



Stuart McKenzie with Doris Hyde, 96, whose daughter, Naomi Scarr, kept her distance. He wrangles snakes of all sizes, many deadly.

A Slithering, Hissing Business That’s Booming

By NATASHA FROST

SUNSHINE COAST, Australia — The phone rings. It’s the local prison. There’s a snake in a cell. Within a few hours, snakes have also been spotted at a school, beneath a piano stored in a private garage and near a lagoon-like swimming pool at a retirement home. Customers want them gone.

Business has never been so good for Stuart McKenzie, who runs a snake-catching service in the Sunshine Coast, a verdant enclave along miles of pristine beach

Warming World Keeps Australia’s Snake Catchers Busy

in the vast Australian state of Queensland. On the busiest days, he can receive more than 35 calls about troublesome snakes.

Queensland is home to the largest number of snake species in Australia — about 120. Of those, two-thirds are venomous and a handful are deadly. Throughout Australia, fatalities from snake

bites remain extremely rare — about two a year — and in Queensland, the reptiles are simply a part of life.

In the cooler months of the year — historically from April to September — snakes become sluggish and may not eat, drink, defecate or even move for weeks at a time. But as the world warms and the climate in southern Queensland shifts from subtropical to tropical, this period of brumation is shrinking — meaning more run-ins between humans and the animals.

“Not only are snakes becoming

Continued on Page A6

Lawyer and Online Star, From Inside Iron Lung

By JESUS JIMÉNEZ

After he was paralyzed by polio at age 6, Paul Alexander was confined for much of his life to a yellow iron lung that kept him alive. He was not expected to survive after that diagnosis, and even when he beat those odds, his life was mostly constrained by a machine in which he could not move.

But the toll of living in an iron lung with polio did not stop Mr. Alexander from going to college, getting a law degree and practicing law for more than 30 years. As a boy, he taught himself to breathe for minutes and later hours at a time, but he had to use the machine every day of his life.



He died on Monday at 78, according to a statement by his brother, Philip Alexander, on social media.

He was one of the last few people in the United States living inside an iron lung, which works by rhythmically changing air pressure in the chamber to force air in and out of the lungs. And in the final weeks of his life, he drew a following on TikTok by sharing what it had been like to live so long with the help of an antiquated machine.

No official cause of death was given. But Mr. Alexander had briefly been hospitalized with Covid-19 in February, according to his TikTok account. After he returned home, Mr. Alexander struggled with eating and hydrating as he recovered from the virus, which attacks the lungs and can be especially dangerous to people who are older and have breathing problems.

Mr. Alexander contracted polio in 1952, according to his book, “Three Minutes for a Dog: My Life in an Iron Lung.” He was

SMILEY N. POOL/DALLAS MORNING NEWS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

quickly paralyzed, and doctors at Parkland Hospital in Dallas put him in an iron lung so that he could breathe.

“One day I opened my eyes from a deep sleep and looked around for something, anything,

familiar,” Mr. Alexander said in his book, which he wrote by putting a pen or pencil in his mouth. “Everywhere I looked was all very strange. Little did I know that each new day my life was un-

Continued on Page A15

WHITE HOUSE MEMO

Biden Talked The Ears Off Interrogators

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — They were there to talk about classified documents, but somehow President Biden’s mind had turned to Mongolia.

Something about being handed a bow and arrow during a visit and embarrassing his host. “Pure luck, I hit the goddamn target,” Mr. Biden recalled. Not so much the Mongolian leader. “The poor son of a bitch couldn’t pull it back. I was like, oh God.”

He has a large storehouse of stories, this president, and he shared them freely during interviews with prosecutors last fall. Mr. Biden described giving an oration in law school on a case he had not read and lying his way into an exclusive club in Delaware. He recounted his time with President Barack Obama and trying to “save his ass” from manipulative generals. He boasted of building a solar facility in Angola.

What any of that had to do with Mr. Biden’s handling of secret papers was not always clear, but transcripts of his five hours with the special counsel Robert K. Hur released this week opened a window into a president not often seen by the public lately. He was funny and folksy, chatty and charming, quick and quirky. In a sometimes meandering stream of consciousness, he took prosecutors on a colorful tour of his life with the occasional disquisition on the history of the Gutenberg printing press and Richard M. Nixon’s 1960 election defeat.

Of most importance to investigators, Mr. Biden was maddeningly imprecise about the government documents that ended up in his homes and offices where they did not belong. “I don’t remember how a beat-up box got in the garage,” he said. All told, he offered variations of “I don’t remember” or “I don’t recall” more than 50 times.

And there were other things he could not recall — what a fax machine is called, the name of a former cabinet colleague, the agency that preserves official papers. Discussing negotiations with a challenging nation, he named Afghanistan, then corrected himself to say that he meant Iraq only to have one of

Continued on Page A12

Germany Tries To Nudge Out The Far Right

Changes to Institutions May Have Blowback

By ERIKA SOLOMON

BERLIN — For Germany, a country that knows something about how extremists can hijack a government, the surging popularity of the far right has forced an awkward question.

How far should a democracy go in restricting a party that many believe is bent on undermining it?

It is a quandary that politicians and legal experts are grappling with across the country as support surges for Alternative for Germany, a far-right party whose backing now outstrips each of the three parties in the governing coalition.

Not only is the AfD the most popular party in three states holding elections this year, it is polling nationwide as high as 20 percent. German politicians have become increasingly alarmed that someday the party could wield influence in the federal government. Its popularity has grown despite the fact that the domestic intelligence services announced they are investigating the party as a suspected threat to democracy.

