

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 or contact Frank directly at frankdamon@my.smccd.edu.

Man in the News

He is a former U.S. senator, presidential candidate, and secretary of state. He is now the first person to ever serve as the U.S. special presidential envoy for climate.

After graduating from Yale in 1962, he served in the Vietnam War, where he was wounded and won medals for his bravery. When he returned to the U.S., he became an anti-war activist before entering politics in Massachusetts.

From 1985 to 2013, he represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate. In 2004, he was the Democratic presidential candidate, but lost the election to George W. Bush. he served as Barack Obama's secretary of state from 2013 to 2017.

Two weeks ago, he traveled to Shanghai, China. There, he met with the Chinese special envoy for climate. They both pledged that their countries, which are the two largest carbon emitters on Earth, would work together to, quote, "tackle the climate crisis...with the urgency that it demands."



(John Kerry.)

New jobs plan focuses on crumbling U.S. infrastructure

Last month, President Biden introduced a new economic measure called the American Jobs Plan. This \$2 trillion package aims for two goals at once: creating millions of new jobs across the U.S., and shoring up the country's crumbling infrastructure. Infrastructure is all the physical and organizational structures that are needed for society to function. The American Jobs Plan proposes many solutions for the country's infrastructure problems. For one thing, it would put people to work modernizing about 20,000 miles of U.S. highways. Do you think this is a necessary effort?

The nation's railways, airports, and other transportation systems would also be targeted in this effort, as would 10,000 structurally deficient bridges. The map here shows the states with the highest percentage of bridges that need repair. In Rhode Island, the smallest state in the U.S., 22.3 percent of the state's bridges are deficient — the highest percentage in the country.

The American Jobs Plan would also create jobs for people to upgrade the nation's electrical grid, especially the parts that are controlled by computers. Why is this such a high priority? (People have speculated that terrorists could hack into these computer systems and disrupt electrical systems all over the U.S.) The plan would also seek equity by providing clean water and internet service to all Americans.

New jobs plan focuses on crumbling U.S. infrastructure

Photo: Metropolitan Transit Authority, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0



Fixing tracks after derailment on Long Island Rail Road

U.S. states with highest percentage of deficient bridges



The \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan would:

- Modernize 20,000 miles of highways and roads
- Repair 10,000 bridges
- Upgrade electrical grid
- Bring clean water & affordable internet to entire U.S.

While many of the previously mentioned changes would easily fall under the traditional definition of “infrastructure,” it also includes aspects that would expand that idea. From Sen. Bernie Sanders’ quote here, what kinds of systems are contained in the concept of “human infrastructure”? (Education, childcare, health care, higher wages, lower drug costs, and so on.) Do you think this stretches the concept too far? Or is it a way to make our lives better and more efficient?

For example, the American Jobs Plan includes increased access to childcare, making it easier and more affordable so that people have more incentives to work instead of staying home. Another new provision seeks to increase wages for those who provide medical and other care for people that need it. This concept would provide additional stability for home healthcare workers, many of them are women of color and/or immigrants, usually do not make much money. Is this fair to them? Why or why not?

In addition, the American Jobs Act would put people to work updating about 2 million houses, schools, and office buildings across the country. These upgrades would focus on energy efficiency as well as structural integrity. The plan also emphasizes the importance of research and development programs. What does “research and development” mean? (The practice of brainstorming new and better ways to accomplish important tasks.)

Expanding the traditional definition of “infrastructure”

- Improved access to childcare
- Higher wages for care workers
- Upgrading buildings & homes
- More investment in research and development

Photo: Fort George G. Meade Public Affairs Office, CCA-SA-Lic. 2.0



"I happen to believe that when you talk about infrastructure, you've got to talk about human infrastructure. Education. Health care. Childcare. Good wages. Affordable prescriptions. That's human infrastructure."
— Senator Bernie Sanders

Political pundits say the American Jobs Plan has little chance in the U.S. Senate, which is split 50 to 50 between Democrats and Republicans. Why would Republicans object to Biden's plans? (For political purposes; to avoid spending taxpayer money, and so on.)

Some GOP lawmakers have put forth scaled-back and less expensive infrastructure bills of their own. One of the biggest objections has to do with price. President Biden says that much of the \$2 trillion plan could be funded by re-examining President Trump's corporate tax cuts. Under Trump, the rate was cut from 35 percent to 21 percent. The White House says that a rate of 28 percent would bring in a lot more money, while still preserving half of the tax cut.

Biden also thinks he could pay for infrastructure upgrades by simply making big companies in the U.S. pay their fair share of taxes. Large businesses often take advantage of loopholes and incentive programs to eliminate most or all of their tax liability. Amazon, for example, has often paid no taxes at all during recent years. Last year, the company actually paid \$2 billion in federal taxes. But this worked out to be less than ten percent of its \$20 billion increase in revenue in 2020. Why did Amazon do so well last year? (People had items delivered so they wouldn't have to go outside during the pandemic.)

How would we pay for the American Jobs Plan?

Corporate tax rates would increase by seven percent... and still be lower than they were six years ago.

"There are 91 Fortune 500 companies — the biggest companies in the world, including Amazon — [that] used various loopholes so they'd pay not a single solitary penny in federal income tax. I don't want to punish them, but that's just wrong."

— President Joe Biden



Amazon headquarters, Seattle, Washington

Photo: Joe Mabel, CCA-SA-Lic. 4.0

Sir David Attenborough endorses new plastic recycling technology

The man shown here is Sir David Attenborough. Who knows what Attenborough is famous for? (Writing and presenting nature documentaries for the British Broadcasting Company, including “Planet Earth,” and “Blue Planet.”) Most recently, Attenborough’s work has focused on the tremendous negative impact climate change is having on wildlife around the globe.

Recently, Attenborough was part of a promotional campaign for a U.K. company called Mura Technology, which is building a new recycling facility in England. This facility is said to be the first in the world capable of breaking down and recycling all types of plastic waste. What do you know about how plastic waste breaks down naturally in the wild? (It can take hundreds of years for many plastic products to biodegrade.) What does it mean for something to biodegrade? (To be broken down by living microorganisms like bacteria.) Over the last 12 years, Mura Technology has been developing a method of breaking down plastic waste using supercritical steam. This is a type of steam superheated under a great amount of pressure. Mura’s CEO says the company can break down any plastic polymer into its component elements, even plastics previously considered unrecyclable. These chemicals can then be used to make new plastic products. The company says this will help keep many plastic products out of landfills and our oceans. It hopes to eventually recycle a million tons of plastic a year.

Sir David Attenborough endorses new plastic recycling technology



Attenborough in 2015

“What’s so tragic about plastic pollution is that it is so totally unnecessary. The plastic in our oceans should never have found its way there in the first place.”

—David Attenborough

Estimates show that 300 million tons of plastic waste are produced globally every year. Much of this waste ends up in landfills, our oceans, and even our own bodies. And while the problem may seem unsolvable, scientists around the world are coming up with innovative solutions for dealing with plastic waste. In 2020, scientists in England discovered a new “superenzyme” that produces a type of bacteria capable of feeding on plastic waste. What is an enzyme? (Protein molecules in cells that speed up chemical reactions in living things.)

This superenzyme is capable of breaking down plastics in only a few days, rather than the hundreds of years it takes in the wild. Other scientists in Pakistan have discovered another enzyme, produced by the *Aspergillus tubingensis* fungus, that can break down plastics while providing food for the fungus. Experts are hopeful these enzymes could be used to quickly break down the plastics in landfills.

In Indonesia, a company called Evoware is trying to reduce the use of plastic packaging by making food wrappers out of seaweed. The company works with local seaweed farmers to make sandwich packaging and other biodegradable food storage options. And in the Netherlands, a company called PlasticRoad is creating new infrastructure using recycled plastic. On the screen, you see a bike path produced by PlasticRoad using recycled plastic material.

Solving the problem of plastic



PlasticRoad is making bike paths out of recycled plastics



The *Aspergillus tubingensis* fungus can break down plastic products

New solutions to the plastic problem:

- Super-enzymes can break down plastic waste
- Some fungi can dissolve plastic waste
- Packaging material made from natural, biodegradable sources like seaweed
- Roads and bike paths made from recycled plastic products

New Richard Wright novel to be published decades after his death

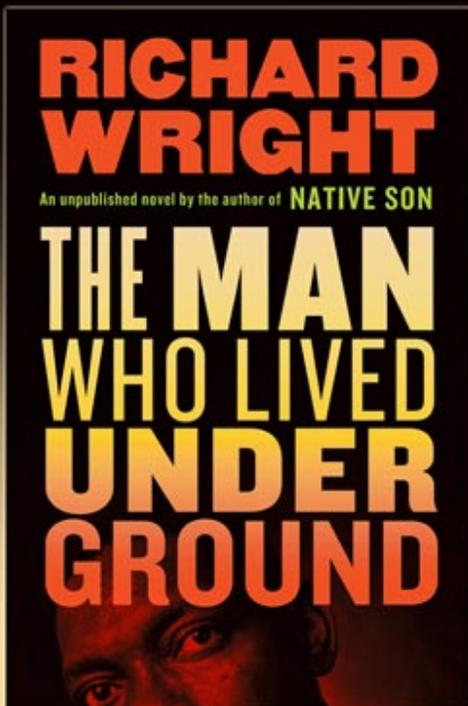
The man shown here is American author Richard Wright. Wright is most famous for his best-selling 1940 novel "Native Son." What do you know about this novel?

Wright's writing focused on the challenges facing Black Americans during the 20th century. His work depicts racism in vivid, sometimes disturbing detail. Today, Wright is considered one of the most important authors to write about the Black experience in the U.S. That's why so many people were excited on April 20th when the Library of America released a complete version of Wright's previously unpublished novel, "The Man Who Lived Underground." This novel was written in 1941, shortly after the publication of "Native Son." But his publisher rejected the manuscript even though Wright was their best-selling author.

Some critics say the publisher was expecting a more hopeful book. Instead, Wright's book was very dark, and contained strong depictions of racist violence, which the publisher thought their readers wouldn't accept. Why do you think Wright chose to describe instances of extreme racism in his novels? How do you think the average reader has changed since 1941?

"The Man Who Lives Underground" tells the story of a Black man who is falsely imprisoned, beaten by police, and forced to confess to a crime he didn't commit. He later escapes and hides below ground in the sewers, where he observes the outside world in secret and comes to see the world in a different way.

New Richard Wright novel to be published decades after his death



"I have never ... expressed myself in a way that flowed more naturally from my own personal background, reading, experience, and feelings than 'The Man Who Lived Underground.' "

— Richard Wright

Richard Wright was born on the Rucker Plantation near Natchez, Mississippi in 1908. His father was a sharecropper, and his mother was a schoolteacher. Both sets of Wright's grandparents were enslaved, but both his grandfathers fought in the Civil War and were granted their freedom in return for their service. Wright's father left the family when Wright was only six. After that, Wright spent much of his childhood in extreme poverty, moving from place to place. How do you think Wright's childhood informed his later writing?

