

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 1 of 54

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Newsweek Bulletin](#)
- [4- Groton Area Rallies Past Webster for a Dominant Victory](#)
- [5- Obit: William Kroll](#)
- [6- Krueger takes second at Sioux Falls Tournament](#)
- [6- GDI Fit Ad](#)
- [7- Names Released in Fall River County Fatal Crash](#)
- [8- Names Released in Brown County Fatal Crash](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: Regulator stays on new carbon pipeline case after prior recusal, with no explanation this time](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: One of former state employees charged in string of criminal cases takes a plea deal](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Former South Dakota attorney general fights suspension of Iowa law license](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Johnson wins Trump's endorsement to continue as U.S. House speaker](#)
- [15- Weather Pages](#)
- [20- Daily Devotional](#)
- [21- Subscription Form](#)
- [22- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [23- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [24- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Tuesday, Dec. 31

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, three bean salad, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Common Cents Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 209 N Main.

Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Groton Community Center

## Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



## Thursday, Jan. 2

Senior Menu: Chicke strips, tri-tators, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast Pizza.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, garlic toast.

School resumes

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

## Friday, Jan. 3

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, winter blend, oranges.

School. Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Popcorn chicken, tri taters.

Girls Wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 2 p.m.

## Saturday, Jan. 4

Boys Wrestling Tournament at Webster, 10 a.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 209 N Main

Basketball Double Header hosts Redfield ((Boys Girls JV at 1 p.m.; Boys JV/ at 2 p.m.; Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow)

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

© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 2 of 54

Newsweek

## The Bulletin



China reacts to Carter's death: The Chinese government on Monday paid tribute to former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, praising him for being the "promoter and decision-maker" in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Bird flu update: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed it is monitoring for a number of red flags that suggest bird flu could become the world's next pandemic. H

National Day of Mourning: President Joe Biden issued an executive order on Monday declaring January 9 a national day of mourning for the late President Jimmy Carter.

Greece to launch internet curb app: In an effort to curb excessive internet use among young people, Greece announced plans to launch a government-operated app designed to enhance parental oversight of mobile devices in 2025.

Weather warnings: Winter weather advisories were in places for five U.S. states from the National Weather Service early Tuesday, with up to 14 inches of snow forecast in some parts of the country.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, a fire has broken out at a Russian oil depot deep behind the frontline in Kursk, according to the Kyiv Independent. The oil depot in Yartsevo in Russia's Smolensk region caught on fire on December 31 after a drone attack overnight.

### **Supreme Court Rulings That Could Change America in 2025**

The rundown: From puberty blockers to TikTok, online porn and ghost guns, major Supreme Court decisions are expected in 2025 that could have a massive influence on American culture. Here are some of the major opinions that are likely to be delivered before next summer.

Why it matters: Key cases include challenges to transgender healthcare laws, with Tennessee's ban on gender-affirming treatments for minors facing scrutiny. Decisions on ghost guns address untraceable firearms regulations, while the legality of Texas' porn site age verification law raises First Amendment questions. TikTok's future is at stake as the Supreme Court reviews Congress' mandate for parent company ByteDance to sell the platform due to security concerns. Donald Trump's ongoing legal battles may also bring new precedents regarding presidential immunity.

Trust in US Courts Plummets to Record Low, Gallup Poll Reveals

TL/DR: Nothing on the court's schedule ignites the kind of heated public debate generated by *U.S. v Skrametti*, a case about medical care for transgender teens.

What happens now? It is not on the Supreme Court docket, but the court will often take important cases on short notice, especially if it involves the presidency.

### **Republicans Skeptical of Mike Johnson React to Trump Endorsement**

The rundown: President-elect Donald Trump's endorsement of Speaker of the House Mike Johnson appears to have done little to convince some of Johnson's staunchest Republican critics on Monday.

Why it matters: Johnson, whose continued role as speaker is up for a vote after the new House is sworn in on Friday, recently faced heavy criticism from some of his GOP colleagues over a federal funding fight that nearly triggered a government shutdown just days before Christmas. Trump praised Johnson as "a good, hard working, religious man" while endorsing his continued speakership in the closely divided House. Several Republican House members who previously announced their opposition to Johnson continuing quickly weighed in on the endorsement but seemed less than convinced, with some comparing him to former Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, who was also endorsed by Trump but has since become a figure reviled by the president-elect and many other MAGA Republicans.

TL/DR: "Speaker Mike Johnson is a good, hard working, religious man," he added. "He will do the right thing, and we will continue to WIN. Mike has my Complete & Total Endorsement."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 3 of 54

What happens now? As Republicans are expected to have a slim 219 to 215 seat majority when the House convenes on Friday, only a small number of defections could kill Johnson's bid to continue as speaker. If a majority does not elect him speaker, the House will be forced to continue voting until a new speaker is chosen.

## **Should Luigi Mangione Go to Prison If Convicted? What New Poll Says The rundown:**

A recent poll found that a majority of college students believe that Luigi Mangione should be sentenced to time in prison if convicted.

Why it matters: Mangione has gained support in some corners of the internet, including a fundraiser for his legal defense fund that has raised over \$200,000. If Mangione is found guilty—according to a poll conducted by College Pulse and shared with Newsweek—32 percent of survey participants said he should be sentenced to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole; 14 percent chose life imprisonment without the chance of parole; 26 percent preferred a fixed-term prison sentence; and 2 percent believed he should get the death penalty. The remaining respondents chose "other" or "no opinion."

TL/DR: The poll collected responses from over 1,000 college students. All respondents had heard about the shooting, with differing levels of familiarity.

What happens now? Mangione is being held without bail in Brooklyn's Metropolitan Detention Center. His next federal court appearance is set for January 18 and he's due back in state court on February 21.

## **Will Ukraine War End in 2025?**

The rundown: The start of 2025 is likely to see Russia maintain battlefield momentum in its invasion of Ukraine amid concerns about what the new year will mean for continued American aid for Kyiv.

Why it matters: Putin's full-scale invasion will enter its fourth year on February 24, a grim anniversary in the war that has destroyed Ukraine's cities, killed thousands of civilians and soldiers and upended the security situation in Europe. Trump's transition team has been working on a plan to broker talks between Kyiv and Moscow and the president-elect hinted that both sides will have to compromise. However, Russia's defense minister, Andrei Belousov, said on December 16 that the four Ukrainian regions Putin claims to have annexed—Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk and Donetsk, would be fully under Moscow's control in 2025.

TL/DR: Donald Trump enters the White House on January 20 with anticipation building over whether he can make good on his pledge to end the war started by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

What happens now? Zelensky told the French newspaper that the incoming U.S. administration would not have access to the full military and diplomatic intelligence until after Trump's inauguration. Trump takes office in the first month of 2025 but whether by the year's close he can proclaim himself as the dealmaker who helped end the war depends on many factors.

## **Florida Faces Pileup of Unsold Homes**

The rundown: Florida has seen the biggest year-over-year surge in stale inventory in the entire nation in November, according to a new report by real estate brokerage Redfin, as new properties flooded the market at a time when few seemed to be interested in buying them. Here's why the housing market is cooling despite its pandemic-era growth.

Why it matters: The Sunshine State, together with Texas, now has the highest share of homes sitting idle in the market for over 60 days without going under contract, Redfin wrote. The recent rise in stale listings is yet another sign that the once-booming Florida housing market is now facing a likely downturn as inventory piles up at a time when demand is dwindling. The surge in stale listings in Florida is closely linked to the fact that the state has built more new homes than any other state in the country in the past few years, with the exception of Texas. Miami leads with 63.8 percent of homes sitting unsold for over 30 days, while Tampa saw the highest year-over-year increase in unsold inventory at 12.3 percent.

TL/DR: There are new homes on the market—and with less inbound migration, historically high home prices and mortgage rates, an increasing number of them are remaining unsold.

What happens now? Tricky times are ahead for the Florida housing market. Several experts told Newsweek that prices are likely to fall in the Sunshine State next year as a result of the growth in inventory and active listings.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 4 of 54

## Groton Area Rallies Past Webster for a Dominant Victory

In a matchup full of swings, the Groton Area Tigers surged back from an early deficit to defeat the Webster Area Bearcats 76-46 in boys' basketball action.

The game began with a flurry of long-range shooting by Webster Area's Matthew Mount. Mount caught fire in the first quarter, draining five three-pointers and helping the Bearcats race to a 20-7 lead. By the end of the quarter, Webster held a commanding 23-11 advantage, shooting a scorching 57% from the field compared to Groton Area's 28%.

However, the Tigers were undeterred. In the second quarter, they found their rhythm, particularly in the closing minutes. A 12-point run erased Webster's lead, tying the game at 27 with 2:03 left in the half. Moments later, Groton Area claimed their first lead at 29-27 and continued to dominate, heading into halftime with a 36-27 advantage. Their 67% shooting in the second quarter, compared to Webster's 17%, highlighted their efficient play.

The momentum stayed firmly with the Tigers in the third quarter. Led by balanced scoring from their starters, Groton Area extended their lead to 57-37 by the end of the period. Meanwhile, Webster struggled to find their early shooting form, hitting just 25% of their attempts.

In the fourth quarter, Groton Area sealed the game, shooting 50% from the field while Webster managed 38%. The Tigers finished with a commanding 30-point victory, thanks to their smothering defense and unselfish play. They recorded 20 assists and 16 steals, while limiting turnovers to just 11. Keegen Tracy's 14 points, Jayden Schwan's 12, Gage Sippel's 11, and Ryder Johnson's 10 points showcased the team's depth.

Webster's Matthew Mount led all scorers with 23 points, and Jack Shoemaker contributed 13. However, the Bearcats couldn't overcome their 19 turnovers and inconsistent shooting after the first quarter.

Rebounding and defense also played a key role in Groton's win. Becker Bosma dominated the boards with 14 rebounds, and Gage Sippel led the Tigers' defensive efforts with two blocks.

Shooting percentages told the story of the game:

- Groton Area: 66% on field goals, 26% from beyond the arc, and 55% on free throws.
- Webster Area: 33% on free throws, as foul trouble limited their scoring opportunities.

- Story compiled by ChatGPT

Keegen Tracy: 14 points, 6 assists, 2 steals, 2 fouls.

Jayden Schwan: 12 points, 3 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals, 3 fouls.

Gage Sippel: 11 points, 9 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 steal, 2 fouls, 2 blocks, 1 dunk.

Ryder Johnson: 10 points, 9 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 steals.

Becker Bosma: 9 points, 14 rebounds, 4 assists, 5 steals.

Turner Thompson: 9 points, 3 rebounds, 1 steal, 4 fouls.

Karson Zak: 8 points, 1 rebound, 1 assist, 2 steals, 2 fouls.

Ryder Schelle: 3 points, 1 rebound.

Blake Pauli: 1 rebound, 3 assists.

Logan Warrington: 1 steal.

Jace Johnson: 1 rebound.

Ethan Kroll: 2 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 fouls, 1 block.

Total: 23-35 field goals, 66%; 8-31 3-pointers, 25%; 6-11 free throws, 55%; 45 rebounds, 11 turnovers, 20 assists, 16 steals, 15 fouls, 3 blocks.

Matthew Mount led Webster Area with 23 points while Jack Shoemaker had 13, Ian Lesnar five, Michael Dorsett three, Seth Lesnar two. Webster made 16 of 46 field goals for 35 percent, 3 of 9 free throws for 33 percent, had 13 team fouls and 19 turnovers.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 56-20, leading at the quarterstops at 14-1, 30-8 and 43-15. The mercy rule kicked in with 4:22 left in the game. Anthony Tracy 15, Logan Warrington 10, Asher Johnson 10, Jayden Schwan 9, Ryder Schelle 8, Ethan Kroll 2, Jace Johnson 2. Peyton Sichmeller led Webster Area with 8 points.

Both games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM. Dorene Nelson sponsored the junior varsity game. Varsity game sponsors were Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's & More, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Lounge, Locke Electric, Krueger Brothers, R&M Farms/Rix Farms, The Meathouse in Andover,

## The Life of William Kroll



Services for William Kroll, 77, of Andover will be 10:30 a.m., Thursday, January 2nd at Zion Lutheran Church in Andover. Pastor Jeremy Yeadon will officiate. Inurnment will follow in the spring in Andover City Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the funeral chapel on Wednesday from 6-8 p.m.

Bill passed away December 29, 2024 at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen.

William Ernest Kroll was born on October 7, 1947 in Webster to William W. and Eleanor (Widvey) Kroll. He was baptized and confirmed at Zion Lutheran Church in Andover. Bill attended school in Andover until his sophomore year when he transferred to Groton. He graduated from Groton High School in 1965 and continued his education at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN. Bill returned to the family farm following his father's passing. In his early years, he enjoyed playing softball and bowling. On October 3, 1970, he was united in marriage with Jane Klein in Andover. Together they made their home on the farm and were blessed with five children.

Outside of farming, Bill was active in the church, holding many offices at Zion Lutheran. He attended many of his children's and grandchildren's sporting events and also helped with 4-H Club. For nearly 15 years, he drove bus for the Groton School District. Bill enjoyed attending cattle shows, riding 4-wheeler and cooking/baking. His butterhorns, donuts and birthday cakes will be fondly remembered by many friends and family.

Celebrating his life is his wife, Jane of Andover, his children, Craig (Lisa) Kroll of Andover, Marcy (T.J.) Harder of Groton, Joel (Jessica) Kroll of Groton, Mike (Rachel) Kroll of Warner, Barb (David) Gienger of Hosmer, 10 grandchildren: Kansas, Halee, Haden, Jace, Ethan, Connor, Lincoln, Braydon, Mattea and Sophia. Bill is also survived by his siblings, Anne (Ade) Swenson of Thompson, Iowa, Judy Kroll of Volga, Jim Kroll of Andover, Joyce (David) Priem of Fredericksburg, Texas and Donna (Kevin) Briggs of Mankato, Minnesota.

Preceding him in death were his parents and his step-father, Robert Lapham.

In lieu of flowers or memorials, please consider donating to the Groton Baseball Softball Foundation, Concession fund or the charity of your choice.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 6 of 54

## Krueger takes second at Sioux Falls Tournament

### 2024 Floyd Farrand Girls Invitational Results for Groton Area

**107: Liza Krueger (18-2) placed 2nd and scored 22.5 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 18-2 won by tech fall over Andrea Luna Sanchez (Milbank) 1-8 (TF-1.5 2:13 (20-3))

Quarterfinal - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 18-2 won by fall over Emma Bocek (Clark/Willow Lake) 3-8 (Fall 3:36)

Semifinal - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 18-2 won by major decision over Kendall Clayton (Brandon Valley) 7-3 (MD 15-4)

1st Place Match - Olivia Anderson (Watertown) 15-1 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 18-2 (Fall 1:53)

## You have to start some time! Why not **now!**

5 months to get your through the winter!

Student: \$175.75, Single: \$202.40, Couple: \$298.90,  
Family: \$362.15

This will get you into the gym through the end of May!



Gift  
Certificates  
Available!

Daily Pass Available for \$5

Age 65 or older  
Physical Therapy  
\$20 per month

Annual Memberships:

Student: \$255.60

Single: \$319.50

Couple: \$575.10

Family: \$702.26



15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460

Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



Living Heart Fitness Center

Open 24/7

## Names Released in Fall River County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 18, mile marker 25, 11 miles west of Hot Springs, SD

When: 7:49 a.m., Friday, December 27, 2024

Driver 1: Joseph Daniel Myers, 26-year-old male from Hot Springs, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2003 Honda Accord

Seat belt Used: No

Driver 2: Gregory Scott McKinney, 59-year-old male from Iola, WI, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2024 Peterbilt 579

Seat belt Used: Yes

Fall River County, S.D.- A 26-year-old Hot Springs man was fatally injured after colliding with a semi near Hot Springs, SD Friday morning.

Preliminary crash information indicates Joseph Daniel Myers, the driver of a 2003 Honda Accord was traveling eastbound on US Highway 18 near mile marker 25, passing another eastbound vehicle. Myers lost control of his vehicle and entered the westbound lane, and was struck by an oncoming semi, driven by Gregory S. McKinney. Myers was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected. He was pronounced deceased at the scene. McKinney was not injured.

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

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

## Names Released in Brown County Fatal Crash

What: Vehicle/Bicycle fatal crash

Where: North Lincoln Street and 2nd Avenue NE, Aberdeen, SD

When: 9:45 p.m., Thursday, December 26, 2024

Driver 1: Brandon Ellen Smith, 45-year-old male from Aberdeen, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 1: 2005 Ford F150

Seat belt Used: No

Charges: Pending

Driver 2: Roger Martin Genung, 65-year-old male from Aberdeen, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: Bicycle

Helmet Used: Under Investigation

Brown County, S.D.- A bicyclist sustained fatal injuries when struck by a vehicle Thursday evening in Aberdeen, SD.

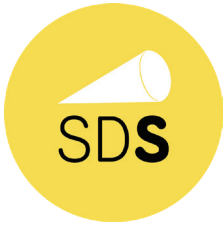
Preliminary crash information indicates Brandon E. Smith, the driver of a 2005 Ford F-150 was traveling westbound on 2nd Avenue NE near North Lincoln Street when he struck a bicyclist on the shoulder of the road.

The cyclist, Roger Martin Genung, passed away from his injuries. Smith was uninjured.

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

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Regulator stays on new carbon pipeline case after prior recusal, with no explanation this time**

**Public utilities commissioner's relatives still have a trust that owns land on the project route**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - DECEMBER 30, 2024 2:47 PM**

A trust controlled by a South Dakota regulator's relatives still owns land along a proposed pipeline route, but the regulator has not recused herself from the project's second permit application after recusing herself from the first one.

Two years ago, Public Utilities Commissioner Kristie Fiegen disqualified herself from Summit Carbon Solutions' first carbon dioxide pipeline application. She cited state law prohibiting commissioners from participating in hearings or proceedings when they have a conflict of interest.

Fiegen wrote a recusal letter in February 2022 that said the pipeline "would cross land owned by my sister-in-law (my husband's sister) and her husband." Gov. Kristi Noem assigned State Treasurer Josh Haeder to fill in for Fiegen.

