

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 1 of 87

- 1- [Today on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- 2- [Football Preview](#)
- 3- [Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- 5- [Area COVID-19 Cases](#)
- 6- [Aug. 20th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- 10- [Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- 11- [Weather Pages](#)
- 14- [Daily Devotional](#)
- 15- [2020 Groton Events](#)
- 16- [News from the Associated Press](#)



Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“OUR INNER WISDOM IS PERSISTENT, BUT QUIET. IT WILL ALWAYS WHISPER, BUT IT WILL NEVER STOP KNOCKING AT YOUR DOOR.”

-VIRONIKA TUGALEVA



GDILIVE.COM



Mobridge-Pollock vs. Groton Area
7 p.m., Friday, Aug. 21, 2020
Doney Field, Groton

Sponsored By



CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 2 of 87

2020 GROTON AREA FOOTBALL PREVIEW

by Coach Shaun Wanner

Years Coaching: 34th Year 20th at Groton Area
Coaching Record: 227 Wins 105 Losses

2019 Record: 4-5 Conference: 2-2

TOUGHEST OPPONENTS:

Sisseton returns a lot of starters from last season and along with Mobridge/Pollock. Also in the conference, Milbank, Webster, and Ab. Roncalli will field very good teams with a great deal of experience and talent back from last season. Non-conference teams, Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm ND returns a lot of there starters from last season, Stanley County returns several talented kids from last season.

Seniors: LETTERWINNERS

Alex Morris	Sr.	OL/DL
Paxton Bonn	Sr.	OL/DL
Trey Gengerke	Sr.	OL/LB
Caleb Furney	Sr.	OL/DL
Kale Pharis	Sr.	OL/DL
Chandler Larson	Sr.	WR/LB
Adrian Knutson	Sr.	OL/DL
Jaimen Farrell	Sr.	FB/LB

Juniors:

Kaden Kurtz	Jr.	QB/LB
Pierce Kettering	Jr.	RB/LB
Jackson Cogley	Jr.	WR/Safety
Seth Johnson	Jr.	OL/LB
Jordan Bjerke	Jr.	TE/LB
Favian Sanchez	Jr.	RB/DB

Sophomore:

Andrew Marzahn	Soph.	RB/DB
----------------	-------	-------

RETURNING OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE STARTERS:

Alex Morris	Sr.	OL/DL
Trey Gengerke	Sr.	OL/DL
Kale Pharis	Sr.	OL/DL
Adrian Knutson	Sr.	OL/DL
Chandler Larson	Sr.	WR/Safety
Kaden Kurtz	Jr.	QB/LB
Pierce Kettering	Jr.	LB
Andrew Marzahn	Soph.	DB

TEAMS STRENGTHS:

Our strength should be our returning starters on both the offensive and defensive line. We return four starters at those positions that have some valuable experience. We do have some speed and experience at our skilled positions. Our running and passing game should be decent with some good backs and receivers. Defensively we should be pretty good with some talented kids returning.

TEAMS IMPROVEMENTS:

We must be able to throw the ball some during the season along with running the football between the tackles. We have some good skilled positions that will get better as the season progresses. I think we must become a little more physical on both sides of the ball. Our offensive and defensive line will be our key, they are a very hard working group that wants to do well.

TEAMS OUTLOOK:

We should be a competitive football team by the end of the season. Our conference along with our non-conference teams are going to be very good. Our depth won't be what it has been in the past so will have to stay healthy. The group we have is a hard working group that will get better. I feel if we stay on the right path and don't get distracted will be a very good team by the end of the season. This group has a lot of potential!

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 3 of 87

#179 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

No real change from yesterday. We have 47,500 new case reports today, a 0.9% increase to 5,585,200 cases. We tend to have 10 to 12 states and territories showing increasing case reports these days, but there are about 15-18 that cycle on and off this list, so those are the ones where they're never really making progress. The good news is that our seven-day average for new cases nationally is now 20,000 less than it was one month ago. This remarkable decrease has been attributed to the strict guidelines imposed in many states, particularly the wider adoption of face masks. California, for example, has reported new case numbers below their 14-day average for five consecutive days with positivity rates of 6.6%. Additionally, test positivity rates overall in the US have dropped from 8.5% to 6.3% since the middle of last month. 5% is the goal to be OK with reopening things, and 3% is the real target.

We do still have 12 states with daily averages rising at least 10% this week over last week. Admiral Brett Giroir, the physician on the White House task force in charge of testing, is warning, "This could turn around very quickly if we're not careful. We saw that early on after Memorial Day and the couple of weeks afterward that sort of started the current outbreak." There are still real concerns about students of all ages returning to school along with the Labor Day holiday weekend coming up. We've had colleges in at least 17 states reporting outbreaks linked to social gatherings and outbreaks in elementary and secondary schools in pretty much every state where schools have reopened; so there's plenty to be concerned about.

There have been 174,065 deaths, 1107 of them today, a 0.6% increase. Our seven-day average for deaths has been above 1000 for 25 straight days, and that's not great. Florida crossed the 10,000-death threshold today, the fifth state to do so. The age profile of those doing the dying in Florida has changed as well, shifting younger. The total number of deaths in the 25 to 44 age group doubled in July; that means as many Floridians died from Covid-19 in July as died in all the prior months of this pandemic. North Dakota and Nevada reported record single-day numbers of deaths today. We have about 15 states showing increases in death reports; again there are a few more than that that cycle on and off that list as well. Recent analysis has 223,900 excess deaths in the United States from March 15 through August 8; you may recall excess deaths are deaths above the number expected for the same time period based on five-year historical death reports and adjusted for population growth. The good news is that, if nothing else bad happens (something I'm not convinced is in the cards, but it might be), the death rate should start to drop by next week or the week after; we know deaths lag new case reporting by a month or so.

We've talked since early on about the disparate impact of Covid-19 on minority communities. I've read recent analysis about just how stark that disparate impact is. Black, Latino, and Native people are nearly three times as likely to be infected as White people, about five times as likely to be hospitalized, and three times as likely to die. These differences are not genetic; they're social and systemic, including factors like who is able to move from a hot spot to a second home, who shares housing with multiple generations, who is living in older and poorer housing, who has access to running water, who lives in crowded conditions, who is able to work remotely and who has to leave home to do essential work, who has to rely on public transportation, who has ready access to testing, who has underlying conditions due to lack of access to health care and healthy food, who receives medical care that is attentive to their symptoms, and who puts off treatment because of cost. Even if you didn't care about members of minorities as human beings, you should care about the public health impact on the entire society of some segments of it who are sicker and more likely to be out in the public shedding virus. Beyond issues of social justice, it's bad public policy to leave some communities this underserved; that rebounds on us all.

Recent analysis from a team at Emory University shows superspreading events may be particularly instrumental in driving the pandemic in rural areas. You may recall that superspreading events occur when one or a few people infect multiple others, starting a cascade of transmissions; these are typically related to parties, funerals, conferences, and other large gatherings, and the effects can be widespread. It also shows that younger people are three times as likely to spread the virus as people over 60 and also tend to be responsible for superspreading. I'm going to speculate that much of this is because young people are less likely to have symptoms, so they're probably going about their lives; because they tend to have more social contacts, especially in this time of pandemic; and because older people are more likely to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 4 of 87

have symptoms and get tested.

There's been some conversation about a potential therapeutic called oleandrin, an extract of the oleander plant. A study from the University of Texas, which was neither peer-reviewed or published, reported finding it rendered this virus noninfectious in tissue cultures in the lab. There's a problem, though; this substance is highly toxic to the heart, causing dangerous arrhythmias and, even in very small amounts, death. There have been no studies in animals or humans to establish whether there is any safe dose because it is so very toxic. I suppose anything's possible, but I do not see this becoming the next big thing. And in the meanwhile, steer clear of anything purporting to contain oleandrin; if it actually does contain oleandrin, it could kill you, and if it does not, then the purveyor is lying to you, which should make you wary of any other claims made.

Pfizer and German partner, BioNTech, had several vaccine candidates in early-stage testing which is complete. They have selected the vaccine with the fewest side effects and a robust immune response and are now recruiting for phase 3 trials. That means one more possible option. More is better.

PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has been analyzing HHS and CDC data on county-level positivity; it uses projections from these data to make recommendations to the federal coronavirus task force and to provide states with information on spread in communities. Their latest projections show continuing concern for virus resurgence, and they're giving special attention to Labor Day as a travel weekend and to its potential to fuel further spread.

Here is their latest guidance with respect to schools; it should be noted that these guidelines are similar to the situation in existence in countries in Europe and Southeast Asia that have successfully reopened schools.

Full or hybrid reopening: Stable or declining number of 10 cases per 100,000 per week with less than 5% positivity.

Continue in-class instruction if started: Stable number of cases with 5-9% positivity, ONLY if there is no evidence of transmission

Incremental reopening with special needs and/or elementary-age children returning first: 10-35 weekly cases per 100,000 with less than 5% positivity.

Remote learning: 9% positivity rate or above.

High-contact sports: Weekly case incidence less than 10 per 100,000 with positivity under 1%, and competitions should be limited to teams from places having similar incidence and positivity rates.

Moderate-contact sports: Stable or declining rate of weekly incidence with 1-5% positivity, and competitions should be limited to teams from places having similar incidence and positivity rates.

Lower-contact sports (swimming, track, golf, baseball, softball) or for individual drills and distanced/masked group training in other sports: Stable weekly case incidence with 5-9% positivity, and competitions should be limited to teams from places having similar incidence and positivity rates.

All competitions and practices individual or online only: Test positivity over 9%.

Just over a week ago, a blast rocked a Baltimore neighborhood, apparently the result of a gas leak. Two people were killed, seven hospitalized, and three homes were leveled. There were people trapped in the debris, many were put out of their homes, and there was broken glass and rubble over a wide area. We're in a pandemic, which complicates every single part of this urgent situation. So what happened next?

A bunch of volunteers showed up to shovel dirt, sweep debris into dumpsters, and clear yards and alleyways not because they had to, but because they chose to. A nonprofit held a sidewalk sale to raise money for survivors. Councilman Isaac Schleifer organized the clean-up effort, saying, "This is Baltimore for you, you know we always turn out for each other, we're always there for one another."

I'm just going to say this is precisely what I am hoping—and pushing—for in our national response to this pandemic and in our efforts to move forward after that to create a more fair, just, and safe society. Until policy-makers bestir themselves to bring about something like that outcome, we must bestir ourselves to do the work on a micro scale. Surely, we can all pitch in on some project that makes society stronger. We know change happens first at the local level, so let's all act on a local level and see what we can make happen.

Stay healthy. I'll see you tomorrow.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 5 of 87

Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 12	Aug. 13	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18
Minnesota	61,839	62,303	62,993	63,723	64,413	65,152	65,716
Nebraska	29,030	29,244	29,660	29,988	30,241	30,372	30,563
Montana	5,104	5,268	5,407	5,541	5,659	5,750	5,792
Colorado	51,441	51,756	52,219	52,538	52,838	53,176	53,370
Wyoming	2,584	2,600	2,627	2,694	2,730	2,789	2,829
North Dakota	7885	7970	8171	8322	8444	8587	8647
South Dakota	9713	9815	9897	10,024	10,118	10,274	10,360
United States	5,141,879	5,197,749	5,248,172	5,314,116	5,357,396	5,403,218	5,444,115
US Deaths	164,545	166,038	167,092	168,458	169,432	170,052	170,559

Minnesota	+323	+464	+690	+730	+690	+739	+564
Nebraska	+334	+214	+416	+328	+253	+131	+191
Montana	+87	+164	+139	+134	+118	+91	+42
Colorado	+402	+315	+463	+319	+300	+338	+194
Wyoming	+19	+16	+27	+67	+36	+59	+40
North Dakota	+172	+85	+201	+151	+122	+143	+60
South Dakota	50	+102	+82	+127	+94	+156	+86
United States	+47,314	+55,870	+50,423	+65,944	+43,280	45,822	+40,897
US Deaths	+1,080	+1,493	+1,054	+1,366	+974	+620	+507

	Aug. 19	Aug. 20	Aug. 21
Minnesota	66,061	66,618	67,308
Nebraska	30,825	31,040	31,348
Montana	5,846	5,956	6,072
Colorado	53,631	53,901	54,230
Wyoming	2,850	2,909	2,940
North Dakota	8782	8968	9242
South Dakota	10,443	10,566	10,691
United States	5,482,823	5,530,247	5,576,089
US Deaths	171,833	173,193	174,290

Minnesota	+345	+557	+690
Nebraska	+262	+215	+308
Montana	+54	+110	+116
Colorado	+261	+270	+329
Wyoming	+21	+59	+31
North Dakota	+135	+186	+274
South Dakota	+83	+123	+125
United States	+38,708	+47,424	+45,842
US Deaths	+1,274	+1,360	+1,097

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 6 of 87

August 20th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Two males have died from COVID-19 in South Dakota. One was in his 60s and the other in the 80+ age group. One was in Davison County and the other in Minnehaha County.

Day, Edmunds and Marshall counties each had a new positive case. Brown County had seven.

The currently hospitalized is down 2 from yesterday to 53 in South Dakota.

The positivity rate is 11 percent in North Dakota, 7.4 percent in South Dakota and 9.0 percent in Brown County. While the numbers keep trending upward, the currently hospitalized is holding steady, which is a good thing!

Brown County:

Total Positive: +7 (503) Positivity Rate: 9.0%

Recovered: +6 (441)

Active Cases: +1 (59)

Total Tests: +78 (6528)

Ever Hospitalized: 0 (22)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 87.7% (0 change)

South Dakota:

Positive: +125 (10,691 total) Positivity Rates: 7.4%

Total Tests: 1687 (169,767 total)

Hospitalized: +5 (940 total). 53 currently hospitalized (Down 2 from yesterday)

Deaths: +2 (157 total)

Recovered: +76 (9,265 total)

Active Cases: +47 (1,269)

Percent Recovered: 86.7 -.3

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 52% Non-Covid, 46% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 66% Non-Covid, 30% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 11% Non-Covid, 84% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Gained Jackson): Bennett 6-6, Jackosn 12-11-1, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 2-2, Hyde 3-3, Mellette 24-24, Miner 15-15, Perkins 4-4, Tripp 20-20.

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
Beadle (9): +4 positive (20 active cases)
Bennett: Full Recovered
Bon Homme: +4 positive, 1 recovered (18 active cases)
Brookings (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)
Brown (3): +7 positive, +6 recovered (59 active cases)
Brule: +1 positive (4 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +1 positive (6 active cases)
Butte (1): +1 positive (6 active cases)
Campbell: +1 positive, +1 recovered (1 active case)
Charles Mix: +1 recovered (17 active cases)
Clark: 2 active cases
Clay: 20 active cases
Codington (1): +8 positive, +4 recovered (58 active cases)
Corson: +1 recovered (19 active cases)
Custer: +7 positive (22 active case)
Davison (2): +3 positive, +2 recovered, 1 death (7 active cases)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 7 of 87

Day: +1 positive (7 active cases)
 Deuel: +2 recovered (10 active cases)
 Dewey: +1 positive, +3 recovered (25 active cases)
 Douglas: 4 active cases
 Edmunds: +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 Fall River: 3 active cases
 Faulk (1): 3 active cases
 Grant: +1 recovered (6 active cases)
 Gregory: 1 active case
 Haakon: 1 active case
 Hamlin: 16 active cases
 Hand: +1 recovered (3 active cases)
 Hanson: 4 active cases
 Harding: +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Hughes (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)
 Hutchinson: 7 active cases
 Hyde: 1 active case
 Jackson (1): +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: +1 positive (2 active cases)
 Lake (5): 4 active cases
 Lawrence (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +12 positive, +8 recovered (95 active cases)
 Lyman (3): 5 active cases
 Marshall: +1 positive (5 active cases)
 McCook (1): 7 active cases
 McPherson: 1 active case

Meade (1): +7 positive, +1 recovered (36 active cases)
 Mellette: Fully Recovered
 Miner: Fully Recovered
 Minnehaha (69): +30 positive, +16 recovered, 1 death (429 active cases)
 Moody: 4 active cases
 Oglala Lakota (2): +1 recovered (16 active cases)
 Pennington (33): +13 positive, +8 recovered (113 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active cases
 Potter: +1 positive (2 active cases)
 Roberts (1): +2 recovered (9 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: 3 active cases
 Stanley: +2 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Sully: 1 active case
 Todd (5): 6 active cases
 Tripp: Fully Recovered
 Turner: +1 positive (16 active cases)
 Union (4): +6 positive, +3 recovered (24 active cases)
 Walworth: +1 positive (7 active cases)
 Yankton (3): +5 positive, +3 recovered (49 active cases)
 Ziebach: +3 recovered (8 active cases)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 20:

- 7,738 tests (2,488)
- 9,242 positives (+274)
- 7,718 recovered (+68)
- 130 deaths (+0)
- 1,394 active cases (+185)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	379	0
10-19 years	964	0
20-29 years	2392	2
30-39 years	2081	6
40-49 years	1585	7
50-59 years	1564	18
60-69 years	951	28
70-79 years	418	25
80+ years	357	71

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	5313	79
Male	5378	78

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 8 of 87

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	40	38	397	0	Minimal
Beadle	602	573	1952	9	Moderate
Bennett	6	6	547	0	None
Bon Homme	32	14	852	0	Substantial
Brookings	166	142	2919	1	Moderate
Brown	503	441	4773	3	Substantial
Brule	48	44	774	0	Minimal
Buffalo	109	101	658	3	None
Butte	22	15	839	1	Minimal
Campbell	4	3	104	0	None
Charles Mix	114	97	1481	0	Substantial
Clark	17	15	408	0	Minimal
Clay	142	122	1476	0	Moderate
Codington	191	132	3048	1	Substantial
Corson	49	30	516	0	Substantial
Custer	58	36	835	0	Substantial
Davison	104	95	2506	2	Moderate
Day	30	23	674	0	Moderate
Deuel	26	16	432	0	Substantial
Dewey	61	36	2337	0	Substantial
Douglas	20	16	418	0	Minimal
Edmunds	22	17	430	0	Minimal
Fall River	23	20	1024	0	Minimal
Faulk	29	25	205	1	Minimal
Grant	34	28	760	0	Moderate
Gregory	8	7	411	0	Minimal
Haakon	3	2	299	0	None
Hamlin	34	18	694	0	Substantial
Hand	12	9	313	0	Moderate
Hanson	22	18	229	0	Minimal
Harding	2	1	57	0	Minimal
Hughes	101	86	1884	3	Moderate
Hutchinson	35	28	937	0	Minimal

Groton Daily Independent

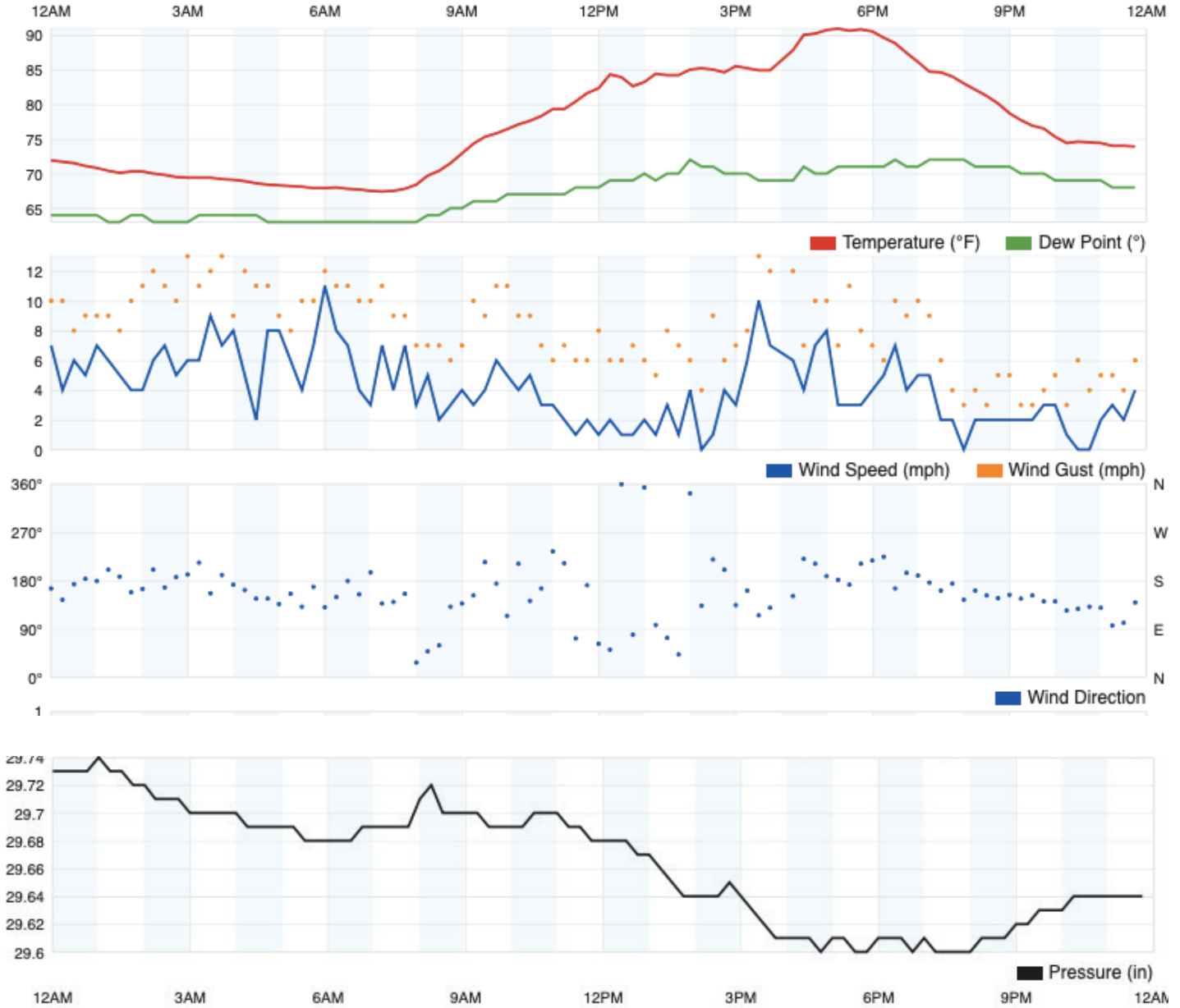
Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 9 of 87

Hyde	4	3	146	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	11	488	1	Minimal
Jerauld	39	38	277	1	None
Jones	2	2	62	0	None
Kingsbury	16	14	591	0	Minimal
Lake	105	96	994	5	Moderate
Lawrence	83	60	2231	1	Moderate
Lincoln	750	643	7384	2	Substantial
Lyman	91	83	1004	3	Minimal
Marshall	13	8	490	0	Minimal
McCook	37	29	672	1	Moderate
McPherson	8	7	228	0	None
Meade	127	90	2089	1	Moderate
Mellette	24	24	394	0	None
Miner	15	15	262	0	None
Minnehaha	4757	4258	29430	70	Substantial
Moody	34	30	681	0	Minimal
Oglala Lakota	159	141	2985	2	Minimal
Pennington	975	829	11502	33	Moderate
Perkins	6	5	197	0	None
Potter	3	1	308	0	Minimal
Roberts	87	77	1916	1	Moderate
Sanborn	13	13	238	0	None
Spink	27	24	1210	0	Minimal
Stanley	19	15	270	0	Minimal
Sully	4	3	89	0	Minimal
Todd	75	66	2310	5	Moderate
Tripp	20	20	627	0	None
Turner	64	48	987	0	Moderate
Union	230	202	2076	4	Moderate
Walworth	24	17	768	0	None
Yankton	164	112	3304	3	Substantial
Ziebach	35	27	323	0	None
Unassigned	0	0	9695	0	

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 10 of 87

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 11 of 87

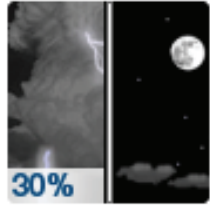
Today



Hot

High: 93 °F

Tonight



Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Clear

Low: 63 °F

Saturday



Hot

High: 91 °F

Saturday
Night



Clear

Low: 62 °F

Sunday



Hot

High: 92 °F

MARGINAL RISK of Severe T-Storms

ISSUED: 5:40 AM - Friday, August 21, 2020

WHEN

Scattered showers and storms developing by mid afternoon, mainly after 2pm CDT/1pm MDT, and continuing into the evening. The highest risk period will be this afternoon and evening.

WHAT

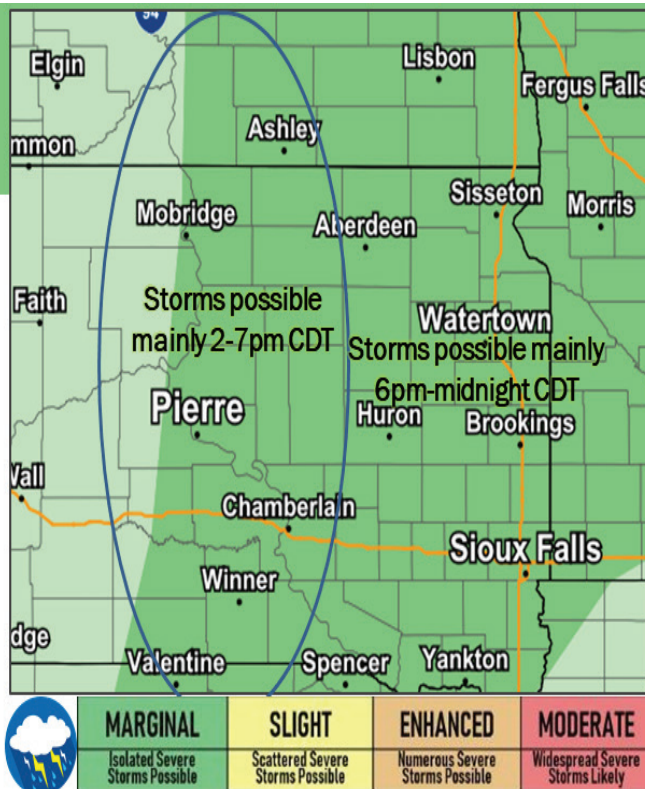
Isolated severe storms possible. These storms could produce large hail up to around a quarter size and wind gusts up to around 60 mph.

WHERE

The greater threat is over eastern SD and much of MN.

ACTION

Monitor the weather and have a plan of action if severe weather approaches your area.



There is potential for isolated strong to severe storms over mainly eastern South Dakota. Scattered showers and storms developing by mid afternoon over central South Dakota will shift to eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota this evening. The main threat with any stronger storms that develop will be large hail to around the size of quarters, and damaging winds to around 60 mph. Stay weather aware from mid afternoon through this evening!

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 12 of 87

Today in Weather History

August 21, 1989: Baseball size hail caused near 100 percent crop damage to Correll in Big Stone County to 10 miles north of Appleton. Most of Swift County also received 4 to 8 inches of rain.

August 21, 2007: Thunderstorms produced large hail in southeastern South Dakota, mainly near the Missouri River, during the late afternoon and early evening of August 21st. Enormous hail fell in the Dante area in Charles Mix County, including a state record size hailstone certified as 6 and 7/8 inches in diameter, with a circumference of 18 inches and a weight of one pound. The most massive stone was verified at 6 1/8 inches in diameter with a weight of 1.25 lbs. Damage included holes in roofs, broken rafters, broken awnings, numerous broken windows and dented vehicles, damaged siding, divots in the ground up to 12 inches long and 3 inches deep, and damaged crops. The state record hailstone was broken on July 23rd, 2010 with the United States record hailstone in Vivian.

1856: The Charter Oak was an unusually large white oak tree growing from around the 12th or 13th century until it fell during a windstorm on this day in 1856. According to tradition, Connecticut's Royal Charter of 1662 was hidden within the hollow of the tree to thwart its confiscation by the English governor-general. The oak became a symbol of American independence and is commemorated on the Connecticut State Quarter.

1883: An estimated F5 tornado caused extensive damage to Rochester Minnesota on this day. The enormous roar was said to have warned most Rochester residents, as the massive funnel cut through the north side of town. Over 135 homes were destroyed, and another 200 damaged. Many of the 200 plus injuries were severe, and other deaths probably occurred but not listed as part of the 37 total mentioned. This damaging tornado eventually led to the formation of the Mayo Clinic.