In 1927, Wright left the South to move himself and his family to Chicago. He joined the Communist Party and wrote for a Communist newspaper called "The Daily Worker." He wrote "Uncle Tom's Children" a collection of novellas published in 1938. What is a novella? (A short novel.) The collection drew inspiration from real-life examples of racist violence that had taken place in the southern U.S. After moving to New York, Wright published "Native Son," which became a national bestseller and established him as a major voice in American fiction. The book is set in Chicago, and tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a young Black man shaped by societal forces, who commits terrible crimes.

In 1945, Wright published his memoir "Black Boy," which told the story of his growing up poor and Black in the South. The following year, Wright moved to Paris, France. He died there in 1960 at the age of 52.

Richard Wright published "Native Son" in 1940

Black Boy, Wright's memoir, was published in 1945

A marker celebrating the life of Richard Wright in Natchez, Mississippi.

"All literature is protest. You can't name a single literary work that isn't protest."
—Richard Wright

The collage features several key elements:

- Top Left:** A red and orange text box stating "Richard Wright published 'Native Son' in 1940".
- Top Right:** A map of the United States highlighting the Midwest, with a red dot in Chicago, Illinois. Neighboring states like Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, and Kentucky are also labeled.
- Center:** A photograph of a green historical marker in Natchez, Mississippi, which reads: "RICHARD N. WRIGHT - Noted African-American author of *Native Son* and *Black Boy* was born in 1908 near Natchez, where he spent his early childhood. His lifelong quest for freedom led him to Paris, France, where he died in 1960."
- Bottom Left:** The cover of the novel "Native Son" by Richard Wright, featuring a yellow background and the title in large black letters.
- Bottom Right:** The cover of the memoir "Black Boy" by Richard Wright, featuring a dark background with the title in large yellow letters.
- Bottom Center:** A quote in black text: "All literature is protest. You can't name a single literary work that isn't protest." —Richard Wright.

Country of the Week: The Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelagic nation in southeast Asia. What is an archipelago? (A cluster of small, neighboring islands.) It is close to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, and lies within the Pacific Ocean. The Philippines is made up of more than 7,000 islands. The country used to be almost completely covered in forests, but the amount of forest cover has been greatly reduced by logging.

Many of its native species are now endangered due to habitat loss. In spite of this, the Philippines is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. It is home to hundreds of endemic species, including the Philippine eagle, the Atlas moth, and the Philippine tarsier. The Philippine tarsier, which is only a few inches long, is one of the smallest primates in the world. What do you notice about it?

The Philippines has a population of more than 100 million. About one million people live in Manila, the capital. Manila is a major economic center, home to many large shopping malls, banks, and the Philippines's largest sea port. The economy of the Philippines is dependent on exports of electronic parts like semiconductors and microchips, and it has large shipbuilding and car manufacturing sectors as well. Fruit exports and tourism are also important to the country, and it is the world's largest exporter of coconuts. Rodrigo Duterte has been the president of the Philippines since 2016. He has been widely criticized for his policy of extrajudicial killings of drug users by government death squads



The islands of the Philippines have been inhabited for thousands of years. In 1565, they were colonized by Spain, which ruled the country for the next 300 years. In 1896, a group of Filipino revolutionaries, including Emilio Aguinaldo, began a war for independence. Two years later, they won the war, and Aguinaldo became the first president of the Philippines in 1899. The United States had aided the revolutionary fighters, and after the war, the U.S. invaded and took over the Philippines. Many Filipinos, including Aguinaldo, fought against the U.S. occupation, but American troops didn't leave until 1946, after a major world event. What event was this? (World War Two.)

In 1965, Ferdinand Marcos became president of the Philippines. He and his wife Imelda were notorious for using public money to fund their lavish lifestyles, including Imelda's vast shoe collection. In 1972, Marcos declared martial law. What is martial law? (A system of government where the military has complete control.)

Thousands of people were killed and tortured by the government during this period. Martial law remained in place until Marcos was deposed in 1986. The Philippines has a distinct culture, with its own language and values. It is famous for its cuisine, which blends European, Middle Eastern, and Asian flavors into a unique culinary tradition. Influences of indigenous cultures can also be seen in many parts of the Philippines. The AtiAtihan festival, which takes place every year on the third Sunday of January, mixes indigenous traditions with European Christianity.



This Week in History

This week marks the 35th anniversary of one of the worst man-made disasters in history. Where did this disaster take place? (In Chernobyl, a town in Ukraine.) This event had a very large effect on the people, animals, and the environment of Ukraine and surrounding countries, especially Belarus. It was also a huge disaster for the economy of the Soviet Union. In 1986, Ukraine was part of the United Soviet Socialist Republic, or Soviet Union. What was the Soviet Union? (A group of communist countries controlled by Russia for much of the 20th century.) Some say the disaster helped lead to the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Chernobyl was home to a nuclear power plant. Nuclear power is a type of energy created when atoms are split. This is called “fission.” The metal usually used to create nuclear energy is uranium. Atoms are the smallest units of matter. Splitting them creates an incredible amount of energy. It also creates waves of energy called radiation. These waves can be very harmful. Because of this, all the waste materials in nuclear power plants must be stored in special containers so they do not damage the environment. Would you be afraid to work in a nuclear power plant? Nuclear energy is just one source of power. Can you name others?



(Oil, natural gas, coal, wind power, solar energy, and so on.)

The disaster started at 1:23 in the morning on April 26, 1986. The crew in the Chernobyl plant wanted to test what would happen if the plant lost power. As part of the test, they switched off the normal safety systems. Then they cut the power in the nuclear reactor down to 25 percent of its normal level. No one is sure why the test did not go as planned, but the power suddenly dropped down to less than one percent. As the crew tried to correct this problem, there was a sudden power surge. What is a power surge? (A sudden huge increase in power.) This surge caused a huge explosion and a fire that burned for nine days. The picture on the right shows what the plant looked like after the explosion.

The explosion released dangerous radiation into the environment. Scientists think radiation levels might have been 30 or 40 times higher than the radiation from the atom bombs dropped on Japan in World War Two. More than 350,000 people had to be evacuated and resettled. An area extending out about 19 miles from all sides of the plant became known as the “Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.”

There are only about 180 humans living in this zone today. Many are older women still farming their land. Some experts say the area will not be safe for human habitation for more than 300 years; other estimates range as high as 20,000 years. However, in 2011, the Ukraine did open the Chernobyl site to visitors, and it has become popular with tourists. Would you be interested in visiting this site? Why or why not?

Experts have also found that wildlife in the area, including moose, deer, and wild boar, is similar to levels in nearby areas. Wolf populations were found to be even higher. Why do you think these animals are thriving in the area? (Because they are undisturbed by humans. Even though radiation is not good for wildlife, humans are even worse.) Are you surprised that the fox shown here seems so healthy? It is hard to figure out exactly how much death and disease was caused by the Chernobyl disaster. As of 2008, only 64 deaths were confirmed as being directly related to the tragedy. But other studies seem to show that the radiation caused health problems for tens of thousands of people, including thousands of deaths from cancer.

In the U.S. today, nuclear power accounts for about 20 percent of the electricity we use. But other disasters have caused many people to worry about the safety of nuclear power plants.

Faces and Places



Walter Mondale

Former Vice President Walter Mondale died at the age of 93 on April 19th. Mondale served as the vice-president of the United States, between 1977 and 1981, under then-President Jimmy Carter. Mondale was born and raised in Minnesota. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean war, and afterward, received a law degree from Macalester College. He was appointed Minnesota attorney general in 1960, before serving as a U.S. senator representing Minnesota from 1964 to 1976. Mondale himself ran for president on the Democratic ticket in 1984, choosing Geraldine Ferraro as his running mate. This was a historic choice as it made her the first woman chosen to run for that position on a major party ticket. The pair lost to Republicans Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush. After losing, Mondale returned to practicing law in Minnesota, but eventually returned to politics. President Bill Clinton appointed Mondale as the Ambassador to Japan in 1993.

Bernie Madoff

Bernie Madoff, the former Wall Street financial adviser behind one of the largest financial frauds in modern history, died in prison on April 14th. He was 82. Madoff and his brother operated an investment company in New York during the 1980s. And while the company began as a legitimate business, it was later revealed that Madoff was running a secret “Ponzi scheme” in which he used the funds of new investors to pay returns to old ones, all while enriching himself. Madoff was so respected in the financial industry at the time that he attracted famous investors, including Steven Spielberg and Kyra Sedgwick. In 2008, Madoff admitted to his family that his business was fraudulent. Shortly after, he was arrested, found guilty, and sentenced to a maximum of 150 years in prison. Altogether, Madoff is believed to have stolen between \$10 and \$17 billion from his investors. The U.S. government is still in the process of returning funds to the victims of Madoff’s scheme.

Chad

The president of Chad, Idriss Deby, was killed on April 19th during a conflict with rebels in the northern part of the country. Deby, 68 at the time of his death, was one of the longest-ruling leaders in Africa, having taken power in 1990. Deby’s death comes just a day after he was named the winner of a presidential election. His victory would have meant a sixth term in office. Deby was killed while visiting troops battling rebels near the border of Libya. Chad’s Transitional Military Council now says it will lead a transition period of 18 months before another election is held. Deby’s son, Mahamat, has been named interim president during this transitional period. Experts are now concerned about the nation’s stability, as Deby was an important ally for Western countries attempting to fight Islamic extremists in Africa.

Minnesota

On April 20th, after about 10 hours of deliberation, the jury in the trial of former Minnesota police officer Derek Chauvin reached a verdict. Chauvin was found guilty on all three counts, including the most serious charge of second-degree murder. This carries a sentence of up to 40 years in prison. Chauvin was on trial for killing George Floyd, a Black Minnesota man whose death prompted massive protests around the world last summer. Prosecutors in the trial relied on a video taken during Floyd's arrest, which showed Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes, while Floyd was handcuffed and on the ground. Medical experts who testified during the trial said that Floyd died of a lack of oxygen to his brain due to the pressure on his neck. After the verdict was announced, hundreds gathered in the streets of Minneapolis in celebration. President Biden made a statement after the verdict was released, asking Congress to act quickly to introduce police reform legislation.

Remembering When...

Everyone has always known that Dick Van Dyke is a very talented fellow. This legendary comedian, actor, dancer, and singer has entertained audiences all over the world for more than six decades. Recently, the 95-year-old Van Dyke made the news again, but not for a new film or TV show. Instead, he made headlines by pulling up to a group of unemployed people standing in a work line — and passing out money to everyone there. Why do you think he did this? (He said he wanted to help people whose livelihoods were destroyed by COVID-19.) What does this say about his character?

Richard Van Dyke grew up in Danville, Illinois. Too skinny for active duty in World War Two, he worked as a radio announcer and entertainer for the troops. After the war, he worked as a comedian, actor, and TV host. In 1960, he won the role of Albert Peterson in the Broadway musical “Bye Bye Birdie” alongside Chita Rivera. He won a Tony Award for his performance; he also ended up starring in the film version in 1963. Do you remember who else was in the movie “Bye Bye Birdie”? (Janet Leigh, Ann-Margret, Paul Lynde, and many others.) In 1961, CBS aired the first episode of “The Dick Van Dyke Show.” Here you see him with actress Mary Tyler Moore, who played his wife on the show. Do you remember their characters’ names? (Rob and Laura Petrie.) This sitcom is still one of the best-loved shows of all time. Although “The Dick Van Dyke Show” was not a hit at first, it slowly caught on around the country in its five-year run. Today, the show still stands as a huge achievement in television comedy. What made this show so popular?

