

Daly City Library & Recreation Services  
Active Adult/Senior Services  
presents



### Current Events with Frank Damon

Doelger Senior Center has been fortunate to have Frank Damon leading both our Current Events and History discussion groups for the last 6 years. During this time of physical distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Frank is sharing his current events discussion topics online. Starting on Monday, January 4, 2021 at 1:30 pm Frank will offer Current Events discussion groups each Monday on ZOOM.

**Daly City Active Adult/Senior Services invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Topic:** Current Events with Frank Damon

**Time:** 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm every Monday

Join Zoom meeting with following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87222786510?pwd=d0VucFhGYzhMMXVhSUNJTmdFWDNwdz09>

Meeting ID: 872 2278 6510

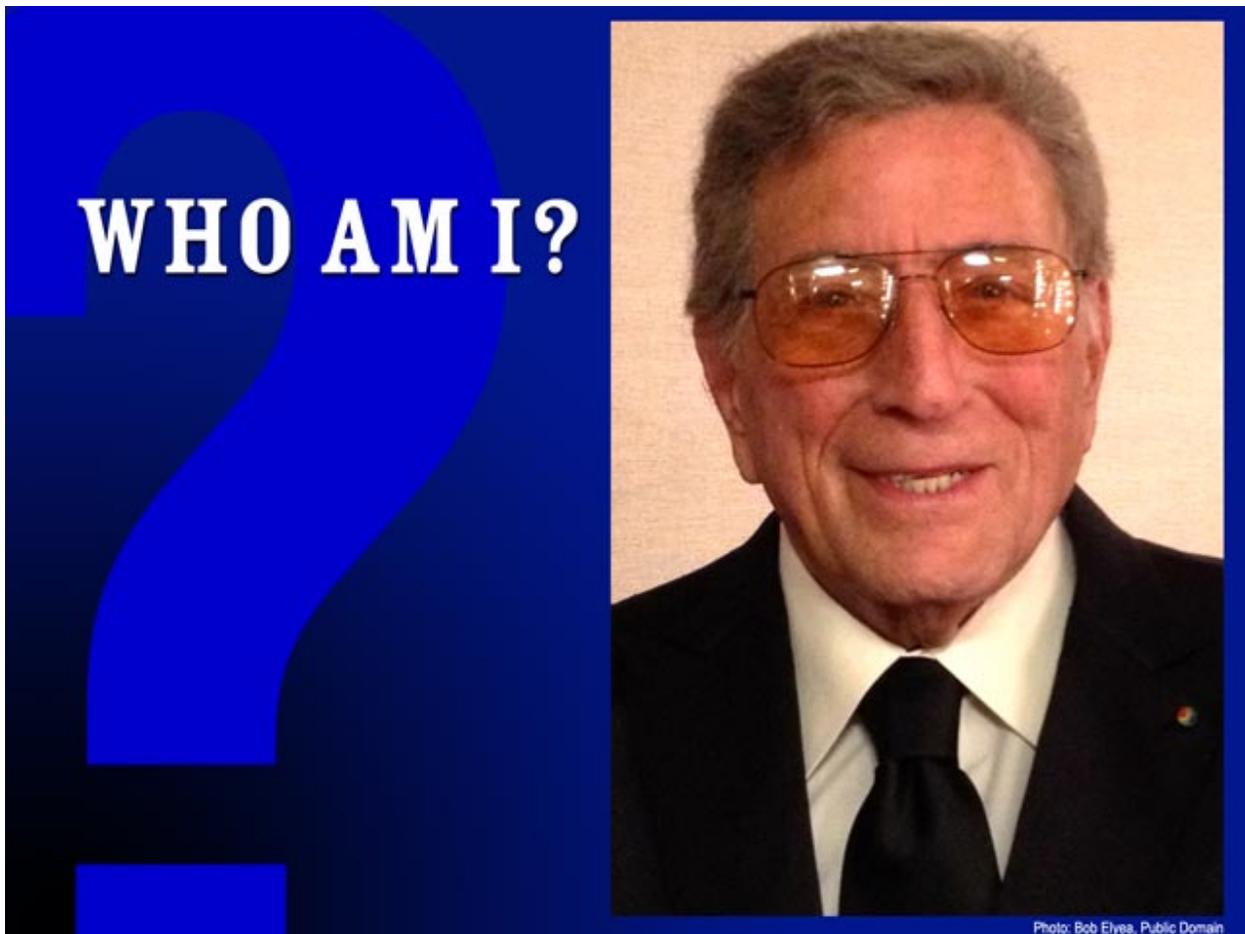
Passcode: 724368

Frank received his BA degree from the University of San Francisco with a dual major in Political Science and American History. He also earned his MA in Political Science and teaching credentials at USF. Over the course of his career, Frank taught in the San Mateo Union High School District and at Marin Catholic High School, Terra Nova High School, Golden Gate University, College of San Mateo, Skyline College and Canada College.

If you are interested in joining *Current Events with Frank Damon*, please go to [www.dalycityseniors.org/current-events](http://www.dalycityseniors.org/current-events) or contact Frank directly at [frankdamon@my.smccd.edu](mailto:frankdamon@my.smccd.edu).

### Person in the News

He is a 95-year-old American singer, painter, and activist. He was born and raised in Queens, New York, and had his first number one hit, "Because of You," in 1951. Early in his career, He was known as a pop singer, or "crooner." But as time went on, He started working with jazz artists. His signature song, "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," won the 1962 Grammy Award for Best Record of the Year. He also became known for my support of the civil rights movement in the U.S., and for his paintings, which are shown under his birth name: Anthony Benedetto. After a long career slump, he regained popularity in the 1990s. Since then, he has continued to tour and record; my second duet album with Lady Gaga, "Love for Sale," will be released in October. But although he had planned to perform these songs with her in concert, He retired from performing two weeks ago on doctor's orders. Earlier this year, He announced that he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's.



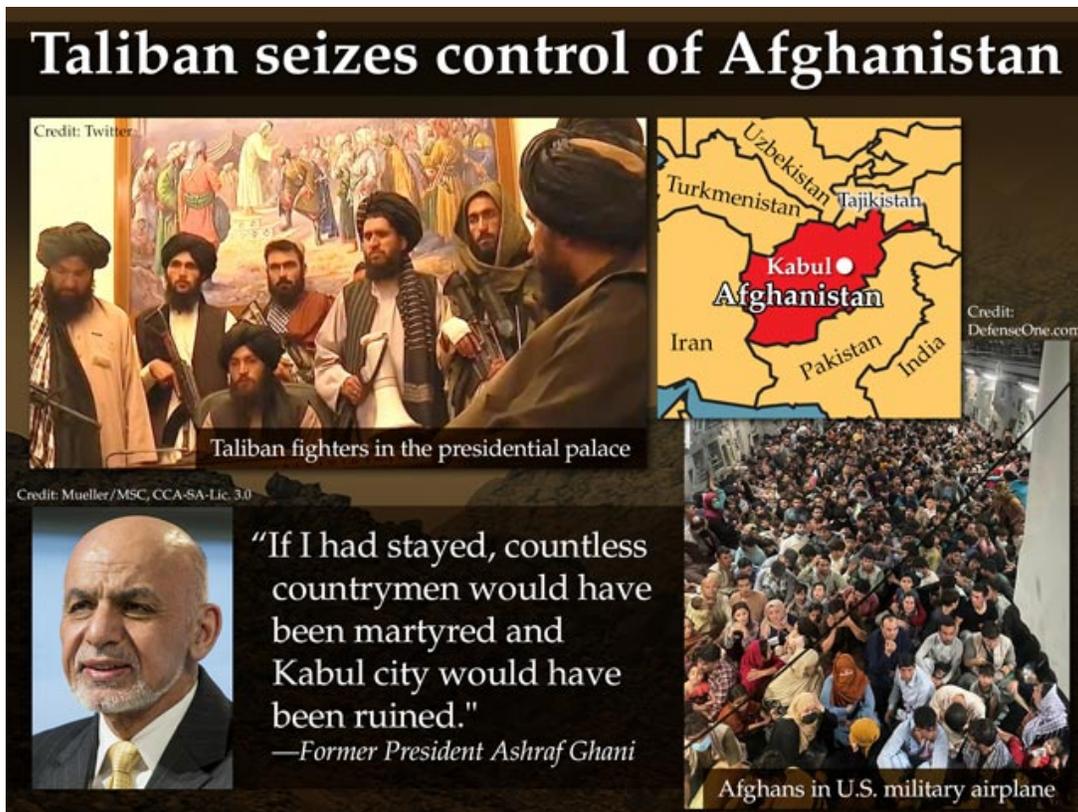
**Who am I?** (*Tony Bennett.*)

## Taliban seizes control of Afghanistan

On August 15th, an extremist Islamic group known as the Taliban seized control of Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. This made the Taliban's control of the country complete. Afghanistan's president, Ashraf Ghani, had already fled the capital. About 6,000 U.S. troops were sent to evacuate diplomats and other Americans living there. But thousands of Afghans also rushed to the Kabul airport to escape the new regime. The picture at right shows a military transfer plane containing more than 600 desperate Afghans, many of whom worked with the U.S.

Twenty years ago, the U.S. and other nations invaded Afghanistan with two main goals. One was to find terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, who was hiding in the country after directing the attacks of September 11th, 2001. The other was to remove the Taliban, which controlled Afghanistan at the time, and had sheltered bin Laden. U.S. and coalition troops soon removed the Taliban from power and helped install a democratically-elected government in Afghanistan. Ten years later, U.S. troops killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. Many of the human rights lost under the Taliban's rule were also restored. But the Taliban continued to fight against Afghan and coalition forces. Last year, the Trump administration made a deal with Taliban leaders to withdraw U.S. troops by May 2021. President Biden extended this deadline, ordering a total withdrawal by September 11th. Just a few weeks ago, Biden seemed confident that Afghan forces could maintain the gains made over the last 20 years. But with the end of U.S. airstrikes, Afghanistan's military was not able to stop Taliban forces from re-taking the country. Many people have been critical of Biden's decision and the way the withdrawal was handled, but he said he stands by his decision to end the longest war in U.S. history.

# Taliban seizes control of Afghanistan



Credit: Twitter

Taliban fighters in the presidential palace

Credit: DefenseOne.com

Credit: Mueller/MSC, CCA-SA-Lic. 3.0

"If I had stayed, countless countrymen would have been martyred and Kabul city would have been ruined."  
—Former President Ashraf Ghani

Afghans in U.S. military airplane

Upon seizing control of Kabul, Taliban leaders promised that they would not seek revenge against any Afghans for working with the U.S. or the country's former government. The Taliban claims that it only wants peace from now on, both internally and externally. But many Afghans fear the future, especially when it comes to human rights. This is because the Taliban, which originated in Pakistan, follows an extremely strict interpretation of Islamic law. During the group's previous reign, this meant that all men must grow long beards and follow Islam, with no exceptions. Even more troubling was the group's complete domination over women. Girls were not allowed to attend school, and women were not allowed to teach either gender. What do you think this did to the Afghan educational system, considering most teachers were women?

Nine years ago, in Pakistan, Taliban soldiers dragged a teenage education advocate from her school bus and shot her in the face. Do you know this person's name? (Malala Yousafzai, a co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.) In public, women were required to wear burqas, the full-length garment shown below. And any woman seen in public without a male relative risked punishment. Recent Taliban statements have hinted that women would not lose many of their rights under the new regime. Taliban leaders have even said that they want women to work and go to school, "within the framework of Islam,". But many people who have experienced Taliban oppression do not believe that the group has changed its beliefs and policies. In fact, as you can see in the quote here, there are already reports of violence against women and children since the takeover.

## Many Afghans fear the future under the Taliban's harsh rule.

Women in burqas



Credit: imtfi, Flickr, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0



Family in Kandahar

Credit: Daniel P. Shook, U.S. Army, public domain

"I am deeply concerned by accounts of human rights violations against the women and girls of Afghanistan who fear a return to the darkest days."

—U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres

# A shameful ending

Is Biden to blame for the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan?