1888 - A tornado swarm occurred in Maryland and Delaware. Many waterspouts were seen over Chesapeake Bay. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1918 - A tornado struck Tyler, MN, killing 36 persons and destroying most of the business section of the town resulting in a million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1983 - The temperature at Fayetteville, NC, soared to 110 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Early morning thunderstorms produced severe weather in eastern Iowa and west central Illinois. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 82 mph at Moline IL, and tennis ball size hail at Independence IA. Rock Island IL was drenched with 3.70 inches of rain. Total damage for the seven county area of west central Illinois was estimated at twelve million dollars. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms spawned several tornadoes in Iowa, produced wind gusts to 63 mph in the Council Bluffs area, and drenched Sioux Center IA with up to 6.61 inches of rain. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Kansas to Minnesota and North Dakota. Thunderstorms in Minnesota produced baseball size hail from Correll to north of Appleton. Thunderstorms in north central Kansas produced wind gusts higher than 100 mph at Wilson Dam. Thunderstorms around Lincoln NE produced baseball size hail and up to five inches of rain, and Boone NE was deluged with five inches of rain in an hour and a half. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

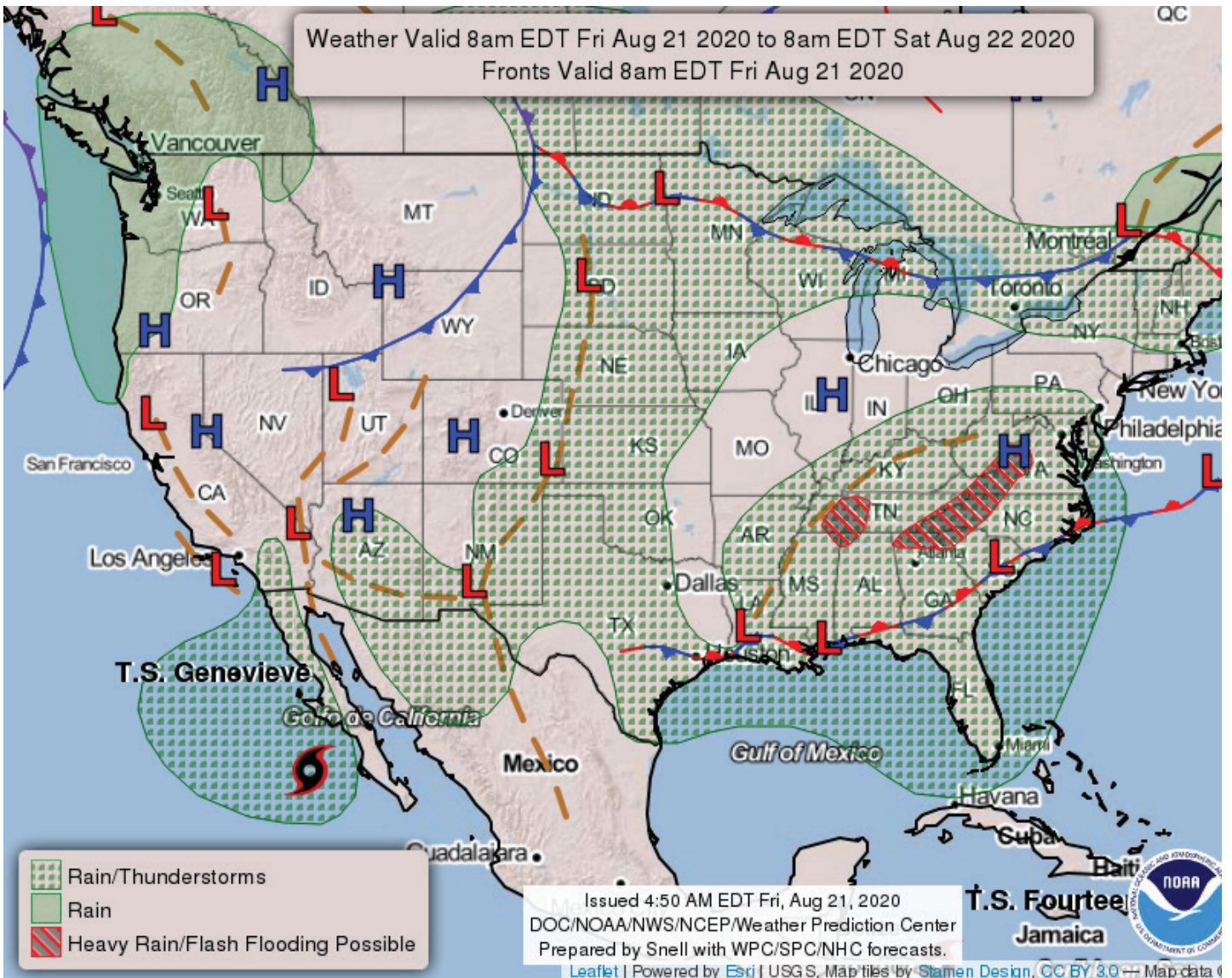
Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 13 of 87

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 91 °F at 5:14 PM
Low Temp: 67 °F at 7:06 AM
Wind: 13 mph at 2:59 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 105° in 1947
Record Low: 37° in 2004
Average High: 81°F
Average Low: 55°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.56
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.24
Average Precip to date: 15.42
Precip Year to Date: 11.75
Sunset Tonight: 8:30 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:44 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 14 of 87



WHERE IS GOD?

Sir John Franklin is remembered for being a great Englishman and explorer of the Arctic region of the planet. As he was planning one of his expeditions, he decided that, based on his various journeys, he would revise the map of the world.

Previous to Franklin, others had been marking unknown territories with phrases such as "Here be Dragons," and "Here be Demons."

But, on his revised map, he wrote, "Here be God." Sir Franklin, as a result of his journeys, knew that wherever he was, God would be. Even in the most distant, most lonely, and most inaccessible places, he believed that he would find God.

In Psalm 121, we discover the assurance and hope that wherever we are, God is. He is with us always, protecting us and providing for our every need - day or night. He not only made the mountains and seas, the valleys and deserts, but all that they contain.

We must never forget that the Creator of the universe is the sustainer of the universe. Trusting the One Who "put it all together" enables us to believe that He will not allow "dragons" and "demons" to overcome the one who trusts in His goodness and grace.

Nothing will ever divert or distract God from watching over His children. We can have the utmost confidence that in Him, we are safe and can never escape His untiring, unceasing watch over us.

Prayer: May we join our voices with the Psalmist, Father, and shout, "Keep watch over me, Lord, as You come and go, both now and forever!" How blest we are for Your love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever. Psalm 121

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 15 of 87

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

News from the Associated Press

Mount Rushmore protest leader faces felony charges

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The leader of a July 3 protest before President Donald Trump's visit to Mount Rushmore is facing added charges that bring his potential prison sentence to 17 years.

Pennington County prosecutors have added a felony and misdemeanor charge to their case against Nick Tilsen, who helped lead a demonstration that blocked a road leading to Mount Rushmore, the Rapid City Journal reported. He had already been charged with two felonies and three misdemeanors.

Law enforcement officers, including the South Dakota National Guard, confronted the protesters after they used vans to form a blockade to call for the Black Hills to be returned to the Lakota people. As law enforcement officers advanced on the blockade, protesters scuffled with the officers and took one of their shields.

Tilsen is charged with assault and robbery for allegedly attacking a law enforcement officer and stealing the shield. The new charges stem from his alleged assault of a Pennington County Sheriff's Office detective.

Tilsen is president of a local organization called NDN Collective that is petitioning for prosecutors to drop the charges. 19 other people have been charged with misdemeanors for their roles in the protest.

A preliminary hearing in Tilsen's case is scheduled for Friday.

Officials: Some who went to huge Sturgis rally have COVID-19

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials warned Thursday that a number of people who attended the 10-day Sturgis Motorcycle Rally this month, including some who came from out of state, have come down with COVID-19.

Department of Health officials did not give an exact number of rallygoers who tested positive, but they said it was under 25. The rally, which ended Sunday, brought hundreds of thousands of people from far and wide to the city in the western part of the state. Even before it kicked off, some locals and officials expressed concern that COVID-19 could spread rapidly at the rally and that it would be hard to track rallygoers who got infected before heading home.

The state's health department has received reports from other states that people who traveled from the rally have tested positive, state epidemiologist Josh Clayton said.

Contact tracers have been able to work with most people to determine who they were around and may have infected. But the health department has issued public warnings for two bars — one in Sturgis and the other at a popular stop for riders along U.S. Highway 385 near Mount Rushmore. Clayton said they did not know how many people were exposed at the bars.

The health department did not immediately reply to a question about what other states have reported infections in people who attended the rally.

Sturgis is planning to conduct mass testing of its residents next week in an attempt to stem a possible outbreak of infections from the rally.

The rally news comes amid an increase in the COVID-19 infection rate in South Dakota. Health officials reported Thursday that there were 125 new confirmed cases of the disease and two new deaths. Over the past two weeks, the average number of daily new cases has increased by 32, which is an increase of about 43%.

With schools in the state set to welcome back students to the classroom in the coming days, health officials said they plan to track and release data on infections among students, teachers and staff. They have found fewer than 40 school-related cases statewide so far, but they said they would not be breaking those infections down by the school districts where they occurred.

Clayton said the schools will notify students and parents when they find cases, but the health department is reporting the total number of cases to give a statewide view on infections in schools.

Since the pandemic started, South Dakota has had 10,691 confirmed cases of COVID-19. The state's death toll from the disease caused by the coronavirus stands at 157.

Nebraska troopers find military tank abandoned on Interstate

OVERTON, Neb. (AP) — It wasn't a typical abandoned vehicle call for the Nebraska State Patrol on Thursday.

A patrol trooper was alerted early Thursday that a large military vehicle was sitting on a parked trailer at the Interstate 80 on-ramp near Overton, patrol spokesman Cody Thomas said.

The trooper determined the tank belonged to the South Dakota National Guard 211th Engineer Company, the Lincoln Journal-Star reported.

The patrol discovered the tank was being returned to South Dakota from a training mission in California when it was abandoned sometime Wednesday by the driver for a trucking company contracted to move it, Thomas said.

Thomas said the patrol is working with the South Dakota National Guard to return the tank to them and to find the driver who abandoned it.

Massachusetts man pleads guilty to defrauding VA facilities

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — A Massachusetts man contracted by several U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to inspect medical gas systems pleaded guilty Thursday to billing for inspections that neither he nor his company performed, federal prosecutors said.

Chester Wojcik, 49, of Agawam, went so far as to create false invoices and reports for inspections that never took place, according to the U.S. attorney's office in Boston.

Medical gas supply systems deliver compressed air, oxygen, nitrous oxide, nitrogen and carbon dioxide to operating rooms, recovery rooms and patient rooms and must be inspected and maintained regularly to ensure the safety of patients and medical professionals, authorities said.

Wojcik, the owner of Alliance Medical Gas Corp., failed to perform inspections of gas systems at VA facilities in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Tuskegee, Alabama; and Montgomery, Alabama, in 2014 and 2015, federal prosecutors said. He was paid almost \$9,000 for services his company did not perform.

Wojcik pleaded guilty to wire fraud. He faces up to 20 years in prison at sentencing scheduled for Nov. 19.

'Best that we can do': DNC viewers adjust to virtual format

By JIM SALTER, STEPHEN GROVES and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

BALLWIN, Mo. (AP) — Nick Zingarelli relished Michelle Obama's speech at the Democratic National Convention this week, especially when the former first lady used President Donald Trump's own words — "It is what it is" — to sum up Democrats' disappointment in his presidency.

But the moment on the first night of the first virtual convention was bittersweet for Zingarelli. A line that good deserved a thunderous applause from a crowded convention hall, he thought.

"Not having that response — yeah, there was something that was taken away from that," said Zingarelli, a 41-year-old lawyer from suburban St. Louis. "But it's the best that we can do in this environment."

In other words, it is what it is.

Many Americans who have tuned in to Democrats' experiment in socially distanced political theater have come away with similar reactions. They believe that a traditional nominating convention — a boisterous and quirky affair staged for a packed audience of hyped-up political activists — had to be sacrificed for safety and public health. But its replacement — a mashup of homemade videos, slickly produced montages and speeches with no applause — takes some getting used to.

Millions of people are still watching Democrats' four-day celebration of their presidential nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden, and his running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris.

They are at home watching on TV and computer screens, or passing around clips of the highlights the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 18 of 87

day after. Some were in their cars at drive-in movie-style viewing stations Democrats set up in a few states. Some have tried for a social experience by jumping on a Zoom watch party.

Zingarelli organized a video conference for 25 attendees on Monday night and said the communal experience was lively.

"My wife and I were sitting side by side, rocking our Joe Biden aviators from the dollar store, just promoting the fun, and my wife was making signs," Zingarelli, an ardent Biden supporter, said.

Through two nights, television viewership is sharply down from the 2016 convention. Monday's first night reached 19.7 million viewers, the second night 19.2 million; the audience was around 25 million four years ago, the Nielsen company said. It's hard to judge how much is due to the format, since people in general are watching less TV than they did four years ago.

The Biden campaign says an additional 10.2 million streamed the first night. Although that couldn't be independently verified, this year's programs appears tailor-made for that format, easily consumed in snippets and bites. The speeches have been shorter and less formal than the behind-the-podium oratory of conventions past.

The new virtual format has spawned some creative reimagining of old traditions — including a new roll call vote quickly embraced as a success. Viewers praised the montage of clips featuring delegates announcing their states' vote tallies from state landmarks and scenic landscapes.

Laura DeGroff Simoes of Concord, New Hampshire, who voted in the Democratic primary but considers herself an independent, said it's a welcome change that offered a glimpses of the places homebound Americans miss.

"There was much more diversity represented, there were different languages. I loved seeing the backdrop of where people were from," said Simoes, who watched on TV alongside her husband and two sons.

Lynn Hart, a South Dakota farmer who is both Black and a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, would have been in Milwaukee, the original site of the convention, as a first-time delegate. While disappointed about the change, he said there have been perks. The video conference format allows him to network with other Democrats while moving seamlessly between a lineup of meetings.

"I can sit here in my shorts, T-shirt or my pajamas and pick and choose who I listen to," he said.

But some delegates missed the in-person action.

Jackie Craig, a Minnesota delegate, watched from her home — sometimes from a closet so she wouldn't distract the rest of the family. A self-described "obnoxious extrovert," she said it was a "little deflating" missing the in-person experience.

"I would have been like one of those dogs who wags its tail so hard it probably passed out," Craig, 49, said.

Republicans are watching, too. Carol Wessel Boyer of Troy, Missouri, has been active in GOP politics for decades and knows the kind of bounce conventions can give to a candidate. She doesn't see the virtual DNC generating that sort of excitement, and doesn't expect the Republican version will, either.

"They're just not going to get the enthusiasm you normally pick up from a convention," Boyer said. "It's hard to get excited about something virtually."

Republicans will get their shot next week. President Donald Trump is due to give his nomination acceptance speech at the White House. But GOP convention planners have said little else about the details of their programming or format.

Nanda Nunnally served as a delegate at the 2016 convention in Philadelphia, and she's a delegate again. This time, she's been watching with another delegate, Genevieve Williams, from Williams' home in Neosho, Missouri.

Nunnally, 53, says they miss the crowds, drama and excitement — not just from the soaring speeches and historic moments, but at the parties afterward.

"Now, it was just like, you're on a high note and, 'OK, let's go to bed now,'" she said.

Groves reported from Sioux Falls, S.D. Ronayne reported from Sacramento, Calif. AP Media Writer David

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 19 of 87

Bauder in New York contributed to this report.

Two company executives, lifelong friends, killed in crash

GROTON, S.D. (AP) — Two executives of an agriculture equipment dealer who were lifelong friends have died in a highway crash in South Dakota, according to the company.

Mark Kreps and Steve Connelly were both vice presidents at Fargo, North Dakota-based RDO Equipment Co. The men, both 54, died when their pickup truck collided with a dump truck west of Groton near Aberdeen on Tuesday afternoon, the South Dakota Highway Patrol said.

The dump truck was westbound in the left lane of U.S. Highway 12 and was making a left-hand turn into the median when the pickup, which was also westbound, rear-ended the dump truck, the patrol said. Both men died at the scene. The dump truck driver wasn't hurt.

The company said in a Facebook post that Kreps and Connelly "were everything you could want in a friend, team member, and leader. They were the heart and soul of RDO Equipment Co.'s Agriculture Division."

Connelly was vice president of the Midwest agriculture region, overseeing locations in Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota, and Kreps was vice president for agriculture sales, the company said.

"Together and independently, their leadership has been instrumental to the success of our organization," the company's post said.

Connelly grew up on his family's farm near Moorhead, Minnesota, and graduated from Moorhead High School, where he later became an instructor and head football coach, according to an online biography.

The Kreps family issued a statement that said the two men were close and had known each other since childhood.

Asia Today: Seoul surge appears to spread around South Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea added its most new virus cases in months on Friday, driven by a surge around the capital that appears to be spreading nationwide.

The 324 new infections was its highest single day total since early March and the eighth consecutive triple-digit daily increase.

Most of the new cases are in the densely populated Seoul region, where health workers are scrambling to track transmissions from sources including churches, restaurants, schools and workers.

But the new infections reported Friday were from practically all major cities, including Busan, Gwangju, Daejeon, Sejong and Daegu, the southeastern city that was the epicenter of a massive outbreak in late February and March.

The new figures reported by South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brought the nation's caseload to 16,670, including 309 deaths.

Health authorities managed to contain the virus in the Daegu region by April, ramping up tests and using cellphone location data, credit-card records and security camera videos to trace and isolate contacts, which allowed the country to weather the outbreak without placing meaningful restrictions on its economy.

Another factor was that the narrowness of the Daegu outbreak effectively aided its containment — most were linked to a single church congregation with thousands of members.

It's unclear whether South Korea's previous formula of success will be as effective since the Seoul region has many more people and new clusters are occurring in various places as people increasingly venture out in public.

Churches had been a major source of new cases in the Seoul area before authorities shut them this week while raising social distancing restrictions, something they had resisted for months out of economic concerns. Nightclubs, karaoke bars, buffet restaurants and computer gaming cafes are also closed and spectators have been banned again from baseball and soccer games.

Jeong Eun-kyeong, director of the KCDC, said the government should consider stronger distancing measures — possibly including banning gatherings of over 10 people, shutting schools, halting professional sports and advising companies to have employees work from home — if the virus's spread doesn't slow

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 20 of 87

after the weekend.

Jeong said country is now conducting 50,000 tests per day, compared to around 20,000 per day during the Daegu outbreak.

She said 732 infections have been linked to a Seoul church led by a vocal critic of the country's president. Sarang Jeil Church pastor Jun Kwang-hun was hospitalized with COVID-19 on Monday after participating in an anti-government protest last week where he shared a microphone on stage with other activists.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— Hong Kong will offer free, universal testing to its residents starting Sept. 1. The testing program, which will last a maximum of two weeks, is on a voluntary basis. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said that universal testing was possible due to support from Beijing, which provided resources such as laboratory staff to boost capacity in the semi-autonomous city. The program is aimed at identifying individuals who are infected but have exhibited no symptoms. The city, with a population of 7.5 million, has conducted over 1.2 million tests so far. Critics of the universal testing program say that there may be potential privacy concerns, given that the program is supported by the Chinese Communist Party. Lam brushed aside such concerns, stating that no matter what the government did, there will always be people who come up with conspiracy theories.

— Papua New Guinea says it halted the arrival of Chinese workers after a Chinese mining company claimed to have immunized employees against COVID-19 in an apparent vaccination trial. A pandemic response official banned COVID-19 vaccine testing or trials in the South Pacific island nation after Ramu NiCo Management claimed to have vaccinated 48 Chinese employees. Papua New Guinea says any vaccine imported into the country must be approved by PNG's health authorities and must be pre-qualified by the World Health Organization. An official says the country is seeking further information from China.

— India's coronavirus caseload crossed 2.9 million with a surge of 68,898 in the past 24 hours. The Health Ministry on Friday also reported 983 more deaths, taking total fatalities to 54,849. India has been recording at least 50,000 new infections per day since mid-July. Four of India's 28 states now account for 63% of fatalities and 54.6% of cases. The ministry said more than 900,000 tests are being done and the rate of tests that are positive for the virus is averaging 8%.

— The governor of Iwate in northern Japan said the national government's "Go To" travel campaign should be considered a failure, noting the growing number of coronavirus cases. "To start it in July was a bit too soon as preparations weren't complete. It was carried out too soon, and so I think it can be called a failure," Gov. Takuya Tasso told reporters. Iwate had zero COVID-19 cases until a month ago and its 11 cases since are still the lowest among Japan's prefectures. Tasso said factors for the area's success include its low population density, limited travel and people's awareness of crisis management after Iwate was devastated by the 2011 tsunami. The "Go To" campaign promoted travel to areas of the country except Tokyo to help the badly hit tourism industry.

— Australia's hard-hit Victoria state on Friday reported its lowest number of new coronavirus cases in more than six weeks. Victoria's Health Department reported 179 new infections and nine deaths, the lowest daily increase since July 8. The state capital, Melbourne, has been under a strict lockdown for two weeks, and authorities say daily infections will have to fall to single digits or low double digits before the lockdown is relaxed.

— Sri Lanka has decided to reopen all schools after health officials declared the coronavirus is under control. About two weeks ago the education ministry allowed the resumption of several grades that will face government examinations in the coming months. The ministry has now given all schools permission to reopen if they have enough classrooms and teachers to maintain social distancing. Sri Lanka has reported 2,918 coronavirus cases, including 11 deaths.

In moving speech, boy says Biden helped him overcome stutter

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Even in a week filled with emotional endorsements of Joe Biden, Brayden Har-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 21 of 87

rington's stands out.

The 13-year-old boy sat in his home, speaking to a cellphone camera and reading, carefully, from a piece of paper. He looked up and told the world how the former vice president, by speaking about his own experience, had helped him overcome a difficult challenge.

"We stutter," Brayden said in a video that aired Thursday, shortly before Biden accepted his party's presidential nomination on the final night of the Democratic National Convention. The Concord, New Hampshire, teen got stuck briefly on the "s" sound and bravely worked his way through the word. His face showed strain but also determination to force out the sound.

"It's really amazing to hear that someone became vice president" despite stuttering, Brayden said. "He told me about a book of poems by Yeats that he would read out loud to practice."

Biden has spoken frequently about how overcoming a stutter was one of the hardest things he's done in life. Brayden and Biden met at a February CNN town hall in Concord, where Biden spoke about overcoming a severe childhood stutter. He's talked frequently publicly through the years about the anger and frustration of being mocked by classmates and a nun in Catholic school — and how that motivated him to work to overcome it.

"It has nothing to do with your intellectual makeup," he said at the town hall.

After the event, Biden invited Brayden backstage to talk more about learning to control a stutter. Biden noted that he'd practiced by speaking as he looked at himself in the mirror. He also gave the boy a speech he'd prepared for delivery, complete with markings he'd made on its pages that showed where he had time to take breaks and pauses so that the words would come out more smoothly.

Brayden held up that speech for convention viewers on Thursday.

"I'm just trying to be a kid," Brayden said. "And in a short amount of time, Joe Biden made me feel more confident about something that's bothered me my whole life. Joe Biden cared. Imagine what he could do for all of us."

"Kids like me are counting on you to elect someone we can all look up to," he added.

Biden has talked about his stutter frequently on the presidential campaign trail and how it sometimes returns on certain words, especially if he's tired.

After he talked about it during a Democratic primary debate in December — and even started to make the sounds of a stutter — then-White House press secretary Sarah Sanders ridiculed Biden on Twitter. The tweet was later deleted and Sanders apologized. Biden said afterward that he had no regrets "because I know what it's like to be humiliated."

Analysis: Drive to beat Trump unites Democrats behind Biden

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly everything in American life has changed in the 16 months between the launch of Joe Biden's White House campaign and his address Thursday night as the Democratic presidential nominee. A pandemic has killed more than 170,000 Americans and remade work and school. A soaring economy is now sagging.

Yet Biden's bet on the 2020 race has remained unchanged — a belief that the nation is less partisan and more open to compromise than it often appears on social media or cable television panels. That voters are seeking decency over ideology, a reset over a revolution. That after four years of President Donald Trump's administration, what mattered most to Democrats was winning.

Many questioned Biden's premise during the primary, viewing the 77-year-old career politician as a candidate as out of step — in age, race and ideology — with a diverse party increasingly tilting to the left and seeking generational change. Some still worry that Biden won't draw out enough young and liberal voters this fall.

But Biden's nominating convention this week was filled with evidence validating his approach: that fierce opposition to Trump can unite a wide swath of the American electorate around an imperfect, yet personally respected and empathetic, candidate.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 22 of 87

Indeed, the four nights of virtual programming prominently featured both Republicans, including former Ohio Gov. John Kasich, and some of the most liberal members of Congress, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, vouching for Biden's character and experience. Speakers heralded Biden's ability to work across the partisan divide, while gauzy videos touted progressive policies for tackling climate change, gun violence and immigration.

And as Biden stepped forward to accept his party's nomination Thursday, 33 years after he first ran for president, he vowed to put country — not party or personal power — above all else.

"I am a proud Democrat and I will be proud to carry the banner of our party into the general election," Biden said as he accepted his party's nomination on the convention's final night. "But while I will be a Democratic candidate, I will be an American president."

Biden's big tent political philosophy can at times feel like an antiquated throwback to an era that no longer exists, or a misread of the political environment that would await him in Washington if he wins in November. Even a sweeping Electoral College victory would likely be read more as a repudiation of Trump than a full embrace of Biden's own governing philosophy. Republicans who are comfortable with Biden as an electoral alternative to the incumbent president may nevertheless be less inclined to vote for his economic and domestic policy agenda.

And there were already some signs of intraparty Democratic discontent amid the convention celebrations. Some progressives who only reluctantly endorsed the more moderate Biden after the Democratic primary chafed at the numerous GOP convention speakers in the program and made clear they would be waiting to push Biden to the left if he wins in November.

"A lot of what you're seeing is like the beginning of the tension that will come to the fore in a Biden administration," said Waleed Shahid, spokesman for the progressive group Justice Democrats.

But the convention's frontal focus on the former vice president's "come one, come all" approach to politics was about more than how Biden would negotiate legislation and whip votes in Washington. It was meant to draw a direct contrast with Trump, who appears to view not only politicians, but most Americans in black and white terms: those who support him unequivocally and those who do not.

"People saw a lot more of the content of Biden's character, a lot more of the soul of the man," said Jesse Ferguson, a Democratic strategist who worked on Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign. "That contrast with Trump was everywhere you turned."

The contrast will grow even sharper next week when Trump headlines the Republican convention and the race barrels toward November. Trump has made little concrete effort to expand his appeal beyond his most loyal supporters, and if anything, his struggle to contain the coronavirus pandemic has put at risk his advantages with older voters and some more moderate Republicans.

Not only will there be no prominent Democrats crossing the aisle to speak on Trump's behalf at his convention, elder statesmen in his own party, including former President George W. Bush and 2012 GOP nominee Mitt Romney, won't publicly vouch for him.

Part of Trump's strategy in the campaign's final stretch will be casting Biden as past his prime, a mentally diminished candidate who would simply be a vessel for the priorities of far-left Democrats. But at least on Thursday, as Biden addressed his convention, that strategy appeared to backfire, helping Biden exceed the low expectations set by his rival with a focused and serious speech.

"If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst," Biden said. "I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness."

AP writer Sara Burnett contributed to this report.

Editor's Note: Julie Pace has covered the White House and politics for the AP since 2007. Follow her at <https://twitter.com/jpaceDC>.

Analysis: Drive to beat Trump unites Democrats behind Biden

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 23 of 87

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly everything in American life has changed in the 16 months between the launch of Joe Biden's White House campaign and his address Thursday night as the Democratic presidential nominee. A pandemic has killed more than 170,000 Americans and remade work and school. A soaring economy is now sagging.

Yet Biden's bet on the 2020 race has remained unchanged — a belief that the nation is less partisan and more open to compromise than it often appears on social media or cable television panels. That voters are seeking decency over ideology, a reset over a revolution. That after four years of President Donald Trump's administration, what mattered most to Democrats was winning.

Many questioned Biden's premise during the primary, viewing the 77-year-old career politician as a candidate as out of step — in age, race and ideology — with a diverse party increasingly tilting to the left and seeking generational change. Some still worry that Biden won't draw out enough young and liberal voters this fall.

But Biden's nominating convention this week was filled with evidence validating his approach: that fierce opposition to Trump can unite a wide swath of the American electorate around an imperfect, yet personally respected and empathetic, candidate.

Indeed, the four nights of virtual programming prominently featured both Republicans, including former Ohio Gov. John Kasich, and some of the most liberal members of Congress, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, vouching for Biden's character and experience. Speakers heralded Biden's ability to work across the partisan divide, while gauzy videos touted progressive policies for tackling climate change, gun violence and immigration.

And as Biden stepped forward to accept his party's nomination Thursday, 33 years after he first ran for president, he vowed to put country — not party or personal power — above all else.

"I am a proud Democrat and I will be proud to carry the banner of our party into the general election," Biden said as he accepted his party's nomination on the convention's final night. "But while I will be a Democratic candidate, I will be an American president."

Biden's big tent political philosophy can at times feel like an antiquated throwback to an era that no longer exists, or a misread of the political environment that would await him in Washington if he wins in November. Even a sweeping Electoral College victory would likely be read more as a repudiation of Trump than a full embrace of Biden's own governing philosophy. Republicans who are comfortable with Biden as an electoral alternative to the incumbent president may nevertheless be less inclined to vote for his economic and domestic policy agenda.

And there were already some signs of intraparty Democratic discontent amid the convention celebrations. Some progressives who only reluctantly endorsed the more moderate Biden after the Democratic primary chafed at the numerous GOP convention speakers in the program and made clear they would be waiting to push Biden to the left if he wins in November.

"A lot of what you're seeing is like the beginning of the tension that will come to the fore in a Biden administration," said Waleed Shahid, spokesman for the progressive group Justice Democrats.