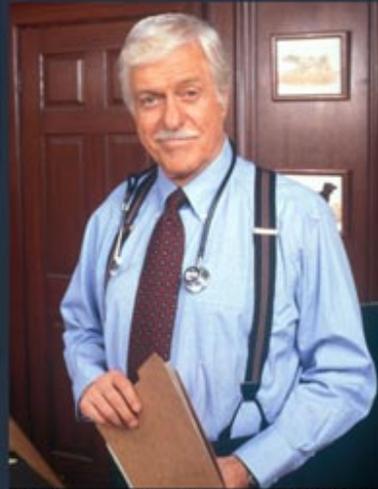
While still appearing on his TV show, Dick Van Dyke was able to make some very popular films. “Mary Poppins,” with Julie Andrews, was one of the biggest hits. Do you remember what his character did? (He was a chimney sweep.) Van Dyke made several more comedy films in the 1960s, including teaming with Julie Andrews again in “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.” In the early 1970s, he returned to TV with “The New Dick Van Dyke Show.” But during this period of his life, he was hiding a personal secret, Alcoholism. Van Dyke got treatment for this in 1972 and was very open about his problem. He’s been sober ever since. Although he never really stopped working, his career suffered for a long time. How do you think it helps other people when celebrities talk about their personal struggles?

Remember When...

Dick Van Dyke: Still active (and doing good deeds) at 95



With Mary Tyler Moore in
"The Dick Van Dyke Show"



"Diagnosis: Murder" (1993)

Photo: Gage Skidmore, CCA-SA-Lic. 3.0



Van Dyke in 2017

"I enjoy myself. I don't think about the way I am supposed to act at my age — or at any age."

In 1993, Dick Van Dyke returned to television in a big way with "Diagnosis: Murder." He played Mark Sloan, a doctor who helped his policeman son solve crimes. The actor who played his son was his real life son, Barry Van Dyke. This show ran for eight seasons on CBS and introduced Van Dyke to a whole new generation of fans. Were you a fan of "Diagnosis: Murder"? Do you like mysteries in general?

He has also appeared in new hit films such as "Night at the Museum" and, in a cameo role, "Mary Poppins Returns." Along with passing out money at work lines, Dick Van Dyke is still singing and dancing. He talked about this in his 2016 book, "Keep Moving: And Other Tips and Truths About Aging." In this book, Van Dyke shares wisdom from his long life. He also urges older people to do what makes them happy, and to try new things. He tells people: "Don't do anything that isn't fun." Is this good advice or unrealistic? As should be clear by now, "Keep Moving" is not just a book title for its author; it is also his personal philosophy.

Dick Van Dyke had four children with his first wife, whom he divorced in 1984. In 2012, when he was 86, he married Arlene Silver, a makeup artist, who is 46 years younger than he is. He said of their happy marriage: "She's very mature for her age, and I'm very immature for my age, so it's just about right."



Photos by Stephen Lam / The Chronicle

Mayor London Breed speaks during the predawn commemoration of the 115th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake.

Crowd rumbles back for quake tradition

Dozens gather early to mark anniversary of S.F.'s 1906 disaster

By Sam Whiting

David Hirtz didn't need an alarm clock to tell him it was 3:30 Sunday morning and time to get up. "It's in the DNA," he said an hour later, standing on a San Francisco street corner in the dark with his wife, Virginia. "My body knows when the 18th of April is here."

That meant the 115th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake that struck at 5:12 a.m., cracking open gas lines that fed a conflagration that did not stop until it hit Van Ness Avenue, heading west. Every year that moment is commemorated at Lotta's Fountain, where the city's stunned populace had met to search for lost loved ones and signs of hope.

Last year's commemoration was canceled because of the city's stay-home order, and this year's commemoration was not approved until Thursday night and was never announced. But Hirtz has been coming to these for 40 years. He had a hunch something would be happening — and he was right.

By the time they'd driven downtown from Sutro Heights, there were around 35 believers, including



San Francisco Sheriff Paul Miyamoto (left) and Fire Chief Jeanine Nicholson observe a moment of silence to honor the quake and fire's victims.

Geary. "I thought I would be here alone," quipped former Mayor Willie Brown, who claimed to have been passing through on his usual nocturnal wanderings, dressed in a varsity jacket with white leather sleeves and red trim to match his shoes.

London Breed, who arrived in

GAIL COLLINS

Take a Springtime Politics Quiz

SPRING IS HERE, FOLKS! I know things aren't really normal yet. But they seem to be coming around. Picnics! Movies! Sooner or later we'll all actually be going to work at . . . work. And before your socializing gets into full swing, let's make sure you're caught up on everything that's been going on in the wonderful world of politics.

1. Donald Trump celebrated his post-presidential Easter by . . .
A. Hiding some eggs where Eric and Don Jr. couldn't find them.
B. Claiming the election was rigged.
C. Donning bunny ears and passing out treats along our southern border.
2. Senator Steve Daines, Republican of Montana, took a trip to view the immigrant problems on the Mexican border and bemoaned the flood of drugs coming into the country. Daines said that back in his home state, methamphetamine, or "meth," used to be . . .
A. Sometimes confused with "math."
B. Nonexistent.
C. Homemade.

3. Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida is in trouble for his extremely bouncy sex life. Colleagues in the House reportedly claimed Gaetz used to . . .

- A. Try to sign them up for the Billie Eilish fan club.
- B. Wander around the House floor showing off nude photos of women he said he'd slept with.
- C. Sell them cookies on behalf of a niece in the Girl Scouts.

4. Lately, the tireless Mike Lindell of MyPillow fame has . . .

- A. Launched a new social media platform, presumably to remind people that he thinks Trump was re-elected.
- B. Introduced a series of stuffed models of right-wing militia leaders known as Fluffy Friends.
- C. Announced he'll be competing in professional wrestling matches as the guy who beats liberal opponents over the head with a throw pillow.

5. Marwa Elselehdar, Egypt's first female ship's captain, complained about

being barraged by rumors that . . .

- A. She'd been cast as the villain in the next James Bond movie.
- B. She was the captain of the megaship that blocked the Suez Canal.
- C. She was dating Matt Gaetz.

6. Andrew Giuliani, Rudy's son, is reportedly thinking about announcing that he's . . .

- A. Running for governor.
- B. Joining the Trump-in-exile forces as a full-time caddy.
- C. Hiring a new father.

7. Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, questioned whether Joe Biden was "really in charge" and pointed to his . . .

- A. Failure to keep Congress updated on budget plans.
- B. Inconsistent foreign policy.
- C. Low level of tweeting.

8. The Air Force is developing a new presidential jet, with décor that's inspired by . . .

- A. The peregrine falcon.

B. The bald eagle.

C. The German shepherd.

9. Joe Biden's middle name is . . .

- A. Gamaliel.
- B. Robinette.
- C. Hank.

10. In a speech to Republican donors at Mar-a-Lago, Trump referred to Mitch McConnell as . . .

- A. "That guy with no chin."
- B. A "dumb son of a bitch."
- C. "The Louisville loser."

11. Gov. Ron DeSantis has been trying to prohibit cruise lines in Florida from . . .

- A. Requiring their passengers be vaccinated.
- B. Constantly playing "Banana Boat Song."
- C. Serving dolphinburgers.

12. We all remember that way back at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, DeSantis declared that . . .

- A. Professional wrestling was an "essential service."

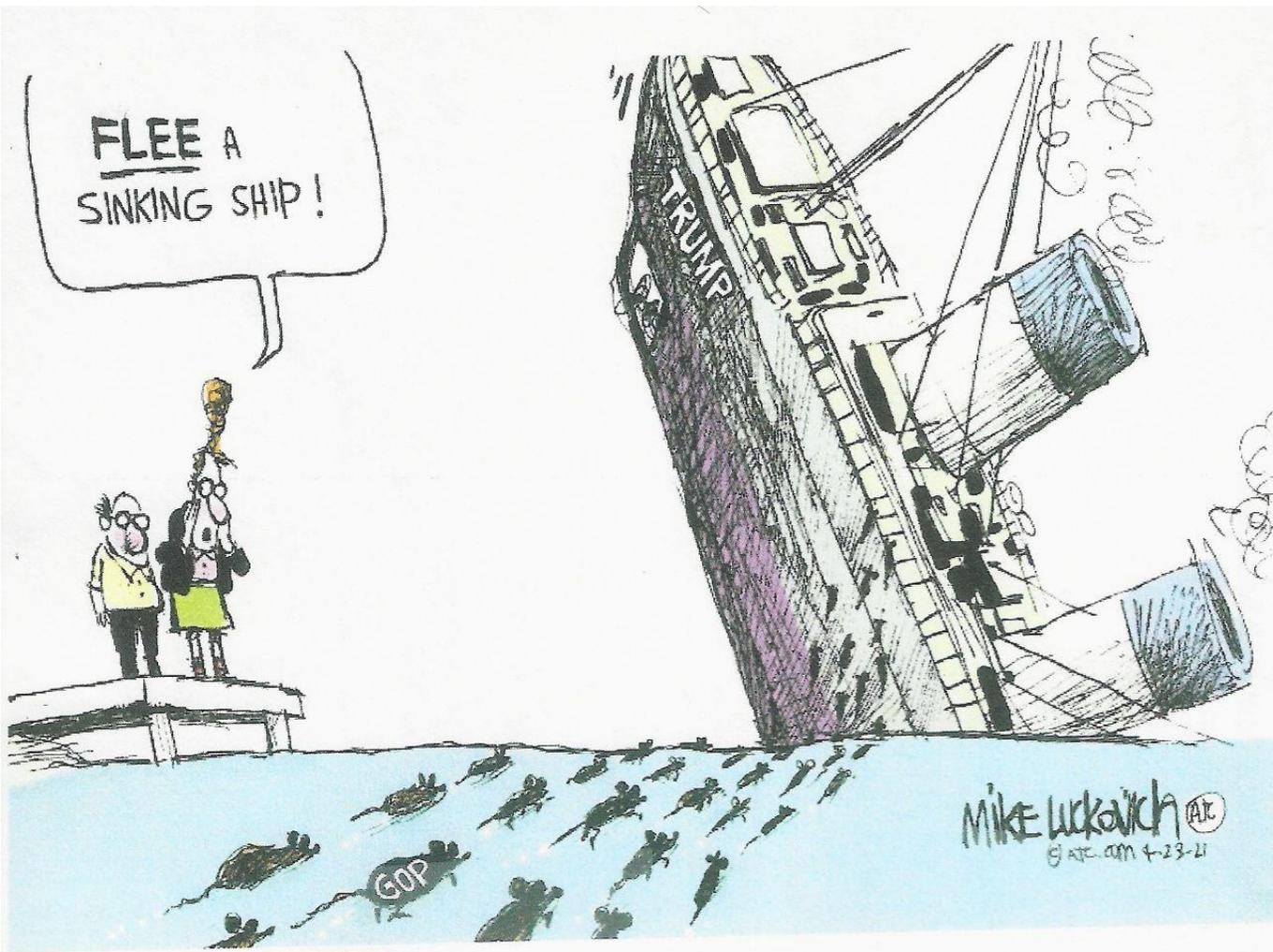
B. "Nobody ever got sick from eating at a beach restaurant."
C. Miami was the "Covid Fun Capital."

