

NEW CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

# Looking half a century ahead

Plan accounts for evolving technology, patient needs

By MARIN WOLF  
Staff Writer  
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Hospital buildings, much like the patients they house and doctors they develop, have lifespans. After 50 or 60 years, once cutting-edge designs fade into the shadow of newer technologies.

Children's Medical Center Dallas, which opened in 1967, can't grow up or out, having expanded to the edge of its plot on the corner of Harry Hines Boulevard and Medical District Drive. The space above the hospital's ceilings is only 8 inches in some parts, a relic of when medical clinics had fewer machines and fewer wires to run above the rooms.

BY THE NUMBERS  
New hospital

552  
Bed capacity at the new facility, up 38% from the current hospital

96  
Level IV neonatal intensive care unit beds, up from 47

INSIDE: What you need to know about the new hospital, 13A

capacity to add to existing facilities or construct new ones. Children's Health and UT Southwestern Medical Center have chosen to start fresh, announcing plans to build a \$5 billion hospital less than 2 miles from the current pediatric facility.

Demand for care is increasing. Dallas-Fort Worth has ballooned in recent years and is projected to hit 8.5 million people by 2028. The pediatric population is nearing 2.5 million, a number that's expected to double by 2050, Children's reports. Nationwide, emergency department visits have outpaced population growth for years as more people turn to hospitals for acute medical needs.

The new campus, which includes a 2 million-square-foot hospital with three

See PROJECT Page 13A

EAGLE PASS

# In the middle of it all



Photos by Chitose Suzuki/Staff Photographer

Migrants were escorted by U.S. soldiers with the 508th Military Police Company from New Jersey to a van on Feb. 1 after they crossed the Rio Grande from Mexico at Eagle Pass. Gov. Greg Abbott's efforts to deter immigration have centered on the border city.

## Border city plays big role in national debate

By AARÓN TORRES  
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EAGLE PASS — The park, fenced off from the center of town and patrolled by troops, is inaccessible.

The Rio Grande is, too. "We can't even see it," Eagle Pass resident Jessie Fuentes said. "We can't even touch it."

Fuentes has owned a kayak business since 2015, hosting races every summer and river tours throughout the year. Lately, the only people getting on his kayaks are journalists who want to see buoys in the water or razor wire on the banks leading to Shelby Park, which has been under state control for a month.

The 1,000-foot string of buoys and the takeover of the city park were ordered by Gov. Greg Abbott to deter unauthorized border crossings. Although the actions have pleased the governor's supporters, Fuentes is not a fan.

"He's abusive, he's cruel and he doesn't care," Fuentes, 63, said of the three-term governor. "He does not care about what's happening in our community."

Abbott has turned Eagle Pass into a bold ex-



periment to determine how big a role states can play in immigration enforcement, and this city of 28,500 has mixed feelings about its position as ground zero in a national political fight.

There's the mayor who wanted help dealing with illegal crossings but didn't expect to see a

See EFFECTS Page 16A

### KEY DATES

**MARCH 2021:** Gov. Greg Abbott launches Operation Lone Star, a nearly \$10 billion initiative to stem the flow of migrants across the southern border.

**JUNE 2023:** Abbott announces that troopers with the Texas Department of Public Safety would install a 1,000-foot-long string of buoys in the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass.

**JULY:** The Department of Justice orders the state to remove the buoys, along with 60 miles of concertina wire.

**JAN. 10, 2024:** Texas takes control of the 47-acre Shelby Park, not allowing federal authorities to access the river.

## Ex-Dallas County DA's road to healing

Overwhelmed by mental illness, Susan Hawk resigned as Dallas County district attorney in September 2016. The former prosecutor and reform-minded judge — a bright star in law and politics — vanished from public view.

That first year, she never left her Lakewood home except to visit her doctor or therapist. Even after electroconvulsive therapy pulled her out of her suicidal spiral, medication failed to shake her deep depression.

When she felt anything, it was shame and failure.

By year two, Hawk could function a little better. Thanks



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to a psychiatrist who refused to give up on her, they found the right prescription. She no longer sat in the same chair all day long. She set simple tasks for herself like showering and making her bed — so she wouldn't crawl back into it.

Still, the only place other than home she felt safe was at her therapist's office. She al-

See EX-DALLAS Page 15A



Juan Figueroa/Staff Photographer

Former Dallas County DA Susan Hawk has worked hard to get healthy and hopes her story will prompt others to get mental-health help more quickly than she did.

### IN SPORTSDAY



### Super Bowl LVIII game day

Chiefs vs. 49ers  
5:30 p.m. today  
Las Vegas  
(Ch. 11)

**TIM COWLISHAW:** If the 49ers win, passing the Cowboys in Super Bowl victories, maybe that will give Dallas the motivation it's been lacking. **1C**

**DAVID MOORE:** Tony Romo has carved a prominent niche for himself in the broadcast world. He'll be the lead analyst for CBS at the Super Bowl. **1C**

**PATRICK MAHOMES'** running style helps him on the field. **6C**

**OUR WRITERS** predict the winner of today's game. **6C**

**49ers QUARTERBACK** Brock Purdy brings an extra dimension of making plays the team lacked four years ago. **7C**

**WHAT KANSAS CITY** has going for it is experience playing in the Super Bowl. **7C**



### Showers, thunderstorms



Metro, back page

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### ARTS & LIFE

#### Eclipse preview

You may know that a total solar eclipse will pass over Texas in April. Well, the celestial event is already in Dallas — on billboards. **6E**

### METRO

#### New maternal medical clinic

A new East Dallas clinic aims to help pregnant women with affordable prenatal care as advocates say Texas is in a maternal health crisis. **1B**

### BUSINESS

#### Frisco mall evolving

Stonebriar Centre is moving some of its 200-plus stores around to make room for stores that cater to Gen Z, Gen Alpha and their moms. **1D**



ENTERTAINMENT

Blige, Carey and Cher are Rock Hall nominees

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK — Mary J. Blige, Mariah Carey, Cher, Lenny Kravitz, the late Sinéad O'Connor and heavy metal's so-called Prince of Darkness are some of the 2024 nominees for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a wide musical net that also includes the pop-soul of Sade and Brit-poppers Oasis.

Ozzy Osbourne, who led many parents in the 1980s to clutch their pearls with his devil imagery and sludgy music, gets the nod as a solo artist, having already gone into the hall with Black Sabbath. Nominations also were handed to hip-hop duo Eric B. & Rakim, soft rockers Foreigner, singer-guitarist Peter Dinklage, alt-rockers Jane's Addiction and Dave Matthews Band, and dance icons Kool & the Gang.

"Continuing in the true spirit of rock 'n' roll, these artists have created their own sounds that have impacted generations and influenced countless others that have followed in their footsteps," John Sykes, Chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Founda-

tion, said in a statement. Ten of the 15 nominees are on the ballot for the first time, including Carey, Cher, Foreigner, Frampton, Kool & the Gang, Kravitz, Oasis, O'Connor, Osbourne and Sade. Carey, with 19 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, Blige with eight multiplatinum albums and nine Grammy Awards, and Cher — the only artist to have a No. 1 song in each of the past six decades — would help boost the number of women in the hall.

Artists must have released their first commercial recording at least 25 years before they're eligible for induction.

Nominees will be voted on by more than 1,000 artists, historians and music industry professionals. Fans can vote online or in person at the museum, with the top five artists picked by the public making up a "fans' ballot" that will be tallied with the other professional ballots.

Last year, Missy Elliott, Willie Nelson, Sheryl Crow, Chaka Khan and the late George Michael were some of the artists who got into the hall.



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NEWS SHOWS

Here are public affairs TV highlights for Sunday:

**Fox News Sunday** (8 a.m., Ch. 4) — Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.; Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash.

**Lone Star Politics** (8:40 a.m., NBC5) — State Rep. Matt Shaheen, R-Plano; Wayne Richard, R-Plano, who is challenging Shaheen in the GOP primary; Laura Collins, Director, Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative at the George W. Bush Institute.

**Meet the Press** (9 a.m., NBC5) — Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas; Mitch Landrieu, co-chair of President Joe Biden's reelection campaign; former Gov. Chris Christie, R-N.J.

**This Week** (9:30 a.m., Ch. 8) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del.; Gov. Brian Kemp, R-Ga.

**Face the Nation** (9:30 a.m., Ch. 11) — Former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, a Republican presidential candidate; Bob Bauer, Biden's personal attorney; Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn.

**State of the Union** (8 a.m., CNN) — Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.; Rod Rosenstein, deputy attorney general during the Trump administration.

The Associated Press

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Stephanie Murrow

**Steven Murrow poses with** one of the 39 cats he fetched from treetops last year. In three years, he estimates he has rescued more than 100 felines. "If I can save a cat's life by climbing a tree, I'm happy to do it," he said.

INSPIRED

Climber rescues cats stuck in treetops for free

‘A big believer in karma and kindness’

By CATHY FREE  
The Washington Post

David Fernandez-Moreno was frantic to find his cat Shadow when the feline somehow slipped out of his Philadelphia home and went missing.

"We looked everywhere and called for him for a few days, but there was no trace of him," said Fernandez-Moreno, 21. "I was scared I wouldn't see him again."

Then three days later, in mid-January, Fernandez-Moreno was out for a run in his neighborhood when he saw the stray feline he'd taken in a few months earlier. Shadow was meowing and hunkered down on a rotting tree limb near the top of a 30-foot tree, about a block from his house. The cat was afraid to come down.

Fernandez-Moreno said he shouted for Shadow to hang on while he got help.

It's a common situation with cats. According to pet health experts at PetMd, cats tend to go high when they're either chasing a small animal or feeling threatened, but many have trouble coordinating their front and hind feet when trying to climb down. They generally jump down from high perches, but a tree might be too far off the ground for them to land safely.

Fernandez-Moreno said he ran home and told his mother he'd spotted Shadow.

"It was really cold outside, probably 15 or 20 degrees," he said. "It had been snowing and I knew he was getting weak and was freezing up there."

Fernandez-Moreno said he called police, and an officer gave him contact information for several people who might be able to help. One person gave him a number for Steven Murrow, a professional tree climber from Pitman, N.J., who lives about 30 minutes from Philadelphia and rescues cats at no charge.

100-plus rescues

Murrow, 39, runs Tesla Tree Service, a tree-cutting business named after the vehicle he uses to haul around his solar-charged chain saws and climbing equipment. He immediately dropped what he was doing that day, Jan. 16, and drove to Philadelphia to pluck Shadow out of the tree.

Murrow made a video of the recovery and posted it on Facebook with some of the other 100-plus cat rescues he's done over the last three years. Thirty-nine of those rescues were done in 2023.

Fernandez-Moreno was overjoyed. For Murrow, it was another outing in a long string of successful cat rescues.

He said he first coaxed a nervous feline from a tall tree in 2021, after friends told him about a cat somebody had posted about on Facebook. It had been stuck in a tree in South Jersey for almost a week.

"They asked if I could help, and I said, 'Sure, I'll give it a try,'" Murrow said. "I'm a climber and I love animals, but I'd never res-



Steven Murrow

**A cat yowled in a tree** last year as it awaited rescue. Cats generally jump down from high perches, but a tree might be too far off the ground for them to land safely.

cued a cat before."

Murrow successfully got the cat out of the tree after pulling himself up on a rope and enticing the scared feline to come to him in the treetops. He then placed the cat in the pouch and carefully lowered them both down.

The property owners put a notice on social media about the cat and were eventually able to reunite him with his owners, he said.

"I literally cried when I held that cat and comforted him to let him know it was okay," Murrow recalled. "He was so hungry and thirsty that he was starting to get organ failure."

Murrow decided to advertise he'd rescue cats from trees at no charge after that, he said. Channel 6-ABC recently covered his efforts in the Philadelphia area.

People who don't live near Murrow can find a list of potential helpers through the Cat in a Tree Rescue directory. Some rescuers — like those at Canopy Cat Rescue in Seattle — will rescue cats at no charge but encourage donations, while others charge for the service. Most people call their local fire departments first when they discover cats in trouble, but ladder trucks can't always access the trees, Murrow said.

"As a tree climber, I can go places the ladder truck can't," he said, noting that he tosses a weighted throw line high into the tree canopy before safely climbing up.

Jane Niziol and Joanna Johnson of

Turnersville, N.J., said they were stunned at how quickly Murrow retrieved a cat named Jon Jon from an 80-foot tree in their neighborhood last year after it was stuck at the top for three days.

‘Saved the day’

"We'd tried everything to coax the cat down, including making a little ramp for it," said Johnson, 63. "Nothing worked."

When another neighbor learned about Murrow's free service online, "we called and he came out right away," said Niziol, 59. "In 30 minutes, he'd climbed up the tree, fetched the cat, climbed back down and saved the day."

Jon Jon was taken to an animal shelter and was eventually reunited with his owners, Niziol said.

Murrow said he's always thrilled to hear about happy reunions.

"In 25% of cases, we don't know right away who the owners are," he said. "A cat could end up in a tree almost anywhere."

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals recently gave Murrow a "Compassionate Action Award" for taking his empathy to new heights, but he said his greatest reward is tucking a frightened feline into his harness pouch, knowing it won't have to spend another night in the treetops.

"I'm a big believer in karma and kindness," he said. "If I can save a cat's life by climbing a tree, I'm happy to do it."

