

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Tuesday, March 23, the 82nd day of 2021. There are 283 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT IN HISTORY:

On March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry delivered an address to the Virginia Provincial Convention in which he is said to have declared, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

ON THIS DATE:

In 1792, Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 94 in G Major (the "Surprise" symphony) had its first public performance in London.

In 1806, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, having reached the Pacific coast, began their journey back east.

In 1919, Benito Mussolini founded his Fascist political movement in Milan, Italy.

In 1933, the German Reichstag adopted the Enabling Act, which effectively granted Adolf Hitler dictatorial powers.

In 1942, the first Japanese-Americans evacuated by the U.S. Army during World War II arrived at an internment camp in Manzanar, California.

In 1965, America's first two-person space mission took place as Gemini 3 blasted off with astronauts Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom and John W. Young aboard for a nearly five-hour flight.

In 1973, before sentencing a group of Watergate break-in defendants, Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica read aloud a letter he'd received from James W. McCord Jr. that said there was "political pressure" to "plead guilty and remain silent."

In 1993, scientists announced they'd found the renegade gene that causes Huntington's disease.

In 2001, Russia's orbiting Mir space station ended its 15-year odyssey with a planned fiery plunge into the South Pacific.

In 2003, during the Iraq War, a U.S. Army maintenance convoy was ambushed in Nasiriyah; 11 soldiers were killed, including Pfc. Lori Ann Piastewa; six were captured, including Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who was rescued on April 1, 2003.

In 2004, a federal commission concluded that Clinton and Bush administration officials had engaged in lengthy, ultimately fruitless diplomatic efforts instead of military action to try to get Osama bin Laden before the 9/11 attacks; top Bush officials countered that the terror attacks would have occurred even if the United States had killed the al-Qaida leader.

In 2010, claiming a historic triumph, President Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act, a \$938 billion health care overhaul.

Ten years ago: Academy Award-winning actor Elizabeth Taylor died in Los Angeles at age 79. NATO ships began patrolling off Libya's coast as airstrikes, missiles and energized rebels forced Moammar Gadhafi's tanks to roll back from two key western cities. A blast blamed on Palestinian militants ripped through a bus stop in Jerusalem, killing a 59-year-old British tourist, and wounding two dozen other people, including five Americans. Army Spc. Jeremy Morlock pleaded guilty at his court-martial at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state to the murders of three unarmed Afghan civilians (he was sentenced to 24 years in prison).

Locals examine UK's government health care

By **DICK MASON**
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Opponents of the drive to get a single-payer government health care system established in the United States often argue that patients in nations with nationalized health care must wait long periods for doctor appointments.

This is not the case in the United Kingdom, which has a single-payer system, according to Wayne Hill of England. Hill discussed the UK's National Health Service system with representatives of the Union County chapter of Health Care for All Oregon on Friday, March 19, via a Zoom conference.

Hill, speaking from England, said waiting time is not an issue in the United Kingdom. He said everyone who needs

to see a doctor can do so promptly.

"The waiting list is determined by the level of urgency," said Hill, who grew up in California and has lived in England for 30 years.

Hill also said if people cannot get an appointment as soon as they want to, they often can by checking back to see if openings were created by patient cancellations.

"If you stay in touch you can get an earlier appointment," he said.

When there are longer waits for appointments, Hill said, they are often for less urgent procedures, including those related to the need for hip and knee replacement operations.

Hill is the brother of Vivian Young of La Grande, who is a member of the Union County chapter of Health Care

for All Oregon, which is striving to help Oregon and the United States change to a single-payer health care system.

Hill said he is impressed with the level of care he receives in England.

"It is very satisfactory for me," the writer and artist said.

Hill said doctors tend to meet with patients six or 12 minutes at a time. He said physicians listen intently to their patients.

"They are very caring," he said. "There is a real sense of compassion."

He said everyone in the United Kingdom is eligible for NHS care, even those who are just visiting.

"If you are here you can get care," Hill said.

The system, though, does have shortcomings. For example, it is harder to get scans for skin conditions, said Hill's wife, Lynn

Relfe, who also grew up in California. She said some doctors in the UK view skin issues as more of a cosmetic issue. Relfe noted she has small growths on her skin as a result of sun exposure while growing up in California. Hill said after she drew this to the attention of dermatologists in the UK she had no trouble getting appointments for skin scans.

Relfe noted doctors in Great Britain see fewer skin conditions related to sun exposure because the United Kingdom receives less sunshine than many other places.

Hill said national health care became apparent during World War II when children were often sent to rural areas where they would be safe from German bombing attacks. It was then that it became evident that many children

were growing up in impoverished circumstances.

"It created a domestic awareness of what people need," he said.

Great Britain's National Health Service was established in 1948, three years after World War II.

Hill noted NHS doctors and staff are so highly regarded that Great Britain's government sparked a controversy recently when it provided them with a 1% pay increase. He said many believe they deserved much more, especially because of what they have been put through due to the COVID-19 pandemic over the past 12 months.

"There is national outrage," he said.

Physicians and other health care workers, Hill said, are revered.

