated wetlands, this runoff would have been captured and filtered before it could impact the lake. However, at some point in time those ecosystem services stopped when the lake's protective wetland buffer became compromised. Today, we not only have very little functional wetland left to help us prevent unfiltered nutrients and pollutants from entering the lake, but instead we place some of our most polluting land uses right on the water's edge! Fertilized lawns (some treated with herbicides and other toxins), and areas of pavement are often only separated from the water they pollute by a concrete or steel retaining wall, which does nothing to capture sediment, absorb nutrients, or provide flood resilience.

I'm not here to debate the economic benefits that drove these dramatic changes in our landscape. However, I do want to make an economic argument in favor of maintaining and restoring our wetlands wherever possible. Centuries of filling in wetlands that were deemed useless, or at least less valuable than whatever alternate land use folks had in mind, should be reconsidered. Because the unfathomable amounts of time, effort, and money that we now need to spend on erosion control, bank stabilization,

sediment removal (dredging), pollution control, and mitigation of excess nutrient loading could have been avoided, or certainly greatly reduced, if Chautauqua Lake's protective wetlands had remained intact.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service estimates that by the mid-1980s, the USA had lost over half its original wetlands, and those losses continue to date. The same holds true in our region and many of our wetlands have been drained, filled, or otherwise impacted over time. The good news is that the remaining wetlands in the watershed continue to do for us all those things that we cannot seem to accomplish with even our most sophisticated engineered or chemical solutions.

They continue to absorb nutrients, trap sediment, mitigate flooding, and prevent erosion wherever we allow them to exist. They help keep our lake healthier, our businesses and neighborhoods safer from flooding, and our region more scenically beautiful. And the really wonderful thing is that they do it all for free! Wetlands work quietly, 24/7/365, and are entirely solar-powered (no panels needed!), and look great doing their job, all dressed in wildflowers, birds, butterflies, frogs, turtles, and other wildlife. Anyone who has ever canoed down the Chautauqua Lake outlet or taken a ride on the Chautauqua Belle in or out of Jamestown can attest to the beauty of our last sizeable wetlands on the lake. Unfortunately for lake users, these systems filter the water that is leaving Chautauqua Lake, and their beneficial impacts are enjoyed in Jamestown and farther downstream. Having similarly functional wetland systems along the lake shores and bordering the tributary streams that feed into Chautauqua Lake is what we should be striving for. Still, the opportunity for residents and outside visitors to experience the natural beauty of a ride down the lake's outlet or to spend a relaxing afternoon fishing provides real economic potential.

There are many undeniable ecological and economic benefits to protecting our existing wetlands. I have no doubt that this notion is one of the main drivers of the DEC's new wetland regulations. Finding a balance between short-term, in-lake improvements to keep Chautauqua Lake's appeal high, while simultaneously working towards a more financially and ecologically sensible and sustainable future is what needs to happen. Rather than simply vilifying wetlands as a problem, we should embrace their incredible restorative abilities. They have always kept our lake healthy and thriving until we compromised their ability to function properly. Wetlands truly are the original tool in that metaphorical "toolbox" which is so often referenced in conversations about lake maintenance.

I understand people's concerns over the potential impacts on property values but do want to point out that properties protected by wetlands or vegetated shorelines are significantly less likely to be damaged by our increasingly intense storm events than those protected by lawn and/or a bulkhead. A point that has also gone unnoticed by insurance companies and is reflected in the cost of flood insurance premiums.

Whatever shape a potential future wetland designation on parts of the lake's shorelines will take remains to be seen. However, I am absolutely convinced that protecting our remaining wetlands is critical for the long-term health of Chautauqua Lake. And I am equally convinced that investing in the restoration of compromised wetlands, or the construction of new vegetated buffers along our shores in places where this makes sense, will give us the most bang for our buck if we want our lake to be ecologically and economically sustainable.

*Twan Leenders is a Jamestown resident and is dof conservation for the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy.*

### Working Families Deserve Protection From Retaliation

BY STATE SENATOR ANDREW GOUNARDES

Earlier this month, my colleague State Senator George Borrello voted against my legislation to protect New Yorkers who face discrimination when applying for paid family leave to care for a sick loved one or new child.

Senator Borrello actually voted for these same protections last year. But on the Senate floor this time around, he voted nay because he said the law had changed in a way that would "add to the cost of doing business."

The only problem? That's not true. The parts of the legislation Senator Borrello now objects to were included in the bill he approved last June.

New York's family leave law pays a portion of an employee's wage when they need to take time off to care for a newborn baby, a child with a disability, or a close relative with serious health problems, among other difficult circumstances. The law also provides safeguards against discrimination: employers aren't allowed to retaliate against workers who request or use paid leave, and must reinstate employees coming back from leave to their former position or a similar one. If they don't, the worker can file a complaint that can ultimately lead to getting their job back, along with lost wages.

But the workers' compensation system is so backlogged that many lawyers can't or won't handle family leave discrimination claims, denying workers the recourse they would receive for other types of abuse, like racial or gender discrimination.

Even worse, an obscure rule requires that workers must ask for their job back before filing a complaint, despite the obvious fact that many workers can't or don't want to return to their former jobs after facing discrimination. On top of that, many types of abuse - like insults at the jobsite, harsher feedback, removal from projects, or the sabotaging of breastmilk pumping - can occur while someone is still employed, meaning the requirement that workers request their job back makes no sense, since the employee hasn't left in the first place.