# Biden defends U.S. pullout as Afghanistan falls

## What happened

A defiant President Biden stood behind his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan as the Taliban seized the country this week, bringing a two-decade campaign of counterterrorism and nation building to a chaotic end. Thousands of Afghans fleeing Taliban rule flooded the tarmac of Kabul's international airport, where videos showed several people clinging to the wheels of a departing U.S. C-17 cargo plane, then falling from midair to their deaths after takeoff. Military helicopters evacuated staff from the U.S. Embassy, evoking images of the fall of Saigon that the Biden administration had desperately hoped to avoid. In the presidential palace, Taliban fighters toted Kalashnikovs and posed for photos, completing their conquest of Kabul after Afghanistan's U.S.-trained army folded with little resistance.

In an address to the nation, Biden declared "the buck stops with me," then pointed his finger at the Afghan army, Afghan officials, and Donald Trump, who last year signed a peace deal with the Taliban that required all U.S. troops to withdraw by May 1. Biden postponed that date, but never wavered from his insistence on a full withdrawal, although top generals and intelligence officials reportedly warned it could lead to the government's quick collapse. "It is wrong to order American troops to step up when Afghanistan's own armed forces would not," Biden said, adding that their failure to fight shows that leaving "was the right decision."

Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid gave his first press briefing, vowing there would be "no reprisals" and that women's rights would be respected "under Islamic law." Some Afghan protesters, however, were shot dead in the streets. U.S. officials said it had warned the Taliban not to interfere as it evacuates thousands of U.S. citizens and Afghans who assisted in its 20-year campaign, although those without proper documentation are being turned away at Taliban and U.S. checkpoints. Among those who departed safely was now ex-President Shafiq Ghani, who reportedly fled to the United Arab Emirates with dozens of aides in tow, along with bags worth \$69 million in cash stuffed into four cars and a helicopter.

## What the editorials said

Biden "is the main architect of this needless American surrender," said *The Wall Street Journal*, and yet he has "refused to accept responsibility." Instead, he blamed the Afghan army and Trump, whose peace deal with the Taliban was "a mistake." By framing the withdrawal as a way to save U.S. soldiers from more bloodshed, Biden will not be able to appeal to "Americans who are



Frantic Afghans climb on planes at Kabul airport.

his administration did not do enough to protect the Afghans who worked with the U.S., or "the girls and women who had embraced a measure of equality." Tragically, the American dream of promoting democracy and human rights in this troubled region "proved to be just that: a dream."

## What the columnists said

The U.S. is "betraying millions" of Afghans, said Ruchi Kumar in *TheDailyBeast.com*. Desperate Afghans who worked for the U.S. or the Afghan government are still flooding Kabul's airport, clinging to the "tiniest hope" that foreign planes will save them from Taliban vengeance. Now the Taliban are executing perceived opponents in the streets, cutting off the limbs of those accused as thieves, and "forcefully marrying women off." America, "this is your legacy."

Biden "made the difficult but necessary choice," said Daniel Silverberg in *TheAtlantic.com*. The Taliban are stronger now than they have been since 2001, and Afghan soldiers sick of corruption and not getting paid were already deserting the army en masse. If Biden had reneged on Trump's deal to withdraw all U.S. troops, the Taliban would have launched a major offensive and resumed attacking our soldiers. To keep the Afghan government from falling, Biden would have been forced to send thousands of troops back in—starting the cycle of futility again. The status quo was not sustainable, and those who argue otherwise are "engaging in fantasies."

## What next?

With Afghanistan under Taliban control, the U.S. now "faces a far steeper challenge" in combating extremist threats, said Missy Ryan and Souad Mekhennet in *The Washington Post*. The U.S. must "prevent a resurgence by al Qaeda," which a recent U.N. report said is active in at least 15 provinces and "showed no indication of breaking ties" with the Taliban. The CIA and Pentagon have lost a "friendly spy agency in Kabul," but Biden administration officials say they will monitor extremist activity by satellite and through other intelligence. They promise to disrupt terrorist groups with drone and air attacks. But Nathan Sales, a senior counterterrorism official in the Trump administration, said it's much harder to monitor and control terrorist groups from afar. "We are now back to 1998, where the Clinton administration was launching missiles at desert camps and hoping to hit something," Sales said.

tired of foreign military missions." But this was no mere civil war: We were there for 20 years to prevent Afghanistan "from again becoming a terrorist safe haven," and "the Taliban's victory will now attract thousands of young jihadists" eager to attack the West.

Biden "was right to bring the war to a close," said *The New York Times*, but it should never have ended "in such chaos." Leaving 2,500 troops in Afghanistan would only have delayed, not prevented, an inevitable Taliban victory. His decision to leave "took courage and wisdom." But

"I fear for my Afghan sisters," said Malala Yousafzai in *The New York Times*. Millions of Afghan women and girls who received an education are now "in despair" as the future they were promised is stripped away. Some Taliban members say they will let women and girls go to school. Don't believe them. When I was 15 in Pakistan, the Taliban "tried to kill me" when I spoke up for my right to an education. I cannot imagine "going back to a life defined for me by men with guns."

## How they see us: America's Afghanistan fiasco

History could well remember this week "as the pivot point when the American empire lost its luster," said the *Daily Times* (Pakistan) in an editorial. In Afghanistan, America's "longest, most expensive military adventure ever" ended with scenes of panic and chaos. The Americans "had to cut and run in the most humiliating way imaginable," their helicopters and cargo planes rising over crowds of pleading, desperate Afghan allies abandoned below. As the Taliban swept into the capital, Kabul, the Afghan government that the U.S. spent two decades erecting fled and the army just "melted away." The Americans will seek a "scapegoat," and Pakistan is making it easy for them to blame us, said Mosharraf Zaidi in *The News International* (Pakistan). Pakistani generals and even government ministers have gloated openly about the U.S. defeat, and their "admiration for the Taliban is clear." Given that Pakistan was a key player in the peace talks in Qatar, the U.S. will likely claim that Pakistan was double-dealing all along.

That's because it's true, said Con Coughlin in *The Telegraph* (U.K.). The speed of the Taliban takeover speaks to the "support, both military and political," that the militants received from their allies, Pakistan chief among them. Pakistani intelligence has kept up its "insidious influence" over the tribal border territories where the Taliban flourish, and Prime Minister Imran Khan's endorsement of the militants has earned him the nickname "Taliban Khan." Meanwhile, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards, pursuing an "enemy of my enemy is my friend" approach, have



At the airport, desperate Afghans seeking to flee

let equipment and supplies flow to the Taliban from Iran. And Moscow welcomes any conclusion "that leads to the humiliation of its Western adversaries." This was a global "battle for influence in one of the world's key strategic locations," and the West lost.

Don't blame other actors, said Vladimir Snegirev in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (Russia). America has learned what the Soviets learned 40 years ago: Afghans spit out foreigners. Of course, the U.S. embarrassment is greater, since the Soviet-backed Afghan government lasted for three years after Soviet troops left, while the U.S.-backed government folded in a weekend. Even the "legendary" warlord Ismail Khan "raised his hands as soon as the jihadists approached." Why should he fight for an Afghan regime that "had not the slightest authority among the people?" The government of Ashraf Ghani was seen as a band of corrupt American puppets. Afghans have always despised collaborators, and any U.S.-backed government was doomed from the outset.

The ramifications of this U.S. loss are dire, said Vince Cable in *The Independent* (U.K.). With the Biden administration's credibility "shredded," China and Russia are likely to push their advantage by trying to claim territory in the South China Sea or Ukraine or the Baltics. The Americans "will then be tempted to overreact to prove that they haven't lost their mojo." Now that the weakness of the superpower is exposed, the world has become "a more dangerous place."

### TALIBAN RULE

## Afghan women fear return to the past

By Farnaz Fassihi and Dan Bilefsky  
*The New York Times*

As Afghan women clustered in their homes Tuesday, fearing for their lives and their futures under Taliban rule, a pair of female television broadcasters offered starkly contradictory visions of the country's direction.

On Tuesday morning, Beheshta Arghand, a newscaster

with the privately owned Tolo News channel, interviewed a Taliban official, asking him about the Taliban's house-to-house searches in the Afghan capital.

"The entire world now recognizes that the Taliban are the real rulers of the country," said the official, Mawlawi Abdulhaq Hemad, a member of the Taliban's media team. "I am still astonished that peo-



Journalist Zahra Nabi takes pictures of Taliban fighters after a Taliban news conference in Kabul on Tuesday.  
JIM HUYLEBROEK — THE NEW YORK TIMES

FROM PAGE 1

ple are afraid of Taliban."

The remarkable scene of a Taliban official taking questions from a female journalist was part of a broader campaign by the Taliban to present a more moderate face to the world and to help tame the fear gripping the country since the insurgents seized the capital Sunday.

But hours later, a prominent anchorwoman on state television, Khadija Amin, tearfully told a Clubhouse chat room that the Taliban had suspended her, and other female employees, indefinitely.

"I am a journalist and I am not allowed to work," said Amin, 28. "What will I do next? The next generation will have nothing, everything we have achieved for 20 years will be gone. The Taliban is the Taliban.

They have not changed."

The stories of the two journalists reflect the uncertainty and deep anxiety Afghan women face as they try to assess what will befall them as the Taliban take control of the country. Millions are afraid of a return to the repressive past, when the Taliban barred women from working outside the home or leaving the house without a male guardian, eliminated schooling for girls and publicly flogged those who violated the group's morality code.

But Taliban officials are trying to reassure women that things will be different this time. In a news conference in Kabul on Tuesday, a Taliban spokesperson said that women would be allowed to work and study. Another Taliban official said that women should participate in government.

"We assure that there will be no violence against women," the spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid,

said. "No prejudice against women will be allowed, but the Islamic values are our framework."

Pressed for details, he said only that women could participate in society "within the bounds of Islamic law."

The question is whether the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law will be as draconian as when the group last held power, before the U.S. invasion of 2001.

There are already scattered signs that, at least in some areas, the Taliban have begun to reimpose the old order.

Women in some provinces have been told not to leave the home without a male relative escorting them.

In Herat, in western Afghanistan, Taliban gunmen guarded the university's gates and prevented female students and instructors from entering the campus Tuesday, witnesses said.

In Kandahar, women's

health care clinics were shut down, a resident said. In some districts, girls schools have been closed since the Taliban seized control of them in November.

Women there said they were starting to wear the head-to-toe burqa in the street, partly in fear and partly in anticipation of re-Taliban restrictions.

At Kabul University, in the capital, female students were told they were not allowed to leave their dorm rooms unless accompanied by a male guardian. Two students said they were effectively trapped because they had no male relatives in the city.

In Mazar-i-Sharif, in northern Afghanistan, Aliya Kazimiy, a 27-year-old university professor, said that women shopping alone in the city's bazaar were turned away and told to return with male guardians.

"I am from the generation that had a lot of opportunities after the fall of

the Taliban 20 years ago," she said in a text message. "I was able to achieve my goals of studying, and for a year I've been a university professor, and now my future is dark and uncertain. All these years of working hard and dreaming were for nothing. And the little girls who are just starting out, what future awaits them?"

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said Monday that his organization was "receiving chilling reports of severe restrictions on human rights" throughout the country. "I am particularly concerned by accounts of mounting human rights violations against the women and girls of Afghanistan," he said at an emergency meeting of the Security Council.

U.N. officials have not provided any details about those reports and it is too early to say whether they represent the national policy of the incipient govern-

ment or outlying acts of freelance vigilantes.

There were also some indications that the Taliban was, in some cases, adopting a more tolerant stance regarding the role of women and girls.

UNICEF, the U.N.'s children's organization, said one of its representatives met a Taliban-appointed health commissioner Monday in Herat and reported that he asked that women who work for the Health Department return to work.

But UNICEF also reported mixed messages on questions of education. In some areas, local Taliban authorities said they were waiting for guidance from leaders, in others they said they wanted schools for boys and for girls up and running.

"We are cautiously optimistic on moving forward," said Mustapha Ben Messaoud, UNICEF's chief of operations in Kabul, speaking by video link.

# Rough Beast, Redux

WASHINGTON  
**A**S PRESIDENT BIDEN watched Kabul descend into hell, did he think of his beloved Yeats?

He is the poet Biden recited as a teen to conquer his stutter. And Biden has quoted Yeats before while talking about the Middle East.