But the convention's frontal focus on the former vice president's "come one, come all" approach to politics was about more than how Biden would negotiate legislation and whip votes in Washington. It was meant to draw a direct contrast with Trump, who appears to view not only politicians, but most Americans in black and white terms: those who support him unequivocally and those who do not.

"People saw a lot more of the content of Biden's character, a lot more of the soul of the man," said Jesse Ferguson, a Democratic strategist who worked on Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign. "That contrast with Trump was everywhere you turned."

The contrast will grow even sharper next week when Trump headlines the Republican convention and the race barrels toward November. Trump has made little concrete effort to expand his appeal beyond his most loyal supporters, and if anything, his struggle to contain the coronavirus pandemic has put at risk his advantages with older voters and some more moderate Republicans.

Not only will there be no prominent Democrats crossing the aisle to speak on Trump's behalf at his

convention, elder statesmen in his own party, including former President George W. Bush and 2012 GOP nominee Mitt Romney, won't publicly vouch for him.

Part of Trump's strategy in the campaign's final stretch will be casting Biden as past his prime, a mentally diminished candidate who would simply be a vessel for the priorities of far-left Democrats. But at least on Thursday, as Biden addressed his convention, that strategy appeared to backfire, helping Biden exceed the low expectations set by his rival with a focused and serious speech.

"If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst," Biden said. "I will be an ally of the light, not the darkness."

AP writer Sara Burnett contributed to this report.

Editor's Note: Julie Pace has covered the White House and politics for the AP since 2007. Follow her at <https://twitter.com/jpaceDC>.

Navalny's medevac from Russia to Germany in limbo

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Family and allies of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who remains in a coma in a Siberian hospital, were fighting for his transfer to a German clinic on Friday as local doctors insisted the politician is too unstable to be medevaced and refuse to give authorization for the transfer.

Navalny, a 44-year-old politician who is one of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, was admitted to an intensive care unit in a coma at a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk on Thursday, following what his supporters are calling a suspected poisoning that they believe was engineered by the Kremlin.

A plane with German specialists and all the necessary equipment landed at Omsk airport on Friday morning, prepared to take Navalny to a clinic in Berlin. But doctors treating the politician said his condition was too unstable to transport him and bristled at the idea of consulting with German specialists, saying that doctors that flew in from Moscow over night were competent enough.

Omsk hospital deputy chief doctor, Anatoly Kalinichenko, also said that no traces of poison were found in Navalny's body.

"Poisoning as a diagnosis remains on the back burner, but we don't believe that the patient suffered from poisoning," Kalinichenko told reporters Friday.

Kalinichenko added that a diagnosis have been determined and relayed to Navalny's family members. He refused to reveal it to reporters, citing a law preventing medical workers from disclosing confidential patient information.

Navalny's spokesman, Kira Yarmysh, tweeted that the politician's family wasn't given a diagnosis, but rather "a range of symptoms that can be interpreted differently."

"Doctors still can't determine the cause of Alexei's condition," she said.

Navalny fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from the Siberian city of Tomsk on Thursday and was taken to the hospital after the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk. His team made arrangements to transfer him to Charité, a clinic in Berlin that has a history of treating famous foreign leaders or dissidents and insisted that the transfer is paramount to saving the politician's life.

"The ban on transferring Navalny is needed to stall and wait until the poison in his body can no longer be traced. Yet every hour of stalling creates a threat to his life," Yarmysh tweeted.

German officials have been in contact with both Russians and a private group that sent a plane to pick Navalny up, and support the initiative. "If Mr. Navalny wants to get treated in Berlin and if he is able to come to Berlin, the Charité hospital is obviously ready," Berlin Mayor Michael Mueller told the German news agency dpa.

Like many other opposition politicians in Russia, Navalny has been frequently detained by law enforcement and harassed by pro-Kremlin groups. In 2017, he was attacked by several men who threw antiseptic

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 25 of 87

in his face, damaging an eye.

Last year, Navalny was rushed to a hospital from prison, where he was serving a sentence following an administrative arrest, with what his team said was suspected poisoning. Doctors said he had a severe allergic attack and discharged him back to prison the following day.

Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption has been exposing graft among government officials, including some at the highest level. Last month, he had to shut the foundation after a financially devastating lawsuit from Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin.

The most prominent member of Russia's opposition, Navalny campaigned to challenge Putin in the 2018 presidential election, but was barred from running.

He set up campaign offices across Russia and has been promoting opposition candidates in regional elections, challenging members of Russia's ruling party, United Russia. One of his associates in Khabarovsk, a city in Russia's Far East that has been engulfed in mass protests against the arrest of the region's governor, was detained last week after calling for a strike at a rally.

Biden vows to defeat Trump, end US 'season of darkness'

By STEVE PEOPLES and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden accepted the Democratic presidential nomination with a vow to be a unifying "ally of the light" who would move an America in crisis past the chaos of President Donald Trump's tenure.

In his strongest remarks of the campaign, Biden spoke Thursday night both of returning the United States to its traditional leadership role in the world and of the deeply personal challenges that shaped his life. Virtually every sentence of his 22-minute speech was designed to present a sharp, yet hopeful, contrast with the Republican incumbent.

"Here and now I give you my word: If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I'll be an ally of the light, not the darkness," Biden said. "Make no mistake, united we can and will overcome this season of darkness in America."

For the 77-year-old Biden, the final night of the Democratic National Convention was bittersweet. He accepted a nomination that had eluded him for over three decades because of personal tragedy, political stumbles and rivals who proved more dynamic.

But the coronavirus denied him the typical celebration, complete with the customary balloon drop that both parties often use to fete their new nominees. Instead, Biden spoke to a largely empty arena near his Delaware home.

Afterward, fireworks lit the sky outside the arena, where supporters waited in a parking lot, honking horns and flashing headlights in a moment that finally lent a jovial feel to the event.

The keynote address was the speech of a lifetime for Biden, who would be the oldest president ever elected if he defeats Trump in November. Trump, who is 74, publicly doubts Biden's mental capacity and calls him "Slow Joe," but with the nation watching, Biden was firm and clear.

Still, the convention leaned on a younger generation earlier in the night to help energize his sprawling coalition.

Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois senator who lost her legs in Iraq and is raising two young children, said Biden has "common decency."

Cory Booker, only the ninth African American senator in U.S. history, said Biden believes in the dignity of all working Americans.

And Pete Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former South Bend, Indiana, mayor and a gay military veteran, noted that Biden came out in favor of same-sex marriage as vice president even before President Barack Obama.

"Joe Biden is right, this is a contest for the soul of the nation. And to me that contest is not between good Americans and evil Americans," Buttigieg said. "It's the struggle to call out what is good for every American."

Above all, Biden focused on uniting the nation as Americans grapple with the long and fearful health

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 26 of 87

crisis, the related economic devastation, a national awakening on racial justice — and Trump, who stirs heated emotions from all sides.

Biden's positive focus Thursday night marked a break from the dire warnings offered by Obama and others the night before. The 44th president of the United States warned that American democracy itself could falter if Trump is reelected, while Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, the 55-year-old California senator and daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, warned that Americans' lives and livelihoods were at risk.

Biden's Democratic Party has sought this week to put forward a cohesive vision of values and policy priorities, highlighting efforts to combat climate change, tighten gun laws and embrace a humane immigration policy. They have drawn a sharp contrast with Trump's policies and personality, portraying him as cruel, self-centered and woefully unprepared to manage virtually any of the nation's mounting crises and policy challenges.

Voting was another prime focus of the convention on Thursday as it has been all week. Democrats fear that the pandemic -- and Trump administration changes at the U.S. Postal Service -- may make it difficult for voters to cast ballots in person or by mail.

Comedian Sarah Cooper, a favorite of many Democrats for her videos lip syncing Trump's speeches, put it bluntly: "Donald Trump doesn't want any of us to vote because he knows he can't win fair and square."

Biden's call for unity comes as some strategists worry that Democrats cannot retake the White House simply by tearing Trump down, that Biden needs to give his sprawling coalition something to vote for. That's easier said than done in a modern Democratic Party made up of disparate factions that span generation, race and ideology.

Though he has been in the public spotlight for decades as a Delaware senator, much of the electorate knows little about Biden's background before he began serving as Obama's vice president in 2008.

Thursday's convention served as a national reintroduction of sorts that drew on some of the most painful moments of his life.

"I know how mean and cruel and unfair life can be sometimes," Biden said. He added: "I found the best way through pain and loss and grief is to find purpose."

As a schoolboy, Biden was mocked by classmates and a nun for a severe stutter. He became a widower at just 30 after losing his wife and infant daughter to a car accident. And just five years ago, he buried his eldest son, who was stricken by cancer.

From such hardship, Biden developed a deep sense of empathy that has defined much of his political career. And throughout the convention, Biden's allies testified that such empathy, backed by decades of governing experience, makes him the perfect candidate to guide the nation back from mounting health and economic crises.

His allies Thursday included Brayden Harrington, a 13-year-old boy from Concord, New Hampshire. The boy said he and Biden were "members of the same club," each with a stutter they're working to overcome.

He noted that Biden told him about a book of poems he liked to read aloud to practice his speech and showed the boy how he marks his speeches so they're easier to read aloud.

"I'm just a regular kid, and in a short amount of time, Joe Biden made me more confident about a thing that's bothered me my whole life," Harrington said.

The end of the carefully scripted convention now gives way to a far less-predictable period for Biden and his Democratic Party as the 2020 election season speeds to its uncertain conclusion. While Election Day isn't until Nov. 3, early voting gets underway in several battleground states in just one month.

Biden has maintained a polling advantage over Trump for much of the year, but it remains to be seen whether the Democratic nominee's approach to politics and policy will genuinely excite the coalition he's courting in an era of uncompromising partisanship.

Trump's Republican Party is expected to deliver a message next week squarely focused on the president's most loyal supporters.

Biden summed up his view of the campaign: "We choose a path of becoming angry, less hopeful and more divided, a path of shadow and suspicion, or we can choose a different path and together take this

chance to heal.”

Peoples reported from New York.

5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. BIDEN VOWS TO DEFEAT TRUMP

Joe Biden accepts the Democratic presidential nomination with a vow to be a unifying “ally of the light” who would move an America in crisis past the chaos of President Donald Trump’s tenure.

2. POSTMASTER TO TESTIFY BEFORE SENATE

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy is set to testify about disruptions in mail delivery as a Senate committee digs into changes in postal operations being made just as millions of Americans will be relying on mail-in ballots for the November election.

3. BELARUS AUTHORITIES RAISE PRESSURE ON OPPOSITION

Belarus’ authorities detain a leader of striking factory workers, raising pressure on the opposition amid massive protests against official election results.

4. “FULL HOUSE” STAR, HUSBAND TO BE SENTENCE IN COLLEGE BRIBERY PLOT

“Full House” star Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, are set to be sentenced for paying half a million dollars in bribes to get their two daughters into college.

5. FORMER SAILOR DETAILS MISCONDUCT BY SEALS

A former U.S. Navy sailor who was attached to a U.S. Navy SEAL platoon says the 2019 deployment to Iraq was marred by drinking and sexual misconduct.

The Latest: Slovakia reports biggest 1-day increase of 123

By The Associated Press undefined

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia — Slovakia has registered the highest day-to-day increase of COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

Health Ministry figures show 123 were infected in the last 24 hours. The second highest number was 114 cases on April 15.

Overall, Slovakia has a relatively low number of infections. A total of 3,225 have tested positive for the virus while 33 have died.

Officials did not immediately offer an explanation for the jump in cases but they have been going up in neighboring countries, driven by returning vacationers and social events.

HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Papua New Guinea questions Chinese company claim to use COVID-19 vaccine
- 1 in 5 nursing homes short on PPE and staff in virus rebound
- Pandemic’s toll among journalists in Peru is especially high
- As hospitals care for people with COVID-19 and try to prevent its spread, more patients are opting to be treated where they feel safest: at home.
- Governments around the world are taking advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to justify crack-downs on press freedom.
- France’s president insisted that the country will send millions of students back to school starting Sept. 1 despite seeing the biggest weekly spike in confirmed coronavirus cases since the height of its outbreak in the spring.

— Follow AP’s pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/Under>

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 28 of 87

standingtheOutbreak

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

HONG KONG — Hong Kong will offer free, universal testing to its residents starting Sept. 1.

The testing program, which will last a maximum of two weeks, is on a voluntary basis.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said that universal testing was possible due to support from Beijing, which provided resources such as laboratory staff to boost capacity in the semi-autonomous city.

The program is aimed at identifying individuals who are infected but have exhibited no symptoms. The city, with a population of 7.5 million, has conducted over 1.2 million tests so far.

Critics of the universal testing program say that there may be potential privacy concerns, given that the program is supported by the Chinese Communist Party.

Lam brushed aside such concerns, stating that no matter what the government did, there will always be people who come up with conspiracy theories.

BERLIN — At least 41 schools in Berlin have reported that students or teachers are infected with the coronavirus — not even two weeks after they reopened in the German capital.

The daily Berliner Zeitung published the numbers on Friday and the city's senate for education confirmed them to The Associated Press.

Hundreds of students and teachers are in quarantine, the newspaper reported. Elementary schools, high schools and trade schools are all affected. There are 825 schools in Berlin.

The reopening of schools and the risk of virus clusters building up there and spreading to families and further into communities has been a matter of great concern.

Berlin was one of the first places in Germany to reopen schools after summer holidays. Children are obliged to wear masks in hallways, during breaks, and when entering the classroom, but they can take them off once they sit down.

Some critics say the measures in Berlin are too relaxed and both students and teachers should wear masks. Such is the case in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous, where some 2.5 million students went back to school a couple of days after Berlin.

Coronavirus cases in Germany have been going up again since late July, driven by returning vacationers and social events.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday there are too many different regulations in place across the country and "people simply don't understand" why they're allowed to do one thing in Berlin that may be banned in Bavaria.

On Friday, Germany's disease control center registered 1,426 new cases.

LISBON, Portugal — Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has welcomed as "great news" the U.K.'s decision to lift from Saturday the mandatory quarantine for travelers arriving from Portugal.

British authorities made the announcement on Thursday, adding Portugal to a safe list of destinations. The southern European country is reporting between 200 to 300 new daily cases this week, although the spread of contagion seems to have receded since early July.

Rebelo de Sousa, who is on a work holiday tour visiting all Portuguese regions to show his support for the tourism sector, told reporters on Friday that the move will benefit the industry, especially in the southern Algarve region where he expects that U.K. citizens will make bookings for the late summer season in September and October.

The president said that the measure would also benefit some 300,000 Portuguese citizens who live and work in the U.K.

Portugal acted swiftly in the pandemic's early days but experienced significant clusters when it ended its lockdown. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the country has recorded nearly 55,000 infections and 1,788 fatalities attributed to the virus.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 29 of 87

TOKYO — The governor of Iwate in northern Japan has criticized the national government's "GoTo" campaign to encourage travel with discounts, noting the growing number of coronavirus cases.

Gov. Takuya Tasso told reporters that to start it in July was "a bit too soon" as preparations weren't complete. He says the tourism campaign "was carried out too soon, and so I think it can be called a failure."

Iwate has had the fewest cases of COVID-19 among Japan's prefectures at 11 confirmed cases. The first case was reported just a month ago.

Since then, worries have been growing about the infection being brought in from outside Iwate, as well as about discrimination toward infected people.

Tasso credited low population congestion, lack of travel from abroad and the rest of Japan, and the cautious nature of residents for Iwate's success.

Tasso says the experience of the 2011 tsunami made the Iwate people more in tune with crisis management.

Japan, which has never imposed a lockdown, has had about 1,100 deaths and 60,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19. It is trying to keep the outbreak under control while keeping the economy going. Tokyo has reported several hundred confirmed cases by the day.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A health official in the United Arab Emirates is warning nighttime curfews and lockdowns could resume in parts of the country as coronavirus case numbers spike.

Dr. Saif al-Dhaheri of the UAE's National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority made the comments late Thursday in an interview aired on a state-owned television channel.

Asked if those measures could be taken, al-Dhaheri said: "Yes. If we found that the number of cases is increasing in a specific area, we could."

Returning to lockdowns could hurt Dubai, the skyscraper-studded city that's reopened for tourists just a few weeks ago. It also could affect the UAE's efforts to host the Indian Premier League beginning next month.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the UAE discovered over 400 confirmed cases of the virus, its highest numbers in about a month amid an aggressive testing campaign. Officials have blamed the rise in infections on the public not taking wearing masks and social distancing seriously.

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia's prime minister says his government has avoided a major second wave of coronavirus infections on the scale of France, Germany or Britain by limiting international travel.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison described infection rates in those three countries as "rather alarming."

He says they occurred because "people left, went to areas on leave, on holiday, where the virus was moving again and now they're bringing it back."

He says the Australian government has created "some real hardship" by restricting numbers of Australians allowed to come and go.

The government is blocking three out of four applications for Australians to leave the country for fear they could spread COVID-19 when they return.

Australians who want to return home are limited to 4,000 a week.

Morrison says, "As we've just seen in Europe, I think the wisdom of that approach has been borne out. That is not one problem that we have at the moment."

Australia's main coronavirus hot spot, Victoria state, on Friday recorded its lowest daily tally of new infections in more than six weeks.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has reported 324 new cases of the coronavirus, its highest single day total since early March as the recent surge of COVID-19 in the greater capital area now appears to be spreading nationwide.

Friday was the eighth consecutive day that South Korea has reported a triple-digit daily increase, for an eight-day total of 1,900 infections.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 30 of 87

Most of the recent new cases have been in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan region. But officials said Friday the latest new infections were recorded in practically all major cities nationwide.

The daily jump was the highest since 367 cases were reported March 8. The country's caseload is now at 16,670, including 309 deaths.

HONOLULU -- Hawaii's unemployment rate declined slightly last month but large numbers of people continue to be out of work because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The state Department of Labor and Industrial Relations said Thursday that Hawaii had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 13.1% in July, down from 13.4% in June.

The state's jobless rate was just 2.4% in March.

The pandemic has forced many hotels to close, crippling the tourism industry that is Hawaii's biggest employer. The labor department says the tourism industry continued to shed jobs in July but the education and health services sectors added workers.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California has begun approving applications to reopen elementary schools for in-person instruction under special waivers approved by counties that were put on a state monitoring list because of high numbers of coronavirus infections.

The state hasn't said how many have been approved statewide. But data from San Diego and Orange counties on Thursday showed that together they have had 50 schools approved. All of them are private and mostly religious, along with two small public school districts.

Orange County's acting health officer says he has concerns about the reopenings but knows staying home causes hardship for children and parents.

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia's hard-hit Victoria state is reporting its lowest tally of new coronavirus cases in more than six weeks, following two weeks of unprecedented lockdown of the state capital, Melbourne.

Victoria's Health Department reported on Saturday that the state had 179 new infections and nine deaths in the latest 24-hour period. That is the lowest count since 131 new infections were reported July 8. Victoria had recorded 240 new cases Thursday and 216 Wednesday.

State authorities say the daily infection rate will have to fall to single digits or low double digits before Melbourne's lockdown is relaxed.

ROME — The Venice Film Festival is requiring participants at the first in-person cinema showcase of the COVID-19 era to wear facemasks during screenings and take a coronavirus test if they're arriving from outside Europe.

According to guidelines published Thursday, fans and the general public will be kept away from the red carpet during the Sept. 2-12 festival, and movie-goers will have to buy tickets and reserve seats online to ensure every other seat is left vacant. Nine gates set up at various points around the Venice Lido will take temperatures of movie-goers and media. Festival-goers attending indoor events will be tracked to guarantee contact tracing if necessary.

Venice is the first film festival to get under way since the pandemic, and is one of the first major international events Italy is hosting after becoming the onetime COVID-19 epicenter in Europe. After getting infections under control with a strict, 10-week national lockdown that ended in May, Italy is now dealing with a rebound in cases as a result of summer vacation travel.

Biennale organizers said the guidelines were worked out with local health care officials.

BATON ROUGE, La. — U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana says he has tested positive for the coronavirus and is experiencing some symptoms of COVID-19. The Republican senator made the announcement Thursday and said he is quarantining in Louisiana.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 31 of 87

His spokesperson says the 62-year-old senator is experiencing "mild symptoms that began this morning." Cassidy, a physician, said in a statement that he was tested after being notified Wednesday night that he'd been exposed to someone infected with the coronavirus.

The senator says he is adhering to medical guidance and notifying people with whom he may have come into contact. Cassidy is running for reelection on Nov. 3.

Cassidy's announcement came a day after he was in north Louisiana, visiting a veterans hospital in Shreveport.

'Telegram revolution': App helps drive Belarus protests

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Every day, like clockwork, to-do lists for those protesting against Belarus' authoritarian leader appear in the popular Telegram messaging app. They lay out goals, give times and locations of rallies with business-like precision, and offer spirited encouragement.

"Today will be one more important day in the fight for our freedom. Tectonic shifts are happening on all fronts, so it's important not to slow down," a message in one of Telegram's so-called channels read Tuesday. "Morning. Expanding the strike ... 11:00. Supporting the Kupala (theater) ... 19:00. Gathering at the Independence Square."

The app has become an indispensable tool in coordinating the unprecedented mass protests that have rocked Belarus since Aug. 9, when election officials announced President Alexander Lukashenko had won a landslide victory to extend his 26-year rule in a vote widely seen as rigged.

Peaceful protesters who poured into the streets of the capital, Minsk, and other cities were met with stun grenades, rubber bullets and beatings from police. The opposition candidate left for Lithuania — under duress, her campaign said — and authorities shut off the internet, leaving Belarusians with almost no access to independent online news outlets or social media and protesters seemingly without a leader.

That's where Telegram — which often remains available despite internet outages, touts the security of messages shared in the app and has been used in other protest movements — came in. Some of its channels helped scattered rallies to mature into well-coordinated action.

The people who run the channels, which used to offer political news, now post updates, videos and photos of the unfolding turmoil sent in from users, locations of heavy police presence, contacts of human rights activists, and outright calls for new demonstrations — something Belarusian opposition leaders have refrained from doing publicly themselves. Tens of thousands of people all across the country have responded to those calls.

In a matter of days, the channels — NEXTA, NEXTA Live and Belarus of the Brain are the most popular — have become the main method for facilitating the protests, said Franak Viacorka, a Belarusian analyst and non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council.

"The fate of the country has never depended so much on one (piece) of technology," Viacorka said.

In the days following the vote and the subsequent internet outage, NEXTA Live's audience shot from several hundred thousand followers to over 2 million. Its sister channel NEXTA has more than 700,000 followers. Belarus of the Brain's following grew from almost 170,000 users in late June to over 470,000 this week.

Their influence in a nation of 9.5 million is hard to underestimate, and authorities have taken notice and are pursuing those behind the channels.

Last week, officials opened a criminal probe into NEXTA and its founder, 22-year-old blogger Stepan Putilo, on charges of fomenting mass riots — an offense punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Blogger Igor Losik, who founded Belarus of the Brain, was arrested before the election, but the channel continues to operate.

"We have indeed become the bullhorn of the situation that is unfolding in Belarus right now," Putilo, who is Belarusian but lives in Warsaw, Poland, said in a recent interview with Lithuanian news outlet Delfi. "We have become the voice of this revolution, but by no will of our own. It just happened."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 32 of 87

Putilo first created NEXTA — which is pronounced NEKH-ta and means “somebody” in Belarusian — as a YouTube channel in 2015, when he was just 17. His profile rose last year when his 30-minute video about the country’s iron-fisted leader, “Lukashenko. Criminal Records,” was viewed almost 3 million times. A court in Belarus declared the film extremist, but it is still available on YouTube.

Putilo turned to Telegram in 2018. His two channels focused mostly on Belarusian politics. His team received thousands of messages from users sending in photos, videos and news items each day and posted the most newsworthy, taking pride in often sharing information from sources inside the government or law enforcement.

After the demonstrations began, thousands of messages turned into hundreds of thousands, and the underground operation now appears inundated. In response to a request from The Associated Press for an interview, NEXTA editor-in-chief Roman Protsevich wrote: “Sure, it’s possible, but the question is when...” — and then stopped responding.

Putilo hasn’t responded to requests for comment.

When the protests began, the NEXTA channels were often the first places anywhere on the internet to carry grisly pictures of police violently clashing with demonstrators. This week, they were filled with videos of workers protesting at industrial plants.

Journalists in Belarus have praised the channels for breaking news — but note that traditional media also played an important role.

“Telegram channels did help to pierce the information blackout, but I have to say that it wasn’t just them,” said Andrei Bastunets, head of the Belarusian Association of Journalists. “Telegram channels (run by bloggers) played a mobilizing, an organizing role, while more balanced information could be found on Telegram channels of media outlets.”

Social media platforms have played major roles in previous uprisings, including in the Arab Spring, anti-government protests in Hong Kong and demonstrations against racial injustice in the United States.

But, since 2016, when Russia was accused of using Facebook and other platforms in an effort to influence or interfere in the U.S. election, many have seen social media in a more dystopian light, said Hans Kundnani, senior research fellow at London-based think tank Chatham House.

“What’s happening in Belarus right now is kind of a reminder that actually social media can be used in a positive way from a democratic perspective,” Kundnani said.

Protesters in the streets echoed his sentiment.

“Telegram channels and websites that don’t belong to our government are the main source of information today as we cannot at all rely on state media,” said Roman Semenov, who follows the NEXTA channels and joined a rally in central Minsk on Wednesday evening. “It’s a Telegram revolution.”

Associated Press writer Mstyslav Chernov in Minsk, Belarus, contributed to this story.

Follow AP’s coverage of the political turmoil in Belarus at <https://www.apnews.com/Belarus>

With Bannon arrest, ‘Sovereign District’ sends another salvo

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If the recent firing of the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan was intended to quell criminal investigations into President Donald Trump’s close associates, as some have accused, federal prosecutors in New York appear to have missed the memo.

Thursday’s arrest of Steve Bannon, Trump’s former chief strategist, served as a stark reminder that no one who has been within the president’s inner circle is automatically immune from federal scrutiny.

Bannon, 66, and three others are charged with defrauding online donors in the name of helping build the president’s cherished southern border wall. Bannon pleaded not guilty at a hearing Thursday in Manhattan.

The indictment came just two months after the abrupt dismissal of Geoffrey S. Berman, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York who had overseen several investigations with tentacles into Trump’s

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 33 of 87

orbit — including one involving the business dealings of Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal attorney. The same office prosecuted former Trump attorney and fixer Michael Cohen for campaign finance crimes, as well as two Giuliani associates tied to the investigation that led to Trump's impeachment investigation in December. Giuliani himself has not been charged with any crime.

Berman's unceremonious removal — decried by some critics as a "Friday night massacre" in June — fueled longstanding concerns among Democratic lawmakers that the Justice Department has become politicized under Attorney General William Barr.

But the wire fraud and money laundering charges against Bannon "confirm the ongoing professional independence" of the Southern District of New York, said Bruce Green, a former prosecutor in the office.

The Manhattan prosecutors' office, known as SDNY, has long been nicknamed the "Sovereign District of New York" for its independence from Washington politics. The office, older than the Justice Department itself, has been home to famous mob trials, terrorism prosecutions and, increasingly, probes involving Trump's allies.

"It shows that the Trump administration cannot fully protect the president's former associates from federal criminal prosecution simply by firing U.S. attorneys like Geoffrey Berman who honor their responsibility to seek impartial justice," said Green, who now directs the Louis Stein Center for Law and Ethics at the Fordham University School of Law.

Green said in June that Berman's firing "certainly wasn't a routine decision, and the only fair inference is that there are some cases where the office is proceeding too independently."

The charges against Bannon came as Trump himself faced renewed legal perils, as a federal judge rejected Trump's latest bid to shield his tax returns from a state grand jury investigation led by the Manhattan district attorney.

Trump, who is appealing the ruling, blasted the subpoena as "the most disgusting witch hunt in the history of our country" — a refrain he has used to deride several criminal cases targeting him and his associates. He has criticized many of the criminal cases as politically motivated.

The president also sought to distance himself from Bannon on Thursday, saying he knew nothing about the "We Build The Wall" fundraiser. Bannon served as chief strategist during the early days of Trump's administration but clashed with other top advisers and was pushed out after less than a year.

Trump's frequent attacks on federal law enforcement — including his feud with former FBI Director James Comey and his scorn for special investigator Robert Mueller — have not prevented some of his closest associates from being hauled away in handcuffs.

Aside from Cohen, those convicted include Trump's former campaign manager, Paul Manafort, and Roger Stone, a longtime friend and adviser whose jail sentence Trump commuted last month.

Berman refused to leave his post before ensuring he would be succeeded — at least in the interim — by Audrey Strauss, one of his most trusted lieutenants. Strauss leaned into the role, soon announcing headline-grabbing charges against Ghislaine Maxwell, the former girlfriend of deceased financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The prosecution of Bannon, meanwhile, "shows once again that SDNY is intent upon continuing its work without being influenced by politics," said Jennifer Rodgers, another former federal prosecutor in Manhattan who now lectures at Columbia Law School.

"I think the public owes a debt of gratitude to Geoff Berman for his fortitude in standing up to Bill Barr's attempts to take control of SDNY," Rodgers added. "I doubt we would be seeing this charge today if Barr had succeeded."

