

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 1 of 75

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Groton Transit Fundraiser Ad](#)
- [5- Names Released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash](#)
- [5- Witte Exteriors Ad](#)
- [6- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [7- Groton Locke Electric 2024 Triumph Over Merchants](#)
- [7- Subway Ad](#)
- [8- Locke Electric Box Scores](#)
- [9- Prairie Doc: "How to Prevent Sudden Death"](#)
- [10- Dakota Roofing LLC Ad](#)
- [11- EarthTalk - Which tech company is greenest](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: State political leaders condemn Nazi marches in SD](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: White nationalist, anti-LGBTQ activity on the rise, annual hate report shows](#)
- [14- SD SearchLight: Why South Dakota health care is the nation's second most expensive](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: Election workers worry that federal threats task force isn't enough to keep them safe](#)
- [19- Weather Pages](#)
- [24- Daily Devotional](#)
- [25- Subscription Form](#)
- [26- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [27- News from the Associated Press](#)

It's Monday
Heavenly Father,

I woke up. I looked up. I
Thank You, LORD, for
allowing me to see another
new day and week.

I have a roof over my head,
My daily bread.
Running water.
Clothes to wear.
I'm not lucky Lord,
I'm Grateful and Blessed!

In Jesus'
name,
Amen.

God's Spoken Word Ministries

Monday, June 10

Senior Menu: Baked cod, macaroni and cheese, spinach salad with tomato, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

- Junior Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m. (2)
- Junior Teeners hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- U10 R/W hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- U8 B hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
- The Pantry at Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- United Methodist: PEO meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 11

Senior Menu: Teriyaki chicken, rice pilaf, cauliflower and broccoli, pineapple strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.

- U12 B/W at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (2)
- U8 R at Webster, 6 p.m. (2)
- SB U10 Gold hosts Frederick, 6 p.m. (1)
- T-Ball G/B scrimmage, 6 p.m.
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- The Pantry at Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Council Meeting, 6 p.m.
- Olive Grove Ladies League, 6 p.m.
- Olive Grove Bridge, Noon

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 2 of 75

1440

In partnership with [smartasset™](#)

European Parliamentary Elections

French President Emmanuel Macron dissolved the lower house of parliament yesterday and called for snap elections later this month after projections showed the far-right National Rally party defeating pro-European centrists in elections to represent the country in the European Parliament.

France was one of 21 countries voting yesterday in European Parliament elections, and the final group to determine the makeup of the Parliament's 720 members, elected every five years. As of this writing, centrist groups were projected to keep their majority in the EU Parliament, though a number of nationalist-populist parties were projected to make gains. In Germany, the far-right Alternative for Germany earned 16.5% of the country's vote, outperforming the center-left Social Democratic Party. More than 370 million people were eligible to vote in European Parliament elections, the world's biggest democratic exercise after India's elections.

Separately, the EU's poorest country, Bulgaria, also held snap parliamentary elections yesterday following the collapse of its ruling centrist coalition earlier this year. The election marks the country's sixth in three years, following anticorruption protests in 2020.

Israel's Hostage Operation

An Israeli special forces operation in central Gaza Saturday retrieved four living hostages captured on Oct. 7. More than 270 Palestinians were killed, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants.

The daytime operation involved storming two multistory apartment buildings 650 feet apart, where hostages were held separately. Israel says special forces came under heavy fire, including from rocket-propelled grenades, with one Israeli officer killed. Among the hostages was Noa Argamani, filmed taken into Gaza on a motorcycle in a highly publicized video. About 120 hostages are believed to still be in Gaza, including 43 presumed dead. More than 37,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the start of the war, according to the Health Ministry.

Separately, opposition leader Benny Gantz resigned yesterday from Israel's war cabinet after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to set forth a postwar plan for Gaza. Netanyahu's coalition still holds enough seats to remain in power.

'Earthrise' Astronaut Dies

Former NASA astronaut Bill Anders died Friday in a plane crash near the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington state, according to his family. The cause of the accident has not been determined; the 90-year-old Anders was piloting the craft and was the only one aboard.

Anders was part of the Apollo 8 crew—the first humans to reach, but not land on, the moon. The mission helped lay the groundwork for Apollo 11, where astronauts first set foot on the lunar surface.

Apollo 8 orbited the moon 10 times, during which Anders snapped a photo that became known as "Earthrise," depicting the Earth rising above the moon's horizon. Admirers of the shot said it contextualized Earth's fragility—the image has been credited with launching the modern environmental movement and has been called the most important environmental photo ever taken.

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 3 of 75

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Dick Van Dyke becomes oldest Daytime Emmy Award winner ever at 98 for role in "Days of Our Lives". Chet Walker, Basketball Hall of Famer and seven-time NBA All-Star, dies at 84. Team USA women's basketball roster for 2024 Olympics announced; Caitlin Clark among notable players left off 12-player team. Poland's Iga Świątek wins third women's French Open title in a row. Spain's Carlos Alcaraz wins men's French Open title, his third Grand Slam victory. Dornoch wins 156th Belmont Stakes, the final leg of horse racing's Triple Crown.

Science & Technology

Geologists map complex structures making up the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a megathrust fault off the Pacific Northwest coast. Region believed to generate large-scale earthquakes every 500 years on average, with last being in 1700.

The New York Times confirms internal data breach; more than 270GB of source code, an estimated 3.6 million documents, posted to internet message board.

Brain anatomy in baby baboons predicts which hand the animals will use to communicate when grown; brain region associated with language is larger in the left hemisphere for 70% of newborns.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower Friday (S&P 500 -0.1%, Dow -0.2%, Nasdaq -0.2%) on reduced expectations for lower interest rates following Friday jobs report.

Norwegian wealth fund Government Pension Fund Global—owning a 0.98% stake in Tesla—says it will vote against a \$56B pay package for Tesla CEO Elon Musk this week.

Berkshire Hathaway purchases over 2.5 million shares of Occidental Petroleum, adding to its existing 28% stake in the company.

Politics & World Affairs

India swears in Prime Minister Narendra Modi for historic third term, the country's second leader to reach the milestone following India's founding Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Iran's Guardian Council approves six candidates to run in June 28 presidential elections, including hard-liner parliamentary speaker; most prominent candidate is former Tehran mayor known for crackdowns on university students.

South Korea announces it will restart loudspeaker broadcasts of anti-North Korea messages over the border following North Korea's delivery of an additional 330 trash- and sewage-filled balloons into South Korea.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 4 of 75

Groton Transit Fundraiser

Thursday, June 20th, 2024

5:00 pm - 7:00pm at

Groton Community Center

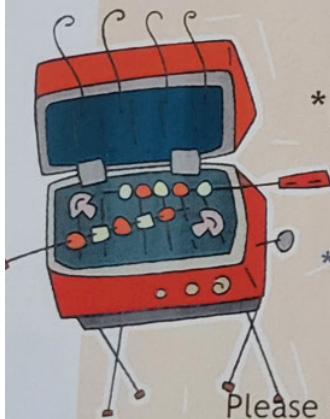
***109 N 3rd Street-One block East of Groton
Transit***

Let us do the cooking for you!!

Burgers, Brats, Beans,
Watermelon, Chips and the
Famous Mini Donuts!!

*Food*Fun*Door Prizes*

FREE WILL DONATION



Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!!

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 5 of 75

Names Released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle crash

Where: Jasper Street and 482nd Avenue, six miles east of Dell Rapids, SD

When: 8:41 a.m. Thursday, June 6, 2024

Driver 1: Jamie Rose Monroe, 35-year-old female from Jasper, MN, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2009 Mazda CX-7

Seatbelt Use: Yes

Driver 2: Aidan James Heitkamp, 19-year-old male from Baltic, Sd, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 2: 2023 Ram 4500

Seatbelt Use: Under investigation

Minnehaha County, S.D.- A 35-year-old Jasper, MN woman died from injuries sustained in a two-vehicle crash Thursday morning near Dell Rapids, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Jamie R. Monroe, the driver of a 2009 Mazda CX-7 was traveling westbound on Jasper Street, while Aiden J. Heitkamp, the driver of a 2023 Ram 4500 was traveling southbound on 482nd Avenue. Heitkamp failed to stop at the stop sign at the intersection of those roads and struck Monroe's vehicle. Both vehicles left the 4-way intersection and came to rest in the southwest ditch. Heitkamp sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to a Sioux Falls Hospital. Monroe was pronounced deceased at the scene. Charges are pending.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

WITTE



EXTERIORS LLC

Specializing in Asphalt and Wood Shingles

Call for an estimate

Zack Witte ~ 605-695-7874

Webster, SD

No Contracts!

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 6 of 75

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

It's official, Justin Jefferson is going to be a Minnesota Viking for many more years! Even though I knew the news was coming, it was still stressful waiting for the official announcement. And finally, after nearly a year of speculation, the Vikings announced they had signed Justin Jefferson to a four-year, \$140 million extension that will keep him in Minnesota through the 2028 season. The contract also makes Jefferson the highest-paid non-quarterback in the NFL, and he's worth every penny.

The other exciting news coming out of Minnesota was the announcement of new alternate jerseys the team will debut this season. Called the "Winter Warrior" jerseys, they feature an all-white look, including a white helmet which will mark the first time in team history they will have worn a helmet that isn't purple. The team announced they will wear the alternate jerseys for the week 15 matchup against the Chicago Bears, and you can see the jerseys for yourself on the Vikings' website.

Let's get into the roster breakdown, which will focus on the wide receiver position. (Did the Vikings wait to announce the Justin Jefferson signing until last week so that it would coincide with our roster breakdown getting to the WR position? I guess we'll never know)

Justin Jefferson – The best WR in the NFL, Jefferson is the focal point of the Vikings' offense. While some speculate that his production will slip this season because Kirk Cousins is no longer on the roster, it's worth noting that he still managed to put up over 1,000 yards in only nine games last season, with four different QBs throwing him the ball.

Jordan Addison – The 2021 Biletnikoff Award winner, given to the best WR in college football, was outstanding as a rookie. Despite missing his starting QB and being forced into the team's WR1 spot for most of the season, Addison still managed to catch 70 passes for 911 yards and 10 touchdowns. With Jefferson back, the QB position somewhat settled, and a year of professional play under his belt, Addison should continue his ascension.

This is where it gets tricky. After the top two, the Vikings don't have a clear-cut WR3 right now. And with T.J. Hockenson possibly missing part of the season as he recovers from injury, the Vikings will need someone to step up and fill the void.

Brandon Powell – Just looking at last year's numbers, Powell will be in the conversation for the WR3 spot. He was fourth on the team with 324 receiving yards in 2023, and with K.J. Osborn gone, that moves him up a spot.

Jalen Nailor – Taken in the 2022 draft, Nailor is a player the coaching staff hopes has a breakout year and becomes a reliable third or fourth option for the team.

Trishton Jackson – Mostly relegated to special teams last season, Jackson will have an outside chance of becoming the team's WR3 or WR4.

Trent Sherfield – Since entering the league in 2018, Sherfield has bounced around the league and is on his fifth team. Sherfield is a very good special teams player, and will likely make the roster because of his abilities there.

If I had to guess, I'd say the six receivers listed above have the best shot of making the final 53-man roster. However, there are currently six other receivers on the Vikings' roster right now. Devron Harper, Lucky Jackson, Ty James, Jashaun Jones, Malik Knowles, and Thayer Thomas still have time to impress the coaching staff enough to get some playing time in 2024. However, I wouldn't be surprised if the Vikings decide to bring in a free-agent WR to compete for the WR3 spot.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 7 of 75

Groton Locke Electric 2024 Triumph Over Merchants

By GameChanger Media

Groton Locke Electric 2024 took down Merchants 4-1 on Sunday.

Merchants opened the scoring in the second after Ethan Beyers singled, scoring one run.

Merchants committed an error, which helped Groton Locke Electric 2024 tie the game at one in the bottom of the second.

In the bottom of the third inning, Groton Locke Electric 2024 went back into the lead after Ty Sieber scored after tagging up, and Brian Hansen singled, each scoring one run.

Chandler Larson earned the win for Groton Locke Electric 2024. The right-handed pitcher allowed three hits and one run over seven innings, striking out six and walking five. Kyle Beardsley took the loss for Merchants. The starting pitcher went two innings, allowing three runs (two earned) on three hits, striking out two and walking three. Alex Morris collected the save.

Morris provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Groton Locke Electric 2024 with two runs batted in. Ben Althoff and Hansen each collected two hits for Groton Locke Electric 2024. Dylan Frey paced Groton Locke Electric 2024 with three walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, collecting 12 walks for the game.

Greg Heyne, Carter Lane, and Beyers each collected one hit for Merchants. Beyers went 1-for-4 at the plate as the second baseman led the team with one run batted in. Merchants had a strong eye at the plate, piling up seven walks for the game. Merchants turned two double plays in the game.

Copyright © 2024 GameChanger Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Any reuse or republication of this story must include the preceding attribution and is subject to the Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. Terms of Use, License Agreement, and Privacy Policy.

GROTON

SUBWAY®

**Opening
June 12th
Hours Daily
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

**Under new ownership,
Beau and Chelsea Larson**



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 8 of 75

Merchants 1 - 4 Groton Locke Electric 2024

📍 Home 📅 Sunday June 09, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
MRCH	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2
GRTN	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	X	4	6	3

BATTING

Merchants	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
C Simes (CF)	4	0	0	0	1	1
J Maxfield (1B, P)	4	0	0	0	1	1
K Stahl (C)	4	0	0	0	0	1
G Heyne (DH, 2B)	4	0	1	0	1	1
S Hamiel (LF)	4	0	0	0	1	1
M Waltman (RF)	3	1	0	0	1	1
C Lane (3B)	3	0	1	0	1	1
E Beyers (2B, 1B)	4	0	1	1	0	1
L Fischbach (SS)	3	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	33	1	3	1	7	8

TB: E Beyers, C Lane, G Heyne, **HBP:** K Stahl, **LOB:** 13

PITCHING

Merchants	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Beardsley	2.0	3	3	2	3	2	0
B Weber	3.0	2	0	0	3	0	0
J Maxfield	3.0	1	1	1	6	6	0
Totals	8.0	6	4	3	12	8	0

L: K Beardsley, **P-S:** B Weber 44-23, J Maxfield 69-35, K Beardsley 59-27, **WP:** K Beardsley, **HBP:** K Beardsley, **BF:** B Weber 14, J Maxfield 16, K Beardsley 13

Groton Locke Elect	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Frey (LF)	2	1	1	0	3	0
S Knecht (CF)	3	0	0	0	1	2
T Sieber (SS)	3	1	1	0	2	1
B Althoff (3B)	4	1	2	0	1	1
A Morris (1B, P)	3	0	0	2	2	1
B Hansen (2B)	4	1	2	1	1	0
C Simon (RF)	4	0	0	0	1	2
W Locke (C)	4	0	0	1	0	0
C Camacho (DH)	3	0	0	0	1	1
A Severson (1B)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	30	4	6	4	12	8

2B: B Althoff, **TB:** D Frey, B Althoff 3, T Sieber, B Hansen 2, **HBP:** S Knecht, **LOB:** 15

Groton Locke	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
C Larson	7.0	3	1	1	5	6	0
A Morris	2.0	0	0	0	2	2	0
Totals	9.0	3	1	1	7	8	0

W: C Larson, **P-S:** C Larson 127-67, A Morris 33-19, **HBP:** C Larson, **BF:** C Larson 33, A Morris 8

“How to Prevent Sudden Death”

My first experience with cardiopulmonary resuscitation was during the summer of 1969. I was an orderly in a Minneapolis intensive care unit (ICU) when my patient stopped breathing. I called for help and provided mouth-to-mouth breathing until the team arrived. Later the doctor told me I saved the patient’s life, further convincing me that medicine was my life’s purpose.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is the act of rhythmically pushing on the chest and breathing into the mouth of a person whose heartbeat and breathing has ceased. CPR can result in enough circulation to keep the victim alive until spontaneous circulation and breathing resumes.

In 1740, the French described how mouth-to-mouth breathing sometimes saved drowned people, and, through the early 1900s, mouth-to-mouth breaths were given to bring lifeless newborns around. In the mid-1950s, two anesthesiologists, Dr. Elam and Dr. Safar, with help from the Red Cross, began promoting mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for adults discovered in cardiac arrest. In 1960, chest compressions were proven valuable in preserving circulation, especially to the brain, and even more important for survival than artificial respiration.

In 1947 a Cleveland surgeon used an internal (open chest) defibrillator to save a 14-year-old boy, and in 1955, Boston cardiologist, Paul Zoll, developed the now popular external (on skin) defibrillator. Studies show that the defibrillator is even more important than chest compression. With available automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and education on how to perform CPR and use AED devices, we have even better outcomes.

For those having a cardiac arrest, the sooner they get defibrillation, effective CPR, and a 911 call for help, the greater the chance of functional recovery. Out-of-hospital successful survival after CPR is about ten percent but increases to 35 percent when the arrest is witnessed and the victim is provided early defibrillation. The sad news is that more than 50 percent of those who could benefit will not have CPR because bystanders fear they might do something wrong. The big mistake is NOT TO TRY.

Simple, first-level, CPR courses are available for anyone interested in every community and through the internet, while AED devices are popping up in almost every community gathering area. Please notice where they are placed. Trust me, if someone has a cardiac arrest, and you try to help, you might just save a life.

The Late Dr. Richard P. Holm founded Prairie Doc Programming with his partner Joanie Holm, RN. Dr. Holm was dedicated to providing science based information to everyone. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook and instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its 22nd season of health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



By the late Richard P. Holm, MD



DAKOTA ROOFING, LLC

Have you suffered
hail damage?

We Offer FREE Roof Inspections And FREE Quotes.
Give Us A Call At (605) 848-3163!

Whether you are a business owner, property manager,
or homeowner, count on expert roofing services,
provided with LIFETIME Warranties on each project!

Call (605) 848-3163 to learn how we can provide your
structure with a long-lasting roofing solution.

We Offer Silicone Spray Roofing

Dakota Roofing Office and Showroom
1205 6th Avenue SW ~ Suite #2
Aberdeen, SD 57401
(605) 848-3163

SERVING THE DAKOTAS FOR OVER 20 YEARS

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Which of the big tech companies are considered the greenest now? – B.P. via email

As global demand for sustainable practices intensifies, the race among major tech companies to adopt green practices has become highly competitive. Many tech giants, including Microsoft, Apple and Google are pursuing demanding sustainability goals.

Microsoft has set the most ambitious target: to run entirely on renewable energy by 2025, to go carbon-negative by 2030, and to neutralize all past emissions dating back to 1975 by 2050. Also, Microsoft has mandated its suppliers report their emissions since 2021 and has implemented a carbon tax on its supply chain. In May 2024, the company signed the largest corporate clean energy deal, purchasing 10.5 gigawatts of carbon-free power from Brookfield Renewable Partners. Microsoft already sources electricity from solar and wind farms across America, Europe and Asia.

Transparency distinguishes Microsoft from other major tech companies: It has openly invested in carbon offset projects, such as installing clean stovetops in Kenya and protecting Indonesian forests, and has supported renewable energy infrastructure, including backup generation for Wyoming solar grids and energy storage batteries in Ireland. In 2020, Microsoft founded the Climate Innovation Fund, investing \$1 billion in over 35 companies developing climate technology solutions for underserved communities.

Apple differs in that it mainly makes physical products. Apple hopes to limit its annual carbon emissions to less than 10 million 'unavoidable' metric tons by 2030 and reach zero net emissions via carbon offsets and removal. In 2022, Apple's carbon footprint was a staggering 22.5 million metric tons, 75 percent produced during manufacturing and 20 percent generated during product use and transportation.

Since production accounts for most of Apple's emissions, the company has prioritized material and energy sourcing. The 2019 MacBook Air's external enclosure is 100 percent recycled aluminum, reducing the product's carbon footprint by nearly half. Also, Apple is developing more durable and energy-efficient products and powering its production lines, offices and data centers with clean energy. And Apple has many carbon offset/removal projects, mostly to protect and restore wetlands, grasslands and forests.

Google has striven to neutralize its carbon emissions since its founding in 1998, and aims to exceed carbon neutrality by becoming carbon-free by 2030. Its carbon-free plan includes three phases: offsetting, reducing and eliminating emissions. For two decades, Google has used "high-quality" carbon offsets and renewable energy. However, Google's lack of clarity about what constitutes "high-quality" makes it difficult to verify their sustainability claims. Since 2017, Google has increased reliance on wind and solar power and hopes to power all facilities soon with locally sourced carbon-free electricity. Sun and wind energy can be unpredictable and insufficient for large-scale tech operations. To address this, Google collaborated with its subsidiary DeepMind to develop machine learning systems that forecast wind farm output up to 36 hours in advance and worked with local authorities to optimize solar panel placement.



Microsoft has set the most ambitious targets of any of the tech cos: to run entirely on renewable energy by 2025, to go carbon-negative by 2030, and to neutralize all past emissions dating back to 1975 by 2050.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State political leaders condemn Nazi marches in SD

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JUNE 9, 2024 11:13 AM

South Dakota political leaders are condemning Nazi demonstrations that happened Saturday in Deadwood and on the Capitol grounds in Pierre.

The state Department of Public Safety said in a news release that a group attempted an unscheduled protest on the Capitol grounds, without a permit. The Highway Patrol asked the group to leave and the march "ended without incident," according to the news release.

Images and video circulated online of about a dozen people dressed in red and black, with black masks covering their faces, carrying a Nazi flag and unfurling it on the steps of the Capitol. Images also surfaced of a similar march in Deadwood.

On her personal X (formerly Twitter) account, Gov. Kristi Noem wrote, "Nazis are not welcome here in South Dakota."

"We stand for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," she wrote. "We reject all hatred and Nazis."

A known neo-Nazi leader, Christopher Pohlhaus, appeared to claim responsibility for the march when he shared Noem's post on his own X account and said "we occupied your steps for the entire time we intended to be there." According to the Anti-Defamation League, Pohlhaus is a former Marine turned tattoo artist and leader of the neo-Nazi "Blood Tribe."

Other South Dakota political leaders also condemned the marches. U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds tweeted, "This is disgusting. This racist behavior has no place in South Dakota or anywhere." U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson tweeted of the incident, "This is atrocious."

The activity is part of a resurgence of in-person demonstrations among white nationalist, neo-Nazi and far-right reactionary groups throughout the country, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center's latest annual report on hate and extremism.

"For the first time since 2018, these racist activists, who together make up what is known as the white power movement, turned out in droves, holding 191 demonstrations in 2022 and 143 in 2023," the report says.

White nationalist, anti-LGBTQ activity on the rise, annual hate report shows

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - JUNE 9, 2024 11:12 AM

WASHINGTON — Emboldened by the mainstreaming of hard-right politics ahead of a presidential election cycle, white nationalist and anti-LGBTQ+ groups increased to record levels in the United States last year, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center's latest annual report on hate and extremism released Tuesday.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, which has published the annual report since 1990, documented 835 active anti-government groups, up 133 from 2022's count, and 595 hate groups, an increase of 72 over the previous year's figure.

Accounting for a large portion of the increase was a 50% surge in white supremacy hate groups in 2023, the highest jump ever recorded by the SPLC, growing to 165 over 109 in 2022. White power and neo-Nazi

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 13 of 75

rallies across the U.S. totaled 143 in 2023, down from 191 in 2022.

SPLC saw a 33% rise in anti-LGBTQ+ organizations over last year, bringing the total to 86. The group said the growth was largely attributable to the anti-trans movement on the far-right.

"What we're seeing now should be a wake-up call for all of us," Margaret Huang, SPLC's president and CEO, said on a call with reporters. "Our 2023 report documented more hate and anti-government extremist groups than ever before. With a historic election just months away, these groups are multiplying, mobilizing and making, and in some cases already implementing, plans to undo democracy."

Hate groups have increased in-person events and leafleting, according to the report. The SPLC tracked nearly 7,000 flyer incidents last year, many including language derived from racist and antisemitic conspiracies.

The groups also launched campaigns to gain influence in mainstream politics, according to the report, namely through the conservative Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 manifesto that outlines aspirations for anti-abortion, anti-free press and anti-LGBTQ+ priorities should presumed GOP presidential nominee and former President Donald Trump win in November.

Nine of the anti-government and hate groups tracked by the SPLC are part of the coalition that supports Project 2025, the organization reports.

Florida a leader in anti-government, hate groups

Among the states leading in numbers of anti-government and hate groups are California, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, Washington and Ohio.

California topped the list with 51 hate and 66 anti-government groups.

The SPLC recorded the second-most groups in Florida, which has become a leader in book-banning incidents and restrictive policies on teachers. The Sunshine State is home to 43 hate and 71 anti-government organizations, according to the report, and is the birthplace of recently influential "parental rights" group Moms for Liberty.

Moms for Liberty co-founder Tiffany Justice was invited in March 2023 to testify before a U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary subcommittee then chaired by Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana, who is now House speaker.

The annual survey of hate groups tracked 116 hate-leafleting incidents in Florida, where the antisemitic groups rallied and flyer on multiple occasions, including over Labor Day when groups named the Goyim Defense League, The Order of the Black Sun and the Maine-based Blood Tribe marched in Orlando wielding flags with swastikas and making Nazi salutes.

Antisemitism, already on the rise, became more pronounced following Israel's continuing offensive on the Gaza Strip following the Hamas-led terrorist attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

"Antisemitic conspiracies seeped into mainstream narratives at an alarming pace and 2023. Specifically after Hamas's October 7 terrorist attack, the far right blurred the lines between legitimate criticism of the Israeli government's actions and outright antisemitism," R.G. Cravens, SPLC's senior research analyst for its Intelligence Project, said during Tuesday's call with reporters.

Following the Hamas attack, the so-called Goyim Defense League distributed a flyer online and in person that read "FREE PALESTINE," as a "not-so-thinly-veiled attempt at stoking more antisemitism and using Palestinian people to further their own aims," according to the report.

Christian 'dominionism'

The SPLC report also cited the expanding influence of extreme Christian nationalism as a driver for the growing number of anti-government organizations.

The report expresses concern over the rise in the Republican ranks of Johnson, a former senior lawyer for the Alliance Defending Freedom, a Christian legal advocacy group behind the U.S. Supreme Court case that precipitated the overturning of the federal right to abortion.

Johnson's far-right politics, including his anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQ+ positions and his advocacy to

blur Christianity and the state, are well documented.

Spokespeople for Johnson did not immediately return an email seeking comment.

The Alliance for Defending Freedom describes SPLC as a “discredited” and “scandal-ridden group,” and denounces the organization’s “hate map.” The SPLC currently has an interactive U.S. map pinpointing locations of anti-government and hate groups.