In September 2023, Haeder and the other two commissioners rejected Summit's initial application, citing the pipeline route's conflicts with several county ordinances that mandate minimum distances between pipelines and existing features.

Summit reapplied in November 2024 with an adjusted route. Fiegen has not filed a recusal letter in the new application docket, and she participated in a procedural hearing about the application on Dec. 17.

Fiegen did not respond to questions from South Dakota Searchlight about her participation in the new docket.

Public Utilities Commission spokesperson Leah Mohr said "ex parte" rules bar Fiegen from discussing the matter. Those rules prohibit direct communication with commissioners about dockets they're considering. Mohr also declined to discuss the matter, and declined to discuss how conflicts of interest are defined for commissioners.

The Attorney General's Office declined to say whether Fiegen's participation complies with state law, or whether she sought the office's legal advice.

#### **Defining a conflict of interest**

The chapter of state law Fiegen cited in her 2022 recusal is specific to public utilities commissioners, and it leaves conflicts of interest undefined. It merely says "if a commissioner determines" that the commissioner has a conflict, the commissioner should file a recusal letter.

Meanwhile, a 2016 law required the state Board of Internal Control to create a conflict-of-interest policy for use by state agencies.

The policy says officials involved in quasi-judicial actions such as reviewing a permit application must be "disinterested and free from actual bias or an unacceptable risk of actual bias" and must abstain if "a reasonably-minded person could conclude" they are not impartial.

#### **Land owned by Fiegen's relatives**

The \$9 billion Summit pipeline would span five states, transporting some of the CO2 captured from the production processes at 57 ethanol plants to underground injection sites in North Dakota. The project would capitalize on federal tax credits that incentivize the prevention of heat-trapping carbon emissions.

The originally proposed pipeline route would have crossed three parcels of land in Minnehaha County owned by Fiegen's sister-in-law, Jean Fiegen-Ordal, and Fiegen-Ordal's husband, Jeffrey Ordal, plus another three parcels of land in McCook County owned by the Jeffrey A. Ordal Living Trust, for which the couple serves as trustees.

Summit said it paid \$175,000 in total compensation for easements and future crop damages on the land owned by the Ordals or their trust. An easement is an agreement granting access to land.

Summit said \$88,000 of the money went to the Ordals. The company did not disclose further details, but public records show the Ordals completed a sale of their Minnehaha County land several months after signing the easement documents in 2022.

The new pipeline route would cross the same parcels of land: the Minnehaha County land that Fiegen's relatives no longer own, and the McCook County land that the Ordal trust still owns.

*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*

## One of former state employees charged in string of criminal cases takes a plea deal

**Charges remain pending against several others**

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - DECEMBER 30, 2024 4:31 PM**

One of the former state of South Dakota employees accused in a recent string of criminal cases took a plea deal Monday and was sentenced to serve probation and pay fines and restitution.

Lynne Hunsley, 64, of Pierre, was accused of using her former position with the state Division of Motor Vehicles to create a fake vehicle title in 2021.

She allegedly used the fake travel-trailer title as proof of a trade-in, to avoid paying some excise taxes on a vehicle she purchased. Excise taxes are applied at the rate of 4% when a vehicle is registered, and trade-in allowances can be deducted from the price.

State Attorney General Marty Jackley announced seven counts of fraud-related charges against Hunsley in October, including five felonies and two misdemeanors.

On Monday at the Hughes County Courthouse in Pierre, Hunsley pleaded guilty to two felony charges: forgery and grand theft by deception.

A judge sentenced Hunsley to serve three years of probation and ordered her to pay a \$1,000 fine and \$1,200 in restitution to the state.

The judge also suspended four years of prison time, which means Hunsley won't serve it unless she violates her sentence and the judge decides to impose it.

Jackley issued a statement after Monday's sentencing.

"The defendant has accepted responsibility for her actions and is being held accountable for violating the public's trust," Jackley said. "As attorney general, I will continue to protect taxpayer dollars and restore the public's trust in state government."

### Other cases pending

Hunsley is one of several former state employees recently accused of criminal activity while working for the state.

The charges against Hunsley followed revelations of allegedly illegal behavior by the late Sandra O'Day, a former state employee who allegedly falsified vehicle titles to get bank loans. No charges were filed against O'Day, because she was deceased by the time the behavior was uncovered.

Danielle Degenstein, 51, of Pierre, is charged with a misdemeanor for allegedly concealing her knowl-

edge of a crime committed by a person identified in court documents only as "S.O." — a set of initials that matches O'Day's. Degenstein has pleaded not guilty.

In July, former Department of Social Services employee Lonna Carroll, 68, of Algona, Iowa, was accused of embezzling \$1.8 million from the state by creating and approving fraudulent financial support orders for children over the course of 13 years. Her case is scheduled for a trial in April.

Earlier this month, Attorney General Jackley announced charges against former Department of Public Safety employee Renee Strong, 55, of Springfield, for allegedly forging and falsifying food-service health inspection records for inspections she never conducted. There have been no further proceedings so far in Strong's case.

Jackley plans to propose legislation this winter to strengthen protections against state employee fraud. Gov. Kristi Noem recently responded to the string of charges by adding an extra internal control officer position to the executive branch and by ordering state employees to undergo annual training aimed at preventing criminal activity.

## Former South Dakota attorney general fights suspension of Iowa law license

**Jason Ravensborg was impeached after accident that killed a pedestrian**

**BY: CLARK KAUFFMAN, IOWA CAPITAL DISPATCH - DECEMBER 30, 2024 3:24 PM**

The former attorney general of South Dakota is objecting to a proposed six-month suspension of his Iowa law license due to his involvement in a 2020 traffic fatality.

In September, the South Dakota Supreme Court suspended for six months the South Dakota law license of Jason Ravensborg, who served as that state's attorney general from 2019 until his impeachment and removal from office in 2022.

Because Ravensborg is licensed to practice law in Iowa, he was recently notified that his Iowa license may also be subject to a six-month suspension based on South Dakota's actions.

Ravnsborg recently filed a written response to that notice, arguing that an identical suspension in Iowa "would be too severe." In his response, he cites the fact that he was born on an Iowa farm in Cherokee County and later served three military deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his response, Ravensborg also says he believes that South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, whom he had been investigating at the time of the fatality, "did everything she could to intimidate, interfere and influence" what he calls "the automobile investigation." He adds that he still believes "she had to get me, otherwise she would be exposed for her actions."

Both Noem and Ravensborg are Republicans.

Ravnsborg also says resigning would have been the easier path for him to take but he opted to remain in office to serve "my client, the state of South Dakota, who repeatedly shows up on lists as one of the most corrupt states."

Ravnsborg has also informed the Iowa Supreme Court that he is willing to sit before the Iowa Attorney Disciplinary Board and answer questions or appear at a hearing before the Iowa Supreme Court. He adds that he believes he should "be given no more than a private reprimand" so he can move forward after four years of dealing with the matter.

The Iowa Supreme Court has yet to issue a decision in the case, but a hearing on the matter is scheduled for Jan. 22, 2025.

### The death of Joe Boever

Court records indicate Ravensborg graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 2001 and was later admitted to the bar in both South Dakota and Iowa. In 2018, he was elected to serve as South Dakota's attorney general, and he took office in early 2019.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 12 of 54

About 10:30 p.m. on Sept. 12, 2020, according to court records, Ravensborg was driving from a political event in Redfield, South Dakota, to his home in Pierre, South Dakota, when he struck and killed a man, 55-year-old Joe Boever, who was walking on the shoulder of the road near the town of Highmore.

According to court records, Ravensborg slowly brought his vehicle to a stop and called 911, telling the operator, "I'm the attorney general. And I am – I don't know – I hit something." The operator asked whether he had hit "a deer or something," and he allegedly replied, "I have no idea, yeah, it could be, I mean it was right in the roadway."

Hyde County Sheriff Mike Volek was dispatched to the scene but couldn't locate anything Ravensborg struck. Because Ravensborg's car was so damaged it could not be driven, Volek then offered Ravensborg the use of his personal vehicle to complete the drive home to Pierre.

Court records indicate that the next day, Ravensborg returned to Highmore with his chief of staff to return the sheriff's vehicle. On the way, they stopped at the site of the crash and found Boever's body lying just off the side of the road. They then informed Volek of their discovery, and Volek advised Ravensborg to go back home to Pierre. The sheriff then contacted the South Dakota Highway Patrol and Division of Criminal Investigation.

State officials later revealed that within two days of the accident, Ravensborg received a text message about Boever from an unnamed consultant saying, "Well, at least the guy was a Democrat."

When he was interviewed by investigators, Ravensborg denied having consumed any drugs or alcohol on the night of the accident – which, according to court records, was confirmed by a blood test. Investigators also concluded that excessive speed was not a factor in the accident and while Ravensborg had been on his phone for some of his commute between Redfield and Highmore, both of his phones were locked at the time of the accident.

Ultimately, investigators concluded Ravensborg had been driving outside the lane of travel, just off the roadway, when the accident occurred. Ravensborg pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor offenses — operating a vehicle while using a cell phone and improper lane driving — and a charge of careless driving was dismissed.

Ravnsborg then entered into a confidential civil settlement with Boever's estate. In June 2022, he was impeached by the South Dakota Senate, removed from office and barred from ever holding public office again in South Dakota.

## **Board cites lack of apology and condolences**

The Disciplinary Board of the State Bar of South Dakota subsequently investigated the matter and recommended a 26-month suspension of Ravensborg's law license.

The board noted that in the immediate aftermath of the accident, the South Dakota governor publicly asked Ravensborg to resign or take a leave of absence, which Ravensborg refused to do. The board also alleged that when responding to questions by investigators, Ravensborg "did not appear to be forthright, and (was) only willing to acknowledge certain conduct after being confronted with evidence by the investigators."

The board also alleged that Ravensborg frequently identified himself as "the attorney general" when encountering law enforcement for minor traffic violations, such as speeding, running a stop sign, and "when making a 911 call from the highway shortly after killing Joe Boever."

In its written findings, the board also stated that "Ravnsborg was not sincere in his remarks concerning how badly he felt for Boever's family and bluntly stated, 'And I'm going down the road and my life changed,' and that, 'I had no idea, to be clear, until the next morning when I found the body and it changed my life forever.'"

The board also noted that from the night of the accident and continuing throughout his service as attorney general, Ravensborg made no public or private apology, never expressed his condolences to the Boever family, and he never acknowledged any culpability.

Ravnsborg, the board concluded, was more concerned with the "impact of the incident on his political

and military careers than the victim, the victim's family and the public he served."

Ravnsborg challenged those findings and the matter went before a retired circuit judge to act as "referee" in resolving the dispute.

The referee concluded Ravnsborg had not been dishonest or misleading and that he had conducted himself in a manner befitting of an attorney. He did, however, recommend that Ravnsborg be censored for identifying himself as the attorney general when dealing with the police in order to win "favorable treatment" from officers.

### Court settles on six-month suspension

In opting for a six-month law license suspension, the South Dakota Supreme Court stated that "several of Ravnsborg's statements after the accident raise questions about his honesty and truthfulness."

The court noted that Ravnsborg had repeatedly denied using his phones during his drive from Redfield to Highmore.

According to the court, the metadata on one of Ravnsborg's phones showed that "minutes before" he called 911, he had unlocked his phone, checked his Yahoo email account, accessed the Dakota Free Press website, and clicked on a political news article.

It was only after investigators informed him of that evidence, the court said, that "Ravnsborg's story took another turn" and he admitted "looking at stuff" on his phone before the accident.

"Ravnsborg's responses demonstrated a concerted effort to avoid criminal liability through dishonesty and misrepresentations," the court concluded.

The court also made note of Ravnsborg's decision to "conceal himself from the public eye" in the aftermath of the accident, even while refusing to take a leave of absence. "Each decision he made was influenced by personal aspirations and political survival rather than his responsibility to serve the public and uphold the integrity of his office," the court stated.

The court also noted two instances of Ravnsborg being stopped for minor traffic offenses – once in Nebraska and once in Iowa — and informing the officers that he was the South Dakota attorney general. In both cases, he was released without a citation being issued, the court stated.

*Deputy Editor Clark Kauffman of the Iowa Capital Dispatch has worked during the past 30 years as both an investigative reporter and editorial writer at two of Iowa's largest newspapers, the Des Moines Register and the Quad-City Times. He has won numerous state and national awards for reporting and editorial writing. His 2004 series on prosecutorial misconduct in Iowa was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. From October 2018 through November 2019, Kauffman was an assistant ombudsman for the Iowa Office of Ombudsman, an agency that investigates citizens' complaints of wrongdoing within state and local government agencies.*

## Johnson wins Trump's endorsement to continue as U.S. House speaker

**BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - DECEMBER 30, 2024 12:36 PM**

WASHINGTON — As U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson vies to keep his gavel, President-elect Donald Trump on Monday gave the Louisiana Republican a major boost with his "Complete & Total Endorsement."

Trump's coveted backing — just days ahead of Friday's House vote to elect a speaker — came as Johnson sat in the hot seat over a government shutdown quarrel earlier this month that exacerbated public dissatisfaction from several of his GOP colleagues over his leadership.

The spending fight also put a spotlight on his vulnerabilities in securing the votes to win the speakership again.

"The American people need IMMEDIATE relief from all of the destructive policies of the last Administration," Trump said in a Monday post on Truth Social.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 14 of 54

The soon-to-be president described Johnson as a "good, hard working, religious man," noting that "he will do the right thing, and we will continue to WIN."

In a post on X shortly after the endorsement, Johnson said he was "honored and humbled" by Trump's support. "Together, we will quickly deliver on your America First agenda and usher in the new golden age of America," he added.

## Tensions flare

But Johnson has failed to secure the backing of every House GOP colleague — which will be critical in a chamber Republicans will hold by a razor-thin margin. His opponents include Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky, who said he would not be voting for the incumbent.

In a post on X, Massie said: "I respect and support President Trump, but his endorsement of Mike Johnson is going to work out about as well as his endorsement of Speaker Paul Ryan."

"We've seen Johnson partner with the democrats to send money to Ukraine, authorize spying on Americans, and blow the budget," he added.

In an earlier Monday post on X, Massie noted he was the only Republican to not vote for former U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan's reelection to the speakership in 2017.

"Mike Johnson is the next Paul Ryan," Massie said. He urged his colleagues to join him in voting against the Louisiana Republican "because history will not give America another 'do-over.'"

Massie has not said whom he would prefer for the position.

In another post on X, Massie said he thinks no one will run for speaker until "Johnson concedes that he can't be Speaker" and "Trump weighs in."

"To step up before then, or to nominate someone before then, is to doom that candidacy," he said.

Indiana GOP Rep. Victoria Spartz has also been vocal in her dissatisfaction of Johnson's leadership and so far has refused to commit to voting for his reelection.

On Monday, Spartz laid out several demands for whoever becomes the next leader, saying: "Our next speaker must show courageous leadership to get our country back on track before this 'Titanic' strikes an iceberg at any moment."

"We must have a vision and a concrete PLAN to deliver on President Trump's agenda for the American people, which I have not seen from our current speaker despite countless discussions and public promises," she added, comparing federal spending to the iceberg that caused the infamous nautical disaster.

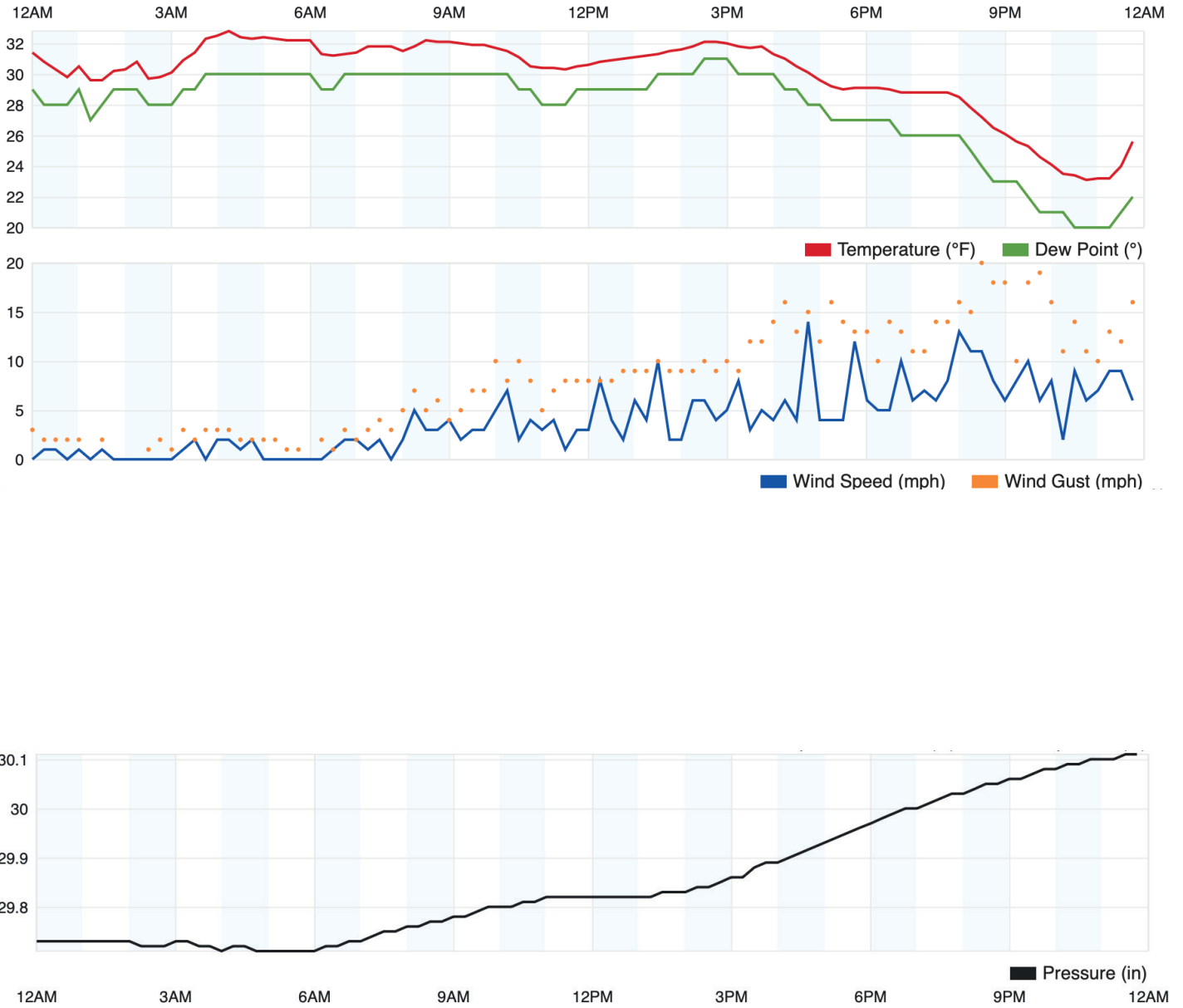
Spokespeople for House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York did not immediately respond Monday to a message seeking comment.

*Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.*

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 15 of 54

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 16 of 54

Today



High: 26 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tonight



Low: 12 °F

Mostly Cloudy

New Year's Day



High: 22 °F

Mostly Sunny

Wednesday Night



Low: 5 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 16 °F

Mostly Sunny



Turning Colder This Week / Snow Possible Saturday

December 31, 2024  
3:42 AM

## Key Messages

- Those warmer than normal conditions are a memory now. Colder than normal temperatures should be in place across the region by Thursday.
- Saturday appears to be the next chance for accumulating snowfall.

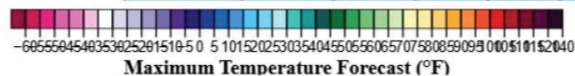
## Impacts

- Wind chill values during the second half of the 7-day forecast
- Light (fluffy/blowable) accumulating snow Saturday/night

## Noteworthy Cooling Trend In The 7-Day

### Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	12/31 Tue	1/1 Wed	1/2 Thu	1/3 Fri	1/4 Sat	1/5 Sun	1/6 Mon
Aberdeen	27	23	17	11	8	10	8
Miller	27	24	18	12	9	11	5
Mobridge	28	26	20	15	12	12	11
Murdo	29	27	22	15	13	11	11
Ortonville	27	21	16	11	8	10	8
Pierre	30	27	23	16	13	15	10
Sisseton	25	19	13	9	6	9	8
Watertown	25	20	14	10	8	11	8



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Some of the coldest air of the season will move into the region by the end of the work week. Right now, the next round of accumulating snow appears to be taking shape across western and central South Dakota over the weekend.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 17 of 54

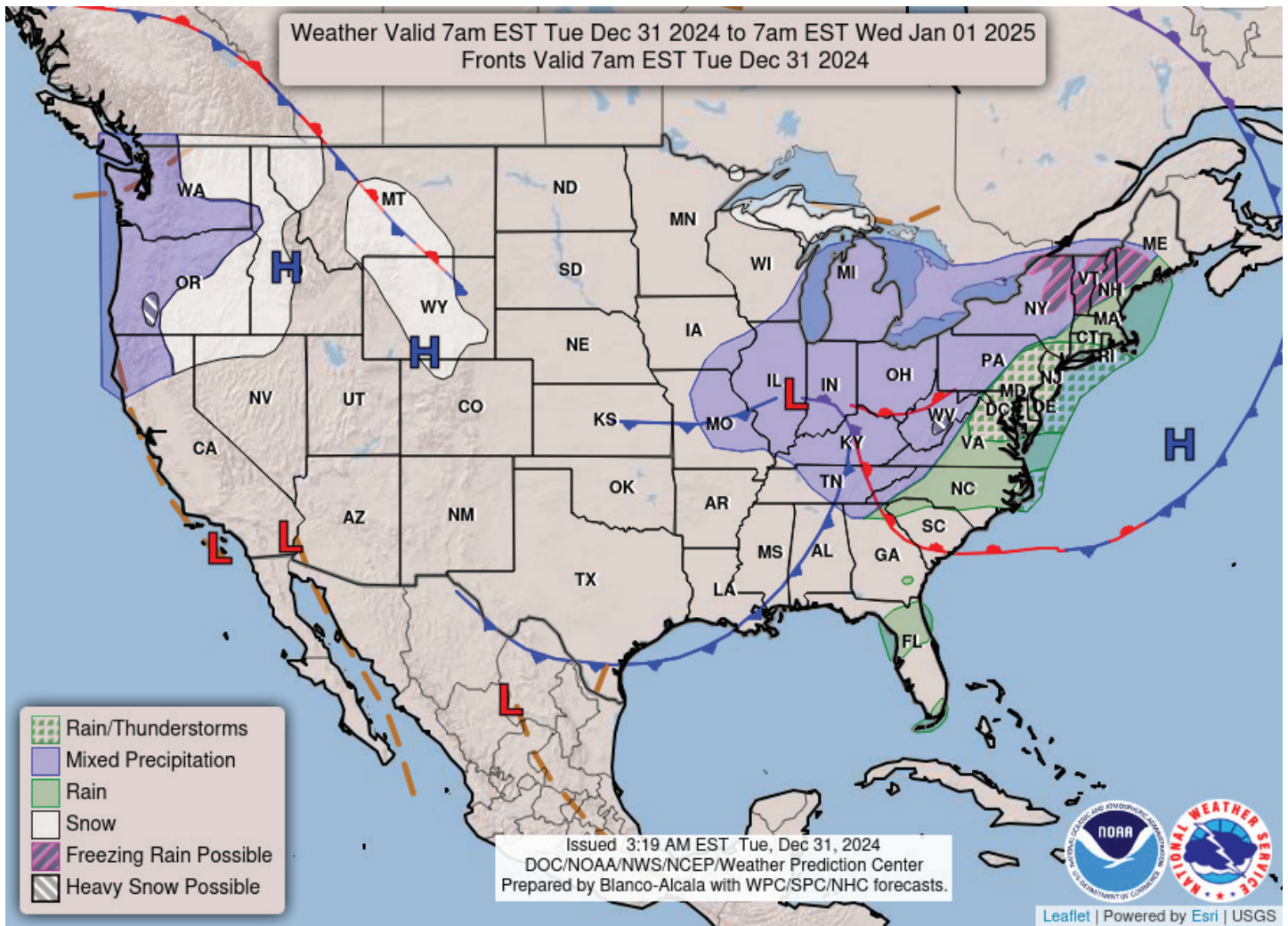
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 33 °F at 4:11 AM**  
**Low Temp: 23 °F at 10:46 PM**  
**Wind: 20 mph at 8:27 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 8 hours, 50 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 47 in 1999  
Record Low: -39 in 1967  
Average High: 24  
Average Low: 4  
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.61  
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 21.82  
Precip Year to Date: 21.71  
Sunset Tonight: 5:01:01 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10:28 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 18 of 54

## Today in Weather History

2010: An area of low pressure moved across the Northern Plains on New Year's Eve bringing widespread heavy snowfall along with blizzard conditions. Bitter cold northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph combined with additional snowfall of 6 to 10 inches brought reduced visibility to near zero across much of the region. This storm was the second blizzard in two days across the area. The blizzard conditions continued into early New Year's Day. Both Interstates 29 and 90 were closed from the 31st until Sunday, January 2nd. There were several stranded motorists along Highway 83 with five people being rescued. The total snowfall amounts from the two storms ranged from 6 to 15 inches across the region.

1876: A heavy snowstorm hit southern Arkansas, with amounts well over 20 inches in places. 28 inches was reported near Warren, and 24–28 inches was reported at Arkansas City.

1882: Downtown San Francisco saw 3.5 inches of snow.

1890: According to the National Meteorological Library and Archive from the United Kingdom, during December 1890, Westminster, England saw zero hours of sunshine.

1917 - The temperature at Lewisburg, WV, plunged to 37 degrees below zero to set a state record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1929 - Greenland Ranch, in Death Valley, California, went the entire year without measurable precipitation. (The Weather Channel)

1933: During the last week of December, a series of winter storms pounded the mountainside with 12 inches of rain near Los Angeles. More rain occurred on New Year's Eve, including 4.86 inches in downtown Los Angeles. The 4.86 inches is currently the fourth most rainfall to occur in one day in downtown Los Angeles since 1877. Around midnight, hillsides in at least three mountain locations collapsed sending millions of tons of mud and debris into the Crescenta Valley neighborhoods below. Crescenta Valley is a few miles north of Los Angeles. This mudslide destroyed more than 400 homes. Following the disaster, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the County of Los Angeles built a flood control system of catch basins, and concrete storm drains, designed to prevent a repeat of the 1934 disaster.

1941 - Snow which began on New Year's Eve became a major blizzard on New Year's Day, burying Des Moines, IA, under 19.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1947 - A late afternoon tornado touched down 10 miles north of Shreveport LA, and dissipated south of El Dorado AR. The tornado, as much as 400 yards in width, killed 18 persons. It damaged or destroyed two thirds of the structures at Cotton Valley LA. (The Weather Channel)

1962 - Perhaps the worst blizzard in the history of the state of Maine finally came to an end. The storm produced 40 inches in 24 hours at Orono, and a total of 46 inches at Ripogenus Dam. Gale force winds produced snow drifts twenty feet high around Bangor. A disastrous icestorm was over Georgia and South Carolina. It ravaged the two states for days causing more than seven million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1963 - A snowstorm struck the Deep South. Meridian, MS, received 15 inches of snow, 10.5 inches blanketed Bay St Louis MS, and 4.5 inches fell at New Orleans LA. Freezing temperatures then prevailed for New Year's Day. (David Ludlum)

1967: The kickoff temperature for the NFL Championship Game between the Dallas Cowboys and the Green Bay Packers was -13°F with a wind chill of -36°F. This game is known as the "Ice Bowl."

2000: The "Snow Bowl" was played between Mississippi St and Texas A&M at Independence Stadium in Shreveport, Louisiana. Snow began about a half hour before kickoff and didn't stop until well after the bowl game.

1987 - Torrential rains caused extensive flash flooding over eastern sections of the island of Ohau in Hawaii, resulting in many rock and mud slides. Rainfall totals ranged up to 22.89 inches in a 24 hour period, and property damage was estimated at 35 million dollars. Strong winds continued to usher arctic cold into the north central U.S. The temperature at Alexandria MN remained below zero through the day, and Jamestown ND reported a wind chill reading of 58 degrees below zero. Gales lashed the Great Lakes, with wind gusts to 54 mph reported at Lansing MI. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 19 of 54**

1988 - Warm and wet weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Six cities in Florida reported record high temperatures for the date. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southern Atlantic Coast. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - The year and decade ended on a soggy note in the eastern U.S. Thunderstorm rains pushed precipitation totals for the year to 88.32 inches at Baton Rouge, and to 75.37 inches at Huntsville AL, establishing all-time records for those two locations. Dry weather continued in California. Sacramento and San Francisco finished the month without any rain or snow, and Santa Maria reported their driest year of record with just 3.30 inches of precipitation. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - Unusually warm air fueled strong storms in the midwestern and southern U.S., producing high winds and a preliminary count of 53 tornadoes across five states. At least eight people were killed in Missouri and Arkansas and dozens of others were injured. In Mississippi, about 200 people were evacuated from the Jackson-Evers International Airport, where an EF-2 tornado crossed a runway. (NCDC)



## Some Final Words

Often what we find depends on what we look for. Here are a few things to look for in the days we will face in the year to come:

Look for God's presence. When fear grips us or failure would defeat us, or if life's challenges seem to be larger than we are, or the nights are longer than usual, remember, we are never alone if Jesus rules and reigns in our lives. He promised that "He will never leave us nor forsake us." When life turns to shambles, He will wrap His loving arms around us and protect us because He is with us.

Look for God's power. The psalmist said that "God is our refuge and strength." Often we look to people for insights and advice when we are faced with difficult problems. But their solutions are never as good as the solutions that come from God. God is the greatest asset any Christian has but we must go to Him and draw from His strength and power.

Look for God's provision. "My God shall supply all your needs." Though we may fail Him, He will not fail us. Though we may fail to claim His promises, it does not mean they are not available. If we look to and trust in Him, He will not let us down.

Prayer: Father, we look to You in faith believing that You will meet our every need if we trust You. Lord, help our unbelief! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scriptures For Today: 1 Kings 8:56-58; Psalm 46:1-3; Philippians 4:19

*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

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 21 of 54

## 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](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent [www.397news.com](http://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](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](https://venmo.com/paperpaul) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.27.24

3 7 37 49 55 6

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000,000**

NEXT 17 Hrs 4 Mins 33  
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.30.24

12 16 38 45 50 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$19,540,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 19  
DRAW: Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.30.24

7 14 18 25 47 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 34 Mins  
DRAW: 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.28.24

5 10 20 27 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$191,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 34  
DRAW: Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.30.24

15 34 52 56 57 14

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 3  
DRAW: Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.30.24

9 19 33 38 39 1

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$178,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 3  
DRAW: Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 23 of 54

## Upcoming Groton Events

- 01/05/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/26/2025 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed at the Community Center 10am-1pm
- 01/26/2025 87th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 02/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 02/05/2025 FB Live Electronic Hwy 12 Sign Drawing City Hall 12pm
- 03/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
- 04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 06/07/2025 Day of Play
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 24 of 54

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

#### **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Brandon Valley 59, Tea 29  
Lakota Tech 67, Mobridge-Pollock 43  
Philip 56, Sully Buttes 37  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 45, Sioux Falls Lincoln 34  
St Thomas More 44, Hill City 23  
Hoop City Classic=  
Ethan 49, Hamlin 46  
Mitchell 53, Sisseton 48  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Irene-Wakonda vs. Avon, ppd. to Dec 31st.

#### **BOYS PREP BASKETBALL**

Groton 76, Webster 46  
Lower Brule 74, Faulkton 70  
Marshall, Minn. 58, Tea 56  
Mobridge-Pollock 59, Lakota Tech 45  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 71, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 47  
Sioux Falls Washington 72, Sioux Falls Jefferson 64  
Tri-Valley 67, Freeman Academy-Marion 36  
Hoop City Classic=  
Brandon Valley 57, St. George's, Tenn. 49  
Bridgewater-Emery 60, Platte-Geddes 48  
Corsica/Stickney 68, Potter County 65  
Lennox 61, Pine Ridge 60  
Viborg-Hurley 84, Leola-Frederick High School 75  
Huron Classic=  
Wessington Springs 55, Gregory 51  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Avon vs. Irene-Wakonda, ppd. to Dec 31st.

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## **Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt reach divorce settlement after 8 years**

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have reached a divorce settlement, ending one of the longest and most contentious divorces in Hollywood history but not every legal issue between the two.

Jolie and Pitt signed off on a default declaration filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on Monday, saying they have entered into a written agreement on their marital and property rights. The settlement was first reported by People magazine.

"More than eight years ago, Angelina filed for divorce from Mr. Pitt," Jolie's attorney, James Simon, said in a statement. "She and the children left all of the properties they had shared with Mr. Pitt, and since that time she has focused on finding peace and healing for their family. This is just one part of a long ongoing process that started eight years ago. Frankly, Angelina is exhausted, but she is relieved this one



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 25 of 54

part is over.”

The filing says they give up the right to any future spousal financial support, but gives no other details. A judge will need to sign off on the agreement. An email late Monday night to Pitt’s attorney seeking comment was not immediately answered.

Jolie, 49, and Pitt, 61, were among Hollywood’s most prominent pairings for 12 years, two of them as a married couple. The Oscar winners have six children together.

Jolie filed for divorce in 2016, after a private jet flight from Europe during which she said Pitt physically abused her and their children. The FBI and child services officials investigated Pitt’s actions on the flight. Two months later, the FBI released a statement saying it would not investigate further, and the U.S. attorney did not bring charges.

A heavily redacted FBI report obtained by The Associated Press in 2022 said that an agent provided a probable cause statement to prosecutors on Pitt, but that after discussing the merits, “it was agreed by all parties that criminal charges would not be pursued.”

The document said Jolie was “personally conflicted” about supporting charges, and in a later court filing she said she opted not to push for them for the sake of the family.

A source familiar with the child services inquiry told the AP in 2016 that the child services investigation was closed without a finding of abuse.

A judge in 2019 declared Jolie and Pitt divorced and single, but the splitting of assets and child custody needed to be separately settled.

Soon after, a private judge that the two had hired to handle the case reached a decision that included equal custody of their children, but Jolie filed to have him removed from the case over an unreported conflict of interest. An appeals court agreed, removing the judge and vacating his decision. The couple had to start the process over.

During the long divorce fight, four of their children became adults, negating the need for a custody agreement for them. The only minors that remain are 16-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne. In June, one of their daughters, then known as Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt, successfully petitioned to remove Pitt’s name from hers.

The couple’s use of the private judge — an increasingly common move among splitting celebrities in recent years — has kept the details of the divorce largely under wraps. There had been no official court actions in the case in nearly a year, and no indication that the two were near agreement.

Some elements of their disputes, however, have been revealed through a separate lawsuit filed by Pitt over Jolie’s sale of her half of a French winery they owned. Pitt had wanted to buy her half of the winery, Chateau Miraval, and said she abandoned their negotiations and sold her part to the Tenute del Mondo wine group. Pitt said it was a “vindictive” and “unlawful” move that should not have been made without his consent and ruined a private space that had been a second home.

Jolie and her attorneys said that Pitt had demanded she sign a wide-ranging non-disclosure agreement about him as part of the proposed deal that was an attempt to cover up his abuse of her and the children.

The divorce agreement does not affect the winery lawsuit, where the legal battle between the two stars could continue.

Publicly, both Pitt and Jolie have been extremely tight-lipped on everything surrounding their split, despite robust promotional tours for various projects.

Pitt said in a 2017 interview with GQ that he had had a drinking problem at the time of the plane incident and the split, but had since become sober and was going to therapy. He has not defended his behavior on the family flight.

Both were among the most elite stars in film when they began dating in 2004, after co-starring as hitman-and-hitwoman spouses in “Mr. and Mrs. Smith,” and remained atop the Hollywood A-list throughout their coupling. The star of “Maleficent” and “Lara Croft: Tomb Raider,” Jolie won an Oscar for her performance in 1999’s “Girl, Interrupted.”