Golden State Killer set for multiple life prison sentences

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A former police officer once sworn to protect the public faces multiple consecutive life prison sentences Friday after he was ultimately unmasked as the mysterious Golden State Killer who eluded his fellow investigators for four decades.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 34 of 87

Joseph James DeAngelo, 74, will die in prison after he pleaded guilty in June to 13 murders and 13 rape-related charges stemming from crimes in the 1970s and 1980s under a plea deal that spares him the death penalty. He also publicly admitted to dozens more sexual assaults for which the statute of limitations had expired.

Prosecutors called his more than decade-long spate of crimes "simply staggering," encompassing 87 victims at 53 separate crime scenes spanning 11 California counties.

The case set several hallmarks.

To finally identify and arrest him in 2018, investigators pioneered a new method of DNA tracing that involves building a family tree from publicly accessible genealogy websites to narrow the list of suspects.

They linked nearly 40-year-old DNA from crime scenes to a distant relative, and eventually to a discarded tissue they surreptitiously sneaked from DeAngelo's garbage can in suburban Sacramento.

The same technique has since been used to solve 93 murders and rapes across the nation, said Ron Harrington.

"It is probably the most important (recent) advancement by law enforcement in solving cold case murders and rapes," he said.

His family has been obsessed with solving the 1980 slayings of youngest brother Keith Harrington and his new wife, Patrice Harrington.

It led oldest brother Bruce Harrington to champion Proposition 69, passed by California voters in 2004, that expanded the collection of DNA samples from prisoners and those arrested for felonies and has since led to more than 81,000 identifications.

The brothers were among family members and survivors who gave three days of often heartbreaking testimony before DeAngelo is formally sentenced Friday by Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Michael Bowman.

Most said they will never be the same, even as they told of their resilience and the bond they have formed since DeAngelo's arrest.

The sweep of his crimes is measured by the mysterious stalker's nicknames over the years, prosecutors said: the Visalia Ransacker, thought to be responsible for about 100 burglaries and one slaying in the San Joaquin Valley farm town; the East Area Rapist; the Original Night Stalker; and finally, the Golden State Killer when investigators linked the crimes that stretched across much of the state.

"He started off as a Peeping Tom, a voyeur, somebody lurking around women's bedrooms at night peering in. He then became a two-bit burglar, breaking into women's bedrooms, stealing trinkets and women's underwear," Ron Harrington recalled.

That escalated to raping single women, then to humiliating couples.

His technique became his trademark: He would force his victims at gunpoint to bind themselves with shoelaces, then balance plates on the man's back with a warning that he would kill both victims if he heard the plates rattle while he raped the woman.

He killed three early Northern California victims when they interfered with his assaults on women. But he escalated again when he moved to Southern California, to 10 known murders.

Even DeAngelo's ex-wife, Sacramento attorney Sharon Huddle, said in a court filing Thursday that she was fooled, though many victims have wondered aloud how she could not have known of her husband's double life.

"I trusted the defendant when he told me he had to work, or was going pheasant hunting, or going to visit his parents hundreds of miles away," Huddle wrote.

Many victims asked Bowman to make sure DeAngelo is sent to a remote prison and housed among other inmates instead of in protective custody, though state corrections officials said they will make the final decision on where and how he is housed.

"You are finally going to prison and will remain there until you die," Jane Carson-Sandler, who was raped in 1976, told DeAngelo this week.

She recalled that he famously left behind a roast in the oven when police moved in to make their ar-

rest on April 24, 2018. His survivors, she said, now plan to celebrate each anniversary of his arrest with a similar feast "in memory of your capture."

"Too bad you won't get to enjoy it," she said.

Saved by suburbs: Food trucks hit by virus find new foodies

By SALLY HO Associated Press

LYNNWOOD, Wash. (AP) — On a warm summer night, two food trucks pulled onto a tree-lined street in a hilltop neighborhood outside Seattle. The smell of grilled meat filled the air, and neighbors slurped on boba tea drinks. Toddlers, teens, their parents and dogs sat in the grass, chatting behind masks, laughing and mimicking imaginary hugs to stay socially distant while they waited for their food orders.

Long seen as an urban treasure, food trucks are now being saved by the suburbs during the coronavirus pandemic. No longer able to depend on bustling city centers, these small businesses on wheels are venturing out to where people are working and spending most of their time — home.

As food trucks hunt for customers that used to flock to them, they're finding a captive audience thrilled to skip cooking dinner, sample new kinds of cuisines and mingle with neighbors on what feels like a night out while safely staying close to home.

"This is festival season, fun season. All the stuff we typically do as humans, we can't do anymore," said Matt Geller, president of the National Food Truck Association. "Walking out to a food truck is a taste of normalcy, and it feels really good."

YS Street Food Group owner Yuli Shen discovered the hilltop Seattle-area neighborhood through Facebook, and she and a friend who runs the Dreamy Drinks boba tea truck went out together recently and served customers for three hours.

It's a change and a relief for Shen. Before the pandemic, she raked in money by parking at Amazon's campus near downtown Seattle, where hordes of office workers would line up for lunchtime Chinese rice bowls. By July, she was frantically searching for somewhere to go.

"It's very hard to find a location to park, and so we have to find a different place and different people. It's harder to run the business, but we're trying," Shen said.

Weekday lunchtime business is the bulk of the revenue for an average food truck, which may make \$800 to \$1,200 a day, Geller said. And lucrative appearances at major summer festivals and community events padded them for leaner winter months.

Since stay-at-home orders earlier this year emptied out city centers and canceled gatherings, many food trucks — like brick-and-mortar restaurants — have gone out of business or aren't sure when they'll open again.

Food trucks adjusted their business model as they headed to the suburbs: They focus on dinner, adding kid-friendly options and preparing for larger orders. A new neighborhood means being unsure how many customers they'll get and gambling on how much food to bring. To avoid that, many trucks urge customers to order ahead online.

Geller said the suburban shift has been a boon for food trucks in places like Seattle, Nashville, Tennessee, and Austin, Texas. He said people in the suburbs have been good at staying connected with neighbors during COVID-19 through Facebook groups, where food truck gatherings are advertised.

B.J. Lofback decided to pivot his Nashville-area food truck and restaurant away from labor-intensive Korean food after laying off most of his staff when business dwindled. He rebranded as Pinchy's Lobster Co. and now sells lobster rolls, which he can largely prep himself.

Without his usual downtown Nashville lunchtimes and music events, he and other truckers began reaching out to homeowners associations in large subdivisions. It's been such a success, he doesn't miss the "stressful, expensive" event schedule. Now, he can keep all the money he earns, instead of paying up to 20% of his revenue in event fees.

"The economics just worked," Lofback said. "Me personally, I'm hoping that even if a vaccine dropped tomorrow and herd immunity was accomplished tomorrow, I hope neighborhoods still have us out."

Piroshky Piroshky, a Seattle institution at the iconic Pike Place Market, lost 90% of its brick-and-mortar business when the pandemic hit, operations manager Brian Amaya said.

The bakery pivoted to online sales, home deliveries and food truck events. Some events featuring its famous hand pies have been as successful as a modest day in a store. The 28-year-old business is considering adding a second food truck.

"It's enough to pay our employees and cover the cost of it and make a little bit of revenue for us to keep going," Amaya said.

The idea was also new to Julie Schwab before she created events that have practically become food truck lore near Lynnwood, Washington, about 16 miles (25 kilometers) north of Seattle.

Business owners ask if it's true that one truck made \$4,000 in one night. She tells them food trucks make between \$1,000 to \$4,000 a shift. The high school psychologist also advises other communities that want in on the food truck circuit.

"You look what's happening with everybody coming out, and people are getting to know each other," Schwab said, adding that people wear masks and keep their distance. "It's been really great to build a community despite what's going on with this pandemic."

After hearing how the industry had dried up, Schwab took a stab at organizing an event in June for the only food truck she'd ever tried. Now, she's scheduling trucks seven days a week and into December.

Thanks to the trucks, Schwab discovered bibimbap, a Korean rice bowl, and she relishes helping small businesses, many run by people of color.

But there's been headaches, too: hours of work scheduling trucks, promoting events and responding to neighbors with questions. Occasionally, trucks are late, unprepared or no-shows.

Christine Thai, a hospital program coordinator, was surprised to learn about the food truck scene in her community when she went to one of Schwab's events recently with her husband and baby. It was a rare outing for the family, and she got to enjoy a strawberry matcha latte.

"The suburbs are getting cool because people don't want to travel anymore," Thai said.

Follow Sally Ho on Twitter at http://twitter.com/_sallyho

Dozens of WWII veterans to gather in Hawaii amid pandemic

By CALEB JONES Associated Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP) — Several dozen aging U.S. veterans, including some who were in Tokyo Bay as swarms of warplanes buzzed overhead and nations converged to end World War II, will gather on a battleship in Pearl Harbor next month to mark the 75th anniversary of Japan's surrender, even if it means the vulnerable group may be risking their lives again amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The 75th anniversary was meant to be a blockbuster event, and the veterans have been looking forward to it for years. There were to be thousands of people watching in Hawaii as parades marched through Waikiki, vintage warbirds flying overhead, and gala dinners to honor the veterans.

Now, most in-person celebrations have been canceled over fears the virus could infect the veterans, who range from 90 to 101. But about 200 people, mostly veterans, their families and government officials, will still commemorate the milestone on the USS Missouri, which hosted the surrender on Sept. 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay.

It comes as Oahu — Hawaii's most populated island and the home of Pearl Harbor — has seen an alarming spike in coronavirus cases in the past two weeks, forcing many restrictions to be reinstated, including a ban on gatherings of more than five people and the closure of all beaches.

"I've been told what I need to do in order to be responsible for myself but also toward others," said WWII veteran Jerry Pedersen, who was aboard the USS Missouri and watched the Japanese surrender. "I can't hug the people that I'd like to hug."

Pedersen, who will be coming from Sacramento, California, for the commemoration, turned 95 on Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 37 of 87

"No, I'm not concerned particularly," he said. "If we would do in life everything the way we've been told to handle this pandemic, we'd come through it pretty good."

Officials plan to keep the veterans socially distanced while they are honored in front of livestreaming cameras instead of live crowds of thousands, as was first planned.

"I want to go back because that day, as much as I remember it, what happened, why we were there, the fact that it was the end of the realities of war and killing and all, it was the first day that I had to start answering, 'What am I going to do with the rest of my life?'" Pedersen said.

He said he reflects on Gen. Douglas MacArthur's words "that we've got to pursue in peace what we won in war. And I made a decision that day that I wanted to be a peace worker. And my life has been that." Pedersen became a pastor after the war.

But as cities and states see new waves of COVID-19, some medical experts are questioning the safety of having dozens of vulnerable war heroes flying to Hawaii from all over the United States.

Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, who specializes in infectious diseases at the University of California, San Francisco, said older people are more at risk from COVID-19, especially if they have illnesses like lung or heart disease or diabetes.

"The impact of COVID-19 on the elderly is very pronounced," Chin-Hong said. "I continue to be concerned about ... the impacts of infection on the elderly, not only on acquiring it, but mainly on progressing from infection to disease and being in the ICU and then dying."

The veterans will board a flight reserved just for them from Oakland to Honolulu. That flight will be about half full, but they need to get to Oakland before the jet shuttles them across the Pacific. Chin-Hong says that segment of the trip is of greater concern because it's more unpredictable.

He said that ensuring the veterans know the risk is important. "As long as people have the information ... that's all I can really hope for."

But taking into account the human element of why these men want to attend the ceremony is also important, he said.

"For somebody who may not live to see the next anniversary ... the risk benefit calculus becomes a little bit different," Chin-Hong said of the aging group. "I feel like sometimes in these settings, you think about risk and benefit in different ways."

Once in Hawaii, the veterans will be isolated in hotels except when attending mostly outdoor events with health screenings and social distancing. The public is not invited, and workers will be continuously screened.

WWII veteran Art Albert, who had come to Hawaii for every commemoration, had promised loved ones that he would make it to the 75th anniversary. But he died in June.

"Somehow, he and the Missouri just connected. Every year as we neared Ford Island, his eyes would fill with tears as he saw what he called his 'first home,'" Albert's wife, Sherry, said by email, referring to the USS Missouri.

Michael Carr, president and CEO of the USS Missouri Memorial Association, which operates the museum the battleship has become, was friends with Albert. Of the veterans, he said that "despite the travel restrictions, despite the pandemic dangers, they are determined to be here."

As of Wednesday, about 60 veterans, each with one companion, were set to attend, but the number has fluctuated as some who wanted to come have died and others have requested to participate last minute.

Hawaii is expected to grant modified quarantine orders for those traveling for the anniversary, allowing them to attend the official ceremony and other events. Otherwise, people coming to the islands are required to quarantine for two weeks.

Gov. David Ige's office said this week that the details are still under review but that the state will do everything possible to ensure the veterans are safely honored.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper and other senior U.S. officials plan to attend the events at Pearl Harbor. Esper's spokesman, John Supple, said the defense secretary is aware of the recent spike of COVID-19 cases on Oahu and everyone in his entourage will be tested for coronavirus before they arrive in Hawaii.

Pedersen, the veteran, says that while the enemy was more defined in 1945, the globe is still at war in many ways.

"We had an enemy that we could see, and we knew how to handle it. Our enemies today are injustice. It's the lack of respecting the dignity and freedom of every single individual," Pedersen said.

Loughlin, Giannulli to be sentenced in college bribery plot

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — More than a year after "Full House" star Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, were charged with paying half a million dollars in bribes to get their two daughters into the University of Southern California, the famous couple appears headed for prison.

Loughlin and Giannulli will be sentenced on Friday after pleading guilty to participating in the college admissions cheating scheme that has laid bare the lengths to which some wealthy parents will go to get their kids into elite universities.

Loughlin's plea deal with prosecutors calls for her to spend two months behind bars, while Giannulli's calls for him to serve five months. They will be sentenced in separate hearings held via video conference because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The judge said at their plea hearings that he would decide whether to accept their unusual deals with prosecutors after reviewing the presentencing report, a document that contains background on defendants and helps guide sentencing decisions. Unlike most plea agreements, in which the judge remains free to decide the defendant's sentence, Loughlin and Giannulli's proposed prison terms are binding if the judge accepts the deals.

They are among nearly 30 prominent parents who have admitted to charges in the scheme, which involved hefty bribes to get undeserving kids into college with rigged test scores or fake athletic credentials, authorities said. Ten parents are still fighting the charges.

Lawyers for Loughlin and Giannulli had insisted for more than a year that the couple believed their payments were "legitimate donations." They also accused prosecutors of hiding crucial evidence that could prove the couple's innocence because it would undermine their case.

Loughlin and Giannulli's about-face came shortly after the judge rejected their bid to dismiss the case over allegations of misconduct by federal agents.

The case shattered the clean image of Loughlin, who gained fame for her role as the wholesome Aunt Becky in the sitcom "Full House" that ran from the late 1980s to mid-1990s, and later became queen of the Hallmark channel with her holiday movies and the series "When Calls the Heart."

The couple has not made any public statements since their arrest and — unlike every other parent sentenced to far in the case — they did not submit letters expressing regret or notes of support from family and friends to the judge ahead of their sentencing.

Loughlin pleaded guilty in May to conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud. Giannulli pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud and honest services wire and mail fraud. Prosecutors agreed to dismiss charges of money laundering and federal programs bribery that were added after the case was filed.

Under the plea deal, Giannulli would also pay a \$250,000 fine and perform 250 hours of community service. Loughlin would pay a \$150,000 fine and perform 100 hours of community service.

Prosecutors told the judge this week that Giannulli deserves a tougher sentence because he was "the more active participant in the scheme," while Loughlin "took a less active role, but was nonetheless fully complicit."

The couple funneled money through a sham charity operated by college admissions consultant Rick Singer to get their two daughters into USC as crew recruits, even though neither girl was a rower, authorities said.

Investigators had recorded phone calls and emails showing the couple worked with Singer to secure their daughters' admission with fake athletic profiles depicting them as star rowers. In one email, Singer told Loughlin and Giannulli he needed a picture of their older daughter on a rowing machine in workout clothes "like a real athlete."

Prosecutors said the couple allowed the girls "to become complicit in crime," instructing them to pose on rowing machines for photos and warning their younger daughter not to say too much to her high school

counselor to avoid getting caught.

When the counselor began questioning their crew credentials, Giannulli angrily confronted him and asked why he was "trying to ruin or get in the way of their opportunities," the counselor wrote in notes detailed in court documents.

After the couple successfully bribed their younger daughter's way into USC, Singer forwarded them a letter saying she was let in because of her "potential to make a significant contribution to the intercollegiate athletic program," prosecutors wrote.

Loughlin responded: "This is wonderful news! (high-five emoji)," according to court filings.

Singer, who has also pleaded guilty, was expected to testify against them had the couple gone to trial.

Others parents who've been sent to prison for participating in the scam include "Desperate Housewives" actress Felicity Huffman. She served nearly two weeks behind bars late last year after she admitted to paying \$15,000 to have someone correct her daughter's entrance exam answers.

Former sailor details misconduct by SEALs pulled from Iraq

By JAMES LAPORTA and JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — U.S. Navy intelligence specialist Colleen Grace was asleep on a remote air base in Iraq in 2019 when she was woken up by knocking on the door next to her room, and then a voice she recognized.

The voice belonged to a Navy corpsman she knew. He was upset and speaking loudly to the Army colonel who lived next door. Grace heard the corpsman say that a sailor who attended a Fourth of July barbecue had just been raped by a member of the Navy SEAL platoon on the base. The corpsman asked the colonel what to do because the victim was afraid that if she reported the incident, retribution would follow.

"And that's real," Grace heard Hospitalman First Class Gustavo Llerenes tell Col. Thomas Collins, a physician's assistant with the Florida National Guard. "It's a good ol' boy's network."

She said she heard Collins urge Llerenes to keep his voice down, saying the walls between the rooms were thin.

Grace, who could no longer hear the conversation between medical professionals, looked down at her phone to check the time. Just then Grace noticed a missed text from a friend asking her to come over. "Urgent," the message read.

When Grace got to her friend's room around 1:50 a.m., she found the sailor curled up in her bed. A giant black bruise marred her jawline. Several other marks lined her neck. It was then that Grace realized the overheard conversation about a rape was about her friend.

Grace said her friend told her the sex started out consensual in the SEAL's room but then he started biting and choking her. Her friend told her that at one point she thought "what is he going to do with my body when he kills me?" because she said he was strangling her so hard she couldn't breathe.

Grace gingerly asked her if it would be OK to photograph her injuries. She said she lifted her friend's shirt to find more bruises — on her breast, a shoulder, her stomach.

Grace sent the photos to her friend's phone, and then hugged her and cried, unsure of what would happen next.

But she and her friend would not stay silent.

Within weeks, the entire Foxtrot platoon of SEAL Team 7, known as Trident 1726, was sent home early to San Diego. It was an extremely rare move to cut short the mission of a unit that was there to combat remnants of ISIS. Navy officials have given few details other than to say there was an alleged sexual assault and drinking at a Fourth of July barbecue in Iraq in 2019 in violation of Navy rules barring deployed troops from consuming alcohol.

The story of the platoon being pulled from Iraq has been previously reported, but documents obtained by The Associated Press through the Freedom of Information Act and interviews with nearly a dozen people give the first in-depth view into what led to the rare recall. The documents and interviews show that women deployed with the SEALs say they were ogled and sexually harassed during the deployment. Records obtained by the AP from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service also reveal a previously unknown

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 40 of 87

reported allegation of sexual misconduct against the SEAL platoon chief, Special Warfare Operator Chief Nicholas Olson, two days before the Fourth of July barbecue. Olson denies any wrongdoing.

The platoon was withdrawn after the Navy made an unusually public push to strengthen order and discipline in its secretive elite force amid a series of scandals involving SEALs. The misconduct has included cocaine use and tampering of drug tests by members of SEAL Team 10 based in Virginia, and last year's conviction of Navy SEAL Adam Matthews, who was sentenced to one year in military prison for his role in the 2017 hazing-related death of an Army Green Beret in Africa.

The Navy fired three SEAL leaders in the aftermath of the alleged rape on the Iraq air base and charged an enlisted SEAL with sexual assault, aggravated assault via strangulation and assault by battery for allegedly biting the victim on the face, among other counts, according to his charge sheet. He faces a court-martial in November. A hearing in the case will be held Friday at Naval Base San Diego.

Jeremiah Sullivan, the lawyer for the SEAL, said he is innocent and "we look forward to trying his case in a court of law." The SEAL, who was charged Dec. 30, filed a counter claim in February against the sailor alleging she sexually assaulted him, taking advantage of him when he was "incapacitated."

AP is not naming the SEAL despite his criminal charges nor the sailor because they both say they were victims of sexual abuse and AP has a policy of not identifying victims unless they choose to be.

Grace is the first service member to come forward to talk about what happened at Ain al-Asad air base in western Iraq. She spoke to the AP in an exclusive interview, detailing what she witnessed that night, describing what she said were attempts by Olson, the platoon chief, to stop the alleged sexual assault from being reported, and revealing other misconduct towards another female sailor working with the SEAL platoon during the 2019 deployment to Anbar Province.

AP spoke to other service members on the deployment who asked not to be named or quoted for fear it could jeopardize their military careers. The sailor who reported being sexually assaulted on July 4, 2019, declined to be interviewed. Llerenes, the Navy corpsman, also declined to be interviewed for this story. Multiple attempts were made to connect with Col. Collins but were unsuccessful.

The drinking at the Fourth of July barbecue in Iraq and the alleged sexual assault that same night came only two days after the acquittal of Special Warfare Operator Chief Edward Gallagher, who was accused by his platoon members of killing a captive Islamic State fighter and shooting civilians during a deployment to Iraq in 2017. Gallagher was also a member of SEAL Team 7 in Iraq but with a different platoon and under different leadership.

Gallagher — who was convicted of a single charge for posing with the dead teen militant's body for a picture — got support from President Donald Trump, who prevented the military from taking disciplinary action against the former SEAL, pitting the commander-in-chief against the Navy's top brass.

The Fourth of July incident led to a second ethics review of America's commando forces in a year. The review by the Special Operations Command found a problematic culture that overemphasized combat and put troops at times far from supervision, opening the door to inappropriate behavior.

Navy SEAL Capt. Todd Perry, the commander of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Iraq in 2019, blamed the "Gallagher Effect," a term coined by leadership to denote the corrosive influence on a platoon such as the one Gallagher's behavior had on order and discipline.

"It only took one bad platoon chief to influence the entire platoon," that the no-drinking rule did not apply to them and that the "brotherhood" was more important than the Navy — "just as Gallagher was able to do with the dishonorable members of his platoon" during his deployment in 2017, Capt. Perry stated in an interview with an Army officer investigating the Fourth of July incident, according to military records obtained by AP. During the interview in Baghdad on July 29, 2019, Perry made no mention of any sexual assault allegations.

About a dozen female service members were attached to the SEAL platoon during a six-month deployment to Iraq that began in March of 2019.

On the air base, Grace and the other service members who supported Special Operations Task Force-West, the unit responsible for missions inside Anbar Province, Iraq, lived at Camp Fenin while the SEALs

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 41 of 87

stayed at Camp Freiwald, about a 10-minute walk away.

The deployment — Grace's first with the SEALs — was slow, she said. Others who had deployed previously to Iraq told her they had never seen it so quiet. She was asked to identify ISIS targets for the SEALs in an area that had been largely untouched for the past nine months.

Grace said the women worked hard to earn the respect of the SEALs. "We're in there 18 hours a day. We wanted their respect. We were doing good work for these guys," she said.

But Grace said the intelligence staff was under a lot of pressure from the SEALs to do more. "People were itching to get outside the wire at every opportunity," but not a lot of information was coming in that they could act on, Grace said.

Then she said she started receiving text messages from Olson, the platoon chief, late at night that were not work-related. At first, she thought it was because he thought highly of her work.

"After I'd been invited over to that side of the camp to have drinks on multiple occasions, I was like this is inappropriate, and that's kind of when he and I stopped speaking," Grace said.

The Fourth of July was a holiday and for some of the special operators, there was even more reason to pop open a bottle with the military jury in San Diego acquitting Gallagher, ending a war crimes case that had tarnished the commando force's image.

Grace said only two days earlier, one of her friends had knocked on her door crying and said Olson exposed himself to her after they met at a makeshift lounge on Camp Freiwald.

According to a July 16, 2019, report of the incident by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, a male, whose name was redacted, met a female to talk privately on July 2. He told her "how all of the team wants to sleep with you," and "we all talked about who will be the first one to do it."

The male then reached into his pants and "exposing his penis," grabbed her from behind her neck and pulled her toward his groin area, according to the report. Afterwards, the male drove the woman to a base cafeteria and asked her to walk back alone to her room so no one would see them together. Later, the woman received a text from the man apologizing for his behavior. The AP was able to confirm the incident involved Olson and a sailor through interviews with service members on the deployment.

Grace said her friend told her that Olson also said how everyone had noticed the nipples poking through the T-shirts of the female sailors during their daily briefings. She added that her friend said there were other "vile comments." Olson's lawyer, Timothy Parlatore, said his client denies making any inappropriate comments.

"I feel violated on her behalf," Grace said. "But also like wow, we are not respected. We are not members of the team. We are pieces of meat that these people ogle."

Parlatore, who also represented Gallagher, said the July 2 allegation is false and was made by an intelligence specialist who held back information necessary to kill ISIS.

"These individuals have the motivation to lie about my client," Parlatore said.

The victim signed a statement on July 13, 2019, saying she did not wish to participate in the investigation. In the signed statement, obtained by AP, it states she understood the chances of the suspect being brought to justice would be greatly reduced without her assistance. The case was closed.

The woman told Grace she did not want to report Olson for exposing himself to her on July 2 because she was concerned it would hurt her career.

"She was tough as nails and she didn't want anyone to know that anything affected her ever," Grace said.

After the alleged incident with Olson, the woman told Grace that she would only go to the barbecue for a short while, and she wasn't going alone. With her friends off to celebrate and the night to herself, Grace face-timed with her family in Michigan, watched Netflix, and then fell asleep.

Hours later, Grace was woken up by the knocking and rushed to help another friend, who said she had just been raped. The Navy corpsman and the female sailor who had been assaulted two days earlier were consoling the victim when Grace got to her room. They told Grace that Olson had stopped outside her room twice that night and warned that everyone at the barbecue will get into trouble if the second

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 42 of 87

woman reported the rape, Grace said.

Parlatore, Olson's attorney, denies that the SEAL chief tried to stop anyone from reporting the rape.

The woman followed the advice of doctors on base who told her she would need to go to Baghdad to be examined and report the July 4 rape. She was told to not take anything off and put her uniform pants over what she already had on.

Grace rode with her in an ambulance to where a helicopter was waiting.

At about 4:25 a.m., Grace hugged her friend, who boarded the aircraft, and then returned to her room.

"I was a wreck, so of course I called my mom," Grace said. "She told me to block my door, have my gun by my bed and write everything down."

After the Fourth of July, Grace said she could no longer stay silent about the July 2 assault, even though the woman who told her about the incident with Olson "was adamant that I don't tell, but I had to. I felt a duty. Her privacy mattered less because our other friend was raped."

Her only regret, Grace said, is she did not take notes July 2 like she did following the Fourth of July when she had the benefit of hindsight and "went straight to my computer and typed everything up that I could remember, dates, times, who I talked to, all of it."

Grace said her work environment worsened after the Fourth of July barbecue.

She went back to work hours after seeing her friend off. No one mentioned why a member of the intelligence staff was not at her desk, Grace said.

On July 8, Grace grew concerned that the Navy would try to cover up things and wrote to U.S. Rep. Mark Takano, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, relaying her detailed notes and naming everyone she knew was involved that night. She told the California Democrat that Olson was sure he would have the power to convince her friend not to report the July 4 assault and that she was concerned that more than 24 hours had passed before the crime scene — the enlisted SEAL's room — was secured.

"I said to myself, if they try (to) cover this incident up, I'll tell the New York Times exactly how Eddie Gallagher's old unit is doing things," Grace wrote. "Perhaps I should have more faith in my Chain of Command, and I pray that I am not overreacting. However, the more that I think about it, the more I see it is not totally outside the realm of possibility that higher-level leadership will get involved in order to ensure that this quietly disappears."

Almost a week would go by before it was brought up by the commanding officer, Cmdr. Edward Mason, of SEAL Team 7, who visited the base to discuss it on July 10.

"It was nice to hear someone finally acknowledge that something had happened," Grace said.

Mason ordered the enlisted SEAL to be examined by a bio forensics specialist, his room swept for evidence, and his weapons locked up. He also had the SEAL and Olson sent home.

On July 11, investigators arrived in Iraq. Two weeks later the entire platoon was sent home after members refused to cooperate with the investigation without having a lawyer present, according to a person who spoke to members of the team. The person, who asked not to be named, said the SEALs were perceived guilty from the start.

Some of the SEALs blamed the female Navy sailors for the interruption in the mission, and the tension made it difficult to do their job effectively, Grace said.

"We were ostracized and that's a very difficult position to be in when you're trying to feed people mission information," she said. "We were treated like pariahs after the July 4th thing, you know, because we were the people that had lied ... so that the team would go home."