“Eventually, their definition of hate included huge swaths of well-respected, mainstream, conservative America,” according to a post on the Alliance for Defending Freedom website.

The SPLC report specifically warns about the rise of the National Apostolic Reformation, a Christian movement made up of “dominionist leaders” that aim to “seize control” of seven areas of society, including government, education and business.

Decline in militias

One area in which the report documented a decline is in the militia movement, which suffered after the hundreds of Department of Justice prosecutions following the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The numbers of militias dropped to 52 in 2023, from 61 in 2022.

One of the most prominent militias, the Oath Keepers, significantly diminished its presence following the 2023 conviction and sentencing of its leader Stewart Rhodes for seditious conspiracy leading up to and during the Jan. 6 attack.

The Oath Keepers active militia chapters dropped to 10 in 2023 from 79 in 2022.

Ashley Murray covers the nation’s capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

COMMENTARY

Why South Dakota health care is the nation’s second most expensive

Competition is supposed to lower costs and improve services, but doesn’t
by TOM DEAN

Several months ago, Forbes, a respected business and economics publication, released an analysis of the “The Most (And Least) Expensive States for Healthcare 2024.” A striking — and concerning — finding was that health care expenses in South Dakota were the second highest in the nation.

The multiplicity of payers and the differing demographics of populations in diverse geographic areas make measuring and comparing total health care costs across different regions a highly complex undertaking. Nonetheless, the findings in the Forbes article have been supported by other research.

An extensive and very interesting paper was published several years ago by the Health Care Pricing Project. This analysis looked at both Medicare costs and private insurance expenditures in 306 health care regions across the U.S. In that study, private insurance expenditures in the Sioux Falls region were the 14th highest in the nation but Medicare expenditures were near the bottom (275th out of 306). The huge difference can be explained by the fact that Medicare prices are set by the Medicare program, whereas each private payer has to negotiate prices with the individual providers.

In eastern South Dakota, there is intense competition between two large health care systems. One could reasonably expect that costs would be lower. The results show that just the opposite is true.

How can this be? The reality is that the economics of health care do not follow the principles that govern prices in standard consumer markets.

For a conventional consumer market to function efficiently, multiple suppliers need to compete based on price and the quality of products available. Consumers need to have full understanding of both product

quality as well as the price charged. They need to be free to switch suppliers if they find a "better deal." They should have the freedom to "shop around."

So how does all this apply to health care?

First, and probably most basic, health care providers rarely compete based on price. In fact, unless patients make an effort to ask, the price of a service may well not be known until the bill arrives. Since so much of health care is paid for by third-party payers, patients often have little incentive to ask. Additionally, there is little motivation to "shop" for the best price even if that is an option available to them, which it may not be.

Furthermore, if patients do have prices to compare from competing providers, they sometimes have skepticism about low-priced services. They may be concerned that providers have "cut corners" or that the service is less trustworthy. This follows directly from the fact that, unlike most consumer goods, patients usually do not have access to objective information about the quality of the actual service being considered. They usually rely on broad provider reputations or word-of-mouth evaluations. Such sources can provide helpful perspectives but are often lacking in specifics about particular procedures, individual providers, etc.

Shopping around to get the best deal makes good sense if one is buying groceries or gasoline, but it presents major problems in health care. Limitations imposed by insurance networks are real. More basically, moving from one provider to another hinders continuity of care and raises the risk of important past history being overlooked or serious risks going unnoticed. Additionally, multiple payers with multiple sets of reimbursement rules have led to administrative complexity and enormous administrative costs.

From the provider perspective, competition all too often leads to duplication of facilities and services. Rather than refer patients/customers to a competitor, each one sets up their own service. This can be a logical action from a business perspective, but in highly technical services such as organ transplantation, small volumes raise the risk of above average cost and poorer outcomes. Competition, instead of promoting lower cost and better service, actually does the opposite.

Paying for health care services is an exceedingly complex undertaking. In the U.S., health care expenditures are the highest in the world, even though we have significant portions of our population who are not getting care. Commitment to conventional market principles has served us well in much of our economy. It is clear, however, that it is not serving us well in the health care.

Tom Dean is a retired family physician who grew up on a farm west of Wessington Springs. He graduated from Wessington Springs High School, Carleton College in Minnesota and medical school in Rochester, New York. He completed a family medicine residency at the University of Washington in Seattle. He returned to Wessington Springs to practice in 1978 along with his wife, Kathy, a certified nurse midwife. He retired after 43 years of practice and still lives in Wessington Springs.

Election workers worry that federal threats task force isn't enough to keep them safe

BY: ZACHARY ROTH - JUNE 9, 2024 2:34 PM

Aiming to send a message, the Biden administration recently spotlighted its indictments and convictions in cases involving threats to election officials or workers.

But with no letup in reports of attacks, some elections professionals say federal law enforcement still isn't doing enough to deter bad actors and ensure that those on the front lines of democracy are protected this fall.

"Election officials by and large have no confidence that if something were to happen to them, there would be any consequences," said Amy Cohen, the executive director of the National Association of State Election Directors. "It is very clear that we are not seeing a deterrent effect."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 16 of 75

A U.S. Justice Department spokesman declined to comment for this story, instead directing States Newsroom to a webpage for the department's Election Threats Task Force.

Launched by the Justice Department in 2021 in response to the wave of harassment of election officials that followed the 2020 election, the Election Threats Task Force works closely with local law enforcement and U.S. attorney's offices around the country to investigate threats.

In going after those who make threats against election workers, the Justice Department is honoring a foundational purpose: The department was created in 1870 in part to protect the voting rights of southern Blacks during Reconstruction.

Run by John Keller, a top official in the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section, the task force also includes the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, the Civil Rights Division, the National Security Division, and the FBI. It also works with several other government agencies, including the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Department of Homeland Security.

Since its launch, the task force has brought charges in 17 cases, according to the department's tally. Eight cases have resulted in prison time, with sentencing scheduled in several more.

In one case, brought in Nevada, the defendant was acquitted.

In March, a Massachusetts man received a three-and-a-half-year sentence — the longest won by the task force to date — for sending an online message to an Arizona election official warning her a bomb would be detonated "in her personal space" unless she resigned.

A Texas man received the same sentence last August for posting threatening messages targeting two Maricopa County, Arizona officials and their families, and separately calling for a "mass shooting of poll workers" in precincts with "suspect results."

'Each of these cases should serve as a warning'

Attorney General Merrick Garland highlighted these convictions and others in a May 13 speech at a task force meeting.

"Each of these cases should serve as a warning," declared Garland. "If you threaten to harm or kill an election worker, volunteer, or official, the Justice Department will find you. And we will hold you accountable."

But those prosecutions amount to only a tiny share of what the Justice Department has said is over 2,000 reports of threats or harassment submitted by the election community to the FBI since the task force was launched in 2021. Around 100 of those were investigated, according to the Justice Department.

The small number of investigations and prosecutions is largely due to free speech concerns. Legal experts say that anything short of a direct and explicit threat to cause physical harm may well be protected speech under the First Amendment.

"A true threat is a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful violence," Keller has said. "If they don't cross that line into invoking violence, they are generally not going to constitute a criminally prosecutable threat."

Still, as the 2024 vote approaches, there's little evidence that the volume of attacks against the people who run elections has declined, or that election workers feel safer.

A recent Brennan Center survey found that more than half of local election officials said they were concerned about the safety of their colleagues or staff — around the same number as in 2022, the year of the last federal election. Around a quarter worry about being assaulted at home or at work.

"This is a widespread issue in the elections community," said Tammy Patrick, the CEO for programs for the National Association of Election Officials, and a former election official in Maricopa County. "It's happening all across the country. It's not just a question of it being in swing states, or just being in the city or whatever. It's happening in a way that is a concerted campaign to create and sow chaos."

"There is some feeling that the task force is a political tool," said another election expert, "that allows the administration to say they care and they're doing something."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 17 of 75

Troubling episodes but little follow-up

In March 2022, anti-fraud activists, accompanied by the local GOP chair, showed up at the office of Michella Huff, the election director for Surry County, North Carolina.

Huff said the activists tried to pressure her to give them access to county voting machines, citing what they said were flawed voter rolls. The group repeatedly threatened to have Huff ousted from her job if she didn't cooperate, and said they planned to return with the local sheriff, though they did not do so.

Huff declined to provide access to the machines, and reported the episode to the state election board's investigations unit.

A spokesperson for the board did not respond to an inquiry about whether the report was forwarded to federal law enforcement.

Election security advocates have urged the FBI to do more to probe efforts by supporters of former President Donald Trump to gain access to voting machines in other states, warning that the breaches could have allowed for voting machine software to be compromised.

Huff said she never heard from law enforcement on any level, despite speaking publicly about the episode.

Though Huff wasn't physically threatened, she said she'd still like to have seen federal authorities do more to respond.

"If it is truly a threat, I think every threat needs to be looked at serious(ly), and it needs to be considered as to what the intent was, if it was successful, and what the repercussions would be if it had been successful," said Huff. "A threat is a threat."

More overt efforts to physically intimidate election workers also have at times spurred little law enforcement followup.

The night before South Carolina's 2022 primaries, a Republican candidate who has promoted lies about the 2020 election posted a message on the conservative social media site Telegram, to a group of anti-fraud activists.

"For all of you on the team tomorrow observing the polls, Good Hunting," the message said. "We have the enemy on their back foot, press the attack. Forward."

During the voting period, groups of activists showed up at multiple polling places to verbally harass, photograph, and film election workers as they did their jobs, recounted Aaron Cramer, the executive director of the Charleston County Board of Voter Registration and Elections.

The activists called the police to at least one polling site, falsely alleging evidence of fraud by election staff. The police came, but made no arrests — though the episode left the site's lead poll manager shaken, Cramer said.

Cramer said his office provided detailed reports on both the Telegram message and the harassment at polling sites to the Department of Homeland Security, as well as to the state election commission.

"We took that threat pretty seriously," he said, referring to the Telegram message.

He said he received a response from DHS saying the report was being looked into, but heard nothing after that.

"I don't know what the conclusions were, or what occurred after submitting that information," Cramer said.

But Cramer added that the experience produced a successful effort to increase collaboration with local, state, and federal authorities — with the result that the county is much better prepared to respond to, and anticipate, similar incidents this year.

"When you're on the defense, you're kind of reacting to everything, and I think that's how the past was," said Cramer. "And now we're being proactive."

'I dread November for you guys'

Patrick, of the National Association of Election Officials, said that while she understands the need to avoid running afoul of the First Amendment, authorities must balance legitimate free speech concerns with their urgent duty to protect those conducting elections.

And, she suggested, they may not always be getting that balance right.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 18 of 75

"We need to be really careful that we're not allowing people to yell fire in a crowded theater," Patrick said. "And that we're not allowing people to use what they are potentially claiming as their freedom of speech as a way of creating chaos in a system, or to threaten individuals who are just trying to do their job."

In addition, election professionals say they've complained for years that after they submit reports about threats and harassment to the FBI, there's often a lack of follow-up beyond an acknowledgment of receipt.

Of course, law enforcement frequently can't share details about their work, even with those who were targeted, in order not to compromise an investigation. But Patrick said even basic information could be helpful.

"Even letting them know that the report is being worked, so it doesn't just go into the void, and a victim knows there's going to be a knock-and-talk, gives the individual who made that report some sense of closure," Patrick said, referring to when federal agents show up to speak with a suspect at their home.

The problem may be exacerbated by a lack of understanding among some in the elections world about what federal law enforcement can and can't do. Many election officials, said Cohen, of the National Association of State Election Directors, want front-end help with steps like bolstering physical security to better prepare for incidents.

"Law enforcement, and especially federal law enforcement, is only coming at the back end," said Cohen. "Their goal is not prevention or recovery, their goal is prosecution. And it has taken our community, I think, a long time to understand what we should be expecting from DOJ."

Ultimately, said Cohen, the prosecutions brought by the Justice Department appear to have done little to reduce the number of threats election workers are subject to today.

"I'm really grateful that DOJ has secured convictions in Arizona," said Cohen. "But I don't think securing convictions in Arizona three years later has actually deterred anything in Arizona."

Indeed, Arizona has been a hotbed for election misinformation, and its election officials continue to be targeted by a consistent stream of threats, according to multiple reports.

Huff, the county election director in North Carolina, said that with a major election approaching, members of the public often express sympathy for her and her staff — an acknowledgement that the vitriol they've been facing is only likely to get stronger.

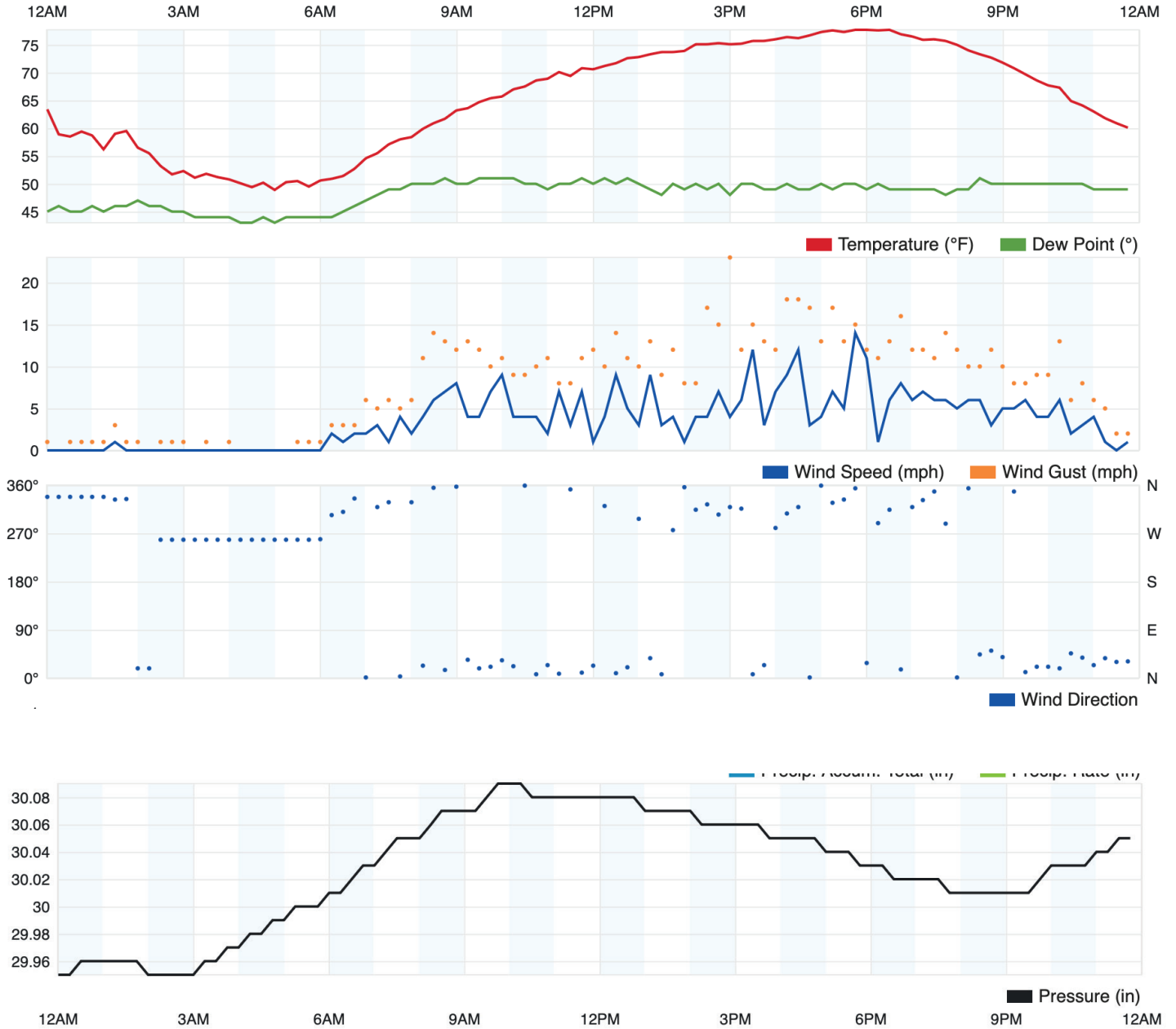
"Out in public, I get that," Huff said — "Boy, I dread November for you guys."

Zachary Roth is the National Democracy Reporter for States Newsroom.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 19 of 75

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 20 of 75

Today

Tonight

Tuesday

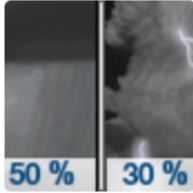
Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 80 °F

Mostly Sunny



Low: 58 °F

Chance Showers then Chance T-storms



High: 83 °F

Sunny



Low: 58 °F

Mostly Clear then Slight Chance T-storms



High: 90 °F

Slight Chance T-storms then Sunny



Severe Weather Threat Overview

June 10, 2024
3:40 AM

This Afternoon - Early Tuesday Morning

Timing/Location

- Storms will mainly affect locations from north central to south central SD later this afternoon and evening.
- The main threats for the area in **Green**

Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

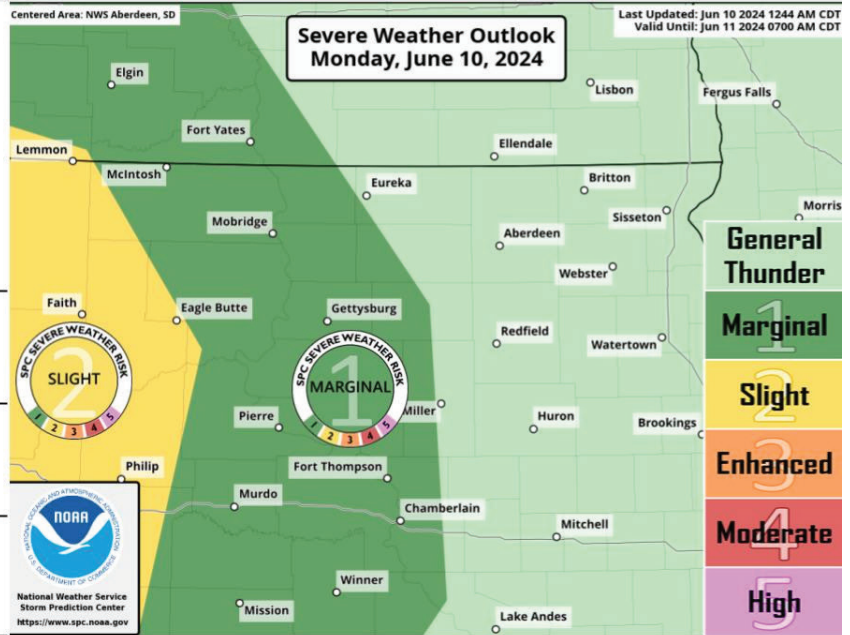
Dimes **Quarters** Golfball Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph **60-70 mph** 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A cold front will bring a 30-80% chance of showers and thunderstorms across central and north central South Dakota this evening. Some of these storms could produce quarter size hail, and wind gusts of 60 mph. The storms will weaken and spread eastward overnight.

Broton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 21 of 75



Timing of Storms this Afternoon-Tuesday Morning June 10, 2024 3:51 AM

Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	6/10 Mon											6/11 Tue								Maximum		
	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	12am	1am	2am	3am	4am	5am	6am		7am	8am
Aberdeen	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	20	20	35	25	25	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
Britton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	10	25	55	35	45	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	54
Brookings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	25	50	45	40	35	35	35	10	10	49
Chamberlain	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	15	20	20	40	55	45	40	30	25	15	15	10	0	0	56
Clark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	15	25	25	25	20	35	20	0	0	0	0	33
Eagle Butte	0	5	5	20	45	50	50	55	55	55	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	57
Ellendale	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	15	55	25	25	80	45	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80
Eureka	0	0	5	5	5	10	10	30	35	45	50	75	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	75
Gettysburg	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	30	40	40	35	35	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49
Huron	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	10	10	20	30	35	40	35	30	20	20	20	5	5	41
Kennebec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	35	50	40	45	50	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52
McIntosh	5	5	40	40	55	55	50	80	55	40	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81
Milbank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	20	35	40	45	35	35	10	0	0	47
Miller	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	10	25	30	35	30	40	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
Mobridge	0	0	0	5	15	5	30	50	60	50	40	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	62
Murdo	0	0	0	0	5	0	15	65	75	60	45	40	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	73
Pierre	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	50	50	40	40	40	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Redfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	15	25	30	25	30	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
Sisseton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	15	25	30	35	45	35	15	0	0	0	0	46
Watertown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	15	20	30	40	30	25	20	0	0	0	42
Webster	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	15	25	25	25	35	30	15	0	0	0	0	37
Wheaton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	20	50	60	75	55	40	25	0	5	73



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Thunderstorms chances are best between 4 pm and midnight for locations along and west of the James River. Chances east of the James River are best after 10 pm.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 22 of 75

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 78 °F at 5:44 PM

Low Temp: 49 °F at 5:02 AM

Wind: 23 mph at 3:00 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 40 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 2021

Record Low: 37 in 1964

Average High: 79

Average Low: 54

Average Precip in June.: 1.15

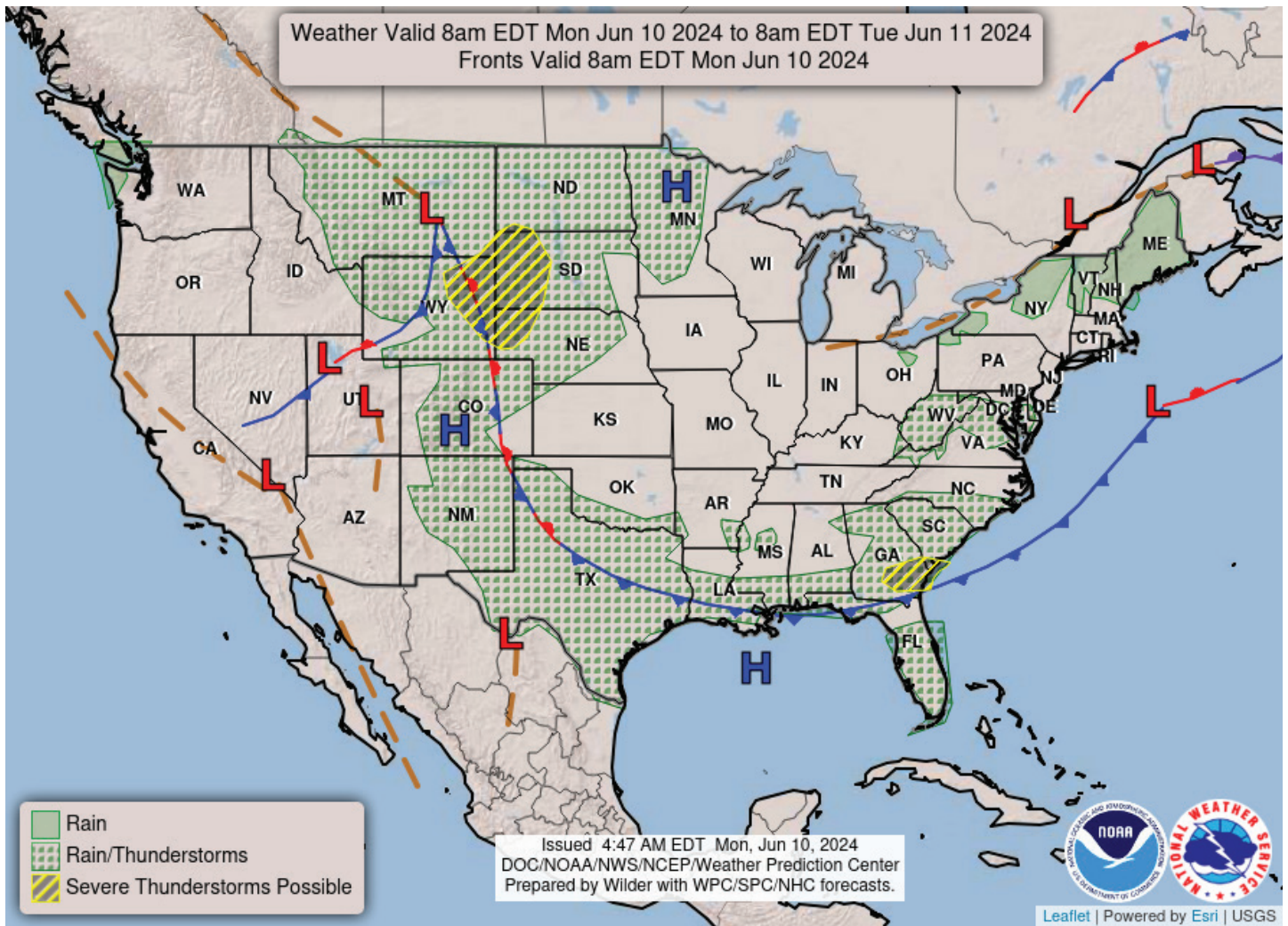
Precip to date in June: 0.08

Average Precip to date: 8.40

Precip Year to Date: 7.15

Sunset Tonight: 9:22:14 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:39 am



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 23 of 75

Today in Weather History

June 10, 1998: Torrential rains of two to three inches in a short period caused flash flooding on the Crow Creek, near Gann Valley. As a result, some dams and roads were washed out.

June 10, 2004: An F1 tornado damaged 3 barns and numerous other buildings on a farm located 22 miles west of Ft. Pierre. This tornado also downed power lines and broke windows out of a home. There were no injuries reported.

June 10, 2008: A strong low-level jet impinging on a frontal surface boundary extending across southern South Dakota brought many severe thunderstorms to central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail and high winds brought some tree damage, trees down, along with some structural damage. Eighty mph winds blew down a 46 by 100 foot Quonset with tin strewn over a quarter-mile. Several trees were also uprooted in Hosmer in Edmunds County. An EF1 tornado touched down briefly and downed a power pole, snapped off a road sign, and blew a metal shed 100 yards destroying it. The tornado also broke off several large tree branches. This tornado occurred eight miles east-northeast of Eden in Marshall County.

