



Partly sunny 60/44 • Tomorrow: Shower 54/37 B6

Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2023 • \$3

Observers at odds on the pace of warming

Is climate change speeding up? Here's what the science says.

BY CHRIS MOONEY AND SHANNON OSAKA

For the past several years, a small group of scientists has warned that sometime early this century, the rate of global warming — which has remained largely steady for decades — might accelerate. Temperatures could rise higher, faster. The drumbeat of weather disasters may become more insistent.

And now, after what is poised to be the hottest year in recorded history, the same experts believe that it is already happening.

In a paper published last month, climate scientist James E. Hansen and a group of colleagues argued that the pace of global warming is poised to increase by 50 percent in the coming decades, with an accompanying escalation of impacts.

According to the scientists, an increased amount of heat energy trapped within the planet's system — known as the planet's "energy imbalance" — will accelerate warming. "If there's more energy coming in than going out, you get warmer, and if you double that imbalance, you're going to get warmer faster," Hansen said in a phone interview.

Zeke Hausfather, a climate scientist with Berkeley Earth, has similarly called the last few months of temperatures "absolutely gobsmackingly bananas" and noted, "there is increasing evidence that global warming has accelerated over the past 15 years."

But not everyone agrees. University of Pennsylvania climate

SEE WARMING ON A15

TOM SMOTHERS | 1937-2023

Half of sibling comedy duo brought edge to prime time

BY FRED A. BERNSTEIN

Tom Smothers, the older half of the Smothers Brothers comedy duo whose hit CBS variety show of the late 1960s was canceled amid controversy arising from sketches that skewered politicians and the Vietnam War, died Dec. 26 at his home in Santa Rosa, Calif. He was 86.

The death was announced by the National Comedy Center, which released the information on behalf of Mr. Smothers's family. He had been under treatment for cancer.

With their clean-cut, glee-club looks, including matching blazers, the Smothers Brothers were unlikely rabble-rousers. They started out as folk singers, with brother Dick also on string bass and Tom playing the acoustic guitar. But they quickly distinguished themselves by spoofing the genre and incorporating wry banter founded on sibling rivalry. Developing the material was easy, Mr. Smothers once said, because

SEE SMOTHERS ON A12

IN THE NEWS

Trump campaign The former president will be allowed to appear on the 2024 primary ballot in Michigan, after the state's high court declined to hear a challenge. A2

N.Y. Times lawsuit The newspaper sued OpenAI and Microsoft for using its articles to train their artificial intelligence technology. C1

THE NATION An Indiana man who was injured and trapped in his crashed truck was found days later. A3
Jacksonville, Fla., removed a Confederate memorial after years of controversy. A3

THE ECONOMY A brainiac couple are at odds over why voters are upset over the U.S. economy. A13
The Climate Coach shares planet-friendly things to consider in the new year. A16

THE REGION The D.C. crime lab won back a key accreditation two years after losing it. B1
A DNA project aims to connect Holocaust survivors with family members they didn't know about, repairing family trees that were ravaged by genocide. B1

The "D.C. snow hole," a relative lack of snow at times in or near the District, really is a thing — on a micro level. B1

STYLE Lee Sun-kyun, a South Korean actor who starred in the Oscar-winning film "Parasite," was found dead at 48. C1

Delaney Rowe is a star on TikTok, where she parodies Hollywood and L.A. life. Now she's going to find out whether power on social media translates to power in the studio system. C1

LOCAL LIVING The section will return next week.

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IMPERFECT UNION



MERIDITH KOHUT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

In an Old West town, new Americans fight for a voice

Kan. lawsuit asserts that at-large voting undercuts diversity

BY SILVIA FOSTER-FRAU

Noi Siriphone, an immigrant from Laos, and her partner, Ivan Morales, an immigrant from Mexico, laugh as their son, Zayne Morales, plays with a Mexican flag this month in Dodge City, Kan., which is governed by a mostly White commission despite being 65 percent Latino.

that affect its residents most directly, including housing, transportation, and education — remains nearly all White. Almendarez, who makes rounds at his plant registering fellow Latino citizens to vote, says he believes the commission's membership might better represent the city's diversity if its five members were elected from local neighborhoods. Instead, every commissioner is elected citywide rather than by just one district. Two Latino residents are suing over the practice.

