

# The Washington Post

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington.

RE V1 V2 V3 V4



Sunny 46/29 • Tomorrow: Sunny 50/33 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024 • \$3

## At 91, she's challenging Trump at high court

Former GOP lawmaker is among Colo. plaintiffs suing to get him off ballot

BY PATRICK MARLEY

LAKEWOOD, COLO. — Norma Anderson left the Colorado legislature nearly two decades ago, but she still keeps a copy of the state's statutes in her home office. She carries a pocket Constitution in her purse. She has another copy, slightly larger with images of the Founding Fathers on the cover, that she leaves on a table in her sitting room so she can consult it when she watches TV.



Norma Anderson

She's turned down a page corner in that copy to mark the spot where the 14th Amendment appears. She has reread it several times since joining a lawsuit last year that cites the amendment in seeking to stop Donald Trump from running for president.

Anderson, 91, is the unlikely face of a challenge to Trump's campaign that will be heard by the Supreme Court on Thursday. She was a force in Colorado politics for decades, serving as the first female majority leader in both chambers of the legislature. She is a Republican but has long been skeptical of Trump and believes he is an insurrectionist who crossed a verboten line on Jan. 6, 2021, that should bar him from holding office again.

"He tried to overturn an election," she said. "The very first time I ever ran, I didn't win. I didn't go out and try to change the election. I said, 'Whoops, work harder next time, lady.'"

The 2024 election could turn on whether the Supreme Court agrees with Anderson and five other Republican and independent voters who persuaded Colorado's top court to rule that Trump is ineligible to run again. SEE COLORADO ON A8

## Historic onslaught of rain inundates California



Rocks and debris litter a street and driveways along Fryman Canyon in Studio City, Calif., on Monday, after an atmospheric river blasted the area with torrential rain. The storm dropped up to 10 inches of rain across the Los Angeles area since Sunday.

MICHAEL ROBINSON CHÁVEZ FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

### TWO PEOPLE KILLED BY FALLING TREES

Atmospheric river brings flooding and mudslides

BY BRIANNA SACKS, JOSHUA PARTLOW AND KASHA PATEL

LOS ANGELES — California residents on Monday endured a historic onslaught of rain that turned glitzy Los Angeles neighborhoods into rivers of mud, flooded roads and toppled trees as authorities warned of more rain on the way.

The atmospheric river that began Sunday arrived with howling winds that gusted above 100 miles per hour in some places and launched what the National Weather Service described as "one of the most dramatic weather days in recent memory."

As Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) declared a state of emergency in eight heavily populated counties across Southern California, rescue workers pulled 19 people off a 40-foot sailboat with a snapped mast and extracted drivers from swamped cars. At least two people were killed by falling trees farther north in the state. By Monday afternoon, about half a million people in California remained without power.

The deluge is part of a growing pattern of supercharged storms feeding off unusually warm waters in the Pacific Ocean driven by climate change and the periodic pattern known as El Niño that returned last year. The storm dropped up to 10 inches of rain across the Los Angeles area since Sunday, more than falls in some years, and the Weather Service warned that the already significant flooding was expected to worsen.

The storm unleashed torrents of water across the state. Retaining walls collapsed, boulders and trees crashed down on roadways, mudslides damaged homes, and flash floods closed down portions of Interstate 5 and other major highways.

"Stay safe and off the roads," Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass told residents during a news conference Monday from the city's emergency operations center. "Only leave your house if it is absolutely necessary."

SEE CALIFORNIA ON A10

**Unforeseen threat:** Supercharged fires caught Chile off guard. A13

## Trial asks: Who is culpable when kids use guns?

BY KIM BELLWARE

PONTIAC, MICH. — When a 15-year-old brought a gun to Oxford High School on Nov. 30, 2021, killed four of his schoolmates and wounded seven other people, the United States was in the grip of a gun violence crisis that had already stretched more than two decades and tallied more than 300 school shootings.

The intractable problem of school gun violence is now pushing some prosecutors to consider a provocative — some say overdue — question: When a child picks up a gun and hurts or kills someone, should their parents be held responsible, too?

In the past few months, the father of a young man who carried out the deadly 2022 Highland

### Charges against Mich. school shooter's parents are part of reassessment

Park, Ill., mass shooting pleaded guilty to misdemeanor reckless conduct for sponsoring his son's gun ownership application despite clear warning signs. The mother of a Virginia 6-year-old who shot his teacher was sentenced to two years in prison for felony child neglect.

The parents of the Oxford, Mich., school shooter are facing the most serious charges yet. James and Jennifer Crumbley each face four counts of involuntary manslaughter, making them

the first parents of a school shooter to face such serious charges. If convicted, they face up to 15 years in prison. Jury deliberations began Monday.