"The Second Coming" eerily sprang to life in the president's helter-skelter exit from Afghanistan, a land that still prizes falconry and falcons flying in widening gyres.

When Yeats writes about darkness dropped in the sands of the desert and a slouching "rough beast" with "a gaze blank and pitiless as the sun," he could be describing the Taliban. Anarchy loosed upon the world, a blood-dimmed tide, and the worst, full of penumbrate intensity.

Biden did the right thing getting us out of there. But he did it badly.

Worshen, Blynken and Nod, as some military circles are decisively calling Joe Sullivan, Tony Blinken and Blasen, consider themselves foreign affairs savants. Yet even Democrats can't defend them and are conceding beatings.

The pandemonium drew comparisons to some of the worst atrocities in modern American history: the fall of Saigon and the Bay of Pigs. It may sound like overkill, but the story of a Marine, Stephen Slaughter, is the worst and kindest year of an American jet as it took off, then plunging to the tarmac; later, human remains were found on one of the wheels. A 17-year-old Afghan soccer player falling to his death off the side of a plane.

Women's rights vanished with the crack of a Taliban whip. The Wall Street Journal said some Taliban commanders were commandeering young women to be brides for Taliban fighters. The story captured the heartbreaking moment for young women who had never lived under Taliban rule. A young researcher, caught by surprise at the fall of Kabul,

was working last Sunday in a short skirt. Trapped at the office as the Taliban closed in, she thought about wrapping herself in a curtain before a friend arrived to escort her home.

Allies expressed their furious sense of betrayal, with British lawmakers raging against Biden in Parliament. Biden's abrupt unilateral path was "throwing us and everybody else to the fire," said one. It was another hard lesson about getting tied up with the Americans for the British, who enabled George W. Bush, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld to execute their spurious, attenuated occupations of Muslim countries.

Americans are not built to occupy feudal countries under scorching suns halfway around the globe. Even

## *We needed to leave. But not this way.*

the British long ago had to face the folly of that, in particular in 1842 when some 17,000 British and Indian Army soldiers, wives and servants were killed as they tried to retreat through the snowy mountains to Jalalabad.

The idea that we were going to turn Iraq and Afghanistan into mini-states of self-governing democracy was almost an arrogant miscalculation, driven by macho hubris, not national security. If we stayed for a century — installing corrupt, larcenous puppets, listening to generals lie about turning the corner, surging, and wasting trillions — we couldn't do it. (General Petraeus, please stop talking.)

But how could we leave the tens of thousands of Afghans who helped and trusted us to the tender mercies of the Taliban? A U.N. report warns that the Taliban were hunting down people who worked with America or NATO, as well as their families, and threatening to kill them.

Lloyd Austin, the defense secretary,

looked flummoxed when The Times's Helene Cooper pressed him on why they did not have a good plan to save the Afghans desperately clawing to get into the airport.

The greatest military on earth is now dependent on "diplomacy with the Taliban," as Cooper posed it, to save the people who risked their lives helping us. Austin and General Milley seemed to have bungled the whole thing. They did not inspire confidence in that news conference, which aired even as some Afghans in the military fled their country in American aircraft and the Taliban were seizing American guns, helicopters and trucks.

Donald Trump could have made safe and orderly passage a part of his deal when he negotiated his 2020 "surrender agreement," as his former national security adviser H.R. McMaster called it in an interview with Bari Weiss.

We all know Trump is a terrible deal-maker. Biden could have told the Taliban he was not abiding by Trump's fatally flawed deal and renegotiated it to avoid this pell-mell disgrace.

But Trump and Biden were so impatient to get out, their screw-ups merged into strangulating red tape.

The State Department dawdled for months in getting visas for Afghan allies and, as the Taliban seized cities, towns and provincial capitals, it neglected contingency planning for a possible evacuation.

Still, it is enraging to watch a parade of dunderheads preen on cable — anchors and generals and chatterers — the same people whose cheerleading ensnared us in 20 years of quicksand in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We didn't know 9/11 was coming, even though we should have. We didn't know Jan. 6 was coming, even though we should have. We didn't know the Potemkin government in Afghanistan that we'd propped up for two decades would fall in two seconds, even though we should have.

What else don't we know?



PAUL WHITE — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, left, EU Council President Charles Michel, center, and Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez prepare for a news conference at the Torrejón military air base in Madrid on Saturday.

## EU has yet to recognize Taliban regime

By The Associated Press

**MADRID** » The European Union's top officials warned the Taliban on Saturday that the current conversations being held to secure the exit of as many Afghan evacuees as possible do not mean the bloc is prepared to recognize the new regime.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen acknowledged the necessity of continuing to engage with the Taliban during her visit, along with EU Council President Charles Michel, to a reception center for evacuees established by Spain near Madrid.

"We do have operational contacts with the Taliban in this moment of crisis, because we need to discuss in these difficult times how we can facilitate it for people in Kabul to come to the airport," the EU leader said. "But this is completely distinct and separated from political talks. There are no political talks with the Taliban and there is no recognition of the Taliban."

She also said the continuance of European humanitarian aid to Afghanistan will hinge on the Taliban respecting human rights, especially

for women and girls.

"We hear the Taliban statement that stresses that women will have their right place in society and have the right to study and work, within the framework of Islam, whatever that means. But we also hear more and more reports of people being hunted down for their past work or opinions, and we hear of women being turned away when they show up at their usual workplace," she said. "The 1 billion euros set aside by the European Union for the next seven years for development aid is tied to strict conditions: respect for human rights, good treatment of minorities and respect for the rights of women and girls."

The EU's top officials toured the facility at the Torrejón military air base along with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, who said it can hold 800 people.

Two planes sent by Spain to Kabul already have arrived at the air base. One brought back five Spaniards and 48 Afghans who had worked for Spain and their families. A second arrived late Friday with 110 more Afghans. A third flight with another 110 passengers has left Kabul for Dubai,

United Arab Emirates, which Spain is using as a stop-off point before the evacuees are flown to Madrid.

The air base is also receiving flights from the European Union with other Afghan evacuees. All are expected to spend up to three days there before moving to welcome centers elsewhere in Spain or going to other European countries.

Sánchez said the response from other EU members has been positive and that some Afghan evacuees already have left for other EU countries.

But the United States and NATO allies are struggling to help Afghans who worked for their forces and now fear reprisals from the Taliban to even reach and enter the Kabul airport. Von der Leyen said EU staff is talking with American and NATO officials on the problem but also working "on the ground" in Kabul.

"It is a very difficult situation, it is changing by the minute, but there is intense work being done to make the best of a very difficult situation," she said.

Von der Leyen, however, also urged international community to help those Afghans who will remain.

# Washington politicians gear up to help Newsom fend off recall

By Tal Kopan

WASHINGTON — Sacramento may be almost 3,000 miles from Washington, D.C., but that hasn't prevented California's recall election from hitting home in the nation's capital. And there's a consensus: It's time to get into the game.

California lawmakers aren't the only ones itching to lend a hand. The sudden urgency to help Newsom extend all the

way to the top of the Democratic Party, including President Biden, while Republicans are cautiously gleeful at the prospect of toppling the governor of a state synonymous with liberal politics.

Most of the Democrats in California's congressional delegation surveyed by The Chronicle said they have plans to, would be happy to, or have already campaigned for Gov. Gavin Newsom to beat back

the recall. And most also agree that their biggest opponent isn't Republican candidates but voter apathy.

On the Republican side of the aisle, almost none of the GOP members of Congress is backing a specific candidate, hoping instead that a wide field can motivate voters against Newsom, with the pieces falling where they may on who will replace him.



Gov. Gavin Newsom, during a visit to Marigny's in S.F. last week, sends texts asking Californians to vote no in the recall.

# Washington politicians enter Newsom recall battle

But for both sides, the focus is the same: turnout.

"This is a gotcha election, a lot of people don't even know what's happening," said Rep. Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael. "Our turnout is something that you can never take for granted. So we're going to have to work for it."

That effort seems to be under way. Newsom announced on Friday that Vice President Kamala Harris, an East Bay native and longtime ally of the governor who represented the state in the U.S. Senate, would appear with him at a campaign event next week.



Vice President Kamala Harris, left, California Sen. Alex Padilla and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren are among the high-profile Democrats who have spoken out in recent days in support of Gov. Gavin Newsom as the recall vote approaches.

Biden last week issued his most explicit statement of support to date for the governor, saying that Newsom "knows how to get the job done because he's been doing it." He is also said to be exploring an in-person campaign event in California.

High-profile help in the recall has also come to Newsom from outside the state, with Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren cutting an early TV ad for the governor linking the recall to former President Donald Trump and tactics by Republicans nationwide.

Most of the Democrats who spoke with The Chronicle remain confident in Newsom and his record, and trust that California voters overall will remain loyal to the Democratic party. They've largely adopted Newsom's talking points that the recall, with its low threshold for signatures to get on the ballot and national Republican funding, is a GOP ploy to upend normal elections.

California Sen. Alex Padilla, who has long been close to Newsom and whom the governor appointed to the Senate to replace Harris, called the recall an "attempted power grab." He compared it to GOP attempts to undermine faith in the 2020 election — despite repeated and

extensive examinations that have found the results valid and trustworthy — and efforts to change voting laws in ways activists warn could limit ballot access.

"It's pretty plain and simple: Republicans are trying to subvert our democracy," Padilla said. "In California, they know they can't win on a regular election so they're trying to exploit the recall, to try to grab power. We're not going to stand for it."

Many of the lawmakers noted the challenge is voter education, with the election happening by itself at an unusual time of year. Even with ballots mailed to voters' homes, Democrats will have to be motivated to fill them out and return them, lawmakers said.

Several of the Democrats in the House said they were already working on it. Huffman said he has been hosting a dozen young Democrats participating in a politics fellowship, who have been working the phones and engaging voters on the recall. Reps. Barbara Lee of Oakland and Karen Bass of Los Angeles started a group called WAR, for Woman Against the Recall, which is campaigning

for Newsom across the state. Fremont Rep. Ro Khanna said he has been reaching out to the progressive community in Newsom's favor.

"The polling I have seen shows that it is a dead heat when you look at energized Republican turnout ... so we can't take this for granted," Khanna said. "I think this is gonna be a close race, and we've got to get our people out."

San Mateo Rep. Jackie Speier was a bit more sanguine about the outcome: She lamented the cost of the recall, but backed Newsom and predicted "a yawner."

There were other notable exceptions. Irvine Rep. Katie Porter, a Democrat who holds a swing seat and is a darling of the left, said "no comment" when asked about helping Newsom and what Democrats should be doing ahead of the recall. But on Aug. 18, Porter tweeted out support for Newsom and said she'd be engaged in helping him. The governor's camp noted she had been featured as a backer of their efforts for months.

Rep. Josh Harder, D-Turlock (Stanislaus County), another

lawmaker defending a purple district seat, pivoted the question about Newsom back to policy, saying he wants to see action, rather than political strategy.

"I think the best way to campaign is actually addressing the core challenges we have in California," said Harder, who has put out statements pressuring Newsom to do more on water for the Central Valley. "We're in the midst of a drought, where I think we could use some real state leadership, wildfires that are devastating the state. ... If we can resolve those problems, my hope is that they can create a record that'll speak for itself."

The view of the recall dynamics, predictably, is starkly different among Republicans. Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Vista (San Diego County), for some time was the only GOP member of Congress to endorse a candidate to replace Newsom, backing former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer. Then, on Aug. 18, Rep. Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale (Butte County), endorsed conservative radio host Larry Elder.

Issa said he backs Faulconer due to their San Diego connec-

tion — Faulconer was Issa's mayor — but he doesn't think other Republicans need to back specific candidates. He said it's about giving voters choices, and pushed back on the notion that the recall was a GOP ploy.

"I believe in the process of recall, that if there's a betrayal, for whatever reason, of a trust, for the voters to have that," Issa said. "To the governor, he sees this as Republicans coming after him. To the voters, this is a referendum on the governor in a state that generically elects Democrats by almost 2 to 1. So it's not about that, and it shouldn't be."

Bakersfield Rep. Kevin McCarthy, who leads the House GOP, said he hasn't endorsed anyone and doesn't think Republicans need to gather around one candidate.

