



Featured Athlete: Cloe Bengtson of Rootstown flag football

SPORTS, 1B

Covering Ravenna, Kent & Portage County

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Julia Michalak, a soon-to-be Kent State University graduate, is being mentored at Woodridge Elementary School in Peninsula, as she pursues her desire to become a physical education teacher. Michalak was born with a mild form of cerebral palsy, making physical activity a challenge. PHOTOS BY ANDREW DOLPH/AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Graduate turns gym class struggles into teaching PE

Craig Webb
Akron Beacon Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Some students would say gym class is the highlight of the school day.

For others, it is a time of dread and one to avoid if at all possible.

Growing up, Julia Michalak would have said the latter.

And yet, she now finds herself on the brink of graduation Saturday, May 9 from Kent State with degrees in physical education and sport performance.

She sees the irony in it all.

But she has empathy for those students who struggle with gym class.

Julia was born with a mild form of cerebral palsy and still struggles with stiffness in her legs that made physical education classes during her years in Cuyahoga Falls difficult.

Further complicating matters – particularly on the stressful dodgeball days – is the fact she also has strabismus, a condition that affects her eyes and visual processing.

Back then, just the thought of gym class would literally make her sick to



Julia Michalak with Woodridge Elementary School physical education teacher Jason Ciocca and her high school mentor, Ty Anna Gray.

her stomach.

“I hated it, but I always tried,” she said.

It was during high school that Julia had a eureka moment that has shaped her life’s journey.

While volunteering in the high school’s office, Julia said, she would see a steady stream of students who either skipped gym class or shared their own

anxiety about having to fulfill their physical education requirements.

She thought maybe she could make a difference in the lives of others by studying to be a physical education teacher.

Overcoming challenges to earn physical education and sports performance degrees

Julia said the path in college wasn’t always easy.

She still struggled physically in some classes – yoga and dance were particularly difficult given her mobility limitations.

But once she found herself student-teaching at Kent, Cuyahoga Falls and Woodridge schools, she said it all just clicked and all the hard work was worth it.

Julia said at the end of the day she is still teaching a gym class, and the lessons still require the students to participate and move about.

But having struggled with it herself,

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Ohio AG Dave Yost expected to announce resignation

Haley BeMiller and Laura A. Bischoff
State Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost is expected to announce that he is resigning from office, a move that could shake up statewide leadership months before the November election, according to two sources.

The surprise announcement means Gov. Mike DeWine must appoint someone to serve as Ohio’s top law enforcement official for the rest of the year.

If DeWine appoints Keith Faber, the Republican nominee for attorney general, it could create a cascade of openings to be filled. Faber is currently state auditor. The governor could instead opt for a placeholder appointee who has no interest in running for the job.

“This is the governor’s decision and I look forward to having a conversation with him about the best path forward after [Yost] makes his announcement,” Faber said in a statement.

A spokesman for DeWine declined to comment. Yost did not immediately respond to a request for comment or take questions from reporters at a May 7 memorial ceremony for Ohio peace officers in London.

“Seven years ago, I stood here for the first time as an attorney general,” Yost said in his remarks. “Today will be the last day I am here in that role. It will not be the last time I’m here.”

It would have been his last time

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Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost speaks at the 38th Ohio Peace Officers Memorial Ceremony on May 7 in London.

SAMANTHA MADAR/COLUMBUS DISPATCH



Artist Michael Quesenberry has entered an online competition and is seeking votes. PROVIDED BY HEATHER MAY

Ravenna man seeks votes in art contest

Diane Smith
Ravenna Record-Courier
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Ravenna artist is asking for votes after advancing in a competition connected with actor and artist Johnny Depp.

Michael Quesenberry of Ravenna entered The People’s Artist Contest, which welcomes votes from the public to advance artists in the competition. Quesenberry is now ranked in the Top 10 of a group of 80 artists.

The winner will appear in Artforum Magazine, take home \$25,000, and display their work at The Art of Elysium’s

Salon in Los Angeles.

“This opportunity isn’t just about recognition,” said his partner Heather May, who entered him in the competition. “It’s about showing that artists from small communities like ours can compete on a national stage.”

May said Quesenberry is known for his “distinctive, emotionally driven style” that “blends raw expression with narrative depth,” which she said resonates with online audiences.

The platform allows people to cast one free vote every 24 hours, or cast additional votes for a donation to The Art of Elysium. Voting is open until 7 p.m. May 14 at peoplesartist.org/2026/mi-

chael-quesenberry-2.

His page on the platform features many of his creations, many of which he said were inspired by a “brilliant light bulb.” When asked what he would do with the money from the competition, Quesenberry said he would further his art and stories.

“I have endless stories and ideas all tied to the same brilliant light bulb that sparked in my mind so long ago,” he said.

Quesenberry said his work focuses on symbolism and “reaching into parts of the mind that are unexplored, often combining bold visual elements with deeply personal narratives.”

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