1752: It is believed that this was the day Benjamin Franklin narrowly missed electrocution while flying a kite during a thunderstorm to determine if lightning is related to electricity. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1957 - A dust devil at North Yarmouth, ME, lifted a 600 to 1000 pound chicken shelter into the air and carried it 25 feet. It landed upright with only slight damage. It is unknown whether any eggs were scrambled. (The Weather Channel)

1958 - A woman was sucked through the window of her home in El Dorado, KS, by a powerful tornado, and was carried sixty feet away. Beside her was found a broken phonograph record entitled Stormy Weather . (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced 2 to 4 inch rains in southern Texas. Two and a half inches of rain at Juno TX caused flooding and closed a nearby highway. Flooding on the northwest side of San Antonio claimed one life as a boy was swept into a culvert. Thunderstorms in the north central U.S. produced an inch and a half of small hail at Monida Pass MT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Three dozen cities, mostly in the eastern U.S., reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins, WV, with a reading of 33 degrees. Unseasonably hot weather continued in the Northern High Plains Region. The record high of 105 degeees at Williston, ND, was their seventh in eight days. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather through the day and night across much of the southern half of the Great Plains Region. Thunderstorms spawned 14 tornadoes, and there were 142 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Hail three inches in diameter caused three millions dollars damage at Carlsbad, NM. Hail four inches in diameter was reported at Estelline TX and Stinnett, TX. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Odessa TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1997: Flash Flooding occurred in many locations in Mississippi. Highway 80 and many other streets were flooded in and around Vicksburg. Water engulfed one person's car, but the person was rescued. This event caused \$300,000 in property damages. Over 6 inches of rain fell in Lexington in a little over 3 hours. The torrential rains caused Bear Creek to overflow and flood much of the town of Lexington. 45 businesses were affected by the flooding and 30 of these suffered major losses. As many as 300 homes had water damage. This event caused 10 million dollars in property damages. Portions of Jones County experienced flash flooding as 3 inches of rain fell in just 1.5 hours over saturated ground.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 24 of 75

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

GETTING DIRTY TAKES TIME

Two poor young children were invited to a Salvation Army Christmas banquet. They were amazed at the lovely surroundings and were surprised to discover that the tables were covered with clean white tablecloths.

When they placed their hands next to their napkins one boasted, "Look, my hands are dirtier than yours."

"Yes," responded his friend, "but you are two years older than I am."

How like sin. Sin is subtle and moves silently but surely, quietly and quickly until it invades every aspect of one's life. The longer one lives in sin the more it expands and grows until it completely controls one's life. It is rarely recognized for what it is unless an individual comes to know and understand and accept God's Word and His message of salvation.

The only way to be redeemed and reclaimed from a sin-centered life is to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and enthrone Him as Lord. Not only is He powerful enough to save us but strong enough to strengthen us, to sustain us and to keep us from sin.

Jesus offers us His salvation freely as a gift of His eternal love. There is nothing we can do to earn His salvation, but there is much to do once we accept it.

Prayer: Lord, we acknowledge our need for Your salvation if we want to be saved from our sins and live lives that are free from sin and worth living. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment. Psalm 32



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 25 of 75

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months..... \$26.63
- 6 Months..... \$31.95
- 9 Months..... \$42.60
- 12 Months..... \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 26 of 75



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.07.24

3 5 12 22 66 7

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$30,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

5 7 23 37 45 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,950,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 34 Mins 18
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.09.24

2 3 33 39 41 7

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 49 Mins 18
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

11 16 17 19 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 15 Hrs 49
DRAW: Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

11 21 57 58 68 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 18 Mins 17
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

8 38 52 54 64 15

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$221,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 18 Mins 17
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

What to know about Indigenous activist Leonard Peltier's first hearing in more than a decade

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and JACK DURA Associated Press

Indigenous activist Leonard Peltier, who has spent most of his life in prison since his conviction in the 1975 killings of two FBI agents in South Dakota, has a parole hearing Monday at a federal prison in Florida.

At 79, his health is failing, and if this parole request is denied, it might be a decade or more before it is considered again, said his attorney Kevin Sharp, a former federal judge. Sharp and other supporters have long argued that Peltier was wrongly convicted and say now that this effort may be his last chance at freedom.

"This whole entire hearing is a battle for his life," said Nick Tilsen, president and CEO of the NDN Collective, an Indigenous-led advocacy group. "It's time for him to come home."

The FBI and its current and former agents dispute the claims of innocence. The fight for Peltier's freedom, which is embroiled in the Indigenous rights movements, remains so robust nearly half a century later that "Free Peltier" T-shirts and caps are still hawked online.

"It may be kind of cultish to take his side as some kind of a hero. But he's certainly not that; he's a cold blooded murderer," said Mike Clark, president of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, in a letter arguing that Peltier should remain incarcerated.

Here are some things to know about the case.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE '70S?An enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe, Peltier was active in the American Indian Movement, which began in the 1960s as a local organization in Minneapolis that grappled with issues of police brutality and discrimination against Native Americans. It quickly became a national force.

AIM grabbed headlines in 1973 when it took over the village of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge reservation, leading to a 71-day standoff with federal agents. Tensions between AIM and the government remained high for years.

The FBI considered AIM an extremist organization, and planted spies and snitches in the group. Sharp blamed the government for creating what he described as a "powder keg" that exploded on June 26, 1975.

That's the day agents came to Pine Ridge to serve arrest warrants amid ongoing battles over Native treaty rights and self-determination.

After being injured in a shootout, agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams were shot in the head at point-blank range. Also killed in the shootout was AIM member Joseph Stuntz. The Justice Department concluded that a law enforcement sniper killed Stuntz.

Two other AIM members, Robert Robideau and Dino Butler, were acquitted of killing Coler and Williams.

After fleeing to Canada and being extradited to the United States, Peltier was convicted and sentenced in 1977 to life in prison, despite defense claims that evidence against him had been falsified.

"You've got a conviction that was riddled with misconduct by the prosecutors, the U.S. Attorney's office, by the FBI who investigated this case and, frankly the jury," Sharp said. "If they tried this today, he does not get convicted."

HOW HAS THE FBI RESPONDED?FBI Director Chris Wray said in a statement that the agency was resolute in its opposition to Peltier's latest application for parole.

"We must never forget or put aside that Peltier intentionally murdered these two young men and has never expressed remorse for his ruthless actions," he wrote, adding that the case has been repeatedly upheld on appeal.

And the FBI Agents Association, a professional group that represents mostly active agents, sent a letter to the parole commission opposing parole. The group said any early release of Peltier would be a "cruel act of betrayal."

WHAT IS THE LEGACY OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT? Tilsen, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation, credits AIM and others for most of the rights Native Americans have today, including religious freedom, the ability to operate casinos and tribal colleges, and enter into contracts with the federal government to oversee schools and other services.

"Leonard has been a part of creating that, but he hasn't been available to be a beneficiary because he has been incarcerated for almost 50 years," Tilsen said. "So he hasn't been able to enjoy the result of those wins and see how they have changed and transformed Indian country."

WHEN IS THE HEARING? The hearing is scheduled to start at 11 a.m. Monday at a high security lockup that is part of the Federal Correctional Complex Coleman. The Federal Bureau of Prisons said in a statement that the hearing is not open to the public.

Sharp, Peltier's attorney, said the hearing will have witnesses for and against parole. Family members of the two FBI agents who were killed will be there.

Sharp expects the hearing to last the day. The decision is required to come within 21 days. If parole is granted, there's a process for release which shouldn't take long. If denied, Peltier can look at his options for filing an appeal to a federal district court, Sharp said.

Parole was rejected at Peltier's last hearing in 2009, and then-President Barack Obama denied a clemency request in 2017. Another clemency request is pending before President Joe Biden.

Hunter Biden's gun trial enters its final stretch after deeply personal testimony about his drug use

By CLAUDIA LAUER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, RANDALL CHASE and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — The criminal trial of President Joe Biden's son heads into its final stretch Monday as the defense tries to chip away at prosecutors' case laying bare some of the darkest moments of Hunter Biden's drug-fueled past.

Hunter Biden's lawyers could call at least one more witness when the case resumes in Delaware's federal court — the first of two trials he's facing in the midst of his father's reelection campaign. It's unclear whether prosecutors will call any rebuttal witnesses before the case goes to closing arguments, and then to the jury.

Hunter Biden is charged with three felonies stemming from the October 2018 purchase of a gun he had for about 11 days. Prosecutors say he lied on a mandatory gun-purchase form by saying he was not illegally using or addicted to drugs.

Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty and has accused the Justice Department of bending to political pressure from former President Donald Trump and other Republicans to bring the case and separate tax charges after a deal with prosecutors fell apart last year. Hunter Biden has said he has been sober since 2019, but his attorneys have said he did not consider himself an "addict" when he filled out the form.

The case has put spotlight on a turbulent time in Hunter Biden's life after his brother Beau's 2015 death. First Lady Jill Biden has watched it unfold from the front row of the courtroom. President Biden was away in France much of last week, and heads to Europe again this week for the Group of Seven leaders meeting in Italy.

Hunter Biden's struggles with a substance addiction before getting sober more than five years ago are well documented. But defense lawyers argue there's no evidence Hunter Biden was actually using drugs in the 11 days that he possessed the gun. He had completed a rehab program weeks earlier.

Jurors have heard emotional and tawdry testimony from Hunter Biden's former romantic partners and read personal text messages. They've seen photos of Hunter Biden holding a crack pipe and partly clothed, and video from his phone of crack cocaine weighed on a scale.

His ex-wife and two onetime girlfriends testified for prosecutors about his habitual crack use and their failed efforts to help him get clean. One woman, who met Hunter Biden in 2017 at a strip club where she worked, described him smoking crack every 20 minutes or so while she stayed with him at a hotel.

Hunter Biden hasn't taken the witness stand and it's unclear if he will. But jurors have heard him describe at length his descent into addiction through audio excerpts played in court of his 2021 memoir "Beautiful Things." The book, written after he got sober, covers the period he had the gun but doesn't mention it specifically.

A key witness for prosecutors is Beau's widow, Hallie, who had a brief troubled relationship with Hunter after his brother died of brain cancer. She found the unloaded gun in Hunter's truck on Oct. 23, 2018, panicked and tossed it into a garbage can at a grocery store in Wilmington, where a man inadvertently fished it out of the trash.

"I didn't want him to hurt himself, and I didn't want my kids to find it and hurt themselves," Hallie Biden told jurors.

From the time Hunter returned to Delaware from a 2018 trip to California until she threw his gun away, she did not see him using drugs, Hallie told jurors. That time period included the day he bought the weapon. But jurors also saw text messages Hunter sent to Hallie in October 2018 saying he was waiting for a dealer and smoking crack. The first message was sent the day after he bought the gun. The second was sent the following day.

The defense has suggested Hunter Biden had been trying to turn his life around at the time of the gun purchase, having completed a detoxification and rehabilitation program at the end of August 2018.

"There is no evidence of contemporaneous drug use and a gun possession," defense lawyer Abbe Lowell wrote in court papers filed Friday. "It was only after the gun was thrown away and the ensuing stress ... that the government was able to then find the same type of evidence of his use (e.g., photos, use of drug lingo) that he relapsed with drugs."

Hunter Biden's daughter Naomi took the stand for the defense Friday, telling jurors about visiting her father while he was at a California rehab center weeks before he bought the gun. She told jurors that he had seemed "hopeful" and to be improving, and she told him she was proud of him. As she was dismissed from the stand, she paused to hug her dad before leaving the courtroom.

The defense on Friday did not rule out calling one more witness, but it was unclear who that could be. Hunter's lawyers had previously said they planned to call as a witness Joe Biden's brother, James and he was at the courthouse on Friday. Testimony from other family members could open the door for more deeply personal messages to be introduced to the jury.

President Joe Biden said last week that he would accept the jury's verdict and has ruled out a pardon for his son. First Lady Jill Biden was in court every day last week to support Hunter, except on Thursday when she was with the president in France for D-Day anniversary events.

It looked as if Hunter Biden would have avoided prosecution in the gun case altogether, but a deal last summer with prosecutors imploded after U.S. District Judge Maryellen Noreika, who was nominated to the bench by Republican former President Donald Trump, raised concerns about it. Hunter Biden was subsequently indicted on three felony gun charges. He also faces a trial scheduled for September on felony charges alleging he failed to pay at least \$1.4 million in taxes over four years.

If convicted in the gun case, Hunter Biden faces up to 25 years in prison, though first-time offenders do not get anywhere near the maximum, and it's unclear whether the judge would give him time behind bars.

Ukraine's air force may keep some F-16 warplanes abroad to protect them from Russian strikes

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine may keep some of the F-16 fighter jets it's set to receive from its Western allies at foreign bases to protect them from Russian strikes, a senior Ukrainian military officer said Monday.

Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway have committed to providing Ukraine with over 60 U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets to help it fend off Russian attacks. Ukrainian pilots are currently undergoing training to fly the warplanes ahead of the deliveries expected to start later this year.

Serhii Holubtsov, head of aviation within Ukraine's air force, said that "a certain number of aircraft will

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 30 of 75

be stored at secure air bases outside of Ukraine so that they are not targeted here.”

Holubtsov told the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that those F-16s could be used to replace damaged aircraft as they undergo repairs as well as for training Ukrainian pilots abroad.

“This way, we can always have a certain number of aircraft in the operational fleet that corresponds to the number of pilots we have,” he said. “If there are more pilots, there will be more aircraft in Ukraine.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that Moscow could consider launching strikes at facilities in NATO countries if they host the warplanes used in Ukraine.

“If they are stationed at air bases outside the Ukrainian borders and used in combat, we will have to see how and where to strike the assets used in combat against us,” Putin said last year. “It poses a serious danger of NATO being further drawn into the conflict.”

In March, the Russian leader again warned Ukraine’s Western allies against providing air bases from where the F-16s could launch sorties against the Kremlin’s forces. Those bases would become a “legitimate target,” he said.

“F-16s are capable of carrying nuclear weapons, and we will also need to take that into account while organizing our combat operations,” Putin stated.

The F-16s require a high standard of runways and reinforced hangars to protect them from attacks on the ground. It’s not clear how many Ukrainian air bases can meet those requirements, and Russia would be certain to quickly target a few that could accommodate them once the jets arrive.

Holubtsov noted that the F-16s will help protect front-line and border regions from Russian glide bombs that have inflicted significant damage to both troops and residential areas, including Kharkiv. Glide bombs are heavy Soviet-era bombs fitted with precision guidance systems and launched from aircraft flying out of range of air defenses.

“I think we will succeed, first of all, in pushing back the aircraft that drop glide bombs farther from the contact line,” he said. “If we manage to push them back at least another 30-50 kilometers (19-31 miles), this can already be considered a turning point and an achievement, if not of superiority, then of parity in the airspace.”

Ukraine’s Western allies are trying to bolster military support for Kyiv as Russian troops have launched attacks along the more than 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) frontline, taking advantage of a lengthy delay in U.S. military aid. Ukraine is currently fighting to hold back a Russian push near its second-largest city of Kharkiv, less than 30 kilometers (less than 20 miles) from the border.

The U.S. and other NATO allies have responded to the latest Russian offensive by allowing Ukraine to use weapons they deliver to Kyiv to carry out limited attacks inside Russia. The decision could potentially impede Moscow’s ability to concentrate its troops for a bigger offensive near Kharkiv and in other border areas.

Last week, Putin responded by warning that Moscow “reserves the right” to arm adversaries of the West worldwide. “If they supply (weapons) to the combat zone and call for using these weapons against our territory, why don’t we have the right to do the same?” Putin said.

He didn’t specify where such arms might be sent. The U.S. has said that Russia has turned to North Korea and Iran to beef up its stock of relatively simple weapons, but Moscow could dip into its stock of high-tech missiles to share with adversaries of the West if Putin decides to fulfill his threat.

The Latest | Election shifts the European Parliament further right

By The Associated Press undefined

Far-right parties made big gains in the European Parliament in election results that rattled the traditional powers and made French President Emmanuel Macron call snap legislative elections.

Macron’s party suffered a heavy defeat from the far-right National Rally party, while in Germany support for Olaf Scholz’s center-left Social Democrats sank to a projected 14%, behind the extreme-right Alternative for Germany, which surged into second place.

Millions of Europeans voted for candidates to serve five-year terms in a new European Parliament, the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 31 of 75

legislative branch of the 27-member trade bloc. Provisional results from the voting that ended Sunday showed the Christian Democrats would have 189 seats, up 13, the Social Democrats 135, down 4 and the pro-business Renew group 83, down 19. The Greens slumped to 53, down 18.

Currently:

- France's Macron calls a snap election after heavy defeat
- Italy's Meloni gets domestic and European boosts from win
- Far-right Alternative for Germany make gains
- Poland's centrist premier Tusk is strengthened by EU election win
- Orbán's party takes most votes, but challenger scores big win
- Complex coalition talks loom after Belgium's federal election
- Bulgarians vote for new national parliament and for EU lawmakers
- What happened in some of the key races

Here's the latest:

FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS SNAP ELECTION IS MACRON'S 'BET ON CONFIDENCE' IN THE FRENCH PEOPLEPARIS — France's foreign minister said Monday that President Emmanuel Macron's decision to call snap elections after the far right's triumph in the European elections was not "a poker move" but "a bet on confidence in the French people."

Stéphane Séjourné said Macron did not take lightly the decision to dissolve the lower house of parliament and call for early elections, which are to start with a first round on June 30 and a second round on July 7.

He said the president's coalition partners are now discussing election plans internally while also seeking cooperation with "reasonable people" on the left and right. The aim of the moderate forces is to win, he said.

But it's the French people who will decide "on the economic and political future of France and its role in world," Séjourné said in an interview with public broadcaster France Info on Monday.

GREENS AND LEFT-WING PARTIES DO WELL IN NORDIC NATIONSCOPENHAGEN, Denmark -- Greens and left-leaning parties emerged as winners in the three Nordic EU members, underlying how environmental issues remain a focus of concern for many in that region.

Sweden, Denmark and Finland defied a trend seen across much of the EU in which far-right parties surged due to concerns over migration.

In Sweden, the far-right Sweden Democrats, who have been gaining support for years and became the second-largest party in 2022 national elections, came in fourth place on Sunday.

Christine Nissen, an analyst with the Copenhagen based think tank Europa, said Monday that security remains the top issue for voters in the Nordics, followed by climate and the green transition.

Many traditional parties in past years have adopted tough stances on migration.

In Denmark, pro-European Union parties prevailed, with the climate-friendly Socialist People's Party making the largest gains. They were followed by the Social Democrats and the Liberals, which are both in the government.

In Finland, the governing conservative National Coalition Party garnered the most votes, nearly 25%. However, the Left Alliance made gains and the populist Finns Party lost its share compared to the last EU election, getting just 6%.

HEAD OF FRANCE'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEFENDS MACRON'S DECISION TO DISSOLVE ITPARIS — The president of France's lower house of parliament says the president was not forced to dismiss the National Assembly but did so to show he was responsive to voters.

President Emmanuel Macron dissolved the legislature and called a snap election Sunday night after his party was handed a humbling defeat by the far-right in the European elections.

"There were other paths," said Yaël Braun-Pivet, who has presided over the National Assembly since last the legislative elections in June 2022. But, Braun-Pivet, a member of Macron's Renaissance party, said the president acted swiftly to "face reality" and to show that he has heard the voters' message.

"We are told too often that we do not hear, that we are cut off from the people, and there, the president

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 32 of 75

took a decision following a very clear vote by the French," Braun-Pivet said in an interview with French public broadcaster on Monday.

AUSTRIA'S FAR-RIGHT PARTY CELEBRATES FIRST WIN IN A NATIONWIDE VOTE VIENNA – Austria's far-right Freedom Party is celebrating a narrow win in the European Parliament election as the country looks forward to a national vote expected in September.

The Freedom Party took 25.7% of the vote on Sunday, finishing in first place in a nationwide election for the first time. It was followed by Chancellor Karl Nehammer's conservative Austrian People's Party with 24.7% and the center-left opposition Social Democrats with 23.2%. The Greens, Nehammer's junior coalition partners, took 10.7% of the vote.

Freedom Party leader Herbert Kickl said in a statement that "this election result means nothing less than that Austrians have made history today." He said the party will continue to work to take the chancellor's job later this year.

Nehammer acknowledged that there is "great dissatisfaction," the Austria Press Agency reported. He vowed that his party will convince voters it takes their concerns seriously over the coming months by acting against irregular migration and overregulation.

ANTI-IMMIGRANT PARTY ALIGNED WITH HUNGARY'S ORBAN DOES WELL IN SLOVENIA LJUBLJANA, Slovenia – The right-wing opposition Slovenian Democratic Party has won the most votes in the EU election in Slovenia, dealing a blow to the ruling liberal Freedom Movement of Prime Minister Robert Golob.

The opposition SDS won 30.8%, or four out of Slovenia's nine parliamentary seats, while Golob's party won 22.1%, or two mandates, according to the election authorities. The remaining three seats went to smaller parties.

SDS leader Janez Jansa, a staunchly anti-immigrant ally of Hungary's hard-line Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, urged the ruling coalition to dissolve parliament and call a snap election.

Golob, however, said he was happy with the result and that overall center-left parties won more votes than right-leaning groups.

MAINSTREAM CONSERVATIVES WIN IN GERMANY, WITH SECOND-PLACE FINISH FOR FAR RIGHT BERLIN – Final results in Germany confirm a clear win for mainstream opposition conservatives, a second-place finish for the far-right Alternative for Germany party and a dismal showing by the three governing parties in the European Parliament election.

Official figures Monday showed the center-right Union bloc taking 30% of the vote. Alternative for Germany took 15.9%.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's center-left Social Democrats won only 13.9% of the vote for their worst post-World War II showing yet in a nationwide election. Their two coalition partners, the environmentalist Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats, took 11.9% and 5.2% respectively.

All were significantly below their results in Germany's 2021 national election. The Greens suffered painful losses compared with the 2019 European election.

The new BSW party took 6.2% of the vote.

Germany has 96 of the new European Parliament's 720 seats. Of those, 29 went to the Union, 15 to Alternative for Germany, 14 to the Social Democrats, 12 to the Greens, five to the Free Democrats and six to BSW. The rest went to a string of smaller parties.

WIN FOR DONALD TUSK'S CENTRIST PARTY IN POLAND AMID GROWTH OF FAR RIGHT WARSAW, Poland — The centrist party of Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk won the most votes, according to official results, giving it its first electoral victory over a right-wing populist party in a decade.

Many people across Europe hailed Tusk's return to power last year as a rare case of a democratic party prevailing over populist and authoritarian forces. While Sunday's voting solidified Tusk's position, the results published Monday also showed that his lead is small, and that support for the far right is rising.

His Civic Coalition took 37.1% of the votes in Sunday's EU election. Law and Justice, the party led by Jarosław Kaczyński that held power from 2015 until last year, got 36.2%. That underlined the continued attraction of its nationalist and conservative worldview to many Polish voters, despite reports of corruption during its years in power.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 33 of 75

Meanwhile, a far-right party, Confederation, had its best result ever, coming third with 12.1% — in line with an EU-wide surge of support for nationalist, anti-EU parties.

INITIAL PROJECTIONS INDICATE ITALIAN PREMIER GIORGIA MELONI'S PARTY HAS WON THE MOST VOTESROME — Initial projections based on 18% of votes counted in Italy indicate Premier Giorgia Meloni's far-right Brothers of Italy party has won the largest percentage of votes in the European parliamentary elections.

The projection released by public broadcaster RAI puts Brothers of Italy as the most popular party with 28.5% of the vote, while the center-left opposition Democratic Party (PD) was second with 23.7%.

The other main opposition party, the 5-Star Movement, won 10.5%, while Forza Italia, founded by late premier Silvio Berlusconi, was fourth with 10%, followed by the far-right League at 8.3%.

HUNGARIAN PRIME MINISTER ORBAN'S NATIONALIST PARTY APPEARS SET TO TAKE MOST VOTESBUDAPEST, Hungary — Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's nationalist party appeared set to take the most votes in Sunday's European Parliament elections, a race that pitted the long-serving leader against a new challenger that has upended Orbán's grip on Hungarian politics in recent months.

With 55% of votes counted, Orbán's Fidesz party stood at 43% of the vote, enough to send 11 delegates of Hungary's 21 total seats in the European Union's legislature.

While Fidesz took a plurality of votes, it was down nearly 10 percentage points from its support in 2019 EU elections and looked set to lose two seats in what was widely seen as a referendum on Orbán's popularity.

While Fidesz has dominated Hungarian politics since 2010, many are deeply dissatisfied with how it has governed the country. A deep economic crisis and a recent series of scandals involving Fidesz politicians have rocked the party, which prides itself on upholding family values and Christian conservatism.

SPAIN'S MAIN OPPOSITION CONSERVATIVES PULL AHEAD OF GOVERNING SOCIALISTSMADRID — Spain's leading opposition conservatives pulled ahead of the governing Socialists in the European Union's parliamentary elections, with the far-right making significant gains amid the surprise appearance of a new extremist party led by a social media influencer.

With 99% of votes counted, the right-wing opposition Popular Party (PP) had 34% of the votes, four percentage points more than the center-left Socialists of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. That translated into 22 seats for the conservatives, nine more than in the previous European election, and 20 for the Socialists.

Spain has the fourth largest number of parliamentary seats allocated in the EU's assembly: 61 out of 720.

The results were a significant improvement for the PP conservatives, who had likened the European vote to a referendum on Sánchez's administration. But the biggest gains were on the far-right of the political spectrum.

EUROSKEPTIC CENTRIST OPPOSITION WINS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION IN CZECH REPUBLICPRAGUE — The centrist opposition ANO (YES) movement led by former populist Prime Minister Andrej Babis has won the European Parliament election in the Czech Republic.

Euroskeptic Babis defeated the center-right Together coalition that consists of three partners in the Czech governing coalition: the conservative Civic Democratic Party of Prime Minister Petr Fiala, Christian Democrats and the liberal-conservative TOP 09 party.

ANO won 26% of the votes, for seven seats, while Together claimed 22%, for six seats.

DUTCH RESULTS CONFIRM FAR-RIGHT, ANTI-IMMIGRATION PARTY FOR FREEDOM IS THE BIGGEST WINNERTHE HAGUE, Netherlands — Near complete Dutch results confirmed Sunday night that Geert Wilders' far-right, anti-immigration Party for Freedom was the biggest winner in elections for the European Union parliament.

Wilders' party won six seats, up from one in the last European parliament, according to a near complete count of the Dutch vote, national broadcaster NOS reported. That is one seat less than projected by an exit poll after the Dutch voted Thursday.

That one seat difference did not dampen Wilders' delight. "Still the very biggest winner with five more seats!" he wrote on social media platform X.

OPPOSITION PARTY CLAIMS VICTORY IN SLOVAKIABRATISLAVA, Slovakia — The major opposition

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 34 of 75

Progressive Slovakia has claimed victory in the European Parliament elections in Slovakia, topping the leftist Smer (Direction) party of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico.

The vote took place just weeks after Fico survived an assassination attempt.

Progressive Slovakia, a liberal and pro-Western group, won 27.8% of the vote, for six parliamentary seats.

Smer, which refuses to send any arms to Ukraine to face Russia's invasion and is critical of mainstream European policies, followed with 24.8%, for five seats.