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# Nation&World



Said Khatib/Agence France-Presse

**Israeli airstrikes in Rafah** in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday killed at least 44 Palestinians, including a three-month old.

## ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

# Neighbors decry Rafah invasion

Egyptian official says ground offensive would be ‘disastrous’

By **NAJIB JOBAIN,**  
**SAMY MAGDY**  
and **CARA ANNA**  
The Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israel’s neighbors and key mediators warned Saturday of disaster and repercussions if its military launches a ground invasion in Gaza’s southern city of Rafah, where Israel says remaining Hamas strongholds are located — along with over half the besieged territory’s population.

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 44 Palestinians — including more than a dozen children — in Rafah, hours after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he asked the military to plan for the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people ahead of an invasion. He gave no details or timeline.

The announcement set off panic. More than half of Gaza’s 2.3 million people are packed into Rafah, which borders Egypt. Many fled there after following Israeli evacuation orders that now

cover two-thirds of the territory following the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that sparked the war. It’s not clear where they could go next.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said any Israeli ground offensive on Rafah would have “disastrous consequences,” and asserted that Israel aims to eventually force the Palestinians out of their land.

Egypt has warned that any movement of Palestinians into Egypt would threaten the four-decade-old peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

### Civilian casualties

Another mediator, Qatar, also warned of disaster, and Saudi Arabia warned of “very serious repercussions.” There’s even increasing friction between Netanyahu and the United States, whose officials have said a Rafah invasion with no plan for civilians there would lead to disaster.

“The people in Gaza cannot disappear into thin air,” German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said on X, adding that an Israeli offensive on Rafah would be a “humanitarian catastrophe in

the making.”

Israel has carried out almost daily airstrikes in Rafah, a rare entry point for Gaza’s badly needed food and medical supplies, during its current ground combat in Khan Younis just to the north.

Overnight into Saturday, three airstrikes on homes in the Rafah area killed 28 people, according to a health official and Associated Press journalists who saw bodies arriving at hospitals. Each strike killed multiple members of a family, including a total of 10 children, the youngest 3 months old.

Fadel al-Ghannam said one strike tore his loved ones to shreds. He lost his son, daughter-in-law and four grandchildren. He fears even worse with a ground invasion of Rafah, and said the world’s silence has enabled Israel to proceed.

Later on Saturday, an Israeli airstrike on a home in Rafah killed at least 11 people, including three children, according to Ahmed al-Soufi, head of Rafah municipality.

“This is what Netanyahu targets — the civilians,” said a neighbor, Samir Abu Loulya. Two other strikes in Rafah

killed two policemen and three senior officers in the civil police, according to city officials.

In Khan Younis, Israeli forces opened fire at Nasser Hospital, the area’s largest, killing at least two people and wounding five, according to the medical charity Doctors Without Borders. Israeli tanks reached the hospital gates Saturday morning, Ahmed Maghrabi, a physician there, said in a Facebook post.

### Overcrowding

Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra said hospital staff are no longer able to move between buildings because of the intense fire. He said 450 patients and 10,000 displaced people are sheltering there.

The Israeli military said troops were not operating inside the hospital but called the surrounding area “an active combat zone.”

Israel’s army chief, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, said more than 2,000 Hamas fighters in Khan Younis had been killed in airstrikes and ground combat, but the offensive in the

city was far from over.

Israel declared war after several thousand Hamas militants burst across the border into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking 250 others hostage. Not all are still alive.

The Gaza Health Ministry said the bodies of 117 people killed in Israeli airstrikes were brought to hospitals over the past 24 hours, raising the overall death toll from the offensive to 28,064, mostly women and children. The ministry said more than 67,000 people have been wounded.

Israel holds Hamas responsible for civilian deaths because it fights from within civilian areas, but U.S. officials have called for more surgical strikes. President Joe Biden has said Israel’s response is “over the top.”

Netanyahu’s office says it is impossible to eliminate Hamas while leaving four Hamas battalions in Rafah.

The United Nations says the city that’s normally home to less than 300,000 people now hosts 1.4 million others who fled fighting elsewhere and is “severely overcrowded.”

## LEBANON

# 2 killed, 2 injured as Israeli drone strikes car

Hamas official was target in coastal town 37 miles from border

By **BASSEM MROUE** and  
**ABDULRAHMAN ZEYAD**  
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — An Israeli drone struck a car near Lebanon’s southern port city of Sidon on Saturday, killing at least two people and wounding two others, security officials said.

The strike came as tensions across the Middle East grow with the Israel-Hamas war, a drone attack last month that killed three U.S. troops in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border, and attacks by Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels on vessels passing through the Red Sea.

The drone strike near the coastal town of Jadra took place about 37 miles from the Israeli border, making it one



Mohammad Zaatari/The Associated Press

**Lebanese army soldiers** stand guard next to a damaged car near the coastal town of Jadra. The Israeli strike was its farthest into Lebanon since the war in Gaza began.

of the farthest inside Lebanon since violence erupted along the Lebanon-Israel border on Oct. 8, a day after Hamas’ attack in southern Israel.

An Israeli security official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said the target of the strike in Sidon was Hamas of-

ficial Basel Saleh, who was responsible for enlistment of new Hamas recruits in Gaza and the West Bank.

Two Lebanese security officials said the strike damaged a car and killed two people, including one on a motorcycle. They spoke on condition of anonymity in line with reg-

ulations.

Drone strikes in Lebanon blamed on Israel have so far killed several officials from Hezbollah as well as the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

On Saturday night, Israeli forces shelled the southern Lebanese border village of Houla, killing one person and wounding nine as they left a mosque after prayers, state-run National News Agency reported. The agency said that in addition to the artillery shelling, a drone fired a missile toward the mosque. Children were among the wounded, the agency said.

The attacks in Lebanon came as Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian met in Beirut with Lebanese leaders including the head of the militant Hezbollah group.

Amirabdollahian said that if the United States wants to bring stability to the region

again, it should work on forcing Israel to end its military operations in the Gaza Strip.

He told reporters after meeting his counterpart Abdallah Bouhabib that after four months of war, Israel and its backers had not achieved “anything tangible.”

In an apparent reference to attacks by Iran-backed fighters in Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, Amirabdollahian said that “if America wants calm to prevail in the region, then the mechanism and the solution is to stop the genocide, crimes and the war against Gaza and the West Bank.”

He blasted Washington, saying the U.S. is working on two tracks, one of which is sending weapons to Israel “and participating in the genocide in Gaza” and at the same time speaking about reaching a political solution to the war.

## POLL

# Flying viewed as safe option

Majority of Americans believe planes secure despite recent scares

By **DAVID KOENIG**  
and **LINLEY SANDERS**  
The Associated Press

Most U.S. adults believe that air travel is generally safe in the U.S., despite some doubts about whether aircraft are being properly maintained and remain free from structural problems.

About 7 in 10 U.S. adults say planes are a “very” or “some-what” safe method of travel, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Even with that high level of trust, only about 2 in 10 U.S. adults have “a great deal” of confidence that airplanes are being properly maintained, or that they are safe from structural faults. Another half have a “moderate” amount of faith that this is the case.

The poll was conducted after a Jan. 5 accident in which a panel blew off an Alaska Airlines Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliner 16,000 feet above Oregon, leaving a gaping hole in the side of the plane. That led to the grounding of more than 140 planes and raised questions about Boeing’s ongoing manufacturing problems as well as the Federal Aviation Administration’s ability to address them.

U.S. adults are more confident in airline pilots’ and air traffic controllers’ ability to maintain air safety than they are in the commercial airlines, airplane manufacturers or federal government agencies charged with it. A majority have at least a “moderate” amount of confidence that each is ensuring safety.

Some with fears of flying expressed even more concern because of the Alaska Airlines incident.

“I don’t enjoy flying. It is so unnatural — we’re in a metal tube flying through the air,” said Margaret Burke of Pensacola, Fla., who read accounts of the jetliner incident, which resulted in no serious injuries. “The fact that people do fly safely every day seems, to me, like a miracle.”

Even with maintenance concerns, U.S. adults have a higher level of certainty that airline pilots and air traffic controllers are well-trained and engaged in proper safety procedures. Slightly fewer than half — 45% — have “a great deal” of confidence in pilots’ training, while 38% say that about air traffic controllers.

About one-quarter of U.S. adults have a high level of confidence that air travel is safe from terrorist attacks, or that government agencies have enacted necessary safety regulations. Even with the variation, a majority of U.S. adults have at least “a moderate amount” of confidence that planes are safe, pilots are well-trained and the regulations are appropriate.

That may be because flying is still much safer than driving and also safer than rail travel on a per-mile basis, according to U.S. Department of Transportation figures.

*The poll of 1,152 adults was conducted Jan. 25–29 using a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.*





A Russian attack on a residential neighborhood in Kharkiv, Ukraine, on Saturday caused a massive fire that burned down 15 private homes and killed seven people, including children aged 7, 4 and 9 months.

Andrii Marienko/The Associated Press

WAR IN UKRAINE

# Russia drone strike kills 7, including kids

Attack hit oil depot, starting deadly fire, according to officials

By SAMYA KULLAB  
The Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city, killed seven people overnight, including three children, a government official reported Saturday. Three others sustained injuries, according to the official.

Oleh Syniehubov, region governor of Kharkiv region, said at least 10 drones were

launched at Kharkiv, eight of which were shot down. Civilian infrastructure in the Nemyshlyan district of the city was hit, causing a massive fire that burned down 15 private houses, he said.

Syniehubov said that an oil depot was hit, causing the fuel to leak out, which prompted the fire. In a Facebook post, Serhii Bolvinov, head of the investigative department of the National Police, cited a local resident as seeing “a true hell: first the fuel flowed, then everything caught fire.”

Bolvinov said a family of five — including children aged 7, 4

and 9 months — burned alive, trapped in their house as the fire raged. Two other adults were killed by the blaze in another house that burned down, he said.

Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said more than 50 people had been evacuated and emergency workers had contained the blaze by Saturday morning.

In an online statement, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offered his condolences to the relatives of all the victims and said that “terror can’t remain unpunished. Terror can’t remain without a fair response. Terrorists must lose this war they had started. Russia must be held accountable for every life it ruined and destroyed.”

The Ukrainian air force said air defense systems destroyed 23 out of 31 Iranian Shahed drones launched by Russia overnight. The drones primarily targeted the northeastern Kharkiv region and the southern province of Odesa, the statement said.

Odesa regional governor Oleh Kiper said four people were injured there by the overnight drone attacks.

The attacks came in three waves, he said. The first targeted the port city of Odesa. All nine drones were shot down, but the debris damaged port infrastructure and injured one person.

The second and the third waves targeted port infrastructure in the Danube river area, Kiper said. A total of 12 drones were shot down and three people were injured.

Romania’s Ministry of National Defense said on Saturday that Russia carried out overnight drone attacks on Ukraine’s river ports of Ismail and Reni, near the border with Romania.

The ministry said that an F-16 jet of the Turkish Air Force was deployed from a Romanian airbase around 1:15 a.m. to carry out “reconnaissance missions” in national airspace to monitor the situation. Text alerts were also issued to residents in two counties adjacent to the attacks.

NATO member Romania has discovered drone debris on its territory several times before, following sustained attacks on Ukraine’s port infrastructure as Moscow attempted to disrupt Kyiv’s ability to export grain and other produce to world markets.

The Russian Defense Ministry, in the meantime, accused Ukraine of targeting Russia’s civilian transport vessels in the Black Sea with sea drones on Friday evening. One such drone was destroyed, the ministry said, and others were jammed, with no damage to the ships.

HUNGARY

# Leader resigns amid outcry

President’s pardon in sex abuse case drew widespread outrage

By JUSTIN SPIKE  
The Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Hungary’s conservative president resigned Saturday amid public outcry over a pardon she granted to a man convicted as an accomplice in a child sexual abuse case, a decision that unleashed an unprecedented political scandal for the long-serving nationalist government.

Katalin Novák, 46, announced in a televised message that she would step down from the presidency, an office she has held since 2022. Her decision came after more than a week of public outrage after it was revealed that she issued a presidential pardon in April 2023 to a man convicted of hiding a string of child sexual abuses in a state-run children’s home.

“I issued a pardon that caused bewilderment and unrest for many people,” Novák said on Saturday. “I made a mistake.”

Novák’s resignation came as a rare episode of political turmoil for Hungary’s nationalist governing party Fidesz, which has ruled with a constitutional majority since 2010. Under the leadership of populist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Fidesz has been accused of dismantling democratic institutions and rigging the electoral system and media in its favor.

Novák, a key Orbán ally and a former vice president of Fidesz, served as the minister for families until her appointment to the presidency. She has been outspoken in advocating for traditional family values and the protection of children.

She was the first female president in Hungary’s history, and the youngest person to ever hold the office.

But her term came to an end after she pardoned a man sentenced in 2018 to more than three years in prison. He was found guilty of pressuring victims to retract their claims of sexual abuse by the institution’s director, who was sentenced to eight years for abusing at least 10 children between 2004 and 2016.

“I decided in favor of clemency in April of last year in the belief that the convict did not abuse the vulnerability of the children entrusted to him. I made a mistake,” Novák said Saturday. “I apologize to those I have hurt and to any victims who may have felt I am not standing up for them.