"I think the first priority is to get the recall passed," McCarthy said. "There's always a special election turnout challenge, but I think more candidates probably help."

# Even if Elder's out of step with many, he might win

Conservative talk show host Larry Elder is out of step with most Californians when it comes to abortion, the minimum wage, fracking, climate change and women in the workplace.

Nevertheless, Californians could be calling him "Gov. Elder" on Sept. 14, as the Republican could be elected in the state's recall election with far less than 50% of the vote.

That is one of the quirks — or is it the feature? — of California's century-old recall process. While Gov. Gavin Newsom could be recalled if more than 50% of the voters vote "yes," his re-

JOE GAROFOLI  
*It's All Political*



placement needs only to get a plurality of support to succeed him. (Polls show that likely voters are split on removing him.) With 46 replacement candidates on the ballot, it will be a challenge for any to win a majority.

In the 2003 recall of Gov. Gray Davis in which Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected, only four of the 135 candidates received more than 1% of the vote. Not only did Schwarzenegger win nearly 49% of the vote, he received roughly 200,000 more votes as a replacement candidate than Davis did in terms of people who opposed to the recall.

"We have the absurd situation where it's possible that Newsom could get 49% of the vote on the recall question and then be replaced by somebody who got 20% of the vote," said Bob Shrum, director of the University of Southern California Center's for the Political Future and a former top Democratic strategist.

Because Elder — or any replacement candidate — could win with a sliver of support, they don't have to appeal to a broad section of voters.

"Most of the time, we're in elections where candidates try to find their way to the middle. And this is an election where a candidate doesn't necessarily have to find their way to the middle," said Mark Baldassare, resident and CEO of the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California and one of the state's leading pollsters.

Instead, Baldassare said, candidates can focus on views that are going to bring out a certain portion of the electorate and that could be the strategy for winning. Elder's core audi-

ence is the 6 million Californians who voted for Donald Trump in 2020; 11 million backed Joe Biden.

The recall format benefits Elder, as he would be hard-pressed to find a majority of Californians who support him on several issues important to many in the deep blue state. Here are some:

## Minimum wage

**Where Elder stands:** Elder, a longtime libertarian, believes that there shouldn't be a minimum wage. As in zero. Instead, as he said last week, "If a willing seller and willing buyer of labor agree on a certain price, I'm not quite sure why it's the government's business to intrude on that."

**Where California stands:** The current minimum wage in California is \$14 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees and will climb to \$15 an hour next year, thanks to a law signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2016. The wage floor is higher in several cities, including San Francisco and Emeryville.

A majority of Californians like it that way. Most adults (57%) said it was "very important" to raise the minimum wage in a 2015 Public Policy Institute of California poll.

Experts say a wage floor is particularly necessary during the pandemic. Low-paying industries had 15% fewer jobs in December 2020 than at the start of the pandemic, according to an analysis of federal labor statistics by the nonpartisan California Budget & Policy Center.

"The idea that California and its economy can be successful without a minimum wage is simply not based on reality,



Marcio Jose Sanchez / Associated Press

**Conservative talk show host Larry Elder could be California's next governor with fall less than 50% of the vote in the recall.**

es of working Californians and our communities," said Alissa Anderson, a senior policy analyst with the center.

### Abortion rights

**Where Elder stands:** Elder has said that the Roe vs. Wade abortion rights decision is one of the worst the Supreme Court has ever produced. He would like to see it overturned and let states set abortion restrictions.

**Where California stands:** Californians have some of the strongest protections for abortion rights in the country. A July survey from the Public Policy Institute of California showed that 77% of Californians would not like to see Roe overturned. That same survey found that 61% thought that "some states are making it too difficult to get an abortion."

Elder's lead in the polls "is horrifying from a reproductive freedom perspective," Shannon Hovis, executive director of Naral California, which supports abortion rights. She backs Newsom and opposes the recall.

Noted Shrum: "Ronald Reagan was conservative, but (as governor) also signed, which he later recanted, what was then the one of the most liberal abortion rights bill in the country."

### Environment

**Where Elder stands:** Last week, Elder bemoaned "this war on oil and gas" in California that is "costing us middle-class

jobs. I'm not quite sure what the trade-off benefit really is. We should be doing more for things like fracking; we're doing less."

He also questioned why Newsom called for California to explore being carbon neutral by 2035, 15 years earlier than planned, while "completely ignoring" the cost implications of such a move.

**Where California stands:** An October 2020 USC Schwarzenegger Institute-USC Price California Issues Poll found that 66% of Californians support ending fracking. But that depends by region, said Christian Grose, academic director of the institute. Californians who live in the more conservative Central Valley — where the oil industry provides jobs — are more supportive.

"On balance, the majority of Californians favor pro-environmental positions," Grose said. "There's less support when it has the potential to hurt someone's business."

### Women in the workplace

**Where Elder stands:** Last week The Chronicle reported remarks that Elder made about pregnant women in his 2002 book, "Showdown: Confronting Bias, Lies, and the Special Interests that Divide America." As my colleague Dustin Gardiner reported, Elder defended hiring discrimination against women who plan to become pregnant, suggesting it's OK for employers to ask women if they intend to

have kids because it could raise costs for the business.

"Are there legitimate business reasons for a venture capitalist to ask a female entrepreneur whether and when she intends to have children? Hell, yes," Elder wrote.

Elder didn't back off his remarks this week, saying that "I believe that government should not be intruding into the relationship between an employer and an employee. I believe that a female employer could ask questions of a female employee or a male employee that directly impacts on whether or not that person is going to be available to work full time."

The Chronicle also reported that Elder said women should tolerate some crude language and behavior from men in the workplace and that sexual harassment doesn't hold women back in their careers.

**Where California stands:** A 2018 Stanford University poll revealed that the status of women in the workplace is important to many California voters. The study found that 78% of Californians think it is important to elect more women to office and 69% strongly favored equal pay for women.

The study found that 41% of female respondents experienced sexual harassment — and 73% of those said that the harassment occurred in the workplace. Shrum said Elder's remarks about women in the workforce may hurt him with some female voters.

"Suburban women are going to be repelled by what Elder said," Shrum said. "The revelations are going to be a (voter) turnaround machine for Democrats."

But Trump was elected in 2016 in the wake of allegations of multiple accusations of sexual misconduct.

"But," Shrum said, "he didn't cruise to victory California."

Successful recall elections of ten depend on one factor: low voter turnout.

People who want to kick an elected official out of office are highly motivated to cast ballots, while people satisfied with the status quo are not. As a result, recall elections are disproportionately determined by recall supporters, even if they represent just a fraction of all registered voters.

That dynamic is key in the current special election to recall Gov. Gavin Newsom.

Even though registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans in California by nearly two to one, and Newsom was

elected with a record-high 61.9% of the vote in 2018, a number of recent polls show likely voters just about evenly split on whether to sink or save the Democratic governor.

With ballots already hitting mailboxes and election day itself slated for Sept. 14, the big question is, will voter turnout be high enough to save Newsom?

"I think right now, if the election were held today, we'd probably have a 30% turnout," predicted Katie Merrill, a Berkeley-based veteran Democratic strategist.

Turnout for most special elections in California peaks at around 33%.

"That's problematic," Merrill said.

And not just for Newsom.

The fate of California's highest officeholder could be determined by a third of its registered voters, while a much smaller slice of Californians could choose Newsom's replacement. That's not great for representative democracy.

Low turnout elections

sway middle-of-the-road voters to win.

That might be why this year's leading GOP contender, radio host Larry Elder, recently walked back his previous statements in which he acknowledged the fact that Joe Biden fairly won the presidency. It also might be why Elder and all GOP challengers — including former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, who's often touted as a moderate — have vowed to ban statewide mandates aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus.

There are several factors working against a higher-than-average turnout in the Sept. 14 recall, from lopsided voter enthusiasm to the confusing mechanics of a recall election to voter exhaustion.

"It may sound silly to some people, but there is probably a large portion of the electorate that is quite uninterested in this election," said Newport Beach-based pollster Adam Probolesky. "They heard something about a recall, something about Republicans being angry. But they're not really engaged at all."

Two factors suggest there's time to change that

Both factors are why Probolesky predicts recall turnout eventually will be closer to 50%, which should be enough to keep the governor around — at least until he'd be up for re-election again in November 2022.

But there's never been a statewide recall in the middle of a global pandemic, with mail-in balloting the norm. And California's only gubernatorial recall — in 2003, when voters booted Gov. Gray Davis — drew a whopping 61% turnout for a reason that's not in play this time around.

"In 2003 you had Arnold Schwarzenegger on the ballot, and that's exactly why — the sole reason why — you had such high turnout," Merrill said. "It was far more about having a celebrity of that level on the ballot."

#### The enthusiasm factor

The good news for Newsom is that his approval rating remains at 50% despite falling in recent months. The other good news for Newsom is that just over 24% of California voters are registered as Republican, while 46.2% are registered as Democrats.

But a poll conducted in early August by CBS News

while 54% of all registered voters supported Newsom, that edge narrowed to 52% when looking at people likely to actually vote by Sept. 14.

"Every poll has shown that the voters that are most engaged in the race right now are the ones who want to recall Gavin Newsom," Merrill said.

Democrats may also have gotten a later start on engagement.

"I don't think most Democrats thought Newsom was in trouble," said Zev Yaroslavsky, a former Los Angeles lawmaker and public affairs professor at UCLA. "They thought, 'He can't possibly lose, this is a blue state.'"

#### The confusion factor

One issue that could dampen voter turnout is the complex recall voting process.

The recall ballot asks two questions that aren't intuitively yes or no.

The first question is, "Should Gavin Newsom be recalled (removed) from the office of Governor, yes or no?" People who want to keep Newsom have to answer in the negative, a seemingly counterintuitive

replace him?" Some people who vote "no" on the first question may not cast any vote on the second, perhaps thinking their choice won't count. Voters can answer both or either question.

Another issue that might confuse voters on both sides is the potential choice of any Newsom replacement.

Republicans have yet to coalesce behind a single candidate, which might leave some GOP voters unsure of who to support. Meanwhile, there's no established big-name Democrat on the ballot to replace Newsom if voters chose to boot him.

What's more, Democratic voters are hearing mixed messages. Newsom and the Democratic Party are telling voters to leave the second question blank, focusing instead on getting a "no" on the recall question. But others — including the Democrat leading in some polls, Kevin Paffrath — are urging Newsom supporters to cast a vote on the second question.

That all adds up to confusion for some voters, who may find it easier to just ignore this election in a year where deciding something as simple as whether to eat in

that confusion and get voters to return their ballots. For that mission, they have one huge factor working in their favor: cold, hard cash.

Newsom and political action committees supporting him had raised more than twice as much money as all of the leading GOP contenders combined by midsummer, with more cash coming in each day. That can buy a lot of voter outreach and education.

So far, Newsom's team has been a bit quiet, Merrill said.

But she believes that's because Newsom's team is doing what every smart campaign does: save its resources for the most critical time. In this case, she suspects that will start around Sept. 1.

Republican candidates, by comparison, have very little money in the recall race. And while Newsom only has to communicate one message, to vote no on the recall, challengers have to convince voters to vote yes and to vote for them.

As Newsom's campaign ramps up, Yaroslavsky predicts voter engagement also will pick up.

