U.S. to send $3 billion in aid to Ukraine as war hits 6 months

Associated Press that the future, including imminent
troops in Europe into the keep more American military
campaign that will likely
Russia's war on Ukraine drags

WEDNESDAY
A reason to celebrate
event held for families that have been reunited

by BRANDON STONE

MOUNT VERNON — Six years ago, Nina Lundsten was struggling to turn her life around and prove to the courts she was able to take care of her daughter Jordan.

On Monday, she and Jordan, now 13, were together at a Skagit County-sponsored picnic, celebrating families like theirs that have successfully worked through the court system to reunite.

Families that overcome legal hurdles to reunite gathered with the social work-

ers and court officials who helped them at the Skagit Valley Playfields for an afternoon of fun and games.

"For me, I wouldn't be where I (am) without the help from reunification court," Lundsten said. "This is the ac-

countability I needed."

Being separated from her daughter drove Lundsten to finally ask for help in getting her addiction under control, she

said. Now, she works with the Anacortes Family Center, helping families find affordable housing and mentoring parents who are where she used to be, trying to turn their lives around and get back custody of their children.

Skagit County Superior Court Judge Laura Riquelme said it’s important to acknowledge the hard work of families like the Lundstens.

"For some families, they have to go through a lot to get to reunification," she said.

With encouragement from the state Office of the Courts, Skagit County held its first family reunification picnic in 2019. Riquelme said she had hoped it would be an annual event, but CO-

VID-19 put a hold on that idea.

Most often, the courts separate children from their parents because of mental health or substance use issues that threaten the child’s safety and well-

being, said Heather Shand, a Superior Court commissioner who handles the county’s dependency cases.

During the pandemic, working with struggling families became even more difficult, she said.

Court hearings were held remotely, making it more challenging to engage with families and connect them with the social services from which they could benefit.

And while the number of reported cases in dependency court fell during that period, Shand and others believe this is because kids weren’t in school, and had fewer eyes on them.

She said the challenges faced by par-
ents trying to reunite with their children during the COVID-19 pandemic make it even more important to recognize the work done over the past few years.

"It’s the most difficult work I do with the court, but it’s the most heartwarming because you get days like this," Shand said.

— Reporter Brandon Stone: bstone@skagitpub.com, 360-419-2112, Twitter: @Boonder_SVN

U.S. $3 billion in aid to Ukraine as war hits 6 months

by BOLITA C. BALDOR

WASHINGTON — As Russia’s war on Ukraine drags on, U.S. security assistance is shifting to a longer-term campaign that will likely involve more American military troops in Europe into the future, including imminent plans to announce an ad-

ditional roughly $3 billion to aid and equip Ukrai-

nian forces to fight for years to come, U.S. officials said.

U.S. officials told The Associated Press that the package to be announced Wednesday, the day

mark and Ukraine celebrates its independence day. The money will fund contracts for as many as three types of
drones, and other ter-

nars, communication and equipment that may not see the battle-

front for a year or two, they said.

The total of the aid package — which is being provided under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative and is the largest to date — could change a bit overnight, but not likely by much. Offi-
cials said that it will include money for the small, hand-

held Shot Gun drones, the long-endurance Scan Eagle surveillance drones, which are launched by catapult, and, for the first time, the British Vampire drone system, which can be launched off ships.

— AP

Weather whirl: Summer lurches from drought to flood

by SETH BORENSTEIN

Parts of northern Texas, mined in a drought labeled as extreme and exceptional, are flooded to near-
tential. In a drought.

Sound familiar? It should. The Dallas area is just the latest
drought-suffering but flooded
local during a summer of extreme weather whirl, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

The St. Louis area and 80% of Kansas, for example, were consid-
ered abnormally dry and then the skies opened up, the rain poured inbibed in cultural proportions, inch after inch, and locally flooding devas-
tated communities. The same thing happened in Yellowstone in June. This time, the current

locale during a summer of extreme

weather whiplash, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

Death Valley, in a drought severe, got a near record amount of rainfall in one day, ca-

using floods, and is still in a nasty

drought.

Chinook Tugboat River is running up, a year after deadly flooding. China is baking under what is a
drought.

The St. Louis area and 80% of Kansas, for example, were consid-
ered abnormally dry and then the skies opened up, the rain poured inbibed in cultural proportions, inch after inch, and locally flooding devas-
tated communities. The same thing happened in Yellowstone in June. This time, the current

locale during a summer of extreme

weather whiplash, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

Death Valley, in a drought severe, got a near record amount of rainfall in one day, ca-

using floods, and is still in a nasty

drought.

Chinook Tugboat River is running up, a year after deadly flooding. China is baking under what is a
drought.

The St. Louis area and 80% of Kansas, for example, were consid-
ered abnormally dry and then the skies opened up, the rain poured inbibed in cultural proportions, inch after inch, and locally flooding devas-
tated communities. The same thing happened in Yellowstone in June. This time, the current

locale during a summer of extreme

weather whiplash, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

Death Valley, in a drought severe, got a near record amount of rainfall in one day, ca-

using floods, and is still in a nasty

drought.

Chinook Tugboat River is running up, a year after deadly flooding. China is baking under what is a
drought.

The St. Louis area and 80% of Kansas, for example, were consid-
ered abnormally dry and then the skies opened up, the rain poured inbibed in cultural proportions, inch after inch, and locally flooding devas-
tated communities. The same thing happened in Yellowstone in June. This time, the current

locale during a summer of extreme

weather whiplash, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

Death Valley, in a drought severe, got a near record amount of rainfall in one day, ca-

using floods, and is still in a nasty

drought.

Chinook Tugboat River is running up, a year after deadly flooding. China is baking under what is a
drought.

The St. Louis area and 80% of Kansas, for example, were consid-
ered abnormally dry and then the skies opened up, the rain poured inbibed in cultural proportions, inch after inch, and locally flooding devas-
tated communities. The same thing happened in Yellowstone in June. This time, the current

locale during a summer of extreme

weather whiplash, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

Death Valley, in a drought severe, got a near record amount of rainfall in one day, ca-

using floods, and is still in a nasty

drought.

Chinook Tugboat River is running up, a year after deadly flooding. China is baking under what is a
drought.

The St. Louis area and 80% of Kansas, for example, were consid-
ered abnormally dry and then the skies opened up, the rain poured inbibed in cultural proportions, inch after inch, and locally flooding devas-
tated communities. The same thing happened in Yellowstone in June. This time, the current

locale during a summer of extreme

weather whiplash, likely goosed by human-caused climate change, scientists say. Parts of the world are lurching from drought to deluge.

Death Valley, in a drought severe, got a near record amount of rainfall in one day, ca-

using floods, and is still in a nasty

drought.

Chinook Tugboat River is running up, a year after deadly flooding. China is baking under what is a
drought.