My bill solves these problems and better protects families by allowing employees facing leave discrimination to file a normal lawsuit in civil court, just like they already can for other types of discrimination. It also removes the nonsensical requirement that employees ask for their job back before pursuing justice.

These common sense changes ensure all families are protected. They were in my bill when Senator Borrello voted for it last year, and they were in the bill when he voted against it this year. And when it comes to the "cost of doing business," companies shouldn't be allowed to discriminate against their workers just to save the boss a few bucks.

*Sen. Andrew Gounardes represents the 26th state Senate district.*

### WHERE TO WRITE

Express your opinion to your representatives in the Legislature and the federal government. Their addresses are:

#### NEW YORK

U.S. Rep. Nick Langworthy, 1600 Longworth House Office Building, Washington D.C., 20515; 202-225-3161. Jamestown Office: The Fenton Building, 2-6 E. Second St., Jamestown, NY 14701.

#### U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer

130 S. Elmwood Ave., #660, Buffalo, NY 14202; 716-846-4111; 322 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510; 202-224-6542.

#### U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand

726 Exchange St., Suite 511, Buffalo, NY 14210, 716-854-9725; 478 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510; 202-224-4451.

#### State Sen. George Borrello

2-3 E. Second St., Suite 302, Jamestown, NY 14701, 716-664-4603; 188 State St., Albany, NY 12247, 518-455-3563.

## READERS' FORUM

### POLICY

All letters to the Readers' Forum must include the writer's signature and the correct full name and address of the author as well as a telephone number for verification purposes.

The maximum limit is 400 words. The forum is designed for the discussion of issues, not personalities. Email submissions to [jwhittaker@post-journal.com](mailto:jwhittaker@post-journal.com) or submit them at [post-journal.com](http://post-journal.com) or by clicking on 'Submit News.'

The editor reserves the right to reject or edit all material.

*Annmarie Schneider  
Greenhurst*

## Blind People Can Hear, Feel April's Total Solar Eclipse With New Technology

WASHINGTON (AP) — While eclipse watchers look to the skies, people who are blind or visually impaired will be able to hear and feel the celestial event.

Sound and touch devices will be available at public gatherings on April 8, when a total solar eclipse crosses North America, the moon blotting out the sun for a few minutes.

"Eclipses are very beautiful things, and everyone should be able to experience it once in their lifetime," said Yuki Hatch, a high school senior in Austin, Texas.

Hatch is a visually impaired student and a space enthusiast who hopes to one day become a computer scientist for NASA. On eclipse day, she and her classmates at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired plan to sit outside in the school's grassy quad and listen to a small device called a LightSound box that translates changing light into sounds.

When the sun is bright, there will be high, delicate flute notes. As the moon begins to cover the sun, the mid-range notes are those of a clarinet. Darkness is rendered by a low clicking sound.

"I'm looking forward to being able to actually hear the eclipse instead of seeing it," said Hatch.

The LightSound device is the result of a collaboration between Wanda Daz-Merced, an astronomer who is blind, and Harvard astronomer Allyson Bieryla. Daz-Merced regularly translates her data into audio to analyze patterns for her research.

A prototype was first used during the 2017 total solar eclipse that crossed the U.S., and the handheld device has been used at other eclipses.

This year, they are working with other institutions with the goal of distributing at least 750 devices to locations hosting eclipse events in Mexico, the U.S., and Canada. They held

workshops at universities and museums to construct the devices, and provide DIY instructions on the group's website.

"The sky belongs to everyone. And if this event is available to the rest of the world, it has to be available for the blind, too," said Daz-Merced. "I want students to be able to hear the eclipse, to hear the stars."

The Perkins Library — associated with the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts — plans to broadcast the changing tones of the LightSound device over Zoom for members to listen online and by telephone, said outreach manager Erin Fragola.

In addition to students, many of the library's senior patrons have age-related vision loss, he said.

"We try to find ways to make things more accessible for everyone," he said.

Others will experience the solar event through the sense of touch,



Minh Ha, assistive technology manager at the Perkins School for the Blind tries a LightSound device for the first time at the school's library in Watertown, Mass., on March 2, 2024.

AP photo

with the Cadence tablet from Indiana's Tactile Engineering. The tablet is about the size of a cellphone with rows of dots that pop up and down. It can be used for a variety of purposes: reading Braille, feeling graphics and movie clips, playing video games.

For the eclipse, "A student can put their hand over the device and

## Judge Questions Border Patrol Stand That It's Not Required To Care For Children At Migrant Camps

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A federal judge on Friday sharply questioned the Biden administration's position that it bears no responsibility for housing and feeding migrant children while they wait in makeshift camps along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Border Patrol does not dispute the conditions at the camps, where migrants wait under open skies or sometimes in tents or structures made of tree branches while short on food and water. The migrants, who crossed the border illegally, are waiting there for Border Patrol agents to arrest and process them. The question is whether they are in legal custody.

That would start a 72-hour limit on how long children can be held and require emergency medical services and guarantees of physical safety, among other things.

U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee said evidence presented by migrant advocacy groups appeared to support the definition of legal custody. "Are they free to leave?" she asked.

"As long as they do not proceed further into the United States," answered Justice Department attorney Fizza Batool.

