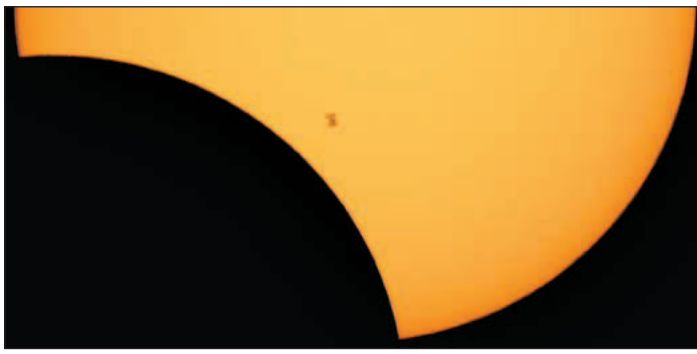


**THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL** represents the view of The Joplin Globe's editorial board. Members of the editorial board are: **Robin Phelan**, publisher, publisher@joplinglobe.com; **Andy Ostmeyer**, editor, aostmeyer@joplinglobe.com; **Jerry Willis**, managing editor, jwillis@joplinglobe.com; and **Jerry Willis**, design editor, jwillis@joplinglobe.com.

**OUR VIEW**



In this image made available by NASA, the International Space Station is silhouetted against the sun during a solar eclipse Aug. 21, 2017, as seen from Ross Lake, Northern Cascades National Park in Washington state. The Joplin area is near the path of totality and should see the sun 95.5% hidden by the moon during the solar eclipse on Monday, April 8.

AP FILE

# Take time Monday for nature's marvels

Monday's solar eclipse will be one of nature's great marvels — one we won't see again in our area until August 2045.

For us, the eclipse will start at 12:34 p.m., reach its maximum of 95.5% totality at 1:52 p.m., and end at 3:10 p.m. Take time, make time to see it. To experience it, actually. There will probably be a noticeable temperature drop. Animal, insect, bird and even plant behavior will be affected.

Our thanks to those area and state organizations that will provide a front-row seat to the event, including:

- **THE CREATIVE LEARNING ALLIANCE** will hold a viewing party on Monday at 300 N. Main St., the former Joplin Public, as part of its "Solar-bration 2024."

- **GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER NATIONAL MONUMENT** will host events beginning at 11:30 a.m. Monday.

- **MISSOURI STATE PARKS** will have many state parks in the path of totality, including Echo Bluff, Taum Sauk and Johnson's Shut-Ins, and has events and educational experiences planned.

From Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" to H. Rider Haggard's "King Solomon's Mines," solar and lunar eclipses are woven into our cultural stories, too, unfortunately in ways that sometimes cast a shadow of ignorance over earlier generations and other cultures and emphasize our superiority. That is ironic when you think about it because they were in many ways much closer to the natural world and its wonders than we, and maybe understood things about humanity's relationship with the cosmos that have been lost to us.

Sabine Stanley, a professor in Earth and planetary sciences at Johns Hopkins University, wrote recently: "Thousands of years ago, early scientists used eclipses to refine their calendars by pinning down the regular characteristics of the Earth's and the moon's orbits. As the moon passed in front of the sun, an ancient astronomer could also figure out the diameters of both bodies."

Modern scientists have used to eclipses to confirm Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity, and it was during an eclipse in 1868 that scientists discovered the element helium.

That we have mastered enough science to grasp all this is a marvel of another kind.

"I've always been amazed that total solar eclipses are possible," Stanley wrote recently in The Washington Post. "The sun, an 870,000-mile-wide ball of gas over 90 million miles away from us gets completely blocked by the moon, a 2,100-mile-wide ball of rock 240,000 miles away. If the sun were a bit bigger or closer, or if the moon were a bit smaller or farther, totality would not occur. There's no scientific reason for this; it's a wondrous coincidence."

We are blessed to live in a world — a universe actually — filled with miracles and marvels. Including eclipses.

**INFO POLL**

**Q.** Do you support making it harder to amend the Missouri Constitution by requiring a supermajority for passage on issues? Go to [JOPLINGLOBE.COM](http://JOPLINGLOBE.COM) to cast your vote.

**Verse**

*'Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"'*

John 11:25-26



## Immigration tests America's soul

Is there a national soul that accepts immigrants fleeing wretched conditions in their home countries?

Or has the surge of refugees at our southern border created so much fear that most, if not all, Americans have simply turned their back on welcoming people from other lands?



**BILL KETTER**

Columnist

Two questions only touched lightly in public opinion polls and yet tied together by the political reality that immigration attitudes will figure in the outcome of the November presidential election.