Pitt, the star of “Fight Club” and “Inglourious Basterds,” thrived as both actor and producer after the split. He won his own Academy Award for 2019’s “Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood,” the crowning achievement

in an awards season that some in media framed as a redemption and brought major public affection for him.

Jolie kept a less visible profile in the years since the divorce, though she directed several films and appeared in several more while trying to focus on raising the children. She has very much returned to the Oscar conversation this year for her portrayal of the legendary soprano Maria Callas in "Maria."

## Cities across the globe prepare to welcome the New Year in celebrations tinged with local traditions

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Cities around the world are readying to ring in the New Year with celebrations highlighting local cultures and traditions, after a year roiled by ongoing conflict and political instability.

Countries in the South Pacific Ocean will be the first to welcome 2025, with midnight in New Zealand striking 18 hours before the ball drop in Times Square in New York.

In New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, thousands were expected to throng the downtown or climb the city's ring of volcanic peaks for a fireworks vantage point — and a light display recognizing Auckland's Indigenous tribes. It follows a year marked by protests over Māori rights in the nation of 5 million.

Two hours later in Australia, more than 1 million people are expected at Sydney Harbor for the traditional fireworks. British pop star Robbie Williams will lead a singalong and Indigenous ceremonies and performances will acknowledge the land's first people.

Asia gets ready for the Year of the Snake

Much of Japan has shut down ahead of the nation's biggest holiday, as temples and homes underwent a thorough cleaning, including swatting floor mats called "tatami" with big sticks.

The upcoming Year of the Snake in the Asian zodiac is heralded as one of rebirth — alluding to the reptile's shedding skin. Stores in Japan, which observes the zodiac cycle from Jan. 1, have been selling tiny figures of smiling snakes and other snake-themed products. Other places in Asia will start marking the Year of the Snake later, with the Lunar New Year.

In South Korea, celebrations were cut back or canceled as the country observes a period of national mourning following the Sunday crash of a Jeju Air flight at Muan that killed 179 people.

New Year celebrations in Jakarta will feature a dazzling fireworks display, including a drone show featuring 800 drones, followed by countdowns to midnight at the city's iconic Hotel Indonesia Roundabout.

West's rivals exchange goodwill

Chinese state media covered an exchange of New Year's greetings between leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a reminder of growing closeness between two leaders who face tensions with the West.

Xi told Putin that their countries will "always move forward hand in hand," the official Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday.

China has maintained ties and robust trade with Russia since the latter invaded Ukraine in 2022, helping to offset Western sanctions and attempts to isolate Putin.

Conflicts cast a shadow in Middle East

New Year's celebrations are likely to be subdued in Israel as its war with Hamas in Gaza grinds through a 15th month and scores of hostages remain in captivity.

Lebanon is in the grip of a severe economic crisis, and many areas were heavily damaged during the war between Israel and Hezbollah, which ended with a shaky ceasefire. Syrians are meanwhile expressing hope and uncertainty for the coming year after the overthrow of President Bashar Assad.

In Dubai, thousands are expected to attend an annual fireworks show at the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest skyscraper.

Midnight Mass, with bubbles

Rome's traditional New Year's Eve festivities have an additional draw: the start of Pope Francis' Holy Year, the once-every-quarter-century celebration projected to bring some 32 million pilgrims to the Eternal

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 27 of 54

City in 2025.

On Tuesday, Francis will celebrate a vespers at St. Peter's Basilica, followed by Mass on Wednesday, when he is expected to once again appeal for peace amid wars raging in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the Cathedral of Saint Paul in Minnesota will host an 11 p.m. Mass followed by a champagne reception with toasts. Jan. 1 is a day of obligation for Catholics, marking the Solemnity of Mary, and many churches will hold vigil Masses on Tuesday afternoon and evening.

The German leader calls for solidarity in a new year

Hours before Germany rings in the new year, Chancellor Olaf Scholz called on the country's 84 million residents to stick together despite the many global crises and wars, the country's ailing economy and a deadly Christmas market attack that shocked the nation.

"We are a country of togetherness. And we can draw strength from this — especially in difficult times like these," Scholz said in his prerecorded speech.

Paris recaptures the Olympic spirit

Paris will cap a momentous 2024 with its traditional festive countdown and fireworks extravaganza on the famed Champs-Élysées.

The Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games hosted in the French capital from July to September transformed the city into a site of joy, fraternity and astonishing sporting achievements, and marked another major milestone in its recovery from deadly extremist attacks in 2015 by al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

Britons will brave wintry weather

London is due to ring in the New Year with a pyrotechnic display along the River Thames and a parade through the city center on Wednesday featuring 10,000 performers. The fireworks will explode against the backdrop of the London Eye, the massive Ferris wheel across the river from Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament.

With a storm bringing bitter weather to other parts of the United Kingdom, however, festivities in Edinburgh, Scotland — including the Hogmanay Street party, garden concert and castle pyrotechnics show — were already canceled.

Rio to see 2 million revelers

Rio de Janeiro will throw Brazil's main New Year's Eve bash on Copacabana Beach, with 10 ferries off-shore bearing 12 straight minutes of fireworks. Thousands of tourists in six cruise ships will witness the show up close.

Rio's City Hall was closely guarding its plans for a display of lights and sounds. More than 2 million people are expected at the Copacabana, hoping to squeeze into concerts by superstar Brazilian artists such as pop singer Anitta and Grammy-award winner Caetano Veloso.

American traditions old and new

In New York City, the organization managing Times Square has tested its famous ball drop, and inspected 2025 numerals, lights and thousands of crystals, as part of a tradition going back to 1907. This year's celebration will include musical performances by TLC, Jonas Brothers, Rita Ora, and Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

The party, covering multiple blocks around the city's main tourism and theater hub, is expected to draw large crowds despite rain and chilly weather.

Meanwhile, Las Vegas will bid farewell to 2024 with old — and some new — traditions. Its annual eight-minute pyrotechnic show will be on in the Las Vegas Strip, with 340,000 people anticipated as fireworks are launched from the rooftops of nine casinos.

Nearby, the massive Sphere venue will display for the first time countdowns to midnight in different time zones.

Country music, football and a midnight race

In Pasadena, enthusiastic Rose Parade spectators were to camp out on the cold streets and ring in the New Year hoping for prime spots for the iconic Southern California tradition. The parade precedes the Rose Bowl football game between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Oregon Ducks on Jan. 1.

Thousands are to participate in a midnight 5K race following the parade route.

Some 200,000 people will flock to a party in Nashville, Tennessee, featuring a five-hour show by some of country music's biggest stars. At midnight — an hour after New York's — a 16-foot tall music note weighing 400 pounds will drop as fireworks light the sky.

Celebrations will echo around the globe as the New Year arrives in different time zones, with American Samoa among the last to welcome 2025 a full 24 hours after New Zealand.

## US and Boeing investigators examine the site of a deadly South Korean plane crash

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A team of U.S. investigators including representatives from Boeing have examined the site of a plane crash that killed 179 people in South Korea while authorities were conducting safety inspections on all Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by the country's airlines.

All but two of the 181 people aboard the Boeing 737-800 operated by South Korean budget airline Jeju Air died in Sunday's crash. Video showed the aircraft, without its landing gear deployed, crash-landed on its belly and overshoot a runway at South Korea's southern Muan International Airport before it slammed into concrete fence and burst into a flame.

The plane was seen having an engine trouble, and preliminary examinations also say the pilots received a bird strike warning from the ground control center and issued a distress signal as well. But many experts say the landing gear issue was likely the main cause of the crash.

The South Korean government has launched safety inspections on all the 101 Boeing 737-800s in the country. The Transport Ministry said authorities are looking at maintenance and operation records during five days of safety checks that are to run until Friday.

The ministry said that a delegation of eight U.S. investigators — one from the Federal Aviation Administration, three from National Transportation Safety Board and four from Boeing — made an on-site visit to the crash site on Tuesday. The results of their examination weren't immediately available.

Kim E-bae, Jeju Air's president, told reporters Tuesday that his company will add more maintenance workers and reduce flight operations by 10-15% until March as part of efforts to enhance the safety of aircraft operations.

John Hansman, an aviation expert at MIT, said the crash was most likely the result of a problem with the plane's hydraulic control systems. He said that would be consistent with the landing gear and wing flaps not being deployed "and might indicate a control issue which would explain the rush to get on the ground."

The Boeing 737-800 -- an earlier version of 737 than the Max -- is a widely used plane with a good safety record, according to Najmedin Meshkati, an engineering professor at the University of Southern California who has studied aviation safety.

He said the failure of the plane's system for broadcasting location, operating its landing gear and extending the wing flaps to slow down indicate a widespread problem that affected electrical and hydraulic systems. He is confident that investigators will learn what went wrong by analyzing information from the flight data and cockpit voice recorders.

"These are really the two pillars for accident analysis and accident reconstruction," Meshkati said. Like other aviation experts, Meshkati also questioned the location of a solid wall just a few hundred feet (meters) past the end of the runway, given that planes occasionally do overshoot runways. "Having such a big concrete barrier over there was really very bad luck for this particular airplane," he said.

South Korean officials have said they will look into whether the Muan airport's localizer — a concrete fence housing a set of antennas designed to guide aircraft safely during landings — should have been made with lighter materials that would break more easily upon impact.

The crash was the deadliest disaster in South Korea's aviation history in decades. A seven-day national mourning has been declared until Jan. 4.

The Transport Ministry said Tuesday that authorities have identified 175 bodies and are conducting DNA tests to identify the remaining five. Bereaved families said that officials told them that the bodies were so badly damaged that officials need time before returning them to relatives.

On Tuesday, Park Han Shin, a representative of the families, accused the government of failing to provide freezers on time as promised and said there are worries that the bodies could decompose. "The last dignities of the victims are seriously hurt. We strongly criticize authorities for failing to keep its promise," Park said.

## Russian missile and drone attack on Ukraine hits multiple targets, including Kyiv

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched an aerial attack on Ukraine on Tuesday, striking the capital and other regions with multiple missiles and drones.

Ukraine's air force reported a ballistic missile threat at 3:00 a.m. (0100 GMT), with at least two explosions heard in Kyiv minutes later. Another missile alert was issued at 8:00 a.m. followed by at least one explosion in the city. Missile debris fell in the Darnytskyi district of the capital with no reports of casualties or damage, the local administration said.

Authorities in the northeastern Sumy region reported strikes near the city of Shostka, where the mayor, Mykola Noha, said 12 residential buildings had been damaged as well as two educational facilities. He said some "social infrastructure objects" were destroyed, without providing detail.

The air force also reported missiles and drones targeting several other regions of Ukraine.

In Moscow, the Russian Defense Ministry said that its forces successfully struck a Ukrainian air base and a gunpowder factory.

Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the war, and rolling electricity blackouts are common and widespread.

Kyiv's Western allies have provided air defense systems to help Ukraine protect critical infrastructure, but Russia has sought to overwhelm its air defenses with combined strikes involving large numbers of missiles and drones.

Russian attacks come as uncertainty looms over the course of the nearly three-year conflict. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office next month, has vowed to end the war and has thrown into doubt whether vital U.S. military support for Kyiv will continue.

On Monday, President Joe Biden announced that the United States will send an additional \$2.5 billion in weapons to Ukraine as his administration works quickly to spend all the money it has available to help Kyiv fight off Russia before Trump takes office.

Ukraine has struck back at Russia with a steady barrage of missile and drone attacks throughout the year.

Early Tuesday, Russia's Defense Ministry said that air defenses shot down 68 Ukrainian drones over several regions early Tuesday and sank eight uncrewed boats in the Black Sea.

Head of the Smolensk region in western Russia, Vasily Anokhin, said drone fragments fell on the territory of an oil depot, sparking a blaze.

In Russia-occupied Crimea, the Moscow-appointed head of the city of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said that Russian defenses downed four aerial drones attacking the city and sank two uncrewed boats near the shore.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Military Intelligence Directorate, known under its acronym GUR, claimed that one of its naval drones on Tuesday shot down a Russian helicopter with a missile, marking the first time when an aerial target was destroyed by an uncrewed vessel.

It said a MaguraV5 naval drone downed a Russian Mi-8 helicopter with an R-73 missile near Cape Tarkhankut, the westernmost point of the Crimean peninsula. Another Russian helicopter was damaged but managed to reach an airfield, GUR said.

Russia has held the initiative this year as its military has steadily rammed through Ukrainian defenses in

the east in a series of slow but steady offensives.

Still, in August, Ukraine launched a raid into Russia's Kursk region that caught Moscow by surprise, dealing a significant blow to the Kremlin's prestige. The Russian army has been able to reclaim some territory of the area there from Ukrainian forces but has failed to fully dislodge them.

## **Middle East latest: 45 patients and wounded people evacuated from Gaza for treatment, officials say**

By The Associated Press undefined

Palestinian health authorities say 45 patients and wounded people have been evacuated for treatment outside the war-ravaged Gaza Strip.

They left the European Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis early Tuesday and traveled through the Kerem Shalom Crossing into Israel. They will receive treatment in the United Arab Emirates.

The patients are accompanied by over 100 of their relatives, according to the hospital.

Among them was a 10-year-old boy, Abdullah Abu Yousef, suffering from kidney failure. The child was accompanied by his sister after the Israeli authorities rejected his mother's application to join him. Israel says it screens escorts for security.

"The boy is sick," said his mother, Abeer Abu Yousef. "He requires hemodialysis three to four days a week."

The Health Ministry says several thousand Palestinians in Gaza need medical treatment abroad. Israel has controlled all entry and exit points since capturing the southern city of Rafah in May. Israel's offensive, launched after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack, has gutted the territory's health care system and forced most of its hospitals to close. Those that remain open are only partially functioning.

## **South Korea to inspect Boeing aircraft as it struggles to find cause of plane crash that killed 179**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean officials said Monday they will conduct safety inspections of all Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by the country's airlines, as they struggle to determine what caused a plane crash that killed 179 people a day earlier.

Sunday's crash, the country's worst aviation disaster in decades, triggered an outpouring of national sympathy. Many people worry how effectively the South Korean government will handle the disaster as it grapples with a leadership vacuum following the recent successive impeachments of President Yoon Suk Yeol and Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's top two officials, amid political tumult caused by Yoon's brief imposition of martial law earlier this month.

New acting President Choi Sang-mok on Monday presided over a task force meeting on the crash and instructed authorities to conduct an emergency review of the country's aircraft operation systems.

"The essence of a responsible response would be renovating the aviation safety systems on the whole to prevent recurrences of similar incidents and building a safer Republic of South Korea," said Choi, who is also deputy prime minister and finance minister.

The Boeing 737-800 plane operated by South Korean budget airline Jeju Air aborted its first landing attempt for reasons that aren't immediately clear. Then, during its second landing attempt, it received a bird strike warning from the ground control center before its pilot issued a distress signal. The plane landed without its front landing gear deployed, overshot the runway, slammed into a concrete fence and burst into a fireball.

Alan Price, a former chief pilot at Delta Air Lines and now a consultant, said the Boeing 737-800 is a "proven airplane" that belongs to a different class of aircraft than the Boeing 737 Max jetliner that was linked to fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019.

But South Korea's Transport Ministry said Monday it plans to conduct safety inspections of all of the 101 Boeing 737-800 jetliners operated by the country's airlines as well as a broader review into safety standards

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 31 of 54**

at Jeju Air, which operates 39 of those planes. Senior ministry official Joo Jong-wan said representatives from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and Boeing were expected to arrive in South Korea on Monday to participate in the investigation.

Ministry officials also said they will look into whether the Muan airport's localizer — a concrete fence housing a set of antennas designed to guide aircraft safely during landings — should have been made with lighter materials that would break more easily upon impact.

Joo said the ministry has determined that similar concrete structures are in other domestic airports, including in Jeju Island and the southern cities of Yeosu and Pohang, as well as airports in the United States, Spain and South Africa.

Video of the crash indicated that the pilots did not deploy flaps or slats to slow the aircraft, suggesting a possible hydraulic failure, and did not manually lower the landing gear, suggesting they did not have time, said John Cox, a retired airline pilot and CEO of Safety Operating Systems in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Despite that, the jetliner was under control and traveling in a straight line, and damage and injuries likely would have been minimized if not for the barrier being so close to the runway, Cox said.

Other observers said the videos showed the plane was suffering from suspected engine trouble but the landing gear malfunction was likely a direct reason for the crash. They said there wouldn't likely be a link between the landing gear problem and the suspected engine issue.

Earlier Monday, another Boeing 737-800 plane operated by Jeju Air returned to Seoul's Gimpo International Airport shortly after takeoff when the pilot detected a landing gear issue. Song Kyung-hoon, a Jeju Air executive, said the issue was resolved through communication with a land-based equipment center, but the pilot decided to return to Gimpo as a precautionary measure.

Joo said officials were reviewing whether there might have been communication problems between air traffic controllers and the pilot. "Our current understanding is that, at some point during the go-around process, communication became somewhat ineffective or was interrupted, ahead of the landing and impact," he said.

Ministry officials said Monday the plane's flight data and cockpit audio recorders were moved to a research center at Gimpo airport ahead of their analysis. Ministry officials earlier said it would take months to complete the investigation of the crash.

The Muan crash is South Korea's deadliest aviation disaster since 1997, when a Korean Airlines plane crashed in Guam, killing 228 people on board.

The crash left many South Koreans shocked and ashamed, with the government announcing a seven-day national mourning period through Jan. 4. Some questioned whether the crash involved safety or regulatory issues, such as a 2022 Halloween crush in Seoul that killed 160 people and a 2014 ferry sinking that killed 304 people.

The Transport Ministry said authorities have identified 146 bodies and are collecting DNA and fingerprint samples from the other 33.

Park Han Shin, a representative of the bereaved families, said they were told that the bodies were so badly damaged that officials need time before returning them to their families.

"I demand that the government mobilize more personnel to return our brothers and family members as intact as possible more swiftly," he said, choking down tears.

The crash was yet more major news for South Koreans already reeling from a political crisis set off by Yoon's martial law decree, which brought hundreds of troops into Seoul streets and revived traumatic memories of past military rule in the 1970-80s.

The political tumult resulted in the opposition-controlled National Assembly impeaching Yoon and Han. The safety minister stepped down and the police chief was arrested over their roles in the martial law enforcement.

