

TOUGHER RULES

GOVERNMENT STIFFENS REGULATIONS ON WALL STREET **NATION/2A**



FALLS VISIT

GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE RICK LAZIO VISITS WNY **LOCAL/3A**



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School merger talks progress

Instruction effects assessed, if Barker, Lyndonville combine

BY HOLLY TOAL

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If the Barker and Lyndonville school districts in neighboring Orleans and Niagara counties were to merge, many areas of the districts' operation would be affected; therefore, an advisory committee was formed to study

the effects a merger would have on the students, staff and residents of both districts.

On Thursday night, the committee met at Lyndonville High School to discuss instructional programming; William Silky and Alan Pole of Castallo and Silky educational consulting firm of Syracuse presented

their findings.

If the districts do merge, one of the challenges that will have to be tackled is how to arrange the grades.

Currently, Barker's elementary school includes students in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, and the middle school includes grades 5 through 8. At Lyn-

donville, the primary school houses pre-kindergarten through first grade, the elementary school includes grades 2 through 4, intermediate includes grades 5 through 6 and the middle school houses grades 7 and 8. Both districts have high schools with grades 9 through 12.

If the two districts were to merge, a common grade configuration would have to be agreed upon, the consultants said.

Looking at every level, the daily schedules vary slightly between the two districts, but Silky explained that creating a common schedule would likely not be a major adjustment for students.

SEE **MERGER** ON PAGE 4A

FACES & PLACES

We're looking for your events

The Union-Sun & Journal staff is working on another edition of Faces & Places Magazine for August and we are in need of your events.

The magazine will publish near the end of August, so events must be taking place from September to mid-November or so.

Keep event descriptions and details brief. We may edit for space or content.

No Excel sheets or attached calendars, please. Word files or just content pasted into the body of an e-mail is fine.

We're looking for free or low-cost public events to add to our community calendar.

Send to tim.marren@lockportjournal.com.

Deadline 5 p.m. July 30.

3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY

1 Manslaughter defendant Gwendolyn Garcia's lawyer hopes to introduce an expert in battered person syndrome to testify at her trial, scheduled to begin Aug. 9. **LOCAL, 3A**

2 Democrat Andrew Cuomo has reported raising another \$9.27 million for his gubernatorial campaign, pushing his available total to \$23.6 million. **STATE, 3A**

3 Workers at the World Trade Center site have uncovered a ship hull apparently used as landfill in the 1700s to extend lower Manhattan. Archaeologists are racing to analyze the vessel and hope to salvage at least some of the now-fragile timbers.

AREA DEATHS

- DAVID M. KARRE
- SUE K. LEWIS
- NORMAN C. WURL

WHERE TO TURN

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• Page designer: Jocelyn Delmar

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IT WORKED: Workers continue to construct a berm system Thursday on the northern end of the Chandeleur Islands, La. A tightly fitted cap was successfully keeping oil from gushing into the Gulf of Mexico for the first time in three months, BP said Thursday.

ALL THE STOPS

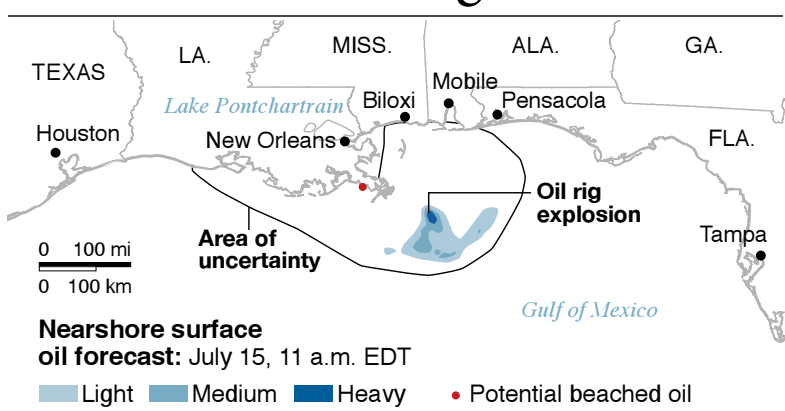
BP chokes off the oil leak; now begins the wait

BY COLLEEN LONG AND HARRY R. WEBER
 The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — BP finally choked off the flow of oil into the Gulf of Mexico on Thursday — 85 days and up to 184 million gallons after the crisis unfolded — then began a tense 48 hours of watching to see whether the capped-off well would hold or blow a new leak.

