The dawn of a new day for the Bills
Ownership change kicks excitement level up a notch
BY VIC CAMURCI
SPORTS REPORTER

Do you really need anything more than the New England Patriots to see the first place in the AFC East on the line to cause Buffalo Bills fans to show their support with enough force to generate seismic activity today?

It’s unlikely you do, but the Buffalo Bills will have something else to create even more excitement for a sold-out crowd of nearly 70,000 new ownership.

Today will mark the first game with Terry and Kim Pegula as the Bills’ owners. They’ve been expected to be introduced on the field before kickoff. And they undoubtedly will receive a roaring ovation, primarily for putting to rest uncertainty about the franchise’s future in Western New York since the passing of its founder, Ralph C. Wilson Jr., last March.

“I’m ecstatic for the people, the fans, the organization, the region,” Bills coach Doug Marrone said. “I’ve never looked at our fans as needing something to be electric, even as far as when I’ve been an opponent in this stadium. But to say it’s going up a notch, obviously, I have to recognize that.

‘I’ve always thought the fans are always going to be a big part of our success when we play at home. They can make a difference. We can make a difference in the turnaround we’re seeing.”

The opening game will mark the Bills’ fifth exhibition game as they prepare to take on the Washington Redskins in Washington.

See Pegula on Page A2

Inmate deaths tied to private medical firm
State cites new hire by Niagara County
BY THOMAS J. PREDKANS
NEWS REPORTER

LOCKPORT — A state investigation concludes that two inmates died four days apart in the Niagara County Jail in 2011, victims of “greasy inadequate” medical care and “poor attendance.”

Both inmates died two weeks after a Miami-based medical company took over medical care at the jail. The Niagara County Legislature had hired Alpha and Health Services in hopes of saving money.

Daniel Pantosio died on Christmas morning 2011. The coroner determined Pantosio died from “natural” causes, but an internal investigation by the state’s Health Services Regulatory Board concluded, “greasy inadequate medical and mental health care.”

See Death on Page A2

THE BUFFALO NEWS
SUNDAY

HOW TO FIX
BUFFALO’S SCHOOLS
EMPOWERING STUDENTS
AT TAPESTRY CHARTER

Principal, teachers develop winning formula for bringing up speed — and sending to college — teens from impoverished inner-city homes

BY SANDRA TAH / NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Milton Sheehan holds up a line green bush ball covered with numbers. • Sheehan is a math teacher at Tapestry Charter School in Buffalo. His short, spiky hair, silvery-colored dress shirt and loopy tie are secondary details to his key accessory: a black tactical vest with reflective, fluorescent yellow trim. He resembles a well-dressed crossing guard. • Sheehan tosses the bush ball to each of his algebra and trigonometry students. Whatever number a student’s right thumb lands on when the ball is tossed is the question that student must answer from the Regents practice exam booklet. • “Who needs help?” Sheehan asks during the last week of school before the Regents exam. • Whatever help his students need, there is a good chance Sheehan can provide, either in his brain or in one of the 15 pockets and holsters on his cheap, black vest. • For a model of how to educate impoverished inner-city students, few schools beat Tapestry. The 25-year-old charter school’s success has been a model for schools around the country.

Milton Sheehan, top, wearing his “mathematical math vest,” helps students solve exam problems. At bottom left, Jacqueline Fregin and Lisa Vidal take notes; at right, Nelson Murray takes part in a daily quiet reading.

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WEATHER

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STUDENTS KNOW HOW FAR THEY HAVE TO GO, AND WHY

By the numbers / University Charter High and Buffalo district high schools

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About the series

This hour the Buffalo schools are in an unusual season highlighting the role a school can play in helping the country that has made a concerted effort on the frontlines of a historic challenge against the spread of COVID.

A number of Buffalo Public Schools administrators describe the challenges they face and how they plan to address them.

Crew is family

The administrators and teachers at University Charter High School have begun to form a community that has support for students who fall behind in their academic pursuits. The school offers a range of programs to help students catch up and stay on track.

Class of 2023

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Anna Burton works on a project in English class. Students are told their Leslie course, measuring reading comprehension, and encouraged to improve their English language skills.

Expectations and reflections

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Why Tapestry was chosen

In selecting the highest performing local charter schools, the Buffalo News reviewed academic growth data for Buffalo’s district schools and charter high schools that draw the majority of their students from Buffalo.

The News looked at various factors to determine which schools have the highest percentage of students testing and returning to district public schools. This data is drawn to measure that charter’s high graduation rates over the results of the school counseling set or expelled or difficult to low achieving students.

Finally, the News looked at the demographics of students enrolled in the charter school to identify schools whose student population resembled the district’s enrollment in terms of race and gender. Based on that analysis, both Tapestry Charter High School and the Charter High School for Applied Technology clearly ranked at the top of the list. The Charter High School for Applied Technology

A long one Tapestry hallway was wraped in blue-and-yellow life style

As we are crew, not passengers read the notice beneath the ship.

Tapestry isn’t the only school to have organized its own student-designed graphical calendars in the traditional public schools and charter schools whose students who subscribe to the “exploratory learning” model.

The motto emphasizes the idea that students participate in their own learning and are not simply recipients of information. To promote this, teachers create thematic projects that are student-driven and involve students across a large number of subjects.

It is unique in the Buffalo school district that has students design their calendars. Students are encouraged to think critically and creatively as they plan their weeks, months, and academic goals.

The school is different from others in Buffalo that focus on academic calendar planning. Tapestry’s academic calendar helps students think critically and creatively as they plan their academic goals.

Teacher support

Tapestry’s teachers face constant challenges and make no mistake on their part, they face a lot of autonomy and poor support. This translates to a school that needs to work at the end of the day, some students don’t take it

Back in the day, when students were asked to think critically and creatively as they plan their academic goals.

To start this process, the school’s teachers work with students to create and set their goals for the year, including both academic and personal ones. This process helps students take ownership of their education and learn to set and achieve their own goals.

Regents review book, then head to the white boards that cover most of the vertical wall in Sherin’s room.

“Who needs help?” Sherin asks. He quickly gets into a position to reach into his vest pocket for a red marker before addressing students. “Some of you have written to the editor of the student’s newspaper to express their out- line. As others complete their final exams, assignments, Sherin teaches them to equ- ate vast fount of information, mark their sheets before they toss out the brain hold with the best and go on to next the students.

Some make Sherin’s math joke work. “I couldn’t have been there. For the past year, he was forced to make repeated trips back to his home so he could

“The end of the year is near. I finally decided I wasn’t going to let him know it!” Sherin joked.

1. “I knew that’s what he meant—relaxing in the sun, playing a few frisbee, Hit his hand with a ruler, then he was told that he was running a frisbee hole in one, a pencil sharpener, Wine Out, a replica of a famous painting (famous- ing holes, dry-erase markers, on iPods, sty- le, boxes, found it a clip-on scientific calculator lobster.

But he’s not blind to the difficulty of his work. Like his colleagues, Sherin often stays at school until dinner time, working to get his students up to speed.

If he were teaching in the suburbs, he said, that effort would be rewarded with exceptional results. But here, he struggles to get students who are below grade level up to speed. When he enter new students’ (regression scores are) below average. “I try to teach them enough to get them on the bus to finish the year,” he said.

Although the school at Tapestry opens at 8:15 a.m., 360 pupils do not come to school some days, such as Friday, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Mondays. Teachers get to

Teachers, not administrators, deter- mine which activities are worth funding as they. They also limit class sizes, limit teaching hours, or cut any academic subjects.

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