In video conferences, Navy brass gave stern warnings that the SEAL teams cannot have any more bad press, Grace said.

Olson was reprimanded and has since lost his Trident pin, the symbol of his membership in the SEALs. Parlatore said the Navy cited his platoon's drinking and the July 2 allegation. He is appealing the decision. The Naval Special Warfare Command declined to comment due to pending litigation.

The Navy's top SEAL, Rear Adm. Collin Green, fired Mason, Command Master Chief Hugh Spangler, and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 43 of 87

Navy SEAL Lt. Cmdr. Luke Im, saying their leadership failures led to a breakdown of order and discipline within two units in Iraq.

Mason and Spangler filed a complaint with the Department of Defense Inspector General to demand the independent agency investigate the firings.

Both men, who have since retired, said in the complaint that they were being used as scapegoats because Green was upset over Navy prosecutors losing the Gallagher case. They accused Navy leadership of putting the SEALs at risk when they pulled the platoon immediately out of Iraq.

The inspector general determined there was insufficient evidence from the complaint to open an investigation, said Dwerna Allen, an agency spokeswoman.

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Mike Gilday, supports Green's actions, his spokesman Cmdr. Nate Christensen said. Green has made changes and "taken a 'back to basics' leadership approach to ensure that his community fully demonstrates both professional competency and character in all they do."

Grace said she underwent therapy because of what happened in Iraq. She left the Navy in February.

"It literally broke my heart because these were people that were my heroes," she said of the SEALs. "It was going to be the highlight of my career, and what do I learn? That these people would rather, you know, have each other's backs and cover up a sexual assault."

LaPorta reported from Delray Beach, Florida.

Contact AP's global investigative team at Investigative@ap.org.

At least 5 people killed in Northern California wildfires

By JANIE HAR and MARTHA MENDOZA Associated Press

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (AP) — Dozens of wildfires raging throughout Northern California have now claimed at least five lives and threaten tens of thousands of homes, authorities said Thursday.

The death of a resident in Solano County, in the northeastern San Francisco Bay Area, was reported Thursday by Sheriff Thomas A. Ferrara, although he didn't have any additional details.

In addition, three civilians had died in Napa County since the fires began, said Daniel Berlant, a Cal Fire assistant deputy director. In all, more than 30 civilians and firefighters have been injured.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the Solano and Napa county fatalities included a Pacific Gas & Electric utility worker who was found dead Wednesday in a vehicle in the Vacaville area between San Francisco and Sacramento.

A pilot on a water-dropping mission in central California also died Wednesday when his helicopter crashed.

Gov. Gavin Newsom addressed the wildfires, calling them clear evidence of climate change, in a last-minute video recorded for the Democratic National Convention from a forest near Watsonville after he visited an evacuation center.

"If you are in denial about climate change, come to California," he said.

"I confess this is not where I expected to be speaking here tonight," he said into what appeared to be a cellphone camera. Newsom had recorded an earlier, more lighthearted video, to be delivered in the convention's prime-time hours but decided it didn't bring the right tone amid his state's disasters, said Dan Newman, one of his political advisers.

More than two dozen major fires were scorching California and taxing the state's firefighting capacity, sparked by an unprecedented lightning siege that dropped nearly 11,000 strikes over several days.

The fires have destroyed 175 structures, including homes, and are threatening 50,000 more, said Daniel Berlant, an assistant deputy director with the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. In all, 33 civilians and firefighters have been injured.

At least two people were missing.

Smoke and ash billowing from the fires has fouled the air throughout the scenic central coast and San Francisco.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 44 of 87

Most of the activity is in Northern California, where fires have chewed through about 500 square miles (1,250 square kilometers) of brushland, rural areas, canyon country and dense forest surrounding San Francisco.

More than 10,000 firefighters are on the front lines, but fire officials in charge of each of the major fire complexes say they are strapped for resources. Some firefighters were working 72-hour shifts instead of the usual 24 hours. The state has requested 375 engines and crew from other states.

"That's going to allow our firefighters that have been on the front line since this weekend to have an opportunity to take some rest," Berlant said.

More firefighters were sent to battle a complex of fires in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties but "it's still not enough," said the incident commander, Cal Fire Assistant Chief Billy See.

"We're still drastically short for a fire of this size," he said at an evening news conference.

Fire officials said the flames were being driven by bone-dry timber and brush and erratic winds. They pleaded with residents to be ready to evacuate when ordered because they place firefighters in danger when crews have to protect those staying behind.

"Today we saw a growth of approximately 700 to 1,000 acres an hour in heavy timber," See said. "That's a dangerous rate of spread for our firefighters and for all those residents out there."

Cal Fire spokesman Dan Olson said there are concerns that some people are trying to organize through social media to create volunteer brigades and fight the fire themselves.

"The dangers out there to their own lives outweigh anything they can accomplish," he said. "They're putting their lives in jeopardy."

In Marin County, just north of San Francisco, where a smaller fire is burning near the Pacific Ocean, county fire chief Jason Weber said he is waiting for assistance from Montana to arrive this weekend.

He said in his 25 years in fire service, "we've never seen this level of draw-down" from cooperating agencies, as there is heavy competition in the western United States for equipment and people.

In the coastal mountain regions south of San Francisco, where 48,000 people were under orders to evacuate, a fire complex had burned 75 square miles (194 square kilometers). Officials warned it has the potential to grow significantly in the next day.

At least 50 buildings, including homes, had burned and nearly 21,000 structures were threatened, fire officials said.

Given depleted resources, one of the best tools firefighters have for public safety is to get people out of harm's way. But some people refused when officers went door-to-door Wednesday night, Cal Fire Chief Mark Brunton said.

Kevin Stover, 42, was struggling with indecision early Thursday when a mandatory evacuation order was issued for the rugged and small town of Felton outside the beach city of Santa Cruz.

"I don't want to leave," said Stover, a camera operator and rigger now driving for Door Dash and Lyft because of the pandemic. His car, loaded with important papers, his father's urn and some arrowheads that meant a lot to him, had a flat tire.

"I'm trying to figure out if I should cut these original oil paintings out of the frame to salvage them," he said.

The unusually large size and number of simultaneous fires, other fires throughout the West and the loss of inmate firefighting crews because inmates were released from prisons to prevent the spread of coronavirus, have created the perfect storm for firefighting.

"Our agency is taxed to the limit," said Incident Commander Mike Smith at the fire near Santa Cruz. Officials there are awaiting help from other states, but they are having to look further afield than usual, meaning it will take days for crews to arrive, he said. The U.S. Forest Service can't help because they are busy fighting fires on federal lands.

In Monterey County along the coast, about 9,000 people have been evacuated for a fire that's now 52 square miles (136 square kilometers).

Two fires in Sonoma County prompted evacuation orders for 8,000 residents near the Russian River

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 45 of 87

Wednesday. Residents of Healdsburg, with a population of about 12,000, were warned Wednesday night to be ready to flee. Fires in that region destroyed more than 100 buildings, including some homes, and threatened 25,000 people across five counties.

Tim Edwards, president of the union representing 7,000 Cal Fire firefighters, said lawmakers need to allocate more money at a time when firefighters are working 40 to 50 days at a time without real relief.

California State Parks announced full or partial closures of more than two dozen parks, including Big Basin Redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where the park headquarters and other facilities were damaged. The park featuring towering stands of ancient coast redwoods dates to 1902 and is the state's oldest.

Har reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writers Olga R. Rodriguez and Juliet Williams in San Francisco and John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the county where the Russian River is located is Sonoma, not Solano.

AP FACT CHECK: Dems on minimum wage and poverty

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans tuned into the Democratic National Convention were told Thursday that the higher minimum wage favored by presidential candidate Joe Biden would lift all full-time workers out of poverty. That's not what \$15 an hour is likely to do.

SEN. CORY BOOKER: "Together, with Joe and Kamala in the White House, we'll raise the minimum wage so no one who works a full-time job lives in poverty."

THE FACTS: That's an improbable outcome for the \$15 minimum wage supported by Biden.

A 2019 report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour would lift 1.3 million Americans out of poverty, a small fraction of the roughly 38 million people living in poverty in 2018.

Moreover, the report estimated a \$15 minimum wage would cost 1.3 million people their jobs because they would be priced out of the market.

Altogether, some 17 million people might see higher pay, the office said, but not enough to raise most who are below the poverty line above it.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on the working poor in 2018, 3.7 million people who usually worked full-time were below the poverty level. That finding suggests that a \$15 federal minimum would not take all full-time workers out of poverty. And, of course, it would still leave millions of part-time workers and the unemployed in poverty.

Seitz reported from Chicago.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apnews.com/APFactCheck>

Follow @APFactCheck on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APFactCheck>

Mexico's graft scandal sparks tit-for-tat video leaks

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's insistence on a public airing of a rapidly widening corruption scandal could complicate the investigation, and it is drawing questions about whether he would be doing this if the accusations were against his own supporters rather than opposition figures.

Those questions came to the fore Thursday when a new video emerged of a man who is now a high-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 46 of 87

ranking official of López Obrador's administration passing a bundle of cash to the president's brother in 2015.

David León served until recently as civil defense director for López Obrador and was scheduled to take over Mexico's coronavirus vaccine and medical procurement efforts. But León said after the new video emerged that he would not accept the new post "as long as my current situation is cleared up, so as not to affect the government of Mexico."

León wrote in his Twitter account that the video was from five years ago, when he was a private political consultant and did not hold any government post. He said he was working at that time "to collect funds from people I knew to hold rallies and other activities."

Apart from handing an envelope with about \$20,000 to Pío López, the president's brother, León discusses delivering a total of about \$100,000 over the course of months. The two are heard discussing arrangements like getting microphones and stages, apparently for the small-scale rallies López Obrador held around that time.

It was unclear if any illegality was involved. Private campaign donations are strictly regulated in Mexico, but López Obrador was not a candidate for any office at the time.

And the amounts discussed are tiny when compared to reports of tens of millions in bribes that the former head of Mexico's state-run oil company said were handed around in the administration of López Obrador's predecessor as president, Enrique Peña Nieto.

The official making those allegations, former state oil company chief Emilio Lozoya, was extradited from Spain last month to face money laundering charges and immediately began cooperating with authorities.

Lozoya's testimony was leaked this week, and López Obrador seemed unapologetic. He has said he wants the public to see the details of the alleged corruption that has now implicated at least three former presidents and more than a dozen other politicians.

But Lozoya's allegations neatly target López Obrador's two predecessors in the presidency — Peña Nieto and Felipe Calderón — as well as his two opponents in the last election — Ricardo Anaya and Jose Antonio Meade. They also focus on corruption surrounding a 2013 energy privatization that López Obrador always fiercely opposed.

Peña Nieto has not commented publicly on the allegations, but the others have issued strong denials.

Calderón said the allegations are politically motivated. He said via Twitter that the document's leak confirms that López Obrador is using Lozoya "as an instrument of revenge and political persecution. Justice doesn't interest him, but rather lynching, making in my case ridiculous accusations."

Lozoya accused Peña Nieto and his closest associates of using bribes from the Brazilian construction company Odebrecht to help win the presidency and then to pass the energy sector overhaul that could greatly benefit that company and others. To that end, some opposition lawmakers were bribed for their votes, he alleges. Other allegations carried over from the prior administration of Calderón.

López Obrador did not appear upset about the leaked testimony, saying Thursday that he wants the public to see a video given by Lozoya to prosecutors showing opposition political operatives stuffing stacks of cash into a duffel bag. The tape was leaked this week — it's not clear by whom.

The president also said he wanted Mexicans to read Lozoya's full statement about the alleged corruption during previous administrations. That, too, also was leaked.

On Wednesday the Attorney General's Office promised to investigate the leaks.

Pressed on whether he would be satisfied if the corruption allegations were made public but those involved were not successfully prosecuted, López Obrador said it would be up to the attorney general.

"It's an advance to have information," he said. "Before, this wasn't known."

López Obrador added: "We aren't persecuting anyone. What we want is to end corruption."

In addition to putting many of López Obrador's rivals on the defensive, for the past month the scandal has distracted attention from the coronavirus pandemic, in which more than 58,000 people have died in Mexico and the economy is forecast to shrink 10% this year.

The emerging scandal and speculation surrounding it accelerated in July, when Lozoya reached an agree-

ment with Mexican authorities to drop his extradition fight and cooperate with the investigation.

Attorney General Alejandro Gertz Manero has expressed discomfort with the amount of public commentary that the president makes about the case. He is the first attorney general to preside over the office since reforms made it more autonomous.

"That actually puts a lot of importance on how Gertz asserts his autonomy from the executive branch," said Maureen Meyer, vice president for programs and director for Mexico and migrant rights at the Washington Office on Latin America.

In a report published this week, the Washington-based think tank and advocacy group said that probably the biggest reason to give the attorney general more autonomy from the executive branch "was precisely to remove political influence over criminal investigations."

Prosecutors need to collect the evidence to support Lozoya's allegations or it will bolster critics who say the investigation is really just a way to taint political rivals, Meyer said. The constant publicizing of details of the investigation poses a risk. But if Mexico were able to successfully prosecute a former president it would be difficult to overestimate its impact.

"It would be a clear sign that Mexico is working to turn the page on tolerance for corruption in the country," she said. "But again, it has to be based on evidence that can be proven in court."

Takeaways from the final night of the Democratic convention

By BILL BARROW and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

A convention without a roaring crowd, confetti cannons, funny hats — a gathering in name only — delivered the Democratic presidential nomination to Joe Biden on Thursday, the culmination of a lifelong pursuit that comes at a time of crisis.

Here are key takeaways from the final night of the Democratic National Convention.

BIDEN MET THE MOMENT

Biden needed an eloquent, emotional, clear speech accepting the Democratic nomination to dispel the criticisms lobbed at him almost daily by President Donald Trump, and even to allay the concerns of some of his supporters about whether, at 77, he was up to the job.

He delivered. His performance in many ways sounded more like the Joe Biden of his early Senate career, when he was considered one of the finest orators in his party, than the Biden in winter who at times has been halting in speeches and debates.

He offered contrasts of character, and policy, with Trump, pledging to unify a country that has grown more polarized during Trump's time in office.

It was clear Biden wanted voters to end the night seeing optimism and possibility, even as he continued his dire warnings about Trump, whose name he did not speak.

"If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst," Biden countered. "I'll be an ally of the light, not the darkness."

It's a delicate balance, because Biden has spent his campaign sounding the alarm about Trump. But his purpose Thursday was to reframe his experience in government and his personal family suffering into a would-be president that Americans can find as an appealing alternative, not just a necessary one.

On the pandemic and a wounded economy: "The president still does not have a plan. Well, I do."

On the pain of those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19: "I know what it's like."

It wasn't new for Biden to say he wants a country "united in our pursuit of a more perfect union." But it was a key moment for him to project that message to a new audience.

"Easily the best and most affecting speech Biden has ever delivered," historian Michael Beschloss said on Twitter. FAITH AT THE FOREFRONT

Biden and the Democrats also put faith at the forefront, making a point not to cede the issue to Republicans.

Sen. Chris Coons, who represents nominee Biden's home state of Delaware, spoke of a "private" faith that is personally defining for Biden, a practicing Roman Catholic. Coons said the nominee "believes in the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 48 of 87

power of prayer” and in “the dignity of all people” because they are “made in the image of God.”

Simone Campbell, of the social justice activist group Nuns on the Bus, delivered the invocation. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms praised the late civil rights icon John Lewis as a “God-fearing man.” Another segment from historian Jon Meacham leaned on Martin Luther King Jr.’s final sermon.

A video from a CNN town hall in February showed Biden explaining his faith as he discussed the 2015 killings of nine Black men and women by a white supremacist at a historically Black church in Charleston. “They forgave him,” Biden said of the victims’ families. “The ultimate act of Christian charity. They forgave him.”

Trump maintains an overwhelming advantage among white evangelicals. But marginal shifts to Biden among that group and mainline Protestants and Catholics could be key in battleground states.

STILL THE OBAMA-BIDEN, ER, BIDEN-OBAMA PARTY

When Biden celebrated his crucial South Carolina primary victory on Feb. 29, he boomed proudly, “I’m an Obama-Biden Democrat!”

Indeed, the Democrats’ virtual convention made clear they are still the Obama-Biden party. What that actually means, in terms of policy and politics, is, however, less clear.

Through four nights and eight hours of programming, the speakers who claimed the most airtime besides Biden and his vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris: former President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle. And it’s really not close.

Obama was the only former president to speak live, and he spoke nearly four times longer than former President Bill Clinton -- a man not known for brevity. Michelle Obama closed out Monday night with a keynote almost twice as long as the combined time awarded to 2016 presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the first women ever to reach those pinnacles.

It’s a sobering reminder for the Democratic old guard that, even with a 77-year-old white man as nominee, the future of the party looks more like the first Black president, his wife and Biden’s running mate.

THE COMPASSION-EMPATHY-RIGHTEOUS ANGER CARD

Democrats quite consciously played up empathy, compassion and a bit of righteous anger, all traits they associated with Biden.

On Thursday, it was Brayden Harrington, a 13-year-old who shared his story of bonding with Biden over their shared stutter. In a powerful moment, he made it, sometimes stuttering, through his own speech, which he’d marked up to show the cadences, just the way he said Biden had taught him when they met.

The night before, there was the Sanchez family of North Carolina telling of how Trump’s immigration policies threaten them.

On Tuesday, Biden’s name was placed in nomination by a New York elevator operator. On Monday, Kristin Urquiza offered one of the week’s most memorable lines, as she recounted losing her father to coronavirus: “His only preexisting condition was trusting Donald Trump — and for that he paid with his life.”

Some Republicans might call it exploitative. Some independents might see it as the obvious, even stale play for the major party that unabashedly advocates for more government action in the economy and society.

But Democrats saw added punch to the approach in 2020 because of the matchup at the top of the ticket. Trump’s calling card is the say-anything, etiquette-be-damned approach that infuses his rhetoric and, Democrats argue, his policies.

In short, Democrats are betting that a majority of voters simply want what former Republican President George H.W. Bush once called for: “a kinder, gentler nation.”

MIKE BLOOMBERG, CAPITALIST VALIDATOR

Mike Bloomberg provided a jolt to the 2016 Democratic Convention, when the billionaire former Republican mayor of New York unloaded on Trump and tried to show opposition to the reality show star came from all sides of the political spectrum.

But on Thursday he speaking after spending \$1 billion on an ill-fated bid for the Democratic party’s nomination, after he which he was sued by former staffers for cutting their health insurance during a pandemic. There’s a deep current of unease among party operatives about him now.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 49 of 87

Still, Bloomberg Thursday served as a valuable validator of Biden as a champion of capitalism rather than socialism, heading off a Trump line of attack. He made the sober businessman's argument against the president: "I'm not asking you to vote against Donald Trump because he's a bad guy. I'm asking u to vote against Donald Trump because he's done a bad job."

THE WRONG 'VEEP'

The actor Julia Louis-Dreyfus added some comedic bite to a fairly somber convention that focused on the deaths of 170,000 Americans in a pandemic and the economic dislocation it has wrought.

Louis-Dreyfus, who played a vice president and a president on HBO's "Veep," blended some of those poignant moments, sometimes awkwardly, with humor at Trump's expense.

After a clip of Biden discussing the massacre of 12 Black worshipers at a Charleston church by a white supremacist, and tying it to how the church helped him through his own tragedies, the camera cut quickly back to Dreyfus. "Just remember," she said, "Joe Biden goes to church so regularly that he doesn't even need tear gas and a bunch of federalized troops to help him get there."

Before introducing a 95-year-old World War II veteran to speak about the contrast between Trump and Biden, Louis-Dreyfus imagined what Trump would tweet about her the next day.

She kicked off the evening saying, "These last few nights have been going so well, we've decided to add a fifth night and just play Michelle Obama's speech on a loop."

The Latest: Biden vows to unite an America mired in crises

By The Associated Press undefined

Joe Biden is vowing to unite an America torn by crisis and contempt.

Biden accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday, achieving a pinnacle in an unfinished quest that has spanned three decades and been marred by personal tragedy, political stumbles and more dynamic rivals.

The past hurdles fell away as Biden addressed his fellow Democrats and millions of Americans at home who he hopes will send him to the White House to replace Donald Trump.

Biden declared, "Here and now I give you my word, if you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst." He said, "I'll be an ally of the light, not our darkness."

The night's keynote address was the speech of a lifetime for Biden, who at 77 would be the oldest president ever elected if he defeats President Donald Trump in November.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THURSDAY'S DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION:

- Takeaways from the final night of the Democratic convention
- Biden vows end of national 'darkness' in convention finale
- AP FACT CHECK: Democrats on minimum wage and poverty
- For Biden, a long path to a potentially crucial presidency

Follow AP's election coverage at <https://apnews.com/Election2020>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

The Democratic Party officially has its presidential nominee.

Joe Biden formally accepted the Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday, a position he has sought for more than 30 years and through three White House bids. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, accepted the vice presidential nomination on Wednesday.

Biden served three decades as a senator from Delaware before being tapped as President Barack Obama's vice president. He first ran for president in 1988 and tried again in 2008 before launching his 2020 campaign last year.

President Donald Trump will formally be renominated as his party's candidate during the virtual Republican National Convention next week.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 50 of 87

The general election is 75 days away. Trump has been struggling in the polls amid a confluence of health, economic and racial crises.

A boy whom Joe Biden bonded with on the campaign trail over their joint struggles with stuttering says the former vice president is "someone who cares."

Brayden Harrington met Biden at an event in New Hampshire and asked for help overcoming his stutter. Biden struggled with a stutter as a boy and continues to counsel youngsters who are going through the same.

Brayden said at Thursday's Democratic National Convention that Biden told him he improved his speaking by reading aloud verses by the poet Yeats.

Brayden says, "Joe Biden made me feel confident about something that's been bothering me my whole life."

He added: "Without Joe Biden, I wouldn't be talking to you today."

Businessman Mike Bloomberg is urging Americans to evaluate President Donald Trump like a coworker or employee when deciding whether to give him another term.

At Thursday's Democratic National Convention, Bloomberg asked: "Would you rehire or work for someone who ran your business into the ground, and who always does what's best for him or her, even when it hurts the company?"

He asked, "If the answer is no, why the hell would we ever rehire Donald Trump for another four years?"

Bloomberg's addition to the convention lineup is another example of Biden trying to appeal to moderate and even Republican voters. Bloomberg has been a Republican, independent and a Democrat throughout his career.

Bloomberg was particularly effective at getting under Trump's skin. He's now telling voters that Trump's slogan of "Make America Great Again" makes "a pretty good case for Joe Biden."

Pete Buttigieg says his experience as an openly gay man and military veteran shows how far the U.S. has come in just a few years and how much farther it has to go.

The former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, says when he was born in 1982, it was unthinkable for an openly gay person to seek any federal office. Yet he noted Thursday at the Democratic National Convention that he had campaigned for the presidency.

He says he did so "often with my husband at my side, winning delegates to this very convention."

Buttigieg, a combat veteran in Afghanistan, also noted that when he joined the military, "firing me because of who I am wasn't just possible — it was policy," because of "Don't ask, don't tell."

He said there's still a long way to go in making America a place of healing and not exclusion, but he says if things changed so much in major social issues for the country over the last 10 years, imagine how much they could during the next.

"Joe Biden is right," Buttigieg said. "This is a contest for the soul of the nation."

Joe Biden is honoring his late son Beau as he prepares to accept the Democratic nomination for president. A video tribute that aired Thursday at the Democratic National Convention recalled Beau Biden through his life as a major in the Army National Guard and as Delaware's attorney general.

Beau died in 2015 of brain cancer. Biden often speaks of his son on the campaign trail as one of his heroes, and in the video he was described as an "inspiration" to his father even now.

The video featured President Barack Obama delivering Beau Biden's eulogy, saying that "some folks may never know that their lives are better because of Beau Biden, but that's OK."

The video's voiceover declared of Beau that "you never had to ask if he'd do something the right way — he didn't know any other way."

The video closed with Beau's own words from his 2008 convention speech. He told the audience that

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 51 of 87

he wouldn't be able to be with his father during the fall campaign and asked them to "be there for my dad like he was for me."

Sen. Tammy Duckworth says Donald Trump is a "coward in chief" who has proved himself unfit to lead the U.S. armed forces.

The Illinois Democrat and military veteran lost her legs during a helicopter crash while serving in Iraq. She said at Thursday's Democratic National Convention that Joe Biden understands the sacrifices military families make.

Duckworth says, "Joe knows the fear military families live because he's felt that."

Biden's late son Beau served as a major in the Army National Guard.

Duckworth says Trump, on the other hand, is uninterested, doesn't read his daily briefing and has been manipulated by dictators who are enemies of the U.S.

She says, "Donald Trump doesn't deserve to call himself commander in chief for another four minutes, let alone four more years."

Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin is sharing her struggles with a childhood illness to tout the importance of health coverage for preexisting conditions.

Baldwin said at the Democratic National Convention on Thursday that she was hospitalized for three months as a 9-year-old. Her grandparents were her caregivers, and their insurance did not cover her. Baldwin says she then struggled to get health insurance as an adult.

She asks: "Do we want to be a country where medical bills bury people in debt?"

Baldwin is touting her support under the Obama-Biden administration for the Affordable Care Act. It allows young people to stay on their parents' insurance until they are 26.

Baldwin spoke from Milwaukee, the city where the convention was set to be held before the coronavirus pandemic forced most of the events to be held virtually.

The final night of the Democratic convention was designed to be Joe Biden's moment to soar.

But actor and comedian Julia Louis-Dreyfus, the master of ceremonies on Thursday, gave him a run for his money, uncorking a brutal roast of President Donald Trump.

"American carnage," she said, referring to the dominant theme of Trump's inaugural speech. "I assumed that was something he was against, not a campaign promise."

Invoking Biden's Catholic faith, she mocked a recent Trump photo op outside a church during protests against police brutality.

"Just remember: Joe Biden goes to church so regularly, that he doesn't even need tear gas and a bunch of federalized troops to help him get there," she said.

Later, following a segment on voting, she quipped: "If we all vote, there is nothing Facebook, Fox News or Vladimir Putin can do to stop us."

Cory Booker has evoked the memory of his late grandfather to argue that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris can bolster unions and empower the middle class.

"Joe Biden and Kamala Harris know the dignity of all working Americans," the New Jersey senator said Thursday on the final night of the virtual Democratic National Convention. "They know the urgency and the demand of our dream."

Booker says the Trump administration's policies have left "working people under attack" and the middle class shrinking. Booker says, "He has failed us."

Booker added of his grandfather, "If he was alive, Joe and Kamala, he would be so proud of you."

"And he'd tell us, take another by the hand, and another, and let's get to work," Booker said. "This dream ain't free, you gotta work for it."

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has invoked the legacy of civil rights icon John Lewis as she en-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 52 of 87

courages people to vote.

"Congressman Lewis would not be silenced, and neither can we," Bottoms said. "We cannot wait for some other time, some other place, some other heroes."

Lewis represented the Atlanta area in Congress for decades. He was among a group of freedom riders who were beaten by Alabama State Police on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma in 1965.

Before he died of cancer in July, he published an essay encouraging people to exercise their right to vote. Bottoms said Lewis was a "God-fearing man who did what he could to fulfill the as-of-yet-unfulfilled promise of America."

And she urged others to live up to his call.

"We must register and we must vote," Bottoms said.

Democrats are opening the fourth and final night of their convention with a not-so-subtle dig at Republicans mispronouncing Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris' first name.

"I cannot wait to see her debate our current vice president, Mika Pints. Or is it Paints?" said actor Julia Louis-Dreyfus, referring to Vice President Mike Pence. After Democrat Andrew Yang suggested it was "Ponce," Louis-Dreyfus responded, "Oh, some kind of weird foreign name."

Harris is the child of immigrants, and her first name reflects her Indian heritage. Her name is pronounced "comma-la," like the punctuation mark.

But President Donald Trump and other members of his party have been saying it wrong, even after they have been corrected.

The bit came after brief remarks by Yang, who ran in the Democratic primary.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom says wildfires raging in his state should give pause to anyone who denies climate change.

Newsom spoke at the virtual Democratic National Convention on Thursday from a forest near California's Central Coast after visiting a nearby Red Cross evacuation center.

More than two dozen major wildfires were blazing across California, blanketing cities and towns in smoke and putting tens of thousands of people under evacuation orders.

Newsom recorded the video after choosing to scrap the prerecorded video he originally recorded.

"I confess this is not where I expected to be speaking here tonight," he said in a video recorded on a cellphone.

He added, "If you are in denial about climate change, come to California."

Newsom criticized President Donald Trump for working to roll back vehicle emission standards meant to curb climate change and for threatening to withhold funding from California.

President Donald Trump says "Joe Biden is no friend of Pennsylvania" as he criticizes the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee near his childhood hometown of Scranton.

Trump isn't laying low during the Democratic National Convention. He's mocking Biden and blaming him for supporting trade policies that he says resulted in manufacturing job losses.

Trump is attempting to frighten voters about the future of their retirement investments as well if Biden is elected, and he bragged that markets are up despite the coronavirus.