13. When Texas was hit with a terrible storm, floods and power outages, Senator Ted Cruz responded by quickly . . .

- A. Reporting for duty as a volunteer at a hostel for the newly homeless.
- B. Recording a song called "Democrats Dumped the Water."
- C. Flying to Cancún, Mexico.

14. When the former House Speaker John Boehner published a memoir that was extremely critical of Cruz, the senator . . .

- A. Told supporters that the First Amendment covered "dolts, too."
- B. Suggested donors might get to vote on whether to machine gun, chain-saw or just burn the book.
- C. Refused to comment, claiming he was still too busy helping with the storm cleanup.



THE FIRST STEP



©TIMES TRIUNE
CAPTION, PA

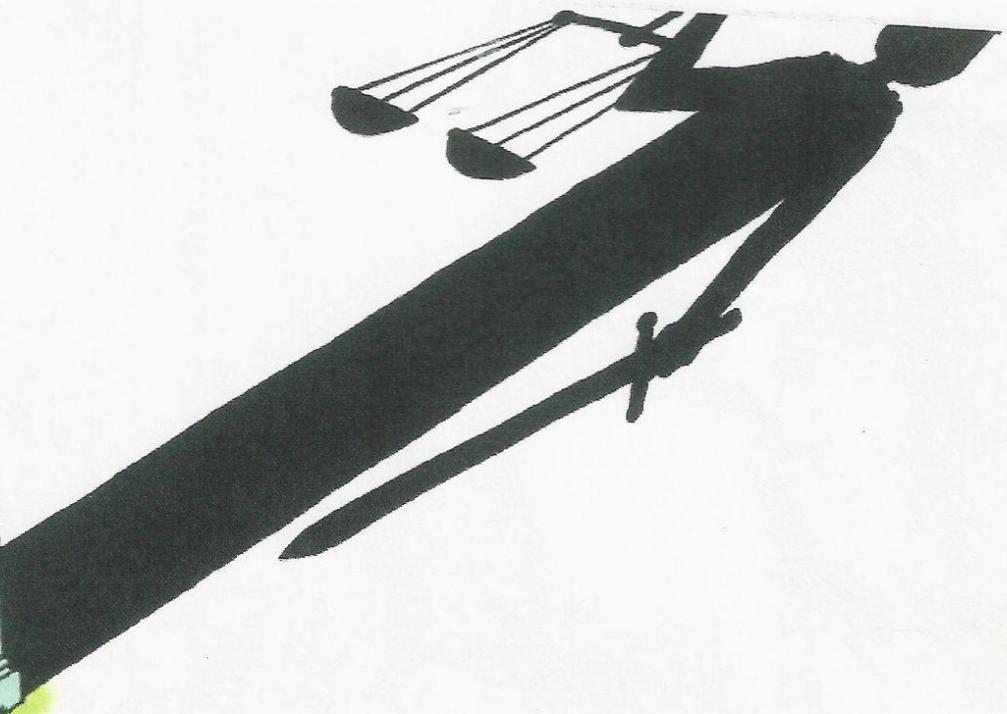
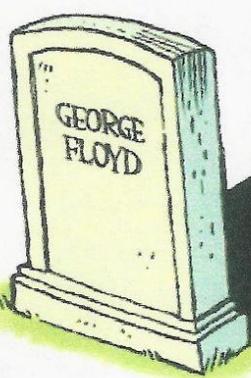
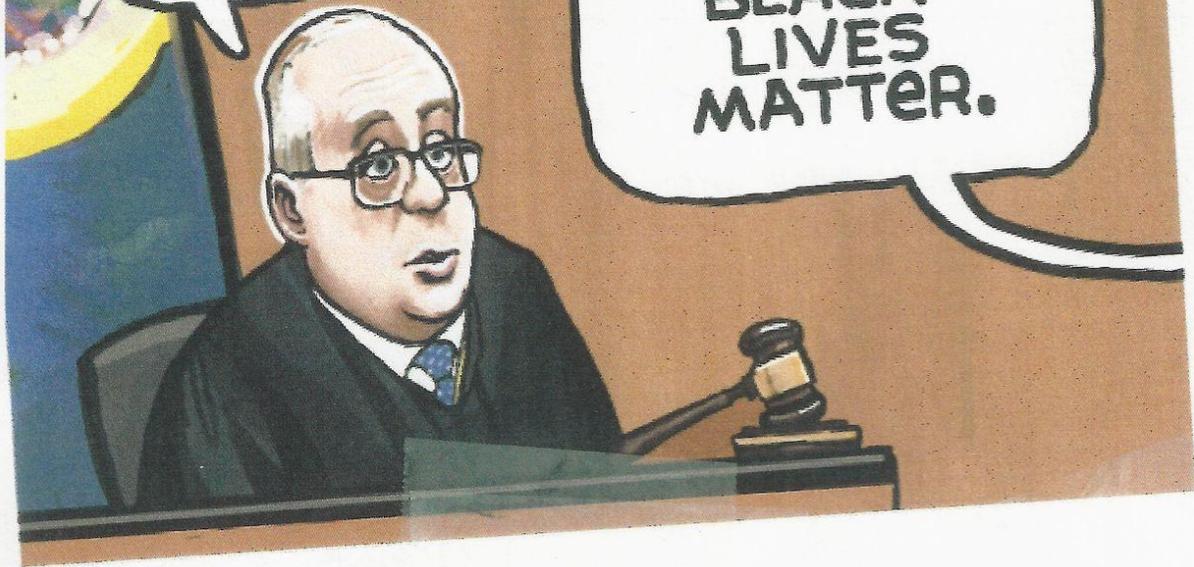
THE JOURNEY
OF A THOUSAND
MILES BEGINS
WITH A SINGLE
STEP?



TRIBUNE
ROCK

HAVE YOU
REACHED
YOUR
VERDICT?

Yes, YOUR
HONOR —
We, THE JURY,
FIND THAT
BLACK
LIVES
MATTER.



The Other Side of Mondale

Amy Klobuchar

ON MONDAY night we lost my friend and mentor Walter Mondale, known to friends as Fritz. In my home state of Minnesota we were proud to call Fritz our attorney general, our senator and our vice president.

On the national stage he shined as a young state attorney general who championed the right to counsel. As a senator he was a leader in the fight for civil rights and housing legislation and — way ahead of his time — warned of the need for intelligence oversight and privacy protections. He reshaped the vice presidency and served as a true partner to President Jimmy Carter, someone who wasn't just a figurehead but instead a close adviser and confidant, deserving of a place in "the room where it happens."

In our state we were lucky enough to see a different side of Fritz as well. He was the husband and father who lovingly took care of his wife, Joan, and daughter, Eleanor, through heartbreaking illnesses. He was a model for anyone who wonders what life would be like if the job ends, or life takes a bad turn. It was not just the decency he displayed on the local and national political stage that made him stand out. It was the dignity he brought home with him in the wake of defeat. He didn't crawl under a desk or complain about his losses.

The man who had played a pivotal role in the Camp David peace accords between Menachem Begin of Israel and Anwar Sadat of Egypt would happily talk Mideast peace with a cashier at the grocery store. He'd share stories from his time as ambassador to Japan with students at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. And most important, he took on the mission of preparing the next generation of leaders for the next big deci-

The former vice president was my role model — and my friend.

sion by serving as a mentor so many. And I know that when the jury verdict in the trial of George Floyd's murder was read, Fritz Mondale was with us rooting for justice.

My first job in politics was as a college intern in Vice President Mondale's office in 1980 during his last year in office. I went to Washington with grandiose visions of writing big briefings on big issues. Instead I was assigned to furniture inventory, which meant I had to write down the serial numbers of every lamp, table and chair provided by the government for the use of the vice president and his staff

As I like to remind students, I learned two things from that job: One, Walter Mondale was scrupulously honest. Nothing was missing. Second, take your jobs seriously, even when they aren't exactly what you planned. Thanks to him, that was my first job in Washington. And, again thanks to him, senator was my second.

It was Walter Mondale who encouraged me to run for Senate, which included his insistence that I get my reasons for running down to a 30-second elevator speech. "That's today's politics," he explained.

This resulted in a series of phone calls, with me earnestly reciting my 30 seconds and him responding with his typical Norwegian understatement: "That's just not good enough. Call me back in an hour." This went on for most of a day until I could finally recite those 30 seconds of reasons, eventually taking them to the cornfields of southern Minnesota, the iron ore mines in the north, and ultimately, the halls of the Capitol. He did that for so many because politics was never just about him. When he picked Geraldine Ferraro to be his running mate during his bid for the presidency in 1984, he assured me, and so many other young women, not to mention countless little boys and girls around the world who watched that day, that anything and everything was possible.

I still remember what Ms. Ferraro was wearing that day — the red dress, the string of pearls, the confidence. And I remember how proud he was to stand by her side. In fact, it was my experience with Vice President Mondale that encouraged me to believe that someday I, too, could actually run for office.

On the wall in the Carter Museum in Atlanta are Vice President Mondale's words uttered shortly after their 1980 defeat, summing up their four years in office: "We told the truth. We obeyed the law. We kept the peace." I wrote those words down once on a piece of paper at the museum and slipped them in my purse. Through the Trump years, those words were my touchstone.

We told the truth. We obeyed the law. We kept the peace. That is the minimum we should expect from our public servants. With Walter Mondale, we got that and so much more.

He was a small-town boy, the son of a minister who rose to the second-highest office in the land, with a strong moral core that defined his every action. He set a high bar for himself, and for his entire life he kept passing it and raising it, passing it and raising it.

As our country's political winds have whipped back and forth in every direction over the past decades, Walter Mondale remained true to his North Star compass of goodness and decency. I can't think of a better role model. □

AMY KLOBUCHAR represents Minnesota in the U.S. Senate and was a candidate for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

WALTER MONDALE, 1928-2021

Democratic lion served Carter as vice president

By Doug Glass

MINNEAPOLIS — Former Vice President Walter Mondale, a liberal icon who lost the most lopsided presidential election after bluntly telling voters to expect a tax increase if he won, died Monday in Minneapolis. He was 93.

The death of the former senator, ambassador and Minnesota attorney general was announced in a statement from his family. No cause was cited.

Mondale followed the trail blazed by his political mentor, Hubert Humphrey, from Minnesota politics to the U.S. Senate and the vice presidency, serving under Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981.

In a statement Monday night, Carter said he considered Mondale "the best vice president in

our country's history." He added: "Fritz Mondale provided us all with a model for public service and private behavior."