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ARGENTINA

# Country marks naming of first female saint

‘Mama Antula,’ who left life of privilege for Jesuits, was a ‘rebel’

By DÉBORA REY  
The Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — A Catholic laywoman who lived in 18th-century Argentina and joined the Jesuits in their evangelical mission throughout the South American country will become the first female saint from the home country of Pope Francis on Sunday.

María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa, more commonly known by her Quechua name of “Mama Antula,” was born in 1730 into a wealthy family in Santiago del Estero, a province north of Buenos Aires. At the age of 15, she left the com-



Natasha Pisarenko/The Associated Press

A woman holds a religious holy card with an image of María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa, more commonly known by her Quechua name of “Mama Antula.”

fortable life of her home and the privileges of her family to join the Jesuits — at a time when women’s options were limited to marriage or joining a convent.

“She was a rebel, just like Jesus,” Cintia Suárez, co-au-

thor of the biography *Mama Antula, the first female saint of Argentina*, told The Associated Press.

Mama Antula collaborated in the performance of spiritual exercises based on the writings of St. Ignatius of Loyola,

the founder of the Company of Jesus in 1534, according to her biographer.

When the Spanish crown expelled the Jesuits from America in 1767, considering them a threat to its interests, Mama Antula decided to take up the mantle and continue her work, even at the risk of being imprisoned.

At a time when slavery still prevailed, masters and slaves, rich and poor were welcome in her spiritual exercises. It was within that space of reflection that she helped to erase social differences.

Mama Antula was not widely recognized due to her status as a lay woman until 2013, when Francis was elected pope and brought her back to the public eye.

Francis first authorized

her beatification in 2016, after the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints recognized a miracle linked to Mama Antula. It was the inexplicable healing in 1905 of a seriously ill nun belonging to the religious order in charge of the House of spiritual exercises founded by Mama Antula in Buenos Aires.

The second miracle that opened the door to her canonization came in 2017, when a former Jesuit seminarian was left on the verge of death from a stroke. A friend brought a picture of Mama Antula to the hospital and stuck it on the vital signs monitor. The man improved and left intensive care.

María Antonia de Paz y Figueroa, or “Mama Antula,” died on March 7, 1799, at 69.



NEWS DIGEST

Simpson denies he’s in hospice care

O.J. Simpson is reportedly undergoing chemotherapy despite posting a video on Friday in which he appeared to flaunt his good health.



O.J. SIMPSON

News broke earlier in the day that the 76-year-old was diagnosed with prostate cancer, after a report was widely shared from Miami’s ABC affiliate Local10, citing sources close to the matter.

Somehow, a rumor seemed to get back to “The Juice” that people thought he was in hospice care, because he then took to X, sharing a video from behind the wheel of his car and telling the camera, “I’m not in any hospice, I don’t know who put that out there.”

New York Daily News

Migrant to be charged as adult in shooting

NEWYORK — The 15-year-old migrant boy who shot a tourist and opened fire on a cop in Times Square faces two counts of attempted murder and will be charged as an adult, police said Saturday.

The teen, whose name is being withheld by the Daily News because of his age, also faces assault and weapons possession charges for the gunplay at the Crossroads of the World Thursday evening.

The Venezuelan immigrant, who came to the U.S. in September, is expected to be arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court on Saturday.

His shot missed the guard, but struck a 38-year-old Tatiele Riberio, who was in line to buy a pair of sneakers.

New York Daily News

Princess of Wales is heading home

Kate Middleton has seemingly recovered enough from her abdominal surgery three and a half weeks ago to now leave Windsor Castle for her separate home in Norfolk, where she’ll join the rest of the royal family.



PRINCESS KATE

Middleton, 42, will reportedly finish recuperating at Anmer Hall, which she shares with Prince William on the couple’s Sandringham Estate, per *People Magazine*.

“Catherine is recovering well,” a source told *The Daily Mail* on Friday. “She was looking forward to a change of scene and will be able to take it easy in Norfolk while the children let off steam with William.”

The Princess of Wales, however, is not expected to return to public duties until after Easter, according to Kensington Palace, which announced she had undergone a “planned abdominal surgery” on Jan. 16. The palace later clarified the issue was not related to cancer.

New York Daily News

Helicopter crashes in desert, killing 6

A helicopter carrying six people, including the co-founder of Nigeria’s biggest bank by assets, crashed in a Southern California desert near the Mojave National Preserve, authorities said.

Herbert Wigwe, 57, co-founder of Access Bank, was among the victims, family members from his home village of Isiokpo said.

Abimbola Ogunbanjo, 61, who was president of the National Council of the Nigeria Stock Exchange from 2017 to 2021, and served as the group chairman of the Nigerian Exchange Group Plc from 2021 to 2022, was confirmed dead by a family member in Lagos.

The Federal Aviation Administration said a Eurocopter EC helicopter crashed at about 10 p.m. Friday with six people on board.

Bloomberg News

HUMAN BRAIN

Is mixing up names a sign of trouble?

Health experts say medical testing is the only way to know

By LAURAN NEERGAARD  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Any parent who’s ever called one of their children by the other’s name — or even the family pet’s name — likely could empathize when President Joe Biden mixed up the names of French leaders Macron and Mitterrand.

The human brain has trouble pulling names out of stuffed memory banks on cue. But when are those and other verbal stumbles normal, and

when might they be a sign of cognitive trouble?

“When I see somebody make a flub on TV, I’m really not all that concerned,” said researcher on aging S. Jay Olshansky of the University of Illinois at Chicago. “What science will tell you about flubs is that they’re perfectly normal, and they are exacerbated by stress, for sure.”

Biden, 81, has a decades-long history of verbal gaffes. But they’re getting new attention after a special counsel this past week decided Biden shouldn’t face criminal charges for his handling of classified documents — while describing him as an old man with trouble

remembering dates, even the date his son Beau died.

That prompted a visibly angry Biden to lash out from the White House, saying, “My memory is fine.” As for his son’s 2015 death from brain cancer, “Frankly, when I was asked the question, I thought to myself, it wasn’t any of their damn business,” Biden said.

Biden is not the only candidate making verbal slips. Former President Donald Trump, Biden’s likely opponent in the November presidential election, has also. Last month the 77-year-old Trump confused his major opponent for the GOP nomination, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, with

former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Health experts caution that neither verbal gaffes nor a lawyer’s opinions can reveal whether someone is having cognitive trouble. That takes medical testing.

But certain glitches are common at any age.

“To easily recall names, right in the moment, is the hardest thing for us to do accurately,” said Dr. Eric Lenze of Washington University in St. Louis, a geriatric psychiatrist.

Some studies have suggested that everyday “misnaming” may occur when the brain has names stored by category — like your family members or

perhaps in Biden’s case, world leaders he’s long known — and grabs the wrong one. Or the miss may be phonetic, as the names of France’s current president, Emmanuel Macron, and former President Francois Mitterrand both begin with “M.”

As for dates, emotion may tag certain memories but not run-of-the-mill ones, such as the special counsel’s questions about when Biden handled a box of documents.

*The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Science and Educational Media Group.*

MIAMI

Radio host files complaint

By SAMANTHA CHERY  
The Washington Post

A Miami journalist filed a federal complaint against his radio station this week, claiming that he and his team were let go after a series of discriminatory incidents, including a boss who allegedly said their show was “sounding very Latino.”

Last week, South Florida’s WLRN terminated Carlos Frias and two producers on his team and canceled “Sundial,” a 6-year-old show about local arts and culture that has been replaced with an extra hour of nationally syndicated programming.

“The change was made to focus more resources on WLRN’s award-winning newsroom, mainly boosting news stories for daily newscasts and features, along with bolstering the expansion of digital stories,” WLRN’s vice president of news, Sergio Bustos; the station’s daily news and live programming director, Caitie Muñoz; and its vice president of radio, Peter Maerz, said in a statement.

Bustos said no one at the station was able to comment based on advice from legal counsel.

But Frías, who joined as the show’s host in 2022, said the “Sundial” team was let go about a week after he complained to human resources about racial discrimination, according to a filing he made jointly to the Florida Commission on Human Relations and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on Tuesday.

Frias alleges that Muñoz told a producer that the show was “sounding very Latino” last August, and made a spreadsheet of the show’s guests that only listed the ethnicity for Hispanic or Latino guests.

The show has featured several Hispanic and Latino guests, including Puerto Rican artists and Cuban American authors.



Ezra Acayan/Getty Images

A performer breathed fire during Lunar New Year celebrations at Binondo district, considered the world’s oldest Chinatown, on Saturday in Manila, Philippines. Lunar New Year is celebrated around the world, and the Year of the Dragon in 2024 is associated with growth, progress and abundance.

ASIA

Officials count on baby Dragons

Will auspicious new year bring hoped-for boom in births?

By LILY KUO and LYRIC LI  
The Washington Post

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Governments across East Asia — from China and Taiwan to Japan and South Korea — have been trying to convince women to have more babies. It’s getting existential: China is fast running out of the workers needed to power its manufacturing-focused economy and is forecast to lose as many as 200 million workers — or the entire working population of the United States — by 2050.

Their efforts are failing. Birthrates continue to fall. But some are hoping for a baby boom, or even a baby boomlet, in the year ahead as Saturday marks the start of a Lunar New Year and the dawn of the Year of the Dragon.

According to Chinese as-

trology — a nearly two-millennia-old system with believers casual and fervent across Asia and in Chinese communities around the world — the dragon is the most auspicious Zodiac animal.

As the only mythical creature of the 12 animals in the Chinese Zodiac, it is considered divine and powerful. Many believe children born in the Year of the Dragon are more likely to be successful and fortunate all their lives.

Under the system, which assigns traits to each animal, some years are less popular, like that of the tiger (too fierce), the goat (too timid) or the snake (seen as manipulative and cunning). The Year of the Golden Pig, which has a decadeslong cycle, has also led to baby booms. Golden Pigs are said to have lifelong comfort and wealth.

But no year is as sought after as the dragon, associated with intelligence, con-

fidence and ambition. Couples opt for in vitro fertilization or schedule Caesarean deliveries to ensure their children are born in time — or even ask doctors to delay deliveries. School class sizes surge during dragon years, often requiring extra cohorts.

Even heads of state weigh in. On Friday, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong urged citizens to “add a ‘little dragon’” to their families.

The superstition is not entirely baseless. According to a 2019 study using data from China, those born during a dragon year were more likely to score higher on university entrance exams and to have a college education. Girls in the cohort studied were also more likely to be taller.

But the reason, the study concluded, had nothing to do with the cosmos. It was the extra time and money that parents spend on those children.

“People think that these dragon kids are special and they want to have special kids, and when they have these kids, they invest in them and expect great things from them. And this makes them successful, and the cycle continues,” said Naci Mocan, a professor of economics at Louisiana State University and one of the authors of the study. “That’s why this has been going on for centuries and generations.”

In China, where the Lunar New Year is the most important annual holiday, authorities are hoping this age-old belief will produce a needed spike in births. Hospitals across China have been sending out timetables and tips instructing couples when to conceive to have a dragon baby. “Hurry up and seize these few months to prepare for a baby scientifically,” read one notice from the Huantai Maternity and Child Healthcare Hospital in Shandong province.

SUPER BOWL LVIII

Swift expected to make it to kickoff

Star traveled across nine time zones to make it to final game

By FOSTER KLUG  
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Is she ready for it?

On social media, fans of Taylor Swift and aviation journalists believe they’ve identified Swift’s private jet, labeled “The Football Era.” It arrived from Tokyo’s Haneda Airport to Los Angeles’ LAX airport just after 3:30 p.m. local time.

Although her transportation plans onward to Las Ve-

gas, where her boyfriend, NFL star tight end Travis Kelce, will play in Sunday’s Super Bowl, have yet to be revealed, it seems like Swift will definitely make kickoff.

Representatives for Swift and VistaJet, the world’s only global private aviation company, did not immediately respond to the AP’s request for comment.

Swift’s last song was still ringing in the ears of thousands of fans at the Tokyo Dome on Saturday night when the singer rushed to a private jet at Haneda airport, presumably embarking on an

intensely scrutinized journey to see Kelce.

“We’re all gonna go on a great adventure,” Swift told the crowd earlier. She was speaking of the music, but it might also describe her race to cross nine time zones and the international date line.

With a final bow at the end of her sold-out show, Swift disappeared beneath the stage and her journey to the other side of the world began.

Her expected trip to see Kelce’s team, the Kansas City Chiefs, play the San Francisco 49ers in Las Vegas has fired imaginations, and specula-

tion, for weeks.

“I hope she can return in time. It’s so romantic,” said office worker Hitomi Takahashi, 29, who bought matching Taylor Swift sweatshirts with her friend and was taking photos just outside the Tokyo Dome.

About an hour after the end of the concert, AP journalists were near Haneda’s private jet area when minivans drove up and someone went inside the gate area, as four to five people carrying large black umbrellas obstructed the view of the person.

IN THE KNOW  
Stalker unfit

The Taylor Swift serial stalker accused of repeatedly showing up outside the music icon’s Tribeca townhouse was found mentally unfit to stand trial and has been committed to psychiatric care, Manhattan prosecutors said. The decision came during a brief Manhattan Criminal Court hearing Friday for Seattle resident David Crowe, who was sitting in a jail cell for repeatedly showing up at Swift’s Franklin Street apartment in January. An examination by a mental health professional found that “David Crowe is unfit to stand trial.”