"They are our real heroes," he said. "They have been stars."



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo, File

This March 13, 2014, file photo shows a female wolf from the Minam Pack outside La Grande, after it was fitted with a tracking collar. A mortality signal from a similar collar led to the discovery of five dead wolves in Union County in February 2021, according to law enforcement authorities.

Five wolves found dead in Union County

Associated Press

SALEM — Five wolves were found dead in Northeast Oregon in February, according to law authorities.

On Feb. 9, a collar on a wolf indicated a mortality signal in the Mt. Harris area in Union County, Oregon State Police Capt. Timothy R. Fox said in an email on Friday, March 19, when asked about it by The Associated Press.

Arriving officers found a total of five wolves dead, Fox said. The cause of death is unknown, he said. All five carcasses were taken to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife forensic lab to determine the cause of death, the email said.

The incident is under

investigation, according to Oregon Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy.

"This is very unsettling news for a species that is only just beginning to recover in Oregon," Kathleen Gobush, Northwest program director at Defenders of Wildlife, said in a news release.

"Predators, particularly wolves, are often the target of ruthless persecution, and the killing of one wolf, not to mention five, appears to follow a growing pattern of grave concern. Defenders of Wildlife will continue to work to make Oregon safe for people and wolves."

No further information was released.

Emotions run high at sentencing of Anthony Montwheeler

Family members speak out during proceedings

By **PAT CALDWELL**
Malheur Enterprise

VALE — Anthony Montwheeler sat in clean street clothes with a fresh haircut and stared straight ahead Friday morning,

March 19, as more than a dozen people delivered statements at his sentencing at the Malheur County Courthouse.

The session was the final chapter of a four-year-long legal case that began in the early morning hours of a cold, overcast January day in 2017.

The former Nampa, Idaho, man pleaded guilty Feb. 26 to second-degree murder, first-degree manslaughter and third-degree assault.

Montwheeler stabbed to death his ex-wife, Annita Harmon, killed Vale resident David Bates, and injured his wife, Jessica, in a head-on crash as he fled police.

Under terms of the plea deal reached earlier this year, Montwheeler will serve a life sentence for killing Harmon but be eligible for parole in 25 years — when he is 78. But he would have to serve another 10 years of the 20-year sentence he has

agreed to for Bates' death. He would also get a three-year sentence for injuring Jessica Bates, to be served as part of the overall sentence.

While there was an undercurrent of anger from the relatives of David Bates and Harmon, a major theme from many of the speakers was one of forgiveness.

"All I can do is pray for your tormented soul," said Lucas Faverau, Annita Harmon's son.

Stacey Harmon-Roeber, Annita Harmon's older sister, said, "I have no words of anger toward Tony. "God loves Tony as much as he loves me."

Harmon-Roeber told the court her kid sister was a "precocious, tow-headed, brown-eyed girl that loved to tease us."

"I remember how she loved horses and animals. I remember special sister time when she was little," said Harmon-Roeber.

Harmon-Roeber said, however, that Montwheeler's crimes terrorized her. "I used to be fearless. Now I am a fearful redhead. I have anxiety. I don't sleep at night," she said.

At one point Harmon-Roeber began to weep. "I wonder what her body felt when he stabbed her. I hate I wasn't there to protect her," she said through tears.

Jessica Bates also wept when she spoke.

"It is obvious you caused a huge amount of hurt and loss. It still feels surreal," Bates said.

"I want you to know that I forgive you. I really do hope this will give you pause to stop and seek God," she said.

Bates told the court she "never in a million years dreamed I'd be married to someone so wonderful and have five children."

"I didn't want to lose David so early," she said.

After the testimony from the families, Dave Goldthorpe, Malheur County district attorney, told the court that "there is no punishment under the laws of the state of Oregon harsh enough for Anthony Montwheeler."

"No amount of time in prison could ever even come close to making these families whole after what he did to all of them," he said.

Goldthorpe called Montwheeler "evil."

"He is abusive," he added. "He is a horrible human being and his face should never be seen by any of these good people who have spoken to you today."

Montwheeler gave a brief statement at the end of the sentencing.

"I can't express the right words of sorrow. I have caused so much pain. To say I am sorry isn't nearly enough," Montwheeler said.

Preparing for possible trouble in downtown Minneapolis

Autumn Swiger-Harrell, who grew up in Baker City, works in a hospital near the building where Derek Chauvin is on trial

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

MINNEAPOLIS — Autumn Swiger-Harrell isn't involved in America's most notorious current criminal trial, but she only has to step outside her workplace to see its effects.

That step is necessary because plywood temporarily blocks the windows. Swiger-Harrell

who grew up in Baker City and graduated from Baker High School in 1993, works as a physician assistant in the emergency room at the Hennepin County Medical Center in downtown Minneapolis.

The hospital is about three blocks from the building where jury selection is continuing in the trial of Derek Chauvin.

Chauvin is a former Minneapolis police officer accused of murder and manslaughter in the May 25, 2020, death of George Floyd.