"People are starting to focus on the stakes and what

## Low voter turnout could cost governor

Effort's supporters have the edge in motivation

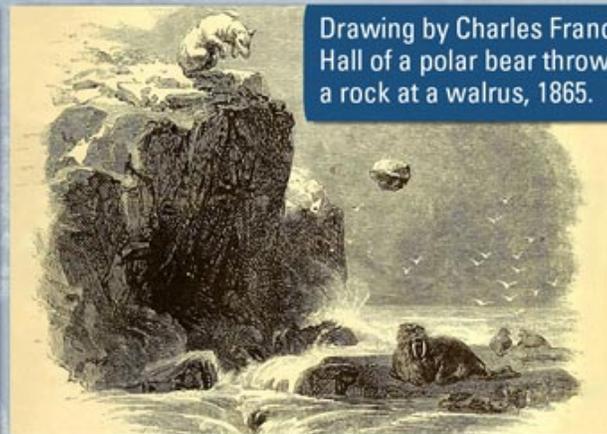
### **Research shows polar bears use tools to hunt walruses**

The drawing shown here was created by Arctic explorer Charles Francis Hall in 1865. What does the drawing show? (A polar bear throwing a rock at a walrus.) Hall created the drawing based on Inuit stories about polar bears using rocks and ice to hunt walruses. The Inuit are a group of indigenous people that live in Greenland, Canada, and Alaska. For a long time, animal experts didn't believe that these stories were true. But recently, scientists in Canada have found more evidence that polar bears do in fact hunt this way. Researchers at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, spent time reviewing more than 200 years' worth of reports from Inuit people. These reports included many stories of polar bears throwing rocks to hunt walruses. The researchers also heard other Inuit stories about polar bears hitting walruses with chunks of ice rather than throwing them. Why do you think scientists thought these accounts were false for so long? Some walruses can weigh over 2,500 pounds and they have thick skulls and large tusks. Because of these features, it can be challenging and dangerous for polar bears to try to hunt them. Using the rock-throwing method allows polar bears to hunt walruses in a much safer way. Researchers have yet to capture the bears throwing rocks on film. But today, they have several other reasons to believe these accounts are true. A young polar bear living in captivity in Japan has been seen using tools to reach meals in out-of-reach places. This bear threw sticks and a large tire at meals placed on perches to knock them down. Another research group filmed polar bears in Alaska throwing chunks of ice at seals to stun them. This evidence, along with the many Inuit accounts, has led researchers to believe that some polar bears likely do throw objects when hunting.

## **Research shows polar bears use tools to hunt walruses**



Credit: Emma - Flickr, CC BY 2.0



Drawing by Charles Francis Hall of a polar bear throwing a rock at a walrus, 1865.

"It's been my general observation that if an experienced Inuit hunter tells you that he's seen something, it's worth listening to and very likely to be correct."

—*Polar Bear Biologist Ian Stirling*

The map here shows the range of polar bears in the wild. Polar bears live in the Arctic, the most northern part of the Earth. Polar bears are huge. The average adult male is about eight feet long and weighs between 650 and 1,300 pounds. On average, polar bears are the largest meat-eating species to live on land. Although they live on land, polar bears are considered marine mammals, and they rely on the ocean for food. They feed mostly on seals, but they also hunt for other prey on land and in the sea. Polar bears can smell seals from more than a mile away. And even though they are large land mammals, polar bears are excellent swimmers. Polar bears are well-adapted to their cold, snowy habitat in many ways. Their large, furry paws and sharp claws help them hunt, walk across ice, and propel themselves through the water when they swim. Thick layers of fat under their skin, called blubber, help keep them warm. And their mostly-white appearance allows them to blend in with the snow and ice. Although polar bear fur appears white, it is actually transparent. The skin underneath their fur is black. This helps them trap heat and stay warm. Their skin's insulation is so effective that polar bears can overheat at temperatures higher than 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Polar bear cubs are born blind and helpless. A polar bear mother typically gives birth to two cubs at a time and nurses both cubs for two and half years. Mothers also teach their offspring to hunt and survive in the harsh Arctic environment. As adults, polar bears play an important role in their environments. They are considered a keystone species. What does that mean? (They have a major impact on their ecosystems and the other animals in it.) Scavenger animals like wolves and birds feed on the leftovers polar bears leave behind after a hunt.

## Polar bears

- Are the largest land carnivore
- Can smell a seal from a mile away
- Have black skin and transparent fur
- Cubs stay with mother for 2 1/2 years

This polar bear blends into its snowy surroundings.

A mother polar bear and her cubs.

credit: Alastair Rae

credit: Alan D. Wilson

The map shows the Arctic region of the world, highlighting the range of polar bears. The range is indicated by a yellow-green color and includes Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Svalbard, Norway, and Russia. The Arctic Ocean is also labeled. A legend below the map shows a yellow-green square next to the text 'Polar bear range'.

## Wildfires raging in North America, Asia, and Europe

North America has seen plenty of record high temperatures this summer. In fact, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, July of 2021 was the hottest month in human history. What kinds of temperatures did your local area experience last month? These high temperatures have caused plants and trees to dry out. These conditions make wildfires much more likely to happen. One example of this was the huge Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon. Oregon had just seen record high temperatures for nearly a week. This blaze started with a lightning strike. The dry conditions helped the fire spread quickly. It was so hot it generated its own weather system! Eventually, the Bootleg fire burned 647 square miles across two counties. It is still burning now, but it is 98 percent contained. The year's largest U.S. wildfire is still raging in northern California. The Dixie Fire began on July 13th. The origins of the Dixie Fire are still being investigated, but investigators think it might have started when a tree fell on a power line. CalFire, the state's firefighting agency, tried to stop the blaze early, but they couldn't access the area because of poor roads. Firefighters tried to dig trenches to slow down the blaze, but the fast-moving flames jumped over these trenches and continued to burn. The small town of Greenville lost 75 percent of its buildings, including some built during the California Gold Rush. The Dixie Fire is still just 31 percent contained, despite the hard work of more than 4,000 firefighters. It has consumed more than 600,000 acres. As of August 18th, California had spent \$217 million to fight the Dixie Fire.

**Wildfires raging in North America, Asia, and Europe**

The Dixie fire is now the largest single wildfire in California history.

The Bootleg fire in Oregon is now 98 percent contained.

Oregon  
Bootleg fire

California  
Dixie fire

Photo: CalFire, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0

Photo: National Interagency Fire Center, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0

The infographic features a dark background with a large, bold title at the top. Below the title, there are two text boxes with white text. To the right of these boxes is a map of the western United States, showing Oregon and California. A small fire icon is placed over Oregon, labeled 'Bootleg fire', and another fire icon is placed over California, labeled 'Dixie fire'. Below the text boxes are two photographs: the left one shows a firefighter in silhouette against a bright orange and red wildfire, and the right one shows a large, billowing white plume of smoke rising from a forest fire at dusk or dawn. At the bottom of the infographic, there are two photo credits: 'Photo: CalFire, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0' on the left and 'Photo: National Interagency Fire Center, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0' on the right.

North America is not the only place being affected by wildfires this summer. Europe has been suffering the effects of a heat dome nicknamed “Lucifer.” On August 11th, the temperature in Sicily was measured at 119.8 degrees Fahrenheit — an all-time recorded high for Europe. The extreme heat has contributed to huge wildfires across all of southern Europe. The nation of Greece, located not far from Sicily, has been hit hard since the end of July. At one point, nearly 600 blazes were burning in various places around the country. Investigators say that arson was the source of at least some of these fires. But there is no doubt that the dry conditions caused by “Lucifer” caused the wildfires to be more severe. Neighboring Turkey suffered through its worst wildfire in history this summer as well, losing more than 617 square miles. A series of fires has also swept through Algeria, an African country on the Mediterranean Sea. So far, at least 69 people have died in Algeria; 28 of them were soldiers trying to fight the fires. An even larger threat is looming in the vast Russian territory of Siberia. This part of the world is known for its frigid temperatures most of the year. However, the region has been heating up steadily, along with the rest of the planet, with 100-degree days being recorded in the Arctic Circle during the summer. The extreme heat has turned Siberia’s forests into fuel for massive wildfires this summer. As of last week, the fires burning in Siberia were larger than all the other wildfires in the world put together. And as these trees burn, more carbon gases are released into the atmosphere.

**The “Lucifer” heat wave is fueling forest fires in Europe and Asia.**

**Aerial view of fires in Greece**



Photo: NASA/NOAA, public domain

Photo: Russian Emergencies Ministry Handout/EPA



**Together, the 155 wildfires burning in Siberia are larger than all the world’s other wildfires COMBINED.**

**“The climate crisis is here and is showing us that everything must change.”**  
—Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis



**Siberia**  
**Greece**  
**Turkey**  
**Algeria**

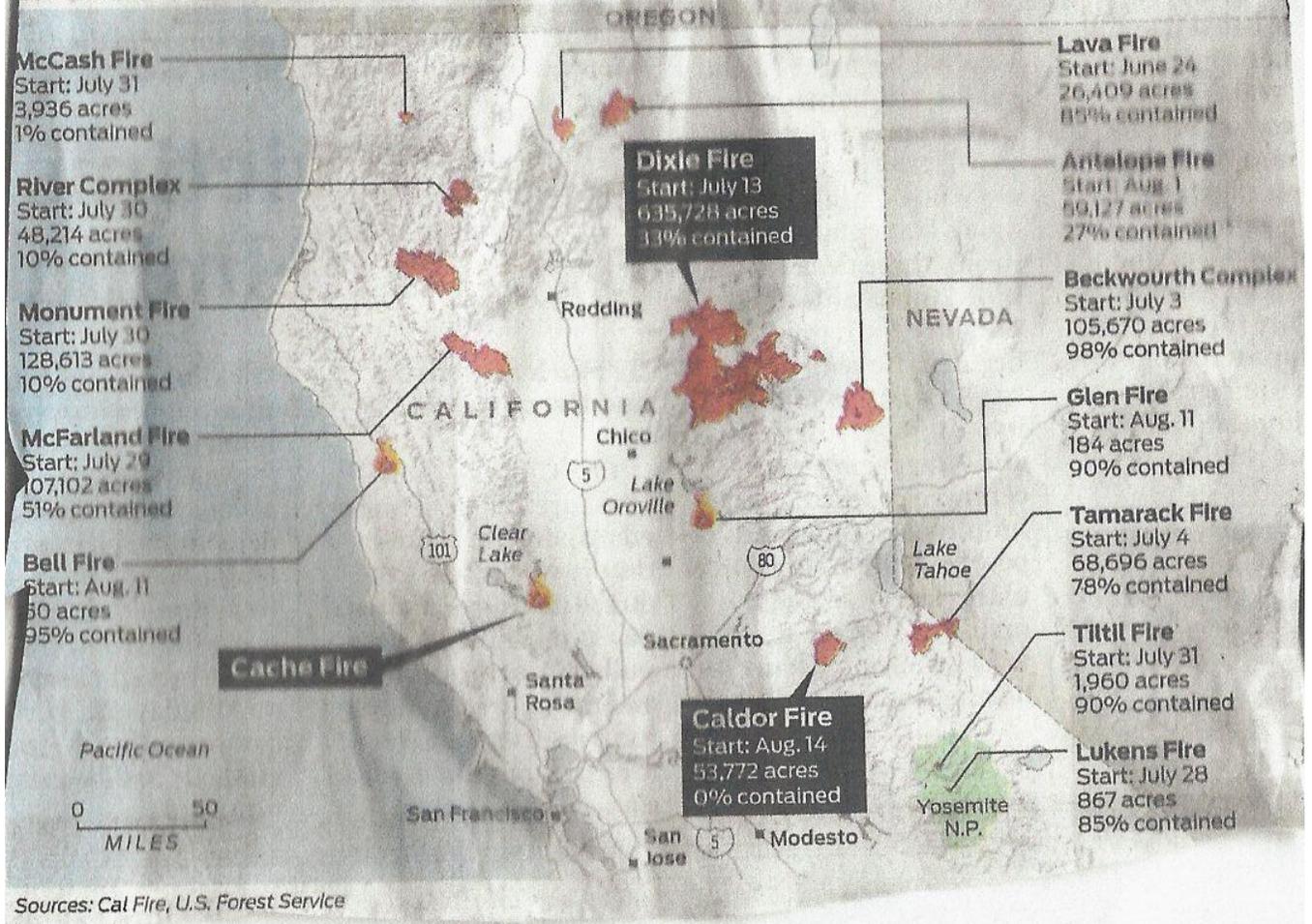
**Cache Fire**  
Clearlake residents  
ordered to leave home

**Dixie Fire**  
While a few get OK to  
return, more told to go

**Caldor Fire**  
Mandatory evacuation in  
much of El Dorado County

# Thousands fleeing state's raging blazes

Active wildfires in Northern California / as of 7 p.m. Wednesday



## Caldor fire jumps over Highway 50 amid winds

by Fiona Kelliher  
kelliher@bayareanewsgroup.com

**PLACERVILLE** • Driven by high winds sweeping across Northern California's bone-dry fire zones Saturday, one of the state's most explosive wildfires, the Caldor fire, jumped across Highway 50, crossing a key line that fire officials hoped to use to slow the spread of the fast-moving blaze.