New York Daily News



ADVERTISEMENT

# Dallas’ premier senior living destination, Edgemere is winning national awards in 2024

Luxury amenities, engaging activities, inspired dining and the utmost individualized care nourish the mind, body and spirit.



At Edgemere, timeless Tuscan-inspired architecture surrounds lush gardens, fountains and ponds, creating intimate gathering areas. (Courtesy Edgemere)

It's an exciting time at Edgemere, a premier senior living destination in the serene Preston Hollow neighborhood of North Dallas. Edgemere has been recognized by Newsweek as the No. 1 continuing care retirement community in Texas in 2024, and placed second overall in the publication's ranking of America's Best Continuing Care Retirement Communities. More than 2,000 communities were evaluated, and the results were collected from a range of surveys sent to residents, prospective residents and family members, as well as employees and associated health care professionals.

This latest accolade follows the November 2023 announcement that the community's health care center, The Plaza at Edgemere, ranked in the top 3% of health care centers in the United States according to U.S. News & World Report's 2024 Best Long-Term Care and Short-Term Rehabilitation ratings. The Plaza earned Best Nursing Home status by achieving "High Performing," the highest possible rating, for both short-term rehabilitation and long-term care. The award-winning health care center also received its most recent Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ("CMS") report and, again, received an overall five-star rating for 2023, a significant accomplishment.

"Receiving these two, top national award recognitions are evidence of the commitment of our community and leadership teams to quality, and creating environments where residents can grow and thrive," said David Lawlor, president and CEO of Long Hill Company, which manages Edgemere. "We are honored to be entrusted with the community's stewardship and work with a dynamic group of residents and staff."



Edgemere's personalized care programs strike a balance between offering the support you need and empowering you to continue enjoying your friendships, pursuing your hobbies and seizing new opportunities. (Courtesy Edgemere)

For more than 20 years, Edgemere has been a trusted and respected senior living community in Dallas, enriching the lives of its discerning

residents through vibrant and engaging opportunities where friendships flourish and memories are made. Nestled on 16 acres in the tranquil Preston Hollow neighborhood, the timeless Tuscan-inspired architecture of barrel tile clay roofing and Venetian stucco surrounds lush gardens, fountains and ponds, creating intimate gathering areas. The community provides living options across the continuum from independent living, assisted living, memory care and both short-term and long-term skilled nursing offerings. The comfort and well-being of each resident is at the heart of the design, ensuring they feel at ease in the inspired surroundings.

Offering one-, two- and three-bedroom floorplans, Edgemere has living spaces for every lifestyle with amenities designed to provide comfort and convenience with the elegance expected by our residents. From the modern fitness center with an indoor pool, to the performing arts center and indulgent full-service salon and spa, the community provides everything residents need to thrive. Edgemere's outdoor space is equally impressive, with meticulously cared for gardens, walking paths and lovely vignettes for visiting with friends and neighbors. The Edgemere campus also offers a greenhouse and herb garden maintained by dedicated residents.

At Edgemere, the health and well-being of every resident is a priority. Our personalized fitness and wellness programs cater to each individual's needs. Whether you're a fitness fanatic or just getting started, we offer something for everyone. Cardio and strength training classes and a pool with group aquatic programming are offered, all complemented by a life enrichment program catering to the mind, body and spirit.



Enjoy time with friends during cocktail hour, or dine together in one of Edgemere's elegant restaurants. (Courtesy Edgemere)

And for those with a refined palate, you'll find dining at Edgemere is always a memorable experience. We offer a variety of venues to choose from, and only use the freshest ingredients, with our menus rivaling Dallas' finest restaurants. No matter where you decide to eat — the Portabella Bistro for classic and casual bites or the more upscale Medici restaurant — Edgemere's culinary team consistently crafts creative experiences that are meant to be savored, and always takes into consideration individual dietary requirements. The community will be adding a third dining venue in Spring 2024 with the opening of the Bottega Café.

## The Plaza

At Edgemere, we understand the importance of preserving your dignity and independence as you age. Residents living in the assisted living neighborhood at The Plaza at Edgemere can expect the highest level of quality and service. Our personalized care programs are thoughtfully crafted to strike a balance between offering the support you need and empowering you to continue enjoying your friendships, pursuing your hobbies and seizing new opportunities. Our health and wellness programs encompass every aspect of your well-being, allowing you to lead a life that's rich in vitality and joy. Our trained team is there to assist, but never oversteps, helping with routines while ensuring residents can maintain their independence as much as possible.



Receive the highest level of service and care at Edgemere, where no detail is overlooked and all residents' individual needs are considered. (Courtesy Edgemere)

In Edgemere's memory care neighborhood, we combine state-of-the-art support with highly individualized attention. Recognizing that each resident has specific needs, our dedicated nurses work directly with residents, their families and their physicians to create custom, dignified care plans. Residents have access to nationally recognized programming, such as Music & Memory and It's Never 2 Late (iN2L), designed to help them live a meaningful life within their specific abilities.

**Life at Edgemere is vibrant, rewarding and as active or carefree as you desire. To discover all Edgemere has to offer, we invite you to schedule a tour or join our executive staff for a complimentary lunch or dinner. Call 469.770.7287 or visit [edgemerelife.com](http://edgemerelife.com) for details.**



MIDDLE EAST

# Mother tried to build ‘bridge’ over grief

Conversations with militant convicted of killing son bear fruit

By ERIC TUCKER  
The Associated Press

After hours of talking about faith and family, redemption and war, the grieving American mother had an additional question for the Islamic militant convicted in her son’s murder.

Do you know, Diane Foley asked, where my son is buried?

The exchange is described in a new book by Foley that recounts face-to-face encounters she had with the British-born Islamic State fighter who was charged in connection with the brutal beheading in Syria of her son James, a freelance journalist.

Sitting in a windowless courthouse conference room with the man who contributed to her son’s death, Foley said in an interview, was meant as a “tiny step” toward reparation — “for him to begin to kind of understand where we were coming from and for me to try to hear him.”

The conversations afforded Foley an opportunity to memorialize a son everyone knew as Jim — curious, full of energy, possessed of strong moral bearing. Across the table, Alexander Kotey, his ankles shackled, conveyed compassion for the Foley family’s suffering but also made clear his resentment over U.S. actions in the Middle East and remained resolute that he’d been acting as a soldier during a time of war.

He couldn’t say where Jim’s body was buried — he wished he knew, he said, but he didn’t — but for Foley, the conversations were nonetheless profoundly worthwhile.

“I just kind of wanted to somehow build a bridge, that’s all,” Foley said. “The pain and hatred continues unless you take the time to try to listen to one another.”

It’s highly unusual for a vic-



Andrew Harnik/The Associated Press

In her book, Diane Foley recounts face-to-face encounters she had with the British-born Islamic State fighter who was charged in connection with the beheading in Syria of her son James 10 years ago.

tim’s relative to have meaningful interactions with someone convicted of harming their loved one. But this case has never been ordinary — and was also never even a sure thing.

Jim Foley was among a group of mostly Western journalists and aid workers held hostage and ultimately killed by a group of British-born Islamic State militants in Syria during a reign of terror that also involved waterboarding and mock executions. The captors came to be known by the incongruously lighthearted nickname of “the Beatles” because of their accents.

It wasn’t until nearly four years after Foley’s 2014 murder at the age of 40 that Kotey and a future co-defendant, El Shafee Elsheikh, were captured by a Kurdish-led, U.S. backed militia. An American drone strike killed the militant actually responsible for Foley’s killing, Mohammed Emwazi, known by the moniker “Jihadi John.”

After legal wrangling, the pair was brought to the U.S. for prosecution in 2020 after the Justice Department agreed to forgo the death penalty as a possible punishment.

The book traces that saga but also delves into Diane Foley’s dismay over what she portrays as a coldly bureaucratic U.S. government response to her son’s disappearance, two years before his death.

The captors reached out with a multimillion-dollar ransom demand, but the Obama administration warned her she could face prosecution if she paid one. Officials struggled to communicate meaningful, up-to-date information.

### Grief managed

The first indication something terrible may have happened to her son, Foley says, was a call not from the government but from a reporter — though in retrospect a possible clue came earlier that morning when two FBI agents arrived at her New Hampshire house to request Jim’s DNA.

President Barack Obama announced her son’s death and later called the family, insisting the administration had done everything possible to save Jim and even revealing to them an unsuccessful military operation to rescue the hostages. But

the Foleys were unconvinced and during a subsequent White House visit, Foley says she bristled at Obama’s assurance that Jim was his highest priority, telling him the hostage families had felt abandoned.

Foley channeled that grief into action, pressing the government to do better. The administration in 2015 overhauled its approach to dealing with hostage cases, with Obama saying he’d heard “unacceptable” feedback from families about the government’s interactions with them.

An FBI-led hostage recovery team was created, along with a new State Department special envoy position.

But the heart of *American Mother*, written with Irish author Colum McCann, is about Foley’s interactions with Kotey — conversations mandated under Kotey’s 2021 plea agreement. El Sheikh was convicted at trial.

Inside a conference room at a federal courthouse in Virginia, Foley asked Kotey to describe what he thought of Jim — a “typical white American” was the response, plus naive and optimistic. He was a truth-

seeker, she told him, a teacher, a journalist. In another world, she said, you and Jim could have been friends.

Kotey shared details of his own life, too, pulling out photos of his daughters in bright blue and pink dresses that were taken in a Syrian refugee camp. Foley felt instantly moved by the girls’ beauty.

He acknowledged his role in Jim’s captivity but in a limited way; yes, he had punched him and written the message Jim delivered on camera before his murder. But he said he wasn’t present for the killing itself.

The indictment doesn’t spell out specific roles for the defendants in the deaths of the Western hostages. What he had done, Kotey said, was what he’d been directed to do as a soldier in war.

### Understanding

At one point, he opened a tissue package, wiping his eyes as he described being moved by an HBO documentary he’d seen about Jim’s life, especially at the sight of his weeping father. He said he was sorry for causing the family pain.

But, he said, he wanted Foley to understand how he came by his resentment.

He told a story of once pulling the remains of a baby from the rubble of an American drone strike, lamenting how no one had been interested in making a documentary about that child as was done for Jim since she was not white or American.

The first two conversations occurred over two days in October 2021, weeks after Kotey’s guilty plea. She returned the following spring, weeks before he was to start his life sentence, after receiving two handwritten letters from him.

He wrote about his “compassion and sympathy for your collective anguish and grief as a family” but also his ambivalence upon learning that Jim’s brother was a U.S. military pilot — something he said he’d been reluctant to bring up in their earlier meetings.

He said he had “struggled to detangle” the “sins of the U.S. government” from “our own misguided and unjust responses towards these grievances” but that he now saw things with “greater clarity.”

### Things lost

In their final meeting, they returned again to the question of regret. He said he wished he had not done certain things he’d been ordered to do, and teared up as he recalled the look on Jim’s face during one particular beating.

He told her his wife and children had left the refugee camp and were now in Turkey and that he hoped he’d be able eventually to serve out his sentence in England.

Foley extended her hand and he shook it. She said she would pray for him and wished him peace.

By the end of their time together, Diane Foley said in the interview, the sadness in the room was palpable. Everyone, she says, had lost.

She had lost her son; Kotey, even younger than Jim, “lost his freedom, his family, his country — all of it, too.”

“To me,” she said, “that was incredibly poignant, and yet by listening to one another, I think there was a bit more understanding somehow.”

MENTAL HEALTH

# Researchers get closer to advancement

Scientists make progress in developing blood test for psychiatric disorders

By ANGELA ROBERTS  
Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — Johns Hopkins researchers say they’re getting closer to developing a blood test that would identify changes in the brain associated with psychiatric and neurological disorders — an advancement that could enable doctors to detect the early signs of mental health emergencies.

In a study published last month in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Molecular Psychiatry*, researchers focused on the potential of particles called extracellular vesicles to provide a window into what’s happening inside a person’s brain.

Extracellular vesicles are fatty sacs of genetic material that are released by every tissue in the body, including the brain.

Sarven Sabunciyany, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the paper’s senior author, compared them to rafts that travel between cells. They sometimes carry messenger RNA — a type of molecule also called mRNA that contains the instructions for how cells should make proteins.

“It’s basically a way of cells communicating,” he said.

The study, led by the Johns Hopkins Children’s Center, was inspired by a previous study by Johns Hopkins researchers, Johns Hopkins Medicine said in a news release Thursday. That

study found that communication between cells is altered in pregnant women who go on to develop postpartum depression after they give birth.

### Hard-to-access tissues

In the new study, scientists first proved that mRNA from specific tissues are found in extracellular vesicles circulating in the blood. Then, using lab-grown human brain tissue derived from stem cells, scientists found that mRNA in extracellular vesicles released from brain tissues reflected mRNA changes happening inside those tissues.

According to the researchers, that means it is possible to gather biological information from hard-to-access tissues — like the placenta or the brain — by examining mRNA inside of extracellular vesicles circulating in the blood.

The study’s results suggest that mRNA in extracellular vesicles are likely an ideal biological marker for identifying brain disorders that involve mood, schizophrenia, epilepsy and substance abuse.