FRANCE'S LE PEN: WE'RE READY TO TURN THE COUNTRY AROUND Marine Le Pen, of France's far-right National Rally party, says she is "ready to turn the country around" after dealing a heavy blow to French President Emmanuel Macron in the EU parliamentary election.

"We're ready for it. After the legislative elections of 2022, which designated the National Rally Party as the main parliamentary opponent, these European elections confirm our movement as the major force for change in France," she told party supporters in Paris.

"We are ready to exercise power if the French people place their trust in us in these future legislative elections. We're ready to turn the country around, ready to defend the interests of the French, ready to put an end to mass immigration, ready to make the purchasing power of the French a priority," she said.

NEAR COMPLETE RESULTS IN GREECE SHOW GOVERNING CENTER-RIGHT PARTY IN COMFORTABLE WIN ATHENS, Greece — Near complete results in Greece show the governing center-right New Democracy party comfortably ahead in the EU Parliamentary election with just under 28% of the vote, but with a poorer showing than the 33% it won in the previous election which the party leadership had set as a bar for Sunday's poll.

Results from 95% of polling precincts showed that the left-wing main opposition SYRIZA also lost ground, polling just below 15%, down from nearly 24% in 2019. Socialist PASOK scored just under 13%, up from nearly 8%. Hard-right populist Greek Solution, which also saw a rise in its popularity to 9.5% from 4%, is the largest of three far-right parties to send representatives to the European Parliament, alongside the ultra-religious Niki with 4% and Voice of Reason with 3%.

FAR-RIGHT ELAM PARTY CLINCHES ONE OF SIX EU PARLIAMENT SEATS ALLOTTED TO CYPRUS NICOSIA, Cyprus — The state broadcaster of Cyprus says near-complete results show the far-right ELAM party has managed to clinch one of six seats allotted to the country in the European Parliament.

It's the first time that the far-right party, founded in 2008, has earned a seat in the European Parliament. ELAM's strident polemics against large numbers of migrants who have reached Cyprus in recent years has increasingly resonated with voters and have given the party a steady rise in support.

With almost 85% of the vote counted, ELAM has garnered just over 11%, the state broadcaster said.

CYPRIOUS INFLUENCER WITH NO POLITICAL EXPERIENCE APPEARS SET TO WIN EU PARLIAMENT SEAT NICOSIA, Cyprus — A popular YouTuber and TikToker whose humorous and occasionally obnoxious posts have earned him tens of thousands of followers has stunned Cyprus' political world by appearing to wrest one of six seats allotted to the island nation in the European Parliament from traditional political powerhouses.

With more than three quarters of votes counted, unofficial results show Fidias Panayiotou clinching almost 20% of votes, about 2 percentage points behind the communist-rooted AKEL party in second and 4 percentage points behind the center-right Democratic Rally Party.

Opinion polls consistently showed Panayiotou garnering high numbers, but no one expected him to perform so well solely through his social media fame after a mere two-month campaign in which he essentially offered no political positions.

In his first remarks after polls closed and initial results showed him steadily in third place, Fidias, who goes only by his first name, said a "miracle" had been achieved, conceding that he himself didn't believe he would pull in such numbers.

"This could be the first time that a completely independent candidate who doesn't have even an inkling of support from a political party, has managed to get elected, with social media being his only weapon," Fidias said.

FRANCE PRESIDENT MACRON CALLS SNAP LEGISLATIVE ELECTION AFTER DEFEAT IN EU VOTE PARIS

– French President Emmanuel Macron says he is dissolving the National Assembly and calling a snap legislative election after his party suffered a heavy defeat in elections for the European Parliament.

In an address to the nation from the Elysee presidential palace, Macron said: "I've decided to give you back the choice of our parliamentary future through the vote. I am therefore dissolving the National Assembly." The vote will take place in two rounds on June 30 and July 7, he said.

The move comes as first projected results from France on Sunday put the far-right National Rally party well ahead in the European Union's parliamentary election, defeating Macron's pro-European centrists, according to French opinion poll institutes.

CROATIA EXIT POLLS PROJECT GOVERNING CONSERVATIVES TO WIN THE MOST VOTESZAGREB, Croatia — Exit polls in Croatia project the ruling conservatives to win the most votes in the EU election, followed by the main center-left opposition party. A newcomer far-right party also won a seat for the first time.

The Croatian Democratic Union of Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic won 33.7% of the vote, or six seats, while the Social Democratic Party won 27.8%, or four seats, according to the exit poll conducted by the Ipsos polling agency and broadcast by the state HRT television.

The report said that far-right Homeland Movement won 8.6%, or one seat. The party is part of the coalition government in Croatia after emerging as kingmaker at a recent parliamentary election. The Liberal We Can group won 5.4%, which is also one seat.

The main takeaways after the far right rocks European politics, sparking a snap election in France

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — A four-day election has shaken the foundations of the European Union, with the far right rocking ruling parties in France and Germany, the bloc's traditional driving forces. For the next five years it will be harder for the European Parliament to make decisions.

French President Emmanuel Macron called snap national elections after Marine Le Pen's National Rally humbled his pro-European centrists in the polls. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats also suffered as the extreme-right Alternative for Germany shrugged off scandals to make massive gains.

In Italy, the party of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, which has neo-fascist roots, won more than 28% of the national vote for the EU assembly, which would make it a key player in forming future alliances.

Green and pro-business liberal groups across Europe suffered heavy defeats, but mainstream formations held their ground, with the center-right European People's Party remaining the biggest bloc in the 27-nation EU's assembly.

POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN FRANCEVoters in France will return to the polls in just three weeks after Macron dissolved parliament and called snap national elections. Le Pen's anti-immigration, nationalist party was estimated to get around 31%-32% of the vote. While a National Rally win was expected, the scale of the victory was a surprise, more than doubling the share of Macron's Renaissance party, which was projected to reach around 15%. It should become clear by mid-July whether a weakened Macron will be forced to work with a far-right government in an uncomfortable "cohabitation."

SCANDALS DO LITTLE TO HARM GERMANY'S HARD RIGHTSScholz's ruling Social Democrats recorded their worst post-World War II result in a nationwide vote, with 13.9%. Alternative for Germany finished second with around 15.9%. The far-right party suffered a string of recent setbacks, including scandals surrounding its two lead candidates in the EU parliament elections. But voters appear to have shrugged them off. The result is better than the AfD's 11% in 2019 but still short of poll ratings earlier this year. Germany's opposition center-right Union bloc took 30% of the vote.

THE PRO-EUROPEAN CENTER HOLDThe center-right European People's Party is projected to win 191 seats in the EU assembly and remains by far the biggest group. The EPP garnered a few more seats, but the parliament is also expanding from 705 seats in 2019 to 720 seats this year, so the increase was mar-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 36 of 75

ginal. The second-biggest bloc, the center-left Socialists and Democrats, lost some ground but with 135 seats comfortably retains its place. EPP lead candidate Ursula von der Leyen had flirted with parties to the right during election campaigning, but after early results were announced she called on the socialists and pro-business liberals to work together in a pro-European alliance.

GREENS AND LIBERALS TAKE A HITThe environmentalist Greens were perhaps the biggest losers overall. They are likely to lose around 20 seats in the EU parliament, almost a third of their tally from 2019. A series of protests across Europe by farmers angered at the burden imposed by new climate laws helped to damage their chances. The EU considers itself a world leader in combating global warming. Senior members had hoped that Greens parties already in government in places like Germany would hold their ground. But projections suggested that Germany's Greens, the second-biggest party in Scholz's coalition, would fall from a peak of 20.5% five years ago to around 12%. Liberal parties across Europe, including Macron's, were also expected to give away a combined 20 seats in the assembly, making them the other biggest losers in this election.

WHAT'S NEXT?Senior party officials and number-crunchers are meeting Monday to work out what kind of groups and alliances might be formed in the parliament for the next five years. Party presidents will hold their first formal talks on Tuesday. One thing is clear: The results will slow decision-making and the passing of legislation on issues ranging from climate change to farm subsidies. EU presidents and prime ministers will hold a summit on June 17 to take stock of the results. They will also discuss whether to return von der Leyen to the helm of the EU's powerful executive branch, the European Commission.

The far right's election gains rattle EU's traditional powers, leading Macron to call snap polls

By RAF CASERT, LORNE COOK and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Far-right parties rattled the traditional powers in the European Union with major gains in parliamentary seats, dealing an especially humiliating defeat to French President Emmanuel Macron, who called snap legislative elections.

Some ballots in the vote for the European Parliament were still being counted Monday, but the outcome showed the 27-nation bloc's parliament membership has clearly shifted to the right. Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni more than doubled her party's seats in the assembly. And despite being hounded by a scandal involving candidates, the Alternative for Germany extreme right party still rallied enough seats to sweep past the slumping Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Sensing a threat from the far right, the Christian Democrats of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had already shifted further to the right on migration and climate ahead of the elections — and were rewarded by remaining by far the biggest group in the 720-seat European Parliament and de facto brokers of the ever-expanding powers of the legislature.

But the surge by nationalist and populist parties across Europe will make it much harder for the assembly to approve legislation on issues ranging from climate change to agriculture policy for the next five years.

Undoubtedly however, the star on a stunning electoral night was the National Rally party of Marine Le Pen, which dominated the French polls to such an extent that Macron immediately dissolved the national parliament and called for new elections to start later this month. It was a massive political risk since his party could suffer more losses, hobbling the rest of his presidential term that ends in 2027.

Le Pen was delighted to accept the challenge. "We're ready to turn the country around, ready to defend the interests of the French, ready to put an end to mass immigration," she said, echoing the rallying cry of so many far-right leaders in other countries who were celebrating substantial wins.

Her National Rally won over 30% or about twice as much as Macron's pro-European centrist Renew party that is projected to reach less than 15%.

Macron acknowledged the thud of defeat. "I've heard your message, your concerns, and I won't leave them unanswered," he said, adding that calling a snap election only underscored his democratic credentials.

In Germany, the EU's most populous nation, projections indicated that voters had not been dissuaded

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 37 of 75

by the AfD's scandals as it rose to 16.5%, up from 11% in 2019. In comparison, the combined result for the three parties in the German governing coalition barely topped 30%.

Scholz's governing Social Democratic party was humiliated as the Alternative for Germany surged into second place. "After all the prophecies of doom, after the barrage of the last few weeks, we are the second strongest force," a jubilant AfD leader Alice Weidel said.

Overall across the EU, two mainstream and pro-European groups, the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, remained dominant in the voting that concluded Sunday. The gains of the far right came at the expense of the Greens, who were expected to lose about 20 seats and fall back to sixth position in the legislature. Macron's pro-business Renew group also lost big.

After having flirted during campaigning with the idea of working with a political group further right, von der Leyen offered late Sunday to build a coalition with the Social Democrats, which mostly held its ground in the elections, and the pro-business Liberals.

"We are by far the strongest party, We are the anchor of stability," von der Leyen said. Reflecting on the rise of the far-right and good showing of the far-left, she added that the result brings "great stability for the parties in the center. We all have interest in stability and we all want a strong and effective Europe."

In the legislature, provisional results showed that the Christian Democrats would have 189 seats, up 13, the Social Democrats 135, down 4 and the pro-business Renew group 83, down 19. The Greens slumped to 53, down 18.

Germany, traditionally a stronghold for environmentalists, exemplified the humbling of the Greens, who were predicted to fall from 20% to 12%. With further losses expected in France and elsewhere, the Greens' defeat could well have an impact on the EU's climate change policies, still the most progressive across the globe.

Senior party members in the EU's parliament were due to hold talks on Monday to see what alliances might be established. Key to the future working of the assembly will be whether the far right unites in a strong enough bloc to challenge the main pro-European groups.

The elections come at a testing time for voter confidence in a bloc of some 450 million people. Over the last five years, the EU has been shaken by the coronavirus pandemic, an economic slump and an energy crisis fueled by Russia's war in Ukraine. But campaigning often focused on issues in individual countries rather than on broader European interests.

Since the last EU election in 2019, populist or far-right parties now lead governments in three nations — Hungary, Slovakia and Italy — and are part of ruling coalitions in others including Sweden, Finland and, soon, the Netherlands.

Apple expected to enter AI race with ambitions to overtake the early leaders

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Apple's annual World Wide Developers Conference on Monday is expected to herald the company's move into generative artificial intelligence, marking its late arrival to a technological frontier that's expected to be as revolutionary as the invention of the iPhone.

The widely anticipated display of AI to be embedded in the iPhone and other Apple products will be the marquee moment at an event that traditionally previews the next version of software that powers the company's hardware lineup.

And Apple's next generation of software is expected to be packed with an array of AI features likely to make its often-bumbling virtual assistant Siri smarter, and make photos, music, texting — and possibly even creating emojis on the fly — a more productive and entertaining experience.

True to its secretive nature, Apple hasn't provided any advance details about Monday's event being held at the company's Cupertino, California, headquarters.

But CEO Tim Cook has dropped strong hints during the first few months of this that Apple is poised to

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 38 of 75

reveal its grand plans to enter a space that has been fueling an industry boom during the past 18 months.

AI mania is the main reason that Nvidia, the dominant maker of the chips underlying the technology, has seen its market value rocket from about \$300 billion at the end of 2022 to about \$3 trillion. The meteoric ride allowed Nvidia to briefly surpass Apple last week as the second most valuable company in the U.S. Microsoft earlier this year also eclipsed the iPhone maker on the strength of its so-far successful push into AI.

But analysts have been getting increasingly worried that Apple may be falling too far behind in the rapidly changing AI space, a concern that has been compounded by an uncharacteristically extended slump in the company's sales. Both Google and Samsung already have released smartphone models touting AI features as their main attractions.

That's why analysts such as Dan Ives of Wedbush Securities view Monday's conference as a potential springboard that catapults Apple into another robust phase of growth. Ives believes infusing more AI into the iPhone, iPad and Mac computer will translate into an additional \$450 billion to \$600 billion in market value for Apple.

Monday's conference "represents the most important event for Apple in over a decade as the pressure to bring a generative AI stack of technology for developers and consumers is front and center," Ives wrote in a research note.

Apple definitely could use the boost that AI may be able to provide, particularly for its 13-year-old assistant Siri, which Forrester Research Dipanjan Chatterjee now calls an "oddly unhelpful helper."

Meanwhile, OpenAI's ChatGPT is getting increasingly conversational — so much so that it recently sparked accusations of intentionally copying a piece of AI software voiced by Scarlett Johansson — and Google last month previewed an AI "agent" dubbed Astra that can seemingly see and remember things.

Besides using AI to spruce up Siri, Apple may also team up with OpenAI to bring some elements of ChatGPT to the iPhone, according to a wide range of unconfirmed reports leading up to Monday's conference.

This will be the second straight year that Apple has created a stir at its developers conference by using it to usher in its entrance into a trendy form of technology that other companies already had been making inroads.

Last year, Apple provided an early look at its mixed-reality headset, the Vision Pro, which wasn't released until early this year carrying a \$3,500 price tag that has been a major impediment to gaining much traction. Nevertheless, Apple's push into mixed reality, tweaked with a twist that it bills as "spatial computing," has raised hopes that what is currently a niche technology will turn into a huge market.

Part of the optimism stems from Apple's history of releasing technology later than others and then using sleek designs and services combined with slick marketing campaigns to overcome its tardy start to unleash new trends.

"Apple's early reticence toward AI was entirely on brand," Forrester's Chatterjee wrote in a preview of the developers conference. "The company has always been famously obsessed with what its offerings did for its customers rather than how it did it."

Bringing more AI into the iPhone, in particular, will likely raise privacy issues — a topic where Apple has gone to great lengths to assure its loyal customer base that it can be trusted not to peer too deeply into their personal lives.

One way Apple could reassure consumers that the iPhone won't be used to spy on them is to leverage its own chip technology so most AI-powered features are handled on the device itself instead of remote data centers, often called "the cloud." Going that route also would help protect Apple's profit margins because AI technology through the cloud is far more expensive than when it is run solely on a device.

What does Israel's rescue of 4 captives, and the killing of 274 Palestinians, mean for truce talks?

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel's dramatic weekend rescue of four hostages from the Gaza Strip, in an operation that local health officials say killed 274 Palestinians, came at a sensitive time in the 8-month-old war, as Israel and Hamas weigh a U.S. proposal for a cease-fire and the release of the remaining captives.

Both sides face renewed pressure to make a deal: The complex rescue is unlikely to be replicated on a scale needed to bring back scores of remaining hostages, and it was a powerful reminder for Israelis that there are still surviving captives held in harsh conditions. Hamas now has four fewer bargaining chips.

But they could also dig in, as they repeatedly have over months of indirect negotiations mediated by the United States, Qatar and Egypt. Hamas is still insisting on an end to the war as part of any agreement, while Israel says it is still committed to destroying the militant group.

Here is a look at the fallout from the operation and how it might affect cease-fire talks:

ELATION, AND MOUNTING CALLS FOR A DEALThe rescue operation was Israel's most successful since the start of the war, bringing home four of the roughly 250 captives seized by Hamas in its Oct. 7 cross-border attack, including Noa Argamani, who became an icon of the struggle to free the hostages.

The raid also killed at least 274 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, deepening the suffering of people in Gaza who have had to endure the brutal war and a humanitarian catastrophe. The ministry does not distinguish between fighters and civilians in its tallies.

The rescue was met with elation in Israel, which is still reeling from the Hamas attack and agonizing over the fate of the 80 captives and the remains of over 40 others still held in Gaza. Israeli hard-liners are likely to seize on it as proof that military pressure alone will bring the rest back.

But only three other hostages have been freed by military force since the start of the war. Another three were mistakenly killed by Israeli forces after they escaped on their own, and Hamas says others have been killed in Israeli airstrikes.

"If anyone believes that yesterday's operation absolves the government of the need to strike a deal, they are living a fantasy," Israeli columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in the mass-selling Yediot Aharonot newspaper. "There are people out there who need to be saved, and the sooner the better."

Even the Israeli army's spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, acknowledged the limits of military force. "What will bring most of the hostages back home alive is a deal," he told reporters.

Over 100 hostages were released during a weeklong cease-fire last year, in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, and reaching a similar agreement is still widely seen as the only way of getting the rest of the hostages back. Hours after Saturday's rescue, tens of thousands of Israelis attended protests in Tel Aviv calling for such a deal.

U.S. President Joe Biden last week announced a proposal for a phased plan for a cease-fire and hostage release, setting in motion the administration's most concentrated diplomatic push for a truce.

Biden described it as an Israeli proposal, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly questioned some aspects of it, particularly its call for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a lasting truce. His ultranationalist coalition partners have threatened to bring down his government if he ends the war without destroying Hamas.

That appears to have only deepened suspicions on the part of Hamas, which has demanded international guarantees that the war will end. It's unclear if such guarantees have been offered, and Hamas has not yet officially responded to the plan.

NETANYAHU SEEKS TO GAINThe rescue operation was a rare win for Netanyahu, who many Israelis blame for the security failures leading up to the Oct. 7 attack and the failure to return the hostages despite months of grinding war.

He has reveled in the operation's success, rushing Saturday to the hospital where the freed hostages were held and meeting with each of them as cameras rolled. Recent opinion polls had already shown him making some progress in rehabilitating his image, and the rescue operation will help.

But as the elation fades, he will still face heavy pressure from an American administration that wants to wind the war down and an ultranationalist base that wants to vanquish Hamas at all costs. His main political opponent, the retired general Benny Gantz, quit the emergency wartime coalition on Sunday, leaving Netanyahu even more beholden to the hard-liners.

Netanyahu is already facing criticism from some of the families of deceased hostages, who say they received no such visits and accuse him of only taking credit for the war's successes. Israel will also likely face heightened international pressure over the raid's high Palestinian death toll.

"The success in freeing four hostages is a magnificent tactical victory that has not changed our deplorable strategic situation," columnist Ben Caspit wrote in Israel's Maariv daily.

It all makes for a tough balancing act, even for someone like Netanyahu, who friends and foes alike consider to be a master politician.

The operation could provide the kind of boost with the Israeli public that would allow him to justify making a deal with Hamas. Or he might conclude that time is on his side, and that he can drive a harder bargain with the militants as they grapple with a major setback.

HAMAS LOSES BARGAINING CHIPS Hamas has lost four precious bargaining chips it had hoped to trade for high-profile Palestinian prisoners. Argamani, widely known from a video showing her pleading for her life as militants dragged her away on a motorcycle, was a particularly significant loss for Hamas.

The raid may have also dealt a blow to Hamas' morale. In the Oct. 7 attack, Hamas managed to humiliate a country with a far superior army, and since then it has repeatedly regrouped despite devastating military operations across Gaza.

But the fact that Israel was able to mount a complex rescue operation in broad daylight in the center of a crowded urban area has at least temporarily restored some of the mystique that Israel's security forces lost on Oct. 7.

The operation also refocused global attention on the hostage crisis at a time when the U.S. is rallying world pressure on Hamas to accept the cease-fire deal.

But Hamas has a long history of withstanding pressure from Israel and others — often at enormous cost to Palestinians. The militants may conclude that it's best to use the remaining hostages to end the war while they still can — or they might just look for better places to hide them.

What's Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage, and why is it significant for Muslims?

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

Once a year, Muslim pilgrims flowing into Saudi Arabia unite in a series of religious rituals and acts of worship as they perform the Hajj, one of the pillars of Islam. As they fulfill a religious obligation, they immerse themselves in what can be a spiritual experience of a lifetime for them and a chance to seek God's forgiveness and the erasure of past sins.

Here's a look at the pilgrimage and its significance to Muslims.

WHAT IS HAJJ? Hajj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia that is required once in a lifetime of every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to make it. Some Muslims make the journey more than once.

Hajj is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, in addition to the profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

WHEN IS HAJJ? The Hajj occurs once a year during the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijja, the 12th and final month of the Islamic calendar year. This year, Hajj will take place this month.

WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAJJ TO MUSLIMS? For pilgrims, performing Hajj fulfills a religious obligation, but it's also a deeply spiritual experience of a lifetime for many. It's seen as a chance to seek God's forgiveness for past sins, to grow closer to God and to walk in the footsteps of prophets.

Communally, Hajj unites Muslims of diverse races, ethnicities, languages and economic classes from around the world in performing religious rituals and acts of worshipping God at the same time and place.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 41 of 75

That leaves many feeling a sense of unity, connection, humility and equality. Pilgrims also show up with their own personal appeals, wishes and experiences.

Many pilgrims bring with them prayer requests from family and friends that they would like to be said on their behalf.

Some spend years hoping and praying to one day perform Hajj or saving up money and waiting for a permit to embark on the trip.

In 2019, nearly 2.5 million Muslims performed Hajj before the coronavirus pandemic disrupted religious and other gatherings the world over and took its toll on the Islamic pilgrimage. Last year's Hajj was the first to be held without COVID-19 restrictions since the start of the pandemic in 2020.

Ahead of the journey, preparations may include packing various essentials for the physically demanding trip, seeking tips from those who've performed the pilgrimage before, attending lectures or consuming other educational material on how to properly perform a series of Hajj rituals as well as spiritually readying oneself.

At times, pilgrims brave intense heat or other challenging conditions during the pilgrimage.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RITUALS THAT PILGRIMS PERFORM? Pilgrims make the intention to perform Hajj and they enter a state of "ihram." Being in ihram includes abiding by certain rules and prohibitions. For instance, men are not to wear regular sewn or stitched clothes that encircle the body, such as shirts, during ihram; there are simple ihram cloth garments for men instead. Scholars say the intention is to discard luxuries and vanity, shed worldly status symbols and immerse the pilgrim in humility and devotion to God.

A spiritual highlight of Hajj for many is the standing on the plain of Arafat, where pilgrims praise God, plead for forgiveness and make supplications.

Other rituals include performing "tawaf," circumambulating, or circling the Kaaba in Mecca counterclockwise seven times.

Muslims do not worship the Kaaba, a cube-shaped structure that they consider the metaphorical house of God; it's the focal point toward which devout Muslims face during their daily prayers from anywhere in the world.

Pilgrims also trace the path of Hagar, or Hajar, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim, Abraham to Jews and Christians, who Muslims believe ran between two hills seven times searching for water for her son.

Among other rituals, pilgrims throw pebbles in a symbolic stoning of the devil.

WHAT IS EID AL-ADHA? Eid al-Adha, or the "Feast of Sacrifice," is the Islamic holiday that begins on the 10th day of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijja, during Hajj.

Celebrated by Muslims around the world, Eid al-Adha marks Prophet Ibrahim's test of faith and his willingness to sacrifice his son as an act of submission to God. During the festive holiday, Muslims slaughter sheep or cattle and distribute some meat to the poor.

Celtics beat Mavericks 105-98, take 2-0 lead in NBA Finals as series heads to Dallas

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Jrue Holiday led the scoring. Derrick White added a chase-down block. Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown pitched in, too — with their passing and defense.

The Mavericks can stop worrying about who Boston's best player is. Everyone is contributing to the Celtics' quest for an unprecedented 18th NBA championship.

Holiday had 26 points and 11 rebounds, and White sprinted down the court to swat away the Mavericks' last chance on Sunday night as Boston beat Dallas 105-98 to take a 2-0 lead in the NBA Finals.

Tatum made up for a rough shooting night with 12 assists and nine rebounds to go with his 18 points. Brown scored 21 with three steals, White had 18 points and three steals, and Payton Pritchard's only basket of the game was a banked half-courter to beat the third quarter buzzer and give Boston an 83-74 lead.

"That's why they are the No. 1 team in the NBA with the No. 1 record," said Mavericks star Luka Doncic, who scored 32 with 11 rebounds and 11 assists — the first NBA Finals triple-double in Dallas franchise

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 42 of 75

history. "They have a lot of great players. Basically, anybody can get off."

Doncic, who was listed as questionable to play less than two hours before the opening tipoff, had his 10th career playoff triple-double. But he scored only three points in the fourth, converting a three-point play with 1:15 left as Dallas scored nine in a row to cut a 14-point deficit to 103-98.

After Derrick Jones Jr. blocked Tatum's dunk attempt, White ran down the court, joining with Brown to block P.J. Washington's potential dunk. Brown made a layup at the other end, and then Doncic missed a one-footed, running floater from 3-point range with 28 seconds left, ending Dallas' last chance at a comeback.

"It's not all on him. It's a team," Dallas coach Jason Kidd said of Doncic, who had been battling chest, knee and ankle injuries. "He put us in a position. He was really good tonight. Unfortunately, we just couldn't get over the hump. We've got to find someone to join Luka and (Kyrie Irving) in that scoring category."

Games 3 and 4 are Wednesday and Friday in Dallas; Boston has not lost on the road this postseason. It was the ninth time the Celtics have won the opening pair in the NBA Finals: They have won the previous eight, and have never been forced to a Game 7 in any of them.