The U.S. has long been a melting pot nation, but angry voices have changed public sentiment, fueled by political lies that migrants who enter the country illegally represent mostly violent criminals, drug dealers and other undesirables.

Former President Donald Trump makes no apology for describing them

as subhuman — "vermin" and "animals" — who have escaped from prisons and asylums to ravage America.

Immigration officials reject Trump's character assassination. They say the large majority of undocumented refugees are families and children fleeing war, violence and dire poverty in their home countries.

Trump promises, if elected president again, mass deportation of the estimated 11 million undocumented migrants in the country, including the 580,000 DACA residents brought in as young children by their parents and now blended into our multiracial society as students, workers and taxpayers.

It is frightening and rife with legal complexities.

Still, constant encounters with thousands of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border is a crisis in need of prompt solutions and long-term immigration law reforms.

The Border Patrol needs more human and technological resources to strengthen border security. Mexico needs to step up efforts to discourage migrant caravans and border encampments. It also needs

to allow, on its side of the border, the sorting of valid asylum claims from the invalid.

The party-before-country Congress has failed to help. Bipartisan legislation to bolster border security did not survive Trump, who convinced scyophant Republicans to scuttle the measure.

Trump sees immigration outrage as "Biden's border bloodbath" — a phrase he coined this week. He considers immigration a huge plus for his presidential campaign, a game changer.

That's why he's spinning the murder of Georgia nursing student Laken Riley, 22 — police say by a Venezuelan immigrant — as an indictment of all undocumented immigrants in the country.

He also stoked public angst at a campaign event Tuesday in Grand Rapids, Michigan, referring to Ruby Garcia, 25, a local woman who police say was shot dead by her boyfriend, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico.

Trump said he "spoke to some of the (victim's) family" who told him she was a "beautiful young woman who was savagely murdered by

an illegal alien criminal."

But Garcia's sister, Mavi Garcia, said his reference to the family wasn't true. She chastised Trump for making a false statement on national TV when "he did not talk with any of us."

Then she added: "It's always about illegal immigrants. Nobody really speaks about when Americans do heinous crimes, and it is kind of shocking that he would just bring up illegals."

If the majority of voters are comfortable with Trump's scornful immigration language and his heartless solution of mass deportations, Trump may be right that his strategy is a campaign winner.

It adds another grim notch to his political legacy. And also scars the national soul as expressed to the world on New York Harbor's Statue of Liberty inscription:

*"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore."*

**BILL KETTER** is senior vice president of news for CNHI. Reach him at [wketter@cnhi.com](mailto:wketter@cnhi.com).

## Just say no to phone-warping

Children are like trees, only more trouble.

Winds that bend young trees expand the tree's roots on the windward side, anchoring the tree. And winds strengthen the wood on the other side. This growth dynamic, called "stress wood," is a metaphor for the intelligent rearing of children, who need the stresses of pressure and risk-taking to become strong.



**GEORGE WILL**

Columnist

Jonathan Haidt says a social catastrophe has resulted from the intersection of two recent phenomena. One is paranoid parenting, which injures bubble-wrapped children by excessively protecting them from exaggerated "stranger danger" and other anxieties about the real world. The other is parental neglect regarding the rewiring of young brains by immersion in the virtual world. This has been enabled by the ubiquitous acquisition of smartphones, granting children something that is not, Haidt argues, age-appropriate: unrestricted access to the internet.

With his just-published "The Anxious Gener-

ation," Haidt hopes to demonstrate that Johannes Gutenberg's legacy — movable type, mass literacy: books — matters more than Steve Jobs's devices. Haidt, a New York University social psychologist, encourages dismay about what has happened since, around 2010, smartphones became common accoutrements of children. Haidt: "Children's brains grow to 90% of full size by age five, but then take a long time to wire up and configure themselves."

High-speed broadband arrived in the early 2000s; the iPhone debuted in 2007. Since about 2010, social media companies have designed "a firehose of addictive content" for Gen Zers (born after 1995) who are often socially insecure, swayed by peer pressure and hungry for social validation. Gen Z became the first generation "to go through puberty with a portal in their pockets that called them away from the people nearby and into an alternative universe."

Phone-based childhood displaced play-based childhood and its unsupervised conversing, touching and negotiating the frictions and setbacks that prepare children for adulthood. Fearful parents, convinced the real world is menacing (and worried about overbroad

"child endangerment" laws), will not allow their children to walk alone to a nearby store. But they allow their children unrestricted wallowing in the internet and social media.