“This is very exciting, because right now, there isn’t a blood marker for disorders affecting the brain,” said Lena Smirnova, a co-author of the paper, in the Hopkins news release about the study. Smirnova is an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Health and Engineering at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Also in the latest study, researchers discovered 13 brain-specific mRNAs in

the blood that were found to be associated with postpartum depression.

### Cellular correlation

Using the lab-grown brain tissue, the researchers discovered that while cellular and extracellular mRNA levels are not identical, they do correlate, which means it is possible to figure out what’s happening inside the brain by looking at extracellular vesicles in the blood.

The team’s eventual goal, Sabunciyany said, is to create a simple blood test that could detect changes in levels of mRNA in extracellular vesicles linked to changes in the brain associated with mental disorders.

“One of the biggest obstacles — not just in psychiatric disorders, but in brain disorders — is, we don’t really know what’s happening in the brain,” Sabunciyany said. “We can’t just do a blood test or take an X-ray.”

Moving forward, Sabunciyany and his colleagues plan to conduct further research, including with people who have psychiatric conditions like bipolar disorder to identify how markers in their blood change as they fluctuate between periods of mania, depression and stability.

Besides forming the foundation of a new way to test for mental health conditions, scientists hope their research will lead to the “next generation” of prenatal tests, where doctors will be able to simply draw blood from the mother to screen her baby for a health issue, rather than conduct an invasive procedure like amniocentesis.



2012 File Photo/Staff

In a study published last month in *Molecular Psychiatry*, researchers focused on the potential of particles called extracellular vesicles to provide a window into what’s happening inside a person’s brain.





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# UTD’s Jonsson School is preparing the next generation of engineers and computer scientists

*The school — which has doubled in size since 2008 — offers numerous programs to help launch graduates’ careers.*

Demand is high for engineers and computer scientists who can solve a range of critical problems, from generating renewable energy to designing life-saving technologies. The Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science at The University of Texas at Dallas, a university created by founders of Texas Instruments in 1969 to produce more engineers and computer scientists, is answering the call.

The Jonsson School has doubled in size since 2008, enrolling 8,839 students in the 2023-2024 academic year. Its nationally ranked programs attract an undergraduate student body whose average SAT scores are among the highest of any public university in Texas.

“The Jonsson School is fulfilling the mission of its founders to provide advanced education and support for the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs,” says Dr. Stephanie G. Adams, dean of the Jonsson School and holder of the Lars Magnus Ericsson chair. “Our graduates go on to innovate at top companies and launch their own businesses to address some of our society’s most pressing problems.”

The Jonsson School offers degrees in several main areas: bioengineering, computer science and software engineering, electrical and computer engineering, materials science and engineering, mechanical engineering, and systems engineering. Average starting salaries for students who earn bachelor’s degrees are \$81,000 for engineering majors and \$93,000 for computer science majors.

Students at all levels have the opportunity to participate in research aimed at the creation of new engineering knowledge and technology transfer to industry. The school continually evolves to carry out its mission, recently organizing efforts around five research thrusts of national importance: advanced manufacturing, energy science and technology, health innovations, semiconductor science and technology, and transportation science and engineering.

Preparing students with entrepreneurial skills is a key part of their education. Students have access to resources such as the Blackstone LaunchPad, which offers a workspace and support, including an annual pitch competition; and the Venture Development Center, which houses spin-off companies affiliated with research produced in the Jonsson School and at the university.

Dr. Izabelle de Mello Gindri (PhD’16), says the skills she gained at UT Dallas prepared her to launch two startups with co-founders in her native Brazil after she earned her doctorate in bioengineering. One of her companies, bio meds Brasil, has risen quickly to become one of the largest producers of absorbable pellets used for hormone replacement therapy and to treat metabolic disorders in Brazil. Her other business, laso Biodelivery, is working on the development of an implant to treat overactive bladder and another implant that goes under the skin to treat Alzheimer’s disease.

De Mello Gindri says her experience in the lab of Dr. Danieli Rodrigues, associate professor of bioengineering, was critical to her success.

“Dr. Rodrigues opened doors at UT Dallas and motivated me through research tools and opportunities to present and explain my work and learn from other collaborators and colleagues,” de Mello Gindri says. “She taught me to look further into problems with a multidisciplinary view.”

Satwik Dutta (MS’20), who is now working on his doctoral degree, is putting his skills to work to create tools that can provide reliable data on children’s classroom engagement to help teachers identify children who might need additional support. He says the Jonsson School’s emphasis on



State-of-the-art facilities, such as Engineering and Computer Science West (ECSW), are integral to meeting the Jonsson School’s mission of being a global leader in engineering and computer science education and research. (Courtesy University of Texas at Dallas)



Satwik Dutta (MS’20), who is now working on his doctoral degree, says the Jonsson School’s emphasis on interdisciplinary research made it possible for him to conduct studies with experts in communication disorders. (Courtesy University of Texas at Dallas)

interdisciplinary research made it possible for him to conduct studies with experts in communication disorders.

“I was fortunate enough to collaborate with excellent teams of researchers at the UT Dallas Center for Robust Speech Systems (CRSS) and Callier Center for Communication Disorders,” Dutta says. Recently, Dutta was selected as a member of the first cohort of Quad Fellowships, a multinational scholarship program launched by the governments of Australia, India, Japan and the United States to build ties among the next generation’s brightest STEM scholars.

UT Dallas also offers research opportunities for undergraduate students, including the UTDesign Capstone program, which gives seniors real-world experience working for sponsors.

Computer science alumnus James Griffin (BS’18) is CEO and founder of Invene, a health care software development company. Griffin, an OZY Genius Award Winner, received a grant from the McKinney Economic Development Corporation’s Innovation Fund. Griffin says the Venture Development Center and Blackstone LaunchPad helped him gain the tools and contacts to launch Invene.

“UTD has a lot of great resources available if you’re willing to invest time

into them. The key is putting yourself out there and getting involved.”

Dr. John H.L. Hansen, the Jonsson School’s associate dean for research and professor of electrical and computer engineering, says the opportunities for students to get involved in research and innovation prepare students for life after graduation.

“We’re excited to be able to offer students a range of hands-on opportunities to conduct advanced research in multiple disciplines,” says Hansen, distinguished chair in telecommunications at UT Dallas. “Our faculty perform a variety of research for industry and government, forging significant partnerships with recent startups, industry powerhouses and government agencies.”

The partnerships and opportunities at UT Dallas continue to grow. In October, the university and UT Southwestern Medical Center dedicated the \$120 million Texas Instruments Biomedical Engineering and Sciences Building on the UT Southwestern East Campus to accelerate training for the next generation of medical innovators.

In September, the university was chosen to receive \$30 million over three years from the Department of Defense to develop and commercialize new battery technologies

and manufacturing processes, enhance the domestic availability of critical raw materials, and train high-quality workers for jobs in an expanding battery energy storage workforce.

Also in 2023, the University launched the North Texas Semiconductor Institute, which is working to accelerate semiconductor innovation, entrepreneurship and workforce development in North Texas.

And a team of computer scientists was selected to participate in the National Center for Transportation Cybersecurity and Resiliency, one of 39 University Transportation Centers that conduct research to promote safe, efficient and environmentally sound transportation.

Four new centers from the Jonsson School — focusing on Smart and Connected Mobility including Transportation (COSMO), Imaging and Surgical Innovation (CISI), Applied AI (CAIQUE), and AI/Machine Learning (CAIML) — were recently established in a new City of Richardson / UT Dallas partnership entitled CENT-IQ.

“Through these new projects, we look forward to providing even greater opportunities for our students to gain advanced skills needed to become the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs,” Hansen says.

Adams, also a professor of systems engineering, noted that the Jonsson School, which was established in 1986, is less than 40 years old.

“We are a young school at a young university, with creativity and an enterprising spirit built into our DNA,” Adams says. “As we continue to build our student-centered and accessible culture in which anyone can thrive, the Jonsson School is impacting the North Texas region and beyond.” ■

By **Kim Horner**  
*Special Contributor*



PAID ADVERTISEMENT



# Embrace the Full Life at Touchmark

Touchmark at Emerald Lake—McKinney’s newest leading full-service retirement community—officially opened its doors in October and welcomed its first independent living residents. With several months under their belts, these residents are experiencing what it means to become engrained in Touchmark’s award-winning programming, including Life Enrichment/Wellness, Choice Dining, health and fitness, and an abundance of social opportunities.

## Maximize Ease & Accessibility

New resident Charlie Hooker comes to Touchmark after several years of living by himself. He selected a second-floor home with a view of Emerald Lake and easy access to all campus amenities. “I was a little concerned there might be a lot of traffic and noise, but I never hear anyone from inside my home,” he says. “I have just under 1,100 square feet and a beautiful patio looking out on the lake. I like the view, privacy, and being right next to all the action. The restaurant where I like to have breakfast and lunch is just a few steps away, and the stairs to the main dining room downstairs are right there, too. I’m close to parking and really everything, and it just makes life easier.”



Residents enjoying yoga class

## Taste All Retirement Has to Offer

Most people don’t associate retirement living with fine dining, but they very well might after a meal at Touchmark. The Choice Dining program features a wide variety of chef-prepared meals that are made-to-order with fresh ingredients that are sourced locally whenever possible and reflect the best of every season. “I didn’t have a great diet before I came here when I was by myself,” Charlie says. “The food is excellent, the service is good, and they’re very open to suggestions. I really like the fish that’s been



Home interior with a view of Emerald Lake

served—the sole, salmon, and seabass have been really special. I had cedar-plank salmon with teriyaki last night and it was excellent. The filets are really good; superb.”

## Come for the Convenience, Stay for the Camaraderie

One of the main reasons Charlie chose Touchmark was for the companionship. “I’ve met new folks and made friends with many of them. The first weekend I was here, my daughter and granddaughter came from Denver to help me move, and on that second night, two couples came into the dining room and asked if they could join us at our table,” he says. “My daughter had been concerned about me—my comfort and security and whether I would like it—and she was blown away at how welcoming those people were. The fact that they just voluntarily sat down with us really made us feel at home.”

## Design Your Days Your Way

Touchmark has been redefining what’s possible in senior living for over 40 years. One of the most common refrains expressed by residents is that they wish they’d moved in sooner so they could take advantage of even more of the activities, events, groups, and outings. The Life Enrichment/Wellness offerings are designed to appeal to every interest, whether someone is more independent and introverted or a social butterfly who likes to be constantly busy.

Charlie says, “I’ve been blessed with pretty good health and still belong to the golf club I’ve been at for 20 years, so I play golf a lot and it’s real close by. I’m a people-person and I really enjoy getting to know the folks here—finding out about them and their backgrounds. That’s probably been the biggest plus for me so far.”

## Prioritize Joy & Togetherness

The true beauty of community living is apparent in the meaningful relationships residents, team members, and their families build with one another. When asked why he chose Touchmark specifically, Charlie said, “I have a huge support system here, which is one of the biggest reasons I wanted to stay in McKinney, and Touchmark has come in and filled all the boxes for me. I get to invite my friends here and still go to church with them and hang out with my golf and old neighborhood friends as well. The whole package here facilitates friendship and support. I had gotten used to living by myself, but I didn’t like it. Touchmark really fills a need I had in terms of community.”

## Plan the Next Phase with Intention

When planning how to make retirement easy, enjoyable, and fulfilling, make a list of all the things that bring joy and purpose. Charlie gives sage advice to those looking to make a change: “The thing that people should look for in their retirement search really comes back to the concept of good food and friends. That encompasses a lot because it enhances your lifestyle. The people here at Touchmark will bend over backward to help you, and it’s amazing how they all know my name. It sets the stage for friendship, and there’s so much positivity when you come here. You can keep all your friends and make lots of new ones. There really aren’t any drawbacks to living here.”

If living in a supportive and fun retirement community appeals to you, call 469-343-4901 or use the QR code below for more information.





AIR QUALITY

# Researchers say pollution can disrupt pollination processes

Study: Pollutants can distort scent cues animals, insects rely on

By DINO GRANDONI  
The Washington Post

Lights from buildings high in the sky can disorient birds. Noise from boats and oil exploration deep in the ocean can deafen whales. And animals that depend on their noses? Pollution from smokestacks and tailpipes is hampering their sense of smell, with potentially dire consequences for the fruits and vegetables we eat that depend on pollinators.

In a study published Thursday, a team of researchers has shown how air pollution is altering the sweet smell of flowers and disrupting the cues nocturnal pollinators use to find nectar.

The research, published in the journal *Science*, is the first to show how pollution is causing a chemical chain reaction that degrades the scents upon which nocturnal insects depend to find flowers. While light and noise pollution are well-understood, the work illustrates the little-known but detrimental effect humans are having on wildlife that rely on scent to make sense of the world.

### Ecological processes

“There’s increasing interest in sensory pollution,” said Jeff Riffell, a University of Washington biologist who co-wrote the study. Air pollution, he added, “could be having widespread effects on a variety of different ecological processes.”

Odor brings order to much

of the animal kingdom. Dogs greet with their snouts. Salmon return to the streams of their birth to spawn by scent. Ants and other insects navigate by leaving trails of pheromones.

People are largely unaware of all of this. “We are visual and auditory animals,” Riffell said.

A kind of insect called a hawk moth, which Riffell and his colleagues studied, uses antennae to sniff out the scent of flowers from over a kilometer away. Once they reach a patch of wildflowers, the moths beat their wings so fast to hover in midair and suck up nectar that they are often mistaken for hummingbirds.

