

Morning News

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MATTHEW ROBERTSON PHOTOS, MORNING NEWS

Caroline Hendrick plays "Malaguena" during a piano recital at Central United Methodist Church in Florence.

HONORS RECITAL

FLORENCE
The Florence Independent Music Teachers Association on Saturday featured some of its best students in an honors recital at Central United Methodist Church. In all, 19 students performed short works that varied from "Sonatina in G" to "I am Bound for the Promised Land."



Madison Lee plays "I am Bound for the Promised Land" during a piano recital at Central United Methodist Church in Florence.

Vengeance rejected at funeral for American killed by cartel on Mexico trip

JAMES POLLARD
Associated Press/Report for America

LAKE CITY — Photos of a peewee football player flashed across a slideshow. The image of a smiling young man adorned memorial T-shirts. But the body of the American gunned down three weeks ago by the Gulf cartel in Mexico was kept shielded from funeral-goers.

Over 100 people gathered Saturday to remember Shaeed Woodard at the first funeral service for the two people killed in the attack in the border town of Matamoros. The sendoff came at the end of a month that should have featured birthday celebrations for the man slain

just days before he turned 34 during a tightknit group's road trip to help Woodard's cousin get cosmetic surgery.

Instead, friends and family shuffled across the maroon carpeting of Good News Deliverance Temple on an overcast afternoon in Lake City. The 6,000-person town was thrust into the international spotlight in early March when Woodard and three friends with ties to the area were attacked over 1,400 miles away.

On March 2, just a few miles across the border, a vehicle crashed into the group's van as they made their way to a medical appointment for



JAMES POLLARD, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Minister Dearest Price prays at the funeral for Shaeed Woodard in Lake City.

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States look at harsher fentanyl penalties

GABE STERN, JAMES POLLARD AND GEOFF MULVIHILL
Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — State lawmakers nationwide are responding to the deadliest overdose crisis in U.S. history by pushing harsher penalties for possessing fentanyl and other powerful lab-made opioids that are connected to about 70,000 deaths a year.

Imposing longer prison sentences for possessing smaller amounts of drugs represents a shift in states that in recent years have rolled back drug possession penalties. Proponents of tougher penalties say this crisis is different and that, in most places, the stiffer sentences are intended to punish drug dealers, not just users.

"There is no other drug — no other illicit drug — that has the same type of effects on our communities," said Mark Jackson, the district attorney for Douglas County, Nevada, and president of the Nevada District Attorneys Association, which is pushing for stricter penalties for fentanyl-related crimes.

But the strategy is alarming recovery advocates who say focusing on the criminal angle of drugs has historically backfired, including when lawmakers elevated crack cocaine penalties in the 1980s.

"Every time we treat drugs as a law enforcement problem and push stricter laws, we find that we punish people in ways that destroy their lives and make it harder for them to recover later on," said Adam Wandt, an assistant professor of public policy at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.

Since 2020, drug overdoses are now linked to more than 100,000 deaths a year nationally, with about two-thirds of them fentanyl-related. That's more than 10 times as many drug deaths as in 1988, at the height of the crack epidemic.

Ingesting 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be fatal, meaning 1 gram — about the same weight as a paper clip — could contain 500 lethal doses.

Before this year's legislative sessions began, a dozen states already adopted fentanyl possession measures, according to tracking by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

This year, in one legislative chamber of liberal Oregon and one chamber of conservative West Virginia, lawmakers have agreed upon tougher penalties. In her State of the State speech this March, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey, a Republican, called on lawmakers to adopt a drug trafficking bill that includes tougher fentanyl sentences.

In Nevada, where Democrats control the Legislature, a bill backed by Democratic Attorney General Aaron Ford would give one to 20 years in prison for selling, possessing, manufacturing or transporting 4 grams or more of fentanyl into the state, depending on the amount.

It's a change for Ford, who has supported criminal justice reforms including a sweeping 2019 law that, among other provisions, raised the threshold for such penalties to 100 grams. It would also remove fentanyl from the state's "Good Samaritan" law, which exempts people

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Dancing for our Future Stars: Throop Crosland

STAFF REPORTS

FLORENCE — The School Foundation's 11th annual Dancing for Our Future Stars event will take place on March 30 at the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology Center on the Florence-Darlington Technical College campus. The doors open at 6 p.m. and dancing begins at 7 p.m.

Twelve dance teams will be competing. One of the 12

"celebrity" dancers is Throop Crosland with Securitas Technologies and his dance partner Rose Yeagley. They will be dancing the Samba to "Intergalactic" by The Beastie Boys.

Crosland took time to answer questions.

Q: What was your initial reaction to being asked to participate in Dancing for our Future Stars?

A: Trepidation

Q: Why is it important to

you to support The School Foundation?

A: Because I like an educated populace and my wife was a teacher.

Q: Did you attend school in Florence County? Do you or did you have children in the school system here?

A: No. No children.

Q: Do you have any prior dance training?

A: None.

Q: How would you describe

your dancing ability?

A: The only way is up! Terrible but improving every day.

Q: What has been the most fun so far preparing for the competition?

A: The forward roll.

Q: What has been the most difficult or stressful for you?

A: Maintaining rhythm.

Q: What is your greatest fear about competing?

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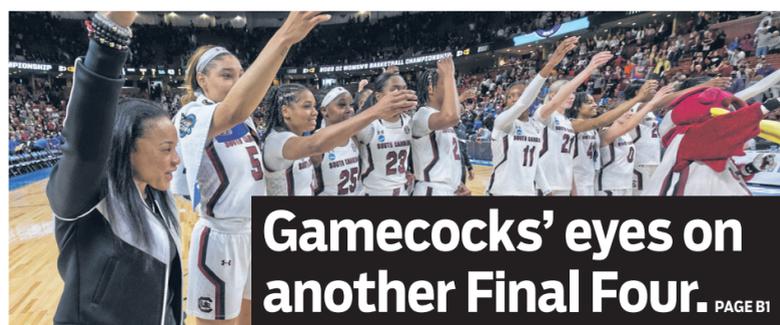
CONTRIBUTED

Throop Crosland with Securitas Technologies and his dance partner, Rose Yeagley.



New study on coffee drinking.

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Gamecocks' eyes on another Final Four.

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