The results, Haidt says — sleep deprivation, socialization deprivation, attention fragmentation — produced "failure-to-launch" boys living with parents, and girls depressed by visual social comparisons and perfectionism. Soon college campuses were awash with timid late-adolescents. After their phone-based childhoods (Haidt calls social media "the most efficient conformity engines ever invented"), they begged for "safe spaces" to protect their fragile "emotional safety."

Haidt recommends "more unsupervised play and childhood independence," "no smartphones before high school" and "no social media before 16." There is, however, a "collective action" problem: It is difficult for a parents to resist the new technology's tidal pull on their children's peers.

Haidt's data demonstrating a correlation (the arrivals of smartphones and of increased mental disorders) suggest causation, but remember: Moral panics about new cultural phenomena — from automobiles (sex in the back seats) to comic

books (really) to television to video games to the internet — are features of this excitable age.

Although Haidt is always humane and mostly convincing, his argument does not constitute a case for government trying to do what parents and schools can do. They can emulate Shane Voss.

In Durango, a city in southwest Colorado, Voss, head of Mountain Middle School, acted early. In 2012, he banned access to smartphones during the school day. The results, Haidt writes, were "transformative":

"Students no longer sat next to each other, scrolling while waiting for homeroom or class to start. They talked to each other or the teacher. Voss says that when he walks into a school without a phone ban, 'It's kind of like the zombie apocalypse and you have all these kids on the hallways not talking to each other.'"

Soon Voss's school reached Colorado's highest academic rating. This local experience constitutes a recommendation to the nation. Recognize the potentially constructive power of negation: Just say no.

**GEORGE F. WILL** writes a twice-weekly column on politics and domestic and foreign affairs.



# Dangerous public campaign against Israel must stop

On Dec. 29, 2023, South Africa filed a lawsuit in the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, accusing Israel of committing genocide, pointing to the scores of dead Palestinians that have resulted from Israel's campaign against Hamas.



**ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS**

Columnist

While the case is still pending, the court issued an order on Jan. 26 ordering Israel to take measures to prevent acts that would be considered genocidal under the 1948 Genocide Convention. The court also said that at least some acts that South Africa alleged fall under the Genocide Convention. However, it did not order Israel to cease its military campaign in the Gaza Strip. Both sides hailed it as a victory. But South Africa wasn't done there. Now the country's foreign minister, Naledi Pandor, has made a new startling announcement that citizens who fought in the Israeli Defense Forces and return to South Africa will be arrested. He said in his statement, "I have already issued a statement alerting those who are South African and who are fighting alongside or in the IDF. We are ready. When you come home, we're going to arrest you."

This came after a warning in December when South Africa's foreign ministry stated, in response to its citizens serving in the IDF, "Such action can potentially contribute to the violation of international law and the com-



Rockets are fired toward Israel from Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023.

AP FILE



Smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel on Oct. 23, 2023.

AP FILE

mission of further international crimes, thus making them liable for prosecution in South Africa."

Now campaigns supporting the same type of action in France are underway, though the French government is being far more reasonable on the matter. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Christophe Lemoine answered a question regarding it, stating, "They have not yet committed these crimes, so if they do commit these crimes and it is proven, I will answer you when the time comes." He also stated that "dual citizenship implies dual loyalty, so, we will not investigate what French-Israeli citizens do regarding their military obligations in Israel."

South Africa is setting an extremely dangerous precedent, using its prosecutorial powers to punish dual citizens who serve in the army of a nonterrorist

state. It is particularly troubling when you consider the fact that Israel heavily relies on foreign-born soldiers to serve in their already relatively small but effective army.

It would be one thing if a South African pledged their allegiance to the Islamic State group, al-Qaeda, Hezbollah or another terrorist outfit internationally recognized as a terrorist outfit that regularly commits heinous acts against innocent people. But it is an entirely different thing to serve in the IDF.

Israel is not a terrorist outfit. It is a peaceful nation that has taken great efforts to ensure its campaign against Hamas does not affect innocent people.

After all, Israel can hardly be blamed for killing innocent civilians, for example, in a hospital when Hamas intentionally stores its weapons there and refuses to

allow innocent people to leave when Israel warns them of an attack.

South Africa does not understand this, and I can perhaps guess the reason why. Because South Africa, like most developed nations, has not, since its formation, been under constant threat of destruction by neighboring countries. South Africa lives in relative peace. It hasn't seen a war in over a century.

Now let's be clear, it is an absolute tragedy that over 30,000 Palestinians, including many women and children, have lost their lives. It is a tragedy that over 70,000 have been injured. But something South Africa has clearly forgotten over the past century, in which it has experienced no war, is that in war, innocent people can perish at the hands of their own government who put them in harm's way.

