



SPORTS
Saratoga Springs ready to play underdog again in state final. **B1**



REGION
Pyramid expects August opening for Costco in Guilderland. **D1**

SPOTLIGHT
Williamstown Theatre Fest leader Harris arrested on drug charges. **A2**

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Vaccines urged as flu season nears

By Nora Mishanec
STAFF WRITER

ALBANY — Flu season is upon us. But infectious disease experts say it's not too late to get vaccinated ahead of the winter holidays.

This week, state Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said that influenza is now “prevalent” across New York, with hospitals reporting sharp spikes in cases and hospitalizations of people with severe respiratory symptoms. Lab-confirmed flu cases are doubling week-over-week as peak season approaches, state data show.

Yet vaccination levels

remain low as vaccine skepticism is on the rise. Across New York, just 21% of adults and 20% of children have gotten this year's flu shot. Vaccination levels in the Capital District and across the Hudson Valley are on par with the state average.

Flu vaccines typically take a few weeks to reach full protection, meaning there is still plenty of time to vaccinate before the holidays, said Dr. Danielle Wales, primary care physician with Albany Med Internal Medicine and Pediatrics.

While the virus is not yet widespread locally, doctors are starting to see signs that cases are on the



Skip Dickstein/Times Union

Health officials this week declared that influenza is “prevalent” across the state, though only 20% of New Yorkers are vaccinated.

rise. “Flu can affect anyone and it can be particularly

nasty, even for young kids,” Wales said.
*See **FLU SEASON**, A3*



Mark Schiefelbein/Associated Press

An American flag flies at half-staff outside the Supreme Court on Nov. 5 in Washington. The court will hear President Donald Trump's appeal of a lower-court ruling that struck down his citizenship restrictions, which have not taken effect anywhere in the U.S.

Court to rule on birthright directive

Trump seeks to deny citizenship to children of illegal immigrants

By Mark Sherman
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed on Friday to take up the constitutionality of President Donald Trump's order on birthright citizenship declaring that children born to parents who are in the United States illegally or temporarily are not American citizens.

The justices will hear Trump's appeal of a lower-court ruling that struck down the citizenship restrictions. They have not taken effect anywhere in the country.

The case will be argued in the spring. A definitive ruling is expected by early summer.

The birthright citizenship order, which Trump signed Jan. 20, the first day of his second term, is part of his Republican administration's broad immigration crackdown. Other actions include immigration enforcement surges in several cities and the first peacetime invocation of the 18th-century Alien Enemies Act.

The administration is facing multiple court challenges, and the high court has sent mixed signals in emergency orders it has issued. The

*See **BIRTHRIGHT**, A4*

Diocese of Albany installs new bishop



Bishop Mark O'Connell raises his arms in celebration Friday as he greets guests and parishioners following his Mass of Installation as the 11th bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany at St. Edward the Confessor Church in Clifton Park.

WILL WALDRON/TIMES UNION

Please, thank you pay off for pupils

Sage replies to 5th graders' notes with 'pre-acceptance'

By Kathleen Moore
STAFF WRITER

TROY — Many colleges are now issuing acceptance letters to entire graduating classes. But Russell Sage College has them beat: it recently handed out pre-acceptance letters to fifth graders.

The college president thrilled the students at Carroll Hill School when he delivered their letters Friday morning.

Many Russell Sage students do their student teaching at Carroll Hill, and the fifth graders recently toured the college. After the tour, the students mailed hand-



Will Waldron/Times Union

Carroll Hill Elementary School fifth grader Mi'Kyla Hill, 10, center, reads her college “pre-acceptance” letter from Russell Sage College on Friday during a ceremony at Carroll Hill Elementary School in Troy. The letter explains that if the students continue to work hard, stay focused, and follow some simple advice, the college will welcome them one day.

written thank you letters in which several said they want to enroll there.

“I would really love to go there someday and possibly live there,” wrote Alannah

White, 10.

Another student promised, “I will work hard so I can go to college. I will see you soon!”

Others wrote that it was the best field trip they'd ever had and that it “changed almost everyone's minds about college.”

They were most impressed by the great variety of food in the cafeteria, the gym, and the “comfy seats.”

Russell Sage employees were touched by the letters.

They decided to do something in return: offer pre-acceptance, a letter that detailed what they need to do to get accepted at Russell Sage in seven years.

“We believe you have amazing potential,” the letter began. “We know you're smart and creative, but get-

*See **SAGE**, A3*

Albany Med makes change in leadership

McKenna out as entrepreneur Pickett named CEO, president

By Susan Mehalick and Larry Rulison
STAFF WRITERS

ALBANY — A day after the Albany Med Health System announced a significant leadership change, very little is publicly known about what prompted the sudden exit of CEO Dr. Dennis P. McKenna in favor of the system's board chair and local entrepreneur Daniel T. Pickett III.

Albany Med Health System, which operates Albany Medical Center, Albany Medical College and three other local hospitals, announced late Thursday afternoon that Pickett was replacing McKenna, immediately, as president and CEO.

“The board decided Albany Med Health System requires new leadership and made this decision only after extensive deliberation and with the system's long-term stability in mind,” Albany Med Health System spokesman Matthew Markham told the Times Union on Friday. “It reflects a clear-eyed assessment of what will best position the system for long-term success.”

Although Thursday's announcement did not

*See **CHANGE**, A3*

Business.....**D6**
Classified.....**D8**
Comics.....**C3**

Crossword.....**C2, C4**
Horoscope.....**C4**
Obituaries.....**D5**

Perspective.....**C1**
Sports.....**B1**
Television.....**C2**



WEATHER: Cloudy, not as cold.
High: **35°** / Low: **26°** / Details, **A2**