Mondale's own try for the White House, in 1984, came at the zenith of Ronald Reagan's popularity. His selection of Rep. Geraldine Ferraro of New York as his running mate made him the first major-party presidential nominee to put a woman on the ticket, but his declaration that he would raise taxes helped define the race.

On election day, he carried only his home state and the District of Columbia. The electoral vote was 525-13 for Reagan — the biggest landslide in the Electoral College since Franklin Roosevelt defeated Alf Landon in 1936. (Sen. George McGovern got 17 electoral votes in his 1972 defeat, winning Mas-



Brant Ward / The Chronicle 1984

Walter Mondale appeared at San Jose State University during the 1984 presidential campaign. He lost to Ronald Reagan.

sachusetts and Washington, D.C.)

"I did my best," Mondale said the day after the election, and blamed no one but himself.

"I think you know I've never really warmed up to television," he said. "In fairness to television, it never really warmed up to me."

Mondale began his career in Washington in 1964 when he was appointed to the Senate to replace Humphrey, who had resigned to become vice president. Mondale was elected to a full six-year term in 1966. In 1972, Mondale won re-election.

His Senate career was marked by advocacy of social

issues such as education, housing, migrant workers and child nutrition. Like Humphrey, he was an outspoken supporter of civil rights.

Mondale tested the waters for a presidential bid in 1974 but ultimately decided against it. In 1976, Carter chose Mondale as No. 2 on his ticket and went on to unseat Gerald Ford.

As vice president, Mondale had a close relationship with Carter. He was the first vice president to occupy an office in the White House, rather than in a building across the street. Mondale traveled extensively on Carter's behalf, and advised him on domestic and foreign

affairs.

Over his lifetime, Mondale never backed away from his liberal principles.

"I think that the country more than ever needs progressive values," he said in 1989.

The son of a Methodist minister and a music teacher, Walter Frederick Mondale was born Jan. 5, 1928, in tiny Ceylon, Minn. He was only 20 when he served as a congressional district manager for Humphrey's successful Senate campaign in 1948. His education, interrupted by a two-year stint in the Army, culminated with a law degree from the University of Minnesota.

Mondale began a law practice in Minneapolis and ran the successful 1958 gubernatorial campaign of Democrat Orville Freeman, who appointed Mondale state attorney general in 1960.

After his White House years, Mondale served from 1993-96 as President Bill Clinton's ambassador to Japan, fighting for U.S. access to markets.

Mondale's wife, Joan, died in 2014. The couple had two sons, Ted and William, and a daughter, Eleanor.

Peter Warner, 90, Seafarer Who Found Group of Shipwrecked Boys, Dies

By CLAY RISEN

Peter Warner, an Australian seafarer whose already eventful life was made even more so in 1966 when he and his crew discovered six shipwrecked boys who had been living on an uninhabited island in the South Pacific for 15 months, died on April 13 in Ballina, New South Wales. He was 90.

His death was confirmed by his daughter Janet Warner, who said he had been swept overboard by a rogue wave while sailing near the mouth of the Richmond River, an area he had known for decades. A companion on the boat, who was also knocked into the water, pulled Mr. Warner to shore, but attempts to revive him were unsuccessful.

The story of the 1966 rescue, which made Mr. Warner a celebrity in Australia, began during a return sail from Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga, where he and his crew had unsuccessfully requested the right to fish in the country's waters. Casually casting his binoculars at a nearby island, 'Ata, that was thought to be uninhabited, he noticed a burned patch of ground.

"I thought, that's strange that a fire should start in the tropics on an uninhabited island," he said in a 2020 video interview. "So we decided to investigate further."

As they approached, they saw a naked teenage boy rushing into the water toward them; five more quickly followed. Recalling that some island nations imprisoned convicts on islands like 'Ata, he told his crew to load their rifles.

But when the boy, Tevita Fatai Latu, who also went by the name Stephen, reached the boat, he told Mr. Warner that he and his friends had been stranded for more than a year, living off the land and trying to signal for help from passing ships.

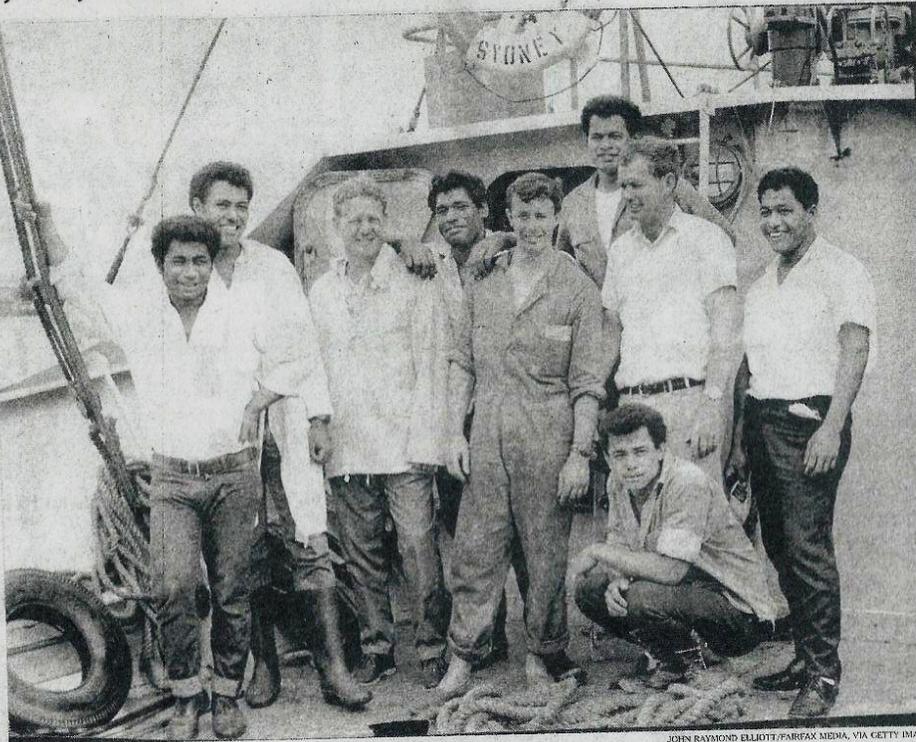
Mr. Warner, still skeptical, radioed Nuku'alofa.

"After 20 minutes," he said, "a very tearful operator came on the radio, and then amongst tears he said: 'It's true. These boys had been given up for dead. Funerals have been held. And now you have found them.'"

In June 1965 the boys, all students between 13 and 16 years old from a boarding school in Nuku'alofa, had stolen a 24-foot boat and gone for what was intended as a maritime joy ride. A few hours into their trip, though, a fierce wind broke their sail and rudder, setting them adrift for eight days.

As they later told Mr. Warner, they finally spotted 'Ata, about 100 miles south of Tongatapu, the main island of Tonga. It had once been home to about 350 people, but in 1863 a British slave trader kidnapped about 150 of them, and the Tongan king relocated the rest to another island, where they would be protected.

At first the boys lived off raw



JOHN RAYMOND ELLIOTT/FAIRFAX MEDIA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Peter Warner, third from left, in 1968 with members of his crew, which included the six Tongan teenagers he had rescued from an uninhabited island in the South Pacific two years earlier. The story of the rescue captivated Australia and made Mr. Warner a celebrity there. From far left, Mr. Warner in 1967 and in 2017.



STUART WILLIAM MACGLADRIE/FAIRFAX MEDIA, VIA GETTY IMAGES



SHAARTE TER HORST

their fortunes improved — amid the rubble they discovered a machete, domesticated taro plants and a flock of chickens descended from the ones left behind by the previous inhabitants. They also managed to start a fire, which they kept burning for the rest of their stay.

They built a makeshift settlement, with a thatched-roof hut, a garden and, for recreation, a badminton court and an open-air gymnasium, complete with a bench press. One of the boys, Kolo Fekitoa, fashioned a guitar out of debris from the boat, and they began and ended every day with

gathering food and watching for ships. If a fight broke out, the antagonists had to walk to opposite ends of the island and return, ideally having cooled off. When Stephen broke his leg, the others fashioned a splint; his leg healed perfectly.

"When I think back to our time on the island, I realize we really learned a lot," Stone Filipe Totau, known as Mano, said in an interview with Vice this year. "And when I compare it to what I gained at school, I think I learned more on the island. Because I learned how to trust myself."

Back in Tonga, Mr. Warner was greeted as a hero. King Taufa'ahau

self. But the owner of the stolen boat was not in a celebratory mood, and he had the boys arrested. He dropped the charges after Mr. Warner offered to compensate him.

The story captivated Australia; a year later the Australian Broadcasting Corporation sent Mr. Warner and the boys back to the island to recreate aspects of their ordeal for a film crew. Other documentaries and newspaper features followed.

The news media cast the story as a real-life version of "Lord of the Flies," William Golding's 1954 novel about a group of boys stranded on an island who descend into murderous anarchy. But this was nothing like Mr. Golding's book: The six boys flourished in their spontaneous community, suggesting that cooperation, not conflict, is an integral feature of human nature.

"If millions of kids are required to read 'Lord of the Flies,' maybe they should also be required to learn this story as well," the Dutch historian Rutger Bregman, who wrote about the episode in his

view.

Peter Raymond Warner was born on Feb. 22, 1931, in Melbourne, Australia, to Arthur George Warner and Ethel (Wakefield) Warner. Arthur Warner was one of the country's wealthiest men, having built a manufacturing and media empire, and he expected his son to follow him in the family business.

But Peter was uninterested; he preferred boxing and sailing, and at 17 he ran away from home to join a ship's crew. When he returned a year later, his father made him go to law school at the University of Melbourne.

He lasted six weeks. He ran away again, this time to sail for three years on Swedish and Norwegian ships. Quick with languages, he learned enough Swedish to pass the master mariner's exam, allowing him to captain even the largest seagoing vessels.

He eventually returned to the family fold, working for his father during the day and studying accounting at night. But he never left the sea. He won the annual

A real-life 'Lord of the Flies' was just one of his many adventures.

ing against his friend Rupert Murdoch. In 1963 he placed fourth in the Transpacific Yacht Race, a 2,225-mile dash between California and Hawaii.

In 1955 he became engaged to Justine Dickson — and immediately went to sea for five months, telling his fiancée it would be "my last fling," as he recounted in a 1974 interview. He returned two days before the wedding, and afterward the couple took a five-month honeymoon aboard a cargo ship sailing between Australia and Japan.

Along with his daughter Janet, his wife survives him, as do another daughter, Carolyn Warner; a son, Peter; and seven grandchildren.

In 1965 Mr. Warner bought several crayfish boats, which he operated around Tasmania. But the grounds around Australia were overfished, and he ventured further and further east, eventually taking him to Tonga — and his encounter with 'Ata.

After he discovered the six boys, Mr. Warner moved with his family to Tonga, where they lived for 30 years before returning to Australia. He hired all six as crew members; he remained especially close to Mr. Totau, who sailed with him for decades.

In 1974, they were fishing near the Middleton Reef, about 300 miles east of Australia, when Mr. Totau spied four sailors on a small island, where they had been stranded for 46 days.

