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Borne from grief, parents provide a chance to help

Young daughter's death gives rise to swim and safety lessons

BY STEPHEN T. WATSON
News Staff Reporter

Marian Coco Reilly, known as “Mare” to those who loved her, had charisma.

The toddler said hello to everyone at the Jewish Community Center’s Early Childhood Center in Buffalo, even strangers and the teachers she didn’t have.

She was bright. She was silly. She liked birds and dogs and singing and dancing.

“She was very precocious for a young kid,” her mother, Caitlin Corr Reilly, said in a recent interview. “She was about two weeks away from her second birthday, but she never really seemed that young. She had a big personality and really had an impact on a lot of people.”

Mare never got to celebrate her second birthday. On July 5, 2025, she died in a drowning accident in a pool at a family cottage in Ontario.

In the weeks and months that followed, Mare’s grieving parents thought about how best to honor her memory.

They decided to set up the Marian Coco Foundation, with a focus on encouraging outdoor play and water safety for children.

The Reillys met with Mayor Sean Ryan and his staff to discuss how they could support

the city’s learn-to-swim program. And they’re working with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy to renovate playgrounds in local parks.

“In addition to the actual mission of the foundation,” said her father, Craig Reilly, “it’s an outlet for talking about Mare and using her name.”

Amazed by birds, motorcycles

Mare grew up in Buffalo’s Elmwood Village with her parents and two older siblings. Her middle name, Coco, was the nickname of Craig’s late father, Colin.

Her brother, William, and sister, June, are active children, and Mare regularly tagged along to soccer fields and ice rinks.

“She would, to all of our friends, cozy up, steal snacks, sit on laps, talk to them,” said Craig, a lawyer with Hodgson Russ, “and I think because of that, people were very drawn to her.”

He recalled once when Mare was taken out for cookies, or ice cream, on Elmwood Avenue. The group passed Hodge Liquor while returning home and Mare asked what kind of store it was.

“She’s 1½, and she was just like, ‘Oh, I like the liquor store,’” Craig Reilly said, smiling at the memory.

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Canisius’ Kimble now stands alone



JOED VIERA, BUFFALO NEWS

Canisius running back Elijah Kimble runs against Huron Heights of Ontario on Saturday at the Stransky Complex in West Seneca. The Syracuse commit is Western New York’s all-time leading rusher after piling up 263 yards and four touchdowns in the Crusaders’ 43-14 win. With 6,626 career yards, Kimble broke the record held by Jehuu Calucrick. For more coverage, turn to Page C13.

Fallen foliage creates a dilemma in the city



JOED VIERA, BUFFALO NEWS

A City of Buffalo sanitation worker carries bags of leaves to his truck on Wednesday on Richmond Avenue. In Buffalo, homeowners are responsible for cleaning up fall leaves to keep roads and sidewalks clear. Those who rake leaves onto a sidewalk or roadway could be fined.

Change of season also leads to opportunities

MACKENZIE SHUMAN
News Staff Reporter

Some say it’s the most beautiful time of year in Western New York. Temperatures are cool, days are shorter and trees are starting to show brilliant fall colors of red, orange and yellow.

In Western New York, fall foliage is in its early stages in parts of Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Venture outside of the cities and the colors are nearing their peak before falling to the ground in the Allegany State Park area, Catskills and Adirondacks.

But the beauty brings a challenge and a dilemma: what to do with all that fallen foliage?

A mature tree can produce 30,000 to 200,000 leaves in a season. That means 2 billion to almost 14 billion leaves could be falling off the nearly 70,000 trees in Buffalo this season.

Many of those leaves can remain on the ground throughout the winter season to protect insects, bugs, small mammals and create a fresh new layer of soil. Residents can line garden beds with healthy fall leaves, create compost piles or bury them so their nutrients can return to the Earth.

But in an urban environment, not all leaves should remain on the ground. Leaves left on sidewalks or streets can become icy and slippery in the winter, clog sewer drains, and potentially lead to flooding during a rainstorm or as snow melts.

In Buffalo, homeowners are responsible for cleaning up fall leaves to keep roads and sidewalks clear. Raking leaves onto a sidewalk or roadway is a crime in the city, punishable by a \$52.50 fine on the first offense.

In Sean Ryan’s first fall season as mayor, Deputy Mayor Ben Swanekamp said the city will enforce those penalties.

Please see **LEAVES**, Page A5

Democrats could take a majority of governorships during this cycle

KEVIN HARDY
Stateline.org

As political prospects for Republicans worsen ahead of the midterms, the GOP is increasingly playing defense over its yearslong grip on state governments.

That’s particularly true for gubernatorial elections, as Democrats could win a majority of governorships for the first time since 2010. Republicans now boast a 26-24 gubernatorial advantage over Democrats.

Next month, voters will choose governors in 36 states, including New York. Thirteen of those races are considered competitive by the nonpartisan Cook Political Report with Amy Walter, which ranks the competitiveness of races for governor, the U.S. Senate and the House.

Some of this cycle’s most competitive races are in politically divided states such as Nevada and Wisconsin. But Republicans also are playing defense in several deeply conservative states,

including Alaska, Iowa and Ohio.

Last week, Cook moved its ratings of the Florida and Texas governor races from Likely Republican to Leans Republican. That means the GOP candidates are still favored, but “given the grim political environment for the GOP, we can’t rule out the possibility of an upset in one or both contests,” wrote Senate and Governors Editor Jessica Taylor.

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Times of clouds and sun. High 67, low 61. Details on Page B6

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