### ‘Intense smell’

One of their favorites is the pale evening primrose, a ghostly white flower that blooms at night. In the field in eastern Washington state, the research team bagged the flowers to sample their scent. In the lab, they isolated the individual chemicals that made up the bouquet.

Up close, “it’s an intense smell,” said Joel Thornton, another University of Washington researcher who worked with Riffell on the research. But the moths are able to detect it from afar.

Pollution, however, can disrupt that spectacular sense of smell.

The team found that certain scent chemicals that moths found attractive degrade in the presence of NO3, a potent pollutant that is formed from the emissions of cars, coal plants and other industrial sources. NO3 builds up in the air at night because it is destroyed by sun-

light.

In lab experiments, two moth species — the white-lined sphinx and the tobacco hawk moth — struggled to fly to the primrose scent when subjected to NO3 levels typically seen at night in cities. When the researchers went back into the field and treated the scent from both real and odor-emitting artificial flowers with NO3, wild moth visitation dropped by about 70%.

“The flowers only bloom once per night,” Riffell said. “Without their pollinators, there can be a huge change in the plant community.”

## TRANSPORTATION ONLINE PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITY

Monday, Feb. 12 - Tuesday, March 12, 2024

The Regional Transportation Council and North Central Texas Council of Governments, together serving as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth area, are seeking public input. Information will be posted online at [www.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb24](http://www.publicinput.com/nctcogFeb24) for public review and comment. To request printed copies, call 817-695-9255 or email [jcastillo@nctcog.org](mailto:jcastillo@nctcog.org).

### TOPICS

- Transit Strategic Partnerships
- Safe Routes to School Update
- Proposed Modifications to the List of Funded Projects

### RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

- Interactive Public Input: Map Your Experience: [nctcog.org/mapyourexperience](http://nctcog.org/mapyourexperience)
- Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP): [smokingvehicle.net](http://smokingvehicle.net)
- Vehicle Incentive & Funding Opportunities: [nctcog.org/aqfunding](http://nctcog.org/aqfunding)
- Try Parking It: [tryparkingit.com](http://tryparkingit.com)
- Business Engagement Program: [publicinput.com/nctcogbusinessengage](http://publicinput.com/nctcogbusinessengage)

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# Dallas’ new children’s hospital prepares for area’s growth

Project kicks off as pediatric population nears 2.5M in region

By **MARIN WOLF**  
Staff Writer  
marin.wolf@dallasnews.com

Children’s Health and UT Southwestern Medical Center are embarking on a major new development: A \$5 billion pediatric campus that will replace Children’s Medical Center Dallas.

The project is five years in the making and will increase capacity for the rapidly growing North Texas region. Dallas-

Fort Worth is projected to hit 8.5 million people by 2028, according to a study by Site Selection Group. The pediatric population is nearing 2.5 million, a number that’s expected to double by 2050, Children’s reports.

“We’re able to serve all the kids and families who come through our front door today,” said Children’s Health president and CEO Chris Durovich. “But obviously with those kinds of growth rates, we’re beginning to press the outside of the envelope, being able to fulfill that piece of our mission to make life better for children.”

Here’s what you need to

know about the hospital and what it means for Dallas:

**The new campus will be bigger than the current one**

A nearly 34-acre plot in the Southwestern Medical District will house the new hospital, which is set to take up 2 million square feet. The entire campus will span 4.5 million square feet, making it larger than AT&T Stadium, which is 3 million square feet.

The hospital will stand 240 feet tall, making it taller than the Statue of Liberty. The new campus is nearly as long as six Boeing 737 planes lined up end to end.

Bed capacity will jump to 552 at the new facility, up 38% from the current hospital. Level IV neonatal intensive care unit beds will more than double, from 47 to 96. Emergency department capacity will increase by 15%.

**A physical connection between Children’s and UT Southwestern**

The new hospital will live on the corner of Harry Hines Boulevard and Mockingbird Lane, right across the street from UT Southwestern’s William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. A connector bridge between the two facilities will al-

low babies born at Clements to have immediate access to the Children’s Level IV NICU.

Children’s and UT Southwestern have a long history of collaboration, which they reaffirmed in 2019. UT Southwestern, an academic medical center, provides most doctors for CMC Dallas.

**What happens to the old facility?**

The current CMC Dallas will remain in operation until the new hospital opens in six-to-seven years. Children’s and UT Southwestern have not yet decided what will happen to the current hospital building,

which UT Southwestern owns.

**An era of expansion**

Wednesday’s announcement of the new hospital is just the latest in a string of projects from Children’s.

The not-for-profit pediatric health system moved north 15 years ago with the construction of its Plano medical campus, which has since started expanding.

Even further north in Prosper, Children’s opened a new, three-story specialty center in early 2023, joining a group of other hospitals staking claim in the booming North Texas town.

## Project will take 6-7 years to finish

Continued from Page 13A

towers and a connecting bridge to William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, is a massive undertaking that will take six to seven years to finish. It’s one of the largest hospital construction projects in the country.

“This is beyond my wildest imagination to be able to create a new facility of these component parts and pieces,” said Children’s Health president and CEO Christopher Durovich, who has been in the role since 2003.

The hospital leader has overseen a long list of expansions including the addition of Tower D, a major addition to CMC Dallas. Children’s Research Institute at UT Southwestern, a joint research venture, was merely a “brain cramp.”

“The future that our two organizations are seeking to create will touch the lives of children for the next 50 to 60 years. Those who are alive today, those who are yet unborn, but who will come into the world over that multigenerational period,” Durovich said. “It will serve as a source of community pride.”

### Power of design

Karla Esquivel knows how quickly a hospital can become a home.

The Coppell mom realized something was wrong with her son, Carlos Rivera, when he lost weight and stopped jumping around. In early 2020, a cardiologist diagnosed him with restrictive cardiomyopathy, meaning the muscles of his heart had stiffened, stopping the organ’s lower chambers from properly filling with blood.

Carlos would need a heart transplant at the age of 3.

The family drove 40 minutes to Children’s Medical Center Dallas for more testing, not knowing they wouldn’t leave for four months.

“We just kind of moved into the hospital,” Esquivel said. “There was a full crew taking care of Carlos and at the end, I realized that it was the best thing that happened to us.”

Despite a scary diagnosis, the days in the facility felt ordinary. Carlos, now 7, befriended other patients, and Karla found comfort with other parents. They moved rooms and decorated each one with superheroes; Iron Man, a character famous for having heart surgery, was of particular interest.

The art of constructing a hospital requires balancing familiarity with the future. Carlos needed a team of medical experts to carry out his complicated operation in June 2020, which was a success. Carlos’ family needed space and a sense of normalcy.

The family didn’t partake in the listening tours Children’s carried out with patients and staff in the planning process of the replacement hospital, but experiences similar to theirs have informed every part of the new campus, from the colors and art to room and floor layouts.

Around the time Esquivel moved her son into the hospital, Children’s Chief Strategy Officer Lindsey Tyra found herself in a similar position, albeit for a much shorter duration. Her son, Brooks, caught a bad case of the flu that hospitalized him for nearly a week.



Children’s Health Renderings

**The new Children’s Medical Center Dallas** will include two 12-story towers and one eight-story tower at a cost of about \$5 billion. The price tag doubled from initial plans, drawn up before the pandemic, in part because it will have more beds but also due to rapidly rising building costs.

“As a mom, leaving my other three kids behind and my newborn so that I could focus my sole attention on him was really scary, and I’m a highly educated health care consumer,” Tyra said. “But I think in that moment, regardless of your education or background, all of that goes out the window.”

In designing the new facility, Tyra and her team implemented areas close to patient rooms for parents and family members and even Children’s staff to take time for themselves.

“If you’re a caregiver, you want to be strong, you want to be positive, you want to be uplifting, but you’re scared,” Tyra said. “You don’t want to let them know that.”

The team paid attention to the view of the child. How would someone the size of a 5-year-old experience the hallways and exam rooms? What textures on the walls and art might engage a toddler versus an elementary student?

Children require different kinds of care tailored to their level of development. Pediatric cardiologists, pulmonologists and gastroenterologists train to recognize diseases and administer treatments that are unique to kids.

“An infant communicates with us differently than a toddler, preschooler, an elementary-aged child, a tween, a teenager or a young adult,” Durovich said.

Doctors, nurses and other health providers also had a say in the design. The hospital constructed mock rooms made of styrofoam and ran simulations to see how big the space needed to be and where each outlet should be placed. It’s a tool that Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta used in the construction of a hospital set to open later this year.

Children’s staff toured pediatric facilities in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Colorado to learn what they want to include, and what they don’t. They pulled inspiration from unlikely sources as well: Durovich saw a salad vending machine in Boston Logan International Airport and a robotic arm that serves coffee during a trip to San Francisco.

“All of those things and more are how we create an environment that kids and families are comfortable with,” Durovich said.

### Joint venture

The relationship between Chil-



dren’s and UT Southwestern, a public academic medical center, stretches decades. Almost immediately after the two health care giants reaffirmed their master agreement in 2019, talks of a new and improved children’s hospital in Dallas began.

“We appreciated that the Children’s Medical Center, as much as it was a place where great care was given, still was an old and aging facility,” said UT Southwestern President Dr. Daniel Podolsky. “It was clearly limited in capacity as the number of children seeking care continued to increase.”

The new hospital, Podolsky said, will be a boon to recruitment efforts for doctors and other health care providers. North Texas is designated as a critical health care professional shortage area for both family medicine and pediatrics. The region is projected to need 1,972 pediatricians in 2032 but a supply of only 1,239, meeting less than 63% of demand, according to the 2022 Dallas County Community Needs Assessment.



One month before COVID-19 brought life to a screeching halt, the Children’s board approved the replacement campus. It was the beginning of a long road: Both Children’s and the governing bodies of the UT System would need to sign off on the plans. UT Southwestern provides most doctors for CMC Dallas.

The hospital’s original proposal and the final product look different, in part because of the pandemic. The project was originally reported to be half the cost and with fewer beds than the current \$5 billion, 552-bed total.

Increasing interest rates and construction costs are to blame for the skyrocketing price tags on a number of hospital projects nationwide.

“It’s more expensive to build anything nowadays than it was two or three years ago,” said Mike Hargrave, principal at medical real estate data firm Revista in Maryland. “And that’s because of inflation of materials like steel and concrete.”

Texas ranked first in hospital construction in 2023, with 35 properties and 8.7 million square feet in progress. Dallas ranked sixth for hospital construction out of the nation’s top cities, just behind Houston. Indianapolis, which is building a new IU Health hospital, ranked first, according to Revista.

Hospital and outpatient construction start volumes are generally down compared to pre-pandemic.

In the fall of 2023, three years after Children’s gave the OK on the new hospital, Durovich and Podolsky had a standing meeting in the UT Southwestern president’s office. Podolsky was prepared to take the plan, all \$5 billion of it, to the UT Board of Re-

gents.

“Holy cow,” Durovich thought. “This is going to happen.”

### Looking to future

As the dust settles after Wednesday’s announcement, the physical work of creating the campus from scratch will commence. Children’s and UT Southwestern will break ground on the new facility, located on land that formerly housed the Bass Center buildings, in the second half of this year.

The hospital will require excavating 800,000 cubic yards of dirt and rock, equivalent to 245 Olympic-size swimming pools. It will need 37,000 tons of rebar, or about 16,820 mid-size cars worth, and 376,000 cubic yards of concrete, which equals the weight of around 3,390 Statues of Liberty.

It’ll be six or seven years before the new facility welcomes patients. In the meantime, Children’s Medical Center Dallas will remain in operation. Children’s and UT Southwestern have yet to decide what to do with the old hospital once the new one opens.

Karla Esquivel and her son Carlos return to Children’s every few months for checkups, and likely will for years to come. The visits are happy — Carlos’ recovery has been smooth — but the family feels prepared for a day when Carlos requires more intensive treatment. The idea of the new hospital is a source of comfort, Esquivel said.

“It’s a big thing for families like mine, for families in that situation already, that they will have more research and more options,” Esquivel said. “It gives me hope.”

**The new hospital** will be built less than 2 miles from the existing one, located on land that formerly housed the Bass Center buildings. Children’s and UT Southwestern expect to break ground on the new facility during the second half of this year. The project will take six to seven years.



CLIMATE CHANGE

# Ocean current worries scientists

Study says scenario that will put Europe in deep freeze moving up

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**  
The Associated Press

An abrupt shutdown of Atlantic Ocean currents that could put large parts of Europe in a deep freeze is looking a bit more likely and closer than before as a new complex computer simulation finds a “cliff-like” tipping point looming in the future.

A long-worried nightmare scenario, triggered by Greenland's ice sheet melting from global warming, still is at least decades away if not longer, but maybe not the centuries that it once seemed, a new study in Friday's *Science Advances* finds. The study, the first to use complex simulations and include multiple factors, uses a key measurement to track the strength of vital overall ocean circulation, which is slowing.

A collapse of the current — called the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation or AMOC — would change weather worldwide because it means a shutdown of one of the key climate and ocean forces of the planet. It would plunge northwestern European temperatures by 9 to 27 degrees (5 to 15 degrees Celsius) over the decades, extend Arctic ice much farther south, turn up the heat even more in the Southern Hemisphere, change global rainfall patterns and disrupt the Amazon, the study said. Other scientists said it would be a catastrophe that could cause worldwide food and water shortages.