Gee, who was appointed by former Democratic President Bill Clinton, acknowledged it was complicated — "like dancing on the head of a pin" — because some children arrive on their own at the camps and are not sent there by Border Patrol agents.

Advocates are seeking to enforce a 1997 court-supervised settlement on custody conditions for migrant children, which includes the time limit and services including toilets, sinks and temperature controls. Gee did not rule after a half-hour hearing in Los Angeles.

Children traveling alone must be turned over within 72 hours to the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, which generally releases them to family in the United States while an immigration judge considers asylum. Asylum-seeking families are typically released in the U.S. while their cases wind through courts.

The legal challenge focuses on two areas in California: one between two border fences in San Diego and another in a remote mountainous region east of San Diego. When the number of migrants was particularly high last year, they waited for several days to be arrested and processed by overwhelmed Border Patrol agents. From May to December, agents distributed colored wristbands to prioritize whom to process first.

Advocates say the Border Patrol often directs migrants to the camps, sometimes even driving them there. Agents are often seen nearby keeping a loose watch until buses and vans arrive.

The Justice Department, which rejects advocates' label of "open-air detention sites," says smugglers send migrants to camps. It says agents giving them water and snacks is a humanitarian gesture and that any agent who sends, or even escorts, migrants there is "no different than any law enforcement officer directing heightened traffic to avoid disorder and disarray."

The Border Patrol generally arrests migrants at the camps within 12 hours of encountering them, down from 24 hours last year, Brent Schwerdtfeger, a senior official in the agency's San Diego sector, said in a court filing. The agency has more than doubled the number of buses in the San Diego area to 15 for speedier processing.

On Friday, 33 migrants, including two small children, waited between border walls in San Diego until agents came to ask them empty their pockets, remove shoelaces and submit to weapons searches before being taken in vans to a holding station. They were primarily from China and India, with others from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Agents spoke to them in English.

## 'Tough Cases'



Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich is escorted from court after a hearing in Moscow, Russia, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024.

AP photo

## Growing Number Of Americans End Up In Russian Jails, Prospects For Their Release Are Unclear

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — A journalist on a reporting trip in a Ural Mountains city. A corporate security executive traveling to Moscow for a wedding. A dual national returning to her hometown in Tatarstan to visit her family.

All of them are U.S. citizens, and all are behind bars in Russia on charges of varying severity.

Arrests of Americans in Russia have become increasingly common as relations between Moscow and Washington sink to Cold War lows. Washington accuses Moscow of targeting its citizens and using them as political bargaining chips, but Russian officials insist they all broke the law.

Some have been exchanged for Russians held in the U.S., while for others, the prospects of being released in a swap are less clear.

"It seems that since Moscow itself has cut off most of the communication channels and does not know how to restore them properly without losing face, they are trying to use the hostages. ... At least that's what it looks like," said Boris Bondarev, a former Russian diplomat who quit after Moscow invaded Ukraine in 2022.

### WHO ARE THE AMERICANS IN CUSTODY?

Friday marks a year since the arrest of Evan Gershkovich, a 32-year-old reporter for The Wall Street Journal who is awaiting trial in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison on espionage charges.

Gershkovich was detained while on a reporting trip to the Ural Mountains city of Yekaterinburg and accused of spying for the U.S. Russian authorities haven't revealed any details of the accusations or evidence to back up the charges, which he, his employer and the U.S. government all deny.

Another American accused of espionage is Paul Whelan, a corporate security executive from Michigan. He was arrested in 2018 in Russia and sentenced to 16 years in prison two years later. Whelan, who said he traveled to Moscow to attend a friend's wedding, has maintained his innocence and said the charges against him were fabricated.

The U.S. government has declared both Gershkovich and Whelan to be wrongfully detained and has been advocating for their release.

Others detained include Travis Leake, a musician who had been living in Russia for years and was arrested last year on drug-related charges; Marc Fogel, a teacher in Moscow, who was sentenced to 14 years in prison, also on drug charges; and dual nationals Alsu Kurmasheva and Ksenia Khavana.

Kurmasheva, a Prague-based editor for the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Tatar-Bashkir service, was arrested October 2023 in her hometown of Kazan, where she traveled to see her ailing elderly mother. She has faced multiple charges, including not self-reporting as a "foreign agent" and spreading false information about the army.

Khavana, of Los Angeles, returned to Russia to visit family and was arrested on treason charges. According to Pervy Otdel, a rights group that specializes in treason cases, the charges against her stem from a \$51 donation to a U.S. charity that helps Ukraine.

### A PATH TO FREEDOM VIA PRISONER SWAPS

The precise number of Americans jailed in Russia is unclear, but the cases of Gershkovich and Whelan have received the most attention.

Gershkovich was designated as wrongfully detained by the State Department less than two weeks after his arrest, unusually fast action by the U.S. government. The designation is applied to only a small subsection of Americans jailed by foreign countries.

Prisoners who get that classification have their cases assigned to a special State Department envoy for hostage affairs, who tries to negotiate their releases, and must meet certain criteria — including a determination that the arrest was done solely because the person is a U.S. national or as part of an effort to influence U.S. policy or extract concessions from the government.

The U.S. has had some success in recent years negotiating high-profile prisoner swaps with Russia, striking deals in 2022 that resulted in the releases of WNBA star Brittney Griner and Marine veteran Trevor Reed. Both Griner and Reed were designated as wrongfully detained.

