



REGION
Bethlehem car wash to permanently close after landslide; Firm seeks new location. **B1**



BUSINESS
Embattled eatery posts, then removes GoFundMe appeal for money. **B7**

SPORTS
Matt Blue, Nevada Smith's first recruit, becomes Siena assistant coach. **A7**

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New racing series adds Saratoga, snubs Preakness
\$5M championship includes Derby, Belmont, Jim Dandy, Travers

By Adam Shinder
STAFF WRITER

With the pursuit of a Triple Crown increasingly fading into history, two major entities are teaming up to attempt to usher in a new era for horse racing's famed 3-year-old division.

A new six-race series offering a \$5 million bonus prize pool that's designed to create an annual, seasonlong championship for top 3-year-olds will include both the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes, as well as two of Saratoga Race Course's biggest events — but, pointedly, does not include the middle jewel

of the Triple Crown, the Preakness Stakes.

The New York Racing Association and Churchill Downs Incorporated on Monday announced the formation of the Thoroughbred Championship Series, which is slated to begin in 2027. The six-race series will be spread across three tracks, culminating with a championship race at Churchill Downs in September, while its summer focus will fall directly on Saratoga, with both the Jim Dandy and Travers stakes races included in the lineup.

The announcement was met with excitement, but also concern

that the series will further jeopardize the future of the Triple Crown, which consists of the Kentucky Derby, Preakness and Belmont. Only two horses have won the Triple Crown since 1978 and, more recently, the compact nature of the trilogy of races has resulted in multiple Kentucky Derby winners bypassing the Preakness. With the absence of the Preakness from the Thoroughbred Championship Series, some fear Monday's development could result in a greater likelihood of top horses skipping that race as their owners and trainers chase a piece of the

See SARATOGA, A5



Skip Dickstein/Times Union

Golden Tempo, who skipped this year's Preakness Stakes in between winning the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes, works out Sunday with jockey Jose Ortiz in the saddle at Saratoga Race Course in Saratoga Springs.

A sprinkle on top



WILL WALDRON/TIMES UNION

Raindrops collect on a rose bloom after a passing shower on Monday in Saratoga Springs. People shield themselves from the rain with umbrellas, below, while crossing Broadway at Congress Street. About an inch of rain fell across the Capital Region, onto ground still saturated by last week's storms.

GOP holdouts now back Blanche

Change clears way to confirm Trump attorney general pick

By Mary Clare Jalonick and Alanna Durkin Richer
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Two Republican senators who threatened to block acting Attorney General Todd Blanche's confirmation to lead the Justice Department said Monday that they will support his nomination, ending an impasse over plans to create a fund to compensate allies of President Donald Trump.

The endorsement from GOP Sens. John Cornyn and Thom Tillis paves the way for the Senate Judiciary Committee to advance Blanche's nomination on Tuesday after the Justice Department and lawmakers reached a deal to formally rescind the \$1.8 billion "Anti-Weaponization Fund" proposed to settle Trump's lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service.

Cornyn and Tillis had refused to back Blanche's bid for the permanent post without official confirmation killing the fund meant to compensate people who believe they were unfairly prosecuted by the Justice Department. Blanche's written order, issued late Sunday, came after the days of negotiations between the

See BLANCHE, A4

Airport board CEO hunt nets California exec

By Patrick Tine
STAFF WRITER

COLONIE — The Albany County Airport Authority has selected Stephen Clark, an airport executive from California, as the next CEO of Albany International Airport.

Authority board member John-Raphael Pichardo confirmed Monday that Clark had been selected. The board had met earlier in the day for a special meeting to discuss "a particular person."

In a statement, the airport authority said Clark and the board are "working together to finalize his start date, which is expected to occur before the end of the summer."

The airport has been run by its former chief attorney, Peter F. Stuto, since 2024, when the board fired CEO Phil Calderone in

See AIRPORT, A3



Clark

Lake George key to Georgia O'Keeffe's art

Landscape inspired nature studies that defined her career

By David Levine
FOR THE TIMES UNION



Courtesy of Doreen Kelly

A scholarship brought Georgia O'Keeffe to Wiawaka in 1908.

In June 1908, a 20-year-old student at the Art Students League in New York City won a scholarship to attend a new women-centered getaway on Lake George called Wiawaka. She moved into room 18 of the Wakonda lodge, where she spent a summer that changed the trajectory of

her artistic life.

Her name was Georgia O'Keeffe, one of the most celebrated American artists of the 20th century. And during her time at Wiawaka that summer and, a decade later, while living on Lake George with her husband, photographer Alfred Stieglitz, O'Keeffe developed her intense focus on nature. Her newfound appreciation

and close study of natural beauty became the central theme of her lifelong work, which she carried to the desert Southwest and into art history.

The young O'Keeffe was "fascinated by Lake George," and her work there "provides that stepping ground for what comes in New Mexico," said Yaritza Martinez Pule,

See O'KEEFFE, A3