The Crumbleys' son, Ethan, was sentenced in December to life in prison for the murders of Hana St. Juliana, 14; Tate Myre, 16; Madisyn Baldwin, 17; and Justin Shilling, 17, at the high school about 40 miles north of Detroit. Prosecutors agree the parents did not know about their son's plan, but they argue the parents' actions make them responsible: They bought their son a gun four days before the shooting, allegedly failed to secure it properly and had ample warning signs that he could pose a threat to others.

The parents are facing identical charges in separate trials, with

Jennifer Crumbley going first. The shooter's access to a 9mm Sig Sauer semiautomatic pistol has been a key point throughout her trial.

School shooting data indicates that family members storing guns securely would curb the flow of weapons in a majority of school shootings perpetrated by children, who, unlike adult shooters, cannot legally buy firearms. The Washington Post reviewed more than 180 shootings committed by juveniles since the Columbine massacre in 1999 and found in cases where the source of the gun could be determined that the weapons were found in the homes of friends, relatives or parents 86 percent of the time.

Oakland County prosecutor SEE PARENTS ON A2

## Wild probe flows out of Trump Media deal

Investors in a proposed merger partner, DWAC, face securities charges

BY DREW HARWELL

In October 2021, former president Donald Trump announced that his media company, the owner of the platform Truth Social, had sealed an incredible deal: a merger with a "special-purpose acquisition company" that would deliver to his firm \$300 million toward his promise of giving "a voice to all."

By then, however, the insider trading by investors in the SPAC, Digital World Acquisition, had already begun, according to documents filed recently in the criminal case against three Digital World investors who've been charged with securities fraud in federal court in New York.

Digital World's chief executive, Patrick Orlando, a Miami financier Trump had hosted at his golf clubs, had been telling investors

privately for months that he'd been talking with Trump about the deal, the filings assert — a violation of federal securities law, the Securities and Exchange Commission would say later, given his company's pledge in regulatory filings that its leaders had held no talks with any merger targets.

One investor, the Miami Beach businessman Anton Postolnikov, had amassed a huge stake in Digital World. Postolnikov, who was born in Russia and is the nephew of a longtime Russian government official, sold most of his stake just days after Trump's announcement sent the stock soaring, according to an FBI agent's search warrant affidavit. His profit: \$22 million.

Another, a Ukraine-born nightclub manager turned private equity investor named Michael Shvartsman, told his business partners and a neighbor about the moneymaking opportunity, according to the affidavit — before securing \$18 million in profits for himself.

Those profits caught the attention SEE MERGER ON A4

## Determined educator revisits a contentious book

Teaching a memoir by a Black author was worth the risk to her career, she decided

BY HANNAH NATANSON IN CHAPIN, S.C.



South Carolina English teacher Mary Wood practices reading her prepared remarks for a school board meeting as her son, Summit, begins writing his own speech on his phone.

Mary Wood walked between the desks in her AP English Language and Composition classroom, handing out copies of the book she was already punished once for teaching.

Twenty-six students, all but two of them White, looked down at Ta-Nehisi Coates's "Between the World and Me," a memoir that dissects what it means to be Black in America — and which drew calls for Wood's firing when she tried to teach it last year in her mostly White, conservative town. Wood crossed to a lectern and placed her hands on either side of a turquoise notebook, open to two pages of bullet points explaining why she wanted to teach Coates's work.

"That book that you guys have, it deals with racism," she said on a recent Tuesday. "It's going to be something with which you're unfamiliar. That you need to spend time to research to fully understand."

Wood stared at her class. She SEE RACE ON A6

## IN THE NEWS

**King Charles has cancer** Buckingham Palace announced the 75-year-old monarch has begun treatment and will step back from public events. A13

**Metro budget** The transit system is likely to avoid steep cuts, but riders can expect to see higher fares, officials said. B1

**THE NATION** The U.S. is moving to tighten regulation of procuring human pancreases for transplant. A3  
**Republican** opposition is mounting to a border bill that would unlock aid for Ukraine. A9

**THE WORLD** Meet Sydney's maligned but beloved bin chicken: the trash-raiding white ibis. A11  
**Antony Blinken** arrived in Saudi Arabia in his fifth trip to the region since October. A14

**THE ECONOMY** Washington state raised \$2 billion in a pollution tax, but all the same, opponents are mobilizing to snuff out the program. A15  
**Elon Musk** is unfathomably rich, but a judge's ruling on his Tesla compensation could change that. A20

**THE REGION** A new D.C. law eliminates the waiting period before divorce, a move spurred by advocates for abuse victims. B1  
**The Montgomery** County school board said it intends to appoint a former N.C. superintendent to serve as interim leader. B1

**SPORTS** The Commanders introduced Dan Quinn, as the veteran coach said he's ready to "get rocking" in his new job. D1  
**HEALTH & SCIENCE** Centenarians from around the world reflect on what it takes to live a long, happy life. E1

BUSINESS NEWS.....A15  
COMICS.....C6  
OPINION PAGES.....A17  
OBITUARIES.....B4  
TELEVISION.....C8  
WORLD NEWS.....A11

CONTENT © 2024  
The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53753

