

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

THE WEATHER
Today, sunshine and clouds, brief shower, high 71. **Tonight**, cool, mainly clear, low 58. **Tomorrow**, sunny to partly cloudy, low humidity, high 75. Weather map, Page B10.

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Medical Official, a Lawyer And a Blurred Ethical Line

**F.D.A. Regulator of Health Devices Whose
Wife Represented Their Makers**

By CHRISTINA JEWETT

For 15 years, Dr. Jeffrey E. Shuren was the federal official charged with ensuring the safety of a vast array of medical devices including artificial knees, breast implants and Covid tests.

When he announced in July that he would be retiring from the Food and Drug Administration later this year, Dr. Robert Califf, the agency’s commissioner, praised him for overseeing the approval of more novel devices last year than ever before in the nearly half-century history of the device division.

But the admiration for Dr. Shuren is far from universal. Consumer advocates see his tenure as marred by the approval of too many devices that harmed patients and by his own close ties to the \$500 billion global device industry.

One connection stood out: While Dr. Shuren regulated the booming medical device industry, his wife, Allison W. Shuren, represented the interests of device



Dr. Jeffrey E. Shuren will retire from the F.D.A. later this year.

makers as the co-leader of a team of lawyers at Arnold & Porter, one of Washington’s most powerful law firms.

Dr. Shuren signed ethics agreements obtained by The New York Times that were meant to wall him off from matters involving Arnold & Porter’s business. But it’s not clear how rigorously the ethics agreements were actually enforced. His wife’s law firm refused to provide a list of clients — and the agency had no legal authority to require it, said Michael Felberbaum, a spokesman for the F.D.A.

In a review of thousands of pages of court documents and F.D.A. records and dozens of interviews with current and former agency staff members and advocates, The Times identified some clients and several instances in which the Shurens’ roles intersected.

Her partner at the helm of the firm’s life sciences team began representing Theranos, the discredited blood testing company, in 2015, demanding that the F.D.A. halt an inspection at its sites in California. While Dr. Shuren said he was recused from the matter, court records suggested he remained involved.

In another case, Ms. Shuren’s firm was working on a \$63 billion acquisition of the company Allergan in 2019 when Dr. Shuren initially declined to urge a recall of the company’s breast implants tied to a rare cancer.

The couple’s work overlapped again in 2022 when Dr. Shuren announced his retirement.

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MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; TOP LEFT, JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, TOP AND ABOVE RIGHT, HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, ABOVE LEFT, JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Hail and Farewell in Chicago

Delegates at the Democratic National Convention saluted President Biden for his decades of service while welcoming Vice President Kamala Harris to the top of the ticket. Follow Wednesday’s developments at nytimes.com, where reporters will give live updates.

A Gay Student Needed Help. Enter Coach Walz.

By ERNESTO LONDOÑO

MINNEAPOLIS — Taunts and threats escalated as rumors about Jacob Reitan’s sexual orientation swirled around his southern Minnesota high school during his senior year in 1999.

Someone chalked a slur on his driveway in giant letters. His mother recalled being horrified by anonymous mail that arrived at their home, including one message that said her gay son would be better off dead.

After the teenager found his car window smashed in the school parking lot, he told officials at Mankato West High School that he intended to come out of the

A Career Was Shaped by an Advisory Role at a High School

closet and sought their support to start a gay-straight alliance club.

The principal made an unconventional decision in the choice of a faculty adviser for the club, which the high school had never had before in this relatively conservative city: Tim Walz, a geography teacher who was also a football coach. Mr. Walz readily agreed, and the choice came as a relief to Mr. Reitan.

“It was important to have a person who was so well-liked on campus, a football coach who had served in the military,” said Mr. Reitan, now 42. “Having Tim Walz as the adviser of the gay-straight alliance made me feel safe coming to school.”

That early chapter from Mr. Walz’s teaching years helped shape his stances as a politician and reflects how much Mr. Walz’s partnership with his wife, Gwen, has shaped his work over many years. Heavily influenced by Ms. Walz, who was Mr. Reitan’s teacher and someone the student confided in, Mr. Walz went on to make gay rights a signature issue

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Kindred Spirit, Obama Repays Harris Gamble

By KATIE ROGERS

CHICAGO — On New Year’s Eve in 2007, Kamala Harris, then the district attorney of San Francisco, prepared to spend the holiday more than a thousand miles away from her native California. She had flown to Iowa for the first time, touching down in Des Moines during one of the wettest winters on record.

Ms. Harris turned up in a dingy campaign field office, wearing a puffy coat and boots. Near a tangle of power cords, someone had propped an “African Americans for Obama” poster against a wall. In the midst of that bleak Midwestern winter, Ms. Harris was there to knock on doors for Barack Obama, the junior senator from Illinois mounting a long-shot bid for the presidency.

“To be here is worth 1,000 Champagne bottles and firecrackers,” Ms. Harris told a reporter on New Year’s Day, surrounded by campaign detritus. “It’s equal to that, in terms of the thrill, the excitement and the promise for tomorrow.”

Supporting Mr. Obama was a political risk. Ms. Harris was one of the rare Californians holding elected office — and one of few in the Democratic Party writ large — to endorse him for the presidency. Most of the party’s institutional heft had been thrown behind Hillary Clinton, a senator from New York who had a powerful surrogate in her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

But Ms. Harris’s early bet paid off, and Mr. Obama has never forgotten it.

“She was just a rock-solid supporter of the president at a time the entire political establishment was not with him,” said Buffy Wicks, a California State Assembly member who was the 32nd person hired by Mr. Obama’s campaign. “She set aside significant time and energy to help get him elected, and that was greatly appreciated by him.”