A day after Kidd attempted to sow dissension in the Celtics locker room by calling Brown — not Tatum, an All-NBA first-teamer — the team's best player, Boston showed why it doesn't matter. The two All-Stars combined to make 2 of 12 3-point attempts, but filled up the box score in other ways.

"How they play together is sacred, and something that can't be broken," Holiday said. "I don't prefer one or the other, I prefer both. Because they're both superstars, and they're showing it on the biggest stage in the world."

Kristaps Porzingis limped his way to 12 points for top-seeded Boston. Tatum was 6 for 22 shooting and 1 of 7 from 3-point range; the Celtics were 10 for 39 from long distance overall.

"I'm really tired of hearing about one guy or this guy or that guy and everybody trying to make it out to be anything other than Celtic basketball," Boston coach Joe Mazzulla said. "Everybody that stepped on that court today made winning plays on both ends of the floor."

Unlike their 107-89 victory in Game 1, when Boston went 7 for 15 from 3-point range in the first quarter to sprint to a 17-point lead, the Celtics missed their first eight attempts from long range on Sunday. Dallas led the entire first quarter.

Tatum was scoreless in the first and had only five at halftime, when he was still 0 for 3 from 3-point range. Boston was still just 5 for 30 from long distance when Pritchard banked in a half-courter at the third-quarter buzzer to give Boston an 83-74 lead.

That excited the crowd, which previously had spent most of its time serenading Irving with boos — and semi-vulgar chants. Before the game, the scoreboard showed Irving's postgame quote from Game 1, where he said he thought the crowd would be louder.

The fans roared.

Irving, who scored 16 points, has lost 12 games in a row against the Celtics.

"A little disappointed in myself not being able to convert a lot more of my opportunities in the lane," he said. "My teammates look for me to convert a lot of shots and lessen the burden not only on Luka but the entire team."

Nevada has a plan to expand electronic voting. That concerns election security experts

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

SCHURZ, Nevada (AP) — Members of the Walker River Paiute Tribe have watched the boundaries of their land recede over time along with the waters of the lake that are central to their identity, threatening the cultural symbol that gave the tribe its name — Agai Dicutta, or Trout Eaters.

Not wanting to cede their voice, tribal leaders have been making a push for expanded voting rights. That effort includes filing a lawsuit on behalf of all Nevada tribes seeking polling places on tribal lands and access to early voting.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 43 of 75

"Tribes shouldn't have to keep filing lawsuits just to vote on their own lands," said Elveda Martinez, 65, a tribal member and longtime voting advocate. "It should be more accessible."

The state has now granted the Walker River Paiutes and other tribes in Nevada a new right that advocates hope will greatly expand voting access for a community that gained U.S. citizenship only a century ago.

Voting on reservations across the country has historically been difficult, with tribal voters sometimes having to travel dozens of miles to their polling place. Slow mail service and lack of a physical address, common on tribal lands, have proved challenging.

The new process — the ability to cast ballots electronically — has the potential to significantly boost turnout among all tribes in Nevada. But what some see as a small measure of justice to equalize voting rights raises security concerns for others, with implications far beyond Nevada's 28 tribal communities as the nation braces for what is expected to be another close and contentious presidential election in November.

Under the plan, tribal members in Nevada who live on a reservation or colony can receive a ballot electronically through an online system set up by the state and then return it electronically. Experts warn that such voting — when a completed ballot is sent back either by email, through an online portal or by fax — carries risks of ballots being intercepted or manipulated and should be used sparingly, if at all.

"At this point in the United States, it's a relatively small number of ballots that are coming through that way," said Larry Norden, an election expert with the Brennan Center for Justice. "But we should be very concerned — both from actual security risks but also from a public confidence point of view — about expanding this."

'HIGH-RISK ACTIVITY' While electronic voting may be limited at the moment, it's available across much of the country to specific groups of voters. More than 30 states allow certain voters to return their ballots either by fax, email or an online portal, according to data collected by the National Conference of State Legislatures and Verified Voting, a nonpartisan group that studies state voting systems.

In most cases, electronic ballot return is available only to U.S. military and overseas voters. But it's been expanded in recent years to include voters with disabilities in a dozen states. Nevada is believed to be the first to add tribes.

Cal Boone, the new tribal outreach coordinator for the Nevada Secretary of State's Office and a member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, has begun meeting with tribes around the state to share details about the process, which he believes could ease a legacy of barriers that has left some reluctant to vote.

"In past years, tribes didn't have access to vote in multiple ways. You had to rely on the mail system to cast your vote or otherwise drive out to great lengths to vote," Boone said. "What we are seeing in Nevada is really powerful, and it really sets the stage for what other states throughout the country can be doing to help support tribes."

But the solution comes with risks.

In a 2020 memo to election officials, the FBI and other federal agencies assessed the risk of sending ballots electronically to be low, but allowing those ballots to be returned electronically was high. The memo highlights recommended security practices for internet-connected systems, including isolating computers that handle electronic ballots from ones that are used for other aspects of voting.

"The information provided should be considered a starting point," the memo states. "Even with these technical security considerations, electronic ballot return remains a high-risk activity."

Earlier this year, the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, which is charged with helping protect the nation's election systems, said in an online post that the memo was being redistributed to ensure state officials and policymakers are "fully informed of risks" associated with electronic ballot return.

Susannah Goodman, director of election security for Common Cause, is among those concerned that there are no federal guidelines for such systems and no independent reviews, unlike what's in place for voting machines and ballot tabulators.

An attempt to create independent standards ended in late 2022 after a group of experts determined it wasn't possible at the time given the technology and cyber risks.

'CONFIDENT IN OUR SYSTEM' Kim Wyman, the former top election official in Washington state, initially

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 44 of 75

supported electronic voting as a military spouse, but said she grew wary after taking over as secretary of state. Her attempt to persuade lawmakers to repeal it was unsuccessful.

Wyman said she worries something could happen to the ballot in transit and what that would mean for public confidence in elections. She believes the safest bet is for voters who receive ballots electronically to print them out and return them by mail.

"Election officials are in a hard spot because they want to provide accessibility and they want to make sure that every eligible American has a right to participate in an election," Wyman said. "But they have to do it in a way where they're also securing those ballots and making sure that that voter's ballot is counted the way the voter cast it."

Nevada Secretary of State Cisco Aguilar said he knows the process carries risks, but sees everything related to elections as having some risk. He pointed to the federal government's action in 2017 to designate the nation's voting systems as critical infrastructure, just like dams, banks and nuclear power plants.

The state's electronic ballot return system was designed by the state with security measures intended to verify eligibility, authenticate voters and their ballots, and ensure secure communications, he said. There are steps to ensure voters are not casting multiple ballots, and the system undergoes regular security reviews and updates.

"I'm confident in our system," Aguilar said.

He expressed frustration about what he described as a lack of national leadership on this and other election issues, saying there should be less criticism and more work and funding to address concerns.

"The federal government has access to so many experts, they have access to resources. They should be providing a leadership position to give us a path forward," Aguilar said. "To think backward and to scare us is not the appropriate way to do this."

STATES DIVIDED OVER SECURITY CONCERNS So far, few Nevada voters have opted in. As of Friday, 255 voters had submitted a ballot electronically — none of them tribal members — ahead of Tuesday's primary. More than half of those were registered in Clark County, which includes Las Vegas and is the state's most populous.

"Folks that participate find it very convenient and very easy to use," Clark County Registrar Lorena Portillo said.

Ahead of the 2022 midterm elections, just over 2,500 voters returned their ballots electronically through the state system. Among them was Ramona Coker, who is blind. Coker said she no longer needs help to vote and can cast a ballot on her phone, which is equipped with screen-reading technology allowing her to follow audio prompts to make her selections.

"It feels very American. It feels like you have done your part and no one else has had an influence in that," said Coker, who works for a Reno-area nonprofit.

She believes the challenges faced by voters with disabilities outweigh the potential risks of electronic balloting.

"We're always going to have bad-faith actors out there, no matter what delivery form or what return form that we use," Coker said. "And if you're always worried about that, then you never cast a vote again."

States led by both Democrats and Republicans have authorized electronic ballot returns, with varying rules. Alaska, California, Florida and Oklahoma limit the process to military and overseas voters and only permit electronic return by fax. In Texas, astronauts can use an online portal to cast their ballots. In West Virginia, first responders on duty outside their county also are eligible.

"Having been in the military, I've seen intelligence transmitted via the internet. We transmit nuclear codes via the internet," West Virginia Secretary of State Mac Warner said. "If we can do that, we can certainly get a secure ballot and transmit across the internet."

Not all states have embraced the practice. In Minnesota, officials considered it but ultimately decided against it.

"In light of recent security concerns, it's on ice," said Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon. "Some-day -- if those security considerations are addressed and if the concerns and objections of the federal agencies can be overcome -- we would definitely consider it because as a matter of convenience, it would

probably make a difference.”

DIDN'T FEEL 'OUR VOICE EVEN MATTERED'The Walker River Paiute reservation is along a scenic stretch of highway between Las Vegas and Reno, about two hours south of the state capital in a vast stretch of desert surrounded by distant mountain peaks.

On a late spring day, sprinklers prepare alfalfa fields that dot the reservation while wild horses graze in nearby foothills. There are no grocery stores, restaurants or hotels, and the nearest town is about 30 miles away.

Although the tribe has long had its own polling location — something other tribes in the state have not — the reservation's remoteness has sometimes added to a sense of political isolation. Some tribal members have not always seen the point in voting.

“Because of the historical abuses our people have faced, we were very timid to even take part in voting or elections,” tribal Chair Andrea Martinez said. “For many years, we didn't feel like our voice even mattered.”

The prospect of casting ballots electronically is a step Martinez and other tribal leaders welcome, but they're not sure it will make a major difference, at least initially. Internet access is spotty on the reservation, as is electricity because of aging utility poles.

“Although we, through the state, can access online voting, who knows if we'll even have electricity or internet that day?” Martinez said.

Teresa McNally, who oversees the election office in Mineral County, which includes the Walker River reservation, plans to hold a meeting with tribal members this year to explain the new system.

One thing she wants to emphasize is the focus on security, including the measures protecting the electronic ballot return system.

“What it takes to even get into our internet system here, it's crazy,” she said.

Courtney Quintero, a tribal member and chair of the board overseeing tribal elections, said she planned to use the new system once she learned more about it, but acknowledged others may be hesitant.

“Trust is a big thing with our community,” she said.

Trump will speak to a Christian group that calls for abortion to be 'eradicated entirely'

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and PETER SMITH Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Donald Trump on Monday will address a Christian group that calls for abortion to be “eradicated entirely,” as the presumptive Republican nominee again takes on an issue that Democrats want to make a focus of this year's presidential election.

The former president is scheduled to speak virtually at an event hosted by The Danbury Institute, which is meeting in Indianapolis in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Danbury Institute, an association of churches, Christians and organizations, says on its website that it believes “that the greatest atrocity facing our generation today is the practice of abortion” and it “must be ended.”

“We will not rest until it is eradicated entirely,” the group said.

Trump has repeatedly taken credit for the overturning of a federally guaranteed right to abortion — having nominated three of the justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade* — but has resisted supporting a national abortion ban and says he wants to leave the issue to the states.

Both the Southern Baptists whom Trump will address Monday and Republicans at large are split on abortion politics, with some calling for immediate, complete abortion bans and others more open to incremental tactics. Polls over the last several years have found a majority of Americans support some access to abortion, and abortion-rights groups have won several statewide votes since *Roe* was overturned, including in conservative-led states like Kansas and Ohio.

Like the GOP, the Southern Baptist Convention has moved steadily to the right since the 1980s, and its members were in the vanguard of the wider religious movement that strongly supported Republican presidents from Ronald Reagan to Trump. The Conservative Baptist Network, one of the event's sponsors,

wants to move the conservative denomination even further to the right.

Although they criticized President Bill Clinton's sexual behavior in the 1990s, Southern Baptists and other evangelicals have supported Trump. That has continued despite allegations of sexual misconduct, multiple divorces and now his conviction on 34 charges in a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election through a hush money payment to a porn actor who said the two had sex. Trump will give his address on the same day he appears virtually for a required pre-sentencing interview with New York probation officers.

Many Southern Baptists say they see him as the only alternative to a Democratic agenda they abhor.

H. Sharayah Colter, spokesperson for The Danbury Institute, said in a statement that the presidential race was a "binary choice" and said Trump has "demonstrated a willingness to protect the value of life even when politically unpopular."

And Albert Mohler, longtime president of the denomination's flagship seminary and once an outspoken Clinton critic, wrote a column after Trump's conviction attacking Democrats for supporting transgender rights.

"Say what you will about Donald Trump and his sex scandals, he doesn't confuse male and female," wrote Mohler, who is a listed speaker for Monday's event, along with others from the denomination's right flank.

Trump has said he would not sign a national abortion ban and in an interview on the Fox News Channel last week, when commenting on the way some states are enshrining abortion rights and others are restricting them, said that "the people are deciding and in many ways, it's a beautiful thing to watch."

For over a year until he announced his position this spring, Trump had backed away from endorsing any specific national limit on abortion, unlike many other Republicans who eventually ended their presidential campaigns. Trump has repeatedly said the issue can be politically tricky and suggested he would "negotiate" a policy that would include exceptions for rape, incest and to protect the life of the mother.

Democrats and President Joe Biden's campaign have tried to tie Trump to the most conservative state-level bans on abortion as well as a recent Alabama Supreme Court ruling that would have restricted access to in vitro fertilization and other fertility procedures that are broadly popular.

"Four more years of Donald Trump means empowering organizations like the Danbury Institute who want to ban abortion nationally and punish women who have abortions," said Sarafina Chitika, a spokesperson for Biden's campaign. "Trump brags that he is responsible for overturning Roe, he thinks the extreme state bans happening now because of him are 'working very brilliantly,' and if he's given the chance, he will sign a national abortion ban. These are the stakes this November."

When asked about his appearance before the Danbury Institute, Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said Trump "has been very clear: he supports the rights of states to determine the laws on this issue and supports the three exceptions for rape, incest, and life of the mother."

Leavitt also said, "President Trump is committed to addressing groups with diverse opinions on all of the issues, as evidenced by his recent speech at the Libertarian Convention, his meetings with the unions, and his efforts to campaign in diverse neighborhoods across the country."

Martha's Vineyard is about to run out of pot. That's led to a lawsuit and a scramble by regulators

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

VINEYARD HAVEN, Mass. (AP) — An 81-year-old woman on Martha's Vineyard drove up to the Island Time dispensary last week seeking her usual order of pot. But owner Geoff Rose had to tell her the cupboard was bare — he'd been forced to temporarily close three weeks earlier after selling every last bud and gummy.

Unless something changes, the island's only other cannabis dispensary will sell all its remaining supplies by September at the latest, and Martha's Vineyard will run out of pot entirely, affecting more than 230 registered medical users and thousands more recreational ones.

The problem boils down to location. Although Massachusetts voters opted to legalize marijuana more

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 47 of 75

than seven years ago, the state's Cannabis Control Commission has taken the position that transporting pot across the ocean — whether by boat or plane — risks running afoul of federal laws. That's despite a counterargument that there are routes to Martha's Vineyard that remain entirely within state territorial waters.

The conundrum led Rose to file a lawsuit last month against the commission, which now says that finding a solution to the island's pot problem has become a top priority. Three of the five commissioners visited Martha's Vineyard on Thursday to hear directly from affected residents.

The tension between conflicting state and federal regulations has played out across the country as states have legalized pot. California law, for example, expressly allows cannabis to be transported to stores on Catalina Island, while Hawaii last year dealt with its own difficulties transporting medical marijuana between islands by amending a law to allow it.

Federal authorities have also been shifting their position. The Justice Department last month moved to reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug, though still not a legal one for recreational use.

For several years, sellers on Martha's Vineyard and the nearby island of Nantucket thought they had a solution. They grew and tested their own pot, eliminating the need to import any from across the water.

But Fine Fettle, a Connecticut-based company that had been the sole commercial grower on Martha's Vineyard and also runs the island's other dispensary, told Rose last year that it planned to stop growing pot on Martha's Vineyard and would close its store when its existing supplies ran out.

Benjamin Zachs, who runs Fine Fettle's Massachusetts operations, said that when the company opened in Martha's Vineyard, it knew it was illegal to transport marijuana across federal waterways.

"Candidly, when it started, we thought this was a good thing for business," Zachs said. "A captured market."

But over time, pot became cheaper with more varied options on the Massachusetts mainland, while the costs of employing testers on the island rose, making it uneconomic to continue such a niche operation, Zachs said. He added that many people bring their own supplies over on the ferry.

But for people living on the island, taking the ferry to buy pot can be expensive and time-consuming. There's no dispensary in Woods Hole, where the ferry lands, so they either need to take an Uber from there or bring over a car, and space for vehicles is in hot demand over summer. That leaves medical users such as Sally Rizzo wondering how they will access marijuana. She finds the drug helps relieve her back problems and insomnia.

"The nice thing about getting it at a dispensary is that you can tell them specifically what you're looking for, and know the milligrams, and know the potency, and what's in it," said Rizzo, who submitted an affidavit in support of Rose's lawsuit.

Rose, 77, has lived on Martha's Vineyard for more than 20 years and opened his Island Time store three years ago. For now, he's keeping his core staff of five on the payroll. The dispensary's green logo looks like a hippyish take on the famous Starbucks emblem, with a relaxed woman smelling a bloom under the words "Stop and smell the flower." But Rose is anything but relaxed these days.

"I'm on the verge of going out of business," he said. "While I acknowledge the efforts of the commission to address the issue, I really felt that the only way to get some immediate relief was to file a lawsuit. I was not going to sit on the sidelines. I had to do something."

Rose was joined in his lawsuit by the Green Lady dispensary on Nantucket, which for now continues to have its own homegrown supply but also faces the same high costs of onsite testing.

In the lawsuit, Rose outlines how he told the commission in November that his business faced an existential crisis because Fine Fettle would no longer be growing pot. In March, he took a chance by buying some pot on the mainland and shipping it across on the ferry.

But the commission ordered Rose to stop selling the product he'd shipped over, putting it into an administrative hold. The commission eventually released the marijuana a few weeks later but told Rose he couldn't ship over any more. In his suit, Rose complains about the commission's "arbitrary, unreasonable, and inconsistent policy against transport over state territorial waters."

Island Time is represented by Vicente, a firm that specializes in cannabis cases. It agreed to delay an

emergency injunction against the commission until June 12 after the commission said it would enter into settlement discussions.

"We're cautiously optimistic that we'll be able to reach resolution, but if we can't, we'll be prepared to make the arguments in court," said Vicente lawyer Adam Fine.

Until last week, the commission maintained that it wouldn't comment on pending litigation, other than to say there was no special accommodation to allow pot to be transported from the mainland to the islands. But when commissioners traveled to Martha's Vineyard, they assured residents they were all on the same page.

"Obviously, this is a super priority for us, because we don't want to see the collapse of an industry on the islands," said commissioner Kimberly Roy.

She said nobody could have foreseen that there was going to be such a supply chain issue and they wanted to get it resolved.

"It's a funny juxtaposition," she said. "The entire industry is federally illegal. But that's evolving, too. We are just trying to stay responsive and nimble."

Blinken returns to Mideast as Israel-Hamas cease-fire proposal hangs in balance after hostage rescue

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

CAIRO (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken returns to the Middle East this week as a proposed Israel-Hamas cease-fire deal hangs in the balance after the dramatic rescue of four Israeli hostages held in Gaza in a major military raid and turmoil in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

With no firm response yet from Hamas to the proposal received 10 days ago, Blinken on Monday will start his eighth diplomatic mission to the region since the conflict began in October. He will meet with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi in Cairo before traveling to Israel, Jordan and Qatar.

While President Joe Biden, Blinken and other U.S. officials have praised the hostage rescue, the operation resulted in the deaths of a large number of Palestinian civilians that may complicate the cease-fire push by emboldening Israel and hardening Hamas' resolve to carry on fighting in the war it initiated with its Oct. 7 attacks in Israel.

"It's hard to say how Hamas will process this particular operation and what it will do to its determination about whether it will say yes or not," Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said Sunday. "We have not gotten a formal answer from Hamas at this time."

In his talks with el-Sissi and Qatari leaders, whose countries are the main mediators with Hamas in the cease-fire negotiations, Blinken will stress the importance of persuading the militants to accept the three-phase proposal on the table. The plan calls for the release of more hostages and a temporary pause in hostilities that could lead to the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

"We are hopeful that with enough of a chorus, the international community all speaking with one voice, Hamas will get to the right answer," Sullivan told ABC's "This Week."

But Hamas may not be the only obstacle.

Although the deal has been described as an Israeli initiative and thousands of Israelis have demonstrated in support of the deal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed skepticism, saying what has been presented publicly is not accurate and rejecting calls for Israel to cease all fighting until Hamas is eradicated.

Netanyahu's far-right allies have threatened to collapse his government if he implements the plan, and Benny Gantz, a popular centrist, resigned on Sunday from the three-member War Cabinet after saying he would do if the prime minister did not formulate a new plan for postwar Gaza. In the aftermath of the hostage rescue, Netanyahu had urged him not to step down.

Blinken has met with Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Gantz and Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid on nearly all of his previous trips to Israel. Officials said Gantz's resignation would not necessarily affect Blinken's schedule.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 49 of 75

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Friday that Blinken would use the trip to "discuss how the cease-fire proposal would benefit both Israelis and Palestinians."

Miller said the deal would not only alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza but also set the stage for a reduction in tension along the Israel-Lebanon border and create conditions for broader Israeli integration with its Arab neighbors, strengthening Israel's long-term security.

Despite Blinken's roughly once-a-month visits to the region since the war began, the conflict has ground on with more than 36,700 Palestinians killed, according to the Gaza health ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its counts.

Meanwhile, the war has severely hindered the flow of food, medicine and other supplies to Palestinians, who are facing widespread hunger. U.N. agencies say more than 1 million people in Gaza could experience the highest level of starvation by mid-July.

In Jordan, Blinken will participate in an emergency international conference on improving the flow of aid to Gaza.

Trump complains about his teleprompters at a scorching Las Vegas rally

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Former President Donald Trump rallied voters in the scorching heat of Las Vegas, at points telling his supporters to ask for help if needed and appearing irritable with the teleprompters that he said were not working.

The presumptive GOP nominee's campaign hired extra medics, loading up on fans and water bottles and allowed supporters to carry umbrellas to an outdoor rally Sunday in Las Vegas, where temperatures exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). The Clark County Fire Department said most of the medical calls were related to the heat, and six people were sent to a hospital and 24 others were treated on site.

"I don't want anybody going on me. We need every voter. I don't care about you. I just want your vote," he said, adding that he was joking.

Earlier in his speech, he said the campaign would offer help to people who were feeling tired and joked that "everybody," including the U.S. Secret Service, was worried about the safety of the crowds and not about him.

"They never mentioned me. I'm up here sweating like a dog," he said. "This is hard work."

Trump returned to Nevada, one of the top battleground states in the November election, for his second rally since he was found guilty in a hush-money scandal.

The unprecedented conviction of a former president has juiced Trump's fundraising and galvanized his supporters, but it remains to be seen whether it will sway swing voters. Trump is scheduled to be interviewed by New York probation officials via a video conference Monday, a required step before his July sentencing.

Temperatures in the Southwest have cooled since reaching historic highs late last week but remain above normal for this time of year and topped 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) at the rally, which took place at a park with little shade next to the airport.

Well into his speech, Trump said it was "not as bad" as he thought it would be, and said he was angrier with the teleprompters not working well, even when he used to mock President Barack Obama for relying on that device.

"I pay all this money to teleprompter people, and I'd say 20% of the time, they don't work," he said, adding he would not pay the vendor who provided the prompters. "It's a mess."

Campaign organizers handed out water bottles as supporters waited in line to be screened by security officers. Inside the venue, large misting fans, pallets of water and cooling tents were placed around the perimeter.

"This is a dry heat. This ain't nothing for Las Vegas people," Nevada GOP Chair Michael McDonald said. "But what it symbolizes for the rest of the United States — we will walk through hell" to elect Donald Trump.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 50 of 75

McDonald and five other Republicans have been accused of submitting certificates to Congress falsely declaring Trump the winner of Nevada's 2020 presidential election and their trial has been pushed to next year.

Trump said the rioters who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 to contest the election were "victims" of a "set up."

"They were really, more than anything else, they are victims of what happened. All they were doing is protesting a rigged election. That's what they were doing. And then the police say, go in, go in, go in, go in," he said. "What a set up that was. A horrible, horrible thing."

The conspiracy theory that the Jan. 6 rioters were encouraged by law enforcement is widespread on the right but has no basis in fact. Many of those who were at the Capitol on Jan. 6 have said — proudly, publicly, repeatedly — that they did so to help the then-president.

Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the 2020 election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed.

The campaign paid for additional EMS services to be on site in the case of emergency. The Secret Service made an exception to allow people to bring in personal water bottles and umbrellas.

"You know what? It's worth it," said Camille Lombardi, a 65-year-old retired nurse from Henderson in suburban Las Vegas who was seeing Trump in person for the first time. "Too bad it wasn't indoors, but that's OK."

During a Trump rally in Arizona on Thursday, the Phoenix Police Department said 11 people were transported to hospitals, treated and released for heat exhaustion. Many of Trump's supporters waited in line for hours and some were unable to get inside before the venue reached capacity. The temperature reached a record 113 degrees Fahrenheit (45 degrees Celsius) that day.

Trump's Nevada rally, his third in the state this year, came on the tail end of a Western swing that included several high-dollar fundraisers where he was expected to rake in millions of dollars.

Democrat Hillary Clinton won Nevada in 2016 as did President Joe Biden in 2020, but Nevada was the only battleground state where Trump did better against Biden than Clinton. In the 2022 midterms, Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, was the only incumbent governor who did not win reelection.

Trump hopes his strength among working-class voters and growing interest from Latinos will push him to victory in the state.

In a play for Nevada's massive service-sector workforce, Trump said he'd seek to eliminate taxes on tips, a major source of income for food servers, bartenders and others who power glitzy Las Vegas hotels.

The Culinary Union Secretary-Treasurer Ted Pappageorge criticized Trump for making that promise, a measure he said the union has fought for decades.

"Relief is definitely needed for tip earners, but Nevada workers are smart enough to know the difference between real solutions and wild campaign promises from a convicted felon," he said in a statement.

Trump's campaign announced a renewed push for Hispanic voters ahead of the event with a Latino Americans for Trump Coalition. Four of the speakers who warmed up the crowd before Trump took the stage were Hispanic immigrants. _____

Gomez Licon reported from Miami.

