



The Recorder

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1832

AMSTERDAM, N.Y.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29, 2024

\$2.00

AMSTERDAM

Liberty ARC now serving two counties

The Montgomery and Schenectady Arc of New York chapters merged this month

BY ASHLEY ONYON

The Arc of New York chapters in Montgomery and Schenectady counties recently merged under the name Liberty ARC.

“The organization has had a strategic plan goal to expand our services and our reach for a number of years and we were really looking for the right partner

to do that with,” said Jennifer Saunders, CEO of Liberty ARC, on Friday.

The planned retirement of former Schenectady ARC CEO Kirk Lewis last year created an opportunity for the neighboring chapters to explore possible unification and plan out the process over the last 10 months. The merger became official on May 1.

Bringing the agencies together will allow Liberty ARC to expand programs and services supporting individuals with disabilities in the two counties, while providing the more substantial organization a layer of protection and flexibility in the future.

“It’s going to allow us to ensure quality services during financially challeng-

ing times,” Saunders said. “We’ll have the ability to absorb financial risk and changes in needs of individuals more easily with a larger size.”

The combined agency now has over 1,100 full- and part-time staff members and provides services to over 720 people with disabilities.

See **LIBERTY**, Page A2

The Recorder

Check out our e-Edition!



Read all you want.
Cancel anytime.

USPS Customer

Fun in the sun



STAN HUDY

Arianna Milette-Alger, 9, of Amsterdam, right, performs a “mermaid dive” in front of her sister, Skylli, 6, near the shore of Great Sacandaga Lake, adjacent to the Broadalbin Boat Launch, on Monday. The pair were enjoying the weather and celebrating Memorial Day.

Trump prosecutor focuses on ‘cover-up’ in closing arguments while defense attacks key witness

BY MICHAEL R. SISK, JENNIFER PELTZ, ERIC TUCKER AND JILL COLVIN

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump engaged in “a conspiracy and a cover-up,” a prosecutor told jurors during closing arguments Tuesday in the former president’s hush money trial, while a defense lawyer branded the star witness as the “greatest liar of all time” and pressed the panel for an across-the-board acquittal.

The lawyers’ dueling accounts, wildly divergent in their assessments of witness credibility and the strength of evidence, offered both sides one final chance to score points with the jury before it starts deliberating the first felony case against a former American president.

The trial featured allegations that

Trump and his allies conspired to stifle potentially embarrassing stories during the 2016 presidential campaign through hush money payments, including to a porn actor who alleged that she and Trump had sex a decade earlier.

“This case, at its core, is about a conspiracy and a cover-up,” prosecutor Joshua Steinglass told jurors, who could begin deliberations Wednesday. He later added: “We’ll never know if this effort to hoodwink voters made the difference in the 2016 election, but that’s not something we have to prove.”

Trump lawyer Todd Blanche told jurors that neither the actor, Stormy Daniels, nor the Trump attorney who paid her, Michael Cohen, can be trusted.

“President Trump is innocent. He did not commit any crimes, and the district attorney has not met their

burden of proof, period,” Blanche said.

Following more than four weeks of testimony, the summations tee up a momentous and historically unprecedented task for the jury as it decides whether to convict the presumptive Republican presidential nominee ahead of the November election. The political undertones of the proceedings were unmistakable as President Joe Biden’s campaign staged an event outside the courthouse with actor Robert De Niro while Blanche reminded jurors that the case was not a referendum on their views about Trump.

Steinglass sought at the outset to defray potential juror concerns about witness credibility. Trump and his legal team have repeatedly denounced Cohen as a liar.

The prosecutor acknowledged that

Daniels’ account about the alleged 2006 encounter in a Lake Tahoe hotel suite, which Trump has denied, was at times “cringeworthy.” But he said the details she offered — including about decor and what she said she saw when she snooped in Trump’s toiletry kit — were full of touchstones “that kind of ring true.”

And, he said, the story matters because it “reinforces (Trump’s) incentive to buy her silence.”

“Her story is messy. It makes people uncomfortable to hear. It probably makes some of you uncomfortable to hear. But that’s kind of the point,” Steinglass said. He told jurors: “In the simplest terms, Stormy Daniels is the motive.”