Firefighters battling the blaze as it burns through El Dorado County had been relying on every available tactic to keep the blaze from crossing the highway, the main artery leading to Lake Tahoe for residents and visitors alike. On Saturday afternoon, the winds pushed flames and burning embers over the highway in

the Kyburz area, according to Cal Fire Incident Commander Dusty Martin.

From the fire crews' base camp in Placerville leading northeast to the Caldor fire's nearly 83,000-acre footprint, gusts of about 25 mph blew away a protective smoke layer and started pushing flames to the northeast — closing in on the highway and small communities dotted along the roadway and surrounding forestland.

Cal Fire spokesman Capt. Keith Wade said Saturday that the Placerville sky was the clearest it had been since midweek, an eerie marker that fearsome winds had arrived. The blaze broke out on Aug. 14.

"That's not a good sign for what's happening up the mountain," Wade said Saturday. "We're feeling a significant breeze down here, so we know that up the hill it's very active. The potential for fire impacting those homes today is very real."

As part of the defensive stand in the area of the highway, firefighters removed dry vegetation, trees and other fuels, while others placed sprinkler lines around houses to slow the flames' spread. In total, more than 1,500 firefighters and support crews tackled the blaze Saturday, with most lined from Sly Park Road to Kyburz along the fire's northern front.

Caltrans officials had closed a nearly 50-mile stretch of the highway on Friday out of fears that fire, poor visibility from smoke and falling ash or trees could endanger drivers' lives.

Caltrans spokesperson Angela DaPrato said Saturday that those heading to and from Tahoe should take Interstate 80, but steer clear of back roads that could be unexpectedly impacted by the fire. There was no estimate for when Highway 50 may reopen.

"Anything could happen," she said.

dry fuel.

The biggest concern through early this week, Wade said, would be embers flying up to a mile out ahead of the fire's body and igniting unburned vegetation that has dried out from several years' worth of drought.

"This stuff is burning really easily here," he said. "Humidity is super low, with a lot of dead timber, dead underbrush, dead floor vegetation that's easily igniting, and that's a challenge to overcome and suppress."

Although temperatures were expected to drop a few degrees in the Caldor and Dixie fire zones — down to the 70s and 80s — weather officials said that both the winds and low humidity levels could allow active flames to expand in unpredictable directions through early today. A red flag warning for the Caldor fire zone was scheduled through 8 p.m. Saturday.

Just over the fire zone near Kyburz, wind gusts had reached about 35 mph by late afternoon Saturday but were expected to calm down overnight, said National Weather Service meteorologist Cory Mueller.

"The winds have definitely materialized," he said. "When you have strong winds, the fire's going to move — especially when you couple it with lower relative humidity."

The worst of the dry storm system was slated to pass by this afternoon. Firefighters may see several days of lighter breezes lasting through at least Wednesday.

About 100 miles north of the Caldor fire, where the Dixie fire was burning in five remote northeast counties, slightly higher overnight humidity levels helped to contain its western spread overnight. But along the fire's southeast corner, a new finger of flame moved downhill and began spotting across Genesee Valley Road, where crews focused on defending

xie fire had burned nearly 715,000 acres, the second-biggest fire in California history behind last year's August Complex Fire, which charred just over 1 million acres.

Though winds were expected to remain slightly quieter that far north, at about 10 to 15 mph, NWS meteorologist Craig Shoemaker said the breezes could still be enough to encourage the flames' spread.

Control lines were holding in Butte County, and crews performed mop-up operations in the Butte Meadows and High Lakes area, he said. All evacuation orders countywide were lifted, while other orders along the previously threatened Lake Almanor shoreline and in parts of Tehama County were downgraded to warnings last week.

In El Dorado County, however, the 23,000 people forced from their homes should not expect to return for at least two weeks, Cal Fire said.

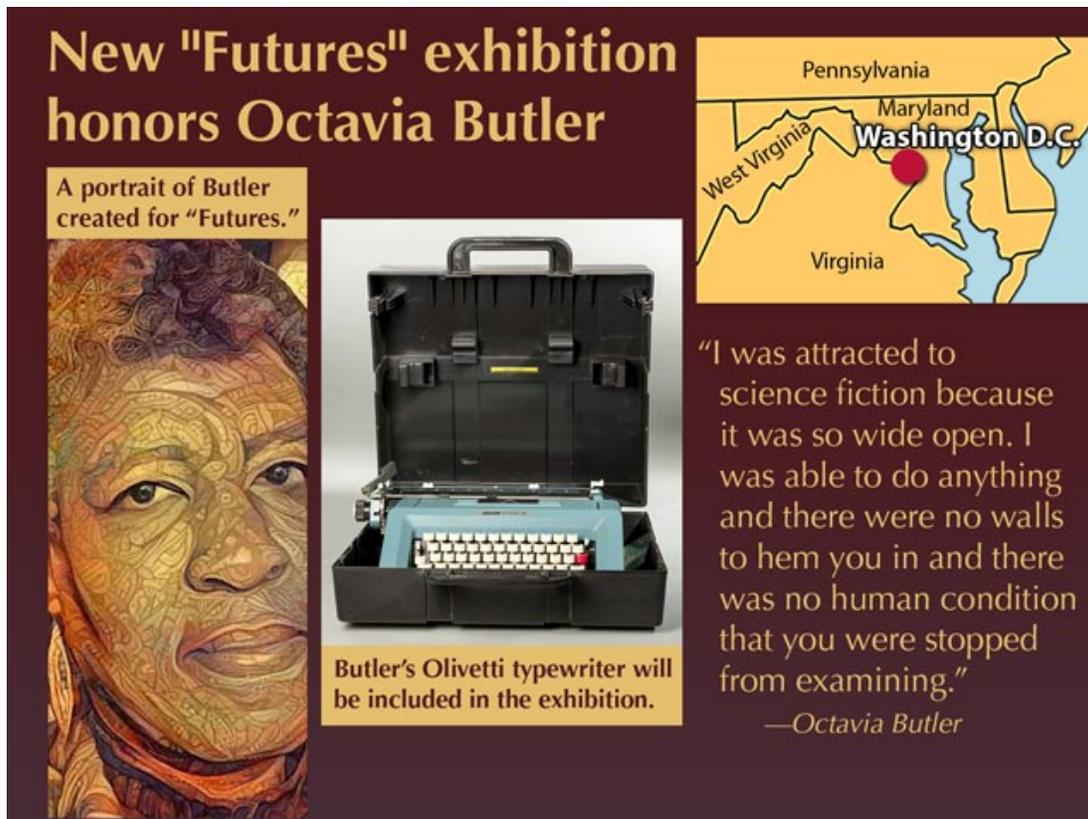
About 37,000 people are evacuated statewide as nearly 13,000 firefighters tackle a dozen different wildfires. While crews have gained the upper hand on the 116,423-acre McFarland fire burning in Shasta-Trinity National Forest, the 145,357-acre Monument fire burning in Trinity County remained just 16% contained.

Officials released a damage assessment map for the first time Saturday to alert residents in El Dorado County which structures had been inspected, but it's "nowhere near" complete, Wade said. He urged residents to heed evacuation orders no matter how far the fire may appear from their community at first glance.

"You put a wind-driven fire down a canyon, or through drainage, and you can push it toward a community and devastate the community — so we'll always err on the side of public safety and life safety," he said. "It's not going away anytime soon."

## New “Futures” exhibition honors Octavia Butler

In late 2021, the Smithsonian Museum will celebrate its 175th anniversary by opening the “Futures” exhibition. Based on the map here, where are the Smithsonian museums located? (Washington D.C.) The new exhibition will be part art exhibit and part festival. It is meant to resemble the World’s Fairs of the 19th and 20th centuries. “Futures” will highlight the latest in technological and scientific developments. The exhibition will also celebrate several important “futurists.” Many of the most important futurists of the 20th century were science fiction writers. One of the futurists celebrated in the new exhibition will be pioneering science fiction writer Octavia Butler. Octavia Butler is considered one of the most important writers of science fiction in the last 50 years. She was the first science fiction writer to win the MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship. She also won both the Hugo and Nebula awards, the two biggest awards in science fiction and fantasy writing. Butler’s writing was also important to the development of “Afrofuturism.” Does anyone know what this is? ( Science fiction that addresses African American themes and concerns.) Butler’s most well-known novel, “Kindred,” was published in 1979. It tells the story of a young African American writer who travels through time between Los Angeles in 1976 and a slave plantation in pre-civil war Maryland. “Kindred” is still taught in many high school and college classes today. Butler was born in Pasadena, California in 1947. Her mother was a housemaid, and her father was a shoeshine. Her father died when she was only seven, and she was raised by her mother and grandmother. As a child, Butler was very shy and had a hard time in school. So, she spent a lot of time in the library, where she developed a love of science fiction stories.



**New "Futures" exhibition honors Octavia Butler**

A portrait of Butler created for "Futures."

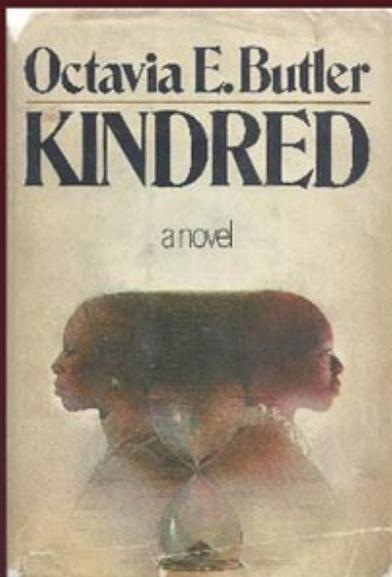
Butler's Olivetti typewriter will be included in the exhibition.

Washington D.C.

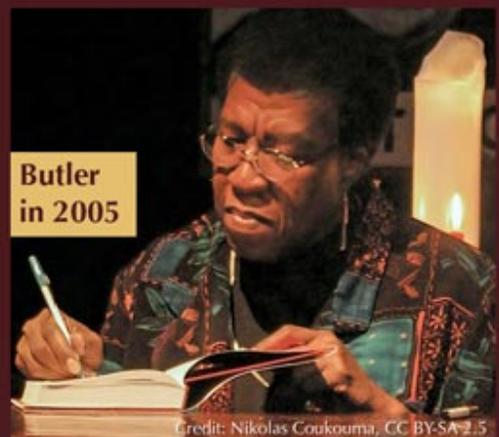
"I was attracted to science fiction because it was so wide open. I was able to do anything and there were no walls to hem you in and there was no human condition that you were stopped from examining."  
—Octavia Butler

After discovering a love of science fiction at a young age, Octavia Butler began to write it herself only a few years later. At 10, she convinced her mother to buy her a Remington typewriter. Then, at the age of 12, Butler watched a 1954 science fiction film called “The Devil Girl from Mars.” Disappointed in the movie, Butler believed she could write a better story. While in junior high, Butler began writing her own science fiction stories. After high school, Butler’s mother encouraged her to get a job as a secretary, but Butler continued to focus on her writing. In the 1970s, after meeting Harlan Ellison and Samuel Delaney, two established science fiction writers, Butler began to publish her short stories. In 1976, Butler published her first novel “Patternmaster.” She published several more novels in the 1970s, including “Kindred,” the cover of which is shown here. By then she was successful enough to write full time. She published many more novels and stories to wide critical acclaim before her death in 2005. Throughout her writing career, Butler used science fiction as a way to engage with modern social issues. She explored issues of race, gender, and class, all while creating strange and fantastic visions of the future. Butler often wrote from the perspective of people who have not been treated well by society. She helped pave the way for other people of color in the world of science fiction and fantasy. Her work continues to inspire people in the literary world, but also in other fields. In 2020, NASA named the landing location of the Mars Perseverance Rover after Butler. One of Butler’s novels, “Dawn,” is currently being adapted for television by Ava DuVernay.