UN food agency pauses its aid work at US pier in Gaza over security concerns, in latest setback

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The director of the U.N. World Food Program said Sunday the program has "paused" its distribution of humanitarian aid from an American-built pier off Gaza, saying she was "concerned about the safety of our people" after what had been one of the deadliest days of the war there.

Saturday saw both an Israeli military assault that freed four hostages but left 274 Palestinians and one Israeli commando dead, and, Cindy McCain said, two of WFP's warehouses in Gaza had been "rocketed"

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 51 of 75

and a staffer injured.

Sunday's U.N. announcement of the pause appears the latest setback for the U.S. sea route, set up to try to bring more aid to Gaza's starving people.

The U.S. Agency for International Development described the pause as a step to allow for a security review by the humanitarian community in Gaza. USAID works with the World Food Program and their humanitarian partners in Gaza to distribute food and other aid coming from the U.S.-operated pier.

Completed in mid-May, the U.S. pier was operational for only about a week before being knocked offline by storm damage for two weeks. After repairs, it returned to operation again Saturday, bringing in 1.1 million pounds (492 metric tons) of food and other aid, before McCain said her agency was pausing its humanitarian work there.

The U.N. agency gave no further details, including how long the pause would last. WFP spokespeople did not respond to requests for further details.

Asked about the pier operation during an appearance on CBS's "Face the Nation" McCain said: "Right now we're paused."

"I'm concerned about the safety of our people after the incident yesterday," McCain said, without elaboration. "We also, two of our warehouses, the warehouse complex were rocketed yesterday."

"We've stepped back for the moment," she said, and want "to make sure that we're on safe terms and on safe ground before we'll restart. But the rest of the country is operational. We're doing ... everything we can in the north and the south."

USAID said in a statement to The Associated Press that it was working with other U.S. government officials and with humanitarian groups in Gaza "to ensure that aid can safely and effectively resume movement following completion of the security review that the humanitarian community is currently undertaking."

President Joe Biden in March announced in his State of the Union address that he had directed the U.S. military to set up the temporary pier. The U.S. project was meant to bring in a limited amount of aid into Gaza, where Israeli restrictions on land crossings, and fighting, have brought more than 1 million of Gaza's 2.3 million people near the point of famine.

Saturday's return to operation for the U.S. pier project came the same day that Israel mounted a heavy air and ground assault that rescued four hostages, who had been taken by Hamas during the Oct. 7 attack that launched the war in Gaza.

Pushing back against social media claims after the Israeli military operation, U.S. Central Command said in a tweet Saturday that neither the pier nor any of its equipment, personnel or other assets were used in the Israeli operation. It noted that Israel used an area south of the pier "to safely return hostages."

A core principle of humanitarian groups holds that their work must be independent of the mission of combatants in a conflict zone, so as to keep aid operations and aid workers from becoming targets.

USAID said in a separate statement Saturday that no humanitarian workers were involved in the Israeli operation.

Speaking of the "rocketing" of the WFP warehouses, McCain said Sunday that one staffer was injured but "everybody else is fine."

"That's why a cease-fire is necessary. That's why we need to stop this," so that aid from her program and other organizations can flow into Gaza "at scale."

Macron dissolves the French parliament and calls a snap election after defeat in EU vote

By SYLVIE CORBET and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — President Emmanuel Macron dissolved the lower house of France's parliament in a surprise announcement sending voters back to the polls in the coming weeks to choose lawmakers, after his party was handed a humbling defeat by the far-right in the European elections Sunday.

The legislative elections will take place in two rounds on June 30 and July 7.

The announcement came after the first projected results from France put the far-right National Rally

party well ahead in the European Union's parliamentary elections, handing a chastening loss to Macron's pro-European centrists, according to French opinion poll institutes.

Marine Le Pen's anti-immigration, nationalist party was estimated to get around 31%-32% of the votes, a historic result more than double the share of Macron's Renaissance party, which was projected to reach around 15%.

Macron himself wasn't a candidate in the EU elections and his term as president still runs for three more years.

He said the decision was "serious" but showed his "confidence in our democracy, in letting the sovereign people have their say."

"In the next few days, I'll be saying what I think is the right direction for the nation. I've heard your message, your concerns, and I won't leave them unanswered," he said.

In latest legislative elections in 2022, Macron's centrist party won the most seats but lost its majority at the National Assembly, forcing lawmakers into political maneuvering to pass bills.

With Sunday's decision, he is taking a big risk with a move that could backfire and increase the chances of Le Pen to eventually take power.

A scenario in which an opposition party would eventually win a parliament majority could lead to a fraught power-sharing situation called "cohabitation," with Macron to name a prime minister with different views.

Le Pen, who head the National Rally group at the National Assembly, "welcomed" Macron's move.

"We're ready for it," said Le Pen, who was the runner-up to Macron in the last two presidential elections. "We're ready to exercise power if the French people place their trust in us in these future legislative elections. We're ready to turn the country around, ready to defend the interests of the French, ready to put an end to mass immigration, ready to make the purchasing power of the French a priority."

The EU elections results were a hard blow for Macron, who has been advocating for Europe-wide efforts to defend Ukraine and the need for the EU to boost its own defenses and industry.

The National Rally's lead candidate for the EU elections, Jordan Bardella, campaigned for limiting free movement of migrants by carrying out national border controls and dialing back EU climate rules. The party no longer wants to leave the EU and the euro, but aims to weaken it from within.

"Tonight, our compatriots have expressed a desire for change," Bardella said. "Emmanuel Macron is tonight a weakened president."

An official at Macron's office said the decision to dissolve the National Assembly was justified by the "historic score of the far-right" that could not be ignored and the current "parliamentarian disorder."

"You're never wrong when you give the people a say," said the official, who spoke anonymously in line with the practice of Macron's office.

EU elections' projections also show a resurgence of the Socialist Party, with about 14% of the votes. The party campaigned on more ambitious climate policies and protections for European businesses and workers, with about 14% of the votes.

Reacting to Macron's announcement, far-left politician Francois Ruffin called on all leaders from the left, including the Greens to unite under a single "Popular Front" banner. "To avoid the worse, to win," he wrote on X.

France is electing 81 members of the European Parliament, which has 720 seats in total.

Bill would rename NYC subway stop after Stonewall, a landmark in LGBTQ+ rights movement

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York City subway station would be renamed to commemorate the Stonewall riots that galvanized the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement, under legislation approved by state lawmakers as they wrapped up their session this month.

The state Legislature approved a bill Wednesday directing the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to change the name of the Christopher Street-Sheridan Square subway station in Greenwich Village to the Christopher Street-Stonewall National Monument Station.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 53 of 75

"This change will memorialize the history of the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement and inspire NY to demand justice and equality for all," state Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, a Manhattan Democrat who sponsored the proposal, wrote on the social platform X following the Senate's passage of the measure.

The bill now heads to Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul for her approval. Her office said late Sunday it will review the legislation.

The Stonewall Inn was raided by police June 28, 1969, sparking a riot and several days of protests that marked a groundbreaking moment in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights in the country.

At the time, showing same-sex affection or dressing in a way deemed gender-inappropriate could get people arrested and led to bars that served them losing liquor licenses.

Today, Stonewall Inn is a National Historic Landmark, with patrons flocking to the site each June, when New York and many other cities hold LGBTQ+ pride celebrations.

The Stonewall National Monument Visitor Center is also planned to open next door as the National Park Service's first such center focused on LGBTQ+ history.

Far-right gains in the EU election deal stunning defeats to France's Macron and Germany's Scholz

By RAF CASERT, LORNE COOK and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Far-right parties rattled the traditional powers in the European Union and made major gains in parliamentary elections Sunday, dealing an especially humiliating defeat to French President Emmanuel Macron.

On a night where the 27-member bloc palpably shifted to the right, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni more than doubled her seats in the EU parliament. And even if the Alternative for Germany extreme right party was hounded by scandal involving candidates, it still rallied enough seats to sweep past the slumping Social Democrats of Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Sensing a threat from the far right, the Christian Democrats of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had already shifted further to the right on migration and climate ahead of the elections — and were rewarded by remaining by far the biggest group in the 720-seat European Parliament and de facto brokers of the ever expanding powers of the legislature.

Undoubtedly however, the star on a stunning electoral night was the National Rally party of Marine Le Pen, which dominated the French polls to such an extent that Macron immediately dissolved the national parliament and called for new elections. It was a massive political risk since his party could suffer more losses, hobbling the rest of his presidential term that ends in 2027.

Le Pen was delighted to accept the challenge. "We're ready to turn the country around, ready to defend the interests of the French, ready to put an end to mass immigration," she said, echoing the rallying cry of so many far-right leaders in other countries who were celebrating substantial wins.

Her National Rally won over 30% or about twice as much as Macron's pro-European centrist Renew party that is projected to reach less than 15%.

Macron acknowledged the thud of defeat. "I've heard your message, your concerns, and I won't leave them unanswered," he said, adding that calling a snap election only underscored his democratic credentials.

In Germany, the most populous nation in the 27-member bloc, projections indicated that the AfD overcame a string of scandals involving its top candidate to rise to 16.5%, up from 11% in 2019. In comparison, the combined result for the three parties in the German governing coalition barely topped 30%.

Scholz suffered such an ignominious fate that his long-established Social Democratic party fell behind the extreme-right Alternative for Germany, which surged into second place. "After all the prophecies of doom, after the barrage of the last few weeks, we are the second strongest force," a jubilant AfD leader Alice Weidel said.

The four-day polls in the 27 EU countries were the world's second-biggest exercise in democracy, behind India's recent election.

Overall across the EU, two mainstream and pro-European groups, the Christian Democrats and the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 54 of 75

Socialists, remained the dominant forces. The gains of the far right came at the expense of the Greens, who were expected to lose about 20 seats and fall back to sixth position in the legislature. Macron's pro-business Renew group also lost big.

For decades, the European Union, which has its roots in the defeat of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, confined the hard right to the political fringes. With its strong showing in these elections, the far right could now become a major player in policies ranging from migration to security and climate.

To stave that off, von der Leyen offered to build a coalition with the Social Democrats and the pro-business Liberals. Since the Christian Democrats won seats while the two others lost, von der Leyen can do so from a position of strength.

"We are by far the strongest party, We are the anchor of stability," von der Leyen regaled. Reflecting on the rise of the far-right and a good showing of the far-left, von der Leyen added that "the result comes with great stability for the parties in the center. We all have interest in stability and we all want a strong and effective Europe"

In the legislature, provisional results showed that the Christian Democrats would have 189 seats, up 13, the Social Democrats 135, down 4 and the pro-business Renew group 83, down 19. The Greens slumped to 53, down 18.

Germany, traditionally a stronghold for environmentalists, exemplified the humbling of the Greens, who were predicted to fall from 20% to 12%. With further losses expected in France and elsewhere, the defeat of the Greens could well have an impact on the EU's overall climate change policies, still the most progressive across the globe.

The center-right Christian Democratic bloc of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, which already weakened its green credentials ahead of the polls, dominated in Germany with almost 30%, easily beating Scholz's Social Democrats, who fell to 14%, even behind the AfD.

The electoral shift to the right could make it harder for the EU to pass legislation, and decision-making could at times be paralyzed in the world's biggest trading bloc.

EU lawmakers, who serve a five-year term, have a say in issues from financial rules to climate and agriculture policy. They approve the EU budget, which bankrolls priorities including infrastructure projects, farm subsidies and aid delivered to Ukraine. And they hold a veto over appointments to the powerful EU commission.

The elections come at a testing time for voter confidence in a bloc of some 450 million people. Over the last five years, the EU has been shaken by the coronavirus pandemic, an economic slump and an energy crisis fueled by the biggest land conflict in Europe since World War II. But political campaigning often focuses on issues of concern in individual countries rather than on broader European interests.

Since the last EU election in 2019, populist or far-right parties now lead governments in three nations — Hungary, Slovakia and Italy — and are part of ruling coalitions in others including Sweden, Finland and, soon, the Netherlands. Polls give the populists an advantage in France, Belgium, Austria and Italy.

"Right is good," Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who leads a stridently nationalist and anti-migrant government, told reporters after casting his ballot. "To go right is always good. Go right!"

Gaza's Health Ministry says 274 Palestinians were killed in Israeli raid that rescued 4 hostages

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — At least 274 Palestinians, including dozens of children, were killed, and hundreds more were wounded, in the Israeli raid that rescued four hostages held by Hamas, Gaza's Health Ministry said Sunday. The Israeli military said its forces came under heavy fire and responded during the complex daytime operation in central Gaza.

The killing of so many Palestinians, in a raid that Israelis celebrated as a stunning success, showed the heavy cost of such operations on top of the already soaring toll of the 8-month-old war ignited by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 55 of 75

The Israeli bombing was "hell," witness Mohamed al-Habash told The Associated Press. "We saw many fighter jets flying over the area. We saw people fleeing in the streets. Women and children were screaming and crying."

The operation in Nuseirat, a built-up refugee camp dating to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, was the largest rescue since Oct. 7, when Hamas and other militants stormed across the border, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking about 250 hostage.

Israel's massive offensive has killed over 36,700 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. It said 64 children and 57 women were killed in the latest raid, and 153 children and 161 women were among the nearly 700 wounded.

Saturday's events also affected fragile attempts to deliver aid. The World Food Program chief said they suspended distribution around a U.S.-built pier off Gaza because "two of our warehouses, warehouse complex, were rocketed yesterday." When asked how it happened and whether WFP shares its locations with Israel's military, Cindy McCain said they did and "I don't know. It's a good question." It wasn't clear if she was referring to the rescue operation.

SCENES OF HORROR AT GAZA HOSPITALIn Gaza, medics described scenes of chaos after the raid. Overwhelmed hospitals were already struggling to treat the wounded from days of heavy Israeli strikes.

"We had the gamut of war wounds, trauma wounds, from amputations to eviscerations to trauma, to TBIs (traumatic brain injuries), fractures and, obviously, big burns," said Karin Huster of Doctors Without Borders, which works in Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. "Kids completely gray or white from the shock, burnt, screaming for their parents. Many of them are not screaming because they are in shock."

The Israeli military said it had attacked "threats to our forces in the area," and that a special forces officer was killed in the operation. It said rescuers had come under heavy fire, including from gunmen firing rocket-propelled grenades, and the military responded with heavy force, including from aircraft.

Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz lashed out at critics of the operation in a post on X, saying "only Israel's enemies complained about the casualties of Hamas terrorists and their accomplices."

Inside Israel, local media have focused heavily on the Israeli toll, the hostages and military efforts with relatively little coverage of the situation for Palestinians inside Gaza.

'MY BROTHER DIED OF GRIEF'Israelis continued to celebrate the return of Noa Argamani, 26; Almog Meir Jan, 22; Andrey Kozlov, 27; and Shlomi Ziv, 41; as they reunited with loved ones.

Argamani's mother, Liora, who has late-stage brain cancer, had released a video pleading to see her. Argamani's father told Army Radio the reunion was "very difficult" as Liora was "just unable to express her feelings and could not say what she was really waiting to say."

Meir Jan's aunt, Dina, said his father had died Friday, hours before the operation. "My brother died of grief," she told Israel's Kan public broadcaster.

Dr. Itai Pessach at Sheba Hospital said none had serious physical injuries. But they have lost friends and family, and staff "have been assisting them in rebuilding the infrastructure of their life," he told reporters.

About 120 hostages remain in Gaza, with 43 pronounced dead, after about half were released in a weeklong cease-fire in November. Israeli troops have recovered the bodies of at least 16, according to the government. Survivors include about 15 women, two children under 5 and two men in their 80s.

Scores of hostages are believed to be held in densely populated areas or inside Hamas' labyrinth of tunnels, making rescues complex and risky. A raid in February freed two hostages while leaving 74 Palestinians dead.

Israel's military has acknowledged it can't carry out operations to rescue everyone.

WHAT LIES AHEADDivisions have deepened in Israel over the best way to bring hostages home. Many urge Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to embrace a cease-fire deal U.S. President Joe Biden announced last month, but far-right allies threaten to collapse his government if he does. Hours after the rescue, thousands of Israelis again gathered to protest the government and call for a deal.

On Sunday, Benny Gantz, a popular centrist member of Israel's three-member war Cabinet, resigned from the government after challenging it to adopt a new plan for the war. The resignation makes Netanyahu

more heavily reliant on his far-right allies.

Also Sunday, the commander of the Israeli military's Gaza division resigned over failures that led to the Oct. 7 attack.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will return to the Middle East this week, seeking a breakthrough in cease-fire efforts. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan told CNN that mediators Egypt and Qatar had not received official word from Hamas on the proposed deal. In a separate interview with CBS, Sullivan didn't say whether Biden would meet Netanyahu when he comes to Washington next month to address Congress.

International pressure is mounting on Israel to limit civilian bloodshed in its war in Gaza. Palestinians also face widespread hunger because fighting and Israeli restrictions have largely cut off the flow of aid.

"They killed everything inside us," said one Nuseirat resident who witnessed Saturday's assault. The woman, identified only as Mounira in a video shared by the U.N. on Sunday, urged a cease-fire.

Centrist Benny Gantz is quitting Israel's war Cabinet, citing frustrations with Netanyahu

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Benny Gantz, a centrist member of Israel's three-man war Cabinet, announced his resignation Sunday, accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of mismanaging the war effort and putting his own "political survival" over the country's security needs.

The move does not immediately pose a threat to Netanyahu, who still controls a majority coalition in parliament. But the Israeli leader becomes more heavily reliant on far-right allies who oppose the latest U.S.-backed cease-fire proposal and want to press ahead with the war.

"Unfortunately, Netanyahu is preventing us from achieving true victory, which is the justification for the painful and ongoing price," Gantz said. He added that Netanyahu was "making empty promises," and the country needs to take a different direction as he expects the fighting to continue for years to come.

The popular former military chief joined Netanyahu's government shortly after the Hamas attack in a show of unity. His presence also boosted Israel's credibility with its international partners. Gantz has good working relations with U.S. officials.

Gantz had previously said he would leave the government by June 8 if Netanyahu did not formulate a new plan for postwar Gaza.

He scrapped a planned news conference Saturday night after four Israeli hostages were dramatically rescued from Gaza earlier in the day in Israel's largest such operation since the eight-month war began. At least 274 Palestinians, including children, were killed in the assault, Gaza health officials said.

Gantz called for Israel to hold elections in the fall, and encouraged the third member of the war Cabinet, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, to "do the right thing" and resign from the government as well. Gallant has previously said he would resign if Israel chose to reoccupy Gaza, and encouraged the government to make plans for a Palestinian administration.

On Saturday, Netanyahu had urged Gantz not to leave the emergency wartime government.

"This is the time for unity, not for division," he said, in a direct plea to Gantz.

Gantz's decision to leave is largely "a symbolic move" due to his frustration with Netanyahu, said Gideon Rahat, chairman of the political science department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He noted it could further increase Netanyahu's reliance on extremist, right-wing members of his government, led by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

"I think the outside world, especially the United States, is not very happy about it, because they see Gantz and his party as the more responsible people within this government," Rahat said.

On Sunday evening, Ben-Gvir demanded a spot in the war Cabinet, saying Gantz and the smaller Cabinet had bungled the war effort due to "dangerous" ideological decisions.

Hamas took some 250 hostages during the Oct. 7 attack that killed about 1,200 people. About half were released in a weeklong cease-fire in November. About 120 hostages remain, with 43 pronounced dead. At

least 36,700 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between fighters and civilians.

Venezuela's ruling party tests its organizing efforts ahead of next month's presidential election

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — With its decades-long grip on power under threat, Venezuela's ruling party on Sunday tested a voter organizing campaign aimed at shoring up President Nicolás Maduro's bid for a third term.

The assessment followed weeks of efforts by local organizers of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela to increase support for Maduro. Each was tasked with adding into a database 10 voters who have promised to vote for Maduro in the highly anticipated July 28 presidential election.

Local organizers as well as voters who pledged their support were expected to receive verification phone calls Sunday. Organizers who had not yet entered voter information into the database due to lack of internet access or experience with databases received help at party meetings across the country.

On election day, local party leaders must ensure the voters they registered make it to the polls no matter what.

The effort to measure support comes as Chavistas — devotees of the late fiery leader Hugo Chávez — are no longer the reliable force that easily claimed electoral victories while the often divided opposition continues to work in unison.

The changes within each bloc have been driven primarily by the complex economic and political crisis that undid the country. As a result, the election is the biggest challenge faced by the ruling party since Chávez, Maduro's mentor and predecessor, became president more than two decades ago and began what he described as Venezuela's socialist revolution.

"We are already approaching record numbers," Maduro said Sunday evening without offering figures. "The level of organization that you have reached at this point is impressive."

Maduro added that starting Monday, he wants "to see a quantitative and qualitative growth of demonstrations in each neighborhood, in each parish, in each community, in each municipality."

People loyal to the ruling party control all branches of Venezuela's government, and public employees are constantly pressured to participate in demonstrations. Each public employee is also being urged to register 10 pro-Maduro voters.

The local leaders who have been gathering names of expected Maduro voters coordinate various government programs, including the delivery of subsidized food. Some of those leaders in Caracas used the logs of the food program to identify people in their community they could add to the database of voters.

Venezuela's electoral body earlier this year set the presidential election for July 28, fulfilling one of the provisions of an agreement signed last year between Maduro's government and the U.S.-backed Unitary Platform opposition coalition.

Under the agreement, both sides vowed to work toward improving conditions for a free and fair election. But Maduro and his allies have continuously tested the limits of the accord, including by blocking the candidacy of the president's chief opponent, María Corina Machado, as well as of her chosen substitute.

Machado and the coalition are now backing former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia.

Ahead of Sunday's verification work, party members signaled that the information gathered through the organizing campaign would be carefully scrutinized.

National Assembly member Saul Ortega earlier this week told state television that the effort represents a "true survey" of the country and is "nothing other than the tracking of the vote" across Venezuela.

Here's what happened in some key countries in the EU Parliament elections

BRUSSELS (AP) — It's easy to get overwhelmed by the EU elections. Voters cast ballots in two dozen languages in 27 countries with scores of different campaign issues.

So here's a look at what happened in some key countries in the June 6-9 elections for a new European Parliament.

FRANCE This was the biggest bombshell of Europe's mass election night: President Emmanuel Macron's moderate pro-business party was so badly trounced by the far-right party of Marine Le Pen in the EU vote that he called a snap legislative election in France.

Propelled by her anti-immigration, nationalist ideas, Le Pen's National Rally party is forecast to win the most of France's 81 seats in the European Parliament — about twice as many as Macron's Renaissance movement.

The snap French legislative election is a big gamble for Macron and his party, which risks further losing support while Le Pen's National Rally could see its influence surge.

Many French voters used the EU election to express dissatisfaction with Macron's management of the economy, farming rules, or security. The result hurts him as he tries to lead Europe-wide efforts to defend Ukraine and boost the EU's own defenses and industry.

The National Rally's lead European Parliament candidate, Jordan Bardella, promises to limit free movement of migrants within the EU's open borders and dial back EU climate rules. The party no longer wants to leave the EU and the euro, but to weaken it from within.

On the left, France's long-suffering Socialist Party surged behind lead candidate Raphaël Glucksmann, who wants a more ambitious climate policy and protections for European businesses and workers.

GERMANY The leader of the EU's richest and most powerful country, Germany, also suffered a blow.

Center-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz's unpopular governing coalition lost badly to the conservative opposition, which benefited from his troubles. The conservative bloc maintained its position as the strongest German party in Brussels as it looks ahead to a national election expected in the fall of next year.

And the far-right Alternative for Germany made good gains despite a string of scandals surrounding its top two candidates for the EU legislature. That's especially sobering to many, given Germany's Nazi past.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is a member of the Christian Democratic Union, the dominant party in the two-party conservative bloc that won the most votes.

Projections showed support for Scholz's center-left Social Democrats at 14%, their worst post-World War II result in a nationwide vote.

Germany's Greens, central to globally important EU climate policy, saw support slump.

Germany will have the largest number of the new European Parliament's 720 seats at 96.

HUNGARY Long-serving Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán saw yet another election victory — but a new challenger has upended his grip on Hungarian politics.

Orbán's Fidesz party was expected to win 43% of the vote, according to estimates from the EU Parliament. While Fidesz took a plurality of votes, it was down nearly 10 points from its support in the last EU elections in 2019, and looked set to lose two seats in what was widely seen as a referendum on Orbán's popularity.

A deep economic crisis and a recent series of scandals involving Fidesz politicians have rocked the party which prides itself on upholding family values and Christian conservatism.

Challenger Péter Magyar broke ranks with Orbán's party in February and in a matter of months built up Hungary's strongest opposition party. That party, Respect and Freedom (TISZA), was expected to take 31% of the vote.

Magyar has shot to prominence on public accusations of corruption and mismanagement within Orbán's government. Magyar's party has presented itself as a more centrist alternative to Orbán's brand of illiberal populism.

Orbán cast the election as an existential struggle between war and peace, telling voters that casting their ballots for his opposition would draw Hungary directly into the war in neighboring Ukraine and precipitate a global armed conflict. He has been in power since 2010.

ITALY Premier Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party, which has neo-fascist roots, is forecast to more than double its number of seats in the European Parliament since the last election. And that will hand her new power to influence policy in the EU.

While voters punished moderate leaders in France and Germany, they gave Meloni's party even more support than in the last national elections in 2022.

Her pro-Ukraine and Israel policies have proven reassuring to centrist American and European allies, but she is leading culture wars at home that preserve her far-right credentials.

The center-left opposition Democratic Party came in second, followed by the other main opposition party, the 5-Star Movement.

In Italy, the vote is not expected to destabilize the government, even if Meloni's advantage will be at the expense of her partners in the governing coalition, the populist, anti-migrant right-wing Lega, led by Matteo Salvini, and the center-right Forza Italia, led by Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani.

Italy has 76 European parliamentary seats.

SLOVAKIA A liberal, pro-Western group won the EU elections in Slovakia, beating the party of populist, pro-Russian Prime Minister Robert Fico just weeks after he survived an assassination attempt.

The attack on Fico sent shockwaves through the nation of 5.4 million and appeared to boost voter turnout, which had been the lowest of the entire bloc in 2014 and 2019 but reached a record 34.4% Sunday.

The assassination attempt didn't help Fico's leftist Smer (Direction) party, the senior partner in the governing coalition, to win the vote. Smer has been attacking the EU's support for Ukraine, as well other policies on immigration, climate change and LGBTQ+ rights.

Smer was in a close race against the main opposition Progressive Slovakia, which won 27.8%, or six seats in the EU parliament, according to provisional results. Smer follows at 24.8%, or five seats. A far-right opposition party that wants Slovakia out of NATO, the Republic, finished third with 12.53% and will have two seats.