“We are moving closer (to the collapse), but we we're not sure how much closer,” said study lead author Rene van



2021 File Photo/The Associated Press

**An abrupt shutdown** of Atlantic Ocean currents that could put large parts of Europe in a deep freeze is looking a bit more likely and closer than before, a new study says.

Westen, a climate scientist and oceanographer at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. “We are heading towards a tipping point.”

When this global weather calamity — grossly fictionalized in the movie *The Day After Tomorrow* — may happen is “the million-dollar question, which we unfortunately can't answer at the moment,” van Westen said. He said it's likely a century away but still could happen in his lifetime. He just turned 30.

“It also depends on the rate of climate change we are inducing as humanity,” van Westen said.

### ‘Rising concern’

Studies have shown the AMOC to be slowing, but the issue is about a complete collapse or shutdown. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is a group of hundreds of scientists that gives regular authoritative updates on warming, said it has medium confidence that there will not be a collapse before 2100 and gen-

erally downplayed disaster scenarios. But van Westen, several outside scientists and a study last year say that may not be right.

Stefan Rahmstorf, head of Earth Systems Analysis at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany, was not part of the research, but called it “a major advance in AMOC stability science.”

“The new study adds significantly to the rising concern about an AMOC collapse in the not too distant future,” Rahmstorf said in an email. “We will ignore this at our peril.”

University of Exeter climate scientist Tim Lenton, also not part of the research, said the new study makes him more concerned about a collapse.

An AMOC collapse would cause so many ripples throughout the world's climate that are “so abrupt and severe that they would be near impossible to adapt to in some locations,” Lenton said.

There are signs showing that the AMOC has collapsed in the past, but when and how it will change in the future is still uncertain, said U.S. Na-

tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration oceanographer Wei Cheng, who wasn't part of the research.

The AMOC is part of an intricate global conveyor belt of ocean currents that move different levels of salt and warm water around the globe at different depths in patterns that helps regulate Earth's temperature, absorbs carbon dioxide and fuels the water cycle, according to NASA.

### Impact on Europe

When the AMOC shuts down, there's less heat exchanged across the globe and “it really impacts Europe quite severely,” van Westen said.

For thousands of years, Earth's oceans have relied on a circulation system that runs like a conveyor belt. It's still going but slowing.


The engine of this conveyor belt is off the coast of Greenland, where, as more ice melts from climate change, more freshwater flows into the North Atlantic and slows everything down, van Westen said.

But there's a bigger global priority, said Joel Hirschi, division leader at the United Kingdom's National Oceanography Centre.

“To me, the rapidly increasing temperatures we have been witnessing in recent years and associated temperature extremes are of more immediate concern than the AMOC shutting down,” Hirschi said. “The warming is not hypothetical but is already happening and impacting society now.”

*The Associated Press' climate and environmental coverage receives financial support from multiple private foundations. AP is solely responsible for all content.*

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SHARON GRIGSBY

# Ex-Dallas County DA focuses on the future

Continued from Page 15A

ways arrived an hour early so she could sit longer in the comfort of its brown velvet couch.

One day the therapist surprised Hawk with two ultimatums: Throw away the drawstring sweatpants she had worn for a year and walk dogs at a local shelter.

The thought of going anywhere she might be recognized paralyzed the former high-flying prosecutor, state district court judge and DA. Yet following instructions had begun to make a difference.

Hawk drove to Operation Kindness and signed up.

She was drawn to a cowering white pup named Dickens, who had been in the shelter for a year. Nobody wanted him. He didn't show well when prospective owners visited. His one adoption failed after the family's other dog rejected him.

Dickens' failures resonated with Hawk. As she put him in the car, the opening to Charles Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities* ran through her mind. "I looked at him and said, 'Well, bud, we've been through the worst of times, so let's find the best of times together here.'"

The electroconvulsive therapy, the right medication, almost daily sessions with her therapist — it had all been key to Hawk's recovery. Dickens' adoption marked the first time she felt a sparkle in her soul. She was all in on building a new life.

Hawk's very public fall from the DA's office made huge and often ugly headlines in 2016. That will always be part of her story, but more important is what she's accomplished in the 7½ years since — and what she's trying to do for others facing mental health challenges.

This interview is the first Hawk has given since her resignation. With her law practice beginning to grow and adamant she'll never again run for office, why did she agree to dig back through such difficult times?

She hopes her story will prompt others to get mental-health help more quickly than she did. Hawk knows people worry they will get in trouble, lose a job or be labeled as crazy. She had all of those thoughts. "You're not crazy," she said. "You need help."

Recovery was extremely hard, Hawk told me in her office at Hawk Criminal Law, a solo practice with special emphasis on clients with mental health issues.

"I have seen the kind of person I do not want to be, and I learned to be the person I want to be," she said. "I'm not perfect. I have to work on it every single day."

The criminal justice system is all about second chances. Its practitioners like to tell juries that mercy and justice are at its core. Hawk's return gives those who work in the system a chance to show whether they will grant the same compassion to one of their own.

**A bright star flames out**

Hawk now understands she suffered from depression and anxiety from a young age. "Living in angst was my normal," she said. "I didn't really know anything different."

She relished the highs, dragged herself through the lows and didn't have a clue what balance would look like.

As a young Dallas County prosecutor handling big cases at record speed, she dreamed of being a district attorney. She spent more than a decade on the bench, where she presided over a specialty court program for defendants with mental illness and drug problems.

"I poured all my energies into other people," Hawk said, "so I didn't have to dive in and start facing my own issues and what was going on with my



Photos by Juan Figueroa/Staff

**Dr. John Geiser (left)** and his wife, Susan Hawk, attorney and former Dallas County district attorney, walked their dogs, Murray and Dickens, in Dallas on Jan. 26. Geiser has been instrumental in Hawk's recovery, and the dogs kept her going at a time when nothing else did.



**Plaques and other recognitions** of Hawk are displayed in her law office. Hawk handles a variety of state and federal cases, but mental health-related work is her passion.

own mental health."

Hawk first ran for a judgeship as a Republican then switched parties as the county turned increasingly blue. She returned to the GOP to run for DA and her winning margin included Democratic voters dissatisfied with incumbent Craig Watkins.

Hawk, the first woman elected Dallas County DA, was in office only 20 months, a tumultuous time marked by three hospitalizations for mental illnesses diagnosed as depression and mood disorder. She faced enormous criticism for not resigning months before she finally did.

Today she can see how her illness skewed her thinking. Again and again, she was certain she only needed a quick mental health tune-up and everything would be fine.

She saw visions of the great things her office could accomplish, only for them to crater into shame and self-hatred each time she had to temporarily step away.

"I believed I was that one person who had conquered her illness," she recalled. "It was just a matter of everyone seeing I was OK." She gritted her teeth and tried again.

That fantasy disintegrated in September 2016 during a meeting that included first assistant DA Messina Madson, who had run the office each time Hawk was hospitalized.

Hawk abruptly stopped the discussion and said, "I can't do this." She sensed the sliver of thread she was hanging onto was about to break. Madson immediately drove her to her psychiatrist's office; from there she went into a locked psych unit at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Even then, Hawk continued to battle with herself over whether to leave her job. "Has it really come to this?" I asked myself. It had. There was no

other option for me."

After Hawk resigned, the few people in her life knew she couldn't be left alone for even a short time because she might harm herself. "When you're in a space like that, it's not to get attention," she recalled. "You are thinking, 'I am such a burden to everybody.'"

Hawk began ECT therapy, a procedure still clouded in misinformation but a game-changer for treatment-resistant depression like hers. She remembers the day when a hospital staffer took her downstairs in a wheelchair and a guy in the valet line said, "Aren't you the DA?"

"Not anymore," she replied, before whispering a four-letter word under her breath and thinking, "How am I ever going to get out from underneath this?"

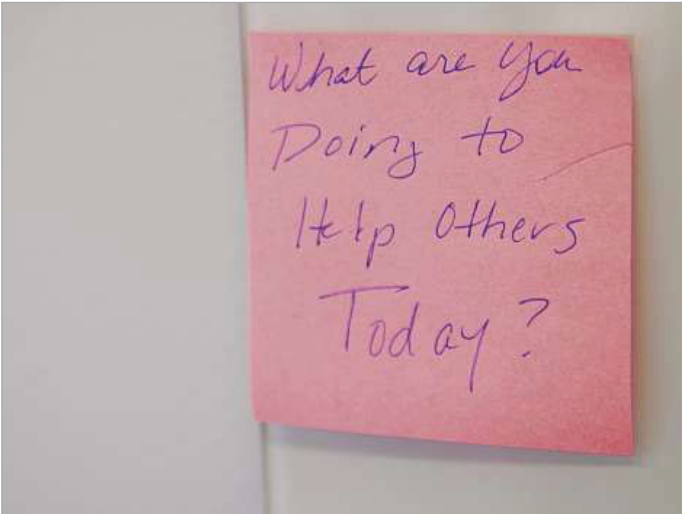
"I just kept going back, and I kept doing the next right thing to get better." Ever so slowly she did.

Hawk's psychiatrist took her off all the drugs and they started from scratch. She worked almost daily with a therapist on how to live a more balanced life.

Her husband, anesthesiologist John Geiser, was there every step of the way, along with Dickens and the couple's first rescue dog, 12-year-old Murray. Hawk's first public outings were to the movies at an obscure theater where she figured no one would recognize her. When she finally thought she was ready to attend a social gathering, more often than not she'd cancel at the last minute.

Among the women who supported Hawk was Stacy Huston, a close friend from their days at Arlington's Lamar High School. Although the two lost touch after Hawk's election to the bench, Huston reached out to see how she could help.

The two, who live only a



**A sticky** note with a paraphrase of a quote by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. is displayed in Hawk's law office in Dallas. The quote has long inspired her.

mile apart in East Dallas, began a weekly Hawk Walk. "Sometimes I was like, 'I'm on my way, so get your butt outside,'" Huston told me, "and that was probably good for her."

Huston watched her friend reemerge as that same "loyal, sunny, smart person" she had known years ago. She took hope in Hawk's new ability to be honest about how she felt and what she needed to do to take care of herself.

Hawk was committed to the basics, which she adheres to today: daily exercise, at least nine hours of sleep and meditation. She started playing Rummikub with friends. She and her husband went out to dinner with friends.

She knew she was really on her way about two years ago when someone in the grocery store said, "I feel like I know you," and she responded with humor, "I just have one of those faces. I'm really not anybody."

**The law world**

Hawk and her therapist spent a lot of time talking about her core values and what she wanted the next part of her life to look like. Hawk realized she didn't have to run away from the work she loved — she could practice law without the "go big or go home" style that wasn't good for her mental health.

She has a healthy respect for her severe depression and anxiety. "It is a disease, but it is a disease you cannot conquer," she said. "You have to face it for the rest of your life."

Hawk handles a variety of state and federal cases, but mental health-related work is where her passion lies. Just as she ran her diversion court, she remains committed to treatment and reform over incarceration or forced institutionalization.

## AT A GLANCE Lifelines of support

**Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 to connect with mental health professionals

**North Texas Behavioral Health Authority:** 24-hour crisis hotline at 877.653.6363 or go to [ntba.org](https://ntba.org)

**Suicide and Crisis Center of North Texas:** Speak to a trained counselor on the 24-hour hotline at 214.828.1000, text 741741 or go to [sccenter.org](https://sccenter.org)

**Here For Texas Mental Health Navigation Line:** Grant Halliburton Foundation initiative that connects North Texans with mental-health resources customized to each caller at 972.525.8181 or go to [HereForTexas.com](https://HereForTexas.com)

**Dallas Metrocare Services:** For help, call 214.743.1215 or go to [metrocareservices.org](https://metrocareservices.org)

torney, especially the lack of transparency about her mental illness. "I fully take responsibility for that," she said. "I should have addressed it head on."

She also regrets not seeking help sooner, rather than letting her health deteriorate to the point she could think about nothing beyond surviving the day. She can see now how problematic her behavior looked to the public. "I understand why people were talking about it the way they were," she said.

Her biggest regret is she was not able to do the job she was elected to do for a community she loves.

Not understanding her own mental illness, "I just wanted to believe I could push through," she said. "I painfully came to learn that was not the case."

While her recent work in courtrooms across North Texas hasn't fazed her, she acknowledged her first trip to Dallas County's Frank Crowley Courts Building left her nostalgic. "I have so many great memories there, and I left in such a terrible way," she said.

She's chosen to focus only on the positive, both in the past and present. For instance, the email she received late last month after she shared her mental health experiences with a group of lawyers: "Because of your speech, I was able to get up and go to work today."

I'm rooting for who Susan Hawk is today. Not the first, the most, the best. Instead, the person who wants to make a difference in little ways. If criminal justice is about second chances, this is how Hawk can make the most of the one she's been given.





Photos by Chitose Suzuki/Staff Photographer

**Texas National Guard Spc. Victoria Morgan** walked by razor wire along the Rio Grande at Shelby Park in Eagle Pass. Texas took control of the 47-acre Shelby Park on Jan. 10 without notifying city leaders, who suddenly found Texas National Guard soldiers blocking its entrance.

