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‘An uproar that’s going to help the community’



A sunny day brings many visitors to the Walkway Over The Hudson State Park in the City of Poughkeepsie on May 12, 2025. PATRICK OEHLER/POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

Mindy Brugger’s legacy fuels call to confront domestic violence

Nickie Hayes

Poughkeepsie Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

This story references domestic violence. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, call the National Domestic Abuse Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or visit thehotline.org or text “START” to 88788. Callers can remain anonymous.

EMT and past Plattekill EMS Captain Melinda “Mindy” Brugger was a hard-working woman, longtime first responder, a grandmother, mother and

friend.

“Even though Mindy has passed, she’s still making differences, and she has caused an uproar that’s going to help the community,” said close friend Brittany Perry.

Brugger died Aug. 21 in what investigators determined was a murder-suicide involving her husband, James Brugger. Her death has put the spotlight on domestic violence cases in the mid-Hudson Valley, which local experts say have been on the rise since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the midst of her grief, Perry put

her efforts toward spreading awareness. The result is “Light Up the Walkway for Mindy,” a domestic violence awareness event at the Highland side of the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park, to be held at 7 p.m. Oct. 11.

Purple lights — LED lights, glow sticks and battery-operated candles — will make the Walkway glow, as people walk from the Highland side to the middle of the bridge.

The nationally recognized color used during October’s Domestic Violence

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Blooming Grove crash kills one

Two others injured in accident on Route 17

Mike Randall

Middletown Times Herald-Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Pennsylvania man was killed and two other people were hurt in a three-vehicle crash on Route 17 in the Town of Blooming Grove.

State police said the crash happened just after 7 p.m. on Oct. 3.

According to state police, a preliminary investigation determined that a 2003 Chevrolet pickup truck was traveling east on Route 17 in the same lane and direction as a 2014 Nissan Pathfinder and a 2015 GMC Sierra.

The Pathfinder and Sierra slowed down and came to a stop due to traffic conditions.

The Chevrolet failed to stop and struck the rear of the Pathfinder, causing it to strike the rear of the Sierra.

The driver and sole occupant of the Chevrolet, Sean M. Nelson, 45, of Millrift, Pa., was transported by the Blooming Grove Volunteer Ambulance Corps to Garnet Health Medical Center in Middletown, where he was pronounced dead.

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Social Security’s COLA call approaches

Victoria E. Freile

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Millions of Americans who receive Social Security benefits each month are watching for the latest details on the Social Security Administration’s 2027 cost-of-living adjustment and how much their benefits could increase next year.

Social Security’s annual cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, determines how much benefits will increase in 2027. The adjustment can affect recipients’ monthly budgets, spending and retirement planning.

The official COLA announcement is not expected until October, but the latest forecasts offer an early look at what beneficiaries could see.

What is the latest 2027 Social Security COLA estimate?

Several recent forecasts place the 2027 COLA in the mid-3% range.

The latest estimates suggest the 2027 adjustment could be around 3.5% to 3.6%, according to forecasts

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Attorney in Cornell frat-related death sees similarities in Jane Doe case

Emily Barnes

New York State Team
USA TODAY NETWORK

Nearly seven years have passed since Cornell University student Antonio Tsialas was found dead in an Ithaca gorge, but an attorney for his family believes circumstances in that case remain relevant today as a sexual assault investigation grips the Ivy League campus.

Shortly before his death in 2019, Tsialas, an 18-year-old freshman, had attended a fraternity party on campus where alcohol was present. The Cornell University Police Department handled the investigation and Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten declined to pursue any criminal charges, igniting outrage among some in the community who were concerned that more wasn’t done at the time.

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The fraternity house at the center of a rape allegation stands on the campus of Cornell University is seen on Sept. 30 in Ithaca. A New York state attorney general has announced a review of the school’s initial response to allegations from a former Cornell University student about being raped at a campus fraternity in 2024. SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

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