Follow the AP's coverage of global elections at: <https://apnews.com/hub/global-elections/>

Carlos Alcaraz wins the French Open for a third Grand Slam title at 21 by beating Alexander Zverev

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — As Carlos Alcaraz began constructing his comeback in Sunday's French Open final, a 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Alexander Zverev for a first championship at Roland Garros and third Grand Slam title in all, there arrived the sort of magical shot the kid is making a regular part of his varied repertoire.

It was a running, then sliding, down-the-line, untouchable forehand passing winner that Alcaraz celebrated by thrusting his right index finger overhead in a "No. 1" sign, then throwing an uppercut while screaming, "Vamos!"

No, he is not ranked No. 1 at the moment — the man he beat in the semifinals, Jannik Sinner, makes his debut at the top spot on Monday — but Alcaraz has been there before and, although a "2" will be beside his name next week, there is little doubt that he is as good as it gets in men's tennis right now. And more accomplished than any man ever was at his age.

Alcaraz is a 21-year-old from Spain who grew up running home from school to watch on TV as countryman Rafael Nadal was accumulating title after title at Roland Garros — a record 14 — and he eclipsed Nadal as the youngest man to collect major championships on three surfaces. Nadal was about 1½ years older when he did it.

"Different tournaments, different aura," Alcaraz said when asked to distinguish among his trio of trophies,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 60 of 75

"but I'm going to say: same feeling. I mean, winning a Grand Slam is always special,"

This one from the clay-court major joins hardware from triumphs on hard courts at the U.S. Open in 2022 and on grass at Wimbledon in 2023. He is 3-0 in Slam finals.

"It's an amazing career already. You're already a Hall of Famer. You already achieved so much — and you're only 21 years old," said Zverev, who also lost the 2020 U.S. Open final, that one after being two points from winning. "Incredible player. Not the last time you're going to win this."

Zverev, a 27-year-old from Germany, exited the French Open in the semifinals each of the past three years, including after tearing ankle ligaments during the second set against Nadal in that round in 2022. Hours before Zverev's semifinal victory over Casper Ruud began on Friday, a Berlin district court announced that he reached an out-of-court settlement that ended a trial stemming from an ex-girlfriend's accusation of assault during a 2020 argument.

On Sunday against Alcaraz, Zverev faltered after surging in front by reeling off the last five games of the third set. Alcaraz's level dipped during that stretch and he seemed distracted by a complaint over the condition of the clay, telling chair umpire Renaud Lichtenstein it was "unbelievable."

But Alcaraz reset and ran away with it, taking 12 of the last 15 games while being treated by a trainer at changeovers for some pain and cramping in his left leg.

"I know that when I'm playing a fifth set, you have to give everything and you have to give your heart," Alcaraz said. "I mean, in those moments, it's where the top players give their best tennis."

No. 3 seed Alcaraz and No. 4 Zverev were making their first appearance in a French Open final. Indeed, this was the first men's title match at Roland Garros since 2004 without at least one of Nadal, Novak Djokovic or Roger Federer.

Nadal, who is 38 and was limited by injuries over the last two seasons, lost to Zverev in the first round two weeks ago; Djokovic, 37, a three-time champion, withdrew before the quarterfinals with a knee injury that required surgery; Federer, 42, is retired.

There were some jitters at the outset. Zverev started with two double-faults — changing rackets after the second, as though the equipment were the culprit — and got broken. Alcaraz lost serve immediately, too.

Let's just say they won't be putting those initial 10 minutes in the Louvre. Actually, lot of the 4-hour, 19-minute match was patchy, littered with unforced errors.

Alcaraz was at his best when it mattered the most — the last two sets.

"I lost focus, and on my serve, I didn't get the power from my legs anymore, which is weird. Because normally I do not get tired. I don't cramp," Zverev said. "Against Carlos, it's a different intensity."

Just like he did against Zverev, Alcaraz overturned a deficit of two sets to one against Sinner, making him the first man to capture the French Open by doing that in each of the last two matches since Manolo Santana — also from Spain — in 1961.

Alcaraz showed off all of his skills: the drop shots, the artful half-volleys, the intimidating forehands delivered aggressively and accompanied by a loud grunt. His 27 forehand winners were 20 more than Zverev's total.

Not bad for a guy who arrived in Paris saying he was afraid to hit his forehand at full force because of a forearm injury that sidelined him for nearly all of May. He said Sunday that there were "a lot of doubts" entering the French Open and he was forced to limit his practice time — which is why he considers this victory the proudest moment of his still-nascent career.

In the fifth set, under constant pressure from Alcaraz, Zverev got broken to fall behind 2-1. The next game showed the grit and gumption that already are hallmarks of Alcaraz's style.

Zverev — who argued about one line call on a second serve by Alcaraz that the German said afterward was out according to an unofficial video review — would hold four break points. He failed to convert any. Alcaraz didn't let him, and wrapped up the game with a drop shot.

The crowd roared. Alcaraz held his left index finger to his ear while waving his racket. He broke again for 5-2, then served it out and dropped onto his back, caking his shirt with clay — just as Nadal often did after championship point.

Alcaraz first learned to play tennis on the rust-colored surface, although he says he prefers hard courts.

Alcaraz says he dreamed long ago of adding his own name to the list of Spanish men to win the event, including his coach, 2003 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero.

And those red-and-yellow Spanish flags that became such an annual fixture at Court Philippe Chatrier in the era of Nadal were there again Sunday, this time for Alcaraz. The difference? The cries of "Ra-fa! Ra-fa!" were now "Car-los! Car-los!"

Biden honors US war dead with a cemetery visit ending a French trip that served as a rebuke to Trump

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

BELLEAU, France (AP) — President Joe Biden closed out his trip to France by paying his respects at an American military cemetery that Donald Trump notably skipped when he was president, hoping his final stop Sunday helped draw the stakes of the November election in stark relief.

Before returning to the United States, Biden honored America's war dead at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery about an hour outside Paris. He placed a wreath at the cemetery chapel before an expanse of white headstones marking the final resting place of more than 2,200 U.S. soldiers who fought in World War I.

It was a solemn end to five days in which Trump was an unspoken yet unavoidable presence. On the surface, the trip marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day and celebrated the alliance between the United States and France. But during an election year when Trump has called into question fundamental understandings about America's global role, Biden has embraced his Republican predecessor — and would-be successor — as a latent foil.

Every ode to the transatlantic partnership was a reminder that Trump could upend those relationships. Each reference to democracy stood a counterpoint to his rival's efforts to overturn a presidential election. The myriad exhortations to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia created a contrast with Trump's skepticism about providing U.S. assistance.

Biden's paeans to the struggle between democracy and autocracy drew plaudits in Europe, where the prospect of a return to Trump's turbulent reign has sparked no shortage of anxiety. But it remains to be seen how the message will resonate with American voters, as Biden's campaign struggles to connect the dire warnings the Democratic president so often delivers about his rival with people's daily concerns.

The visit to the cemetery served as a moment to underscore the contrast once more.

"It's the same story," Biden said. "America showed up. America showed up to stop the Germans. America showed up to make sure that they did not prevail. And America shows up when we're needed just like our allies show for us."

During a 2018 trip to France, Trump skipped plans to go to the cemetery, a decision that the White House blamed on weather at the time. However, subsequent reports said that Trump told aides he didn't want to go because he viewed the dead soldiers as "suckers" and "losers." Trump has denied the comments, although they were later corroborated by his chief of staff at the time, John Kelly.

Trump's purported insults have become a regular feature of Biden's campaign speeches, including during an April rally in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

"These soldiers were heroes, just as every American who has served this nation," Biden said. "Believing otherwise, that alone is disqualifying for someone to seek this office."

Biden ignored a direct question about Trump at the cemetery but said it was important to visit the hallowed ground. "The idea that I would come to Normandy and not make the short trip here to pay tribute," he added, his voice trailing off as if to express disbelief.

Trump, at a campaign rally in Las Vegas, said Sunday after Biden had left France that the president's performance overseas was "terrible" and embarrassing, though Trump did not cite anything in particular. "This is not a representative for what used to be the greatest country," he told his supporters, adding that under Biden "we are a nation in major decline and we're going to stop it immediately."

Maura Sullivan, a former Marine officer who served on the American Battle Monuments Commission

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 62 of 75

under President Barack Obama, said Biden's visit would "set the example, and do what a president should do." Now an official with the New Hampshire Democratic Party, Sullivan said that "voters can draw their own conclusions" from that.

Biden's trip was full of emotional moments, and the president grew heavy-eyed after meeting with World War II veterans. A 21-gun salute cast eerie smoke over 9,388 white marble headstones at the Normandy American Cemetery.

"This has been the most remarkable trip that I've ever made," Biden said on Saturday night, his last in Paris before returning to the U.S.

At Aisne-Marne, Biden said the trip "surprised me how much it awakened my sense of why it's so valuable to have these alliances. Why it's so critical. That's the way you stop wars, not start wars."

His remarks over the last few days were also freighted with political overtones.

On Thursday at Normandy anniversary ceremonies, Biden said D-Day served a reminder that alliances make the United States stronger, calling it "a lesson that I pray we Americans never forget." He also highlighted how the war effort drew on immigrants, women and people of color who were too often overlooked by history.

Then on Friday, he went to Pointe du Hoc, a spot on the coast where Army Rangers scaled cliffs to overcome Nazi defenses on D-Day that was also the site in 1984 of one of President Ronald Reagan's most memorable speeches about the struggles between the West and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

By following in an iconic Republican's footsteps, Biden honed his appeal to traditional conservatives who are often frustrated by Trump's isolationist vision. Biden issued a call for Americans to protect democracy like the Rangers who scaled the cliffs, a message that synced with campaign rhetoric that paints his election opponent as an existential threat to U.S. values.

While Biden was in France, his campaign announced that it had hired the onetime chief of staff to former Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger to lead outreach to GOP voters. Kinzinger clashed with Trump's foreign policy and efforts to overturn the last presidential election.

At Pointe du Hoc, Biden said the Army Rangers "fought to vanquish a hateful ideology in the '30s and '40s. Does anyone doubt they wouldn't move heaven and earth to vanquish hateful ideologies of today?"

Trump has argued that the U.S. needs to devote more attention to its own problems and less to foreign alliances and entanglements. He has also routinely played down the importance of American partnerships, suggesting the U.S. could abandon its treaty commitments to defend European allies if they don't pay enough for their own defenses.

Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian who wrote a book about Pointe du Hoc and Reagan's speech, said Biden "had big shoes to step into" by choosing the same location.

Biden's speech "didn't equal Reagan's in grandeur, nor could it," Brinkley said. Still, he said Biden "said the right words about why democracy matters."

Paul Begala, a veteran Democratic strategist, said it could help Biden politically "to stand where Reagan stood."

He noted that Biden is struggling with younger voters but appears to be gaining strength among older ones who may be more receptive to reminders of Reagan's speech four decades ago.

"He needs a lot of Reagan Republicans to offset his challenges with younger voters," he said.

Biden's trip was also punctuated by the pomp of a state visit in Paris.

French President Emmanuel Macron arranged a ceremony at the Arc du Triomphe, where four fighter jets flew overhead, and hosted a banquet at the Elysee presidential palace.

"United we stand, divided we fall," Macron said in toasting Biden. "Allied we are, and allied we will stay."

Overall, Biden's visit had a slower pace than other foreign trips. The 81-year-old president had no public events on his first day in Paris after arriving on an overnight flight, and didn't hold a press conference with reporters, as is customary. John Kirby, a national security spokesman, said that was necessary to prepare "in advance of the weighty engagements" during subsequent days.

"There's a lot on the calendar," he said.

Still, it was a contrast to Macron's tendency to offer prestigious guests an intense schedule with a mix

of official meetings, business talks, cultural events and private dinners at fancy restaurants.

When the 46-year-old French leader hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping last month, the two-day agenda was crammed with activities including a trip to the Pyrenees Mountains near the border with Spain where Macron spent time as a child.

Trump to undergo probation interview Monday, a required step before his New York sentencing

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump is scheduled to be interviewed by New York probation officials Monday, a required step before his July sentencing in his criminal hush money case, according to three people familiar with the plan.

Trump will do the interview via a computer video conference from his residence at the Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, the people told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to disclose the plans publicly.

One of Trump's lawyers, Todd Blanche, will be present for the interview. People convicted of crimes in New York usually meet with probation officials without their lawyers, but the judge in Trump's case, Juan Merchan, said in a letter Friday that he would allow Blanche's presence.

The usual purpose of a pre-sentencing probation interview is to prepare a report that will tell the judge more about the defendant, and potentially help determine the proper punishment for the crime.

Such reports are typically prepared by a probation officer, a social worker or a psychologist working for the probation department who interviews the defendant and possibly that person's family and friends, as well as people affected by the crime.

Presentence reports include a defendant's personal history, criminal record and recommendations for sentencing. It will also include information about employment and any obligations to help care for a family member. It is also a chance for a defendant to say why they think they deserve a lighter punishment.

A jury convicted Trump of falsifying business records at his own company as part of a broader scheme to buy the silence of people who might have told embarrassing stories about him during the 2016 presidential campaign. One \$130,000 payment went to a porn actor, Stormy Daniels, who claimed to have had a sexual encounter with Trump, which he denied.

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, says he is innocent of any crime and that the criminal case was brought to hurt his chances to regain the White House.

Trump's campaign spokesman, Steven Cheung, said in statement Sunday that President Joe Biden's Democratic Party allies "continue to ramp up their ongoing Witch-Hunts, further abusing and misusing the power of their offices to interfere in the presidential election."

"President Trump and his legal team are already taking necessary steps to challenge and defeat the lawless Manhattan DA case," he said.

Merchan has scheduled Trump's sentencing for July 11. He has discretion to impose a wide range of punishments, ranging from probation and community service to up to four years in prison.

French Open 2024: Alcaraz and Swiatek won the singles titles. What are the early Wimbledon odds?

PARIS (AP) — Catch up on the 2024 French Open with a guide that tells you everything you need to know about what happened at the clay-court Grand Slam tennis tournament, what the early Wimbledon betting odds are and more:

What Happened on Sunday? Carlos Alcaraz won his first French Open title and third Grand Slam trophy overall with a 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 victory over Alexander Zverev in 4 hours, 19 minutes. Alcaraz, 21, is the youngest man to win Grand Slam titles on all three surfaces — clay, grass and hard courts. Rafael Nadal was about 1 1/2 years older when he did it. Zverev is 0-2 in major finals. Hours before Zverev won

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 64 of 75

his semifinal in Paris on Friday, an out-of-court settlement ended a trial in Germany stemming from a former girlfriend's accusation of assault during a 2020 argument. In the women's doubles final on Sunday, Coco Gauff won her first Grand Slam doubles title by teaming up with Katerina Siniakova to defeat Jasmine Paolini and Sara Errani 7-6 (5), 6-3. Gauff, a 20-year-old American, won her first major singles title at last year's U.S. Open. Paolini was also the runner-up in singles at Roland Garros, losing to Iga Swiatek in straight sets in Saturday's final.

The Schedule Wimbledon starts at the All England Club on July 1.

Betting Guide The tennis tours now move to grass courts, and the two singles champions at the French Open — Swiatek (a +275 money-line pick) and Alcaraz (+140) are listed as the early narrow favorites at Wimbledon, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Right behind Swiatek, whose quarterfinal run a year ago was her best showing at the All England Club, is Aryna Sabalenka at +300. Coco Gauff is listed fourth at +900. Alcaraz, the defending champion at Wimbledon, is followed by Jannik Sinner, who rises to No. 1 in the ATP rankings on Monday, at +160.

Get Caught Up What to read about the French Open:

- Carlos Alcaraz wins the French Open for his third Grand Slam title at age 21
- Coco Gauff wins her first Grand Slam doubles title
- Iga Swiatek wins a third consecutive French Open women's title by overwhelming Jasmine Paolini
- French Open director Amélie Mauresmo says she has some ideas to help avoid so many empty seats
- Record-breaking Diede de Groot and teenager Tokito Oda win wheelchair titles at French Open
- Alexander Zverev reaches the French Open final on the day his court case is resolved in Germany
- Can tennis, pickleball and padel co-exist? The folks in charge of the French Open think so
- Coco Gauff loses an argument with a French Open chair umpire and wants to see replays in tennis
- Novak Djokovic says his knee surgery went well
- No one loves it when tennis matches go past 3 a.m. And no one can agree on a solution
- Analysis: No one knows what comes next for Rafael Nadal — not even Nadal

Stats to Know 21 — Alcaraz's age, making him the first man to win a Grand Slam title on all three surfaces — clay, grass and hard courts — before turning 22.

3-0 — Alcaraz's record in Grand Slam finals; among men, only Roger Federer (7-0) had a better start to his career in major title matches.

0-2 — Zverev's record in Grand Slam finals.

Words to Know "Not the last time you're going to win this." — Zverev, to Alcaraz.

"I think it's just one of those things that when you least expect it to happen, it happens." — Gauff, after winning her first Grand Slam doubles title.

Stranded migrants confront violence and despair as Tunisia partners to keep them from Europe

By SAM METZ Associated Press

EL AMRA, Tunisia (AP) — For many migrants who've long dreamed of Europe, one of the last stops is an expanse of olive trees on North Africa's Mediterranean coastline.

But in Tunisia, less than 100 miles (161 kilometers) from the Italian islands that form the European Union's outermost borders, for many that dream has become a nightmare.

Under black tarps covered with blankets and ropes, men, women and children seek shelter from sunlight and wait for their chance to board one of the iron boats that paid smugglers use to transport people to Italy. Having fled war, poverty, climate change or persecution, they find themselves trapped in Tunisia — unable to reach Europe but without money to fund a return home.

Based on unofficial estimates, the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration said it believes 15,000 to 20,000 migrants are stranded in rural olive groves near the central Tunisian coastline. Their presence is a byproduct of anti-migration policies being championed in both Tunisia and throughout Europe, particularly from right-wing politicians who made big gains in the European Union's parliamentary elections

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 65 of 75

this week, according to early projections provided by the EU.

The encampments have grown in size since last year as police have pushed migrants out of cities and ramped up efforts to prevent Mediterranean crossings.

When police razed tents last summer in Sfax, Tunisia's second largest city, many migrants moved to the countryside near the stretch of coastline north of the city.

Among them is Mory Keita, a 16-year-old who left a flood-prone suburb outside of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, last September to link up with a friend already in Tunisia. Keita arrived at an encampment called Kilometer-19 earlier this year.

Named for a highway marker denoting its distance from Sfax, Kilometer-19 is notorious for clashes between migrant groups, he said. "Machete brawls" regularly break out between groups that self-sort by nationality — including Cameroonians, Ivorians, Guineans and Sudanese. When police come, it's not to ensure safety, but to disband encampments by force, Keita said.

"The truth is I'm afraid of where we are," he said. "Innocent people get hurt. The police don't intervene. It's not normal."

Passportless, Keita said he paid a smuggler an initial sum of 400,000 Central African Francs (\$661) to take him through Mali and Algeria last year. He dreams of resettling in France, finding work and sending earnings back to his family in Ivory Coast.

Keita made it onto a boat on the Mediterranean Sea in March, but Tunisia's coast guard intercepted it, arrested him and returned him to the nearby beach without any bureaucratic processing, he said.

With European funds and encouragement, the coast guard has successfully prevented more migrants like Keita than ever before from making dangerous journeys across the sea. From January to May, it stopped nearly 53,000 migrants from crossing its maritime border to Europe, Interior Minister Kamel Fekih said last month.

Less than 10,000 migrants successfully crossed from Tunisia to Italy this year, down from 23,000 in the same time period last year.

That fulfills objectives that European leaders outlined last summer when they brokered a 1 billion euro (\$1.1 billion) accord with Tunisia. Though the funds have not been completely disbursed, the deal included 105 million euros (\$114 million) for migration-related programs. NGOs such as the Catholic Committee Against Hunger and for Development have decried a lack of transparency and information about the programs.

While fewer people landing on the shores of Italy looks like a success, the resulting logjam on the Tunisian coastline is fomenting anger and despair among migrants and Tunisians. Civil society groups have demanded the government expel migrants. Politicians have urged residents to form "citizen militias" to police the area.

"You brought them here and it's your responsibility to send them back to their home countries," Moamen Salemi, a 63-year old retiree from nearby El Amra, said at one of several recent anti-migrant protests.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights said last month it was "very concerned by the increased targeting in Tunisia of migrants, mostly from south of the Sahara, and individuals and organizations working to assist them."

"We are witnessing a rise in the use of dehumanizing and racist rhetoric against Black migrants and Black Tunisians," it said in a statement.

Though migrants from sub-Saharan Africa have been a political flashpoint, the majority of those who have made it from North Africa to Italy this year have been from either Syria, Bangladesh or Tunisia itself.

The government has for more than a year been accused of deporting migrants across its borders with Libya and Algeria, many who are later found dead. Tunisia has acknowledged bussing migrants to the remote borderlands near the two neighboring countries. Yet removing them from areas near the coast does little to answer the anti-migrant anger brewing among residents, many of whom have tried to emigrate to Europe themselves in search of more freedom and better economic opportunities.

The visibility of Black migrants at cafes, markets, money transfer offices and city streets periodically unleashes a xenophobic backlash from locals troubled by their presence and farmers asking the government to remove encampments from their land.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 66 of 75

Their hostility echoes remarks made by President Kais Saied, who last year gave a speech claiming migrants were part of a conspiracy to erase Tunisian identity.

Police keep a heavy presence and the national guard roams the olive-growing towns of El Amra and Jebeniana, which journalists are increasingly barred from covering. Migrants have posted videos on social media of encampments burning after law enforcement raids spurred by calls from local farmers. "Disappeared" notices asking for help finding missing people are posted daily in Facebook groups popular with migrants.

"This situation cannot continue and Tunisia will not be a land for the settlement of migrants," Saied said at a National Security Council meeting in May, where without evidence he revived his questions about nefarious foreign actors pushing to keep migrants in Tunisia.

The EU hopes to limit migration with policies including development assistance, voluntary return and repatriation for migrants and forging closer ties with neighboring governments that police their borders.

Despite the plight of those trapped in Tunisia, European leaders like Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni have lauded the 2023 accord as a model agreement for managing migration. She visited four times over the past year.

The EU also expressed worry after a group of journalists, migration activists and attorneys were arrested last month — including one for making a remark about migration. It said that "freedoms of expression and association, as well as the independence of the judiciary, are guaranteed by the Tunisian Constitution and constitute the basis of our partnership."

While they note the democratic backslide, officials have not threatened to cut off the assistance to Tunisia that many see as a life raft for Saied's government.

Majdi Karbai, a former member of Tunisia's parliament living in Italy, said the nature of the partnership with the EU had imperiled democracy in Tunisia and came at the expense of human rights for African migrants and Tunisians.

Migrants will likely continue to transit through Tunisia and Karbai said Saied uses them as fodder for populist rhetoric that positions him as a defender of struggling Tunisians and also to secure more assistance from Europe.

"Tunisia makes Europe believe it's doing its job as it must," Karbai said. "It's good for Saied in terms of his supporters and for his speeches when he says Tunisia won't be a country that resettles migrants."

Ukraine says it struck a top fighter plane deep inside Russia

By SUSIE BLANN and JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine on Sunday said its forces hit an ultra-modern Russian warplane stationed on an air base nearly 600 kilometers (370 miles) from the front lines.

Kyiv's main military intelligence service shared satellite photos it said showed the aftermath of the attack. If confirmed, it would mark Ukraine's first known successful strike on a twin-engine Su-57 stealth jet, lauded as Moscow's most advanced fighter plane.

In one photo, black soot marks and small craters can be seen dotting a concrete strip around the parked aircraft. According to the Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine's Ministry of Defense, the strike took place on Saturday at the Akhtubinsk base in southern Russia, some 589 kilometers (366 miles) from the front line.

The Ukrainian agency said the plane, which is capable of carrying stealth missiles across hundreds of kilometers (miles), was among "a countable few" of its type in Moscow's arsenal. According to reports by Russian agencies, Moscow's air force obtained "more than 10" new Su-57s last year, and has placed an order for a total of 76 to be delivered by 2028.

A spokesman for Ukraine's military intelligence, Andriy Yusov, hours later said on Ukrainian TV that the attack may have damaged two Su-57 jets parked at the base, and also wounded Russian personnel. He did not immediately give any evidence to support the claim.

Ilya Yevlash, a spokesman for Ukraine's air force, told Ukrainian media in April that Moscow was trying

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 67 of 75

to keep its Su-57 fleet "at a safe distance" from Ukrainian firepower.

The strike comes after the United States and Germany recently authorized Ukraine to hit some targets on Russian soil with the long-range weapons they are supplying to Kyiv. Ukraine has already used U.S. weapons to strike inside Russia under newly approved guidance from President Joe Biden that allows American arms to be used for the limited purpose of defending Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city.

But the airstrip's distance from Ukraine, as well as unofficial comments from Russia, point to the likely use of Ukrainian-made drones. Since Moscow's full-scale invasion more than two years ago, Kyiv has ramped up domestic drone production and used the munitions to strike deep inside Russia. In January, drones hit a gas terminal near St. Petersburg that lies over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) north of the border.

A popular pro-Kremlin Telegram channel, thought to be run by a retired Russian army pilot, claimed that three Ukrainian drones struck the Akhtubinsk airstrip on Saturday and that flying shrapnel damaged the jet.

"It is now being determined whether it can be restored or not. If not, it would be the first combat loss of a Su-57 in history," the Fighterbomber channel reported.

A military correspondent for Russia's state-run RIA news agency, Aleksandr Kharchenko, in a Telegram post Sunday denounced Moscow's failure to build hangars to protect its aircraft. But the post stopped short of directly acknowledging the strike.

Russia's so-called "military bloggers" like Fighterbomber are often seen as sources of information on military losses in the absence of an official Kremlin comment. Russia's Defense Ministry or senior political figures did not comment Sunday.

The ministry on Saturday claimed its forces downed three Ukrainian drones in the Astrakhan region, home to the Akhtubinsk airstrip. Igor Babushkin, the governor of Astrakhan, that same day reported that Ukraine attempted to strike an unspecified facility there, but claimed the attack was unsuccessful.

Russia's Su-57 fleet has been largely absent from the skies over Ukraine, and has instead been used to fire long-range missiles across the border. The U.K. Ministry of Defence said in an intelligence briefing last year that Russia is likely trying to avoid "reputational damage, reduced export prospects, and the compromise of sensitive technology" that would come from losing any Su-57 jets in enemy territory.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian forces kept up drone attacks on Russia's southern border regions, according to local Russian officials.