# Effects of military effort felt across city

Continued from Page 1A

popular park guarded by Texas National Guard soldiers and Humvees.

There are the owners of a pecan farm who invited state troops and troopers onto their land along the Rio Grande, but came to regret that decision and can't get them to leave.

"The community didn't sign up for this," said Fuentes, whose business is suffering while others, particularly hotels and restaurants, are thriving.

Self-described patriots have been drawn to Eagle Pass as well, adding their voices of support for Abbott and his get-tough immigration policies.

"It's what I stand for and I felt called by the Good Lord above us," said Dennis Yarbery, who drove from the Baltimore area to attend a recent "Take Our Border Back" rally.

### Sudden shift

Texas took control of the 47-acre Shelby Park on Jan. 10 without notifying city leaders, who suddenly found rifle-toting Texas National Guard soldiers blocking its entrance. The park was closed to adults, children and, most surprisingly, federal Border Patrol agents — a gesture of defiance by Abbott aimed at President Joe Biden's administration.

Eagle Pass quickly became the backdrop for a series of news conferences featuring politicians from across the country, including U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem. Elon Musk — the billionaire owner of Tesla, SpaceX and social media giant X — was here last year seeking what he called an unfiltered view of immigration's impact on the border.

Reporters from across the nation show up regularly.

Eagle Pass has been invoked in negotiations for a bipartisan immigration bill that was killed Wednesday in the U.S. Senate and as part of this year's presidential race.

Abbott's national profile has risen as the governor refuses to yield to the federal government's demands to remove the buoys and grant Border Patrol agents unfettered access to Shelby Park.



**Texas National Guard soldiers** talked with Border Patrol agents in front of the gate at Shelby Park on Jan. 30. A Border Patrol van was not allowed through the gate and returned.

"We're not going to contain ourselves just to this park," said Abbott, joined by 13 Republican governors from across the country at a news conference Feb. 4 at Shelby Park. "We are expanding to further areas to make sure that we will expand our level of deterrence and denial of illegal entry into the United States."

Later, Abbott said he wanted to shift additional National Guard troops to the border, using Eagle Pass as a model, adding that details would be announced in the future.

Life goes on in Eagle Pass, where several residents said weeks passed before they realized Shelby Park was off limits to them.

Fuentes noticed right away. Shelby Park, named for a Confederate general who fled to Mexico to avoid surrendering after the Civil War, houses the city's only publicly available boat ramp. Fuentes always enjoyed spending time on the water, either here or in Dallas, where he lived for a little over a decade when he was younger. After moving back to the border, he opened Epi's Canoe and Kayak Team.

He learned to respect the

### Shelby Park

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott ordered the state takeover of Shelby Park in Eagle Pass, denying federal agents access to the area along the Rio Grande since Jan. 10.



SOURCES: City of Eagle Pass; Google Maps

Rio Grande growing up. He wishes Abbott would respect it, too.

### A focal point

Eagle Pass, with two small international bridges, features relatively gentle Rio Grande currents that invite migrant crossings. It became a focal point of Texas action in December when the arrival of tens of thousands of migrants over multiple weeks overwhelmed Border Patrol agents



Staff Graphic

and city resources.

Hotel parking lots around the city are filled with Texas Department of Public Safety SUVs as part of Operation Lone Star, Abbott's multibillion-dollar border security crackdown launched almost three years ago. Demand has pushed room rates at the Holiday Inn Express to more than \$250 a night, when rooms are available at all.

The town's only Chick-fil-A restaurant and Starbucks are frequently filled with DPS

troopers or National Guard soldiers.

The string of buoys remains on the Rio Grande, a few miles downstream from Shelby Park. An appeals court hundreds of miles away will determine later this year if a federal judge was right when he ordered the buoys removed for violating a law against construction on a navigable waterway.

Some residents see the effort as a waste of taxpayer money. They say dozens of miles of coiled razor wire,

sharp enough to leave bloody cuts that require stitches, won't deter those who have journeyed through jungles, deserts and hundreds or thousands of miles to reach the U.S.-Mexico border.

"It's this idea that being punitive over here is going to stop [migrants from crossing illegally]," said Poncho Nevárez, a former Democratic state representative from Eagle Pass. "They made it."

Other residents are frustrated when thousands of migrants overwhelm city services, including the hospital emergency room or ambulances that serve the border region.

Maria Moreno migrated from Mexico four years ago. Standing in the city's center square with her 2-year-old twin daughters — Shelby Park just down the street, Mexico within eyesight — Moreno said that although she disagrees with those who see unauthorized migrants as invaders, she is frustrated by the focus on migrants coming into the city.

"They pay more attention to the migrants than to us," Moreno, 33, said in Spanish.

Across the street from Moreno is the Thrifty Nest, selling home decor like a pink wardrobe organizer and a sign that says "Happily ever after."

Claudia Jimenez, 49, opened the store eight years ago.

She was unaware until recently the public had been prohibited from using the park where her two sons, when younger, played soccer matches every summer. It took a visit to a nearby flea market for Jimenez to see the armed soldiers behind metal-wire fencing.

The presence of soldiers was a surprise, she said, because illegal border crossings don't typically affect the city. When a crush of migrants arrives, most Eagle Pass residents don't know it until the international bridges shut down so Border Patrol agents can shift to helping process those who crossed the border illegally.

When that happens, wait times to cross the border from Piedras Negras back into Eagle Pass can top 12 hours, Jimenez said. It's quicker to drive two



# Political visits become common

Continued from Page 17A

hours south to Laredo to cross the border there, she said.

About 3 miles east of Shelby Park, the aftermath of numerous border crossings becomes apparent. Piles of damp, dirt-covered clothing are strewn along a highway and behind a dumpster — shirts, shorts, pants and sneakers.

There's a stuffed teddy bear, an empty can of baby formula next to an empty box of milk.

The clutter sits on the property of a husband and wife who own a pecan orchard along the Rio Grande. Because migrants cross their property regularly, Magali Urbina and her husband Hugo — supporters of Abbott who vote Republican — invited Operation Lone Star forces onto their land. They'd also like to see the Biden administration do more to enforce immigration laws.

But the couple is having second thoughts, and they believe Operation Lone Star has gone too far, Magali Urbina said.

"It bothers me," she said while parked on her property. In the distance, Texas National Guard soldiers were busy apprehending two adults and three children on their land.

The Urbinas say border security initiatives have overreached. Magali Urbina said she has been stopped and questioned by Texas National Guard soldiers while on her own land. They also asked DPS to stop putting razor wiring on their property, to no avail.

## Agency authority

According to DPS, Abbott's order last year declaring a disaster along the border gives the agency authority to use a landowner's property without permission.

Magali Urbina is not pleased with that reasoning. "I want them all off my property," she said. "I want my property back."

She said she is not surprised that what's playing out in her orchard is also happening at Shelby Park.

"They're taking over because they want to," Magali Urbina said.

As Urbina spoke, a 71-year-old man approached her car with his cellphone ready to take photos. "Is there anywhere around here where you can see the river?" Dan Schwartz asked.

There was not.

Schwartz arrived in Eagle Pass after a three-day trip from the northwest corner of Oregon. The dairy farmer and supporter of former President Donald Trump wanted to support Abbott in his standoff with the federal government, so he flew into Kansas City, rented a truck and drove 14 hours to Eagle Pass.

Schwartz wanted to meet



Jay Janner/Austin American-Statesman

**Shipping containers and concertina wire** lined the banks of the Rio Grande in Shelby Park in Eagle Pass, which is across the border from Piedras Negras, Mexico. "We're not going to contain ourselves just to this park," said Gov. Greg Abbott, who held at a news conference Feb. 4 at Shelby Park.



Chitose Suzuki/Staff Photographer

**Magali Urbina, owner** of Heavenly Farms, and her husband invited Operation Lone Star forces onto their land but since have changed their minds. Urbina said she has been stopped and questioned by Texas National Guard soldiers while on her own land.

up with a convoy of truckers and others gathering for a weekend "Take Our Border Back" rally. U.S. Rep. Keith Self, R-McKinney, was in Eagle Pass for the event. There had been rumors Trump would show up, too.

He didn't.

## 'Invasion' language

The idea for the convoy began last month after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Texas in a lawsuit challenging the legality of Border Patrol agents cutting or removing razor wire installed by the state.

Republican lawmakers were outraged, and several, including U.S. Rep. Chip Roy of Austin, suggested the state should ignore the Supreme Court's order.

Officials and ultraconserva-

tive media personalities posted memes with the "Come and Take it" slogan — a callback to the flag famous during the Texas Revolution, only this time depictions of razor wire replaced the flag's cannon.

Convoy organizers said action was needed to protect the country from a "migrant invasion," drawing condemnation from Democrats and migrant-rights advocates who say such language is dehumanizing and could incite violence. The gunman who killed 23 people at an El Paso Walmart in 2019 said he was responding to a "Hispanic invasion" and hoping to deter border crossings.

Convoy participants defended their choice of words.

"If you don't use that type of language, they're not going to do anything about it," said Doug Dailey, who was among

the first truckers to arrive in Eagle Pass after driving seven hours from Ferris, just south of Dallas.

"I feel as if we're being invaded," said Yarbery, 45, who runs a YouTube channel as "MasterGrifter." He wore a ballcap with the "Come and Take it" slogan and razor wire image that he got at a convoy rally in Dripping Springs a few days earlier.

"They're flooding our country with illegals," he said. "Why wouldn't it be an invasion?"

Yarbery stood outside of Shelby Park, with his iPhone on a tripod for a live report on YouTube a few hours before Abbott was to give a news conference alongside like-minded Republican governors.

Yarbery said he does not think the Supreme Court is working for the greater good of

America — the same with any federal judge who has ruled that migrants crossing the border illegally cannot be categorized as an invasion. Some of those rulings came from judges appointed by Republican presidents.

"Those judges are probably corrupt," Yarbery said shortly before ending the interview: "Anyway, I'm done. I'm going to start saying stuff I shouldn't say."

## Park's future

How long will the state takeover of Shelby Park last? It's unclear, but the rhetoric suggests it won't end soon.

While crossings are significantly down in the area — the Del Rio sector, which includes Eagle Pass, reported 16,718 arrests in January, down from 71,095 arrests a month earlier — crossings tend to fluctuate over months.

Abbott was in Eagle Pass on Thursday for his second news conference in less than a week to praise state efforts — razor wire, climbing barriers, lines of shipping containers and more — for forcing migrants to cross elsewhere.

Mexico's government has also increased enforcement, disrupting bus networks that cartels use to transport migrants to the border and deporting some migrants to their home countries, *The New York Times* recently reported.

It has led to a 50% decrease in migration flow at the U.S.-Mexico border, according to data that Customs and Border Protection released Jan. 26.

"[Mexico] is being more aggressive in their tactics in keeping people from coming to the border," said Eagle Pass Mayor Rolando Salinas, a Democrat.

Salinas has been critical of

the Biden administration's immigration policies. He has also cooperated with Texas officials on Operation Lone Star priorities, signing agreements with DPS in June authorizing undocumented migrants to be arrested within Shelby Park for trespassing on private property.

After facing a backlash from the public, the Eagle Pass City Council rescinded the agreement in August, but Salinas reinstated it in September after another surge of migrants.

Standing on the balcony of a new administrative building on a cool Tuesday evening, the mayor said it was frustrating to see his city caught in a tug-of-war.

## Photo ops

"I'm not happy with the federal government, and when you have thousands of people crossing without consequence, I'm not for that," Salinas said. "However, the city didn't come out and say, 'Hey, please take our park.'"

Eagle Pass has become a photo opportunity for political leaders who fly into town, speak to cameras and leave.

The speaker of the U.S. House, Mike Johnson, R-La., and 60 other House Republicans held a news conference in early January at Shelby Park.

A month later, Abbott and other Republican governors were at Shelby Park, blasting Biden for how he has handled illegal immigration.

If Eagle Pass residents were hoping for a quick resolution, and the return of their park, the governor has offered little solace.

Shelby Park, Abbott said, will stay under state control "as long as it takes to maintain security and eliminate crossings."



Chitose Suzuki/Staff Photographer

**A pile of migrants' possessions** could be seen on the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass on Jan. 31. Along the river's banks, evidence of numerous border crossings becomes apparent.



Chitose Suzuki/Staff Photographer



DALLAS HOLOCAUST AND HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM

Walk this Way

FOOTWEAR FROM THE STUART WEITZMAN  
COLLECTION OF HISTORIC SHOES

ON VIEW FEBRUARY 9 TO JULY 14, 2024

LEARN MORE AT [DHHRM.ORG](https://dhhrm.org)

*Walk this Way* presents the story of the shoe as it has never been told before. Women take center stage as this exhibition explores a variety of shoes, including those worn by suffragists as they marched through the streets, Jazz Age flappers as they danced the Charleston, and starlets who graced the silver screen in the postwar era. *Walk this Way* features more than 100 striking pairs of shoes, spanning nearly 200 years, from the collection of high-fashion shoe designer Stuart Weitzman, and businesswoman and philanthropist Jane Gershon Weitzman.



This exhibition has been organized by The New-York Historical Society.

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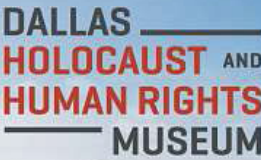
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