**BY DAVID KOENIG** 

AP Airlines Writer

Air travel can be difficult in the best of times, with cramped planes, screaming babies, flight delays and short tempers.

Throw in a pandemic, and the anxiety level can rise quickly.

That has led to confrontations with flight attendants and other unruly behavior, including occasional fights that get captured and replayed endlessly on social media.

Airlines have reported about 3,000 cases of disruptive passengers since Jan. 1, according to a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration, which began tracking it this year. About 2,300 of those incidents involved passengers who refused to obey the federal requirement to wear a face mask.

Over the past decade, the FAA investigated about 140 cases a year for possible enforcement actions such as fines. This year, it was nearly 400 by late May.

Things have gotten so bad that the airlines and unions for flight attendants and pilots sent a letter to the U.S. Justice Department on Monday urging "that more be done to deter egregious behavior."

'The federal government should send a strong and consistent message through criminal enforcement that compliance with federal law and upholding aviation safety are of paramount importance," the letter said, noting that the law calls for up to 20 years imprisonment for passengers who intimidate or interfere with crew members.

Trade group Airlines for America sent a separate letter to the Federal Aviation Administration acknowledging that the "vast majority of pas-



landings to remove unruly

passengers. Pilots and flight at-

tendants now routinely make

pre-flight announcements to

remind passengers about fed-

eral regulations against inter-

imagine how much worse it

would be," said Sara Nelson,

president of the Association of

Flight Attendants, "but this is

clearly not taking care of the

a lot more. I have never, ever

whole problem. We have to do

seen an environment like this."

flight attendant for seven years

and he, too, says he has never seen so much bad behavior on-

board. He recounted a recent

incident in which he and other

flight attendants had just com-

passengers and were preparing

for takeoff when a fight broke

woman accompanying one of

"After 20 or 30 seconds we

out between two men and a

them.

pleted the safety briefing for

Mike Oemichen has been a

"All of that is helpful, and if we didn't have that I can only

fering with crews.

Airlines have reported about 3,000 cases of disruptive passengers since Jan. 1, according to a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration. It has gotten so bad that the airlines, flight attendants and pilots sent a letter to the U.S. Justice Department on Monday urging "that more be done to deter egregious behavior."

sengers" comply with the rules but "unfortunately, we continue to see onboard behavior deteriorating into heinous acts, including assaults, threats and intimidation of crewmembers that directly interfere with the performance of crewmember duties and jeopardize the safety and security of everyone on board the aircraft."

The FAA announced a "zero-tolerance" policy against disruptive behavior on flights back in January. The agency is attempting to levy fines that can top \$30,000 against more than 50 passengers and has identified more than 400 other cases for possible enforcement.

U.S. airlines have banned at least 3,000 passengers since May of last year, and that doesn't include two of the largest, American and Southwest, which declined to provide fig-

Airlines have stripped some customers of frequent-flyer benefits, and in rare cases, pilots have made unplanned

eryone down," Oemichen said. "Then we went back to the gate and had the passengers re-Oemichen suffered a conthe melee.

cussion when he hit his head against an overhead bin during

were able to get the two male

other, and we tried to calm ev-

passengers away from each

We never figured out what they were fighting over," said Oemichen, who spoke on condition that his airline not be named. He also handles grievances for union members at his airline.

The fear among flight attendants is that things will get worse this summer, as travel continues to increase and planes get more crowded. The airline industry passed a milestone earlier this month when the Transportation Security Administration announced that more than 2 million people streamed through U.S. airport security checkpoints for the first time since early March

Airline bookings have been picking up since around February, as more Americans were vaccinated against COVID-19. Falling infection rates could, however, make it much harder for flight attendants to enforce the federal mask-wearing rule, which isn't due to expire until mid-September.

Some security experts think lifting the mask requirement will remove a key source of tension — one with political overtones in a politically divided nation. But it could also raise the anxiety of people who worry about sharing space with strangers while we're still in a pandemic.