Mr. Warner converted to the Baha'i faith in 1990 and later gave up commercial fishing to start a company that harvested and sold tree nuts.

He wrote three books of memoirs, the second of which, "Ocean of Light: 30 Years in Tonga and the Pacific" (2016), detailed his encounter at 'Ata.

Last year Mr. Bregman, the historian, published an excerpt from his book in The Guardian. It garnered more than seven million page views and set off a new round of interest in the boys' story, including offers from film production companies. In May 2020 it was announced that the four surviving boys, now men in their late 60s and early 70s, along with Mr. Bregman and Mr. Warner, had sold the film rights to New Regency.

Although he was accused by some of trying to win fame off the Tongans' story, Mr. Warner always insisted that it was theirs to tell, and that he would rather spend his time sailing.

"I'd prefer," he said in 1974, "to fight mother nature than human



Dreamstime / Tribune News Service

"It's a great study in providing strong evidence that sleep is really a risk factor," said Dr. Kristine Yaffe.

HEALTH

Sleeping too little in middle age may boost dementia risk

By Pam Belluck

Could getting too little sleep increase your chances of developing dementia?

For years, researchers have pondered this and other questions about how sleep relates to cognitive decline. Answers have been elusive because it is hard to know if insufficient sleep is a symptom of the brain changes that underlie dementia — or if it can actually help cause those changes.

Now, a large new study reports some of the most persuasive findings yet to suggest that people who don't get enough sleep in their 50s and 60s may be more likely to develop dementia when they are older.

The research, published Tuesday in the journal *Nature Communications*, has limitations but also several strengths. It followed

beginning when they were 50 years old. It found that those who consistently reported sleeping six hours or less on an average weeknight were about 30% more likely than people who regularly got seven hours sleep (defined as "normal" sleep in the study) to be diagnosed with dementia nearly three decades later.

"It would be really unlikely that almost three decades earlier, this sleep was a symptom of dementia, so it's a great study in providing strong evidence that sleep is really a risk factor," said Dr. Kristine Yaffe, a professor of neurology and psychiatry at UC San Francisco who was not involved in the study.

Pre-dementia brain changes like accumulations of proteins associated with Alzheimer's are known to begin about 15 to 20 years before people

sleep patterns within that time frame could be considered an emerging effect of the disease. That has posed a "chicken or egg question of which comes first, the sleep problem or the pathology," said Dr. Erik Musiek, a neurologist and co-director of the Center on Biological Rhythms and Sleep at Washington University in St. Louis, who was not involved in the new research.

"I don't know that this study necessarily seals the deal, but it gets closer because it has a lot of people who were relatively young," he said. "There's a decent chance that they are capturing people in middle age before they have Alzheimer's disease pathology or plaques and tangles in their brain."

Drawing on medical records and other data from a prominent study of British civil servants

mid-1980s, the researchers tracked how many hours 7,959 participants said they slept in reports filed six times between 1985 and 2016. By the end of the study, 521 people had been diagnosed with dementia at an average age of 77.

The team was able to factor out several behaviors and characteristics that might influence people's sleep patterns or dementia risk, said an author of the study, Séverine Sabia, an epidemiologist at Inserm, the French public-health research center. Those included smoking, alcohol consumption, how physically active people were, body mass index, fruit and vegetable consumption, education level, marital status and conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.



Photos by Lea Suzuki / The Chronicle

Two great horned owllets perch in a eucalyptus tree while an adult owl stands guard in Glen Canyon Park in San Francisco.

Bird watchers delight in Glen Canyon owls

By Jessica Flores

Every spring, residents in San Francisco's Glen Park neighborhood huddle around a large eucalyptus tree in Glen Canyon and marvel over the nesting great horned owls.

"It's a big thing every year," said Mark Lipman, a Bay Area filmmaker who lives near Glen Canyon Park. "People come and look at the owls."

Lipman is one of many photographers who go to the park at sunrise or sunset to take photos of the owls when they are most active in daylight. He began photographing them last spring at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic to stay sane, he said.

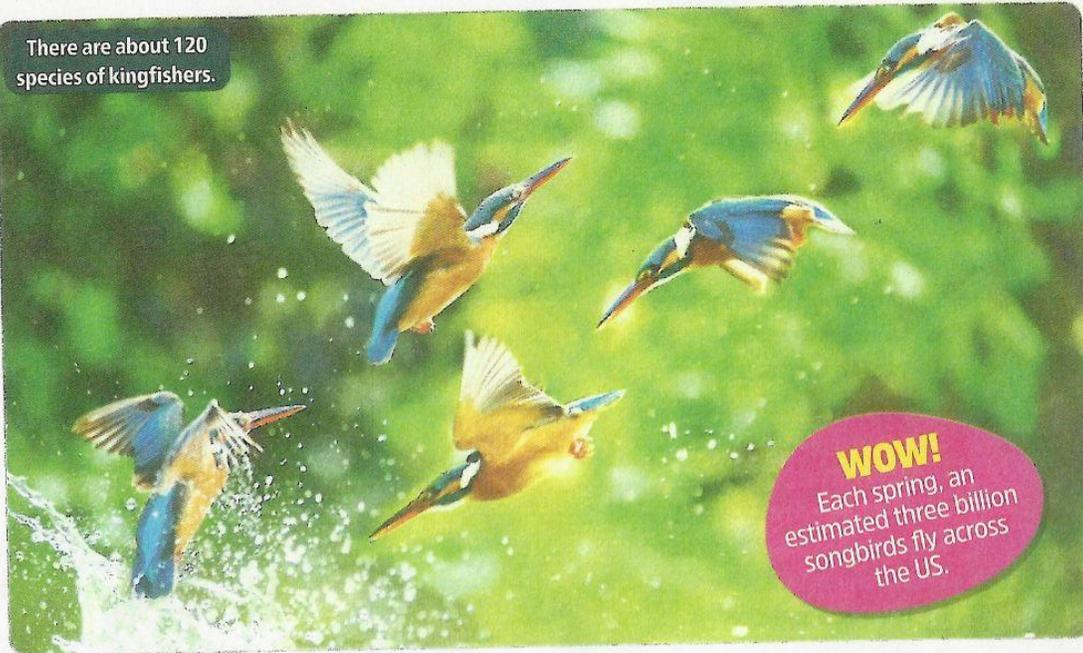
This year he decided to film short videos to capture their movements, like the mother feeding her owllets a rodent or the young birds flapping their wings or snuggling each other in the nest.

"Spring was coming, and the owls were coming," Lipman said.



Mark Lipman, a Bay Area filmmaker, uses his binoculars to find an owllet in Glen Canyon Park in San Francisco. "It's a big thing every year," he says.

There are about 120 species of kingfishers.



WOW!
Each spring, an estimated three billion songbirds fly across the US.

Bird-watching basics

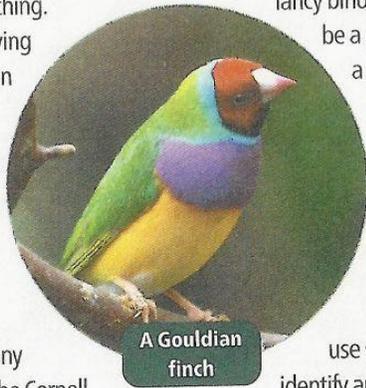
When you're outside and ready to bird watch, listen for singing, rustling, or pecking. Look for trees, posts, power lines, or birds swimming in ponds. Note their shapes, sizes, and colors. Do they fly straight or swoop? What sounds do they make? Consult a field guide, website, or app to identify the birds you spotted.



The world's biggest bird-watching day

People around the world will take part in the largest bird-watching event of the year on May 8. Known as Global Big Day, the event is an annual celebration of birds and bird watching. Anyone can participate by observing birds and sharing their findings on eBird, a popular website and mobile app for bird watchers (also called birders).

Since 2015, Global Big Day has brought together birders and citizen scientists (people who volunteer to collect data for scientific research) to spot as many species as possible in one day. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology (the study of birds) runs the event and the eBird website.



A Gouldian finch

People join in by creating a free account on eBird.org. From there, participating is as simple as going outside and looking up. "You don't need fancy binoculars or an expensive scope to be a good bird watcher," Jenna Curtis, a project co-leader at Cornell, told *The Week Junior*. "All you need is to step outside and pay attention to the birds around you." Families can also watch birds together and talk about what they see and hear.

Participants in Global Big Day use Cornell's eBird site or app to identify and report the birds they spotted. Lucky birders in the southeastern US might see orange- or yellow-colored orioles, people in the

Midwest can look for sandhill cranes, and in the Pacific Northwest people might hear the unusual call of a bobolink. Bright-colored tanagers and buntings will return to the Southwest, and the Northeast will be filled with songbirds.

Every entry helps experts map bird populations and make decisions about habitat conservation. "Observations reported on eBird give insight into the amazing lives of birds on a global scale—something that no individual project or researcher could hope to accomplish on their own," Curtis told *The Week Junior*. Last year on Global Big Day, 50,000 people from 175 countries submitted 120,000 checklists (bird reports), setting a new world record. The team is excited to see what happens this year. Said Curtis, "That's the great thing about Global Big Day. Every year is different!"

BIG DAY FOR BIRDS

Get ready for the world's largest
bird-watching event of the year



Prosecutors Get a Path to More Police Cases

BY ZUSHA ELINSON
AND DAN FROSCH

Tuesday's murder conviction of Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd will likely make prosecutors more willing to charge police officers after fatalities, according to district attorneys and law-enforcement researchers.

Guilty verdicts against police officers who kill people in the line of duty have historically been rare. Of the 140 police officers charged in fatal shootings since 2005, seven were convicted of murder and 37 were convicted of lesser crimes, according to research by Philip Stinson, a Bowling Green State University criminologist who studies the topic.

There are about 1,000 deadly police shootings a year, Mr. Stinson has found.

But increased attention to police misconduct, more video evidence and the precedent of a jury handing up a high-profile conviction against Mr. Chauvin are all likely to compel prosecutors to be more aggressive in such cases, the prosecutors said.

"In the past, we knew that



People rallied in Minneapolis after the Chauvin verdict Tuesday.

juries were reluctant to convict police officers," said Steve Wagstaffe, district attorney in California's San Mateo County and past president of the California District Attorneys Association. The Chauvin verdict will factor into prosecutors' decisions in the future if they believe that "juries will be more willing to conclude that there can be an officer who was a bad apple and hence willing to convict," he said.

High legal standards for charging police officers is one

reason prosecutors have been reluctant to pursue such cases. The Supreme Court has given police leeway to make split-second, life-or-death decisions based on their perceptions of danger. Officers can use deadly force if they reasonably believe that their lives or the lives of others are threatened, although there are variations in different states.

John DeCarlo, a former police chief in Connecticut and a professor at the University of New Haven, said the Chauvin

case is unique because the video footage of his kneeling on Mr. Floyd showed that his actions didn't involve a split-second decision in which he feared for his life. Such a defense is common and frequently successful.

Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascón, whose office is looking at reopening old police-shooting cases, said the verdict sent a message that juries are willing to hold police accountable. But he said laws need to be changed to "create a different legal scheme that is actually a vehicle for accountability for police when they use excessive force."

The number of prosecutions against officers has ebbed and flowed along with public attention to high-profile incidents.

According to data collected by Mr. Stinson, prosecutions of officers for murder or manslaughter rose after the 2014 death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., but dropped several years later. In 2015, 18 officers were charged, up from six the prior year, and 14 officers were charged in 2016. By 2017, however, the number had

dropped to seven.

The numbers have risen again in the wake of widespread protests sparked by the murder of Mr. Floyd. Last year, 16 officers were charged with murder or manslaughter in fatal shootings. In the first four months of this year, 12 have been charged.

"Prosecutors do feel pressure," Mr. Stinson said.

Law-enforcement unions worry that prosecutors will become too zealous in going after police following the Chauvin verdict.

"There is an epidemic of overly aggressive prosecutors across the country right now," said Jim Pasco, executive director of the Fraternal Order of Police, a police labor organization that represents roughly 330,000 officers. "If a police officer faces the possibility of prosecution for performing the kind of appropriately aggressive policing which keeps our citizens safe in our cities and towns, it's going to have a really deleterious effect on public safety."

Mr. Pasco said that he respected the verdict in the Chauvin trial.

JEFF WHEELER/STAR TRIBUNE/TNS/ZUMA PRESS

CHAUVIN GUILTY OF MURDER IN FLOYD'S DEATH



Officer Derek Chauvin after his conviction on Tuesday in Minneapolis. Philonise Floyd, one of George Floyd's brothers, said, "We are able to breathe again."

STILL IMAGE, VIA COURT TV

A Rare Rebuke of Police Violence in the U.S.

This article is by John Eligon, Shaila Dewan, Tim Arango and Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs.

MINNEAPOLIS — A former police officer who pressed his knee into George Floyd's neck until well past Mr. Floyd's final breath was found guilty of murder on Tuesday in a case that shook the nation's conscience and drew millions into the streets for the largest racial justice protests in generations.

The verdict, which could send the former officer, Derek Chauvin, to prison for decades, represented a rare rebuke for police violence, following a case after case of officers going without charges or convictions after killing Black men, women and children.

At the center of it all was an excruciating video, taken by a teenage girl, that showed Mr. Chauvin, who is white, kneeling on the neck of Mr. Floyd, who was Black, for 9 minutes 29 seconds as Mr. Floyd pleaded for his life and bystanders tried to intervene. Mr. Floyd repeated "I can't breathe" more than 20 times during the encounter.

The video, played on a horrifying loop for the past year, triggered more than calls for changes in policing. It sparked Americans of all races, in small towns and large cities, to gather for mass protests chanting "Black Lives Matter," challenging the country to finally have a true reckoning over race. Their demands reverberated inside institutions, from corporate America to the halls of Congress, that had long resisted change.

Welcome to Joe Biden's Boom Economy

By Alan S. Blinder

Welcome to the Biden boom. While the first quarter of 2021 is history, the data are still coming in. "Forecasts" of real economic growth, based on partial data, now run in the 7% to 8% range. More important, there is a good chance the stellar first quarter won't be a flash in the pan. The Wall Street Journal's recent poll of economists registered an average forecast of 6.4% growth over the four quarters of 2021.

If that happens, it will mark the fastest four-quarter growth spurt since 1984. The 1983-84 boom, which came after a deep recession, led to Ronald Reagan's declaration of "morning in America"—and his smashing 1984 electoral victory. Like the Reagan boom and the Clinton boom, the Biden boom won't be due entirely to the policies of the president. But they are sure helping.

Much of the credit goes to the vaccines—including Team Biden's acceleration of their delivery. Then there's the remarkable resilience of the U.S. private sector. Hundreds of millions of people and tens of millions of businesses crawled into their foxholes when Covid-19 hit, but then crawled right out, finding new ways to do business and new ways to shop.

And the private economy got huge assists from government. Contrary to Reagan's famous dictum, government

has been a major part of the solution.

The big fiscal boost started with the \$2.2 trillion Cares Act, which Congress passed by huge bipartisan majorities in March 2020. While much in Cares can be (and has been) criticized, it put so much money into the hands of Americans that real personal disposable income (the purchasing power of the dollars people actually receive) rose by 3% over the four quarters of 2020 even though gross domestic product fell by 2.4%.

The economy is recovering at a rapid clip, thanks in large part to a \$5 trillion infusion from the feds.

As the Cares money ran out, and after much partisan dicker, Democrats and Republicans agreed on another relief package in the closing days of the Trump administration—this time, about \$900 billion.

Enter President Biden, and exit GOP support. In its first major legislative achievement, the Biden administration managed to get the \$1.9 trillion American Relief Plan passed last month—with no Republican votes. The plan is giving the economy a big shot in the arm right now.

Add up the pieces and you get

roughly \$5 trillion in federal fiscal support, or about 23% of GDP. That enormous fiscal effort kept millions of families afloat, kept people in their homes, saved many businesses from failure, and prevented the horrible disease from bringing on Great Depression 2.0.

Because of the enormous influx of federal dollars, American households are sitting on a huge hoard of unspent money. Before the pandemic, American consumers were saving 7.5% of their disposable income—a typical figure. During 2020, the saving rate soared to 16.3%—a rate normally associated more with Singapore than the U.S. The difference translates into nearly \$1.4 trillion in excess saving.

And don't forget about monetary policy. The Federal Reserve fired all its weapons at the Covid recession, the most obvious of which was dropping interest rates to the floor. Amazingly, the interest rate cuts worked. After violent but brief downward hiccups, Americans went back to buying motor vehicles and houses despite the pandemic. Spending in those two categories actually rose 6.3% and 14.3%, respectively, over the four quarters of 2020. Never bet against the American consumer.

Yes, I am painting a rosy picture—of a recession that is gone and the beginnings of a boom. Could something go wrong? Sure.

Here are four worries.

First, the battle between the variants and the vaccines could take a turn for the worse, with the virus winning. I'm no expert in epidemiology, but the experts seem to think the vaccines are likely to prevail. The main question seems to be how much help the virus gets from vaccine resistance and irresponsible behavior.

Second, enormous budget deficits spell a soaring national debt. Some observers wonder how high the debt can go before the world's investors start demanding higher interest rates on U.S. Treasuries. It's a fair question. But so far, so good.

Third, a few economists worry that fiscal stimulus combined with extraordinarily easy money will lead to inflation—and then to a clampdown by the Fed. Count this as possible, but not likely.

Finally, some conservative economists—and many Republican members of Congress—have made their usual claim: that tax increases will flatten the economy, or worse. Those predictions have proved wrong in the past. Bet against them.

Taken as a whole, the worry list doesn't seem all that worrisome. Enjoy the Biden boom.

Mr. Blinder, a professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton, served as vice chairman of the Federal Reserve, 1994-96.

24 Senate Democrats urge Biden to close Guantanamo

By Bob Egelko

Nearly half the Senate's Democrats, including both of California's, are urging President Biden to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba — "a symbol of lawlessness and human rights abuses" — and complete a task that President Barack Obama failed to accomplish.

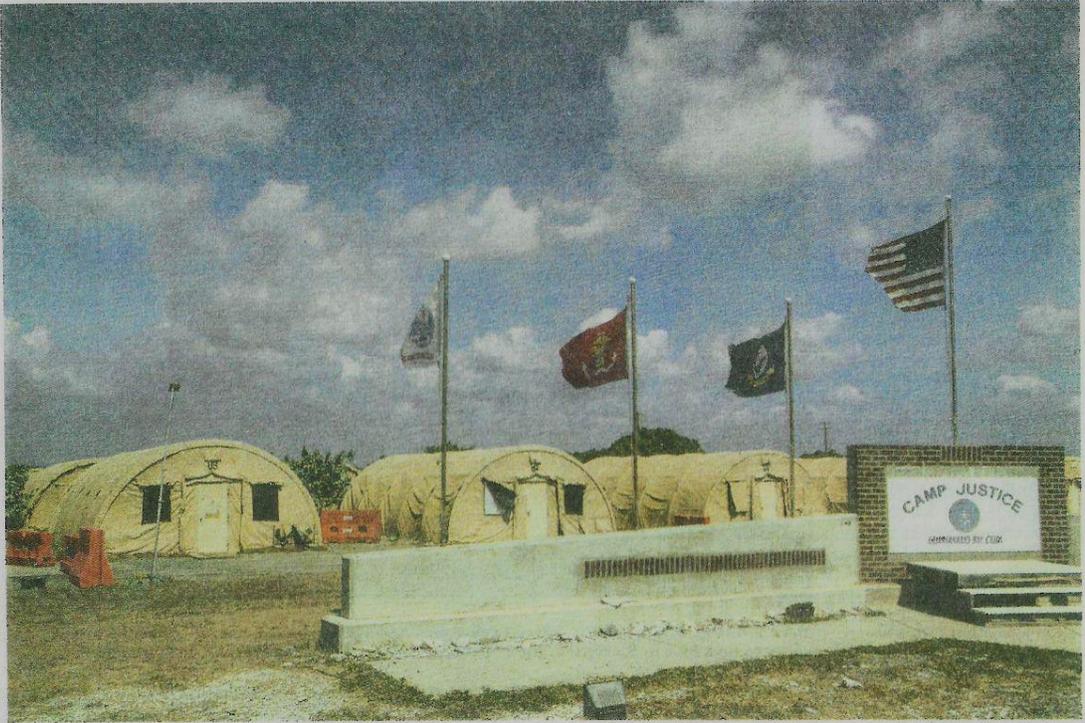
"For nearly two decades, the offshore prison has damaged America's reputation, fueled anti-Muslim bigotry, and weakened the United States' ability to counter terrorism and fight for human rights and the rule of law around the world," the senators said Friday in a letter to Biden.

The lead authors were Sens. Dick Durbin of Illinois, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the Appropriations Committee chairman. Signers included Californians Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla, 21 other Democrats and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who caucuses with the Democrats.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in February that it was "our goal and our intention" to close Guantanamo. But she made no promises, unlike the unfulfilled pledge by Obama on his second day of office in 2009.

While Republicans had not prevented President George W. Bush from transferring or releasing more than 500 of the prison's inmates, they fiercely opposed Obama's attempts to close it, and sponsored legislation prohibiting transfer of Guantanamo inmates to U.S. soil.

Obama managed to transfer 201 prisoners to foreign countries, most of whom had never been tried or sen-



Alex Brandon / Associated Press

Senate Democrats, including both of California's, are calling on President Biden to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay.

tenced and were found to pose no security risk, but was unable to close the facility. President Donald Trump promised to "load it up with some bad dudes" and revive the use of waterboarding, which U.S. law classifies as torture, but he took neither step, and released one inmate to complete his sentence abroad, bringing the population down to 40.

Located on a naval base that the U.S. installed in Cuba in 1903, the prison was opened by Bush in 2002 to hold suspected terrorists and enemy combatants. But at-

tempts to prosecute detainees for war crimes were largely derailed after the Supreme Court ruled that they were entitled to at least minimal legal protections, and a number of inmates told their lawyers that they had been subjected to waterboarding and other forms of torture.

