

## TOP OF THE NEWS

### PEOPLE

#### Mrs. World arrested

Sri Lanka police arrest reigning Mrs. World for pulling the crown off of the Mrs. Sri Lanka beauty pageant winner, allegedly causing injuries./A2

### CAPITAL REGION

#### Tulip Fest virtual again

Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan cites continuing concerns over the pandemic./C1

#### Extras wanted

CASTING CREW, OTHERS TO ARRIVE IN MAY AND JUNE FOR HBO'S DRAMA, "THE GILDED AGE."/C1

### SPORTS



#### Pickett decides to leave Siena

Jalen Pickett decides to enter NCAA transfer portal and end his Siena career after three seasons and two league titles./B1

### NATION

#### Biden reveals gun plan

President shares new steps to address recent shootings./A4

### EMPIRE STATE

#### Protective bill renewed

Adult survivors would gain time and support to deal with trauma of abuse./A3

# TIMES UNION

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### STATE GOVERNMENT

## Some dispute 'voluntary' work on Cuomo book

Current, former staffers say participation was "expectation" in office

By Chris Bragg

Albany

When news broke that Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo used government staff to help produce a for-profit book, his spokesman asserted that the arrangement

was legal: The work was performed voluntarily, he said, and was not a misuse of taxpayer-funded resources.

But several current and former Cuomo staffers, or people speaking on their behalf, disputed that their work on "American Crisis" last year was truly voluntary. Instead, they told the Times Union the work was expected within the culture of Cuomo's office, and that

book-related assignments were made in the context of normal, daily duties.

One former staffer, who was among those asked to perform tasks related to Cuomo's book, said there was a "clear expectation that we would do political work to help with his campaign and run the governor's personal errands in the Executive Chamber."

Please see **CUOMO A3** ▶



Associated Press

In this image taken from video of the Office of the N.Y. Governor, Andrew M. Cuomo speaks during a news conference Wednesday in Albany.

### SPORTS HISTORY



Lori Van Buren / Times Union

Friends, from left, Gary Payton, Lamar Horton and Swervo Payne play basketball at Albany's Madison Park courts Thursday. They're playing a game that dates back 130 years, though some wonder if the first game was really at a YMCA gym in Springfield, Mass.

## Origin story not a slam dunk?

Some say Mohawk Valley village's basketball claim may edge Springfield's

By Wendy Liberatore

Herkimer

With basketball fans still rehashing the outcome of this year's NCAA season of March Madness, another basketball matchup is still unfolding and Herkimer, N.Y., is trying to upset Springfield, Mass.

Most would say the game is long over and Springfield clearly won it more than a century ago. But in this contest over the game's origin story, some in this small village along the Mohawk River speculate the play of a local team may be evidence Herkimer beat Springfield to the game by nearly a year.

Here's the story the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield tells: The athletic director of the YMCA in Springfield, invented basketball on Dec. 12,



Herkimer 9 Foundation

1891.

"That day, a physical education instructor named James Naismith introduced a new game to his class of 18 young men in an otherwise unremarkable gymnasium at the YMCA International Training School in Springfield," the Hall of Fame's website notes.

This photo of the first Herkimer YMCA team, with Lambert Will seated in the middle of the second row, is pointed to as evidence that this team played before the Naismith team in Springfield, Mass., did, based on the date seen on the basketball.

But that's not how the late basketball promoter and Herkimer resident Frank J. Basloe told it. In his 1952 book "I Grew Up With Basketball," Basloe wrote the first game was played Feb. 7, 1891 at a YMCA in Herkimer. And, he added, that Naismith actually got the idea for the game  
Please see **HERKIMER A5** ▶

## Budget expands access to pre-K

Several Capital Region districts will receive grants to fund programs for the first time

By Rachel Silberstein

Albany

Dozens of Capital Region school districts will soon be able to establish free childcare facilities for 4-year-olds with the help of funds in the 2021-22 state spending plan.

The enacted New York budget pumps \$105 million into an expansion of universal pre-kindergarten in 210 districts in upstate New York and Long Island that don't currently offer pre-school programs.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten is a state grant-funded program to prepare 3- and 4-year-olds for kindergarten. Guilderland, Menands, East Greenbush, Shenendehowa, Schodack, and Bethlehem are among the districts that will get UPK grants for the first time this year, according to the state aid numbers released by the state Department of Education this week.

State education officials praised the  
Please see **PRE-K A5** ▶

### HIRING

## Albany looks to diversify recruits

By Steve Hughes

Albany

The city is making a push to increase both the size and diversity of its next classes of police and fire department recruits.

The efforts have been complicated by the coronavirus pandemic, forcing both departments to take some unconventional approaches to advertising and recruiting, as well as how they prepare potential candidates for the hiring process.

The fire department, the second-biggest department in the city in terms of expenses with a \$36 million budget, has escaped some of the scrutiny the police department has received for its lack of diversity in the past. The police department's budget tops \$55 million.

Last year, the only minority supervising  
Please see **RECRUITS A4** ▶

### NEWSLETTERS

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### WEATHER

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