The absence of top officials responsible for managing disasters has led to concerns.

"We are deeply worried whether the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters really can handle the disaster," the mass-circulation JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said in an editorial Monday.

## Jimmy Carter is being mourned in his tiny hometown and around the world

By RUSS BYNUM, SHARON JOHNSON and BILL BARROW Associated Press

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — Johnny Jones found out about Jimmy Carter's death within a matter of minutes. That's how it works in a small town, even for a former U.S. president and Nobel Peace Prize winner known throughout the world.

"Somebody texted my wife and told her about it — that's when I found out," Jones said Monday, a day after the 39th president died at the age of 100, surrounded by family in the one-story house he and his late wife, Rosalynn, built before he launched his first political campaign more than 60 years ago.

"His presence here in Plains has really boosted the morale of everyone who lives here," said Jones, 85, as he recalled warm exchanges with "Mr. Jimmy" and "Ms. Rosalynn," who died in November 2023.

Indeed, the Carters put this town of fewer than 700 people — not much bigger than when Carter was born Oct. 1, 1924 — on the world stage. His remarkable rise to the White House, landslide defeat in 1980 and rehabilitation thereafter as a freelance diplomat and global humanitarian were reflected Monday in tributes from Plains' residents and around the world.

Not far from where Jones sat on his front porch, black ribbons hung alongside U.S. flags flying in front of the souvenir shops and cafes that make up the nucleus of Plains' main street, which spans just a few blocks from Carter's 1976 presidential campaign headquarters — the old train depot — to where the family once operated its peanut warehouses. TV cameras and news trucks lined the street that runs in front of the old gas station where the former president's late brother, Billy Carter, once would hold court with national journalists who covered his older brother.

Across the railroad tracks, Philip Kurland stood in his political memorabilia shop, which he opened years after the Carters returned from Washington, and recalled the former president not as a famous figure but an approachable neighbor who once prayed with him when he was sick.

"We're in a state of denial," he said. "I was telling people: Let's start planning for his 101st birthday."

At Maranatha Baptist Church, where the Carters long taught Sunday school, a handful of residents trickled in for a silent vigil Monday evening. A piano played softly as people lit candles at the altar, with lighted Christmas trees standing on either side.

In Washington, plans continued for the state rites that will affirm Carter's global status. President Joe Biden confirmed that Jan. 9, 2025, will be a day of national mourning, with federal offices closed for Carter's state funeral at the National Cathedral. Biden, a longtime Carter friend and political ally, will deliver a eulogy for his fellow Democrat. Congressional leaders have confirmed to the Carter family that the former president will lie in state from Jan. 7 to Jan. 9, when his remains will be transported to the cathedral for the state funeral.

In New York, the 15 members of the U.N. Security Council stood in silent tribute to the Nobel Peace Prize winner. U.S. deputy ambassador Dorothy Shea read a statement from the U.N.'s most powerful body at the start of an emergency meeting on Yemen.

"President Carter was a peacemaker who worked tirelessly and effectively in support of conflict mediation, the furtherance of human rights and the strengthening of democracy, both while he was in office and during his many years of service thereafter," the Security Council statement said.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador, Geng Shuang, remembered Carter as "a driving force" in establishing relations between Beijing and Washington. "We highly commend his achievements," Geng said, stating that Carter "made great contribution over the years to ... cooperation between the two countries."

Prominent Egyptian rights defender Hossam Bahgat, a fierce critic of the government of President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government, said Carter was among the first to warn of "Israeli apartheid" against Palestinians — a position that put Carter at odds with much of the U.S. foreign policy establishment.

"Such a profile of courage," Bahgat wrote on Facebook. "He warned of Israeli apartheid as early as 2007. He stood by his principles and moral standards because he understood his mission and stayed true to his



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 33 of 54

beliefs without seeking to placate donors or please hedge-funder packed boards.”

Back in Georgia, neighbors of the Carter Center in Atlanta congregated near the grounds where Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter would redefine what a post-presidency can be. The Carters established the Carter Center in 1982 and for four decades oversaw diplomatic missions, election monitoring and public health programs with operations that spanned five continents.

“I really appreciate him as an ex-president, what he’s done since” leaving office, said Richard Hopkins, an Atlanta resident.

Hopkins said Carter’s public service went beyond elected office. A Korean War veteran, Hopkins noted that Carter, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was a submarine officer after World War II. He also highlighted the Carters’ work with Habitat for Humanity, which builds houses for low-income people. The Carters’ Habitat involvement came in addition to their Carter Center work; they headlined their own annual builds into their early 90s.

Habitat for Humanity CEO Jonathan Reckford said the Carters were integral to Habitat’s growth.

“Most people think President Carter started and ran Habitat, which is not actually true,” he said Monday. “But what is true is Habitat was founded in 1976, and it was a tiny organization in 1984 when President and Mrs. Carter famously rode a bus up from south Georgia to spend a week sleeping in a church basement and rehabbing a tenement building on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. That’s when the world found out about Habitat.”

Jason Carter, the former president’s grandson who now chairs the Carter Center’s governing board, said in a recent interview that the former president formed that lifelong commitment to service because of Plains.

“My grandfather could go to a village anywhere in the world,” the younger Carter said, and help people without patronizing them. “Because he was from a village like that himself.”

Some residents like Jones are worried about their small town now that the Carters are gone.

“Interest in Plains will dwindle,” he predicted.

Jill Stuckey, a longtime Carter friend who oversees the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park for the National Park Service, is more optimistic. She expressed personal sadness but commended the Carters for ensuring a lasting impact in Plains, just as they have globally through the Carter Center.

“Since the moment Rosalynn passed, he wanted to be with her. So knowing that he’s finally reunited with Rosalynn is a wonderful thing. But those of us who selfishly wanted to keep him here forever, I’m in that camp,” Stuckey said.

But the Carters, she emphasized, planned long ago to be buried in the same town where they were born, married and spent most of their lives. Rosalynn Carter already is buried in a plot visible from the front porch of the family home. The house and gravesite eventually will be added to the National Park.

Said Stuckey: “I think they’ve kind of set us up for success.”

## South Korean adoptees and families rocked by fraud allegations

By CLAIRE GALOFARO and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

Her greatest fear, dormant for decades, came rushing back in an instant: had she adopted and raised a kidnapped child?

Peg Reif’s daughter, adopted from South Korea in the 1980s, had sent her a link to a documentary detailing how the system that made their family was rife with fraud: documents falsified, babies switched, children snatched off the street and sent abroad.

Reif wept.

She was among more than 120 who contacted The Associated Press this fall, after a series of stories and a documentary made with Frontline exposed how Korea created a baby pipeline, designed to ship children abroad as quickly as possible to meet Western demand. The reporting shook adoption communities around the world with details about how agencies competed for babies — pressuring mothers, bribing hospitals, fabricating documents. Most who wrote were adoptees, but some were adoptive parents like Reif, horrified to learn they had supported this system.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 34 of 54

"I can't stand the thought that somebody lost their child," Reif said. "I can't stop thinking about it. I don't know how to make it right. I don't know if I can."

Forty years ago, she was struggling with infertility. She and her husband pinned their dreams for a family on adopting a baby from Mexico, paid an agency thousands of dollars and waited for months. Then the agency's directors were arrested, and they learned that those Mexican babies had been taken from their families against their will. Reif was heartbroken, but recalls even now looking at her husband and saying: "thank God we don't have a child who was stolen."

But now she isn't sure of that. Because then they adopted two Korean children, and brought them to their home in rural Wisconsin, first a son and then a daughter. The two were not biological siblings, but both arrived with strangely similar stories in their files: their young unmarried mothers worked in factories with fathers who disappeared after they got pregnant.

Back then, Reif still believed the common narrative about foreign adoption: it saved children who might otherwise live the rest of their lives in an orphanage, die or be damned to poverty.

"I don't believe that anymore," Reif said. "I don't know what to believe."

Cameron Lee Small, a therapist in Minneapolis whose practice caters to adoptees and their families, said many are feeling an intense sense of betrayal. Individual adoptees had long shared stories of falsified identities. But the revelations this year pointed to systemwide practices that routinely changed babies' origin stories to process adoptions quickly, including listing them as "abandoned" even when they had known parents.

Small, who was also adopted from Korea in the 1980s, summarized what he's been hearing from adoptees: "I'm kind of back to nothing. What do I believe now? Who can I believe?"

Reif's daughter, Jenn Hamilton, spent her life thinking she was unwanted, often quipping: "that's what happens when you're found in a dumpster as a baby."

It has taken a toll on her all her life: She's been happily married for 9 years, she said, but she has this insatiable insecurity: "I constantly find myself asking my husband, 'are you mad at me? Did I do something wrong?' Do you want to leave me?"

She has no idea anymore if abandonment was ever really her story, with revelations of abuses so systemic that even the Korean government likened it to "trafficking."

"You can't make that many mistakes. It has to be intentional. It was this huge tree of deception," she said. "I feel disgusted."

Holt International, the US-based agency that pioneered adoptions from Korea, did not respond to repeated requests for comment for this story.

Reform is sweeping across Europe — countries have launched investigations, halted foreign adoptions and apologized to adoptees for failing to protect them. But the United States, which has taken in the most adopted children by far, has not done a review of its own history or culpability.

The U.S. State Department told AP this summer that it would work with its historian to piece together its history, and detailed initial findings that some documents might have been falsified. But it said there was no evidence that U.S. officials were aware of it. The State Department has since said that it has "been unable to identify any records that could provide insight into the U.S. government role in adoptions from South Korea in the 1970s and 1980s."

Korea's National Police Agency confirmed an increase in adoptees registering their DNA for family searches — both at domestic police stations and diplomatic offices across North America and Europe — in the weeks following the release of the AP stories and documentary in September. More than 120 adoptees registered their DNA in October and November, compared to an average of less than 30 a month from January to August.

Korea's government has maintained that adoptions were a necessary tool to care for needy children, including babies of unwed mothers or other children deemed as abandoned. However, Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare acknowledged to AP that the adoption boom in the 1970s and 80s was possibly fueled by a desire to reduce welfare costs.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 35 of 54

Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been investigating government accountability over foreign adoption problems since 2022, prompted by complaints filed by hundreds of adoptees, and is expected to release an interim report in February. The Commission has posted the AP stories on its website.

A law passed in 2023 mandates that all adoption records be transferred from private agencies to a government department called the National Center for the Rights of the Child by July, to centralize the handling of family search requests. The center has confirmed that private agencies hold about 170,000 adoption files, but director Chung Ick-Joong doubts it will acquire a space to store and manage all these records in time, due to financial constraints and other challenges. The agency expects family search requests to increase dramatically – “possibly by 10-fold,” according to Chung — yet has funding to add only five staff members to its team of six searchers.

Chung acknowledged that flaws in adoption laws had persisted for decades, and Korea only required adoptions to go through courts and birth records to be preserved after 2012.

“It's difficult to determine who was responsible for the inaccuracies in records before then,” he said. “The adoption agency might have been at fault, the biological parents may have lied, or something might have gone wrong at the orphanage.....no one truly knows what the truth is.”

Korean adoption agencies have mostly declined AP's requests for comment in recent months, often citing privacy concerns.

Advocates insist that most adoptive families thrive, with both the parents and children happily living their lives without questioning the industry as Reif and Hamilton have.

Hamilton grew up in a rural, almost exclusively white community in Wisconsin, and back then all she wanted was to be accepted. But having children of her own changed that. When her first child was born, she looked at him, and it took her breath away.

“It can't explain it, like this is the first person I know in my life that I'm biologically related to,” she said.

She wanted to learn her own history, so her children could know theirs. She wrote a letter to her adoption agency, which within weeks connected her with a woman they said was her mother. It was emotional, shocking.

But soon she felt like she had more questions than answers. The woman's name didn't match the one listed on paperwork, and the name she gave for the father was also different. Birthdates didn't match, the birthplace didn't either. They had not met in a factory, she said, they had been pen pals.

Hamilton asked the woman to take a DNA test, but she said she didn't know how to access one. Hamilton came to believe this woman was not her birth mother.

The AP's reporting found numerous cases where agencies connected adoptees with supposed birth families, only for them to later discover after emotional meetings that they weren't related at all.

Hamilton has been trying to untangle the DNA results on her father's side, contacting people distantly related, cousins once removed, half great aunts.

“It becomes an obsession,” Hamilton said. “It's like a puzzle that you start, and you have to find the missing pieces.”

Lynelle Long, the founder of InterCountry Adoptee Voices, the largest organization of adoptees in the world, said governments at the very least need to legally mandate that agencies provide adoptees with their full and redacted documents, without the payment now often required.

Long said parents like Reif have an important role, because in Western countries, laws always favored the desires of adoptive parents — designed to make adoptions quicker and easier. Many clung to the narrative that they saved needy orphans who should be grateful, she said, especially in the U.S., where the reckoning rocking Europe has not taken hold.

“We really need adoptive parents in the United States, if they have any inkling of guilt or shame or loss, to step up, take responsibility and demand that legislation be put in place to criminalize these practices and prevent it from ever happening again,” Long said.

Hamilton is close to her parents; she just renovated the basement to accommodate their visits. She's sad for herself, she said, but she's sadder for her mother, who is desperate to learn if her children actually had parents somewhere, searching for them.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 36 of 54

"And I'm like, 'why, so you can send us back?'" Hamilton said. "I don't want to be a victim."  
She said she's glad she was adopted, and does not long for that different, alternative life in Korea.  
Reif loves her children profoundly, she said. But she doesn't think she would adopt from abroad again, if she'd known then what she knows now.

"I'd rather be childless than think I have somebody else's child that didn't want to give them up," she said. "I think of somebody taking my child. Those poor families, I just can't imagine it."

## **AP WAS THERE: Carter announces Middle East peace agreement**

By BARRY SCHWEID Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — \_\_\_\_\_

EDITORS: As part of its coverage of the death of former President Jimmy Carter, The Associated Press is looking back at major events in his life. Carter's success at Camp David negotiating a Mideast Peace agreement between Egypt and Israel was one of his crowning achievements. AP Diplomatic Writer Barry Schweid covered Carter's announcement in this Sept. 17, 1978, story.

\_\_\_\_\_

President Carter announced to the world Sunday night that a "framework for peace" in the Middle East had been reached at his summit meeting with Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Israel's Menachem Begin.

Flanked by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, he said documents signed by the two leaders "will provide that Israel may live in peace within secure borders."

The far-reaching accord commits Egypt and Israel to work to conclude a peace treaty within three months. The treaty would be the first formal recognition of the Jewish state by any of its Arab neighbors since the creation of Israel in 1948.

Begin, in a friendly challenge to Sadat, urged that the treaty be concluded before three months elapse. Sadat applauded the overture and nodded in agreement.

Carter said Israel would withdraw its forces from the West Bank of the Jordan River. The agreement allows the Israelis to maintain a security presence in specified bases while ending its military rule of the territory, taken in the Six-Day War of 1967.

Administration officials, who declined to be identified, said no American troops would be involved in the security arrangements negotiated at the summit, although they did not rule out American involvement sometime in the future.

The 1.1 million Palestinian Arabs living on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip on the Sinai "will have the right to participate in the determination of their own future," Carter said.

On the Sinai front, Carter said, Israel would withdraw its forces quickly, with the result being establishment of diplomatic relations between the two old foes in a 30-year conflict.

Carter's appearance with Sadat and Begin at the White House was nationally televised. Flags of the United States, Israel and Egypt stood behind them.

The U.S. president, looking back on 13 days of "long negotiation," acknowledged that at times the talks faltered and it seemed that the patience of Sadat and Begin would run out.

But Carter said results exceeded all expectations.

Sadat, speaking next at a ceremony in the White House East Room, thanked Carter for fulfilling his commitment to serving as a "full partner" in the talks.

Sadat expressed gratitude to Carter for his "spirit and dedication" and concluded with a prayer that the "spirit of Camp David" would mark a new chapter in Middle East history.

Begin, in a tribute to Carter, said "he worked harder than our forefathers did in building the pyramids of Egypt."

The gentle reference to the Biblical period of Jewish slavery drew appreciative chuckles from the dignitaries on hand.

"The president of the United States won the day," Begin said. "Peace now celebrates a great victory for the nations of Egypt and Israel and for all mankind."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 37 of 54

But before there is peace, Begin noted, Israel and Egypt have three months of negotiations ahead to conclude a peace treaty.

"Mr. President," Begin said to Carter, "you inscribed your name forever in the history of two ancient people, the people of Egypt and the people of Israel."

Turning to Sadat, the Israeli prime minister said there was no point in recounting the "saga" of their differences during the negotiations.

"Everything belongs to the past," Begin said.

Now, once again, Begin said, he could refer to Sadat as "my friend." Begin and saluted Sadat as a friend after the Egyptian leader's historic visit to Jerusalem last November. But when the differences deepened after their talk at Ismailia, Egypt, in December, Begin no longer used the phrase.

When Begin concluded his remarks, he embraced Carter and then Sadat. The three leaders then signed the "framework for peace."

Carter said the framework can be used later by Israel to negotiate peace treaties with her other Arab neighbors, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

After signing the documents, the three leaders shook hands.

Although differences remain, the prospect of peace between Egypt and Israel by Christmas was a stunning surprise, made even more dramatic by the deep secrecy imposed during the negotiations.

One question mark remaining was whether the concessions offered by Israel to the Palestinian Arabs living on the West Bank of the Jordan into the peace process.

Carter said he hoped "the foresight and wisdom" demonstrated by Sadat and Begin will guide all nations "as they continue to strive toward peace."

The three leaders smiled and waved as they boarded a jet helicopter to depart Camp David for Washington. Carter climbed in first. Begin deferred to Sadat and urged the Egyptian leader to board second. The three men and the helicopter were lit by the glare of floodlights.

When the helicopter touched down on the White House south lawn, the three leaders were greeted by some 50 dignitaries and members of the White House staff. Each of the three got a kiss from the president's wife, Rosalynn.

Senate Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd said Carter asked to explain the agreements to a joint session of Congress at 8 p.m. EDT on Monday.

The administration officials, who declined to be identified, said the documents "provide a framework for continuing negotiations" and not a completed agreement.