In the exchanges for them, Moscow got arms dealer Viktor Bout, who was serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S., and pilot Konstantin Yaroshenko, given a 20-year prison term in the U.S. for cocaine trafficking.

It's unclear whether there are any negotiations in the works on swapping other Americans held in Russia, such as Leake, Fogel, Kurmasheva or Khavana.

Kurmasheva's husband, Pavel Butorin, told The Associated Press shortly after her arrest that he hoped the U.S. government would use "every avenue and every means available to it" to win her release, including designating her as a wrongfully detained person.

### IS THE WEST HOLDING RUSSIANS THAT MOSCOW WANTS?

In December, the State Department said it had made a significant offer to secure the release of Gershkovich and Whelan, which it said Russia had rejected.

Officials did not describe the offer, although Russia has been said to be seeking the release of Vadim Krasikov, who was given a life sentence in Germany in 2021 for the killing in Berlin of Zelimkhan "Tornike" Khangoshvili, a 40-year-old Georgian citizen of Chechen descent who had fought Russian troops in Chechnya and later claimed asylum in Germany.

President Vladimir Putin, asked this year about releasing Gershkovich, appeared to refer to Krasikov by pointing to a man imprisoned by a U.S. ally for "liquidating a bandit" who had allegedly killed Russian soldiers during separatist fighting in Chechnya.

Beyond that hint, Russian officials have kept mum about the talks. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov repeatedly said that while "certain contacts" on swaps continue, "they must be carried out in absolute silence."

Whether there are any other Russians held in the West that Moscow might be interested in is unclear.

When Russia agreed to release Griner but not Whelan, a senior Biden administration official lamented to reporters that Russia had "rejected each and every one of our proposals for his release."

Those scenarios — in which one detainee is released but not another — weigh heavily on officials in the U.S. government, said Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, speaking in a January interview with AP.

## Bus Plunges Off A Bridge In South Africa, Killing 45 People, An 8-Year-Old Is The Only Survivor

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP)

— A bus carrying worshippers on a long-distance trip from Botswana to an Easter weekend church gathering in South Africa plunged off a bridge on a mountain pass Thursday and burst into flames as it hit the rocky ground below, killing at least 45 people, authorities said. The only survivor was an 8-year-old child who was receiving medical attention for serious injuries.

The Limpopo provincial government said the bus veered off the Mmamatlakala bridge in northern South Africa and plunged 50 meters (164 feet) into a ravine before bursting into flames.

Search operations were ongoing, the provincial government said, but many bodies were burned beyond recognition and trapped inside the vehicle, while others had been thrown from the bus.

The crash happened near the town of Mokopane, which is about 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the South African capital, Pretoria.

Hours after the crash, smoke seeped from the mangled, burned wreck underneath the concrete bridge. Authorities said it appeared that the driver lost control and the bus ploughed into the barriers along the side of the bridge and then over the edge. The driver was one of the dead.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said the victims appeared to be all from Botswana and had been on their way to the town of Moria in Limpopo for a popular Easter weekend pilgrimage that attracts hundreds of thousands of worshippers from South Africa and neighboring countries who follow the Zion Christian Church.

Ramaphosa had phoned Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi to offer his condolences and said the South African government would do all it can to help, according to a statement from Ramaphosa's office.

Provincial authorities said the bus had a Botswana license plate.

South African Minister of Transport Sindiwe Chikunga was in Limpopo province for a road safety campaign and changed plans to visit the crash scene after hearing the "devastating news," the national Department of Transport said. She said there was an investigation underway into the cause of the crash and offered her condolences to the families of the victims.

The South African government often warns motorists to be cautious during the Easter holidays, which is a particularly busy and dangerous time for road travel. More than 200 people died in road crashes during the Easter weekend last year.

Just a day before the bus crash, the South African government called on people to be extra careful on Thursday and Friday because of the expected high volumes traveling by road to Moria.

The Zion Christian Church has its headquarters in Moria and this year is the first time its Easter pilgrimage is set to go ahead since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.



In this image taken from video provided by eNCA, a bus carrying worshippers headed to an Easter festival plunged off a bridge on a mountain pass and burst into flames in Limpopo, South Africa, on Thursday, March 28, 2024, killing multiple people, authorities said.

AP photo

## LOCAL NEWS

## Love Letters

## From Page A1

The Ludwigs met after three different parties were trying to have them meet without anyone knowing. Ludwig said her husband knew she was his "dream girl when he heard I had three jobs, graduated from college and went to church." The pair had their first date at Tim Hortons, so Ludwig said the restaurant now equals love, and that their life has been an adventure ever since.

"If you knew my husband, you know he's a wonderful guy with a whole lot of crazy, the good kind," Ludwig said. "We have gone skydiving, bungee jumping, ran a half marathon together, etc. He keeps me on my toes and keeps life an adventure."

Ludwig said their wedding was also an adventure, involving only close relatives and friends. They sent packages to each guest with ski rentals, lift passes, massage and pool passes along with a walkie talkie and after saying "I do" the Ludwigs "hopped on the ski lift and skied down in all our finery at Peek 'n Peak."

Michael Ludwig was the one who came up with the idea to leave love letters to each other on the pair's wedding night. The Ludwigs stayed in the Honeymoon Suite at the Peek on their wedding night, which Ludwig said was a beautiful, English style room with a fireplace. The Ludwigs also own their wedding bed because the Peek was doing renovations and said they could have both the bed and the dresser. That first night in the room the love letter tradition was born.