**“All that you touch, you change.  
All that you change, changes you.  
The only lasting truth is change.”**



**“Kindred” was published in 1979**



**Butler in 2005**

Credit: Nikolas Coukouma, CC BY-SA 2.5



**NASA named the landing spot of the Mars Perseverance Rover after Butler.**

## **Historic TV series “Reservation Dogs” premieres**

A new TV comedy series called “Reservation Dogs,” premiered on the cable channel FX on August 9, 2021. Many people are excited about this new show, which is the first TV series in which the creators, writers, directors, and lead actors are all indigenous people. The show was filmed entirely on the Muscogee Reservation in eastern Oklahoma. It was created by Sterlin Harjo and Taika Waititi. Harjo is a comedian and filmmaker from the Seminole and Muscogee nations. Waititi is an Oscar-winning writer and director from New Zealand, whose father is of Maori descent. Who are the Maori people? (The indigenous people of New Zealand.) Harjo and Waititi have been friends since 2004, and they have long dreamed of working on a project that shows the lives of modern Native Americans. “Reservation Dogs” is the realization of that dream. “Reservation Dogs” takes its title in part from the slang term “rez dogs,” which refers to stray dogs that live on Native American reservations. The series is about four Native American teenagers as they try to scrape together the funds to move to California. Along the way, they must deal with family, police, and rivals trying to get in their way. But even as they face the reality of their everyday lives, they also talk about history, and their own values. Reviewers are praising the show’s energy, as well as the young cast of largely unknown actors. What do you notice about the cast from the picture? According to co-creator Sterlin Harjo, having all indigenous people involved in the show’s production means that the show provides a more accurate picture of modern Native American life. As opposed to many films and TV shows, “Reservation Dogs” portrays indigenous life with humor and understanding. Many hope this series will pave the way for other Native American filmmakers to tell their own stories—the way they want them to be told.

**Historic TV series  
"Reservation Dogs" premieres**

Cast members (L-R) Paulina Alexis, Devery Jacobs, D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, and Lane Factor

**Writer and co-creator  
Sterlin Harjo**

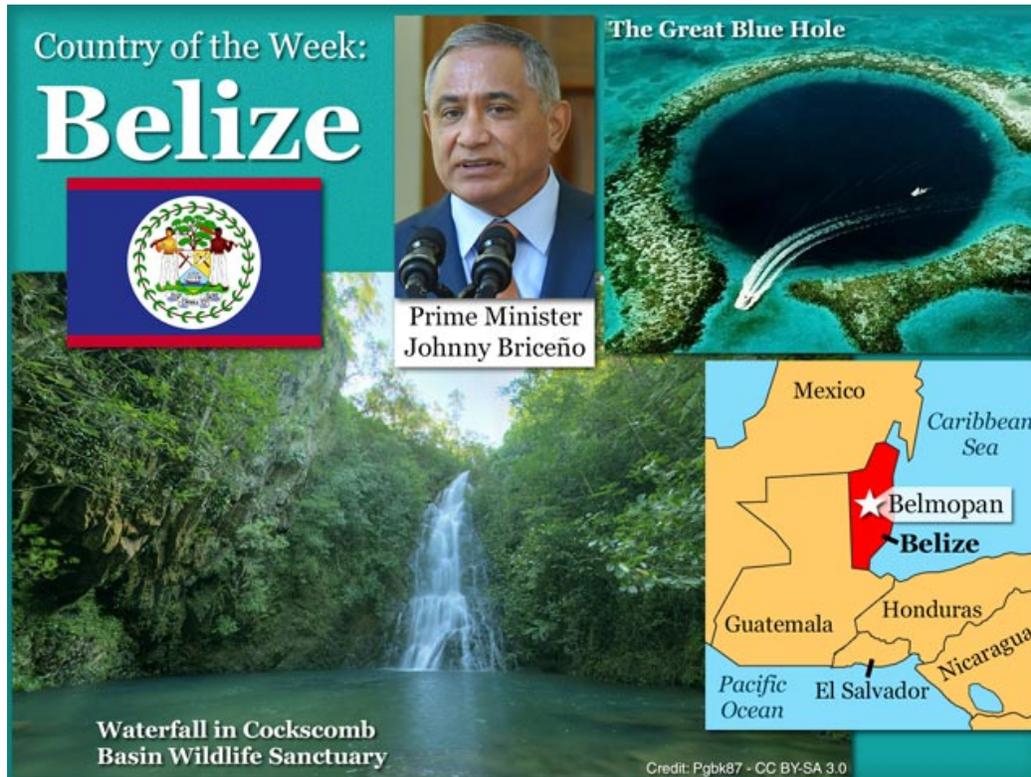
**Muscogee Nation Reservation**

Kansas  
Oklahoma  
Texas

"If you look at Native representation in history, it's been pretty bad. So, almost showing any truthful, real version of Native people is humanizing."  
—Sterlin Harjo, co-creator and writer of "Reservation Dogs"

## Country of the Week: Belize

Belize is a small country on the Caribbean Sea. It is part of both Central America and the Caribbean. It has a population of just under 400,000, by far the lowest of any country in Central America. Belize City is the largest city in the country. Until 1970, it was also the capital. But in 1961, it was nearly destroyed in a hurricane, so a new capital was built. What is the capital now? (Belmopan.) Prime Minister Johnny Briceño has been in office since November 2020. About 60 percent of Belize is rainforest. The north is swampy and flat, and the south is mountainous. The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is home to many species of plants and animals, and one of the world's most important jaguar preserves. The Belize Barrier Reef off the coast is the country's top tourist destination. It is part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, one of the world's largest coral reefs. It has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The reef is home to about 500 species of fish. Some experts say that only about 10 percent of its species have been discovered. The reef's most notable feature is the Great Blue Hole, a sinkhole formed from a collapsed limestone cave. It is about 1,000 feet across and 400 feet deep, the largest of its kind in the world. Belize's economy used to be based primarily on logging. Mahogany, a wood used for cabinets and shipbuilding, was once the country's main export. Today, the biggest sector of the economy is agriculture. Sugar is the biggest export. The second largest industry is tourism. Visitors explore Belize's beautiful beaches and nature reserves, along with ancient Mayan ruins.



The Ancient Maya settled in Belize around 1500 BCE. Today, ruins of Maya settlements can be found throughout the country. Caracol was an important political center for the Maya and home to about 140,000 people. Caracol has a pyramid called “Canaa,” or the “Sky Palace,” which is the largest man-made structure in Belize. The Maya still lived in the area in the early 16th century, when Christopher Columbus became the first European to land there. The British set up settlements and in 1862, Belize became the colony of British Honduras. It gained its independence in 1981. Belize is the only Central American country where English is the official language. However, more than half of the population speaks Spanish. Many also speak Kriol—CREE-ole—a language based in English, but with elements of West African and Native American languages. The people of Belize represent a mix of ethnic groups. Just over half the population is Mestizo, or a mix of European and Indigenous Maya. About a quarter are Kriol, descendants of the African slaves brought to Belize by the British to work in logging. About 10 percent identify as Maya, and about 6 percent of the population are Garinagu, the name for the Garifuna people. The Garinagu are descended from indigenous Carib and Arawak Indians and West Africans who escaped from Spanish slave ships. Garifuna music is central to Belizean culture. The main music style, called punta, features call and response and drumming. Belize is also known for “brukdown” music. The name is from Creole and translates to “broken down Calypso.” Even the food in Belize reflects its many cultures, including Latin American, Caribbean and Kriol, as well as Indian and Chinese influences. Here you see a traditional Belizean meal of rice and beans in coconut milk, with meat and potato salad.



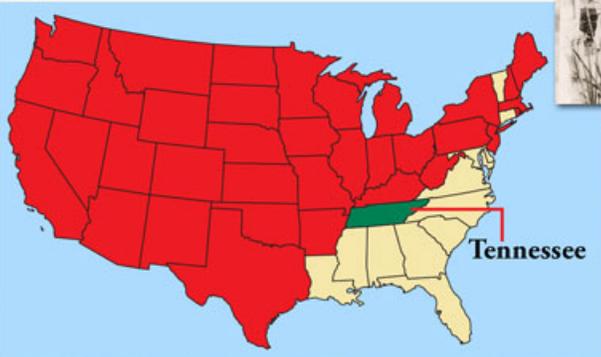
### This Week in History

At 8 a.m. on August 26th, 1920, U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the 19th Amendment, officially granting women the right to vote in the U.S. The right to vote is also known as suffrage. The women's suffrage movement began soon after the Constitution was adopted. Women demanded this right at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848. In 1869, the territory of Wyoming granted women the right to vote, making it the only place in the U.S. to guarantee women's suffrage. Frustrated at the lack of progress over the years, prominent suffragette Susan B. Anthony cast a ballot in the 1872 presidential election and was arrested. But her action brought attention to the cause. Around the turn of the century, many new Western states gave women the right to vote. Why did they do this? (To encourage women to move West and even out the largely-male population.) In the early 20th century, suffragettes held parades, gave speeches, and held non-violent protests. Between 1910 and 1920, a number of other states granted women the right to vote. Finally, in 1917, the U.S. House of Representatives voted "yes" on the 19th Amendment. The next year, President Woodrow Wilson changed his position and announced his support for women's suffrage. That year, the Senate also passed the 19th Amendment. Then it was up to each state to ratify, or approve, the amendment. Each time a state did this, prominent feminist Alice Paul stitched another star onto the banner hung outside her office. But it took a full year for the 36th and final ratification. On August 18th, 1920 — after receiving a note from his mother — a 24-year-old lawmaker named Harry Burn broke a 48-48 tie in the Tennessee legislature by voting in favor of the 19th Amendment. Alice Paul stitched the 36th star on her banner, as shown here. A few days later, the 19th Amendment became the law of the land.

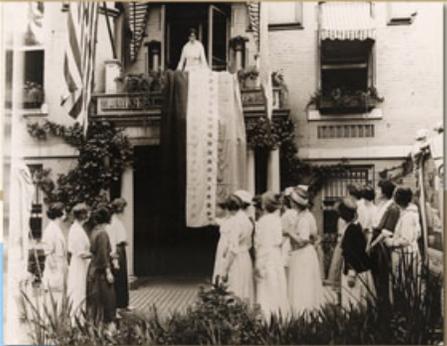
**THIS WEEK IN HISTORY** August 26, 1920:  
**19th Amendment goes into effect**

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

States that ratified the 19th Amendment by 1919



Alice Paul hangs out a 36-star banner to celebrate the ratification of the 19th Amendment.



## Remembering When...

For decades, film buffs have argued about who should be considered the greatest male dancer in Hollywood history. Some cite Fred Astaire's smooth and rhythmic style, while others might choose Gregory Hines, James Cagney, Donald O'Connor, or Patrick Swayze. But for many people, Gene Kelly is the name that first comes to mind. Kelly's style was tough and athletic while still remaining graceful. And it didn't hurt that he was one of the handsomest actors of his time. Eugene Curran Kelly was born on August 23rd, 1912. He grew up in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. His mother wanted her sons Gene and James to be cultured, so she enrolled them in dance classes when they were young. This was a problem for two reasons. For one thing, neighborhood boys used to taunt the Kelly boys for taking so-called "sissy" dance classes. And for another thing, Gene was much more into his hometown baseball team. However, becoming a teenager caused him to change his mind.

Remember When . . .

# Gene Kelly

(1912-1996)

In "Singin' in the Rain," 1952

With Leslie Caron in "An American in Paris," 1951

At home, 1986

"It's true: I didn't want to be a dancer. What I really wanted to be was a shortstop for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Then at 14, I discovered girls, and began to study dancing diligently."