He's also evoking images of violence in some of the nation's biggest cities during his own presidency, saying it will only spread if Biden is elected. He says that if voters "want a vision of your life under a Joe Biden presidency, imagine the smoldering ruins of Minneapolis" and "the violent anarchy of Portland" coming to every city.

"There's only one thing standing between your family and the radical left-wing mob," he says. "And that's your vote this November."

Barr: Feds to appeal ruling, seek death for Boston bomber

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department will seek to reinstate a death penalty for Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the man who was convicted of carrying out the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, Attorney General William Barr said Thursday.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Barr said the Justice Department would appeal the court's ruling last month that tossed Tsarnaev's death sentence and ordered a trial to determine whether he should be executed for the attack that killed three people and wounded more than 260 others. Barr said the Justice Department would take the matter to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"We will do whatever's necessary," Barr said. "We will take it up to the Supreme Court and we will continue to pursue the death penalty."

Under Barr, the Justice Department has again begun carrying out federal executions, putting three men to death so far and scheduling at least three others next week and in September, despite the coronavirus pandemic and waning public support for the death penalty. Barr has said it is the Justice Department's duty to carry out the sentences imposed by the courts — including the death penalty — and to deliver justice for the families of the victims.

A three-judge panel of the 1st U.S. Circuit court found in July that the judge who oversaw the 2015 trial did not adequately question potential jurors about what they had read or heard about the highly publicized case.

The 1st Circuit's decision has ripped open old wounds in Boston, with many injured in the attack expressing anger and anguish at the prospect of having to relive their trauma again at a second trial.

Massachusetts' U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling said Thursday that prosecutors are hoping for a favorable ruling at the nation's highest court so they can avoid another trial. Lelling said he respects the voices of those calling on prosecutors to drop their pursuit of the death penalty but said Tsarnaev's crimes "place him in that narrow category of criminals for whom death is a proportional punishment."

"Some have argued that executing Tsarnaev will not deter others from pursuing similar crimes. But, ultimately, this decision is not about deterrence," Lelling said in an emailed statement. "It is about justice."

The defense acknowledged that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his older brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, carried out the attack on April 15, 2013, but sought to portray his brother as the radicalized mastermind who they said lured his impressionable younger brother into violence.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26, died following a gunfight with police and being run over by his brother as he fled. Police captured a bloodied and wounded Dzhokhar Tsarnaev hours later in the Boston suburb of Watertown, where he was hiding in a boat parked in a backyard.

Tsarnaev, now 27, was convicted of all 30 charges against him, including conspiracy and use of a weapon of mass destruction and the killing of an MIT police officer during the Tsarnaev brothers' getaway attempt. The appeals court upheld all but a few of his convictions.

An attorney for Tsarnaev, David Patton, declined to comment Thursday. Patton said after the 1st Circuit's decision that "it is now up to the government to determine whether to put the victims and Boston through a second trial, or to allow closure to this terrible tragedy by permitting a sentence of life without the possibility of release."

Prosecutors told jurors that Tsarnaev was just as culpable in the attack they say was meant to punish the U.S. for its wars in Muslim countries. In the boat where he was found hiding, he wrote, "Stop killing our innocent people and we will stop."

Killed in the bombing were Lingzi Lu, a 23-year-old Boston University graduate student from China; Krystle Campbell, a 29-year-old restaurant manager from Medford; and 8-year-old Martin Richard, who had gone to watch the marathon with his family. Massachusetts Institute of Technology police Officer Sean Collier was shot to death in his cruiser days later.

Describing media attention in the case as "unrivaled in American legal history," the appeals court said U.S. District Judge George O'Toole fell short in running a jury selection process "sufficient to identify prejudice."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 54 of 87

The 1st Circuit also found that O'Toole erred in refusing to let the defense tell jurors about evidence tying Tamerlan Tsarnaev to the killings of three people in the Boston suburb of Waltham in 2011.

"If the judge had admitted the Waltham evidence — evidence that shows (like no other) that Tamerlan was predisposed to religiously-inspired brutality before the bombings and before Dzhokhar's radicalization — the defense could have more forcefully rebutted the government's claim that the brothers had a 'partnership of equals,'" Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson wrote in the ruling.

President Donald Trump tweeted after the decision that the federal government "must again seek the Death Penalty in a do-over of that chapter of the original trial." The ruling came as the U.S. government recently resumed federal executions following a 17-year pause.

Durkin Richer reported from Boston.

Facebook stirs anger, abandons drilling gear on Oregon coast

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

TIERRA DEL MAR, Ore. (AP) — Facebook's effort to build a landing site in a village on the Oregon coast for a fiber optic cable linking Asia and North America has run into serious trouble.

First, a drill pipe snapped under the seabed. Workers left 1,100 feet of pipe, 6,500 gallons of drilling fluid, a drill tip and other materials under the seabed as they closed down the site, aiming to try again next year.

And then the Facebook subsidiary waited seven weeks before telling state officials about the abandoned equipment, according to the Oregon Department of State Lands.

Homeowners in Tierra del Mar, which has around 200 houses, no stoplights or cellphone service, had opposed the project from the start, pointing out that it's zoned residential and that having a cable landing site threatened the character of their community and could invite similar projects.

Now they are furious, and political leaders are too.

Tierra del Mar, 65 miles (105 kilometers) southwest of Portland, is home to a mix of professionals and retirees who share a love of the unspoiled beach that is fringed with coastal fir trees and the deer, eagles and other birds that inhabit the area.

Facebook representatives had said Tierra del Mar was one of the few places on the U.S. West Coast suitable for the ultra-high-speed cable. It is to link multiple U.S. locations, including Facebook's huge data center in the central Oregon town of Prineville, with Japan and the Philippines, and help meet an increasing demand for internet services worldwide, the company says.

Construction of the cable landing site was supposed to have been done in just a few weeks and completed by the end of April. Instead, the drilling will resume again in January — as long as the state doesn't revoke the permit. Neighbors said the drilling was noisy.

Meanwhile, a lot the size of 10 tennis courts has been stripped of its trees, grasses and other vegetation and is now covered with gravel and concrete.

"It's basically a parking lot," Jeff Bryner, whose house is next door, said as he looked at the property.

The wide, sandy beach seems undisturbed. But under the seabed close to shore sits the drilling equipment, abandoned by a Facebook subsidiary, Edge Cable Holdings.

Lynnae Ruttledge, a retiree with a vacation home in Tierra del Mar, was one of the community organizers opposing the cable landing site.

"They left and didn't disclose to anyone that they left drilling equipment that is now underneath our seabed. And there is no determination that that's wrong, that that's environmentally unsound," Ruttledge said as she spoke on the weathered deck of her home.

Ruttledge and her husband, Ed, said they believe state agencies also share the blame, for being lax in vetting the project and in following up on the drilling accident.

The Department of State Lands has left it up to Edge Cable Holdings to provide an analysis of potential health, safety, and environmental impacts because of the presence of the abandoned equipment.

"It's a travesty to me that they are allowing the perpetrator of the crime to tell people, 'Oh, this is what

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 55 of 87

the impact is going to be,' " Rutledge said.

Department of State Lands spokeswoman Ali Hansen said the analysis will be reviewed by department staff and independent experts as necessary.

Political leaders say Facebook is wearing out its welcome.

State Rep. David Gomberg, a Democrat whose district includes Tierra del Mar, said he was initially neutral on the project and just wanted to ensure that, as it was going through the approval process, locals could pose questions to Facebook. Now he is critical of how the project has dragged on and of the delay in notifying state authorities that equipment was abandoned after the April 28 drilling mishap.

"Facebook has not proven themselves to be a friendly or cooperative neighbor," Gomberg said Tuesday. Gov. Kate Brown is not happy either.

In January 2016, Brown encouraged the Pacific Telecommunications Conference, which was holding its annual meeting in Hawaii, to consider Oregon as a cable landing site on the West Coast of North America.

But now Brown's spokesman says the conduct of Facebook and its subsidiaries in Tierra del Mar is "unacceptable."

"We expect state agencies will hold them accountable to the fullest extent allowed by Oregon law. This incident will also be weighed heavily in future permitting requests," spokesman Charles Boyle said. "Oregon's coasts and seafloor are not Mark Zuckerberg's dumping ground."

Facebook spokeswoman Monica Wik said an "environmental assessment" determined that it was better to leave the bore pipe 50 feet under the seafloor and that no negative environmental harm would result. She added that a retrieval attempt "is not an environmentally prudent option."

The company intends to complete the cable landing site between January and April and will continue to follow the guidance of all relevant government agencies, Wik said by email.

The Oregon Department of State Lands has told Edge Cable Holdings that it must reach an agreement with the state on damages to be paid. Furthermore, within six months it must either remove the abandoned equipment — which is there illegally — without damaging the environment, or obtain an encroachment easement from the state that would allow the equipment to remain.

Failure to comply could result in termination of the easement agreement allowing the cable to be in the territorial sea of Oregon, Hansen said.

The state Land Use Board of Appeals on Thursday rejected a petition, filed before the drilling accident, that sought to reverse approval by a county commission of turning the lot into a cable landing site. The panel noted the county commission had "found that there will be no lasting impacts after construction is completed because the subject property will essentially be a vacant, vegetated lot."

This version corrects that the easement agreement allows the cable to be in the territorial sea of Oregon.

Follow Andrew Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky>

Alabama restarts prep football in test of virus precautions

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

THORSBY, Ala. (AP) — It's mostly quiet in the Alabama farming community of Thorsby aside from trucks and trains that rumble through bound for someplace larger. Remembering directions to the town's football stadium isn't hard; there aren't that many roads to take or turns to miss along the way.

It's there, on Susan Bentley Field, that the Thorsby Rebels took on rival Jemison High School on Thursday night in their first game of the season. Prep football is returning in a high-stakes test of whether players can crash into each other, fans can scream and bands can play without worsening the coronavirus pandemic.

The mayor, who volunteers as a sideline official, is leery yet hopeful the town can avoid a virus outbreak.

The game began with Thorsby, in maroon uniforms, kicking off to Jemison in white. A big cheer went up when Jemison scored a touchdown on its first possession. Anyone entering the stadium was supposed to wear a face covering, but many didn't.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 56 of 87

Others donned masks just outside the chain-link fence and took them off once inside. Hundreds of people filled concrete bleachers, and dozens more stood along the fence that ringed field. Some family groups were spread out, and few people wore masks.

Wearing a clear shield over her face, Carolyn Endress tilted her head back to take a photo of one of her two grandchildren who play in Jemison's marching band. She said it was good to have football back. "I wish it was under better conditions though," she said.

While school and athletics officials said they were taking multiple precautions as dozens of games kick off across Alabama on Thursday night and Friday, some teams already have canceled games after players or coaches were infected during summer practice.

Steve Savarese, executive director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association, said the road to the first game was a challenge.

"I'm just excited to watch our students, our coaches and administrators, spectators ... take an escape from the health challenges we all are facing and just enjoying life again," he told a news conference recently.

The coronavirus has infected more than 106,000 people in Alabama and killed at least 1,876, and reminders of the toll will be everywhere. Tape covers seats at some stadiums to keep fans spread out; concessions options are limited in places and bands and cheerleaders may not travel to away games.

While schools in Utah already have staged games, 16 states including California and Illinois are not playing prep football at all this fall, according to the National Federations of State High School Associations. Others are playing with altered schedules or new pandemic rules.

In rural Chilton County at Thorsby, fans were supposed to wear a mask to enter and stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart once inside the gate. Thorsby only has five police and school staffs are small, leaving personal responsibility as the main enforcer.

The schools are in neighboring farming towns that lie along U.S. 31 about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Birmingham, and Clements expected paid attendance of at least 1,000 people, the equivalent of about half of Thorsby's population.

Thorsby coach Daryl Davis said the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has yet to show up among his players, and hopes it stays that way. "We've been fortunate," he said.

But firefighters, police and other city workers already have been sickened, and a pharmacy in Jemison temporarily shut down after a worker was infected. Thorsby Mayor Robert Hight fears a fresh outbreak if people don't take the threat seriously.

"They've got their guides that they're going by, but I don't know how it's going to go. I hope they use common sense," said Hight. His college-age son had a mild case of COVID-19 as it surged in the area following July 4 parties at a nearby lake.

The state granted approval for fans to attend games but left it up to local school districts to set rules for limiting the spread of the virus. Some systems limited stadium capacity to as little as 25% of normal and encouraged electronic tickets. Others, like Thorsby, did not cut capacity but required masks and asked people to stay apart.

Infections have been on a downward trend in Alabama since a spike blamed on July 4 crowds prompted a statewide order requiring masks in public places when distancing can't be maintained.

There also are rules changes and recommendations for safety during football. No team handshakes are being allowed. Team areas on sidelines have been expanded to allow for social distancing, and referees can wear face masks and use electronic whistles to avoid spit flying at the end of each play.

But Dr. Ellen Eaton, an infectious disease specialist with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said the football action on the field might not be as risky for transmitting the virus as activities commonly associated with the season.

"It's our culture: You have a meal together, you ride together, maybe you spend the night," she said. "It's what makes it fun."

While people can develop symptoms within days of exposure to the virus, it will probably take a few weeks to see whether restarting schools and allowing athletic competitions worsens the pandemic, Eaton said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 57 of 87

"I think late August, early September we'll begin to see infections if we're going to," she said. "And then we'll be ready for Labor Day and all that may bring."

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

Minnesota wins NBA draft lottery, rights to No. 1 pick

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

The NBA draft lottery was delayed three months. The Minnesota Timberwolves are certainly feeling like the wait was worthwhile.

The Timberwolves won the lottery Thursday night, giving them the No. 1 pick. The lottery was conducted virtually because of the pandemic, with NBA officials doing the actual draw in Secaucus, New Jersey.

Golden State holds the No. 2 pick, Charlotte got the No. 3 pick and Chicago will pick fourth. The Hornets and Bulls both bucked some odds to move into the upper echelon.

"We know with the No. 1 pick we have the opportunity to draft an impact player who could immediately complement our young, strong core," Timberwolves President Gersson Rosas said.

Chicago had a 32% chance of moving into the top four spots, Charlotte about a 26% chance. They leapfrogged four teams that had better top-four odds — Cleveland, Atlanta, Detroit and New York.

"I'm pretty sure whoever we get, it's going to be exciting," Hornets guard Devonte' Graham said.

The draft, originally scheduled for June, is set for Oct. 16. But nobody knows yet when the new draft picks will make their NBA debuts, since the start of the 2020-21 season is not yet determined.

The NBA had been hoping for a Dec. 1 start to the 2020-21 season, though Commissioner Adam Silver said on the ESPN telecast of that draft lottery that date now "is feeling a little bit early to me."

Without fans at games, a major revenue stream is obviously lost for the league and its teams. There have been talks about starting next season with one or multiple bubbles, like the one where the league is playing now at Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, but the obvious preference is to have fans returning to games.

"Our No. 1 goal is to get fans back in our arenas," Silver said on the telecast. "My sense is, in working with the players association, if we could push back even a little longer and increase the likelihood of having fans in arenas, that's what we would be targeting."

The Timberwolves were 19-45 this season, marking the 14th time in 15 years that they failed to make the playoffs and finished with a losing record. And a month ago, Glen Taylor — who has owned the franchise since 1994 — said he "will entertain" offers for the Timberwolves WNBA's Minnesota Lynx.

It'll be Minnesota's first time holding the No. 1 pick since 2015, when it took Karl-Anthony Towns.

The Warriors have another asset — either to trade or perhaps keep — now as they look toward next season. The Warriors went from five-time defending Western Conference champions to an NBA-worst 15-50 this season, having two-time MVP Stephen Curry for only five games largely because of injury and not having Klay Thompson at any point while he recovered from the ACL tear he suffered in the last game of the 2019 NBA Finals.

"I have no idea what the value is of that pick, how much people covet it and I don't think I'll know that anytime soon," Warriors general manager Bob Myers said. "But usually the No. 2 pick is pretty good. So I think we'll be happy what whatever options, whatever route we take."

Unlike a year ago, when Zion Williamson was clearly going to be the first selection, there is no consensus about the No. 1 pick. Top candidates include Georgia's Anthony Edwards, Memphis' James Wiseman and LaMelo Ball — the brother of New Orleans guard Lonzo Ball.

Edwards, a 6-foot-5 guard, averaged 19.1 points in 32 games for Georgia in his lone college season. Wiseman, a 7-foot-1 center, played in only three games for Memphis and averaged 19.7 points before giving up what had been a lengthy fight with the NCAA over his eligibility. Ball, a 6-foot-7 guard, averaged 17 points in 12 games while playing in Australia's top pro league this past season.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 58 of 87

Cleveland got the fifth pick, followed by Atlanta, Detroit, New York, Washington, Phoenix, San Antonio, Sacramento and New Orleans at No. 13.

Memphis, which had 200-1 odds of winning the No. 1 pick and was 97.6% certain of finishing 14th, ended up in exactly that spot — a pick that will now be conveyed to Boston as part of a trade that happened in 2015. It means the Celtics could have three first-round picks on draft night, barring any moves by Boston beforehand.

The rest of the first-round order, starting with the No. 15 pick and going to No. 30, as of now is: Orlando, Portland, Minnesota, Dallas, Brooklyn, Miami, Philadelphia, Denver, Utah, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Boston, New York, the Los Angeles Lakers, Toronto and Boston.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Ex-Trump aide Bannon pleads not guilty in border wall scheme

By LARRY NEUMEISTER, COLLEEN LONG and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, was pulled from a luxury yacht and arrested Thursday on allegations that he and three associates ripped off donors trying to fund a southern border wall, making him the latest in a long list of Trump allies to be charged with a crime.

The organizers of the "We Build The Wall" group portrayed themselves as eager to help the president build a "big beautiful" barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, as he promised during the 2016 campaign. They raised more than \$25 million from thousands of donors and pledged that 100% of the money would be used for the project.

But according to the criminal charges unsealed Thursday, much of the money never made it to the wall. Instead, it was used to line the pockets of group members, including Bannon, who served in Trump's White House and worked for his campaign.

He allegedly took over \$1 million, using some to secretly pay co-defendant Brian Kolfage, an Air Force veteran who lost both legs in a mortar attack in Iraq and the founder of the project, and to cover hundreds of thousands of dollars in personal expenses.

"This case should serve as a warning to other fraudsters that no one is above the law, not even a disabled war veteran or a millionaire political strategist," said Philip R. Bartlett, inspector-in-charge of the New York office of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which arrested Bannon aboard a luxury yacht at 7 a.m.

Hours after his arrest, Bannon, 66, of Washington, D.C., pleaded not guilty during an appearance in a Manhattan federal court. He is the latest addition to a startlingly long list of Trump associates who have been prosecuted, including his former campaign chair, Paul Manafort, whom Bannon replaced, his longtime lawyer, Michael Cohen, and his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

Trump has also made clear that he is willing to use his near-limitless pardon power to help political allies escape legal jeopardy, most recently commuting the sentence of longtime political adviser Roger Stone.

Bannon was taken into custody on a 150-foot (45-meter) yacht called Lady May, which was off the coast of Connecticut, authorities said. The boat is owned by exiled Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui and currently for sale for nearly \$28 million. According to Marine Traffic, a commercial tracking service, the vessel's transponder signal went dark on June 17, shortly after it departed a port in Connecticut en route to Miami, potentially indicating its beacon was inoperable or had been turned off.

At his hearing, Bannon appeared by video with his hands cuffed in front of him and a white mask covering most of his face. He rocked back and forth on a chair in a holding cell with his lawyers on the telephone. The magistrate judge approved Bannon's release on \$5 million bail, secured by \$1.75 million in assets.

When he emerged from the courthouse, Bannon tore off his mask, smiled and waved to news cameras. As he went to a waiting vehicle, he shouted, "This entire fiasco is to stop people who want to build the wall."

Kolfage, 38, of Miramar Beach, Florida, did not respond to requests for comment. Also charged were Andrew Badolato, 56, of Sarasota, Florida, and Timothy Shea, 49, of Castle Rock, Colorado, the owner of an energy drink company called Winning Energy. The company's cans feature a cartoon superhero image

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 59 of 87

of Trump and claim to contain "12 oz. of liberal tears." Shea appeared at a brief virtual hearing in Denver.

Other prominent members of the wall group included former Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, its general counsel; Erik Prince, founder of the controversial security firm Blackwater; former Republican Rep. Tom Tancredo of Colorado; and former major league baseball pitcher Curt Schilling. They were not named in the indictment.

After the arrest, Trump quickly distanced himself from Bannon and the project.

"When I read about it, I didn't like it. I said this is for government, this isn't for private people. And it sounded to me like showboating," he told reporters at the White House.

An immigration plan unveiled by Trump last year included a proposal to allow the public to donate toward his long-promised wall, as the Kolfage group had originally said was its mission before shifting its focus to private construction. But Trump later denounced the project publicly, tweeting last month that he "disagreed with doing this very small (tiny) section of wall, in a tricky area, by a private group which raised money by ads" and claiming, "It was only done to make me look bad."

Attorney General William Barr told The Associated Press he had been made aware of the investigation into Bannon months ago but did not say whether the president had been informed.

According to the indictment, the defendants used fake invoices, another nonprofit and sham vendor arrangements to try to hide their efforts to siphon money. Under the arrangement, Bannon and his co-defendants allegedly paid Kolfage \$100,000 up front and an additional \$20,000 monthly, all while claiming they served as volunteers and that Kolfage was not paid.

The indictment said Kolfage "went so far as to send mass emails to his donors asking them to purchase coffee from his unrelated business, telling donors the coffee company was the only way he 'keeps his family fed and a roof over their head.'"

Kolfage eventually spent some of the over \$350,000 he received on home renovations, payments toward a boat, a luxury SUV, a golf cart, jewelry, cosmetic surgery, personal tax payments and credit card debt.

All four were charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Each charge carries a potential penalty of up to 20 years in prison.

Originally called "We the People Build the Wall," the campaign launched in December 2018 and raised approximately \$17 million in its first week. But it soon drew scrutiny, according to the indictment. The crowdfunding site that hosted the campaign suspended it and threatened to return donations unless the money was transferred to a legitimate nonprofit. Bannon was brought in around that time.

Dustin Stockton, who helped start the campaign and then left the project to work on the upcoming presidential election, said it seemed clear that prosecutors were "attacking political infrastructure that supports President Trump right before the election." He was not charged in the case.

Benjamin Harnwell, who with Bannon launched an institute in Italy to train future populists, called the indictment "spurious" and evidence that the "forces of darkness" would stop at nothing to destroy the combative Bannon.

A voice of nationalist, outsider conservatism, Bannon led the conservative Breitbart News before being tapped to serve as chief executive officer of Trump's campaign in its critical final months. He later served as chief strategist during the turbulent early days of Trump's administration and was at the forefront of many of its most contentious policies, including its travel ban on several majority-Muslim countries.

But Bannon, who clashed with other top advisers, was pushed out after less than a year. And his split with Trump deepened after he was quoted in a 2018 book making critical remarks about some of Trump's adult children. Bannon apologized and soon stepped down as chairman of Breitbart.

Bannon, who served in the Navy and worked as an investment banker at Goldman Sachs and as a Hollywood producer before turning to politics, now hosts a pro-Trump podcast called "War Room," which began during the president's impeachment proceedings and has continued during the pandemic.

A day before the indictment was unsealed, Kolfage was a featured guest on the show and solicited donations.

Long and Colvin reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Jennifer Peltz in New York; No-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 60 of 87

maan Merchant in Northbrook, Illinois; Cedar Attanasio in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Dave Collins in Hartford, Connecticut; Mike Balsamo in Cleveland; Nicole Winfield in Rome and Michael Biesecker in Washington contributed to this report.

Whitmer: \$600M Flint water deal a step toward making amends

By JOHN FLESHER and DAVID EGGERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A \$600 million deal between the state of Michigan and Flint residents who were harmed by lead-tainted water is a step toward making amends for a disaster that upended life in the poor, majority-Black city, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Thursday.

State officials and lawyers for Flint residents announced the settlement, which Attorney General Dana Nessel said likely would be the largest in Michigan history, with tens of thousands of potential claimants. It's designed primarily to benefit children, who were most vulnerable to the debilitating effects of lead that fouled drinking water after Flint switched its source to save money in 2014 while under supervision of a state financial manager.

City workers followed state environmental officials' advice not to use anti-corrosive additives. Without those treatments, water from the Flint River scraped lead from aging pipes and fixtures, contaminating tap water.

The disaster made Flint a nationwide symbol of governmental mismanagement, with residents of the city of nearly 100,000 lining up for bottled water and parents fearful their children had suffered permanent harm. A criminal investigation that has resulted in only misdemeanor no-contest pleas so far was resumed last year.

"What happened in Flint should have never happened, and financial compensation with this settlement is just one of the many ways we can continue to show our support for the city of Flint and its families," Whitmer, a Democrat, said.

Several judges must approve the agreement, which is intended to resolve all claims against the state. Residents can decline to take part and file separate lawsuits, but attorneys involved in the negotiations said they would urge their clients to participate.

"It's not perfect. But it is fair, it's reasonable, it's equitable," said attorney Michael Pitt.

Suits also have been filed against the city, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two engineering consulting firms. They could join the state settlement by contributing agreed-on sums to the \$600 million compensation fund.

The agreement establishes a process for submitting claims. Amounts awarded will depend on the number of claims and the extent of damage a person sustained between April 25, 2014, and July 31, 2016.

Nearly 80% will be distributed to claimants who were minors, with the largest share — 64.5% — going to those who were 6 or younger when first exposed to the contaminated water. About 30,000 children lived in Flint at the time.

Lead can harm people at any age but is especially dangerous to children, potentially damaging the brain and nervous system and causing learning and behavior problems.

Some 18% will go to adults and the rest to businesses or other specified relief programs.

Corey Stern, an attorney who represents about 2,600 minors, said many children likely would receive payments in the "high-five to low-six-figure" range, with those badly harmed getting even more. He described it as "the largest single settlement involving lead poisoned children in our nation's history."

Melissa Mays sued the state on behalf of her three sons, saying they have had medical and educational difficulties because of lead exposure.

"You can't fix this with money," Mays, a social worker, said. "You can help make our lives a little less horrid because in no way, shape or form should traumatized victims be scraping by just to survive month to month. In no way is this going to replace my kids' brains, their lungs, their livers, their learning ability."

At least \$9 million will be earmarked to settle a case involving kids who weren't being provided with special education services, said Gregory Little, an attorney with the Education Law Center.

Flint had long purchased drinking water from Detroit, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) south, but switched

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 61 of 87

to the Flint River in April 2014. It was among money-saving measures recommended by an emergency manager appointed by then-Gov. Rick Snyder.

Residents complained that the water was discolored and tasted and smelled bad. They blamed it for rashes, hair loss and other health concerns, but local and state officials insisted it was safe.

Researchers with Virginia Tech University reported in summer 2015 that samples of Flint water had abnormally high lead levels. A group of doctors subsequently announced that local children had high lead levels in their blood.

Snyder, a Republican, eventually acknowledged the problem, accepted the resignation of his environmental chief and pledged to aid the city, which resumed using Detroit water.

Many residents used bottled water for drinking and household needs for more than a year. Researchers said in late 2016 that lead was no longer detectable in many homes.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a Flint pediatrician who led the investigation that discovered the high lead levels in children, said it will take decades to restore trust.

"I am hopeful this settlement serves as a reminder of Flint's lessons: where the perfect storm of environmental injustice, indifferent bureaucracy, lost democracy and austerity, compounded by decades of racism and deindustrialization, left a city powerless and forgotten," she said.

Flesher reported from Traverse City, Michigan. AP reporter Ed White in Detroit and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that pleas to criminal charges were no-contest instead of guilty.

After 5 months, AMC Theaters reopens its doors, cautiously

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

WEST HOMESTEAD, Pa (AP) — The doors to the AMC Waterfront 22 were locked. They had been for five months, along with most indoor theaters in the U.S. because of COVID-19. But in 20 minutes that was about to change and four people in masks were already gathered outside the theater 8 miles southeast of Pittsburgh in eager anticipation. They were there to see the Vin Diesel movie "Bloodshot" for 15 cents a ticket. After so many months, 20 extra minutes didn't seem like all that long to wait.

The lights started slowly coming back on in theaters nationwide Thursday with AMC Theaters, the country's largest chain, leading the charge.

AMC opened some 113 locations across the U.S., advertising retro pricing and retro screenings to entice audiences back to the movies. Regal, the second largest exhibitor, is following suit Friday. It's been a long-time coming for the beleaguered businesses, which had several false starts due to coronavirus spikes.

When the doors at the West Homestead theater finally opened, masked employees stood in the lobby to greet patrons and help them navigate the new safety protocols inside, where masks are required (except when eating and drinking concessions) and the sick are asked to stay home. Pretty soon, the number of customers had doubled and in time there was a steady stream of people of all ages coming through the doors ready to experience the big screen again.

"My son and I counted the days until it reopened. We love coming to the movies. That's why we're here," said Betty Gallagher. "And today's 15 cents, so that was another incentive."

The "1920s pricing" was a main draw for most of those early customers. One 58-year-old man, Jerome Heslin, said he hadn't been to a theater in over 40 years, but the price got him back.

"It's a nice thing to do," Heslin said.

After opening day, the back-catalog films from "Black Panther" to "Grease" will cost \$5 a ticket.