Floyd's death, which came after Chauvin had pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for about nine minutes, prompted a series of protests and riots in Min-

INSIDE

For more about the jury selection in the Derek Chauvin homicide case, see **Page 7A**.

neapolis and many other American cities that continued for several months.

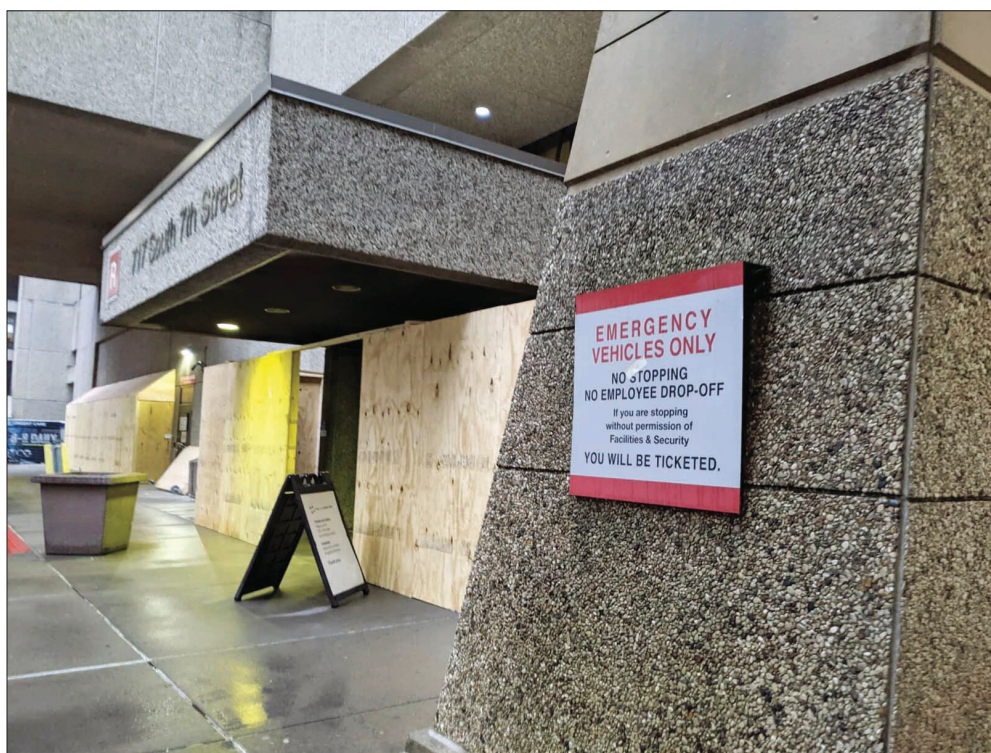
In anticipation of demonstrations and potential violence during and after Chauvin's trial, officials in Minneapolis have installed barricades and boarded up windows at many buildings, including the hospital where Swiger-Harrell has worked for the past year and a half.

She said workers on Monday, March 8, put plywood over the windows at the emergency department, which is on the ground level.

"That's the biggest thing at this point," Swiger-Harrell said in a phone interview on Friday, March 12.

She said the plywood so thoroughly blocks the natural light that it's a perpetual nighttime in the emergency room. Swiger-Harrell said hospital officials plan to invite local artists to paint murals on the plywood.

Swiger-Harrell moved



Autumn Swiger-Harrell/Contributed Photo

Plywood protects the windows at the emergency department of the Hennepin County Medical Center in downtown Minneapolis. Former Baker City resident Autumn Swiger-Harrell works there, three blocks from where jury selection is continuing in the trial of Derek Chauvin, a former police officer facing charges in the May 25, 2020, death of George Floyd.

to Minnesota from Baker City four years ago with her husband, Aaron Harrell. The couple have two children, a daughter, Trinity, and a son, Teagan.

The family lives in Stillwater, Minnesota, a town on the St. Croix River near the Wisconsin border, about 25 miles

from downtown Minneapolis. Swiger-Harrell said she commutes to the hospital and leaves her car in a parking structure that's part of the hospital complex and uses an underground walkway to get to the street.

"I feel pretty secure," she said.

The Chauvin trial isn't the first event that has led to tighter security in the emergency room where Swiger-Harrell works.

Last summer, while the protests and riots were happening nearby, she said she helped treat patients with injuries including gunshots and tear gas inhalation.

The hospital, which is a Level 1 trauma center, is the nearest medical facility to the area where many of the demonstrations happened, Swiger-Harrell said.

She said it was strange to work while National Guard soldiers stood in the emergency department.

The soldiers also traveled with ambulance crews, she said.

Workers erected fencing around the emergency entrance, and there was no damage to the hospital last summer, Swiger-Harrell said.

Thus far during the trial, with testimony not slated to start until later in March or early in April, downtown Minneapolis has been relatively tranquil, she said.

She said she drove by the Hennepin County Government Center, where the trial is taking place, on Thursday, March 11, and she saw about 10 people holding signs.

Among the bigger effects of last summer's demonstrations were freeway closures, Swiger-Harrell said. Multiple times when her shift ended around 1 a.m. she had to find an alternate driving route to get home.