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BITTERSWEET END President Biden delivered the speech that he never wanted to give. **PAGE A12**

HIS CAUSE Doug Emhoff would make fighting antisemitism a goal as first gentleman. **PAGE A13**

Focus on China As Biden Edits Nuclear Plans

By DAVID E. SANGER

President Biden approved in March a highly classified nuclear strategic plan for the United States that, for the first time, reorients America’s deterrent strategy to focus on China’s rapid expansion in its nuclear arsenal.

The shift comes as the Pentagon believes China’s stockpiles will rival the size and diversity of the United States’ and Russia’s over the next decade.

The White House never announced that Mr. Biden had approved the revised strategy, called the Nuclear Employment Guidance, which also newly seeks to prepare the United States for possible coordinated nuclear challenges from China, Russia and North Korea. The document, updated every four years or so, is so highly classified that there are no electronic copies, only a small number of hard copies distributed to a few national security officials and Pentagon commanders.

But in recent speeches, two senior administration officials were allowed to allude to the change — in carefully constrained, single sentences — ahead of a more detailed, unclassified notification to Congress expected before Mr. Biden leaves office.

“The president recently issued updated nuclear-weapons employment guidance to account for multiple nuclear-armed adversaries,” Vipin Narang, an M.I.T. nuclear strategist who served in the Pentagon, said earlier this month before returning to academia. “And in particular,” he added, the weapons guidance accounted for “the significant increase in the size and diversity” of China’s nuclear arsenal.

In June, the National Security

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Rite of Passage: To Go to Disney, Then Into Debt

By JESSICA FU

Alyssa Leach and her husband have visited Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., every year since 2015. To them, the theme park feels like an oasis where they can escape the stress of everyday life.

So when their son, Lincoln, was born in 2020, Ms. Leach wanted his first visit to the park to be special and spared no expense in planning it. She booked a two-week trip to visit Florida in December 2022, which included stays at Disney World and Universal Studios.

The costs quickly accumulated. Ms. Leach and her family traveled from New Haven, Conn., and paid extra for admission to “Mickey’s Very Merry Christmas Party,” an after-hours event that cost about \$200 per person. She also shelled out \$100 for the theme park’s photo service so she could download photos of the family that photographers took during the visit.

The vacation cost around \$6,000, which included accommodations, tickets and a car rental, and which Ms. Leach charged to her Disney-branded credit card.

Ms. Leach is one of many parents who have taken on debt for a Disney family vacation. In June, LendingTree, a financial firm, published the results of a survey of over 2,000 people that found that 45 percent of parents with children under 18 who have gone to Disney went into debt for the trip.

For a family of four, the cost of a one-week trip to Disney can range from \$6,463 to \$15,559, not including flights or souvenirs, according to an analysis by NerdWallet, a personal finance site. Many families can’t afford the trip at all. Last week, Disney reported softening

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Carlos Magdalena, “the plant messiah,” with giant Amazon water lilies at Kew Gardens in London.

THE GLOBAL PROFILE CARLOS MAGDALENA

Braving the Wild to Rescue the Rarest of Flowers

By SILVANA PATERNOSTRO

LONDON — In Australia, he went plant hunting by helicopter and waded in crocodile-infested waters to watch a water lily bloom. In Mauritius, he grabbed a plant specimen off the ledge of a cliff. Last month, while looking for lilies in a Colombian tributary of the piranha-packed Orinoco River, he jumped from plank to plank in the pitch dark at 4 a.m.

to get to a floating pontoon.

“It’s not that I am that daring,” said Carlos Magdalena, a research horticulturalist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London. “These situations just arise, and they are not like Superman extreme. Sometimes it’s more Peter Sellers than Indiana Jones.”

Mr. Magdalena’s main responsibility at Kew Gardens is tending tropical plants. But he is also

known as “the plant messiah,” as anointed by a Spanish newspaper in 2010, for his work rescuing several plant species from the brink of extinction. That work has earned him enormous respect in the field of botany and made him somewhat of a celebrity in the horticulture world.

His renown only grew when David Attenborough, the British doyen of nature documentaries,

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Mobilizing on the Home Front
In Ukraine’s wartime economy, women are working in previously male-dominated industries like mining. **PAGE A4**

A Campaign in Hiding
Venezuela’s opposition leaders ran one of the most consequential bids in the country’s history from asylum. **PAGE A7**

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Amtrak’s Ancient System
Service delays this summer highlighted the problems of 100-year-old equipment. Upgrades would take more than a decade. **PAGE A10**

Migrant Camp Cleared
New York City moved to shut down a shelter complex on Randall’s Island, forcing dozens to leave. **PAGE A19**

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The Secrets of Costco’s Success
More than 100 million people visit the retailer for groceries, but saving money may not be the only motive. **PAGE D1**



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Musicians and tourists flock to Sun Studio to capture a bit of the magic where rock ‘n’ roll took shape. **PAGE C1**

Doubts on Ketamine Treatment
The death of the actor Matthew Perry raises questions about the use of the drug to treat depression. **PAGE C1**

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Legend of Little League
No one is likely to ever approach the statistics that Pinky Deras posted in the summer of 1959. But Deras himself couldn’t escape the shadow of unmet baseball potential. **PAGE B6**

A Call to Reform WADA
The agency, which has faced intense criticism for its handling of positive tests among Chinese swimmers, should be replaced by an independent group, a former chief says. **PAGE B7**

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Bret Stephens **PAGE A21**



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How Spain Quenches Thirst
To supply water for its agriculture, tourists and residents, the country is increasingly relying on desalination plants that convert seawater. **PAGE B1**