"On that first night, Michael said we should write love letters and hide them in our room and see if they are there the following year," Ludwig said. "I was cranky and just wanted to go — it was super early in order to catch a flight for goodness sake. He told me I

would appreciate it later and he wasn't wrong. The first few years we hid them under a dresser drawer. One year a cleaning woman signed off on them and put them back. After the room renovations, we changed the location to underneath the dresser."

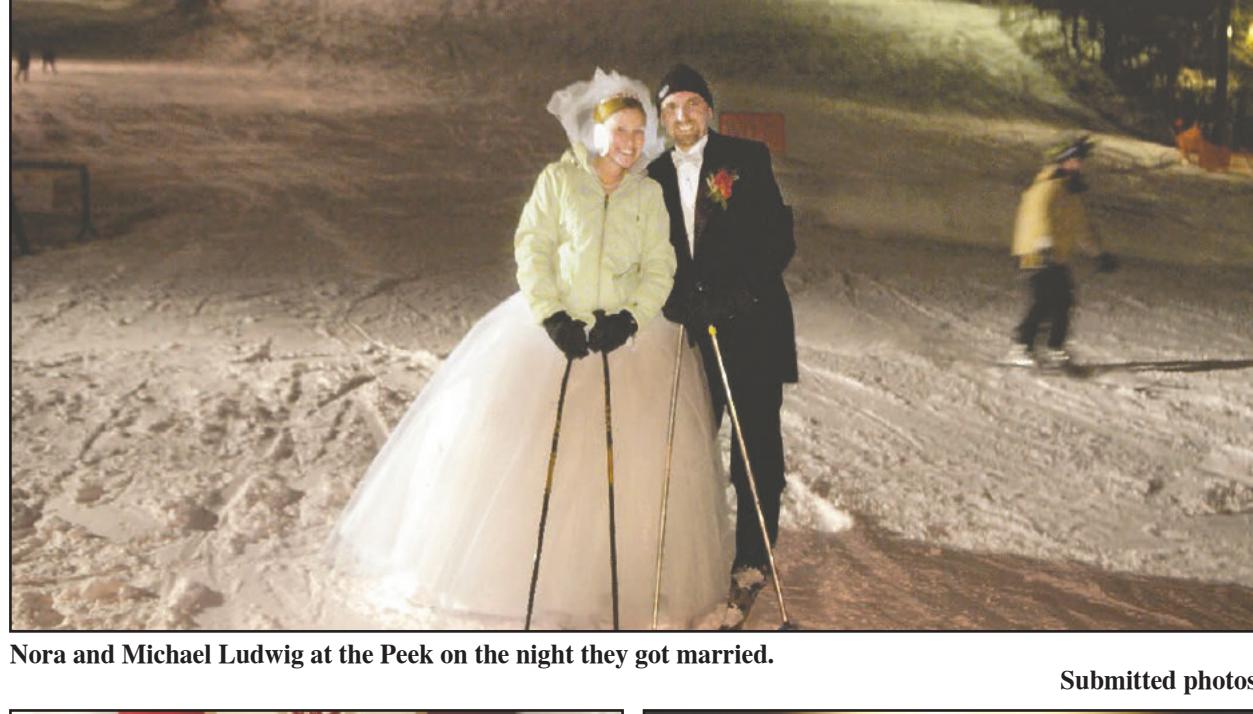
Since that first night the Ludwigs have written love letters to each other every year except during Covid. They would read the letters out loud to each other every year.

"It was a beautiful story of our lives together," Ludwig said. "All of our hopes and dreams. All of our pain and struggles. We were able to remember the sweet memories of buying a house, having children, the death of a parent, and how the 'State of the Union' really was between us."

The Peek'n Peak has always been special for them, Ludwig said. Each time they go back it is a different experience, but one of the things that never changed was checking into the same room and seeing if the letters were there. They even shared the story with the staff over the years, and had a following on Facebook to see if they would find the letters every year.

Since discovering that the letters have been lost, the Ludwigs have been trying to share their story with anyone who might have an idea of what happened to them. They talked to everyone they could while staying at the Peek and Ludwig said the manager even called the man who replaced the floors in the room. A friend also suggested Ludwig tag the Peek in a Facebook post to see if anyone might have more information.

"I have been overwhelmed with the amount of people that have reached out to talk with and tag people they know that may have information and share my story online," Ludwig said. "Even my husband, who works at Family Health Medical Services, is



Nora and Michael Ludwig at the Peek on the night they got married.

Submitted photos



(Left) The Ludwig's love letters. (Right) The pile of love letters that the Ludwigs have written to each other over the years.

talking with patients that have seen my post and shared information, like what the cleaning crew usually does with forgotten items found in rooms. It's such a small world. Michael and I have tried to hold on to hope."