That's why we have a specific definition of genocide. That's why the definition is not "the killing of an innocent person."

Instead, genocide is defined as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

By no stretch of the imagination is Israel intentionally attempting to kill all Palestinians.

South Africa must cease its dangerous public campaign against Israel, lest it allow a terrorist group at Israel's borders to flourish and expand past its own borders. South Africa is making itself an unwitting pawn in Hamas' war against Israel, and it doesn't seem like South Africa is willing to change course.

**ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS** is manager/sole owner of Howard Stirk Holdings I & II Broadcast Television Stations.

# Oklahoma's education meeting 'campouts' now a problem

Long after dark, there was an air of festivity and fun outside the state Department of Education building despite temperatures hovering near freezing.

Someone had hooked up a portable heater, powering it by bootlegging power from the state building. Someone else had commandeered another outlet to operate a movie projector and was using the building's wall as a makeshift movie screen to project "Mean Girls."

As 11 p.m. approached, a woman was enthusiastically live streaming her experiences and thoughts.

Over a dozen people — all who oppose state Superintendent Ryan Walters' policies — were already lined up ahead of the State Board of Education meeting set to begin nearly 14 hours later.

But there was also an air of uncertainty and fear as word spread that the Department of Public Safety was considering booting — or even arresting — people waiting in line.

A DPS security official had already tied the doors shut for the first time in recent memory using an extension cord and zip ties, and someone had hung a sign in the window with a specific provision of state law highlighted in yellow that noted the area was closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

People were confused because it would have marked the first time in at least a year that DPS had decided to enforce a law ahead of the meeting that prohibits unauthorized people in the park after hours.

A public park. At the people's state Capitol complex.

Thankfully, common sense prevailed and 11 p.m. came and went with troop-



**JANELLE STECKLEIN**

Columnist

ers leaving people be. Because had they arrested people peacefully waiting in line for a public meeting, it would have been a black eye for all Oklahomans, made us a national laughing stock and raised serious questions about the state of our democracy.

But DPS is right to be concerned about security issues, and there's a reason laws exist that prohibit people from the complex after hours. And there's also a reason why it's a bad idea to start arbitrarily enforcing provisions about who gets to stay in the park after hours.

We've reached a point where it's time to rethink how these meetings are being handled.

For close to a year now, people have been camping out ahead of these meetings. At first, it was to secure a seat in the board meeting.

And that's still part of the issue, but now, Walters' supporters and detractors are engaged in some bizarre competition to wrap up all 10 public speaking slots. The State Board of Education awards the speaking slots to the first 10 people who sign up as the meeting is preparing to begin. So now, each month, people are lining up earlier and earlier, setting up chairs and making a night of it in an effort to outdo each other. This month, they began lining up at 4 p.m. Wednesday for a 1 p.m. meeting Thursday.

One thing that's uniting Walters' supporters and detractors unlike anything else is

frustration over people with extremely similar viewpoints rigging the system so that they get access to all the speaking slots.

I also spoke with someone in the crowd who questioned whether the current overnight process violates the Americans with Disabilities Act, which provides federal protections for those with disabilities.

One person mentioned they suffered from the sleep disorder narcolepsy, and said waiting in line for one night means a string of bad days afterward.

One woman had to take a day off from work. She also had to secure overnight child care.

Another left her daughter's home in Checotah at 3 a.m. By the time she arrived at 5 a.m., all speaking slots were taken.

The current sign-up process locks out the voices of people who have a vested interest in our public schools, but don't have the time or luxury of sleeping outside all night.

It locks out people who live in rural parts of the state, parents with school-age children, those who have a job, people with disabilities and those who work night shifts.

They have just as much right to speak their truth as everyone else.

It's time for Walters' team to rethink how they're handling this public comment section.

The resulting clown show is not healthy for anyone.

And, the solution is not to add more slots. The board already allots 21 minutes to people who want to speak to matters on the agenda and nine minutes for those who want to speak on random issues.

Thirty minutes seems like plenty of time, particularly when there are other pressing

issues already on the agenda that need to be considered.

The best idea, I heard outside the meeting, was to implement a raffle-type system. Everyone who is waiting 15 minutes before and wants to speak gets a number. State education officials then randomly draw 10 numbers, determining the speakers.

A similar raffle could also be held if the number of people wanting to attend the meeting unfortunately exceeds the available space, though a better long-term solution is to move the meeting location to a large venue.

That would eliminate the ridiculous need to spend the night and the one-upmanship that's currently going on. It would also solve the security problems.