The remaining inmates include Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack, whose trial on capital charges has been repeatedly postponed in disputes over evidence allegedly obtained through torture. About 10

current inmates await trial before a military commission, six have been recommended for transfer abroad, and the rest are being held indefinitely based on military officials' conclusions that they are too dangerous to release.

In their letter, the 24 senators said that in addition to \$540 million a year in taxpayer costs, "the prison also comes at the price of justice for the victims of 9/11 and their families, who are still waiting for trials to begin."

They asked Biden to re-establish a State Department office seeking to close Guan-

tanamo, to pursue plea agreements with detainees who face federal charges based on "untainted evidence," and to negotiate transfers to foreign countries for inmates whose sentences exceed the time they have already spent at the prison.

Biden must also reverse Trump's position, the senators said, "that the Constitution's Due Process Clause does not apply to the men detained there."

I Lost Hope for Afghanistan

Farahnaz Forotan

AS MEN continue to bicker over the future and control of Afghanistan, I have already lost my home and my country. I worked in Kabul as a television journalist for 12 years, and finally left in November after threats to my life.

I know how the Taliban plan to shape the future of my country, and their vision of my country has no space for me. For what turned out to be one of my last assignments, I traveled from Kabul to Doha, Qatar, in October to report on the negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Like many Afghans, I was somewhat hopeful that the talks might help end the long, pitiless war in our country.

In Doha, I had the opportunity to interview members of the Taliban negotiating team at the conference hall where the talks were being held. The experience reinforced my sense that postwar Afghanistan, dominated by the Taliban, was bound to be a bleak place for Afghan women.

The incident that crystallized that dreadful feeling was my interview with Suhail Shaheen, the spokesman for the Taliban. I approached Mr. Shaheen for an interview in a room full of people. Like many young women in Kabul, I do not wear a head scarf. He couldn't hide his disdain at my presence and set about to ignore me. I didn't budge. I refused to be invisible and continued pointing my phone camera at him while asking my questions.

Afghan women live with a sense of being invisible. In our workplaces or in meetings like this one, our voices go unheard, our existence barely registered. Our presence in any public space is celebrated as gender equality in and outside Afghanistan, but all we experience in daily life is inequality and discrimination. It filled me with rage.

My encounter with Mr. Shaheen filled me with terror. When he finally answered one of my questions, his eyes moved in every direction but mine: He examined the

walls, the carpet on the floor, the chairs, the door. He couldn't look at me, even while I stood in front of him. It was as if he saw me as an embodiment of sin and evil. I felt unsafe, even in a room full of people, thousands of miles away from Afghanistan.

The Taliban's notions of religion, politics and governance are based on a combination of a very orthodox interpretation of Islam, Shariah and tribal values. They see their Islamic government as duty bound to safeguard Muslim society from corruption and moral decadence, which they blame on the presence of women in public spaces, including universities and offices. They want to reduce us to bearing children.

The wars that men started and fought in Afghanistan have disproportionately devastated the lives of women. Yet the compo-

Women know the cost of the wars started by men.

sitions of the peace delegations from Afghanistan reveal that women are barely considered as worthy of having a say. It is this knowledge and the memory of the Taliban rule in the 1990s that make me fear for the future of Afghan women.

My pessimism proved correct. On Nov. 9, a few weeks after I returned to Kabul from Doha, I received a call informing me that my name was on "the hit list." Several journalists and rights activists were assassinated in October. Some more were killed in November. About 200 female journalists in Afghanistan stopped going to work, and 50 journalists, including 15 female journalists, had to leave Afghanistan. According to Nai, a nonprofit group that supports Afghan journalists, of the 1,900 female journalists who were working in the country in January 2020, about 200 had left the profession by November. After I received the call about the threat to me, I made the extremely painful decision

to leave my family and my country and seek safety elsewhere.

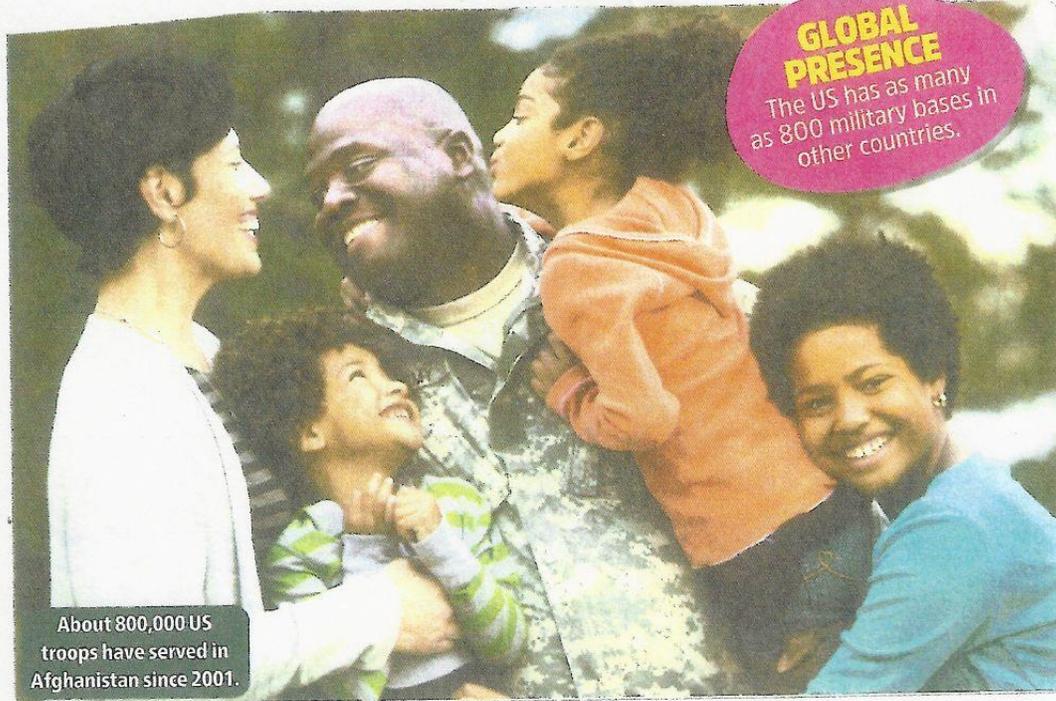
In November, gunmen attacked Kabul University and killed at least 21 students; it was not clear who was responsible. Fear and confusion took over Kabul. All we could be certain of is that the killings of journalists and civil society activists were deliberate and organized. The Taliban have a long history of using assassinations to heighten the sense of insecurity among the people. The inability of the Afghan government and security forces to stop such attacks exposes their failures.

After the United States concluded it couldn't win the war in Afghanistan, even after two decades of fighting the Taliban, it entered into negotiations with them last year. That decision offered the Taliban greater legitimacy than they had ever enjoyed. The rights and status of Afghan women, their access to education and employment, and the creation of a relatively free media have become symbols of what is possible in Afghanistan. With the United States and its allies changing the goal posts, those freedoms are now imperiled.

An important factor in changing U.S. calculations regarding Afghanistan was the failure of governance and the widespread corruption in the Afghan government, its institutions and the broader Kabul elite. Afghans need to be introspective about our own failures. We need to talk about how to avoid yet more violence and to protect the rights and dignity of all Afghan citizens, men and women.

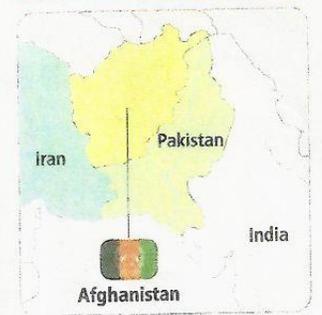
I am now in the United States. I am safe but longing for my home, wondering about the future of my country and my family. I can't shake off the despair and the sense that Afghanistan has been abandoned by the world. We might lose most of what we have gained in the past two decades if the Taliban return to power. The future looks bleak, but Afghanistan can't afford to stop trying to find a better way to move forward. □

FARAHNAZ FOROTAN is an Afghan journalist. This essay was translated by Aziz Hakimi from the Dari.



About 800,000 US troops have served in Afghanistan since 2001.

Afghanistan fact file



- Afghanistan is in central Asia, between Pakistan and Iran.
- It has 37.4 million people and more than 30 languages, including Dari and Pashto.
- Over 252,000 square miles, its landscape ranges from snowy mountains to dry deserts.
- Islam is its official religion.

US will exit Afghanistan

President Joe Biden announced on April 14 that after having the US military in Afghanistan for nearly 20 years, America will withdraw its troops. US soldiers have been fighting in the nation since shortly after terrorists (people who use violence to achieve their goals) attacked America on September 11, 2001.

What happened?

Biden, who as President is also commander in chief of the military, said it's time to end what has been called "the forever war." The US will pull troops from Afghanistan starting on May 1 and finish by September 11, the 20th anniversary of attacks on the US that killed nearly 3,000 people. The conflict in Afghanistan has cost the US nearly \$2 trillion. More than 2,300 Americans and more than 230,000 Afghans have died.

Why are US troops there?

On September 11, 2001, members of al Qaeda, a terrorist group based in Afghanistan, hijacked (took control of) four airplanes in the US. Al Qaeda was an Islamic extremist group—a group of Muslims (people who follow Islam) with extreme, hateful views

toward other countries and religions. Most Muslims do not agree with these beliefs. The attackers flew one plane into the Pentagon (US military headquarters near Washington, DC). They crashed two more into the World Trade Center buildings in New York City, which collapsed. A fourth plane was headed for Washington, DC, but crashed in Pennsylvania. In October 2001, the US invaded Afghanistan to fight al Qaeda and another extremist group called the Taliban, which had taken control of the country. US leaders said they wanted to help Afghanistan create a stable democratic government and military to prevent the rise of more terrorism.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

What do people who support the withdrawal say?

Many military veterans expressed relief at Biden's decision. "Words cannot adequately express how huge this is for troops and military families," Jon Soltz, leader of a veterans' group, said on Twitter.

Jens Stoltenberg, head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, a military alliance of 30 countries), agreed it was time to withdraw. NATO troops have fought alongside Americans in Afghanistan. "We went into Afghanistan together...

and we are united in leaving together," he said. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani tweeted that his nation "respects the US decision, and we will work with our US partners to ensure a smooth transition."

What do people who disagree say?

Many US officials argue that the mission in Afghanistan is not complete. They say that if American troops leave now, terrorist groups will take over and the Afghan military, which the US helped build, could not stop them. The Taliban could also punish Afghans who supported the US. "This is a reckless and dangerous decision," said James Inhofe, a US senator from Oklahoma. Others are concerned that troops are being withdrawn too quickly. "If I were still in uniform today, I'd readily accept a few months more in Afghanistan to end the war right," said US Navy veteran Andrew McCormick, who served there twice.

What will happen next?

There are about 3,500 American troops and 9,600 NATO troops in Afghanistan, and they will begin leaving the country on May 1. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US will continue to support peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. He also said the US will be ready to take action if there is a renewed threat of terrorism.

