



CONSUMERS
Decline in auto prices means relief for many
Business » A8



BASKETBALL
SC returns from slow start to win in 1st round
Sports » B3



SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS
New film highlights local winery
Guide » B1



Showers
H: 58 L: 50
PAGE B8

Santa Cruz Sentinel

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LEARNING JOURNEY

MOUNT MADONNA STUDENTS VISIT INDIA



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Mount Madonna School 12th grader Anya Gonzalez gets a farewell hug from Puja Sharan at Sri Ram Ashram this week. Sharan has lived at the ashram, which is a home for abandoned children, since she was a toddler. Gonzalez, who lives in Santa Cruz, and her classmates are nearing the end of a 16-day learning journey as part of Mount Madonna's Values in World Thought program. The school's seniors visit India each year. To see more photographs, go to Sentinel staff photographer Shmuel Thaler's Weekly Photographer's Eye feature/A3

POLITICS

McConnell will step down as Senate GOP leader

By Michael Tackett
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » Mitch McConnell, the longest-serving Senate leader in history who maintained his power in the face of dramatic convulsions in the Republican Party for almost two decades, will step down from that position in November.

McConnell, who turned 82 last week, announced his decision Wednesday in the well of the Senate, the chamber where he looked in awe from its back benches in 1985 when he arrived and where he grew increasingly comfortable in the front row seat afforded the party leaders.

"One of life's most underappreciated talents is to know when it's time to move on to life's next chapter," he said. "So I stand before you



JACQUELYN MARTIN — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Senate floor at the Capitol in Washington after speaking Wednesday.

today ... to say that this will be my last term as Republican leader of the Senate."

His decision punctuates a powerful ideological transition underway in the Re-

publican Party, from Ronald Reagan's brand of traditional conservatism and strong international alliances, to the fiery, often isolationist populism of former

President Donald Trump. McConnell said he plans to serve out his Senate term, which ends in January 2027, "albeit from a different seat in the chamber."

He spoke at times haltingly, his emotions evident, as he looked back on his career. Dozens of members of his staff lined up behind him on the back wall of the chamber, some wiping away tears, as family and friends looked down from the gallery above. Senators from both parties — most of them taken by surprise by the announcement — trickled into the chamber and exchanged hugs and handshakes.

President Joe Biden, who has had a productive working relationship with McConnell, said he was sorry to hear the news.

MCCONNELL » PAGE 2

ELECTION INTERFERENCE CASE

High court to decide on Trump's prosecution

By Mark Sherman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to decide whether former President Donald Trump can be prosecuted on charges he interfered with the 2020 election and set a course for a quick resolution.

The justices' order maintains a hold on preparations for a trial focused on Trump's efforts to overturn his election loss. The court will hear arguments in late April, with a decision likely no later than the end of June.

The court said in an unsigned statement that it will consider "whether and if so to what extent does a former President enjoy presidential immunity from criminal prosecution for conduct alleged to involve official acts during his tenure in office."

The Supreme Court has previously held that presidents are immune from civil liability for official acts, and Trump's lawyers have for months argued that that protection should be extended to criminal prosecution as well.

Lower courts have so far rejected Trump's novel claim that former presidents enjoy absolute immunity for actions that fall within their official job duties. A panel of appellate judges in Washington ruled earlier in February that U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who would preside over the election interference trial, was right to say that the case could proceed and that Trump

TRUMP » PAGE 2

EDUCATION

Live Oak School District board approves staff cuts

By PK Hattis
pkhattis@santacruzsentinel.com

LIVE OAK » For the second time in less than a week, approximately 100 members of the public—mostly parents, teachers and some students — and at least 146 more on Zoom attended a Live Oak School District Board of Trustees meeting to object to proposed staff cuts meant to right size the district's perilous financial status.

After punting the decision amid a lengthy and chaotic meeting last week, the board unanimously approved preliminary layoff notices at a special meeting Tuesday for the equivalent of 53.29 full-time employees by next school year. That's about 24% of the 220.81 full-time equivalents authorized in the district, which oversees six elementary and middle schools.

LIVE OAK » PAGE 2

RUSSIA

Funeral for Navalny scheduled for Friday

Several locations in Moscow on tap to host funeral for Russian dissident who died in at Russian penal colony. **PAGE A7**



REPORT

Abortion rate in US now comparable to Roe

Report: Number of abortions performed each month is about the same as before Roe v. Wade overturned. **PAGE A6**

BUSINESS

Dow Jones
38,949.02. (-23.39)
S&P 500
5,069.76. (-8.42)
Nasdaq
15,947.74. (-87.56)

SOCIAL MEDIA

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INDEX

BusinessA8 | OpinionA9 | Guide B1 | Sports.....B3 | Crossword..... B7 | Weather B8 | Volume 168, issue 60 |

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