Germans have already had a front-row seat to the rise of so-called illiberal democrats in Poland and Hungary who used their power to stack courts with pliant judges and silence independent media. History hangs heavy over Germany as well — the Nazis used elections to seize the levers of the state and shape an authoritarian system.

Today, German lawmakers are rewriting bylaws and pushing for constitutional amendments to ensure courts and state Parliaments can provide checks against a future, more powerful AfD. Some have even launched a campaign to ban the AfD altogether.

But every remedy holds its own dangers, leaving German politicians threading a course between safeguarding their democracy and the possibility of unwittingly providing the AfD with tools it could someday use to hobble it.

“It’s never the case that if you have democracy, once you’ve won it, you have it forever,” said Stephan Thomae, a member of Parliament from the Free Democratic Party. “Therefore, we should protect it a little more.”

For years, Germany’s mainstream parties have tried to isolate and ostracize the AfD by avoiding political collaboration.

They now acknowledge that those efforts failed to curb the AfD, whose popularity has grown with German concerns about migration and a stagnating economy, and despite reports of the

Continued on Page A10

SCHUMER VOICES HARSH CRITICISM OF ISRAEL LEADER

HE ‘HAS LOST HIS WAY’

Urges Netanyahu Ouster, Bringing Sharp Retort From McConnell

By ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, delivered a pointed speech on the Senate floor on Thursday excoriating Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel as a major obstacle to peace in the Middle East and calling for new leadership in Israel, five months into the war.

Many Democratic lawmakers have condemned Mr. Netanyahu’s leadership and his right-wing governing coalition, and President Biden has even criticized the Israeli military’s offensive in Gaza as “over the top.” But Mr. Schumer’s speech amounted to the sharpest critique yet from a senior American elected official — effectively urging Israelis to replace Mr. Netanyahu.

“I believe in his heart, his highest priority is the security of Israel,” said Mr. Schumer, the highest-ranking Jewish elected official in the United States. “However, I also believe Prime Minister Netanyahu has lost his way by allowing his political survival to take precedence over the best interests of Israel.”

Mr. Schumer added: “He has been too willing to tolerate the civilian toll in Gaza, which is pushing support for Israel worldwide to historic lows. Israel cannot survive if it becomes a pariah.”

The speech was the latest reflection of the growing dissatisfaction among Democrats, particularly progressives, with Israel’s conduct of the war and its toll on Palestinian civilians, which has created a strategic and political dilemma for Mr. Biden. Republicans have tried to capitalize on that dynamic for electoral advantage,

Continued on Page A13



ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

AIPAC’S HURDLES The pro-Israel lobbying group faces new tests with both parties. PAGE A13

If It’s Banned or Forced to Sell, TikTok Can Blame Its Hubris

KEVIN ROOSE

THE SHIFT

SAN FRANCISCO — I was really rooting for TikTok.

In 2020, when the Trump administration first tried to force TikTok’s Chinese owner, ByteDance, to sell the app or risk having it shut down, I argued that banning TikTok in the United States would do more harm than good.

Why? Partly because TikTok seemed like a convenient scapegoat for problems — invasive data collection, opaque content policies, addictive recommendation algorithms — that plagued all the big social media apps, and partly because I never bought the argument that the app was a Chinese spying tool hiding in plain sight.

I’m still skeptical of that argument. If the Chinese government wanted to snoop on Americans through their smartphones, it wouldn’t have to use TikTok to do it. It could buy troves of information from a data broker, thanks to America’s nonexistent federal data privacy laws.

And I’m still worried that banning TikTok would be a huge gift to U.S. tech giants like Meta and Google, which own TikTok’s largest competitors — Facebook, Instagram and YouTube — further entrenching winners in a

Continued on Page A20

OPPOSITION Dozens of TikTok influencers have traveled to Washington to fight back. PAGE B1



NATIONAL A11-17, 20

SpaceX Successful on Third Try

The most powerful rocket ever built achieved a series of milestones before breaking up upon re-entry. PAGE A20

Offer to Delay a Trump Trial

The Manhattan district attorney’s proposal would give lawyers time to review a new batch of documents. PAGE A14

INTERNATIONAL A4-10

Tightening Its Grip on Haiti

After a gang alliance forced the country’s leader out, it has become clear that its next goal is to become a legitimate political force. News Analysis. PAGE A4

U.S. Diplomat Chides Orban

The ambassador to Budapest said the prime minister was jeopardizing Hungary’s position as a trusted ally. PAGE A6

OBITUARIES B10-11

Mission to Help Youth in Nepal

A group co-founded by Olga Murray, 98, rescued thousands of girls and young women from bonded slavery. PAGE B11



SPORTS B6-9, 12

Superstar Moves to Shortstop

The Dodgers make a risky call to put Mookie Betts at a position that he hasn’t played since high school. PAGE B7

A Road Trip to Help Heal

After surviving a mass shooting and losing her father, a Columbia basketball star took a gap year to travel. PAGE B6

BUSINESS B1-5

Reddit’s Long Road to an I.P.O.

The San Francisco-based site, a throwback to an earlier era of social media, is poised to go public as soon as next week. It hasn’t been easy to get to the stock market. PAGE B1

Shift in Venture Capitalists

Big-name Silicon Valley investors such as Reid Hoffman and Michael Moritz are pulling back, creating room for another generation of tech power brokers to step up. PAGE B1

OPINION A18-19

Julia Angwin PAGE A19



WEEKEND ARTS C1-14

Plenty to Argue About

The Whitney Biennial opens, heavy on identity and low on risk. Three critics weigh in on the exhibition everyone will have an opinion about. PAGE C1