Photo: Allen Warren, CCA-SA-Lic. 3.0

After graduating from high school, Kelly went to college, but he had to drop out at the start of the Great Depression. Gene and another brother, Fred, made money for the family by dancing at Pittsburgh talent contests. As his local renown spread, his family opened the Gene Kelly Studio of the Dance. This venture helped Kelly pay for college at the University of Pittsburgh, and even attend law school for a couple of months before dropping out to be a fulltime dancer, choreographer, and actor. Why do you think the dance studio did so well, even during the Depression? Soon, Gene Kelly was acting, singing, and dancing on Broadway as well as in Pittsburgh. He started to get larger roles and won the lead in several big shows such as “The Time of Your Life” and “Pal Joey.” These roles forced Hollywood to take notice, and he was soon starring in musicals with Judy Garland, Lucille Ball, and Rita Hayworth. By the mid forties, he could seemingly do anything he wanted. In “Anchors Aweigh,” he performed a dance number with an animated character. Do you remember which animated character danced with Kelly? (Jerry, the mouse from “Tom and Jerry” cartoons.) Kelly was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor for this movie. The hits just kept on coming for Gene Kelly. He choreographed and co-directed “On the Town,” and performed a 17-minute dream ballet in “An American in Paris,” which won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1952. And the 1952 movie “Singin’ in the Rain,” which Kelly also co-directed and choreographed, is still thought of as perhaps the greatest film musical of all time. Can you still remember Kelly’s classic performance of the title song? With the decline of old-fashioned musicals, Kelly transitioned smoothly into directing films such as “A Guide for the Married Man” and “Hello, Dolly!” Kelly became a regular performer on TV variety shows and in movie cameo roles. He is also still well known for narrating the “That’s Entertainment!” movies. Kelly was married three times. His third wife, Patricia, was just 30 when the 77-year old Kelly married her in 1990. They were still together when Kelly died in 1996 at the age of 83. Besides his wife, he was survived by three children from his first two marriages.



PHOTOS BY JEENAH MOON — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

People arrive before the "We Love NYC: The Homecoming Concert" in New York's Central Park on Saturday. The concert eventually was called off because of weather.

# Crowd told to leave concert in Central Park due to weather

By The Associated Press

**NEW YORK** » The crowd at a superstar-laden Central Park concert meant to celebrate New York City's recovery from the coronavirus was asked to leave because of severe weather as Hurricane Henri approached. New York City police Saturday night told concertgoers via Twitter to "calmly move to the nearest exits and proceed to areas outside of the park. This is NOT an emergency."

Mayor Bill de Blasio's office did not provide further information about the status of the concert.

The highly promoted "Homecoming Concert" featured Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon, Jennifer Hudson, Carlos Santana,

LL Cool J and Andrea Bocelli among the performers.

Saturday's event comes after a series of hip-hop concerts in the past week at outdoor venues around the city.

The concert kicked off amid worries about the contagious delta variant of COVID-19.

New York City over the past week has averaged just under 2,000 new cases of COVID-19 a day, according to state statistics. That's up from just under 200 cases per day in late June. Only about 54% of city residents are fully vaccinated against the virus.

Those who attend the concert, the majority of tickets for which were handed out for free, had to show proof of vaccination.

A patron shows a proof of vaccination to enter before Saturday's concert to celebrate New York City's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.



# Boosters on the way as Delta variant rages

## What happened

With the Delta variant continuing to drive soaring case counts, hospitalizations, and outbreaks in newly reopened schools, the Biden administration this week recommended that Covid booster shots be made available to most fully vaccinated Americans from Sept. 20. Citing the threat from the highly contagious Delta strain and mounting evidence that vaccine efficacy against infection and mild disease wanes over time—although protection against serious disease and death remains strong—federal officials said recipients of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines should get a third dose eight months after their second shot. The boosters will help the U.S. stay ahead of the virus, said White House medical adviser Anthony Fauci. “You don’t want to find yourself behind, playing catch-up.” The FDA and CDC are expected to approve the booster plan in the coming weeks. Officials said a booster will also likely be needed for people who received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

More than 900,000 new Covid cases were reported last week, the highest number since February, and more than 91,000 people are currently hospitalized with the disease, up 17 percent in a week. The surge is being driven by rocketing caseloads in the South: There are now no intensive-care beds available in Alabama, and more than 90 percent of ICU beds are occupied in Texas, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida. A record 1,900 children are now in the hospital with Covid, and some 121,000 tested positive for the virus last week. “This is not last year’s Covid,” said Sally Goza, former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Tending to a patient in a Houston hospital hallway

Abbott and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are playing to their bases by barring mask mandates in schools, said *The Wall Street Journal*. But President Biden has also tried to score points by bashing the two Republicans. These “mask wars are a political distraction.” What we really need is for our leaders to work together on getting more shots in arms—only 51 percent of the population is fully vaccinated—and delivering boosters to the immunocompromised. “Vaccines are the only way through the pandemic.”

## What the columnists said

Republicans are failing America’s children, said Renée Graham in *The Boston Globe*. Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves last week dismissed the need for school mask mandates, saying Covid in kids rarely amounts to “anything but the sniffles.” The next day, 13-year-old Makayla Robinson became the fifth Mississippi child to die from Covid. For children—especially the under-12s, who are not yet eligible for vaccines—a mask can be a lifesaver. But that simple truth is lost on a political party with values “akin to a death cult.”

Public-health experts have offered “some spectacularly mixed messages” on boosters, said Jim Geraghty in *NationalReview.com*. As the Delta variant spread in Israel in early July, the country’s health ministry announced that Pfizer’s vaccine was now only 64 percent effective in preventing infection, down from about 95 percent in May. The next day, the CDC and the FDA declared that Americans wouldn’t need a booster, and—even as more studies showed the shots’ waning effectiveness—kept to that message until this week. Small wonder, then, that at least 1 million Americans have already gone rogue and skipped a booster dose.

## The census: A shrinking white majority

"At some point, at least in most functioning democracies, demography does become destiny," said Harold Meyerson in *Prospect.org*. Between 2010 and 2020, U.S. Census data revealed last week, the white population experienced a "stunning numerical and percentage decline." Thanks to a low birth rate among whites, immigration, and a whopping 276 percent rise in the number of Americans who call themselves multiracial, the country went from 64 percent white to 58 percent, and is "clearly on track to lose its white majority at some point in the 2040s." This might seem like bad news for the Republican Party, "which finds its strongest support among whites," said Justin Gest in *CNN.com*. But because much of America's relatively sluggish 7.4 percent population growth occurred in GOP-controlled Sun Belt states, the Right can "delay and minimize" nonwhite political representation. Four of the six states that will gain seats in the House of Representatives in 2022 have GOP legislative majorities that will control the redistricting process.

"A perfect storm of factors" will help Republicans hold off demographic change, said Greg Sargent in *The Washington Post*. When states soon redistrict, Republicans know they can gain the five net

seats they need to claim the House majority in the 2022 elections through aggressive gerrymandering alone, even if Democratic congressional candidates get more votes in total. Nothing wrong with that, said Noah Wall in the *Washington Examiner*. "Redistricting is a partisan process—always has been and always will be." Democrats have extensively gerrymandered "deep-blue Maryland," yet some are still pushing for a "federal takeover of elections" through the For the People Act. Congressional redistricting is inevitable in a growing nation, and it's better to have elected representatives do it than an "independent commission" of unaccountable bureaucrats.

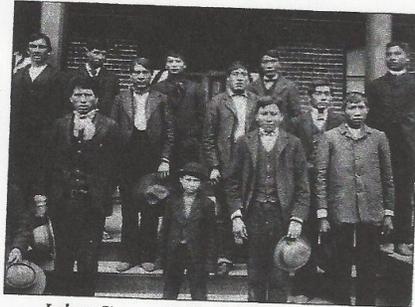
For the white nativists who now control the GOP, said Charles Blow in *The New York Times*, the "browning of America" must be "downright frightening." Republicans are doing their best to "suppress nonwhite votes" so they can continue to control purple states like Georgia and Michigan. That's "why the Democratic-controlled Senate's inability and unwillingness to alter the filibuster to pass voter protection is so maddening." White America can't maintain its political dominance forever, but "people with power fight—sometimes to the end—to maintain it."

# Erasing Native American culture

The U.S. and Canada are starting to face their history of forcing indigenous children into abusive boarding schools.

## What was the schools' goal?

Simply put, cultural genocide. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the U.S. government and religious leaders used compulsory boarding schools to force young Native Americans to give up the languages and cultures of their ancestors, which were considered self-evidently inferior to a Christian, Western-style upbringing. Boarding schools were made mandatory for Native American children in 1891. This often meant forced separation from their families and communities. And because these schools were underfunded, crowded, and often unsanitary, thousands of students died of disease. Canada also coerced at least 150,000 indigenous children into a network of residential schools that were mostly run by the Catholic Church; last June, researchers uncovered 1,148 unmarked graves on the grounds of three schools. U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo people whose maternal grandparents were forced to board, has opened an investigation into America's boarding-school policy. "This attempt to wipe out Native identity, language, and culture," she wrote in a June *Washington Post* article, has "never been appropriately addressed."



Lakota Sioux at the Carlisle school, circa 1890

## Who ran boarding schools in the U.S.?

Of the 367 boarding schools for Native Americans known to have operated in the U.S., the federal government operated more than half, the Catholic Church about 100, and many others were run by various Protestant denominations. In 1879, the first off-reservation government school was founded by Richard Henry Pratt, an Army general who had overseen the education of Native American prisoners of war. The first 86 students recruited for the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pa., were Lakota Sioux. Pratt convinced Lakota leaders that education was critical to their people's survival, but later wrote that he had planned to make the children "hostages for the good behavior of their people." Pratt rejected then-popular notions of white biological superiority, but he said his mission for each student was to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man."

## What was life like for students?

They were essentially treated like prisoners. On arrival at the school, the long hair of both boys and girls—which had deep spiritual significance for many indigenous peoples—was typically shorn. Children were compelled to discard their traditional clothes and take English names. In later years, new students were doused with DDT. They were forbidden from speaking their own languages, and the ban was often enforced with corporal punishment. At both government- and church-run schools, physical and sexual abuse were rife. Students were expected to perform daily manual labor,

and instead of being allowed home, students were often sent on summer "outings" to local white families, where they worked as farmhands or domestic servants for little or no pay. Because of limited indoor plumbing in dorms and poor ventilation, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, the flu, and smallpox spread quickly. A student at Carlisle, Luther Standing Bear, recalled nearly half of his fellow Lakota classmates dying. At some institutions, students were expected to make coffins for their classmates in school woodshops.

## Was there any resistance?

Escapes were so common that some schools offered bounties for the return of runaways. Many parents also resisted sending their children away, though the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs could withhold food from those who refused to comply. In 1894, the Hopi residents in what is now Arizona fought against armed soldiers in an effort to keep their children at home. "Our children were taken by force," one Hopi leader later recalled. "They were dragged from the fields and from the rocks and from their homes, and if they hid away, they were shot at." Eventually, 19 Hopi men were arrested and sent to Alcatraz.

## When did the schools close?

In the 1960s and '70s, the Pan-Indian Movement demanded the right to a self-determined education; finally, in 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act abolished compulsory boarding-school education. Most of the remaining boarding schools closed soon after, but 15 schools are still taking boarders, with modified educational goals.

## How is this history being addressed?

Haaland has requested that the Department of the Interior make a final report next April. Last month, the Sicangu Lakota of South

## The scars of family separation

When they graduated, boarding-school students often found themselves alienated from their people, unable to speak their language, and lacking important life skills. Traumatized and shamed, many sank into poverty and substance abuse, which damaged their ability to raise their own children; indigenous people who were once separated from their parents frequently had their kids become wards of the state. Before the Indian Child Welfare Act, according to a report by the Association on American Indian Affairs, more than a quarter of Native American children nationwide had been taken from their parents for the children's safety, often to be placed in non-Native households. In states such as Minnesota, South Dakota, and Montana, indigenous children are still disproportionately represented in the foster-care system. "You have all of these people who were put through extreme abuse and neglect," said Sioux writer and former tribal judge Ruth Hopkins. "You have people who didn't really learn how to parent correctly."

Dakota successfully brought home the remains of nine children and teenagers who died at Carlisle. In 2008, the Jesuits paid \$5 million to 16 people who said they were sexually abused by clergy at a Washington state boarding school. So far, the Vatican has not issued a formal apology for the church's mistreatment of indigenous children in Catholic boarding schools. The United States government also has not issued a specific apology for forced boarding: A 2020 congressional bill that would have created a truth-and-reconciliation commission died in committee. Native American survivors and activists say that the work to reckon with this chapter of American history is just beginning. "This isn't some kind of isolated history chapter," said University of Iowa historian Jacki Thompson Rand, a member of the Choctaw Nation. "We're all still paying for it."