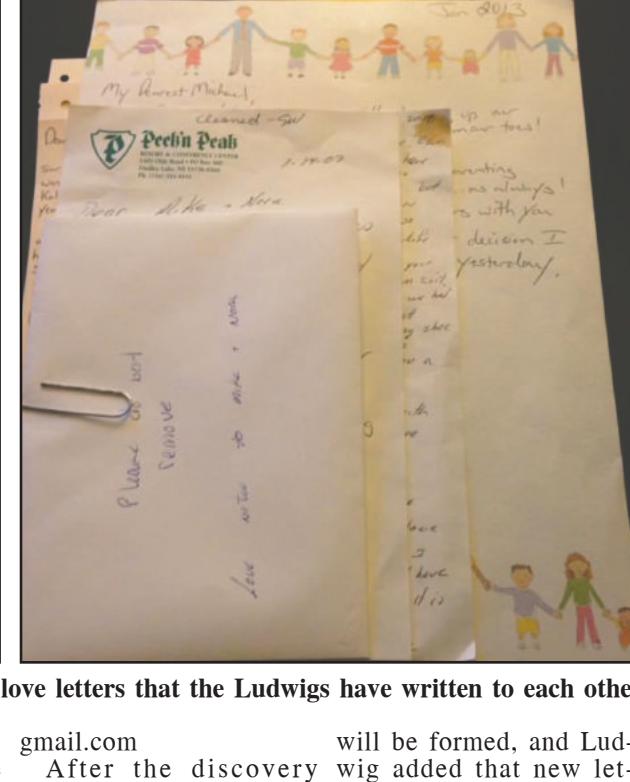
Additionally, Ludwig said someone had reached

out through the post saying they had been the one that threw the letters away but she did not know for sure if that was true. She has also recently opened an email for anyone who might have any more information about the letters, missingletters2024@gmail.com

will be formed, and Ludwig added that new letters were not necessarily off the table. Overall, she said her and Michael are just keeping their love story going.

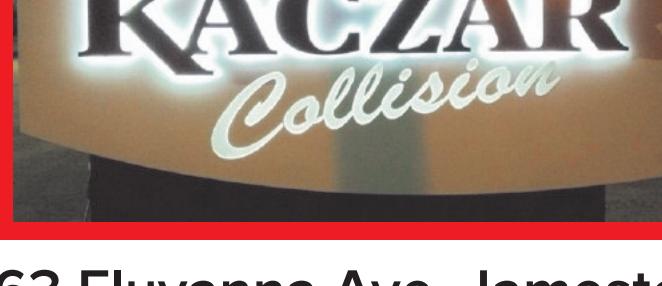
"We are just everyday people who have a great love story," Ludwig said.

After the discovery of the missing letters, Ludwig said the couple did not write new ones this year, as it did not feel right at the time and they were both really sad to find the others missing. A new tradition



## KACZAR COLLISION

2023 Winner Best Auto Body Shop!



3063 Fluvanna Ave, Jamestown  
716-487-0947

Quality Workmanship for Future Pride!

Thank you for making us your Best Auto Body Shop!

Thanks to the great customers for 42 years in business.

We are truly humbled and appreciate your continued confidence in our work.

sincerely Steve and Entire Staff!

Nichelle: I have used Kaczar on 3 occasions and every time - quality work, great communication, and so easy to work with!!

Mike: wow amazing people.. did exactly what they said they would do, when they said they would do it.. small job, big job, no matter.. a great place and skilled.. they have my business forever. thanks all of you..

Bonnie: I have my baby back! Steve and his crew made her so beautiful again. Candy treats you so good. They all treat you like you are valuable to them. They are a value to the community!! I used to deal with Steve years ago. He and his business are true professionals!!

Cheryl: These guys are GREAT! They fixed our motor home and did more than they had to! THANKS. We give you guys 5 stars and then some!

Robert: Did a fantastic job on a custom paint Harley tank and fender!!! highly recommend!!!

which would free up billions of dollars each year that could instead be spent on programs.

"I understand debt is really attractive when you want something today but don't want to pay today," Goodell said. "But as these numbers point out, when we don't pay for what we

want to spend today and instead borrow it, it costs us a lot of money. Just think about this. If we had no debt, we'd have \$10.5 billion more to spend without raising taxes. We'd be saving today \$10.5 billion in interest payments if we hadn't accrued this debt in the past."

Goodell said some people have been overwhelmed by the amount of bills pending in front of us that would reduce costs for consumers. We'd like to raise all the taxes and fees on them but we don't have anything that gives them some relief."

Both houses of the legislature approved budget extenders and debt service bills Thursday, with Gov. Kathy Hochul signing the budget extender bill. The bill funds state government through April 4. There has been no public announcement of agreement on housing and education funding, in addition to the items Goodell mentioned in his remarks on the Assembly floor.

State legislators are scheduled to return to Albany on Tuesday.

"So I share my concerns with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle about what we don't have today and I hope we can have a spirited discussion about what we ought to be talking about after we take Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday off," Goodell said.

Goodell voted against the debt service bill while giving his annual warning about the state's mounting debt load. The legislation approved Thursday calls for \$13.5 billion in state debt payments, with 78.5% of that money (\$10.5 billion) earmarked for interest, not principal on the debt.