"People on both sides of the issue are acting badly," Nelson

#### Solve these puzzles on C4

#### **SOLUTION TO TODAY'S SUDOKU**

9 5 4 6 3 8 1 7 2 8 1 6 2 7 4 3 5 9 7 3 2 9 5 1 8 6 4 3 2 8 5 1 9 7 4 6 6 7 1 8 4 2 5 9 3 5 4 9 7 6 3 2 8 1 4 9 3 1 8 5 6 2 7 1 8 7 4 2 6 9 3 5 **SOLUTION TO TODAY'S JUMBLE** 

The orchard owners could see "PEACHFRONT"

HOME

STERFO

THRIVE CASHEW

# NYT CROSSWORD SOLUTION B A U M N A T C H T W A S O R W O R S E E M I L E B Y T U R N S S Y N C S I N T U R M O I L S T E P N A T S S C R I P S I D E B S E T I A L E A P I A N S O H O T H O E P E R L E N G E T E M O B O E N S M U C H A C H O E T H U K U L E L E S M U C H A C H O E T H U K U L E L E S O P E L M A A C C O N E T A A T R A U S H E R T A U T O L O G Y M A S H E N S T O R E S P R I O R T A U R A D A E T E S Q U I N C E A N E R A W R E N

E T E S Q U I N C E A N E R A W R E N
S E L L S E D D A T G I F C I E R A

A I G I S L E E L M U G
O L D P R O S G O R D I E H O W E L E I A S A T A Y E W E S B L I G E

LAT CROSSWORD SOLUTION

# S E E I N G R E D H A V I N G A C O W H R S O L E S T R A I T A L I C O K E D E A V E D S O N A T A S D R I V E N U P A W A L L F P E T R E L R O D E N P R L L Y R A Y O U R E R O D E R N P R L Y H A D A N I P Z Y D E C O B L O W I N G A G A S K E T A D A G E M A R C H I T T I N G T H E R O O F R A R E S T D R N O B U L L Y E M O K I A D R N O A S N E R F R A M C P E E P E D B R E A T H BREATHINGFIRE DINTYBAAS C A S I N O I M P E R I L G A E L E I N E I C O N T A L C

# Surf

### Continued from C1

Lopez, who has mentored Chun and others, helped shape the boards that Chun now sells. The boards are selling for about \$600 a pop, he said. So far only about 50 to 100 surfboards have been sold since Chun launched Bend Surf in 2021.

"There's something about surfing that is unique. The fact that our waves go away in the winter and change depending on the river flow makes it so special," Chun said. "I'm learning something new and Gerry (Lopez) gets to share his knowledge and gets to pass it on. It's a fulfilling thing that I'm doing."

## **Snowboarding with Lopez**

Nicol said he met Lopez while snowboarding at the Big Wave Challenge at Mt. Bachelor, an annual event inspired by Lopez. The pair struck up a conversation about board designs, and Lopez offered up the



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin James Nicol, owner of SnoPlank,

works on a skateboard inspired and designed by Gerry Lopez.

templates for the shapes he had designed, Nicol said. That was in 2016.

"They were these beautiful longboard shapes, and we made few and they really worked well," he said. "After that we started doing seasonal releases of the collaborated boards during the summer

months, and the decks just kept getting better."

Nicol's business actually began in 2012 as a snowboarding manufacturer, but he didn't start selling his craft snowboards and skateboards until several years later, he said. Over the years Nicol said

he has partnered with other businesses to support causes in the community. This summer, June through September, Nicol will donate the revenue from the 2021 Gerry Lopez Street Surfer skateboards to The Conservation Alliance, which awards funds to 20 grassroots conservation groups in the United States.

"It's a more in-depth process to make a snowboard," Nicols said. "But building skateboards is an opportunity to work with Gerry, who's an incredible human and a legend in multiple disciplines in sports. We're also able to do something good and give back to the community." Reporter: 541-633-2117.

sroig@bendbulletin.com







Competitive Salary & Benefits plus Signing Bonus! Contact us Today to Learn More generalmanagerealx55.com



Resort-Style Independent Living for Active Seniors