See **TRIAL**, Page A2

Foster parents discover new family bonds

Not everyone would take a multiple myeloma diagnosis that required moving to New York City for a month to undergo a stem-cell transplant and decide to add more responsibility.

But that’s exactly what Katie Pincher, 46, chose a few years ago.

With the onset of her blood cancer, Pincher realized she wanted more.

“I wanted to give back,” said Pincher, who is now in remission. “I wanted to feel more fulfilled.”

So the mother of three boys who has spent her career working in early childhood education, decided with her husband, Scott, to become a foster parent.

Katie had been thinking about foster parenting ever since becoming close with a mom whose foster child attended the daycare where Katie was the site director many years ago.

But the mortality scare, combined with her boys now being in high school and college, made it a reality.



Andrew Waite
WEIGHING IN

Katie and Scott, 51, were trained and certified to become foster parents through Northern Rivers, which is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

The Pinchers have now had seven placements in their Rotterdam home in about two years. Those placements

See **WAITE**, Page A2



STAN HUDY

Scott and Katie Pincher stand next to their camper outside their home in Schenectady. It is their favorite hobby and adventure they enjoy with their family.

INSIDE



Israeli strikes kill at least 37 Palestinians

PAGE A8

INDEX

Annie/Horoscope	B8
Classified	A9-14
Comics	B6-7
Obituaries	A6
Opinion	A4
Sports	B1-5

WEATHER



Partly cloudy, showers
High 73/Low 49

PAGE A2



0 94922 76521 5

REACH THE
DAILY GAZETTE
FAMILY OF
NEWSPAPERS

STORY TIPS/
PRESS RELEASES

news@recordernews.com

COMMUNITY NOTES/EVENTS
notes@recordernews.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
opinion@recordernews.com

SEVEN DAY FORECAST FOR CAPITAL REGION

Wednesday	Wed. night	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
High 75 Low 53 RealFeel: 76/51		73/49 RF: 80	76/52 RF: 77	82/55 RF: 88	84/59 RF: 82	85/63 RF: 88	82/63 RF: 88
The AccuWeather RealFeel Temperature™ (RF) is an exclusive index of effective temperature based on eight weather factors. Shown are the highest values of the day.							



Get notifications of nearby lightning!
Get the AccuWeather App

Tuesday's Almanac
Temperatures

High/low	79/63
Normal high/low	75/52
Last year high/low	90/53
Record high	93 in 2016
Record low	33 in 1994

Albany through 5 p.m. Tuesday
Precipitation

24-hour total	0.40"
Month to date	3.14"
Normal month to date	3.04"
Year to date	18.57"
Normal year to date	14.22"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather.com ©2024

Storms leave widespread power outages across Texas

BY LEKAN OYEKANMI
AND JOHN SEEWER

HOUSTON (AP) — Strong storms with damaging winds and baseball-sized hail pummeled Texas on Tuesday, leaving one person dead and about 1 million businesses and homes without power as much of the U.S. recovered from severe weather, including tornadoes, that killed at least 24 people during the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Widespread outages were reported

across a wide swath of storm-weary Texas, where an oppressive, early-season heat wave added to the misery. Voters in the state's runoff elections found dozens of polling places without power. Dallas County said it would keep polls open two hours later because of the outages Tuesday.

Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins declared a disaster and noted that some nursing homes were using generators. "This ultimately will be a multiday

power outage situation," Jenkins said Tuesday.

Around Houston, cars crawled through flooded highways and more than 300,000 customers were without power in the area, which includes parts still recovering from hurricane-force winds earlier this month.

The local fire department said one worker died in a collapse of three homes under construction in the Houston suburb of Magnolia. Fire division

chief Jason Herrman said no one else is believed to be in the area, but they were still clearing the scene Tuesday evening.

An East Houston school district issued a shelter-in-place order and directed buses with students back to their campuses in the afternoon until the weather subsided.