For others, it was something to do with their children. Leslie Lopez came out with her 5-year-old daughter to see the live-action "Beauty and the Beast," as did Lindsey Adams with her 3-year-old, bedecked in Belle's golden ball gown.

Neither were concerned about COVID-19.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 62 of 87

"We have our masks on and our hand sanitizer and we're taking our precautions," Adams said. "We're sure the theater has done everything they could."

There was a bit of a learning curve for some patrons when it came to the new safety and social distancing protocols. Some wandered in with masks down by their chins (an employee quickly approached them to ask that they cover their faces). Others were surprised that concessions were cash only. And at least one family was extremely disappointed to find out that the movie they wanted to see was already sold out.

But others had already mastered the art of ordering concessions online, like Eileen Nucci and her husband, who simply told the employees their name and were handed their food and cups in a paper shopping bag.

"It was easy," Nucci said. "We're just happy to be here."

They weren't alone. Even without a new movie in the bunch, within 30 minutes, 17 of the 20 showtimes had sold out and all that remained were a few tickets for "The Goonies," "Jumanji: The Next Level" and the Christian film "I Still Believe." Tickets for "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Back to the Future" had already been gone for days.

A sellout, however, isn't exactly what it used to be. AMC is only selling to 30% capacity, which in this location meant about 25 people per screen. Each film only gets two screenings a day to give employees ample time to clean. And showtimes are also being staggered to help prevent too many people from congregating in the lobby.

New movies are soon to follow, though, which the theaters are counting on for survival. Disney's much-delayed "New Mutants" will debut on Aug. 28 and Christopher Nolan's "Tenet" will follow soon after, with some screenings as early as Aug. 31.

At least one patron was a little reticent to come back.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to, but then I saw they were playing 'The Empire Strikes Back,' one of my all-time favorites, and I'm like, 'I'll see how bad it is with the mask. It's only a couple of hours,'" said Jason Parks.

It'd been a few years since he'd seen the "Star Wars" film on the big screen. He even wore his Luke and Vader lightsaber fight t-shirt for the occasion.

But he's not entirely sure yet if he'll be rushing to the theater again soon.

"It all depends on how I feel after today," Parks said. "If this is a little too much, maybe not, but as of right now it's not too bad."

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ldbahr

Rise in jobless claims reflects still-struggling US economy

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The coronavirus recession struck swiftly and violently. Now, with the U.S. economy still in the grip of the outbreak five months later, the recovery looks fitful and uneven — and painfully slow.

The latest evidence came Thursday, when the government reported that the number of workers applying for unemployment climbed back over 1 million last week after two weeks of declines.

The figures suggest that employers are still slashing jobs even as some businesses reopen and some sectors like housing and manufacturing have rebounded.

"Getting the virus in check dictates when there'll be relief from this economic nightmare, and it doesn't look like it will be soon," said AnnElizabeth Konkel, an economist at Indeed, a job listings website.

The scourge in the U.S. has killed more than 170,000 people and caused over 5.5 million confirmed infections, with deaths rising by more than 1,000 a day on average. Worldwide, the death toll stands at about 790,000, with over 22 million cases.

The overall number of laid-off American workers collecting unemployment benefits declined last week from 15.5 million to 14.8 million. Many of them probably found jobs. But some may have used up all their benefits, which in most states run out after about six months.

In Europe, meanwhile, fears mounted over rising infections, many of them attributed to vacationers and young people lowering their guard.

Italy added nearly 850 cases to its count, with Sardinia becoming a hot spot because of people partying

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 63 of 87

at nightclubs and other spots without masks. Greece reported 269 new infections, matching a record high set two days earlier. Amid a surge in Spain, emergency coordinator Fernando Simón said younger people should take into account the risk of infecting older relatives.

"Nobody should be fooled. Things are not going well," he said.

In France, President Emmanuel Macron insisted the country will send millions of students back to school starting Sept. 1, despite the biggest weekly spike in cases since the height of the outbreak in March and April — over 18,000.

"The return to school will happen" in the coming days, Macron said. "We will not bring our countries to a halt, but we will have to learn to live with the virus."

Elsewhere around the world, India logged a record 69,652 confirmed infections in a single day.

In the U.S., the previous weekly report from the Labor Department showed new jobless claims had dipped below 1 million for the first time since March, to 971,000. But that trend reversed itself this time.

Many businesses and consumers remain paralyzed by uncertainty and restricted by lockdowns, and job gains appear to be slowing from the rapid bounce-backs of May and June, when millions of restaurant and store employees were rehired. The number of job openings posted on Indeed fell last week for the first time since April.

Twenty-two million jobs were lost to the outbreak in March and April. In the past three months, only 9.3 million have been regained, and unemployment remains high at 10.2%.

Until the virus can be brought under control, economists agree, any recovery is destined to remain weak.

Kronos, a company that makes time-tracking software for small businesses, said the number of shifts worked by its clients is barely growing after rising steadily in the previous three months. Shifts worked are stuck at about 10% below their pre-pandemic level.

"It's increasingly clear that the last 10% of the recovery will be the most challenging," said Dave Gilbertson, a vice president at Kronos.

At the same time, those who are drawing unemployment are now getting far less aid because a \$600-a-week federal benefit has expired, which means they must get by solely on the much smaller benefits from their states. That has deepened the struggle for many and put some in danger of eviction.

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order to provide \$300 a week in federal unemployment aid. Twenty-eight states so far have said they will dispense it, though they would need to revamp their computer systems, and it could take a few weeks for the money to start flowing to some recipients. Arizona said Monday it has started paying out the extra \$300 this week, the first state to do so.

While home construction and sales have bounced back along with auto purchases, small businesses are struggling, and spending on travel, entertainment and many other services is still weak. While more Americans are eating at restaurants, seated dining is still 54% below pre-pandemic levels, according to OpenTable.

Daniel Zhao, an economist at Glassdoor, an employment website, said the industries with the largest increase in job openings are health care and e-commerce and delivery services. But those gains reflect mainly responses to the outbreak rather than economic growth.

Thursday's report showed that in addition to people who applied last week for state benefits, roughly 540,000 others sought aid under a new program that has made self-employed and gig workers eligible for the first time. That figure isn't adjusted for seasonal variations, so it is reported separately.

Including the self-employed and gig workers brings to 28 million the number of people receiving some form of jobless aid, though that figure may include double-counting in some states. That number is little changed from a week earlier.

State unemployment benefits average about \$308 a week. Louisiana pays the nation's lowest average, \$183, Hawaii the highest, \$456.

For John Williams, a former cabdriver in Slidell, Louisiana, just outside New Orleans, the loss of the \$600 in federal benefits landed him in a food bank line this week, waiting for groceries. He now receives just \$107 in state unemployment aid, which is all that he qualifies for based on his previous income.

Before the virus dried up most of his business, Williams, 77, used to pick up fares at the New Orleans

airport. Now, besides his jobless aid, he receives about \$300 a month from Social Security and a small pension from a previous job as a maintenance man in the city's school system. He can barely cover his mortgage.

Williams has gone two days without taking his blood pressure medication because when he went to have it refilled, the cost had doubled.

"I'm hanging in there, doing the best I can," he said.

AP Writer Rebecca Santana in New Orleans and National Writer Jocelyn Noveck in New York contributed to this report.

1 in 5 nursing homes short on PPE and staff in virus rebound

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One in five U.S. nursing homes faced severe shortages of protective gear like N95 masks this summer even as the Trump administration pledged to help, according to a study released Thursday that finds facilities in areas hard-hit by COVID-19 also struggled to keep staff.

Significantly, there was no improvement from May to July in the shortages of personal protective equipment, known as PPE, or in the staffing shortfalls, according to the analysis of federal data by academic researchers. The summer has seen the coronavirus surge across the South, and much of the West and Midwest.

People living in long-term care facilities represent less than 1% of the U.S. population, but account for 43% of coronavirus deaths, according to the COVID Tracking Project. Similar glaring disparities have been seen with nursing home residents in other countries, but in the U.S. the issue has become politically sensitive for President Donald Trump, who is trying to hang on to support from older voters in his reelection bid.

"A study that shows that 1 in 5 nursing homes has a severe shortage of PPE and a shortage of staff, and that it did not change from May to July, should be a massive red flag," said Terry Fulmer, president of the John A. Hartford Foundation, a nonprofit that works to improve care for older adults.

"We have had no coherent federal response," added Fulmer, who was not involved in the research.

Reacting to the study, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said in a statement that the Trump administration "has provided nursing homes the tools they need to stop the virus' spread and, ultimately, each nursing home is responsible for its residents' safety." CMS sets nursing home standards and pays for much of the care.

The study published in the journal Health Affairs looked at two periods of four weeks each earlier this summer, from mid-May to mid-June, and from the latter part of June to mid-July. Large outbreaks in nursing homes have been reported in many states since the end of February.

Researchers from the University of Rochester in New York, Harvard Medical School and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health analyzed data provided by nursing homes to the government at the behest of the Medicare and Medicaid agency, CMS.

They found that during the early part of the summer, 20.7% percent of nursing homes reported a severe PPE shortage, with one week or less of available supply. Shortages of N95 masks — recommended for health care providers — were the most common. The situation had barely changed by midsummer, with 19.1% of nursing homes reporting severe shortages.

As far as staff shortages, 20.8% of nursing homes reported deficiencies in early summer. Commonly those involved nurses and nursing aides. By midsummer, 21.9% of nursing homes reported staff shortages.

Adequate levels of protective equipment and nursing staff are essential components in any infection control plan, experts say, and persistent shortages can feed a vicious cycle that raises risks both for residents and staff.

The study found that high rates of PPE shortages were seen in Iowa, Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee, which have struggled to contain the virus this summer.

Nursing homes that reported PPE shortages were more likely to be for-profit, part of a chain, and to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 65 of 87

have COVID-19 cases among residents and staff.

The report found high rates of staff shortages clustered in the South and Midwest, especially Louisiana, Alabama, eastern Texas and Georgia.

Facilities that were government-owned, received higher shares of their earnings from Medicaid, and had lower quality ratings were more likely to confront staffing shortages.

"We have been slow to provide resources to nursing homes, and when we have provided them, they have been inadequate," said Harvard health policy professor David Grabowski, one of the study authors.

An initial federal effort to supply PPE was widely panned by nursing homes, and Grabowski said a new push to supply N95 masks will probably come up short unless it is sustained. There are about 1 million shifts a day total in nursing homes, he said, and that means very large quantities of N95 masks are needed.

Separately, the Trump administration is trying to supply 14,000 nursing homes with fast-test machines to screen residents and staff for COVID-19. That effort is underway, but isn't scheduled to be completed until the end of September.

"The federal government should really own this issue," Grabowski said.

Addressing staffing shortages is seen as the more difficult problem, since nursing home pay is low, and with COVID-19, health risks to workers are high. Grabowski said Congress should earmark money to raise the wages of caregivers. But coronavirus legislation is stalled.

Foundation executive Fulmer said she's forecasting that the staffing shortage in nursing homes will only get worse.

"These individuals are putting themselves and their families at risk, when they can get minimum wage in other ways," Fulmer said. "People are just going to say, 'Enough is enough.'"

Florida Keys to release modified mosquitoes to fight illness

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Sometime next year, genetically modified mosquitoes will be released in the Florida Keys in an effort to combat persistent insect-borne diseases such as Dengue fever and the Zika virus.

The plan approved this week by the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District calls for a pilot project in 2021 involving the striped-legged *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is not native to Florida. But it does transmit several diseases to humans, particularly in the Keys island chain where nearly 50 cases of Dengue fever have been reported so far this year.

The plan by the Oxitec biotechnology company is to release millions of male, genetically-altered mosquitoes to mate with the females that bite humans because they need the blood. The male mosquitoes, which don't bite, would contain a genetic change in a protein that would render any female offspring unable to survive — thus reducing the population of the insects that transmit disease, in theory.

Kevin Gorman, an Oxitec scientist, said Thursday in a phone interview from the United Kingdom that the company has successfully done such projects in the Cayman Islands and Brazil.

"It's gone extremely well," Gorman said. "We have released over a billion of our mosquitoes over the years. There is no potential for risk to the environment or humans."

Oxitec points to numerous studies by government agencies, ranging from the Environmental Protection Agency to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that underscore the safety of the project. Several Florida government agencies have approved it as well.

Yet, there are people who worry about using genetically-modified organisms, or GMOs, that they believe could alter the planet's natural balance. At a meeting Tuesday of the Florida Keys mosquito control board, several people questioned the wisdom of the project.

"You have no idea what that will do," Barry Wray, director of the Florida Keys Environmental Coalition, told the board.

Whether or not the modified mosquitoes can efficiently crash the population of these mosquitoes in Florida remains an open question, some experts say.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 66 of 87

"The mosquitoes created in a lab have not gone through a natural selection process, in which only the fittest survive and mate. Once they are released in the natural environment, will they be as fit as the naturally occurring males and able to outcompete them for mates?" said Max Moreno, an expert in mosquito-borne diseases at Indiana University who is not involved in the company or the pilot project.

Another question is whether the mosquitoes may have other unintended effects on the environment. If a spider, frog or bird eats the mosquito, will the modified protein have any effect on the predator?

"An ecosystem is so complicated and involves so many species, it would be almost impossible to test them all in advance in a lab," said Moreno.

Still, Keys mosquito board members voted 4-1 in favor of the project. One of the supporters, Jill Cranny-Gage, said at the meeting that insecticides and other chemical means have become less effective against the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

"The science is there. This is something Monroe County needs," Cranny-Gage said. "We're trying everything in our power, and we're running out of options."

Associated Press writer Christina Larson in Washington contributed to this report.

Russia's Navalny in coma, allegedly poisoned by toxic tea

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, one of Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, lay in a coma Friday at a Siberian hospital, the victim of what his allies said appeared to be a poisoning engineered by the Kremlin.

Navalny's organization was scrambling to make arrangements to transfer him to Germany for treatment; a German group said it was ready to send a plane for him and that a noted hospital in Berlin was ready to treat him.

The 44-year-old Navalny fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from the Siberian city of Tomsk on Thursday and was taken to a hospital after the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk, Navalny's spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, said on Twitter.

She told the Echo Moskvy radio station that he must have consumed poison in tea he drank at an airport cafe before boarding the plane early Thursday. During the flight, Navalny started sweating and asked her to talk to him so that he could "focus on the sound of a voice." He then went to the bathroom and lost consciousness, and has been in a coma and on a ventilator in grave condition ever since.

In a video statement released early Friday in Omsk, Yarmysh said Navalny remained in critical condition and she called on the hospital's leadership "not to obstruct us from providing all necessary documents for his transfer." It was not clear what the possible obstructions could be.

Other opposition figures were quick to suggest Kremlin involvement.

"We are sure that the only people that have the capability to target Navalny or myself are Russian security services with definite clearance from Russia's political leadership," Pyotr Verzilov, a member of the protest group Pussy Riot who ended up in intensive care after suspected poisoning in 2018, told The Associated Press. "We believe that Putin definitely is a person who gives that go-ahead in this situation."

Jaka Bizilj of the German organization Cinema For Peace, which arranged for Verzilov's treatment in Germany, said that at Verzilov's request "we will send at midnight an air ambulance with medical equipment and specialists with which Navalny can be brought to Germany."

Omsk is about 4,200 kilometers (2,500 miles) east of Berlin, roughly a six-hour flight.

Doctors at Omsk Ambulance Hospital No. 1, where the politician was being treated, remained tight-lipped about his diagnosis saying only that they were considering a variety of theories, including poisoning. Local health officials said they found no indication that Navalny had suffered from a heart attack, stroke or the coronavirus.

Authorities initially refused to let Navalny's wife, Yulia, see her husband and have rejected requests for documentation that would allow him to be transferred to a European hospital for treatment, Yarmysh said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 67 of 87

Verzilov, who was flown to Berlin for treatment in 2018, said hospitals in Omsk or Moscow would not be able to treat Navalny properly and expressed concern about possible pressure from security services that doctors could be under in Russia.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was necessary to wait for test results showing what caused Navalny's condition, adding the authorities would consider a request to allow Navalny to leave Russia, which has not fully opened its borders after a coronavirus lockdown, for treatment.

State news agency Tass reported that police were not considering deliberate poisoning, a statement the politician's allies dismissed.

Reports about the alleged poisoning made waves in the West.

French President Emmanuel Macron said France was ready to offer Navalny and his family "all necessary assistance ... in terms of health care, asylum, protection" and insisted on the need to clarify what happened.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking at a joint news conference with Macron, echoed that sentiment. "What is very important is that it will be clarified very urgently how it could come to the situation."

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and the United Nations also expressed concern over what happened to Navalny, and Amnesty International demanded a full and thorough investigation.

The widow of Alexander Litvinenko, the Russian agent who was killed in London by radioactive poisoning in 2006, voiced concern that Navalny's enemies within Russia may have decided that it's time to use a "new tactic."

"Maybe they decided ... not to stop him just with an arrest but to stop him with poison. It looks like a new tactic against Navalny," Marina Litvinenko told The Associated Press from Sicily, Italy.

Like many other opposition politicians in Russia, Navalny has been frequently detained by law enforcement and harassed by pro-Kremlin groups. In 2017, he was attacked by several men who threw antiseptic in his face, damaging an eye.

Last year, Navalny was rushed to a hospital from prison, where he was serving a sentence following an administrative arrest, with what his team said was suspected poisoning. Doctors said he had a severe allergic attack and discharged him back to prison the following day.

Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption has been exposing graft among government officials, including some at the highest level. Last month, he had to shut the foundation after a financially devastating lawsuit from Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin.

Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko accused Navalny last week of organizing unprecedented mass protests against his re-election that have rocked Russia's ex-Soviet neighbor since Aug. 9. He did not, however, provide any evidence and that claim was one of many blaming foreign forces for the unrest.

The most prominent member of Russia's opposition, Navalny campaigned to challenge Putin in the 2018 presidential election, but was barred from running.

He set up campaign offices across Russia and has been promoting opposition candidates in regional elections, challenging members of Russia's ruling party, United Russia. One of his associates in Khabarovsk, a city in Russia's Far East that has been engulfed in mass protests against the arrest of the region's governor, was detained last week after calling for a strike at a rally.

In the interview with Echo Moskvyy, Yarmysh said she believed the suspected poisoning was connected to this year's regional election campaign.

Commentators say Navalny has become increasingly dangerous for the Kremlin as Putin's approval rating has plummeted to a record low of around 60% amid the coronavirus pandemic and growing public frustration with the declining economy.

Navalny's ability to mobilize voters against pro-Kremlin candidates poses a particular challenge ahead of the 2021 parliamentary elections, said Abbas Gallyamov, a former Kremlin speechwriter-turned-political analyst.

"The Duma elections are particularly important for the Kremlin," as the new Duma will be operating in 2024, when Putin's current presidential term expires and he may announce running for re-election, Gal-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 68 of 87

lyamov told the AP.

"That's why controlling the next State Duma is crucially important for the Kremlin. Navalny really makes it harder for the Kremlin to establish that control," Gallyamov added.

At the same time Navalny, who rose to prominence by exposing corruption all over Russia, could have other enemies, Gallyamov said, and may have been targeted by people featured in one of his investigations, if he was indeed deliberately poisoned.

Navalny is not the first opposition figure to come down with a mysterious poisoning.

Verzilov, who spent a month in a hospital recovering from his suspected 2018 poisoning, told the AP that Navalny's initial symptoms — loss of coordination, pain, fainting — were very similar to his.

Opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza was hospitalized with poisoning symptoms twice — in 2015 and 2017. Prominent journalist Anna Politkovskaya was also reportedly poisoned in 2004 — two years before being murdered.

On Thursday evening, activists in several Russian cities held protests in support of Navalny. In St. Petersburg, a crowd of about 100 people gathered in the city center, and several supporters were detained.

"It was actually in the interests of the authorities to safeguard him," Yegor Batozhok, 34, a municipal deputy in St. Petersburg, told the AP. "But for some reason a number of those who criticize the authorities get poisoned."

Associated Press writers Irina Titova in St. Petersburg, Angela Charlton in Paris, Pan Pylas in London, Alexander Roslyakov and Jim Heintz in Moscow and Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin contributed.

NY lets voters get absentee ballots due to virus concerns

By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York will allow voters to request absentee ballots for the general election because of an outbreak — like coronavirus — under a new state law signed Thursday.

New Yorkers can now vote by absentee in any election through Jan. 1, 2022, over concern about voting in-person during an epidemic or disease outbreak. For weeks, Democrats and voting rights groups had called on Gov. Andrew Cuomo to sign the legislation, which the Democratic-led Legislature passed in late July.

Voters were allowed to vote by absentee ballots in the June primary because of virus concerns. New York typically only allows voters to request absentee ballots if they fall into one of several categories, including absence from one's county on Election Day.

Voters in New York can start requesting absentee ballots immediately under another bill Cuomo signed.

New York's new legislation comes amid growing concerns about the impact of cost-cutting moves at the United States Postal Service, a potential surge in the pandemic this fall and mailing delays and other issues that plagued the June primary. An unknown number of voters didn't receive their ballot until Election Day or after, fueling calls by voting rights group for a ballot-tracking system across New York.

Some lawmakers have proposed reducing reliance on the mail by allowing drop boxes outside the usual confines of voting sites and local election offices. But State Board of Elections spokesperson John Conklin told The Associated Press it's "unlikely" New York has the time to buy enough drop boxes to widely expand their use for November.

Election officials are expecting an even bigger flood of mail-in votes in November than for the June primary, after which results were delayed for six weeks.

Election officers worked through the pandemic to process 1.8 million requests for absentee ballots in a primary that saw nearly 40% of votes cast by absentee ballot — a monumental sum in a state whose long-restrictive absentee-voting system involves fewer than 1 in 10 voters in typical elections.

Unlike New York, 34 states allow residents to vote absentee without citing a specific excuse, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. New York state lawmakers who want to allow no-excuse voting would have to pass a proposed state constitutional amendment a second time in the next Legisla-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 69 of 87

ture to send it to voters for ratification.

Some states, including Missouri and Massachusetts, have already expanded absentee voting this year, while similar legislation is pending in Connecticut.

Other voting-related legislation, including a bill to pass an automatic electronic system of voter registration, is still under review, according to Cuomo's office.

As of early Thursday afternoon, Cuomo had not signed a bill to notify voters of issues with their absentee ballots — such as the lack of signature — and allow voters to fix them. Some state election officials calling for additional funding and time to process ballots this November from lawmakers — along with patience from voters — have warned the measure will fuel more delays.

It's unclear how the state and Postal Service will fix several issues with mail-in voting ahead of the November election.

Earlier this year, Cuomo announced the state would mail applications for absentee ballots with prepaid postage to all registered voters. His office didn't immediately respond Thursday when asked whether he'll do so for November as well.

But the Postal Service failed to postmark all ballots sent with the prepaid postage in the June primary, even though it's their policy to do so.

Over 4,800 ballot envelopes in Brooklyn lacked a postmark while the four other boroughs saw fewer than 100 ballots without postmarks, according to Robert Brehm, the state elections board's co-executive director. He said the state received complaints from upstate counties as well.

"I am sure you agree that is an unacceptably high number," Brehm said, in an Aug. 10 letter asking the Postal Service how it'll avoid more voter disenfranchisement in November.

Brehm cited a federal judge who found that "discrepancy" in the diverse borough — whose minority communities were hard-hit by the coronavirus — was unconstitutional.

"As you are aware, a lack of a postmark results in disenfranchising voters, and our efforts should focus on preventing such disenfranchisement," he said.

Another new state law Cuomo signed Thursday would let election officials count a ballot even if it wasn't postmarked, at long as it arrived by the day after Election Day.

Still, lawmakers haven't addressed the fate of ballots without a postmark that arrived several days after the June primary, and whether the state will accept such ballots in November.

Meanwhile, state and local election commissioners are calling on New York to prevent delays and give poll workers more time and funding to prepare.

The Postal Service asked New York on July 30 to require voters to request a ballot at least 15 days before the Nov. 3 election, up from seven days currently.

Brehm endorsed pushing back the deadline in a recent legislative hearing, but Cuomo and lawmakers haven't indicated whether they'll do so.

And Brehm is urging the Postal Service to avoid a repeat of the 2017 November election, when large batches of absentee ballot envelopes in Brooklyn weren't delivered until late April in 2018.

He said the postal service expected the city to pick up the ballots per a verbal agreement.

The Postal Service didn't respond to request for comment Wednesday or Thursday.

Virtual Emmys: Less walking, talking, but beware the Wi-Fi

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a typical Hollywood awards show, it's the orchestra's task to nudge off winners whose acceptance speeches wander into overtime. In a virtual ceremony, the internet could give them an unintentional boot.

A balky online connection is among the pitfalls that may face next month's prime-time Emmy Awards, forced into socially distanced safety by the coronavirus pandemic.

Whether ABC and the ceremony's producers decide to gamble on mixing live and pre-taped elements remains to be seen, with planning for the Sept. 20 event hosted by Jimmy Kimmel under wraps.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 70 of 87

The risks and rewards of going live are well-known to Adam Sharp, head of the New York-based TV academy that administers Emmys for programs outside of prime-time series; those are under the auspices of the LA-based TV academy.

He has already soldiered through the daytime and sports Emmy ceremonies that were in the vanguard of an unprecedented awards season. The Aug. 11 sports awards tackled a challenging live presentation.

"We were at the mercy of the home internet gods," said Sharp, with presenters and nominees using desktop computers and tablets to take part in the online ceremony.

It came off without major glitches but there "were certainly those who were cursing out their internet connections," said Sharp, president of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences that's presenting the Sept. 21 and 22 news and documentary Emmys online.

The Daytime Emmys took the cautious route in June, with hosts, presenters and even acceptance speeches pre-taped. Nominees were invited to submit videos to be aired if they won.

Sharp and Maury McIntyre, president of the Los Angeles-based Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, have discussed staging remote ceremonies minus the sizzle of red-carpet glamour and halls packed with celebrities.

McIntyre got a taste of orchestrating a live virtual event when the nominations were revealed last month, with host Leslie Jones in a studio and presenters Josh Gad, Tatiana Maslany, and Laverne Cox at home.

After fretting about dropped Wi-Fi connections during the brief online announcement, McIntyre recalled, he told Sharp he was surprised that his Emmy experiences to date hadn't led to an ulcer.

"I don't know how I'm going to live through the night," McIntyre said of the telecast that's handled by the network in consultation with the academy.

Top contenders include "Watchmen," "Succession," "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" and "Ozark."

The three-hour ceremony is meant as entertainment and a tribute to the past TV season's achievements. Both require big-name nominees to participate.

Among the stars vying for trophies: Regina King and Jeremy Irons (for "Watchmen"); Jennifer Aniston ("The Morning Show"); Mahershala Ali ("Ramy"); Cate Blanchett ("Mrs. America"); and Don Cheadle ("Black Monday").

Nominees got a sense of what's ahead in a letter from the producers, including Kimmel, that mixed cheerleading and cajoling. The goal, they wrote, is to ensure that the ceremony is "not compromised by this crazy moment in our lives."

"It's still going to be TV industry's biggest night out... but we'll come to you!" they wrote, promising to assemble a top-notch team of technicians, writers and others to "make you look fabulous" with good cameras and lighting at home or another location of choice.

Before COVID-19 hit, the Emmys were to have been held in the 7,100-seat Microsoft Theatre in downtown Los Angeles. There is overlap between real and virtual ceremonies — the split screen that shows each nominee in a box, a la Zoom meetings or "The Brady Bunch" opening, as the choice is announced.

In the online sports ceremony, the winner's square quickly expanded to fill the screen.

There are advantages to going virtual, Sharp said, including shorter acceptance speeches.

"I don't know if that is because they (winners) are in their homes, and they're not looking out at a room of people and constantly being reminded of people they forgot to thank," he said.

An element that was rendered moot by a virtual ceremony provided an unexpected benefit: That glad-handing saunter or even sprint to the stage by each winner sucks up a lot of time.

"Anywhere between 15 and 22 minutes of our show is generally walking to the stage, or presenters walking from behind stage to the mic," McIntyre said. "Just a lot of walking."

That allowed for something more compelling for the Sports Emmys, as some presenters had space to conduct on-the-fly interviews. When "What's My Name: Muhammad Ali Part I" was honored as best long documentary, a discussion ensued on how the boxing great and activist might reflect on the confluence of sports and today's Black Lives Matter protests.

Producers can work effectively within the constraints imposed on them by the virus, said Don Mischer, a

veteran producer whose credits include the Oscars and Emmys. But it's the unscripted moments that count. "If there's not a surprise winner, and there's not that poignant, tearful acceptance speech or the feeling that somebody's in a life-defining moment," Mischer said, "then no matter what you do, it's not going to work out as well as you hoped."

Online:

<https://theemmys.tv/>

<https://www.emmys.com/>

Lynn Elber can be reached on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lynnelber>.

'Tiger King' zoo closes after animal treatment investigation

WYNNEWOOD, Okla. (AP) — The Oklahoma zoo featured in Netflix's "Tiger King" documentary has closed after federal authorities investigated it for alleged maltreatment of animals and suspended its license.

The Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park closed to the public after the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Monday suspended the exhibitor license for owner Jeff Lowe for 21 days.