The suggestion actually generated considerable enthusiasm by people on all sides of the political spectrum who didn't have the luxury of camping out. Even some of those who were camping out were also supportive.

Such a change would guarantee that everyone has an equal chance to speak and perhaps diversify the voices that the state board hears from each month.

Because right now Oklahomans are understandably concerned about the future of our education system. And, everyone deserves the right to participate in government and to address their leaders regardless of economic status, disability, life circumstances or political belief.

**JANELLE STECKLEIN** is editor of Oklahoma Voice. An award-winning journalist, Stecklein has been covering Oklahoma government and politics since moving to the state in 2014.

# A World War II tale of a veteran and a ship, forever linked by history

She was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 16, 1914.

She was born into a Navy family where her travels began at an early age. At 4½ she accompanied her family to France as part of the escort group traveling with President Woodrow Wilson for the Paris Peace conference.

Her younger years saw her visiting Turkey, the Caribbean, a couple of visits to Peru, and the Hawaiian Islands. Between trips, Southern California was home.

At age 15 she attended finishing school in Portsmouth, Virginia, and again found herself in the presence of a president — this time with Herbert Hoover visiting Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

When an earthquake hit Long Beach, California, in 1933, she assisted in relief efforts and a year later found herself in a supporting role in the James Cagney movie, "Here Comes the Navy."

Then came the Great Depression and, as every military family knows, budget cuts hit them first. The rest of the 1930s saw them staying close to home and traveling only when absolutely necessary.

By the spring of 1940, the budget cuts were softening, but the sky had war clouds gathering. With the Imperial Navy of Japan on the move, orders were cut that found the fam-

ily packing up for a new home in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

He came into this world on Sept. 13, 1921, in Ojibwa, Wisconsin.

His early years weren't nearly as glamorous as the young lady he had yet to meet. His was a story of a family following the work.

In New Mexico, they lived in a tent as his father supervised a road crew building Route 66. In Stockton, Kansas, he attended a one-room schoolhouse and was shooting rabbits and prepping them for supper at age seven. A move back to Denver found dad at Swift Co. and on a 20-acre farm for growing vegetables for extra income with a 5-mile walk one way to school. With no running water on the farm, he'd shower after sports practice rather than having to close off the kitchen and bathe in a tub with water heated by a wood stove. When the family sold the farm, they moved closer and he finished out his junior and senior years at Wheatland High School with just a short mile-and-a-half walk. (Yes, Virginia, times were quite different back then.)

He joined the U.S. Navy in the fall of 1939, and soon after he would meet the "she" of our story. And they would not part until her tragic death two years later — a death that hit him at barely over 20 years of age, yet a death that would be part of him for the rest of his life.

"She" is the USS Arizona.

"He" is Louis Anthony Conter. And while she died a violent death on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, he would survive



**Lou Conter, an Arizona crewman, attends ceremonies for the 75th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 2016, in Honolulu. Conter, the last living survivor of the USS Arizona battleship, died on Monday, He was 102.**

AP FILE

and live a full and active life.

Conter, the last known survivor of the bombing that sank the Arizona and killed 1,177 sailors and U.S. Marines aboard the ship, died peacefully Monday morning surrounded by family at his home in Grass Valley, California. He was 102.

And like so many others who

endured the hell of that war, his retelling of the events has not himself the hero but those who didn't make it.

From The Wall Street Journal: "He wrote in his 2021 memoir, 'The Lou Conter Story.' 'It was horrible,' he wrote. 'Absolutely horrible.'"

Despite his work that day, he said

he didn't want to be called a hero. "I consider the heroes the ones that gave their lives, that never came home to their families," Conter said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal last year. "They're the real heroes."

The Washington Post: "Though many treated the shrinking group of Pearl Harbor survivors as heroes, Mr. Conter refused the label. 'The 2,403 men that died are the heroes,' he told The Associated Press in 2022. 'We've got to honor them ahead of everybody else. And I've said that every time, and I think it should be stressed.'"

While his first ship was lost, he and the Navy would stay together until he retired as a lieutenant commander in 1967.

We are now fully into the era of the "last of" death notices and memorials. But thanks to organizations like [wwwww2online.org](http://wwwww2online.org), the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, The National WWII Museum's oral history project and others, recordings of their experiences are being archived for present and future generations.

Louis Conter's full story can be found at: <https://wwwww2online.org/view/louis-lou-conter-early-life>. Yes, it's a little over two hours. But two hours compared to a life of 102 years? It's the least we can do. And I promise you, he will not disappoint.

**GEOFF CALDWELL** lives in Joplin. He can be reached at [gc@caldwellscorner.com](mailto:gc@caldwellscorner.com).