Destructive storms over the weekend caused deaths in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, North

Carolina and Virginia. Meanwhile in the Midwest, an unusual weather phenomenon called a "gustnado" that looks like a small tornado brought some dramatic moments to a western Michigan lake over the weekend.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Criswell will travel to Arkansas on Wednesday as the Biden administration continues assessing the damage from the weekend tornadoes.

Liberty

Continued from page A1

Offices are being maintained in both Montgomery and Schenectady counties.

There have been no staffing reductions from the merger, which has created opportunities for some expanded roles or promotions.

"We went through thoughtfully and looked at each program and department and tried to find the best practice for each

one to be able to merge the two together," Saunders said. "We are aggressively recruiting because we would like to grow our employee base."

Liberty ARC recently also appointed seven new members to the Board of Directors. Karen Bona, Arthur Breault, John Bresonis, Holly J. Gray, Tammy Krisher and Sarah Wilson-Sparrow each previously served on the board at Schenectady ARC. Brandon Waylett is joining the board after previously chairing the family support services committee at Liberty ARC.

"They're bringing a wonderful experience in the fields of intellectual and developmental disabilities, supported care, health care, finances and business ownership," Saunders said. "We look forward to their contributions to the agency as we provide quality supports and services to people with disabilities in Montgomery and Schenectady counties."

While there have been structural changes within the organization, Saunders said there haven't been any changes to services in either county at this

stage with programs expected to soon be expanded into each county alongside other improvements.

"At this point, it's been pretty much a name change," Saunders said. "People are still getting to work with their preferred staff, seeing familiar faces. Because we have such similar cultures and missions, it's really been fairly seamless for families and people we're supporting."

Self-directed services and a horticulture program previously only offered in Schenectady County will soon make their

way to Montgomery County. And an art program popular in Montgomery County will likewise be extended into Schenectady County.

In the coming months, Saunders said capital improvements are planned to residential program homes in Schenectady County.

Work will largely involve updates to kitchen and bathrooms addressing accessibility to ensure residents can safely remain in their homes as they age.

"We're leveraging the experience and expertise of our

staff members to provide the very best for the people in our programs today and in the decades ahead," Saunders said. "We know that the heart of this unification is a mutual respect for people with disabilities and a desire to support each person's hopes, dreams, and ambitions so that everyone can live a quality of life that each person values."

Reach Ashley Onyon at aonyon@dailygazette.net or [@AshleyOnyon](https://www.facebook.com/AshleyOnyon) on X.

Trial

Continued from page A1

The payoff unfolded against the backdrop of the disclosure of a 2005 "Access Hollywood" recording in which Trump could be heard bragging about grabbing women sexually without their permission. Had the Daniels story emerged in the aftermath of the recording, it would have undermined his strategy of spinning away his words, Steinglass said.

"It's critical to appreciate this," Steinglass said. At the same time he was dismissing his words on the tape as "locker room talk," Trump "was negotiating to muzzle a porn star," the prosecutor said.

Blanche, who spoke first, sought to downplay the fallout by saying the "Access Hollywood" tape was not a "doomsday event."

Steinglass also maintained that the prosecution's case did

not rest solely on Michael Cohen, Trump's former lawyer and personal fixer who paid Daniels \$130,000 to keep quiet. Cohen later pleaded guilty to federal charges for his role in the hush money payments, as well as to lying to Congress. He went to prison and was disbarred, but his direct involvement in the transactions made him a key trial witness.

"It's not about whether you like Michael Cohen. It's not about whether you want to go into business with Michael Cohen," Steinglass said. "It's whether he has useful, reliable information to give you about what went down in this case, and the truth is that he was in the best position to know."

Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records, charges punishable by up to four years in prison. He has pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing.

The two sides also differed on a recording Cohen made of himself and Trump discussing

what prosecutors say was a plan to buy the rights to the story of a Playboy model, Karen McDougal, from the National Enquirer, after the publication's parent company paid her \$150,000 to keep quiet about a yearlong affair she says she had with Trump.

Blanche said the September 2016 recording, which cuts off before the conversation finishes, is unreliable and isn't about McDougal at all, but rather about a plan to buy a collection of material the tabloid had hoarded on Trump. Steinglass said the recording was part of a "mountain of evidence" against Trump.