"If we have a big Hispanic population why aren't we on commission seats and things like that? Simply because the doors aren't open. The doors are always closed on us, even putting obstacles in the voting process," Almendarez, 65, said in Spanish.

Experts who study representation

SEE IMPERFECT UNION ON A8

Her story fueled anti-trans bills she's now fighting

A woman who detransitioned works to preserve the gender-affirming care that she once criticized

BY CASEY PARKS

COLUMBUS — The Ohio Statehouse elevator lifted, and Carey Callahan practiced what she'd say. *Hi. I live in your district. I'm a detransitioner.*

A decade ago, when Callahan stopped taking testosterone, few Americans knew a transgender person, let alone someone who had transitioned and then returned to their sex assigned at birth, and when Callahan went looking for other people who'd changed their minds, all she could find was a defunct email group that had topped out at a dozen members.

But much had changed since then. Detransitioners now headlined conservative rallies. They spoke on Capitol Hill and on Tucker Carlson's show, and billionaires flew them across the country to beg legislators to ban gender-affirming care. Earlier this spring, detransitioned women had come to Ohio from California and Michigan to describe themselves as mutilated.

SEE OHIO ON A4



MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

From left, Carey Callahan, a detransitioner, and Cam Ogden take a break from seeking out lawmakers at the Ohio Statehouse before a November hearing on a bill restricting gender-affirming health care.

Fears of a new front for Israel

'A FORK IN THE ROAD' WITH HEZBOLLAH

Strikes, counterstrikes increase at Lebanon line

BY SHIRA RUBIN AND RUBY MELLEN

TEL AVIV — Escalating strikes and counterstrikes along the border between Israel and Lebanon are raising fears of a possible new front for Israel, even as its fighters remain mired in bloody urban combat in Gaza to the south in its campaign to destroy Hamas.

Hezbollah fired more barrages at northern Israel on Wednesday in the latest in a string of attacks by Iranian-backed groups across the Middle East against Israeli and U.S. assets.

Hezbollah has lobbed scores of rockets and explosives-laden drones at Israel this week, including at a Greek Orthodox church, where two Israeli Christians were wounded.

Drones targeted the Egyptian resort city of Dahab in the Sinai Peninsula, the second such incident there in the past month. There was an explosion outside the Israeli Embassy in India's capital, New Delhi. And an airstrike near Syria's capital, Damascus, killed a senior officer in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The group has vowed that Israel will "pay."

SEE WAR ON A11

Displacement: Over a million have packed into tiny corner of Gaza. A10

Postwar Gaza: U.S. is struggling to revive the Palestinian Authority. A11

THE SCHOOL BOOK WARS

Challenged books return to shelves, but at what cost?

BY HANNAH NATANSON

Almost half of books challenged at school are returned to shelves, but titles with LGBTQ characters, themes and stories are most likely to be banned, according to a Washington Post analysis of nearly 900 book objections nationwide.

School officials sent 49 percent of challenged titles back to shelves, The Post found, a discovery some interviewed for this story hailed as proof the national alarm over book challenges has been overblown — although librarians warned of a severe burden on employees forced to spend months defending titles. The next-most-common outcome, in 17 percent of challenges, was for a book to be placed under some form of restriction. Libraries might require parental permission or limit the youngest students from checking out a given title.

And school officials permanently removed 16 percent of challenged books, making that the third-most-common outcome. In the remaining cases, the

SEE BOOKS ON A6

Upon review: The challengers and the titles reveal a few surprises. A7