Three drones hit Belgorod province late on Saturday, damaging a power line and blowing out windows but causing no casualties, said Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov. Another five drones and a Ukrainian-made missile were brought down over the region on Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

According to an update by Pepel (Ashes), a channel run by Belgorod journalists now based outside Russia, Ukrainian drones on Sunday afternoon struck an ammunition depot outside the town of Rakitnoye, some 35 kilometres (22 miles) from Ukraine. Footage circulating on social media showed thick plumes of smoke rising into the sky. In one video, a woman's voice is heard, saying "I wonder if soldiers lived there?"

Gladkov, the governor, did not directly comment on those claims, but confirmed that a blaze had broken out in a "non-residential building" near Rakitnoye. He said no one was hurt.

Across Ukraine's front-line provinces, Russian shelling killed at least three civilians and wounded at least nine others on Saturday and overnight, according to reports by regional officials.

A man died and two women suffered wounds in the village of Khotimlya, east of Kharkiv, Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said. Shelling also damaged the local school, a council building, a shop and private homes, Syniehubov said.

Heavy battles continued in the area as Ukrainian troops try to beat back Russia's invading forces after a weeklong push by Moscow that sparked fears for Kharkiv, located just 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Russian border, and a wave of civilian evacuations.

Russia's coordinated new offensive has centered on the Kharkiv region, but seems to include testing Ukrainian defenses in Donetsk farther south, while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions.

The easing of restrictions on the use of Western weapons will help Ukraine protect Kharkiv by targeting Russian capabilities across the border, according to Ukrainian and Western officials. It is unclear what other

impact it may have on the direction of the war, in what is proving to be a critical period.

The move drew a furious response from Moscow, and warnings it could embroil NATO in a war with Russia. But Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, described it as "common sense."

"What was happening up around Kharkiv ... was a Russian offensive where they were moving from one side of the border directly to the other side of the border, and it simply didn't make sense not to allow the Ukrainians to fire across that border, to hit Russian guns and emplacements that were firing at (them)," Sullivan said Sunday in an interview with CBS's "Face the Nation."

Iran OKs 6 candidates for presidential race, but again blocks Ahmadinejad

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's Guardian Council on Sunday approved the country's hard-line parliament speaker and five others to run in the country's June 28 presidential election following a helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others.

The council again barred former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a firebrand populist known for the crackdown that followed his disputed 2009 re-election, from running.

The council's decision represents the starting gun for a shortened, two-week campaign to replace Raisi, a hard-line protege of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei once floated as a possible successor for the 85-year-old cleric.

The selection of candidates approved by the Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists ultimately overseen by Khamenei, suggests Iran's Shiite theocracy hopes to ease the election through after recent votes saw record-low turnout and as tensions remain high over the country's rapidly advancing nuclear program, as well as the Israel-Hamas war.

The Guardian Council also continued its streak of not accepting a woman or anyone calling for radical change to the country's governance.

The campaign will likely include live, televised debates on Iran's state-run broadcaster. Candidates also advertise on billboards and offer stump speeches to back their bids.

So far, none of them has offered any specifics, though all have promised a better economic situation for the country as it suffers from sanctions by the U.S. and other Western nations over its nuclear program, which now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Such matters of state remain the final decision of Khamenei, but presidents in the past have leaned either toward engagement or confrontation with the West over it.

The most prominent candidate remains Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, 62, a former Tehran mayor with close ties to the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. However, many remember that Qalibaf, as a former Guard general, was part of a violent crackdown on Iranian university students in 1999. He also reportedly ordered live gunfire to be used against students in 2003 while serving as the country's police chief.

Qalibaf ran unsuccessfully for president in 2005 and 2013. He withdrew from the 2017 presidential campaign to support Raisi in his first failed presidential bid. Raisi won the 2021 election, which had the lowest turnout ever for a presidential vote in Iran, after every major opponent found themselves disqualified.

Khamenei gave a speech last week alluding to qualities that Qalibaf's supporters have highlighted as potentially signaling the supreme leader's support for the speaker.

Yet Qalibaf's role in crackdowns may be viewed differently after years of unrest that have gripped Iran, both over its ailing economy and the mass protests sparked by the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a young woman who died after being arrested for allegedly not wearing her headscarf, or hijab, to the liking of security forces.

Other candidates include Saeed Jalili, former Jalili, former senior nuclear negotiator, who ran in 2013, and registered in 2021 before withdrawing to back Raisi. Tehran mayor Alireza Zakani also withdrew in 2021 to back Raisi. Mostafa Pourmohammadi is a former minister of justice. Amirhossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Raisi's vice president, ran in the 2021 presidential elections and came in last with just under 1 million votes.

Masoud Pezeshkian is the only reformist candidate among a slate of hardliners, and is not seen as hav-

ing much chance.

The Guardian Council disqualified Ahmadinejad, the firebrand, Holocaust-questioning former president. Ahmadinejad increasingly challenged Khamenei toward the end of his term and is remembered for the bloody crackdown on the 2009 Green Movement protests. He was also disqualified in the last election by the panel.

It also blocked former speaker of parliament speaker Ali Larijani, a conservative with strong ties to Iran's former relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani. It was the second election in a row in which Larijani was barred from running.

Former Iranian Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati, who ran in 2021, and Eshaq Jahangiri, who served as vice president under moderate President Hassan Rouhani, were also disqualified.

The election comes at a time of heightened tensions between Iran and the West over its arming of Russia in that country's war on Ukraine. Its support of militia proxy forces throughout the wider Middle East has been increasingly in the spotlight as Yemen's Houthi rebels attack ships in the Red Sea over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Raisi, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and others were killed in the May 19 helicopter crash in the far northwest of Iran. Investigations are continuing, though authorities say there's no immediate sign of foul play in the crash on a cloud-covered mountainside.

Raisi was the second Iranian president to die in office. In 1981, a bomb blast killed President Mohammad Ali Rajai in the chaotic days after the country's Islamic Revolution.

From women pastors to sexual abuse to Trump, Southern Baptists have a busy few days ahead of them

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

Thousands will gather in Indianapolis June 11-12 for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The meeting comes at a fraught time in the nation's largest Protestant denomination. Messengers — as voting delegates are known — will vote on whether to establish a constitutional ban on churches with women pastors. They'll hear a report — and get outside criticism — of their handling of sexual abuse among their clergy.

With membership in steady decline, they'll hear a report on how an earlier effort to reverse that trend fell short. And they'll vote for a new president from among six candidates.

Speaking of presidential candidates, an outside group is inviting attendees to a virtual speech by former President Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee, at an off-site event. Proposed resolutions deal with topics ranging from Gaza to abortion and in vitro fertilization.

Here's some of what's facing the SBC:

WHAT'S THE LATEST WITH THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS?The convention has struggled to respond to sexual abuse in its churches since a 2019 report by the Houston Chronicle and San Antonio Express-News, saying that roughly 380 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers faced allegations of sexual misconduct in the previous two decades. A subsequent consultant's report said past leaders on the convention's Executive Committee intimidated and mistreated survivors who sought help.

But survivors and advocates say the denomination's actions don't match its promises of reform.

An Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force recently concluded its work. While it has provided a curriculum for training churches on preventing and responding to abuse, it has not achieved the mandate of previous annual meetings to establish a database of offenders, which could help churches avoid hiring them.

In a recent YouTube interview with a fellow pastor, the chairman of the SBC's Executive Committee, Philip Robertson, sought to downplay reports that there was a "systemic problem" of abuse in the denomination, which he contended were "not true." This has been a talking point for some outside critics of SBC efforts to respond to the crisis, now voiced by at least one person in SBC leadership. Robertson also said insurers warned they wouldn't cover the denomination if it had the database due to liability risks.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 70 of 75

In response, the reform task force proposed having a separate nonprofit handle the list, but that has yet to materialize.

"Robertson's remarks provide a window onto what has always been true," said Christa Brown, a long-time advocate for fellow survivors of abuse within Southern Baptist churches, in an email. "SBC officials' resistance to a database has always been about trying to minimize liability risks to the institution. ... And SBC officials are trying to operate this multi-billion dollar organization without taking on the inherent responsibilities that go along with it."

In May, federal prosecutors charged Matt Queen, a former professor and administrator at an SBC-affiliated seminary in Texas with providing federal investigators with a false document. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York asserted this document, involving an alleged case of sexual abuse by a seminary student, was provided with the intent to impede their investigation into sexual abuse within the convention.

The Executive Committee says it was told the federal investigation into its own actions has been completed.

WHY WOULD THE SBC BAN CHURCHES WITH WOMEN PASTORS?In 2000, Southern Baptists amended the Baptist Faith and Message, their statement of doctrine, to say the office of pastor is limited to men, citing Bible verses such as one forbidding "a woman to teach or to have authority over a man." This came amid a larger rightward push in the late 20th century SBC.

The doctrinal statement is nonbinding, and the denomination can't tell its independent churches whom to call as pastor. Some churches with women pastors left, while others stayed but kept a low profile. Still others later appointed women pastors or allowed women to serve under male leaders in associate pastoral roles, citing biblical examples of women in ministry.

At this year's meeting, messengers will vote on whether to give final approval to amending their constitution to ban churches – by deeming them not in "friendly cooperation" – with women pastors in lead or associate roles. The denomination preliminarily approved the amendment last year. That's when it also began expelling congregations with women pastors, such as Saddleback Church, a California megachurch, on the grounds that they don't closely identify with the Baptist Faith and Message. The amendment would codify an explicit ban on such churches, putting them in the same category as churches that "endorse homosexual behavior," discriminate based on ethnicity or fail to address sexual abuse.

WHY MIGHT THIS AFFECT NON-WHITE CHURCHES MORE?The National African American Fellowship, a caucus of predominantly Black congregations within the SBC, says an amendment barring churches with women pastors could disproportionately impact its members, many with women working in assistant pastor roles. Chinese and Hispanic Baptist fellowship leaders also say their churches could be impacted because of language differences in how pastors are described.

WHO ARE SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, ANYWAY?The Southern Baptist Convention is the nation's largest Protestant denomination. Members are overwhelmingly evangelical and conservative both in religion and politics, the continuation of a rightward shift that began in the 1980s. The denomination was founded in 1845 in defense of slavery in a schism with northern Baptists. In 1995, the mostly white denomination formally repented of its support for slavery and other racism, and it made some strides to diversify racially. It has lost some Black churches and pastors in recent years due to alleged racial insensitivity within its overwhelmingly white leadership.

HOW'S IT DOING?Southern Baptist membership has steadily declined since 2006 and is now below 13 million, its lowest since 1976. There are also long-term declines in baptisms – the prime metric of spiritual vitality.

Alarmed by such trends, Southern Baptists in 2010 approved a seven-point plan to reenergize evangelistic efforts. A task force, evaluating how that went, reported this year that only two of the goals were met, and some were quickly forgotten.

The task force reported: "Regarding the simple question of whether or not the implementation (of the 2010 plan) reversed the decline of baptisms in the SBC, the answer is a clear and decisive, No."

The report noted "a clear erosion of 'trust, transparency and truth' from within our convention which

has ravaged our cooperative work.”

WHO WANTS TO LEAD THE DENOMINATION?Six men are being nominated to succeed Bart Barber, a folksy cattle farmer and small-church pastor, as president.

The candidates include five pastors and a seminary dean. As in recent years, the contest will be among candidates with varying degrees of conservatism.

WILL THERE BE POLITICS?Trump will speak virtually at a nearby event on Monday, the day before the annual meeting. That program includes some Southern Baptist leaders. It's sponsored by an independent group but listed on the SBC calendar of events.

Former Vice President Mike Pence will speak Tuesday at a luncheon hosted by the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, but not in the main hall, as he did in 2018.

Messengers are expected to vote on resolutions supporting Israel and blaming Hamas amid the Gaza war; recommitting to the abolition of abortion; and urging parents diagnosed with infertility to carefully consider ethical options.

Why Robert F. Kennedy's Jr.'s current presidential polling numbers might not hold up into November

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has reached 15% or more in three approved national polls. One more, and he will have met one of CNN's benchmarks to qualify for the debate June 27 with Democratic President Joe Biden and presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump.

But Kennedy cannot count on maintaining his current level of support as the November election nears.

It is pretty common for third-party candidates to look like they have polling momentum in the months before an election, only to come up far short at the ballot box, according to an Associated Press analysis of Gallup data going back to 1980.

That is not a sign that the polls about Kennedy are wrong right now. They just are not predictors of what will happen in the general election.

Studies have shown that people are bad at predicting their future behavior, and voting is months away. And in a year with two highly unpopular candidates in a rematch from 2020, voters may also use their early support for a third-party candidate to express their frustration with the major party choices. In the end, voters may support the candidate for whom they feel their vote can make a difference or they may decide not to vote at all.

AMERICANS WANT A THIRD PARTY, IN THEORYThe concept of a third party has been popular for a long time.

A poll conducted by Gallup in 1999 found two-thirds of U.S. adults said they favored a third political party that would run candidates for president, Congress and state offices against Republicans and Democrats. (The AP analysis used Gallup data, when available, because Gallup has a long history of high-quality polling in the United States.)

About 6 in 10 U.S. adults have said in Gallup polling since 2013 that the Republican and Democratic parties do “such a poor job representing the American people” that a third major party is needed. In the latest Gallup polling, much of that enthusiasm is carried by independents: 75% say a third party is needed. About 6 in 10 Republicans and slightly fewer than half of Democrats (46%) say an alternative is necessary.

Marjorie Hershey, a professor emeritus in the political science department at Indiana University, said Americans generally like the idea of a third party until specifics emerge, such as that party's policies and nominees.

“It's a symbolic notion. Do I want more choices? Well, sure. Everybody always wants more choices, more ice cream choices, more fast-food choices,” Hershey said. “But if you start to get down to brass tacks and you talk about, so would it be tacos or burgers, then that's an entirely different choice, right?”

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 72 of 75

THIRD-PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES RARELY GET A SUBSTANTIAL SHARE OF THE VOTE That hypothetical support for third-party candidates often breaks down quickly.

The AP analysis looked at polling for every independent and minor party presidential candidate who received at least 3% of the popular vote nationally going back to the 1980 election.

In multiple elections, including the 1980, 1992, and 2016 presidential races, third-party candidates hit early polling numbers that were much higher than their ultimate vote share. For instance, in polls conducted in May and June 1980, between 21% and 24% of registered voters said they would like to see independent candidate John Anderson, a veteran Republican congressman from Illinois, win when he ran for president against Republican Ronald Reagan and Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter. Anderson went on to earn 7% of the popular vote.

Part of the problem is that early polls often look quite different from the actual general election vote.

Voters "don't know what's going to happen between now and the election," said Jeffrey Jones, a senior editor at Gallup. "Things are going to come up in the campaign that could change the way they think."

Decades after Anderson, polls conducted during the 2016 presidential campaign put support for Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson, a former New Mexico governor, at between 5% and 12% in polls of registered voters conducted from May to July. That led some people to predict that he could do better than any third-party candidate in decades. Johnson won about 3% of the vote in that election.

Johnson told the AP that he believes his name should have been included in more polls, though he was in surveys used to determine eligibility for debates.

He also contends that independent candidates struggle to match major party candidates in fundraising.

"It's money, first and foremost. People don't donate if they don't think that you have a possibility of winning," Johnson said. "I'm not excluding myself from that same equation. Look, am I going to give money to somebody that I know is going to lose? I'd rather go on a vacation in Kauai," Johnson said in an interview while driving with his family on a trip in Hawaii.

KENNEDY'S SUPPORT MAY DROP OFF AS THE ELECTION NEARS The American electoral system makes it hard for third parties to thrive. Still, it is possible to have a significant impact without coming close to winning.

Billionaire businessman Ross Perot is among the most successful modern-day examples. He won 19% of the vote when he ran for president in 1992. But that was substantially lower than his support in earlier polling. In polls conducted from May to July of that year, between 30% and 39% of registered voters said they would vote for Perot.

There are already reasons to believe that at least some of Kennedy's polling support may be a mirage. (The Kennedy campaign did not respond to a request for comment.)

A CNN poll conducted last summer when he was running for the Democratic nomination found that 2 in 10 Democrats who would consider supporting him said that their support was related to the Kennedy name or his family connections. An additional 17% said they did not know enough about him and wanted to learn more, while only 12% said it was because of support for his views and policies.

"A variable that is so different from all these other people is the Kennedy name," said Barbara Perry, an expert in presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center. "There's a lot of emotion around him that I would say was not there in the Anderson, Perot, (Ralph) Nader and Johnson cases."

There also is some evidence that Americans are using support for Kennedy to express frustration with Biden and Trump.

Hershey notes that for many people, presidential elections can feel abstract until a few weeks before it happens, so it is good to take early poll numbers with a grain of salt.

Such polls "don't necessarily reflect actual political issues," Hershey said. "They reflect general views about life."

Hunter Biden's family weathers a public and expansive airing in federal court of his drug addiction

By COLLEEN LONG, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — In a span of less than 48 hours this past week, first lady Jill Biden shuttled from a Normandy ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion in France to the front row of a Delaware courtroom, where Hunter Biden is on trial in a gun case, and then back to Paris for an elaborate state visit at Élysée Palace.

"Here we are again," the first lady said with a laugh as she and President Joe Biden were greeted by French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife, Brigitte, at the palace on Saturday, the light comment an oblique nod to her transatlantic commute.

It was a manifestation of the great lengths to which the Biden family has gone to support Hunter Biden as he stands trial in Wilmington, Delaware, accused of lying on a federal gun purchase form when he said he did not have a drug problem. Jill Biden has been a regular presence in the courtroom, buttressed by a rotating cast of other family members.

"The back and forth, the push and pull, of family responsibilities, of first lady duties, of her career, of the campaign — that's just who she is," said Elizabeth Alexander, the first lady's communications director.

Every family wrestles with personal challenges, and politicians are often left to navigate those dynamics in public. But the very expansive airing in court of tawdry details surrounding Hunter Biden's addiction — in the glare of an election year — is of an order of greater magnitude. And the president's family has shown a determination to ensure Hunter Biden does not weather it alone.

The trial resumes Monday. Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty to the charges, but he does not deny a drug problem. His memoir, "Beautiful Things," is all about hitting bottom after his brother Beau's death in 2015 from cancer. But his lawyers say he did not consider himself to be an "addict" at the time he filled out the gun purchase form in 2018 to buy a revolver.

BOTH PRESIDENT AND A DAD Joe Biden has steered clear of the courtroom and said little about the case, wary of creating an impression of interfering in a criminal matter brought by his own Justice Department. But the president has long walked the line between public servant and father.

At just 30, the Democrat was sworn in as Delaware's junior senator from a hospital room where his young sons were recuperating from a car accident that killed his wife and baby daughter.

In grainy black-and-white newsreels, Biden can be seen holding 3-year-old Hunter as the new senator takes the oath and 4-year-old Beau watches from a hospital bed. Joe Biden pledged then that if there was ever a conflict between "my being a good father and being a good senator," he would resign.

The president did put out a brief written statement as Hunter Biden's trial began.

"As the president, I don't and won't comment on pending federal cases, but as a dad, I have boundless love for my son, confidence in him, and respect for his strength," he said. "Our family has been through a lot together, and Jill and I are going to continue to be there for Hunter and our family with our love and support."

The case followed him to Normandy nonetheless, where Biden was asked in an ABC interview whether he thought his son would get a fair trial and whether the president would rule out pardoning his son if there was a guilty verdict.

Biden answered with a terse "yes" on both matters.

SHOW OF SUPPORT Over the trial's first week, Jill Biden was in court four days out of five, missing only Thursday due to the D-Day events. Others who have taken seats in the courtroom at various points are Hunter's sister Ashley, aunts Bonny Jacobs and Valerie Owens and his wife, Melissa Cohen Biden.

The first lady has leaned over the court railing to embrace Hunter, who has called her mom since she married Joe Biden in 1977. She has walked hand in hand with him out of the courtroom. She has listened to hours of testimony.

Hunter has not made it easy for his family, and the evidence in the case has been a highly personal tour of his mistakes and drug use, some kind of nightmare version of "This is Your Life."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 74 of 75

Jurors have listened to hours of testimony from his ex-wife, a former girlfriend and his brother's widow, who between them painted a picture of strip club trips, infidelity, habitual crack use and their failed efforts to help him get clean. Jurors saw images of the president's son bare-chested and disheveled in a filthy room and half-naked holding crack pipes. And they watched a video of his crack cocaine being weighed on a scale.

Federal prosecutors have argued the evidence was necessary to prove to jurors that Hunter Biden, 54, was in the throes of addiction when he bought the gun and therefore lied when he checked "no" on the form that asked whether he was "an unlawful user of, or addicted to" drugs.

On Friday, his eldest daughter, Naomi, 30, testified for the defense, telling jurors a hopeful story about how her father seemed to be getting better around the time of the gun purchase.

"I told him I was so proud of him," she said softly.

But then prosecutor Leo Wise showed her texts that showed erratic behavior during that same period. Her father did not respond to her message for hours, then asked her at 2 a.m. whether her boyfriend could meet up to switch cars.

"Right now?" she responded. "I'm really sorry dad I can't take this."

When she got off the stand, she stopped at the defense table, pausing to hug her dad before she left the courtroom.

By Friday afternoon, the first lady was headed back to France for the state dinner.

Her transcontinental flights underscore the importance of family to the Bidens writ large, said Carl Sferazza Anthony, an expert on first ladies and author of "Camera Girl," about Jacqueline Kennedy.

"She understands that at the end of the day what matters is her son and his well-being and knowing he has support and knowing, also, the vulnerability of someone who has been in recovery," Anthony said.

A FAMILIAR STORY Patrick Kennedy, a former congressman and leading voice on mental health and addiction, said Hunter Biden's story is so common that he expected many Americans would see something familiar in it, however disturbing or embarrassing it seems. Kennedy himself struggled with drug addiction and is the son of a famous lawmaker, the late Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass.

"The disease of addiction seems to be what is on trial here," he said, arguing that a big part of the case is the definition of sobriety. Are you sober when you are not taking drugs? Or are you sober when there has been a profound shift in your thinking that goes along with stopping the drugs?

"Half say it's physical, and the other half say it's mental — and truth is that it is both," he said.

WHAT COMES NEXT The trial is winding down. The defense is debating whether to call more witnesses on Monday, including the president's brother James. After closing arguments, the case will go to the jury.

But Hunter Biden's legal problems will not end there. He faces a separate trial in September in California on charges of failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes.

A plea deal had been negotiated last summer that would have resolved both the gun and tax matters, avoiding the spectacle of a trial so close to the presidential election this November. But when U.S. District Court Judge Maryellen Noreika, who was nominated by former President Donald Trump, questioned aspects of the deal, the lawyers could not come to a resolution. The deal fell apart.

Attorney General Merrick Garland then appointed the lead investigator, former U.S. Attorney David Weiss of Delaware, as a special counsel in August. A month later, Hunter Biden was indicted.

Hunter Biden has argued he is being unfairly targeted by the Justice Department after Republicans decried the now-defunct plea deal as special treatment for the Democratic president's son.

Today in History: June 10, the Six-Day War ends in the Middle East

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, June 10, the 162nd day of 2024. There are 204 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 10, 1967, six days of war in the Mideast involving Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq ended

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 10, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 350 ~ 75 of 75

as Israel and Syria accepted a United Nations-mediated cease-fire.

On this date:

In 1692, the first execution resulting from the Salem witch trials in Massachusetts took place as Bridget Bishop was hanged.

In 1907, eleven men in five cars set out from the French embassy in Beijing on a race to Paris. (Prince Scipione Borghese of Italy was the first to arrive in the French capital two months later.)

In 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in Akron, Ohio, by Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith and William Griffith Wilson.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act of 1963, aimed at eliminating wage disparities based on gender.

In 1971, President Richard M. Nixon lifted a two-decades-old trade embargo on China.

In 1977, James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., escaped from Brushy Mountain State Prison in Tennessee with six others; he was recaptured June 13.

In 1978, Affirmed, ridden by Steve Cauthen, won the 110th Belmont Stakes to claim horse racing's 11th Triple Crown.

In 1991, 11-year-old Jaycee Dugard of South Lake Tahoe, California, was abducted by Phillip and Nancy Garrido; Jaycee was held by the couple for 18 years before she was found by authorities.

In 2009, James von Brunn, an 88-year-old white supremacist, opened fire in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., killing security guard Stephen T. Johns. (Von Brunn died at a North Carolina hospital in January 2010 while awaiting trial.)

In 2013, a trial began in Sanford, Florida, in the trial of neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, charged with second-degree murder in the fatal shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. (Zimmerman was acquitted.)

In 2016, Muhammad Ali was laid to rest in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, after an all-day send-off. "Mr. Hockey" Gordie Howe, who set scoring records that stood for decades, died in Sylvania, Ohio, at 88.

In 2020, protesters pulled down a century-old statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, the former capital of the Confederacy.

In 2022, Britney Spears married her longtime partner Sam Asghari at a Southern California ceremony that came months after the pop superstar won her freedom from a court conservatorship. (Asghari would file for divorce 14 months later.)

In 2023, Ted Kaczynski, the Harvard-educated mathematician known as the "Unabomber" who retreated to a dingy shack in the Montana wilderness and ran a 17-year bombing campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others, died at a federal prison medical center.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Alexandra Stewart is 85. Singer Shirley Alston Reeves (The Shirelles) is 83. Actor Jurgen Prochnow is 83. Media commentator Jeff Greenfield is 81. Actor Frankie Faison is 75. Football Hall of Famer Dan Fouts is 73. Country singer-songwriter Thom Schuyler is 72. Former Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., is 71. Actor Andrew Stevens is 69. Singer Barrington Henderson is 68. Rock musician Kim Deal is 63. Singer Maxi Priest is 63. Actor Gina Gershon is 62. Actor Jeanne Tripplehorn is 61. Rock musician Jimmy Chamberlin is 60. Actor Ben Daniels is 60. Actor Kate Flannery is 60. Model-actor Elizabeth Hurley is 59. Rock musician Joey Santiago is 59. Actor Doug McKeon is 58. Rock musician Emma Anderson is 57. Country musician Brian Hofeldt (The Derailers) is 57. Rapper The D.O.C. is 56. Rock singer Mike Doughty is 54. R&B singer Faith Evans is 51. Actor Hugh Dancy is 49. R&B singer Lemisha Grinstead (702) is 46. Actor DJ Qualls is 46. Actor Shane West is 46. Country singer Lee Brice is 45. Singer Hoku is 43. Actor Leelee Sobieski is 42. Olympic gold medal figure skater Tara Lipinski is 42. Americana musician Bridget Kearney (Lake Street Dive) is 39. Actor Titus Makin is 35. Actor Tristin Mays is 34. Sasha Obama is 23. Actor Eden McCoy is 21.