Though the case featured sometimes seamy discussion of sex and tabloid industry practices, the actual charges concern something decidedly less flashy: reimbursements Trump signed for Cohen for the payments.

The reimbursements were recorded as being for legal expenses, which prosecutors say was a fraudulent label designed to conceal the purpose of the

hush money transaction and to illicitly interfere in the 2016 election.

Defense lawyers say Cohen actually did substantive legal work for Trump and his family. But Steinglass said that argument is undermined by a 2018 Trump tweet in which the then-president described the arrangement with Cohen as "reimbursement" while insisting it was unrelated to his candidacy.

"Mr. Cohen spent more time being cross-examined at this trial than he did doing legal work for Donald Trump in 2017," Steinglass quipped. "Do you think there's any chance Donald Trump would pay \$42,000 an hour for legal work by Michael Cohen?"

In his own hourlong address to the jury, Blanche castigated the entire foundation of the case.

He said Cohen, not Trump, created the invoices that were submitted to the Trump Organization for reimbursement and that there was no proof that Trump knew what staffers were

doing with the payments. He rejected the idea that the alleged hush money scheme amounted to election interference.

"Every campaign in this country is a conspiracy to promote a candidate, a group of people who are working together to help somebody win," Blanche said.

He reserved his most animated attack for Cohen, with whom he tangled during a lengthy cross-examination.

Mimicking the term "GOAT," used primarily in sports as an acronym for "greatest of all time," Blanche labeled Cohen the "GLOAT" — greatest liar of all time — and also called Cohen "the human embodiment of reasonable doubt."

"He lied to you repeatedly. He lied many, many times before you even met him. His financial and personal well-being depend on this case. He is biased and motivated to tell you a story that is not true," Blanche said, a reference to Cohen's social media attacks on Trump and the

lucrative income he has derived from books and podcasts about Trump. The attorney's voice became even more impassioned as he revisited one of the more memorable moments of the trial: when Blanche sought to unravel Cohen's claim that he had spoken to Trump by phone about the Daniels arrangement on Oct. 24, 2016.

Cohen testified that he had contacted Trump's bodyguard, Keith Schiller, as a way of getting a hold of Trump, but Blanche asserted that at the time Cohen was actually dealing with a spate of harassing phone calls and was preoccupied with that problem when he spoke with Schiller.

"That was a lie," Blanche said, "and he got caught red-handed."

In his testimony, Cohen acknowledged a litany of past lies, many of which he said were intended to protect Trump. But he said he had subsequently told the truth, at great cost: "My entire life has been turned upside-down as a direct result," he said.

Waite

Continued from page A1

include caring for siblings, caring for children ranging in age from newborn to preschool, and caring for kids for anywhere from five days to 15 months.

"Seven placements in two years is not unheard of, but it's a testament to the kind of home that they have," said Eugene White, a spokesperson for Northern Rivers, which serves children who need an out-of-home placement from birth to age 21 and has a presence in 42 counties in the state.

The Pinchers are helping to address a critical need. While the number of New York state children in foster care has dipped some from the more than 17,000 in care in 2021, more than 15,000 kids were in foster care in June of 2023, according to Office of Children and Family Services data. More than 7,000 of these children were outside New York City.

May is foster care awareness month, a time to spotlight the vital service. And this year, with Schenectady County seeing an unprecedented cluster of cases involving harm to children at the hands of supposed caretakers, it's a happy contrast to share the story of giving parents like the Pinchers.

The Pinchers both work full time and have adapted to being foster parents by simply fully incorporating the children into the family, whether that means taking them to their youngest son's football games or on family camping trips.

The Pinchers also rely on the help of Northern Rivers staff, who provide support and make weekly visits, and they'd connected with other foster parents in their community. They've also utilized respite-care providers, who are kind of like foster-care babysitters that have the same certifications as any full-time foster parent.

But in taking on the momentous responsibility, the Pinchers have experienced magical moments. For instance, Scott, who raised three boys and is one of six brothers, now understands what it's like to be a "girl dad."

"It's a different feeling," he said, describing the sim-

ple joys of going for walks around the neighborhood and dropping the two-year-old girl currently in the family's care at daycare, which is funded through the state.

