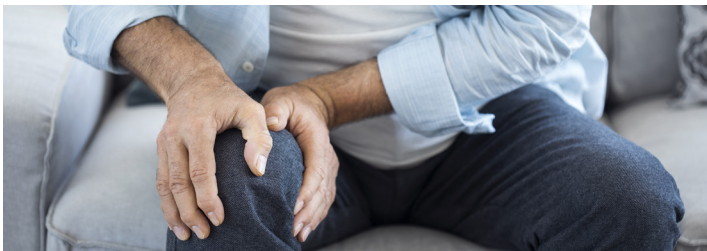


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THRILLS IN LIMBO

Is Pa.’s oldest roller coaster retired? Riders hope not.



A hill on Leap-the-Dips. JEREMY THOMPSON/ FLICKR

Fighting fires and cancer risks

Fire departments are buying gear that is free of forever chemicals

By Michael Casey
ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Every time he rushed out on a fire call, East Providence Lt. Thomas Votta knew he put himself at risk for cancer. There are potential carcinogens in the smoke billowing out of a house fire, but also risks from wearing his chemically-treated gear.

Last month, the Rhode Island fire department became the nation’s first to give the 11-year veteran and all his 124 fellow firefighters new gear free of PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances.

Known as forever chemicals because of how long they remain in the environment, PFAS have been linked to a host of health problems, including increased risk of certain cancers, cardiovascular disease and babies born with low birth weights.

“We are exposed to so many chemicals when we go to fires,” Votta said. “Having it inside our gear, touching or very close to our skin was very, very concerning. Knowing that’s gone now, it gives us a little bit of relief. We’re not getting it from every angle.”

Why is PFAS in the gear?

The PFAS in the multilayered coats and pants — primarily meant to repel water and contaminants like oil and prevent moisture-related burns — have been a growing concern among firefighters for several years.

Cancer has replaced heart disease as the biggest cause of line-of-duty deaths, according to the International Association of Fire

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Awaiting SCOTUS, Pa. lawmakers want to protect same-sex marriage

By Fallon Roth
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

PHILADELPHIA —For years, Pennsylvania Democratic lawmakers have unsuccessfully tried to enshrine same-sex marriage into state law, but with the U.S. Supreme Court being asked to consider taking on a case that could overturn that right nationally, their efforts have taken on greater urgency.

The nation’s high court last month was asked for the first time weigh a case that could overturn Obergefell v. Hodges, the 2015 landmark ruling that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

This has served as a backdrop to state Democratic lawmakers reintroducing the Marriage Equality Act — which would codify same-sex marriage in Pennsylvania law — in both the state House and Senate. If passed,

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AI Apocalypse? Why language surrounding tech is sounding increasingly religious

By Krysta Fauria
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TORONTO — At 77 years old, Geoffrey Hinton has a new calling in life. Like a modern-day prophet, the Nobel Prize winner is raising alarms about the dangers of uncontrolled and unregulated artificial intelligence.

Frequently dubbed the “Godfather of AI,” Hinton is known for his pioneering work on deep learning

and neural networks which helped lay the foundation for the AI technology often used today. Feeling “somewhat responsible,” he began speaking publicly about his concerns in 2023 after he left his job at Google, where he worked for more than a decade.

As the technology — and investment dollars — powering AI have advanced in recent years, so too have the stakes behind it.

“It really is godlike,” Hinton said.

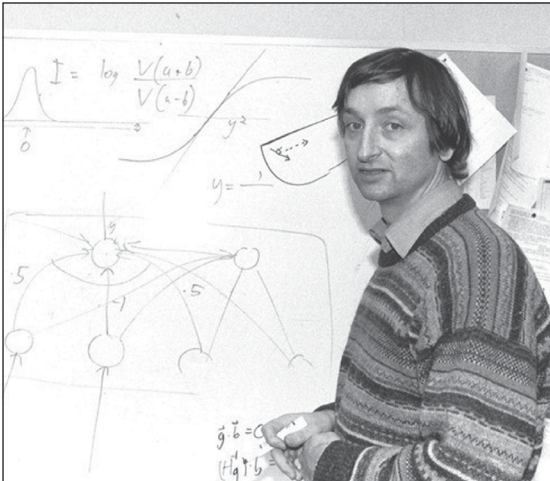
Hinton is among a growing number of prominent tech figures who speak of AI using language once reserved for the divine. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has referred to his company’s technology as a “magic intelligence in the sky,” while Peter Thiel, the co-founder of PayPal and Palantir, has even argued that AI could help bring about the Antichrist.

WILL AI BRING CONDEMNATION OR SALVATION?

There are plenty of skeptics who doubt the technology merits this kind of fear, including Dylan Baker, a former Google employee and lead research engineer at the Distributed AI Research Institute, which studies the harmful impacts of AI.

“I think oftentimes they’re

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This late 1980s photo provided by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research shows computer scientist Geoffrey Hinton in Toronto. CIFAR VIA AP

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