Forty issues remain unresolved after the 12-day summit, including the ultimate fate of Israeli settlements in the Sinai and the nature of the final arrangement for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The agreement on the Sinai comes closer to being a final settlement, the officials said. It provides that Israel eventually restore Egyptian sovereignty "throughout the Sinai" and that Egypt will make peace and establish normal relations with Israel.

The Sinai agreement calls for phased withdrawal of Israeli troops, starting as soon as six months from Sunday night and the return of Sinai airfields to Egyptian civilian control.

It commits both Israel and Egypt to agreeing to a treaty within three months, with a major Israeli withdrawal three to nine months after the treaty is signed.

After the first Israeli withdrawal, the two countries agreed to establish normal diplomatic relations, the administration officials said.

The final Israeli withdrawal is to take place two to three years after the signing of the peace treaty. The treaty also is designed to provide security zones for Israel in the Sinai as well as a program of arms reduction in the area.

The major disagreement on the Sinai is the fate of Israeli settlements in captured territory. The officials said Egypt demands that Israel remove the settlements.

Israeli negotiators wanted the issue to be decided during the negotiations, the officials said. But they added that the Israel is agreed to let their parliament decide within two weeks on how the question should

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 38 of 54

be resolved.

The agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip is much less specific, reflecting the difficulties in that area.

In that agreement, the officials said, Egypt and Israel agree to a five year transition period during which "the inhabitants will attain full autonomy," but Israel will be able to station troops in specified bases in both the West Bank and Gaza areas.

The framework leaves unsettled the issues of the final borders between Israel and the new Palestinian entity and whether that entity will be a state, an affiliate of Jordan or something else.

The countries involved will invite Jordan to join their negotiations along with representatives of the Palestinians living in the two territories. Jordan also will be invited to play a "security role" during the period. Israel committed itself to establishing no new settlements in those territories during the negotiations, the officials said.

If and when a final agreement is reached, elected representatives of West Bank and Gaza inhabitants, predominately Palestinians, will have an opportunity to pass judgment on it, the officials said.

They said Israel and Egypt could agree only to exchanging letters on the emotional issue of the fate of Jerusalem. The officials would not disclose what was to be said in those letters.

The fact that Carter was meeting side-by-side with Sadat and Begin suggested that the summit had not ended in failure.

The White House appearance was arranged after Carter had mounted an all-out, 11th hour effort to narrow differences between Egypt and Israel on a peace formula.

As Carter drove for an agreement, facing a Sunday night deadline concurred in by all three leaders, officials of Egypt, Israel and the United States privately indicated he was making progress.

George Sherman, a State Department spokesman, disclosed the arrangement for the joint appearance after a day of negotiating at all levels in the summit delegations.

Declining to say whether the Camp David summit had concluded, Sherman declared he had been authorized to make only a "procedural announcement."

In his final effort, Carter shuttled between Sadat and Begin and back again. But no three-way meeting was reported before the leaders appeared together for their wrapup announcement.

Carter went to Sadat's quarters at Camp David for a 45-minute meeting Sunday morning. Then, the White House said, Carter spent six minutes - from 3:27 p.m. to 3:33 p.m. EDT - with Begin.

That session was followed by a second Carter-Sadat meeting. It lasted an hour and 50 minutes.

Israeli sources said, meanwhile, that Sadat also met with Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman.

A White House announcement said "intensive consultations within and among the three delegations continued."

No plans for a Carter-Begin-Sadat meeting were announced, however. They last met formally on Sept. 7.

In Washington, the president's wife, Rosalynn, told a White House meeting of Hispanic leaders that Carter "says today Sunday is the last day. It might go to midnight. He just doesn't know . . . He needs your prayers in these last hours of the summit meeting at Camp David."

However, in Atlantic City, N.J., President Lloyd McBride of the United Steelworkers Union told a news conference that Carter had put off speaking to the union's convention from Tuesday to Wednesday. A White House aide, Robert Neuman, said the delay is "due to the summit."

At Camp David, a White House official confirmed that Carter had postponed his speech one day. The official, who asked that his name not be used, said Carter would be involved in post-summit details even if the summit was concluded by Tuesday.

Asked how Carter would report summit results to the nation, the official said the president had not yet decided. Congressional sources have said the White House has considered a presidential address to Congress or a nationally televised news conference.

Begin declined an invitation to speak, in person or by telephone, to a Sunday afternoon meeting of an Israel Bonds leadership conference in Washington.

A spokesman for the group, Gunther Lawrence, said Begin wanted to maintain a news blackout at the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 39 of 54

summit as long as the talks were in progress.

While there was no word on specifics, Israeli sources expressed "cautious optimism" after Carter and Begin ended a 45-hour session past midnight Saturday.

One source, who declined to be identified, said "a good atmosphere" characterized the session.

An Egyptian editor, Moussa Sabry of Al Akhbar, reported -- without offering any details -- that an earlier, 2 1/2-hour session between Carter and Sadat had produced a "dramatic development."

Those upbeat outlooks contrasted with pessimism reflected by the Egyptian press when summit spokesman Jody Powell first announced the 12-day conference would end by Sunday night.

Powell said the leaders were likely to meet again in a three-way session — the first in 10 days -- before the end of the summit. Among items under discussion in the final hours was a wrapup communique. Powell indicated there might be more than one.

As the final countdown began, Carter attended Sunday services conducted at Camp David by Cecil Reed, a Protestant chaplain from nearby Ft. Ritchie, Md.

When Carter set up his separate meetings with Sadat and Begin, sources close to all three delegations reported the negotiations were at a delicate and critical stage.

At that point, Powell said, there was still no agreement on a "framework" for future negotiations between Egypt and Israel. That was Carter's minimal goal when he invited Sadat and Begin to his secluded retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains.

Apart from procedural disputes, the two sides apparently had not settled any of the key issues. These center on whether Begin was willing to commit Israel to a withdrawal from the West Bank of the Jordan River and on how Israel's security would be protected.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., chairman of the arms control subcommittee, told the Israeli Bonds conference that efforts to include a West Bank settlement in an overall Middle East agreement was a mistake and doomed to failure.

"I am convinced that the Israelis are prepared to return the Sinai to Egypt in exchange for peace," Jackson said.

Carter proposed the Sunday night deadline and Sadat and Begin concurred, according to Powell, spokesman for all three governments. He said the decision grew out a shared conclusion that the issue in dispute "had been certainly aired."

Sadat and Begin have not had a face-to-face negotiating session since Sept. 7. Since then, Carter has shuttled between them. Sadat has met with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan and Defense Minister Ezer Weizman.

American officials have tried to minimize the long time since the last formal meeting between Sadat and Begin. Still, there were persistent rumors of personal differences between the two leaders. Powell has not denied the rumors directly.

"I simply have not tried to keep a running tab on the personal feelings of these two men," he said on Friday.

## Jimmy Carter sought to expand democracy worldwide long after he left the White House

By FARAI MUTSAKA and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Amid everything else on his desk — the Iran hostage crisis, domestic economic turmoil, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and a grueling 1980 reelection fight — President Jimmy Carter elevated the independence of a country in southern Africa as a top agenda item.

Carter hosted then-Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe at the White House soon after his country achieved independence and later described Zimbabwe's adoption of democracy as "our greatest single success."

Three decades later, Carter, who was long out of office, found the door slammed shut when he and other dignitaries sought to visit Zimbabwe on a humanitarian mission to observe reported human rights abuses after a violent disputed election in 2008. He had become a critic of Mugabe's regime and was denied a visa.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 40 of 54

Carter didn't give up. From neighboring South Africa, he relied on emissaries from Zimbabwe for testimony on violence and allegations of electoral fraud. The effort reflected the former president's long commitment to promoting democracy worldwide.

This "more than anything else cemented Carter's legacy" as an advocate for free and fair elections across Africa, said Eldred Masunungure, a former political science lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe.

"Carter didn't change. Zimbabwe did. Mugabe swayed from the democratic ideals that Carter held so dear," he said. "The incident demonstrates Carter's consistency, the steadfastness."

Zimbabwe's evolution toward autocracy turned out to be the kind of scenario that the Carter Center has long sought to prevent by deploying observers and developing voting standards in countries struggling to form democracies.

Established in 1982, two years after Carter lost his bid for a second term, the center has been Carter's signature effort to promote fair elections as a vehicle for peace. It has sent observers to monitor some 125 elections in 40 countries and three tribal nations, and has been credited with helping expand democracy across the globe.

Carter's "moral authority, the trust people put in him and the credibility of someone who had both won and lost an election" contributed to these successes, David Carroll, head of the center's democracy program, told The Associated Press.

Carter, who died Sunday at 100, was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for the center's work supporting elections, promoting human rights and helping developing countries cultivate economic, social and public health institutions.

Its elections work began in Panama, where Carter became concerned about the 1989 elections after reports of armed militia members in civilian clothes confiscating voting records during the night.

The Carter Center had just decided to expand its mission of conflict resolution and human rights to include vote monitoring, concluding that democratic elections were essential to resolving political disputes.

"In my fumbling Spanish, I stood up on a table, and I denounced the election as fraudulent," Carter recalled in a 2015 video marking the center's 100th election observer mission. "There was later another election, which was honest and fair, and that was the birth of real democracy in Panama."

The center also helped rescue a peace process in Nepal, then oversaw the country's twice-postponed elections in 2008 to elect an assembly that would be tasked with writing a constitution. Carter made several trips to the South Asian nation, holding marathon negotiations with former rebels and top politicians to keep the peace process on track.

"There was deadlock in the country. Political parties were not sitting together, and there was no way out on how the process will move on," said Bhojraj Pokharel, Nepal's chief election commissioner in 2008, who later worked with Carter in Congo and Myanmar.

On Nepal's election day, Carter traveled to dozens of polling stations talking to voters. Polling was peaceful despite earlier fears of violence.

"His presence itself was a message to the Nepalese population and voters about the integrity of the election," Pokharel said.

The Carter Center often works in countries with little or no experience in representative government and where trust has all but evaporated because of violence.

After Bolivia held elections in 2019 that the Organization of American States said were marred by fraud, the country's electoral tribunal invited the Carter Center to observe elections the following year. The center deployed a team to Bolivia and later commended the country for elections it called impartial and transparent.

The Carter Center's "evaluation was important not only for how the international community viewed us but also for how Bolivian society evaluated the electoral process," said Salvador Romero, the tribunal's president at the time.

Similar results have been difficult to obtain recently in Africa, where many countries emerging from decades of colonialism have seen forceful takeovers and disputed elections.

In Nigeria, Tunisia, Zambia and Ivory Coast, Carter Center observers noted violence, killings, vote-buying,



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 41 of 54

uneven playing fields for political parties and candidates, and a general lack of trust in elections.

In Tunisia, frustration has replaced the wave of hope brought by the 2010 Arab Spring uprising. A new parliament was convened in March 2023, two years after President Kais Saied suspended parliament and started legislating by decree. The 11% turnout for parliamentary elections marked "a low point" for the country's democracy, The Carter Center said, and some election observer groups were denied accreditation for the October 2024 presidential contest.

At times, Carter personally intervened to keep African peace processes on track by trying to persuade warlords and rebels to support elections, rather than the use of force, in their quests for power.

In recent years, the Carter Center's elections work turned toward the U.S.

Its teams deployed to Oklahoma in 2017 at the request of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes following elections plagued with problems. In 2013, ballots had been moved from office to office and stored without proper security, eroding confidence in the integrity of the vote. A recount then overturned the results, tribal Gov. Reggie Wassana said.

The Carter Center's presence in the later election made "a huge difference, and it restored some faith among tribal members," Wassana said.

Until 2020, the center tried to stay away from broader political issues in the United States, according to Carroll. But the center noticed threats to American democracy were increasing, which prompted a decision to expand programs within the U.S.

"If we saw the same conditions in another country that we were seeing in the U.S. — the lack of trust in election institutions, polarization and growing concern of political violence — it is exactly the kind of country we would prioritize to see if we could play a constructive role," Carroll said.

Faith in U.S. elections, most notably among a large segment of Republican voters, eroded after the 2020 election amid former President Donald Trump's false claims that Democrats had rigged the vote. There was no evidence of widespread fraud or manipulation of voting machines in that election.

In the 2024 presidential election, which Trump won, the center did some limited observation in New Mexico, Montana and Fulton County, Georgia. In many U.S. states, election observers are limited to political party representatives, with no provisions for nonpartisan, independent groups. The center is working to change that.

Carter's leadership on democracy issues remains a north star for the center, Carroll said.

"You can help strong systems be in place, but they need to be watched continually. You can never rest on your record on democracy and elections. You always have to be vigilant and keep an eye on the process," he said.

## Middle East latest: Israel intercepts Houthi missile fired from Yemen

By The Associated Press undefined

Israel's military said it intercepted a missile fired toward the country by Yemen's Houthi rebels, setting off sirens late Monday in central areas including Tel Aviv.

The Houthis have been firing drones and missiles at Israel, as well as attacking shipping in the Red Sea corridor — attacks they say won't stop until Israel agrees to a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's war in Gaza has killed more than 45,500 people, over half of them women and children, according to the territory's Health Ministry. Its count does not differentiate between combatants and civilians. The Health Ministry said Monday that Israeli airstrikes and bombardments had killed at least 27 people over the past day alone. Israel says its forces only target militants.

In Syria, Ukraine is pledging support for the new government that ousted Bashar Assad, who had been a key Russian ally in the Mideast. The Ukrainian foreign minister met with Syria's de facto leader on Monday during a visit to Damascus.

Here's the latest:

UN gives updates on humanitarian situation in Gaza

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 42 of 54

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations humanitarian agency said Monday that Israel allowed a U.N. and Palestinian Red Crescent team to deliver medical supplies, food and water to critical patients in northern Gaza a day earlier.

The patients had been forced by Israeli soldiers to leave Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza and had been taken to the Indonesian Hospital, which is not functioning, the U.N. said. Some of those patients were later detained by Israeli soldiers.

"Ten patients were evacuated from the (Indonesian) hospital, four of whom were arrested by Israeli forces at the checkpoint leaving the area," the U.N. humanitarian office known as OCHA said.

"Seven patients along with 15 caregivers and health workers remain at the facility, which is severely damaged and has no ability to provide medical care," it said.

The U.N. humanitarian office is warning that the Israeli onslaught on health care and humanitarian access in Gaza, combined with relentless strikes that kill and wound civilians daily, is dismantling the means for Palestinians to survive.

OCHA stressed that humanitarian access to Gaza remains hindered.

"In the past three days, over 60% of the 42 U.N.-coordinated movements were denied, interfered with or impeded on the ground" across all of Gaza, it said.

Israeli military says it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel's military said it intercepted a missile fired toward the country by Yemen's Houthi rebels, setting off sirens late Monday in central Israel including Tel Aviv. There were no reports of injuries from Magen David Adom, Israel's rescue service.

The Houthis have been firing drones and missiles at Israel as well as attacking shipping in the Red Sea corridor — attacks they say won't stop until Israel agrees to a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has carried two waves of intense strikes in recent weeks in Yemen in response to the missile attacks. The latest launch raises the likelihood of further Israeli retaliation.

At a U.N. Security Council meeting on Monday, Israeli U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon vowed his country will respond decisively to Houthi attacks.

Wounded Palestinians describe harsh treatment by Israeli soldiers who expelled them from a hospital

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Wounded Palestinians who Israeli soldiers expelled from a northern Gaza hospital over the weekend described harrowing conditions where they were forced to strip down to their underwear in cold winter weather for hours.

"They surrounded the hospital at 4 a.m. and burned all the buildings around the hospital," said Wissam Warsh, a 45-year-old father of five who spent almost a week at Kamal Adwan Hospital receiving treatment. He said soldiers made the hospital director, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, bring all the patients outside before detaining him.

"They told him over the loudspeaker that he had 10 minutes to evacuate them, and they began firing shells around the hospital as a pressure tactic," Warsh said. He and other patients were recuperating at Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, where he spoke to The Associated Press from a hospital bed on Sunday.

Israel's military says its troops entered the hospital because Hamas militants were using it as a base, and said over 240 militants were detained, including Abu Safiya. Hospital officials have denied those claims.

Other patients said the Israeli army refused to provide them with food or water.

"The most difficult thing was that we were in the cold and winter and we could not find clothes, in addition to the moments of insults. All the moments were difficult," said Ramadan al-Aswad, who was a patient at the hospital.

Staff at Kamal Adwan Hospital say it has been hit multiple times over the past three months as Israeli forces wage an offensive against Hamas fighters, who the army says have regrouped in northern Gaza. Israel has virtually sealed off the areas of Jabaliya, Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya from food or medical aid.

Syria's new rulers crack down on alleged Assad loyalist militias

ADRA, Syria — Syria's new government said it deployed dozens of soldiers in the Damascus suburb of Adra on Monday in search of alleged militiamen loyal to ousted President Bashar Assad, with military police vehicles seen transporting detainees.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 43 of 54

"A security campaign was carried out in Adra town which led to the arrest of the militia leaders in the area," said Abu Yaarub, a security official who did not give his full name in accordance with regulations. He added that five top militiamen were detained.

Clashes erupted last week in several cities across Syria between Assad supporters and the new government, which is led by Islamist rebels.

Since Assad's fall, dozens of Syrians have been killed in acts of revenge, according to activists and monitors, the vast majority of them from the minority Alawite community, an offshoot of Shiite Islam to which Assad belongs.

By Leo Correa and Ghaith AlSayed.

Gaza hospital director's family pleads for his release

JERUSALEM — The family of a hospital director in northern Gaza is pleading with the international community and the Israeli military for his release, after soldiers detained Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya over the weekend.

Abu Safiya's family says he's being denied medical care and kept in the freezing cold in Sde Teiman, an Israeli detention center that been sharply criticized for its inhuman conditions.

Israeli military spokesman Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani said Abu Safiya "is currently being questioned regarding his potential involvement in terrorist activity."

Over the weekend, Israeli soldiers expelled staff and patients from Kamal Adwan Hospital, where it detained 240 people who it said were militants and took them for interrogation in Israel. The military said some militants attempted to pose as patients and hid in ambulances, without providing evidence.

Israel alleged that Hamas had been using the facility, which hospital officials have denied.