Rather than take out bonds, Goodell again said the state should begin paying for more projects out of the state's general fund,

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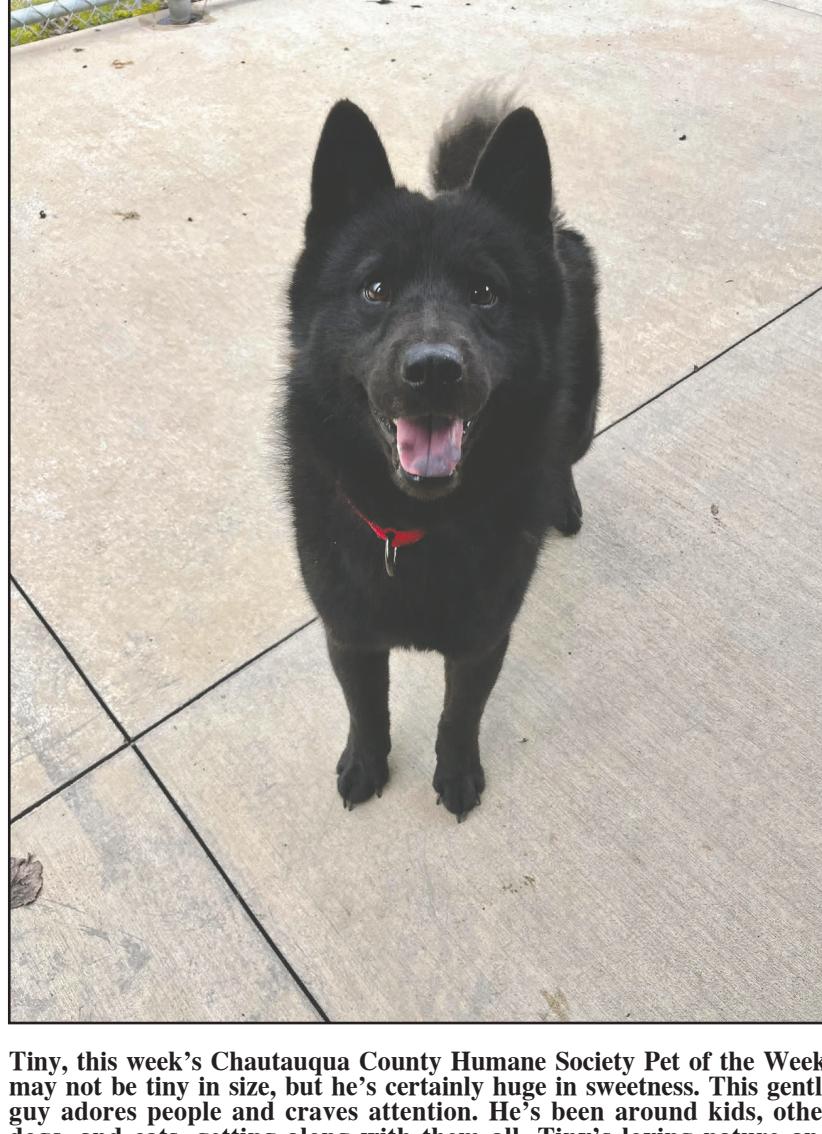
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## AREA NEWS

**Tiny Is CCHS Pet Of The Week**

Tiny, this week's Chautauqua County Humane Society Pet of the Week, may not be tiny in size, but he's certainly huge in sweetness. This gentle guy adores people and craves attention. He's been around kids, other dogs, and cats, getting along with them all. Tiny's loving nature and friendly disposition make him a perfect companion for anyone looking for a big-hearted canine friend. Meet Tiny at the Chautauqua County Humane Society, 2825 Strunk Road, open from 1 to 5:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. View all available animals at chqhumane.org.

**AREA POLICE REPORTS****JAMESTOWN POLICE**

Two Jamestown residents face charges after a traffic stop at 3:39 p.m. Thursday on Newland Avenue near Charles Street. City police and Chautauqua County Sheriff's deputies working on a GIVE overtime detail report seeing a black Audi driven by Codie D. Swartz, 24, of Jamestown. Officers said they knew Swartz's driver's license had been revoked and pulled the vehicle over. Swartz was allegedly found with a small amount of cocaine. Eddie B. Texidor, 18, of Jamestown was riding in the vehicle, according to a police report, and was allegedly found with oxycodone. Swartz was charged with second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation and two counts of seventh-degree criminal possession

of a controlled substance. Texidor was charged with one count of seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance. Swartz was released to be in court later. Texidor was held pending arraignment due to prior failures to reappear in court, according to the police report.

Lisa M. George, 42, of Jamestown was charged with petit larceny at 8:26 p.m. Thursday after officers responded to a report of a shoplifter at the Dollar General on Foote Avenue. Officers found a woman matching the description provided by store employees, who then reportedly identified George. According to a police report George tried to conceal \$67.82 worth of merchandise without paying for it. She was arraigned and will be in court later.

An early afternoon ceremony on Saturday, October 7, 2023, joined in marriage with a double ring ceremony Louise Marlene Prince and Charles Marvin Massey.

The Reverend Luke Fodor officiated the 3 p.m. ceremony in the Saint Luke's Episcopal Church in Jamestown, New York.

The Bride is the Daughter of the Late Lee B. Prince and Ella E. Prince. The Bride's groom is the Son of the late Lewis F and Helen E. Massey.

The Bride was given away by her Son, Randall Lee Prince. The Bride was attended by Michelle (Shelley) Ann Prince who was her Maid of Honor, of Gerry, New York.

Bridesmaids were Debra Ann Oakes of Cherry Creek, N.Y., Shirley Mae Haynes of Coneango Valley, New York, Melissa Lee Ann Prince Crouch of Newport News, Virginia, Sylvia Conti of Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, Barbara Schlagenhauf of Ware Shoals, South Carolina, Cindy E. Massey of Jamestown, New York and Ft. Myers,

Florida, Julie Hatch of Bemus Point, New York, Sarah Jean Massey of Fenton, Missouri and Sue Thompson of Falconer, New York.

