



Joe McIntyre/staff photographer

Untrice Matthews, of Cincinnati, left, and Sandra Simpson, of Cortland, stake their lunch break by the Courthouse Park fountain Tuesday in Cortland. A new stage being proposed for the park would be located near the fountain and the "Copper John" Civil War memorial.

# Setting the stage

## Design phase underway for Courthouse Park project

By ROBERT CRENNAN  
Staff Reporter

rcrennan@cortlandstandard.net

**CORTLAND** — The people planning the proposed Newell "Spiegel" Willcox Community Stage in Courthouse Park are working with public input to create a design.

The city Youth Bureau met recently with stakeholders, musicians and event organizers to discuss what features the stage should have. The importance of lighting, power sources and wi-fi also came up.

"One of the things we determined was a roof for the stage," Youth Bureau Director John McNehey said. "We didn't have that in our original plans."

The current plans call for the stage to be located on the west side of Courthouse Park, close to the fountain and the "Copper John" Civil War memorial. Engineer Ken Teter is working on the designs for

the facility to be named after prominent jazz trombonist Willcox, a longtime local resident who died in 1999.

The stage would be used for the arts and park program, festivals, theater production and other performances.

The next steps are coming up with a final design and having it approved by the Common Council. McNehey could not give a definite timetable for completion.

The project is estimated to cost about \$200,000, of which \$100,000 in state funding was already secured by state Sen. James Seward (R-Millford). The estimated date of the stage's completion will be in 2018.

Local Civil War historian Ed Raus wrote in a recent letter to the *Cortland Standard* that he opposes adding another permanent structure to the park.

"When the Soldiers Monument was erected in 1877," Raus said in his letter, "the park took on a more solemn role as

the place where Cortland County would honor her fallen soldiers. The veterans who designed the monument wanted it to stand at the entrance of the park along Church Street to remind residents of the great sacrifices made by Cortland's Civil War Generation and serve as an 'ever-present reminder of patriotism.'"

Cortland resident Lorraine Hall is in favor of the project due to the possibility of more entertainment and cultural options downtown.

"I don't see people in the youth center," Hall said, about positive youth. "They're all out in the streets."

McNehey said the best location for the stage is still in discussion, and organizers will make an announcement when a design is completed.

"Everyone's going to have an opinion," McNehey said. Courthouse Park is co-owned by the city of Cortland and Cortland County.

navia prvy  
for Washington  
wars ahead of the  
2018 midterm  
elections.

Democrats are left with the bitter hope of another tighter-than-usual margin, still searching for a contest where anti-Trump energy and flush campaign coffers actually add up to victory.

The latest GOP winner is Karen Handel, who won about 52 percent of the vote in Georgia's 6th Congressional District to quell the upstart phenomenon of Jon Ossoff, a 30-year-old Democrat who raised more than \$23 million and became a symbol of opposition to President Donald Trump.

Handel, who left an abusive home as a teen, will be the first Republican woman to represent Georgia in Congress.

The former Georgia secretary of state was quick to embrace her party's leader after mostly avoiding him — at least publicly — during a protracted campaign.

"A special thanks to the president of the United States of America," Handel said late Tuesday night as her supporters chanted, "Trump! Trump! Trump!"

It was Handel's most explicit praise of a president whose tenuous standing put this previously safe Republican

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# NY parents of alleged MS-13 gang victims urge action

By FRANK ELTMAN  
Associated Press

**CENTRAL ISLIP** — Parents of two New York teenagers brutally slain in an alleged MS-13 killing appealed to members of Congress on Tuesday to take action to combat gang violence.

Speaking at a federal courthouse on Long

Island, the parents urged Congress to take action to combat gang violence. Speaking at a federal courthouse on Long

kids killing kids, and as they continue to grow so does their techniques of recruiting helpless kids into their wicked actions. MS-13, or the Mara Salvatrucha, is believed by federal prosecutors to have thousands of members across the U.S., primarily immigrants from Central America. It has a stronghold in Los Angeles, where it emerged in the