Israel's latest military offensive in northern Gaza has largely isolated the area, with little medical or other aid allowed to reach hospitals there.

On Monday, the International Committee of the Red Cross said Israeli operations have "obliterated the health care system in northern Gaza," noting that Kamal Adwan and Indonesian hospitals are now "completely inoperable."

Ukraine's foreign chief pledges support for a new Syria on a trip to Damascus

DAMASCUS, Syria — Ukraine's foreign minister met with Syria's de facto leader Ahmad al-Sharaa in Damascus on Monday, days after Kyiv announced the delivery of a large shipment of wheat flour to the country following the ouster of Bashar Assad, Russia's ally.

Syria is gradually shifting away from Iran and Russia and rekindling ties with Western and Gulf Arab nations that had opposed Assad's rule, as well as Turkey, which backed opposition forces during the civil war.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Ukraine will send 500 tons of wheat flour to Syria through the U.N. World Food Program to help improve the country's food security and economic crisis. About 90% of Syrians live in poverty, while over half don't know where their next meal will come from, according to the U.N.

"The Ukrainian delegation held important talks with the Syrian administration, leader Ahmed Al-Sharaa and ministers. We support the Syrian people in overcoming decades of dictatorial rule and restoring stability, security, and normal life in Syria," Zelenskyy wrote on X.

Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said he hopes "that a new Syria would become a country that respects international law." He said Ukraine is ready to share its experience in gathering evidence and conducting investigations to hold war criminals accountable.

"The Russian and Assad regimes supported each other because their foundation is violence and torture," he said.

Syria appoints first female interim Central Bank governor

BEIRUT — Syria on Monday appointed its first female interim Central Bank governor, as the country navigates through recovering its battered economy after the downfall of the Assad dynasty's rule.

Maysaa Sabreen is the second woman appointed in a leadership role under Ahmad al-Sharaa and his

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 44 of 54

Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which led Assad's ouster in an offensive in early December.

Sabreen had served as the Central Bank's first deputy governor.

She inherits a dire financial crisis following a decade of civil war, mismanagement and sanctions, which has led to the Syrian pound drastically losing its value against the U.S. dollar. The United Nations estimates that some 90% of Syrians live in poverty.

Turkey ready to export electricity to Syria and Lebanon

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey is prepared to export electricity to Syria and Lebanon to assist them in addressing power shortages, Turkey's energy minister said, adding that a Turkish delegation was already in Damascus to evaluate Syria's energy infrastructure.

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar also said Monday that the Turkish delegation included experts who would be assessing how Syria's oil and natural gas could be used to improve the economy.

"We can see the picture a little more clearly after seeing the situation of the transmission network," the state-run Anadolu Agency quoted Bayraktar as saying.

He said Syria's electricity capacity had dropped significantly due to the civil war.

"The vast majority of the people meet their electricity needs through generators," he said. "There is a serious need for electricity."

Turkey has backed insurgents who ousted President Bashar Assad and has expressed readiness to support the new administration.

## Jimmy Carter made eradicating Guinea worm disease a top mission

By RUSS BYNUM and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

JARWENG, South Sudan (AP) — Nobel Prize-winning peacemaker Jimmy Carter spent nearly four decades waging war to eliminate an ancient parasite plaguing the world's poorest people.

Rarely fatal but searingly painful and debilitating, Guinea worm disease infects people who drink water tainted with larvae that grow inside the body into worms as much as 3-feet-long. The noodle-thin parasites then burrow their way out, breaking through the skin in burning blisters.

Carter made eradicating Guinea worm a top mission of The Carter Center, the nonprofit he and his wife, Rosalynn Carter, founded after leaving the White House. The former president rallied public health experts, billionaire donors, African heads of state and thousands of volunteer villagers to work toward eliminating a human disease for only the second time in history.

"It'd be the most exciting and gratifying accomplishment of my life," Carter told The Associated Press in 2016. Even after entering home hospice care in February 2023, aides said Carter kept asking for Guinea worm updates.

Carter died Sunday at age 100.

Thanks to the Carters' efforts, the worms that afflicted an estimated 3.5 million people in 20 African and Asian countries when the center launched its campaign in 1986 are on the brink of extinction. Only 14 human cases were reported across four African nations in 2023, according to The Carter Center.

The World Health Organization's target for eradication is 2030. Carter Center leaders hope to achieve it sooner.

That meant recently returning to Jarweng, in a remote area of South Sudan in northeastern Africa. The village of 500 people hadn't seen Guinea worm infections since 2014, until Nyingong Aguek and her two sons drank swampy water while traveling in 2022. A fourth person also got infected.

"Having the worm pulled out is more painful than giving birth," said Aguek, pointing to scars where four worms emerged from her left leg.

The center's staff and volunteers walked house-to-house distributing water filters and teaching people to inspect dogs, which can also carry the parasite.

"If someone's hurt, The Carter Center will help," said villager Mathew Manyiel, listening to a training session while checking his dog for symptoms.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 45 of 54

An audacious plan

In the mid-1980s, global health agencies were otherwise occupied and heads of state largely overlooked the illness afflicting millions of their citizens. Carter was still defining the center's mission when public health experts who had served in his administration approached him with a plan to eliminate the disease.

Only a few years had passed since the WHO declared in 1979 that smallpox was the first human disease to be eradicated worldwide. Guinea worm, the experts told Carter, could become the second.

"President Carter, with a political background, was able to do far more in global health than we could do alone," said Dr. William Foege, who led the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's smallpox eradication program and the CDC itself before becoming The Carter Center's first executive director.

Those who worked closely with Carter suspect Guinea worm's toll on poor African farmers resonated with the former president, who lived as a boy in a Georgia farmhouse without electricity or running water.

"Nobody was doing anything about it, and it was such a spectacularly awful disease," said Dr. Donald Hopkins, an architect of the campaign who led the center's health programs until 2015. "He could sympathize with all of these farmers being too crippled from Guinea worm disease to work."

Eliminating other diseases

There's no vaccine that prevents Guinea worm infections or medicine that gets rid of the parasites. Treatment has changed little since ancient Greece. Emerging worms are gently wound around a stick as they're slowly pulled through the skin. Removing an entire worm without breaking it can take weeks.

So instead of scientific breakthroughs, this campaign has relied on persuading millions of people to change basic behaviors.

Workers from the center and host governments trained volunteers to teach neighbors to filter water through cloth screens, removing tiny fleas that carry the larvae. Villagers learned to watch for and report new cases — often for rewards of \$100 or more. Infected people and dogs had to be prevented from tainting water sources.

The goal was to break the worm's life cycle — and therefore eliminate the parasite itself — in each endemic community, eventually exterminating Guinea worm altogether.

The campaign became a model for confronting a broader range of neglected tropical diseases afflicting impoverished people with limited access to clean water, sanitation and health care. Expanding its public health mission, the center has supplied training, equipment and medicines that helped 22 countries eliminate at least one disease within their borders.

Mali became the latest in May 2023 when the WHO confirmed it had ended trachoma, a blinding eye infection. Haiti and the Dominican Republic are working to eliminate malaria and mosquito-borne lymphatic filariasis by 2030. Countries in Africa and the Americas are pursuing an end to river blindness by 2035.

A personal mission

Having a former U.S. president lead the charge brought big advantages to a nonprofit that relied on private donors to fund its initiatives.

Carter's fundraising enabled the center to pour \$500 million into fighting Guinea worm. He persuaded manufacturers to donate larvicide as well as nylon cloth and specially made drinking straws to filter water. His visits to afflicted villages often attracted news coverage, raising awareness globally.

"He went to so many of the localities where people were afflicted," said Dr. William Brieger, a professor of international health at Johns Hopkins University who spent 25 years in Africa. "The kind of attention that was drawn to him for getting on the ground and highlighting the plight of individual people who were suffering, I think that made an important difference."

Carter first saw the disease up close in 1988 while visiting a village in Ghana where nearly 350 people had worms poking through their skin. He approached a young woman who appeared to be cradling a baby in her arm.

"But there was no baby," Carter wrote in his 2014 book "A Call to Action." "Instead she was holding her right breast, which was almost a foot long and had a worm emerging from the nipple."

Carter used his status to sway other leaders to play larger roles. Some heads of state got competitive,

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 46 of 54

spurred by the center's charts and newsletters that showed which countries were making progress and which lagged behind.

Worms in a war zone

In 1995, Carter intervened when a civil war in southern Sudan made it too dangerous for workers to reach hundreds of hotspots. The ceasefire he negotiated enabled the center and others to distribute 200,000 water filters and discover more endemic villages.

Carter's efforts not only stopped transmissions in much of what became South Sudan, but also built trust across communities that resulted in a "significant peace dividend," said Makoy Samuel Yibi, the young nation's Guinea worm eradication director.

Pakistan in 1993 became the first endemic country to eliminate human cases. India soon followed. By 1997, the disease was no longer found in Asia. By 2003, cases reported worldwide were down to 32,000 — a 99% decline in less than two decades.

Some setbacks frustrated Carter. Visiting a hospital packed with suffering children and adults amid a 2007 resurgence in Ghana, Carter suggested publicly that the disease should perhaps be renamed "Ghana worm."

"Ghana was deeply embarrassed," Hopkins said.

Ghana ended transmission within three more years. Even more inspiring: Nigeria, which once had the most cases in the world, reached zero infections in 2009.

"That was a thunderclap," Hopkins said. "It was important throughout Africa, throughout the global campaign."

To the last worm

Even after being diagnosed with brain cancer, Carter remained focused: "I'd like the last Guinea worm to die before I do," he told reporters in 2015.

Despite dwindling cases, total success has proven elusive.

Historic flooding and years of civil war have displaced millions of people who lack clean drinking water across central Africa. Of the 13 total cases reported in 2023, nine occurred in Chad, where infections in dogs have made the worms harder to eliminate.

"These are the most challenging places on planet Earth to operate in," said Adam Weiss, who has directed the campaign since 2018. "You need eyes and ears on the ground every single day."

The campaign still relies on about 30,000 volunteers spread among roughly 9,000 villages. Staying vigilant can be difficult now that cases are so rare, Weiss said.

"I would still like to think we will beat the timeline," Weiss said of the 2030 eradication goal. "The Carter Center is committed to this, obviously, no matter what."

## **Southerners are cleaning up from tornadoes that swept the region**

By JAMIE STENGLE and LEKAN OYEKANMI Associated Press

NEW CANEY, Texas (AP) — Cleanup was underway Monday after a strong storm system spawned hail, rain, high winds and tornadoes across the southern U.S. over the weekend, killing at least four people.

As of Monday afternoon, over 30 tornadoes had been confirmed as crews worked through about 50 reports of tornado damage spanning from Texas to South Carolina, said Mark Wiley, an emergency response specialist with the National Weather Service's Southern Region Headquarters.

The storms came over a busy holiday travel weekend, causing some treacherous road conditions along with delays or cancellations at some of the busiest U.S. airports.

The storms first hit Saturday around the Houston area, where the National Weather Service by Monday had confirmed six tornadoes. Two of the twisters were rated EF3, with peak winds of about 140 mph (225 kpm), including one that hit Montgomery County in the Porter and New Caney areas.

"Some of the damage was pretty substantial, some cases leveling homes, some producing quite a bit of roof damage," said Brian Kyle, lead forecaster with the National Weather Service in Houston.

About 50 homes in Montgomery County sustained major damage and 30 were destroyed, county official

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 47 of 54

Jason Smith said. A couple hundred more homes sustained minor or cosmetic damage, he said.

Cleanup crews labored over the weekend and were continuing to pick up debris Monday.

Carlos Benitez, 41, was already working to rebuild his auto repair shop in the New Caney area. He said he closed his eyes as the storm blew through and when he opened them, "everything's down."

Sasha Zamora, 39, lives nearby, and was trying to put her baby to sleep when she realized how serious the storm was. "Immediately, the wind picked up so fast that things were hitting the window," she said, recounting how she rushed her children to the center of the house. Though her family and her property came through the storm OK, her neighbor's mobile home flipped over, Zamora said.

Officials in Mississippi said two people were killed in storms there, including an 18-year-old who died after a tree fell on her home Saturday night in Natchez in Adams County. About 22,000 Mississippians remained without power Monday afternoon, according to the website PowerOutage.us. In Texas, a 48-year-old woman died in the Liverpool area south of Houston, said Madison Polston of the Brazoria County Sheriff's Office. She said the woman was found about 100 feet (30 meters) from her home.

Dozens of homes and buildings were significantly damaged in Brazoria County, including an elementary school.

In North Carolina, a 70-year-old man was killed Sunday in Statesville, just north of Charlotte, when a tree landed on the pickup truck he was driving. Highway Patrol Trooper DJ Maffucci said "it was just a freak accident" and he believed Matthew Teeple, of Cleveland, North Carolina, was killed instantly.

Maffucci said that the storms were responsible for a number of downed trees and "quite a few wrecks."

In the Alabama city of Athens, northwest of Huntsville, storm damaged the downtown area, said city spokeswoman Holly Hollman. Large HVAC units were hurled from the tops of building and the roof was ripped off a bookstore. A full-sized, stripped-down military helicopter was toppled from a pole where it was on display, she added.

"I stepped out on my porch and I could hear it roar," she said of the storm.

Although somewhat uncommon for the season, weather officials say even December can bring severe weather under the right circumstances, as warm temperatures from the Gulf of Mexico combine with a cold front.

"You can still have the right ingredients that lead to these severe events even in the dead of winter in the Deep South," said Peter Mullinax, a meteorologist with the National Weather Services' Weather Prediction Center.

Still, it's rare for a system to start in Texas and make its way all the way to the Atlantic Coast this time of year, Wiley said.

Meanwhile, in western Pennsylvania, high winds overnight Sunday caused power outages early Monday, most of them in Pittsburgh and other parts of Allegheny County. Wind speeds of more than 60 miles per hour (97 kph) were reported in Pennsylvania as high winds also blew across Ohio and northern West Virginia.

AccuWeather meteorologist Alex DaSilva in State College, Pennsylvania, said a strengthening low-pressure system ushered in the winds that downed trees and utility poles Sunday evening and into the night. Some 60,000 Pennsylvania utility customers were without power Monday morning. That number had dropped to about 13,000 by Monday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us.

## Tennessee remains No. 1 following quiet week in AP Top 25, No. 15 UCLA climbs 7 spots

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

Tennessee remains No. 1 after a quiet holiday week in the AP Top 25.

The Volunteers received 41 first-place votes from a 61-person media panel in The Associated Press men's college basketball poll released Monday. No. 2 Auburn had 20 first-place votes, with Iowa State, Duke and Alabama rounding out the top five.

The Tigers gained ground on Tennessee's No. 1 spot last Monday and did it again this week despite not playing, picking up eight additional first-place votes.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 48 of 54

The top 13 teams remained unchanged following a week in which 12 ranked teams didn't play. Tennessee won its lone game of Christmas week, beating Middle Tennessee 82-64 last Monday night to retain the No. 1 spot for the fourth straight week.

Tennessee is among four unbeaten teams left in men's Division I basketball, including three from the Southeastern Conference, joining No. 6 Florida (10-0) and No. 12 Oklahoma (10-0). Drake (9-0) also begins this week undefeated.

The Gators beat Stetson 85-45 and the Sooners knocked off Prairie View 89-67.

The SEC continued to dominate the Top 25, with the Gators giving the league four of the top six.

UCLA's rise

Most of the AP Top 25 teams in action last week went up against schools from smaller conferences.

Not UCLA and Gonzaga.

The Zags and Bruins played the final marquee game of the nonconference season on Saturday, squaring off in the first college basketball game played at Intuit Dome, the new home of the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers.

UCLA held off Gonzaga's late rally to pull out a 65-62 win behind Eric Dailey Jr.'s 18 points and was rewarded in this week's poll by moving up seven spots to No. 15. Gonzaga dropped five spots to No. 19 with the loss.

Rising and falling

UCLA was the only team to move up more than two spots in this week's poll.

No. 24 Mississippi barely held on to a ranking, dropping eight places following an 87-70 loss to No. 21 Memphis on Saturday.

In and out

Memphis was the only team to move into this week's poll after the win over Ole Miss.

San Diego State dropped out from No. 20 after losing 67-66 to Utah State on Tucker Anderson's 3-pointer with 6.8 seconds left. The Aggies appeared on 14 ballots after the win.

Conference watch

The SEC leads all conferences with 10 ranked teams. The Big Ten and Big 12 each have five and the Big East two. The Atlantic Coast, West Coast and American Athletic conferences each have one.

## Times Square ball takes final test for New Year's Eve

By MELISSA GOLDIN undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — The crystal-covered ball that descends down a pole in Times Square to ring in the new year was taken for a test run Monday, as New York City officials laid out their plans for the iconic New Year's Eve event.

Officials flipped a switch to light up the dazzling geodesic sphere — weighing almost 6 tons (5.4 metric tons) and featuring 2,688 crystal triangles — which then successfully ran up and down a 139-foot (42-meter) pole atop the One Times Square skyscraper.

Monday's rehearsal was just one of many pre-ball drop promotional events: On Sunday, fistfuls of confetti were flung toward crowds in the square in anticipation of the 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms) of brightly colored paper that will fill the air at midnight on New Year's Eve. Some of those pieces will include wishes written by people ahead of 2025.

"This is the crossroads of the entire planet right here in New York City," New York City Mayor Eric Adams said earlier Monday as he and law enforcement leaders discussed their plans for security at the celebration. "People tune in at different locations and celebrate as we do the countdown for the New Year."

Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said that although there were "no specific credible threats" to the Times Square celebrations, "the public can expect to see a tremendous amount of police resources deployed throughout the area and across the city." Plans range from "dedicated pickpocket teams" patrolling the square to sealing off all mailboxes and vending machines in the area.

A New Year's Eve ball has dropped in Times Square for nearly 120 years, with the exception of 1942 and



1943 when nightly "dimouts" occurred during World War II to protect the city from attacks.

## **Biden announces nearly \$2.5 billion more in military aid for Ukraine**

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday that the United States will send nearly \$2.5 billion more in weapons to Ukraine as his administration works quickly to spend all the money it has available to help Kyiv fight off Russia before President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

The package includes \$1.25 billion in presidential drawdown authority, which allows the military to pull existing stock from its shelves and gets weapons to the battlefield faster. It also has \$1.22 billion in longer-term weapons packages to be put on contract through the separate Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, or USAI.

