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A new voice for Mass. cities walks a fine line

Municipal group leader aims to balance local control with state's call for housing

By Andrew Brinker

GLOBE STAFF

In a ballroom at the Hynes Convention Center one Saturday in January, hundreds of people who run cities and towns across Massachusetts — select board members, town administrators, and mayors — rubbed elbows in what is an annual tradition of local government in this state.

The yearly convention of the Massachusetts Municipal Association had featured the usual chatter about school funding, climate grants, and other typical local-government fare. Then Ryan Curly, a member of the Wellfleet Select Board, stepped to the microphone and begged his fellow municipal officials to sharpen their focus on what he warned is an “extinction-level event” for cities and towns.

“We have a housing crisis that is a wildfire raging out of control,” said Curly. “We certainly appreciate increased state funding for schools. But unless we treat housing not just as a problem, not just as a crisis, but as an emergency, increased funding for schools will not matter.”

There was polite applause, assurances from a few board members they had heard Curly's concerns, and a generally uncomfortable air as

CITIES AND TOWNS, Page A7

Murkowski is right in the middle of it

Rare senator who builds consensus, she toys with leaving GOP

By Lissandra Villa de Petrzelka

GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — Unicorn. Dying breed. Endangered species.

Those are just a few of the descriptors political observers apply to the senators who can cross party lines and build effective relationships in an institution that has undergone a dramatic makeover in recent years, especially within the Republican Party.

And one in particular falls squarely in that camp: Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, who seems poised to help fill an expanding void in the center lane.

And as more changes appear to be on the horizon for the Senate, she has left open the door to an exit from the party.

“I just regret that our party is seemingly becoming a party of Donald Trump,” Murkowski

MURKOWSKI, Page A6

Famine striking north Gaza

US aid official first to call it that; Israel braces for retaliation over Iran attacks

By Liam Stack, Cassandra Vinograd, Eric Schmitt

NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — The chief US aid official told lawmakers this week that a famine is underway in the northern Gaza Strip, which has been devastated by six months of Israeli military operations and is the part of the territory most cut off from aid.

The statement from Samantha Power, administrator of the US Agency for International Development, makes her the first senior US official to publicly identify the hunger crisis in Gaza as a famine. But her agency, known as USAID, later sought to temper Power's comments, clarifying that her assessment was based on data collected in March, not on new infor-

mation.

“While there has not been a new assessment, conditions remain dire,” USAID said in a statement Thursday.

Aid agencies and global experts have warned for months that nearly all 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza would soon face extreme hunger.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, the top US military commander for the Middle East, General Michael E. Kurilla, arrived in Israel amid rising tension between Tel Aviv

and Iran following the April 1 strike in Syria that killed several senior Iranian commanders.

Iran has vowed to avenge their deaths and Kurilla is in Israel reviewing preparations as the countries brace for what is expected to be imminent retaliatory action, as well as to discuss the war in the Gaza Strip, Defense Department officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Israeli military spokesperson
GAZA, Page A4



AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Palestinians carried an injured girl on Thursday following an Israeli bombardment of the Firas market area in Gaza City.

One more blow to local journalism

The late Fred Hanson covered towns in a way that's becoming rare

By Aidan Ryan

GLOBE STAFF

Community journalism has been rapidly shrinking, with the United States losing a quarter of its newspapers in the past two decades. Great patches of small-town America find themselves in a news blackout, leaving local residents without information on how their tax dollars are spent, who is developing the property

down their streets, and what their schools are doing to educate their children.

But in Braintree and other South Shore towns, locals had Fred Hanson, a fixture at The Patriot Ledger for nearly 43 years. His death this week outside Braintree Town Hall, where he was about to cover a school board meeting, not only marks an uncertain future for Braintree, the South Shore, and the Ledger — it's also a symbol of a disappearing kind of local journalism.

“Fred was the Ledger,” said Linda Shepherd, a former Ledger editor.

“For Braintree, they've lost their news. Going forward, I don't think anybody will have their ear to the ground the way Fred did.”

Across the nation, local newspapers have struggled to adapt to the digital age as readers moved their attention away from print. Advertising shifted too, which has left newspapers without the print advertising revenue that sustained them for decades.

Over the past several years, thousands of journalists have lost their jobs and local newsrooms have been

HANSON, Page A7

O.J. SIMPSON 1947-2024

Once a bright star, forever tarnished

By Robert D. McFadden

NEW YORK TIMES

O.J. Simpson, who ran to fame on the football field, made fortunes as an all-American in movies, television, and advertising, and was acquitted of killing his former wife and her friend in a 1995 trial in Los Angeles that mesmerized the nation, died Wednesday at his home in Las Vegas. He was 76.

The cause was cancer, his family announced on social media.

The jury in the murder trial cleared



ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

With his “dream team” of lawyers, O.J. Simpson celebrated his acquittal.

him, but the case, which had held up a cracked mirror to Black and white America, changed the trajectory of his life. In 1997, a civil suit by the victims' families found him liable for the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald L. Goldman, and ordered him to pay \$33.5 million in damages. He paid little of the debt, moved to Florida, and struggled to remake his life, raise his children, and stay out of trouble.

SIMPSON, Page B10

The Biden administration approved the broadest expansion of federal background checks on gun sales in decades in an attempt to regulate the shadow market. **A2.**

Harvard will again require applicants to submit standardized test scores, joining other elite colleges. **B1.**

Former governor Michael Dukakis, who served a record 12 years, was celebrated by three of his successors, at Northeastern University, where he served for decades as a professor. **B1.**

In the Frozen Four games, BC moved into the men's final, beating Michigan, while BU fell short in overtime to Denver. **C1.**

Shoot — the breeze

Friday: Windy, early rain. High 58-63. Low 46-51.

Saturday: Still windy. High 53-58. Low 43-48.

Weather and Comics, G8-9. Obituaries, B10.

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