Best Man for Mr. Massey was his Brother, Daniel F. Massey. His groomsmen were John Conti of Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, Peter (Monty) Hatch of Bemus Point, New York, Randall Lee Prince of Gerry, New York and Dan Thompson of Falconer, New York.

Nathan Lewis Massey of Marysville, Ohio was in charge of their wedding music.

Nicolas Conti of Lawrenceburg, Kentucky was the Electric Technician.

Guests were Grandchildren of the Bride, Jeremy and Amy Prince of Turtlepoint, PA and Great Grandchildren Jaden and Lexis Prince of Turtlepoint, PA.

Reception dinner was catered by Mr. Rickie Eagelson. Photo Photography was provided by Erica Gross of Jamestown, New York.

**WEDDING****MR. AND MRS. CHARLES M. MASSEY****Jamestown Community College Officials Release 2023 Fall Graduate List**

Jamestown Community College officials recently released the college's list of fall 2023 graduates. Graduates include:

- Allegany: Breeanna Finefrock (A.S.: Criminal Justice), Kimberly Kwiatkowski (A.S.: Addictions Counseling - High Honors)
- Andover: Taegen MacCrea (Certificate: Healthcare Studies - High Honors)
- Ashville: Paiton James (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics & Sciences - High Honors)
- Bemus Point: Erin Nolan (A.S.: Homeland Security - High Honors), Terence Roberts (Certificate: Cybersecurity - Honors)
- Bethpage: Antonia Coffaro (A.S.: Individual Studies)
- Boksburg, South Africa: Belinda Paine (A.S.: Fine Arts: Studio Arts - High Honors)
- Bradford, Pa.: Amanda Johnston (A.S.: Health Information Technology - High Honors), Gabriella Mager (A.S.: Business-Business Administration)
- Bridgeport, Conn.: Suleyman Eminov (A.S.: Cybersecurity - Honors)
- Brocton: Alicia Fedrick (A.A.S.: Individual Studies), Alyssa Grover (A.A.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences), Cassandra Hurd (A.A.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences)
- Buffalo: Maxine Langford (A.A.S.: Business-Business Administration - Highest Honors)
- Cassadaga: Aystyn Barrett (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics & Sciences), Isis Catlett (A.S.: Fine Arts: Studio Arts - Honors)
- Cattaraugus: Cole Green (Certificate: Cybersecurity - High Honors), Cole Green (Certificate: Information Technology - High Honors), Charlie Milliman (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics & Sciences - High Honors)
- Centurion, South Africa: Centurion (A.S.: Business-Business Administration - Honors)
- Findley Lake: Christopher Eades (A.S.: Individual Studies - Honors)
- Fishkill: Megan Daley (Certificate: Entrepreneurship - Honors)
- Franklinville: Caitlynn Carson (A.S.: Addictions Counseling - Honors), Avery Pockey (A.S.: Individual Studies), Cheznea Rivera (A.S.: Business-Business Administration - High Honors)
- Frederick, Md.: Michelle Boutron (A.S.: Business-Business Administration - Honors)
- Gowanda: Madeline Browning (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Early Childhood Education)
- Great Valley: Cole Hedlund (A.A.S.: Individual Studies - High Honors)
- Greater Manchester, England: Joshua Carr (A.S.: Physical Education Studies)
- Greenbelt, Md.: Chelsea Adolph (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Adolescence Education)
- Greenhurst: Christian Bafouin (A.S.: Business-Business Administration - Honors)
- Hinsdale: Samantha Vanderaske (A.S.: Human Services - Honors)
- Irving: James White (A.S.: Addictions Counseling)
- Jamestown: Shaelyn Anderson (A.A.S.: Individual Studies), Grace Arrance (A.A.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences), Skyela Banse-Fay (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics & Sciences), Trent Bjork (A.A.S.: Information Technology - High Honors), Colton Cappalino (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics & Sciences), Robert Cole (Certificate: Administrative Professional), Heather DeJesus (A.A.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences - Honors), Steven Dewey (A.A.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences), Jonathan Erickson (A.S.: Computer Science - Honors), Courtney Huston (A.S.: Addictions Counseling - Honors), Tammy Ingrao (A.A.S.: Individual Studies), Alice Moffatt (A.S.: Business-Business Administration - High Honors), Christopher Navarro (A.A.S.: Business-Business Administration - Honors)
- Mayville: Chadwick Crandall (A.A.S.: Mechanical Technology - Machine Tool - High Honors), Nicholas Gilmore (A.S.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Adolescence Education), Bryce Peterson (A.S.: Sport Management)
- North Collins: Abigail Rupp (A.S.: Business-Business Administration - High Honors)
- Olean: Steven Atherton (A.A.S.: Information Technology - High Honors), Jaykob Cornell (A.S.: Individual Studies), Kaden Cruz (A.S.: Criminal Justice - High Honors), Dustin Elliott (A.A.S.: Mechanical Technology - Design), Michael Hamed (A.S.: Business-Business Administration), Isaiah Maine (A.S.: Individual Studies), Rita Malone (A.A.S.: Business-Business Administration - Honors)
- Wellsville: James Dunne (A.A.S.: Mechanical Technology - Design - Honors)
- Westfield: Sheala Barresi (A.A.: Liberal Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences - High Honors), Kellie Rivera (A.A.S.: Health Information Technology - Honors)