Biden said all longer-term USAI funds have now been spent and that he seeks to fully use all the remaining drawdown money before leaving office.

"I've directed my administration to continue surging as much assistance to Ukraine as quickly as possible," Biden said in a statement. "At my direction, the United States will continue to work relentlessly to strengthen Ukraine's position in this war over the remainder of my time in office."

In addition to the weapons support, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen announced Monday that the U.S. is also providing \$3.4 billion in economic assistance to Ukraine to help pay for critical government services during its ongoing fight against Russia. The money will pay salaries for civilian government and school employees, healthcare workers and first responders.

The new military aid comes as Russia has launched a barrage of attacks against Ukraine's power facilities in recent days, although Ukraine has said it intercepted a significant number of the missiles and drones. Russian and Ukrainian forces are also still in a bitter battle around the Russian border region of Kursk, where Moscow has sent thousands of North Korean troops to help reclaim territory taken by Ukraine.

The Biden administration is pushing to get weapons into Ukraine to give Kyiv the strongest negotiating position possible before Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20. Trump has talked about getting some type of negotiated settlement between Ukraine and Russia and has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Many U.S. and European leaders are concerned that Trump's talk of a settlement might result in a poor deal for Ukraine, and they worry that he won't provide Ukraine with all the weapons funding approved by Congress.

The weapons systems being pulled from existing stockpiles through this latest weapons package include counter-unmanned aerial systems munitions, air defense munitions, ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), 155mm and 105mm artillery ammunition, air-to-ground munitions, anti-armor systems, tube-launched missiles, fragmentation grenades, and other items and spare parts.

Including Monday's announcement, the U.S. has provided more than \$65 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since Russia invaded its neighbor in February 2022.

## **Argentine judge charges 5 people over death of former One Direction star Liam Payne**

By ALMUDENA CALATRAVA Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — An Argentine judge confirmed charges against five people in connection with the death of Liam Payne, a former member of musical group One Direction, and ordered preventive prison for two of them for having supplied him with drugs.

A judicial officer confirmed Monday the judge's decision and said that one of the two people ordered to be put under preventive prison — a form of pre-trial detention — was an employee of the hotel in Buenos Aires where Payne stayed until he died after falling from the balcony of his room in October.

The officer said the other person was a waiter Payne met in a restaurant. The officer, who requested

not to be identified as a condition to talk about the ruling, said that both face charges for supplying drugs and they need to present themselves before the judge.

The judge also charged three other people with manslaughter, including a businessman who was with Payne in Argentina and two managers of the hotel. The official said that they were not ordered to be held under preventive prison.

In November, prosecutors filed initial charges against three people, but they didn't reveal their names.

Payne fell from his room's balcony on the third floor of his hotel in the upscale neighborhood of Palermo in the Argentine capital. His autopsy said he died from multiple injuries and external bleeding.

Prosecutors also said that Payne's toxicological exams showed that his body had "traces of alcohol, cocaine and a prescribed antidepressant" in the moments before his death.

Payne's autopsy showed his injuries were caused neither by self-harm nor by physical intervention of others. The document also said that he did not have the reflex of protecting himself in the fall, which suggests he might have been unconscious.

Prosecutors in Argentina also ruled out the possibility that Payne died by suicide.

One Direction was among the most successful boy bands of recent times. It announced an indefinite hiatus in 2016 and Payne — like his former bandmates Zayn Malik, Harry Styles, Niall Horan, and Louis Tomlinson — pursued a solo career.

## Jimmy Carter and Playboy: How 'the weirdo factor' rocked '76

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — Jimmy Carter already had drawn months of media scrutiny as a devout Southern Baptist running for president. Then the 1976 Democratic nominee brought up sex and sin as he explained his religious faith to Playboy magazine.

Carter was not misquoted. But he was certainly misunderstood, as his thoughts in the wide-ranging interview were reduced in the popular imagination to utterances about "lust" and "adultery."

Nearly a half-century later, as Carter was receiving hospice care in the same south Georgia home where he once spoke with Playboy journalists, his interviewer Robert Scheer still believed Carter was treated unfairly. He recalled the former president as a "real" and "serious" figure whose intent was smothered by the intensity of a campaign's closing stretch.

Carter died Sunday at age 100.

"Jimmy Carter was a thoughtful guy," Scheer told The Associated Press. "But that got lost here. I've never seen a story like it. It was worldwide. ... It just never went away."

Political disaster ensued. Rosalynn Carter was suddenly being asked whether she trusted her husband. The fallout, in Carter's words, "nearly cost me the election."

Carter spent five-plus hours with Playboy across several months — "more time with you than with Time, Newsweek and all the others combined," he told Scheer and Playboy editor Barry Golson.

The resulting Q&A spanned 12,000 words, and Scheer added thousands more in an accompanying story. Carter discussed military and foreign policy, racism and civil rights, political journalism and his reputation as a "vague" candidate.

"They weren't interested in sensationalized stuff," Scheer said of Playboy.

Hugh Hefner's publication reached an estimated 20 million-plus readers each month with its pictorials of nude women. But the magazine chronicled American culture as well, with its branded "Playboy Interview" featuring such power players as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., John Lennon, Malcolm X and leading newsman Walter Cronkite.

Carter, unafraid of nuance, proved he belonged among them, Scheer said.

Carter's most-remembered comments came at the end of their final session. Standing outside Carter's front door, Golson pressed Carter on whether his piety would make him a "rigid, unbending president" unable to represent all Americans.

The Baptist deacon responded with an 823-word soliloquy on human imperfection, pride and God's

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 51 of 54

forgiveness. He said he believed in "absolute and total separation of church and state" and explained his faith as rooted in humility, not judgment of others.

Quoting Matthew 5:27-28, Carter explained that Jesus Christ considered an offending thought equivalent to consummated adultery, and by that standard, he was in no position to judge a man who "shacks up" and "screws lots of women," because he had "looked on many women with lust" and, thus, "committed adultery many times in my heart."

Scheer called it a "sensible statement," reflecting Carter's Baptist tradition: "He was saying, 'Look, I'm not going to be some fanatic. ... I'm not this perfect guy.'"

Playboy realized Carter provided explosive material — and not just about sex. Citing President Lyndon Johnson's handling of Vietnam, Carter included the last Democratic president alongside disgraced Republican Richard Nixon as guilty of "lying, cheating and distorting the truth."

The magazine decided to send the full Q&A text to about 1,000 media outlets in late September, before the usual October publication date for the November edition.

The idea, Scheer explained, was to allow time for fair coverage rather than drop bombshells days before the election.

Headline writers, satirists and late-night television pounced anyway, labeling it Carter's "lust in my heart" interview. "Saturday Night Live," then a fledgling NBC sketch comedy show, had a field day. One political cartoonist depicted Carter lusting after the Statue of Liberty.

He lamented to NPR in 1993 that the Playboy interview morphed into "the No. 1 story of the entire 1976 campaign."

"I was explaining Jesus' Sermon on the Mount," Carter wrote wistfully in a 2015 memoir.

Carter's faith had endeared him to many fellow white evangelicals and cultural conservatives. That made him a difficult foil for Republicans, who wanted to cast Democrats as out of step with most of America. The flip side, Scheer noted, was that many young voters and urban liberals — key Democratic constituencies — "wondered if he was this Southern square."

"Hamilton Jordan (Carter's campaign manager) had always called Carter's faith 'the weirdo factor,'" said Amber Roessner, a University of Tennessee media historian who has written extensively on Carter. "Talking to Playboy was their way to prove he wasn't some kind of prude."

Scheer, who was with Carter as part of his traveling press corps, said Playboy's early text release sparked a frenzy.

"Reporters were scrambling, asking me, 'Bob, what is this?'" he recalled.

The press traveling with Carter focused initially on Carter's criticism of Johnson, who died in 1973. It was a juicy detail because Carter was headed Texas to campaign with LBJ's widow.

Carter initially told reporters his criticisms of LBJ were taken out of context. Scheer "ran back to the plane to get the tapes," and effectively caught the nominee violating his pledge never to make a "misleading statement."

Lady Bird Johnson skipped Carter's Texas events, Scheer said. Carter apologized to her by telephone.

When his commentary on adultery ballooned, Carter insisted the exchange had been off-the-record, throwaway banter as Scheer and Golson prepared to leave.

"He was still wearing the mic!" Scheer told AP.

The way the story morphed "ended up making Carter seem like a creep," Roessner said.

Rosalynn Carter fashioned a pat response: "Jimmy talks too much, but at least people know he's honest and doesn't mind answering questions." And, no, she never worried about his fidelity.

"The only lust I worried about was that of the press," she wrote in 1984, recounting how her discipline finally cracked when a reporter asked whether she ever committed adultery.

"If I had," she replied, "I wouldn't tell you."

President Gerald Ford, who had been gaining on Carter but still trailed badly, leveraged the story. The Republican president was an Episcopalian, soft-spoken about religion, but he invited leading evangelical pastors to the White House the day after the interview's release, including the Rev. W.S. Criswell of Dallas First Baptist Church.

Criswell later declared from his pulpit that he had asked Ford: "Mr. President, if Playboy magazine were to ask you for an interview, what would you do?" Ford's reply, according to Criswell: "I was asked by Playboy magazine for an interview — and I declined with an emphatic 'No!'"

Thousands of his parishioners roared.

The Rev. Billy Graham, then the nation's top evangelist, and the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the rising leader of the so-called Religious Right, also blitzed Carter. National media, including The AP, highlighted criticism from Christian pastors from around the country.

Roessner, the daughter of a Protestant pastor, said Carter's Playboy comments were clumsy, "but if anyone should have understood the context ... it should have been the ministers."

She recalled Carter's resentment during a 2014 interview she conducted with him. Decades of global humanitarian work had by that time afforded the former president a profile above politics, yet "almost 40 years later, it was clearly something he held on to," she said. He was "still incredibly frustrated by what he felt was unfair coverage and response."

The 1976 campaign was the first after Richard Nixon's resignation, driven by reporting from The Washington Post, and many journalists were demonstrating a new level of distrust of politicians, especially one Scheer described as "wearing his religion on his sleeve."

Those same news organizations largely ignored what the soon-to-be president said about them, Roessner noted.

"The traveling press have zero interest in any issue unless it's a matter of making a mistake," Carter told Playboy. "There's nobody in the back of this plane who would ask an issue question unless he thought he could trick me into some crazy statement."

Scheer, at least, asked plenty of policy questions, and, looking back, he pointed to Carter's narrow victory just weeks later.

"Whatever they said, I think it did exactly what they wanted to accomplish," Scheer said. "That doesn't mean they weren't nervous."

## **An appeals court upholds a \$5 million award in a sexual abuse verdict against President-elect Trump**

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal appeals court on Monday upheld a jury's finding in a civil case that Donald Trump sexually abused a columnist in an upscale department store dressing room in the mid-1990s.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued a written opinion upholding the \$5 million award that the Manhattan jury granted to E. Jean Carroll for defamation and sexual abuse.

The longtime magazine columnist had testified at a 2023 trial that Trump turned a friendly encounter in spring 1996 into a violent attack after they playfully entered the store's dressing room.

Trump skipped the trial after repeatedly denying the attack ever happened. But he briefly testified at a follow-up defamation trial earlier this year that resulted in an \$83.3 million award. The second trial resulted from comments then-President Trump made in 2019 after Carroll first made the accusations publicly in a memoir.

In its ruling, a three-judge panel of the appeals court rejected claims by Trump's lawyers that trial Judge Lewis A. Kaplan had made multiple decisions that spoiled the trial, including by permitting two other women who had accused Trump of sexually abusing them to testify.

The judge also had allowed the jury to view the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape in which Trump boasted in 2005 about grabbing women's genitals because when someone is a star, "you can do anything."

"We conclude that Mr. Trump has not demonstrated that the district court erred in any of the challenged rulings," the 2nd Circuit said. "Further, he has not carried his burden to show that any claimed error or combination of claimed errors affected his substantial rights as required to warrant a new trial."

In September, both Carroll, 81, and Trump, 78, attended oral arguments by the 2nd Circuit.

Steven Cheung, a Trump spokesperson, said in a statement that Trump was elected by voters who de-

livered "an overwhelming mandate, and they demand an immediate end to the political weaponization of our justice system and a swift dismissal of all of the Witch Hunts, including the Democrat-funded Carroll Hoax, which will continue to be appealed."

Roberta Kaplan, a lawyer who represented Carroll during the trial and is not related to the judge, said in a statement: "Both E. Jean Carroll and I are gratified by today's decision. We thank the Second Circuit for its careful consideration of the parties' arguments."

The first jury found in May 2023 that Trump sexually abused Carroll and defamed her with comments he made in October 2022. That jury awarded Carroll \$5 million.

In January, a second jury awarded Carroll an additional \$83.3 million in damages for comments Trump had made about her while he was president, finding that they were defamatory. That jury had been instructed by the judge to accept the first jury's finding that Trump had sexually abused Carroll. The appeal of that verdict has not yet been heard.

Carroll testified during both trials that her life as an Elle magazine columnist was spoiled by Trump's public comments, which she said motivated some people to send her death threats and leave her fearful to leave the upstate New York cabin where she lives.

Trump testified for under three minutes at the second trial and was not permitted to challenge conclusions reached by the May 2023 jury. Still, he was animated in the courtroom throughout the two-week trial, and jurors could hear him grumbling about the case.

During appeals arguments in September, Trump lawyer D. John Sauer said testimony from witnesses who recalled Carroll telling them about the 1996 encounter with Trump immediately afterward was improper because the witnesses had "egregious bias" against Trump.

And the attorney said the judge also should have excluded the testimony of the two women who said Trump committed similar acts of sex abuse against them in the 1970s and in 2005. Trump has denied those allegations too.

The 2nd Circuit wrote: "In each of the three encounters, Mr. Trump engaged in an ordinary conversation with a woman he barely knew, then abruptly lunged at her in a semi-public place and proceeded to kiss and forcefully touch her without her consent. The acts are sufficiently similar to show a pattern."

It said the "Access Hollywood" tape was "directly corroborative" of the testimony by the women of the pattern of behavior they experienced.

The Associated Press does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Carroll has done.

## **Trump endorses Mike Johnson to stay on as House Speaker despite government funding turmoil**

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump on Monday endorsed House Speaker Mike Johnson, providing crucial backing for the Louisiana Republican as he prepares for what is expected to be another contentious speakership race this week.

Trump said in a post on his social media platform that Johnson "is a good, hard working, religious man" and said he "will do the right thing, and we will continue to WIN."

"Mike has my Complete & Total Endorsement," he wrote.

Johnson thanked Trump for the endorsement and added, "The American people demand and deserve that we waste no time. Let's get to work!"

The signal of support from Trump comes despite his frustration with a spending deal Johnson pushed through the House days before Christmas that failed to achieve his central goal of raising the debt limit.

But other Republicans have been less forgiving. Far-right criticism over the spending ordeal has left Johnson's continued leadership of the incoming GOP majority once again in jeopardy. Though a deal was reached, averting a holiday shutdown, Johnson had to rely on Democrats to keep the government running, highlighting the limits of his influence and exposing cracks in his party's support.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 189 ~ 54 of 54

The speaker's first two funding plans collapsed as Trump, who does not take the oath of office until Jan. 20, interceded with calls to suspend or lift the government debt ceiling.

Johnson, who has worked hard to stay close to Trump over the last several months, convinced the president-elect that he would meet his demands to raise the debt limit in 2025.

Trump had remained quiet about Johnson's fate before a Jan. 3 leadership vote for over a week, even as some Republicans signaled that they may not support Johnson for the role.

Rep. Victoria Spartz, one of the Republicans who opposed Kevin McCarthy's initial bid for the speakership, said in a statement Monday that "our next speaker must show courageous leadership to get our country back on track."

The Indiana lawmaker went on to make a series of demands for the next leader of the GOP majority, which included major spending reform. Rep. Andy Harris, who is the chair of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus, had also indicated that Johnson's future as speaker is not guaranteed before the holidays.

In a Dec. 20 post on X, Harris said that Republicans have not done enough to bring down "spending, deficits and inflation" since Trump's electoral victory in November.

Because of this, Harris wrote, "I am now undecided on what House leadership should look like in the 119th Congress."

## Today in History: December 31, Edison demonstrates incandescent lights in Menlo Park

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 31, the 366th and final day of 2024. This is New Year's Eve.

Today in history:

On Dec. 31, 1879, Thomas Edison first demonstrated his electric incandescent lights for the public by illuminating some 100 bulbs in and around his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey.

Also on this date:

In 1904, New York's Times Square saw its first New Year's Eve celebration, with an estimated 200,000 people in attendance.

In 1972, Major League baseball player Roberto Clemente, 38, was killed when a plane he had chartered and was traveling on to bring relief supplies to earthquake-devastated Nicaragua crashed shortly after takeoff from Puerto Rico.

In 1985, singer Rick Nelson, 45, and six others were killed when fire broke out aboard a plane that was taking the group to a New Year's Eve performance in Dallas.

In 1995, the syndicated comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes," created by Bill Watterson, came to an end after a 10-year run.

In 1999, Russian President Boris Yeltsin resigned, making Prime Minister Vladimir Putin acting president.

In 2019, the health commission in the central Chinese city of Wuhan announced that experts were investigating an outbreak of respiratory illness and that most of the victims had visited a seafood market in the city; the statement said 27 people had become ill with a strain of viral pneumonia, which would eventually be known as COVID-19.

In 2022, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who had become the first pontiff in 600 years to resign as pope, died at age 95.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Anthony Hopkins is 87. Rock musician Andy Summers (The Police) is 82. Actor Ben Kingsley is 81. Filmmaker Taylor Hackford is 80. Fashion designer Diane von Fürstenberg is 78. Actor Tim Matheson is 77. Actor Bebe Neuwirth is 66. Actor Gong Li is 59. Author Nicholas Sparks is 59. Businessman Donald Trump Jr. is 47. Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., is 45. Olympic gymnastics gold medalist Gabby Douglas is 29.