"She thinks she's the mayor of school. She wants to say 'hi' to everybody, and she wants to hold my hand as we walk. I didn't get that from the boys," Scott said.

The Pinchers have also had the pleasure of meeting birth parents of kids in their care, having shared everything from doctor's appointments to family rituals together.

"We had one placement that every time I would bring the child for a visit, the parents would invite me in to stay," Katie told me. "And I got to be part of a hair-cutting ceremony that happens in their culture when the baby was one month old. They were so inclusive."

Still, being a foster parent requires major sacrifice. There's the restless nights while suddenly finding yourself caring for an infant, or having to cope with challenging behaviors of kids who are coming into foster care through family court because their families are dealing with alleged drug abuse, physical abuse, neglect and other difficulties.

Plus, every new placement requires a new routine. "Our schedules, our life. Integrating these children into that is always challenging," Katie said.

But the kids always end up being part of the family. "You don't think about it as foster anymore," Scott said.

When the family takes photos — even a Christmas portrait — the foster children are included.

"They're not ours, but they're still ours while they're here," Scott said.

Of course, the bond makes it harder to say goodbye, which happens every time a family court judge places a child in the care of a biological caretaker or close family friend, which is the goal.

"A lot of people will say, 'Oh, I could never be a foster parent because I get too attached,' and I'm like, that's the reason you should be a foster parent," Katie said.

An unexpected and pleasant surprise in fostering has been seeing how the Pinchers' own boys have grown as a result. The young men have had to welcome crying babies or try to sleep through the noisy play of toddlers who wake up way earlier than any teenager.

But the Pinchers' boys have risen to the occasion. On the afternoon I spent with the family, 19-year-old Jacob played baseball with the two kids in the yard so Katie and Scott could focus on the interview.

"It's given them all such an eye-opening experience," Katie said. "It's really taught them how to be more empathetic and kind."

And as much as the Pinchers have bonded with kids in their care, being foster parents has also made their biological family closer.

"I think it just helps form that bond," Katie said.

Really, what could be more fulfilling than that.

Columnist Andrew Waite can be reached at awaite@dailygazette.net and at 518-417-9338. Find him on X @UpstateWaite

The Recorder

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1832

Published Monday thru Saturday by The Daily Gazette Co., Inc.

John DeAugustine
Publisher

Miles Reed
Editor

Ashley Onyon, News

Bob O'Leary
VP Advertising

Mary Anne Semkiw
Advertising Contact
518-526-0116

Adam Shinder, Sports

News Room 518-843-1100 Ext 4390
Contact Us at news@dailygazette.net

Editorial Policy - The Recorder accepts signed letters from readers and reserves the right to reject any advertisement, letter or news copy.
Copyright Policy - The Recorder retains all copyright ownership of advertisements created by its staff members.
Advertising Claims - The Recorder does not guarantee the accuracy of any claim made by any advertiser.
Advertising Rates - Available on request.
Check Your Ad - Advertisers should check their ads on the first day of publication. The Recorder shall not be liable for typographical errors or errors in advertisements except to the extent of the cost of the first day's insertion of the ad, and shall also not be liable for damages due to the failure to publish an ad. Adjustment for errors is limited to the cost of that portion of the ad wherein the error occurred. **The publisher reserves the right to edit, revise, reclassify or reject advertising.**

(Pending Periodical)

Published by The Daily Gazette Co., 2345 Maxon Road Ext.
Published 6 days a week. Periodicals postage pending at Albany, NY
Postmaster: Send change of address to:
The Recorder, 2345 Maxon Road Ext., Schenectady, NY 12308

Your Recorder subscription may include up to eight **PREMIUM EDITIONS** per year that are not included in your base subscription rate. **PREMIUM EDITION** months include: February, April, May, June, September, October, November, and December. For each **PREMIUM EDITION**, your account balance will be charged up to \$5.00 which will be reflected in the billing period when the **PREMIUM EDITION** publishes. This will result in shortening the length of your billing period. To become a home delivery subscriber please visit recordernews.com/subscribe. The Recorder is published Monday thru Saturday by the Daily Gazette Co., Inc.