To the relief of millions of people along the Gulf Coast, the big, billowing brown cloud of crude at the bottom of the sea disappeared from the underwater video feed for the first time since the disaster began in April, as BP closed the last of three openings in the 75-ton cap lowered onto the well earlier this week.

"Finally!" said Renee Brown, a school guidance counselor visiting Pensacola Beach, Fla., from London, Ky. "Honestly, I'm surprised that they haven't been able to do something sooner, though."



But the company stopped far short of declaring victory over the biggest offshore oil spill in U.S. history and one of the nation's worst environmental disasters, a catastrophe that has killed wildlife and threatened the livelihoods of fishermen, restaurateurs, and oil industry workers from Texas to Florida.

Now begins a waiting period during which engineers will monitor pressure gauges and watch for signs of leaks elsewhere in the well. The biggest risk: Pressure from the oil trapped under the cap could fracture the well and make the leak even worse, causing oil to spill from other spots on the sea floor.

SEE **OIL** ON PAGE 4A

DRUG CRIME

DEA sting nets 34 arrests

EARLY HOURS: Lockport woman faces prescription drug sales and conspiracy charges.

BY BILL WOLCOTT

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The first major drug bust for prescription medicine in Niagara Frontier history stretched into Lockport on Thursday.

Brenda Sargent, 43, 242 Park Ave. was among the 34 people arrested and charged with unlawfully trafficking in prescription pills during a Drug Enforcement Administration sting that began at 4 a.m.

"There are a lot more involved," Lockport Police Chief Larry Eggert said. "The DEA concentrated on major players all over Western New York, from Lockport to Orchard Park."

The alleged ring leader, Michael McCall of Buffalo, was charged with operating a continual criminal enterprise. Conviction on the enterprise charge would carry a mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$2 million.

Sargent faces drug sales and conspiracy charges. "We're familiar with her," Eggert said. "We've had some involvement with her." According to Eggert, Sargent was getting prescriptions and then selling them.

The arraignment process was held at the U.S. Attorney's office in Buffalo.

Eggert noted that 12 of the people charged are 26 years of age and under. "It's becoming an epidemic," Eggert said. "One guy went to seven different doctors. They fake injury, sell it to users. It's a horrible problem beneath the surface. People don't understand the magnitude."

Eggert said there are byproducts of the illegal prescription medicine abuse and noted that there have been some arrests at Lockport High School.

SEE **CRIME** ON PAGE 4A

Vatican revises its rules on clerical sex abuse

BY NICOLE WINFIELD
 The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican revised its in-house rules to deal with clerical sex abuse cases Thursday, targeting priests who molest the mentally disabled as well as children and doubling the statute of limitations for such crimes.

Abuse victims said the rules are little more than administrative housekeeping since they made few substantive changes to current practice, and what is needed are bold new rules to punish bishops who shield pedophiles.

Women's ordination groups criticized the new

rules because they included the attempted ordination of women as a "grave crime" subject to the same set of procedures and punishments meted out for sex abuse.

The rules, which cover the canonical procedures and penalties for the most serious sacramental and moral crimes, were issued as the

Vatican confronts one of the worst scandals in recent history: revelations of hundreds of new cases of priests who raped and sodomized children, bishops who covered up for them, and Vatican officials who stood by passively for decades.

In 2003, the Vatican streamlined its 2001 proce-

dures for disciplining abusive priests, allowing them to be defrocked without a lengthy canonical trial if the evidence against them was overwhelming. The rules issued Thursday codified those procedures into church law.

SEE **VATICAN** ON PAGE 4A

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