The zoo, previously run by Joseph Maldonado-Passage —also known as Joe Exotic— became famous after being featured in Netflix's "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness."

The Garvin County Sheriff's Office and USDA investigated the zoo after receiving a formal report that documented photos showing a lion with its ears covered in flies and another with the tips of its ears covered in blood.

But Lowe said in a statement Tuesday that his license was suspended over a "litany of falsehoods." He said he plans to open a new park for private filming for television and streaming services, KFOR-TV reported.

"Rest assured that all the animals will continue to have excellent care," Lowe said.

Officials at the animal rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, referred to as PETA, say the photos included in the report show lions suffering from flystrike. In this condition, flies are usually attracted to uncleared animal waste, bite other animals and lay eggs on them, resulting in hatched maggots eating the skin.

"PETA looks forward to seeing every one of the long-suffering animals at the G.W. Zoo be transferred to an appropriate facility where it won't take federal intervention for a sick cat to receive veterinary care," said Brittany Peet, PETA Foundation Deputy General Counsel for Captive Animal Law Enforcement.

An Indiana district court recently ordered Lowe to provide veterinary records for the lions allegedly not being treated appropriately.

Young children pose a dilemma for airlines with mask rules

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Two recent incidents involving young children who refused to wear face masks show how airlines are struggling to balance safety with compassionate treatment of all their customers during a pandemic.

JetBlue Airways forced a woman and her six children off a plane this week when her 2-year-old daughter wouldn't keep her mask on.

"It was horrible, the whole experience was traumatizing," the mother, Chaya Bruck, told the New York Daily News from the airport in Orlando, Florida, where the Brooklyn family was stranded.

Last week, a Texas woman said Southwest Airlines booted her family off a plane after one of the children, a 3-year-old with autism, refused to wear a mask. Alyssa Sadler said her son became upset because he does not like to have his face touched.

All major U.S. airlines have mask rules and have banned at least a couple hundred passengers who have refused to comply. Typically, the violators are adults who argue that there is no government requirement

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 72 of 87

to wear a mask — there isn't; the Federal Aviation Administration has declined to impose one, leaving it up to the airlines.

JetBlue and Southwest both require masks for all passengers except those under the age of 2.

A JetBlue spokesman said the company's policy mirrors guidelines on masks from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"During these unprecedented times, our first priority is to keep crew members and customers safe, and we've quickly introduced new safety policies and procedures throughout the pandemic," the airline spokesman, Derek Dombrowski, said in an email.

Dombrowski said customers get an email before their flight that details safety rules including the one on face masks, and employees are ready to help customers who need assistance.

Bruck and her family weren't making a political stand against masks, "she and her other children were wearing them," said Gary Leff, who writes about travel on his View from the Wing website. "She was doing her best, but some young children aren't going to keep a mask on and fly much better with a pacifier."

Leff said "it seems reasonable" to exempt 2- and 3-year-olds from the mask rule.

Sadler, the Houston-area woman kicked off a Southwest flight home from Midland, Texas, said she had a doctor's note explaining her son's autism condition, but it didn't help.

"I think there needs to be something in place for children or even adults with disabilities who can't wear a mask. They should have some kind of exemption," she told Houston TV station KPRC.

Southwest is among several airlines that recently tightened the mask rules by ending an exemption for people who claim a medical reason for not covering their face. Southwest's president said last month the change was made because passengers were uncomfortable seeing other people on board without masks.

Southwest spokesman Dan Landson said Thursday that the airline regrets any inconvenience to the Sadler family. He said passengers 2 and up who can't wear masks are given refunds and will be welcome on the airline "if public health guidance regarding face coverings changes."

Airlines have tweaked other pandemic-safety policies such as aircraft cleaning and leaving some seats empty to create more space between passengers.

On Thursday, Delta Air Lines announced that it will continue blocking middle seats during the holidays and through at least Jan. 6. The Christmas season normally means packed planes, but it's hard to know what flights will look like later this year. U.S. air travel during the peak summer season has been about 70% lower than a year ago.

David Koenig can be reached at www.twitter.com/airlinewriter

Mail-delivery concerns put spotlight on ballot deadlines

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — U.S. Postal Service warnings that it can't guarantee mailed ballots will arrive on time have put a spotlight on the narrow time frames most states allow to request and return those ballots.

The mail-in ballot deadlines are tight in the best of times. But many more ballots are at stake this year with tens of millions of Americans likely to vote by mail because of concerns about coronavirus exposure at polling places.

Georgia voters can request a ballot by mail until four days before the Nov. 3 election, with completed ballots due by 7 p.m. on Election Day. New Jersey ballots mailed on Election Day must be received within 48 hours of polls closing. Louisiana voters who meet certain criteria can request a ballot by mail until the Friday before Election Day, but they must return them by the following Monday — a day before the election.

In letters to state election officials late last month, the Postal Service warned many of the deadlines for absentee ballots and ballot applications "may be incongruous with the Postal Service's delivery standards." The warnings became public last week amid outcry over mail delivery disruptions and concerns that President Donald Trump is trying to undermine the agency ahead of the election.

Ballots received by local election officials after their state's deadline won't be counted. Hoping to avoid

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 73 of 87

that, some states are altering deadlines. Secretaries of state elsewhere, including in Kansas and Tennessee, say it's too late or would be too confusing to make changes.

"The message to voters is really very clear," said Jeanette Senecal with the League of Women Voters. "We need them to make their Election Day plan so they know when they're returning their ballot, how they're returning their ballot (or) if they're voting in person."

People who don't want to vote in person need to make sure they have the most up-to-date information on how to obtain an absentee ballot and how to return it. Rules vary from state to state and even within some states, she said.

A majority of states require mail-in ballots to be received by Election Day, while others accept them days or even weeks later if they're postmarked by Election Day.

The Postal Service letters recommend that requests for mail-in ballots should be received by election officials at least 15 days before the election. Few states have application deadlines that far in advance, and most accept mailed applications within seven days of the election.

Some even allow ballot requests by mail until the day before the election.

A number of states already have made changes, including New Mexico and Maryland, which moved their absentee ballot application deadlines from one week to two weeks before Election Day.

Maryland was responding to concerns by local officials that voters tend to wait until the last minute to request ballot applications.

"We were really worried that if we didn't change the deadline, our voters were going to inadvertently run out of time," said David Garreis, president of the Maryland Association of Election Officials.

Ongoing lawsuits could lead to further rule and deadline changes as the election approaches.

In Minnesota, a lawsuit filed by voting rights groups resulted in the Democratic secretary of state agreeing to extend the deadline for counties to receive mail-in ballots from Election Day to one week later.

Litigation is pending in a number of other states, including Georgia and Wisconsin, where federal lawsuits seek to extend the deadlines for receiving mail-in ballots beyond Election Day to prevent voter disenfranchisement.

Georgia's deadline is set by state law, and Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's office said a later deadline could interfere with election officials' ability to perform audits and other post-election tasks by certification deadlines.

The judge in the Wisconsin case questioned whether it's appropriate to ease absentee voting regulations, especially if the coronavirus might pose less of a threat to in-person voting by November. But he indicated he might be open to some changes.

In Pennsylvania's June primary, some counties struggled to mail ballots to voters with enough time for them to be returned, and thousands arrived after polls closed.

Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf has asked the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to extend deadlines for mail-in ballots from Election Day to three days later, citing the Postal Service warning. Republicans oppose it.

Other states also are seeing conflicts between state officials and lawmakers over changing ballot deadlines.

In Michigan, Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson wants to allow mailed ballots to count as long they are postmarked by Election Day and arrive up to two days later. But that proposal has gone nowhere in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

The GOP-led legislature in Ohio has ignored calls from Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose to change the deadline to request an absentee ballot from three to seven days before the election.

LaRose is urging voters to submit applications no later than Oct. 27, rather than waiting until the Saturday before Election Day.

"Do not wait that long to request your absentee ballot," he said. "The law may permit it, but it is a foolish thing to do and will likely result in you getting a ballot after Election Day."

Associated Press writers David Eggert in Lansing, Mich.; John Hanna in Topeka, Kan.; Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis; Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tenn.; Morgan Lee in Santa Fe, N.M.; Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pa.; Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City; Todd Richmond in Madison, Wis.; Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio,

and Brian Witte in Annapolis, Md., contributed to this report.

Record melt: Greenland lost 586 billion tons of ice in 2019

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Greenland lost a record amount of ice during an extra warm 2019, with the melt massive enough to cover California in more than four feet (1.25 meters) of water, a new study said.

After two years when summer ice melt had been minimal, last summer shattered all records with 586 billion tons (532 billion metric tons) of ice melting, according to satellite measurements reported in a study Thursday. That's more than 140 trillion gallons (532 trillion liters) of water.

That's far more than the yearly average loss of 259 billion tons (235 billion metric tons) since 2003 and easily surpasses the old record of 511 billion tons (464 billion metric tons) in 2012, said a study in Communications Earth & Environment. The study showed that in the 20th century, there were many years when Greenland gained ice.

"Not only is the Greenland ice sheet melting, but it's melting at a faster and faster pace," said study lead author Ingo Sasgen, a geoscientist at the Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany.

Last year's Greenland melt added 0.06 inches (1.5 millimeters) to global sea level rise. That sounds like a tiny amount but "in our world it's huge, that's astounding," said study co-author Alex Gardner, a NASA ice scientist. Add in more water from melting in other ice sheets and glaciers, along with an ocean that expands as it warms — and that translates into slowly rising sea levels, coastal flooding and other problems, he said.

While general ice melt records in Greenland go back to 1948, scientists since 2003 have had precise records on how much ice melts because NASA satellites measure the gravity of the ice sheets. That's the equivalent of putting the ice on a scale and weighing it as water flows off, Gardner said.

As massive as the melt was last year, the two years before were only on average about 108 billion tons (98 billion metric tons). That shows that there's a second factor called Greenland blocking, that either super-charges that or dampens climate-related melting, Gardner said.

In the summer, there are generally two factors in Greenland's weather, Gardner said. Last year, Greenland blocking — a high pressure over Canada that changes the northern jet stream — caused warm southern air to come up from the United States and Canada and flow into Greenland, forcing more melting.

In 2017 and 2018 without Greenland blocking, cooler Arctic air flowed from open ocean into Greenland, making summer milder, he said.

This year, Greenland's summer melt has been not as severe, closer to normal for recent times, said Ruth Mottram, an ice scientist at the Danish Meteorological Institute, who wasn't part of Sasgen's research.

Mottram and several other outside scientists said Sasgen's calculations make sense. In her own study this month in the International Journal of Climatology, she found similar results and also calculated that Greenland coastal regions have warmed on average 3 degrees (1.7 degrees Celsius) in the summer since 1991.

"The fact that 2019 set an all-time record is very concerning," said New York University ice scientist David Holland, who wasn't part of either study.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Pelosi tells fellow Democrats 'it's all riding on Wisconsin'

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and former Attorney General Eric Holder delivered a stark reminder to Wisconsin Democrats on Thursday about the importance the battleground state plays in the presidential election less than 11 weeks away.

"No pressure, it's all riding on Wisconsin," Pelosi told more than 100 Democrats during a virtual meeting tied to the final day of the Democratic National Convention. "No pressure."

Democrats, as well as President Donald Trump, have made no secret how essential winning Wisconsin is to the race this year. Wisconsin did not get the national attention it hoped for when the Democratic convention originally planned for Milwaukee moved online. But Trump and his surrogates have flooded the state this week, drawing a sharp contrast with Democratic nominee Joe Biden, who decided against traveling to the state to accept the nomination due to concerns over COVID-19.

Still, after Trump's narrow victory of less than 23,000 votes in 2016, and polls showing another close race this year, Democrats are pledging not to downplay the importance of Wisconsin in Biden's efforts to defeat Trump.

"The road to the presidency runs through Wisconsin," said Holder, who was attorney general under former President Barack Obama. "The fate of the United States, the fate of the western world, is on your shoulders. Not too much pressure."

Holder and Gov. Tony Evers also stressed the importance of denying Republicans the six seats needed in the Wisconsin Legislature to have a veto-proof super majority headed into the once-a-decade process of redistricting next year. Wisconsin has been at the front of the national battle over redistricting, with Democrats taking a challenge of the current maps all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Republicans need to pick up three seats in the Senate and three in the Assembly to have super majorities that could override any Evers veto. That would enable the GOP-controlled Legislature to enact any map it wishes after redistricting next year, just as it did in 2011 when Republican Scott Walker was governor.

Evers and Democrats have rallied around a "Save the Veto" message, with the first-term Democrat saying Thursday he had temporarily suspended fundraising for his own reelection to focus on that effort.

Evers predicted that Republicans would convene "within seconds" to override his veto of the maps if they have the votes to do it.

"That's what this year's election is all about for me, and I think for you also," Evers said. "Sure, it's about defeating the Trumpster and making sure his brand of nonsense comes nowhere near the White House again. I know Joe is going to win in November, but it's also about maps."

Holder said Wisconsin had the most gerrymandered maps in the country.

"We need to make sure that Democrats have a seat at the table," Holder said. "This is an existential presidential election, I get that. But so are the races happening down the ballot in Wisconsin as well, and across the country."

Follow Scott Bauer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sbauerAP>

Science Says: Climate change, people stoke California fires

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

If you want to build a fire, you need three things: Ignition, fuel and oxygen. But wildfire in California is a much more complex people-stoked witch's brew.

The state burns regularly because of fierce autumn winds, invasive grasses that act as kindling, fire-happy native shrubs and trees, frequent drought punctuated by spurts of downpours, a century of fire suppression, people moving closer to the wild, homes that burn easily, people starting fires accidentally or on purpose — and most of all climate change.

"California has a really flammable ecosystem," said University of Colorado fire scientist Jennifer Balch. "People are living in flammable places, providing ignition, starting the wildfires against a backdrop of a

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 76 of 87

warming climate that is making wildfires worse.”

Trying to manage California’s wildfires is like trying to hold back a tidal wave, said Columbia University fire scientist A. Park Williams: “Big fires are kind of inevitable in California.”

And it’s getting worse, fast. Area burned by wildfire in California increased more than fivefold since 1972, from a five-year average of 236 square miles (611 square kilometers) a year to 1,394 square miles (3,610 square kilometers) a year according to a 2019 study by Williams, Balch and others.

Dozens of studies in recent years have linked bigger wildfires in America to global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas, especially because it dries plants and makes them more flammable.

“Fuel moisture drives the fire business,” said University of Alberta fire scientist Mike Flannigan. “Fuel moisture is being influenced by climate change.”

In California, a Mediterranean climate sets up ideal conditions for fire then is worsened by climate change, said University of California, Merced, fire scientist LeRoy Westerling, who has had his home threatened twice in the last few years.

That means long hot and dry summers with a handful of winter storms bringing rain and snow.

But as the climate warms, snow melts earlier making for drier plants in the summer and the rains come later, extending fire season.

“It’s a super strong effect in the summertime and we’re right smack in the middle of summertime,” Balch said Monday. “Our fire season is not over yet and we have the fall to worry about.”

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s fall outlook gives more reason to worry. Parts of California and the Southwest will be drier and hotter than normal with a drought developing in some areas of California not already officially in drought, meteorologist Matt Rosencrans said Thursday.

If you lose a fall storm, as happened in 2019, that leaves California fire-prone in October and November, when often-fierce winds blow from the mountains toward the ocean. Those spread fires easily, even jumping eight-lane highways.

November and December, though technically the wet season, can see some of the worst fires such as 2018’s Camp Fire that decimated the Sierra Nevada foothills town of Paradise and killed scores of people.

Another way climate change has worsened wildfire danger is that the jet stream — the river of air that moves storms and daily weather — slows down and weather gets stuck, often with dry periods.

This means California can lose maybe two of its five or six important drenchings, Westerling said. And in other years, with the jet stream stuck in a wet pattern, a couple of extra storms hit California and prompt explosive growth of plants that dry into fuel.

More fires from climate change mean more smoke — and this year that’s going to hurt people already hit by the coronavirus, Balch said. “We’re seeing compounding extremes.”

But more than climate and weather are at work.

When people moved into California, they brought invasive grasses, such as cheatgrass and common Mediterranean grass, that outcompeted native grasses and burn more quickly. They act as kindling for brushland fires.

California’s native shrubs burn easily, and so do conifers that release their seeds in fires to regenerate.

For more than a century — spurred by a 1910 inferno — the general government attitude has been to put out every fire. But Williams said that leads to a buildup of fuel that eventually burns.

About 97% of the fires in coastal California are started by people, either on purpose or accidentally, a study by Balch found. The top ignition causes are equipment use — such as weedwhackers, lawnmowers and chainsaws — arson and debris burning.

However, the fires devastating the state this month mostly seem to be caused by lightning strikes, not people, state officials said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday that the state recorded nearly 11,000 lightning strikes in 72 hours and there were 23 major fires or groups of fires, known as complexes.

Another contributor to runaway fires is that homes, especially roofs, are much more flammable than need be, Balch said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 77 of 87

While bigger fires can burn elsewhere — Alaska last year had nine times as much land burned as California — fire risk is greater in the Golden State because so many people live close to the flames.

“We don’t hear about fires in other places, the western U.S. or Alaska because they burn for days without getting near a home,” said University of Utah fire scientist Phil Dennison.

People keep building closer to areas that are wilder and beautiful but fire-prone, Flannigan said, so “we have to learn to live with fire. It’s not going to go away.”

Associated Press writer John Antczak contributed from Los Angeles.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears .

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

AP Interview: Ex-official urges transition talks in Belarus

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — As a former culture minister and ambassador to France, Pavel Latushko is the most well-connected member of a new council established by the political opposition in Belarus to facilitate a transition of power amid massive protests challenging the continued rule of the country’s authoritarian five-term president.

Defying the government he previously served has earned Latushko threats. His house in Minsk was doused with red paint overnight. Prosecutors opened a criminal probe into the opposition council Thursday. But the dapper 47-year-old ex-diplomat appears uncowed.

Latushko, once an associate of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and a member of the political elite, rejects accusations that the Coordination Council is plotting to overthrow the leader of 26 years, arguing that the group is seeking dialogue between the government and protesters.

“There is no other way,” Latushko told The Associated Press in an interview. “The society is offering that mechanism to the authorities to conduct a dialogue. Even if strikes subside, they will resume in half a year.”

The 65-year-old president so far has rebuffed opposition offers for dialogue and threatened the council members with criminal charges. The probe by national prosecutors focuses on potential charges of violating the constitution and threatening national security, accusations the opposition leaders dismiss as unfounded.

After leaving the Belarus Embassy in Paris, Latushko served as the head of the Ylanka Kupala national theater in Minsk. He was fired earlier this week after expressing solidarity with the demonstrators who took to the streets to protest the official results of the Aug. 9 vote that declared Lukashenko’s re-election to a sixth term by a landslide.

Latushko said that he couldn’t remain silent after seeing the brutal police crackdown on the peaceful post-election protests. His theater troupe quit en masse in protest against his dismissal.

He said he has received repeated threats and warnings to leave the country and that he sent his daughter and mother abroad. On a somber note, he warned that if reports surface about him changing course and accepting the election results, it would mean that he spoke under duress, perhaps after being drugged.

“Yes, I fear arrest,” Latushko told the AP. “But I say that I haven’t committed any criminal offense and I’m not breaking the law by expressing my opinion. I have no intention to leave the country.”

Nearly 7,000 people were detained and hundreds were injured in the first four days of protests. Police dispersed the demonstrators with rubber bullets, stun grenades and clubs. At least three protesters died, and many of the detainees described savage beatings, torture and abuse in police custody.

“That has drawn a line for me,” Latushko said. “Actors were saying, ‘My brother was detained and many people suffered abuse.’ Those horrible scenes couldn’t leave me indifferent.”

Latushko acknowledged that a lack of leaders presents challenges for the protest movement, but he noted that it couldn’t be otherwise in a country where Lukashenko has relentlessly stifled dissent.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 78 of 87

Lukashenko's main challenger in the presidential race, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, left for neighboring Lithuania in the wake of the vote under pressure from the authorities. The Coordination Council includes her top associates, prominent journalists, rights activists and representatives of striking factory workers. It also includes the nation's most famous author, Svetlana Alexievich, who won the 2015 Nobel Prize in literature.

But Latushko is the only former senior official in the group, and he brings a close knowledge of Lukashenko and the inner workings of the Belarusian leader's regime.

Latushko's experience also makes him a perfect candidate for sensitive negotiations with the government, and the years he spent as an ambassador to France, Spain and Poland mean he'd be well-prepared for talks with foreign officials.

He thinks many Belarusian officials are repulsed by the brutal crackdown, and fear speaking out but nevertheless could put a wrench in the wheels of the state machine.

"The state apparatus is demotivated," Latushko said. "I felt and saw that the vast majority of government officials are tired of that pressure and are ready for changes, they want those changes."

He said many public servants secretly detest the powerful role of the Belarusian State Security Committee, which still goes under its Soviet-era name: the KGB.

"The KGB trace is clearly visible in the election campaign," he said. "While it's nominally responsible for protecting security of the state, it has undermined public confidence in state institutions. It has caused the society to explode and do its own vote count."

Latushko isn't driven by anger over Russia's continued influence in Belarus. Neither is the anti-government protest movement, unlike the 2014 protests in Ukraine that ousted the country's Russia-leaning former president.

Latushko says it's important for Belarus to keep close relations with Moscow while developing ties with the West.

"We have very broad relations with Russia," he said, adding that Moscow is interested in seeing a stable Belarus.

However, Latushko noted that many Belarusians are starting to ask why Russia has remained tight-lipped about the harsh crackdown on protests and failed to condemn it.

"It would be an ideal option if the European Union and Russia jointly play mediators to help settle the Belarusian crisis," he said.

This story has been corrected to show that Latushko's brother was not detained but actors he worked with had relatives detained.

Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed.

Trump wants #SCOTUS OK to block critics on @realdonaldtrump

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

President Donald Trump is asking the Supreme Court to allow him to block critics from his personal Twitter account.

The administration said in a high-court filing Thursday that Trump's @realdonaldtrump account with more than 85 million followers is his personal property and blocking people from it is akin to elected officials who refuse to allow their opponents' yard signs on their front lawns.

"President Trump's ability to use the features of his personal Twitter account, including the blocking function, are independent of his presidential office," acting Solicitor General Jeffrey Wall wrote in urging the justices to review the case.

The federal appeals court in New York ruled last year that Trump uses the account to make daily pronouncements and observations that are overwhelmingly official in nature. It held that Trump violated the First Amendment whenever he blocked a critic to silence a viewpoint.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 79 of 87

A decision about whether even to hear the case is not likely before the November election.

The case grew out of a challenge brought by the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, which sued on behalf of seven individuals blocked by Trump after criticizing his policies.

Jameel Jaffer, the Knight Institute's executive director, said the justices should decline to take up Trump's appeal.

"This case stands for a principle that is fundamental to our democracy and basically synonymous with the First Amendment: government officials can't exclude people from public forums simply because they disagree with their political views," Jaffer said in a statement.

The administration argued in its appeal that the Supreme Court, not lower courts, "should decide where to draw the line between the President's personal decisions and official conduct."

The pace of the case was slowed by the coronavirus pandemic as well as Trump's decision to ask the full 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to review the ruling by a three-judge panel. The court refused to do so by a 7-2 vote in March. Two Trump appointees, Judges Michael H. Park and Richard J. Sullivan, were the only members of the court to side with the president.

The Supreme Court extended its deadline to file an appeal from 90 days to 150 days when it shut the building to the public and abandoned in-person meetings in favor of telephone conferences because of the virus outbreak.

Working families enlist grandparents to help with the kids

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Gone, for now, are the days when retirees Bill and Mary Hill could do whatever they please. Since school started for their only grandchild, they're not leisurely reading the morning newspaper, dawdling over a sudoku or staying holed up in their Colorado cabin to beat the Arizona heat.

Instead, they greet 8-year-old Will at the gate of their residential community in suburban Phoenix every school day, often rolling up in their golf cart.

The 72-year-old Bill, a former college sports administrator, and 70-year-old Mary, who worked as a nurse practitioner, volunteered to keep Will five days a week and oversee distance learning after their son and daughter-in-law were required to report in person to the school where they teach.

"At first it was like, we'd love to be a part of this and get to see our grandson more, really get to know him a little better," Mary said. "At the same time, we were going, 'Oh my gosh.' We knew it would change our lives and it has. It's much busier."

Whether students are learning at school or at home, or are not yet school age, more grandparents have jumped into daily caregiver roles. Many are happily working without pay, for the love of family, while others have accepted offers of money from their frazzled, eternally grateful adult children.

As the Hills have learned, it's not always easy.

"The hardest part is not just being a grandparent, where you can give out candy and eat ice cream and play games. Now there are house rules. You need to drink at least one glass of milk a day, do some extra reading, things like that," Mary said.

Many seniors who already live in multigenerational households or are grandparent-guardians are navigating routine interactions with young ones, from family dinner to a hug at bedtime, to avoid COVID-19. Others, like the Hills, have never been physically closer to the grandkids. They hope their protective bubbles will save them all.

"The original village was grandparents, when you look back historically," said child care advocate Florence Ann Romano, a former nanny. "But the granny nanny is coming back."

In Brooklyn, 64-year-old Mary Pupko is a retired seamstress with multiple sclerosis. She recently moved to town from Seattle to be closer to her daughter, Elisa Pupko, her son-in-law and her nearly 3-year-old granddaughter, Evelyn.

"Because of her health we are extremely cautious with our COVID precautions," Elisa said of her mother. "We didn't see her at all for the first 10 weeks of the lockdown, but eventually we realized we needed the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 80 of 87

child care assistance, and she was alone in her apartment, and we all missed each other."

Elisa and her husband bought a car so they can drive her mom back and forth to help out with Evelyn while they work from home.

Mary keeps her granddaughter occupied reading stories, doing puzzles and playing games in her room from 9 a.m. to noon. They all eat lunch together, then Evelyn takes some "quiet time" (she has dropped her nap) while grandma sleeps.

There's a snack and more playtime with grandma until dinner. The shaggy-haired troll dolls Mary brought along are a hit. The family eats together once again, and one parent drives Mary home while the other puts Evelyn to bed.

"It was challenging at first. I realized it was a lot harder than when you're in your 20s and 30s," said Mary, who raised two children alone after her MS diagnosis. "I thought, OK, how can I do this so I'm not so tired that I can't function? I said, 'I've got to have a rest time.' Then I can get up and help with the second part of the day."

For the Hills, an hour of quiet time for themselves, when Will entertains himself, is among their new house rules. That, Mary said, often translates to a nap for the couple.

"It's more work than I thought it was going to be," Bill said. "At 8 o'clock in the morning, you've got to be there, ready to roll."

For Donna Sasse in Danville, California, it's all too familiar.

Her daughter, Aimee Grove, has paid her \$200 a week for years to care for now 13-year-old Shea, her only grandchild, but they isolated separately for the first three months of the pandemic. They decided to combine forces around June. Sasse has been casually helping out over the summer, running errands and driving Shea to baseball practice twice a week.

Now that Zoom school has started, Sasse will pick up more days for school help. Grandma and grandson also regularly golf together.

"Up until this year, it was every day," said Sasse, a widow in her early 70s who works as a life coach and is trying to keep her house on a fixed income. "I miss him. I was a single mom, raising two kids on my own, but now as I'm older, wiser, calmer and have time, I'm the person I would have wanted to have been with my daughter and my son. That's a real gift."

Renee Fry, CEO and co-founder of an online estate planning business, took a different tack.

Her mother, 73-year-old Pat Fry, is a retired eighth-grade science teacher. Renee and her 9-year-old son, Liam, left home in Quincy, Massachusetts, soon after the pandemic struck in March and moved in with her parents just outside State College, Pennsylvania, so Pat could oversee Liam's online schooling.

Renee's husband commutes back and forth for long weekends as he continues to work, taking extreme care to social distance when he's away. Her dad has Alzheimer's and also lives in the Pennsylvania home.

"We just couldn't do it anymore, trying to teach my son and run a business," she said.

Fourth grade has yet to begin, but Liam's private school has loaded down students with summer work to catch up from the end of last spring's chaotic academic year. It's unclear whether Liam will return to the classroom when school begins.

"It's been a blessing having them here," Pat said. "He brings joy to our lives. He really does. I've always enjoyed teaching."

Liam sees a fundamental difference between distance learning under mom and with grandma in charge: "Mom tells me the answers. She doesn't," he said, pointing to Pat.

The grandparents postponed a move back to Illinois, where they're from, so Pat can continue to help out with Liam.

So what about that new math?

"My mother is morally opposed to new math," Renee joked. "I have a Harvard MBA and I don't understand it."

Like Will in Arizona, Liam has new responsibilities at his grandparents' house. Chores include picking the tomatoes every day, making his bed and helping with the laundry.

"He learned how to vacuum," Pat said. "He learned what a clothesline is and how to scrub a tub. He's

not a fan.”

Trump appeals as judge OKs Manhattan DA getting tax returns

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As President Donald Trump’s lawyers moved swiftly Thursday to appeal a federal judge’s ruling that granted Manhattan’s top prosecutor access to his tax returns, Trump blasted the long-running quest for his financial records as a “continuation of the most disgusting witch hunt in the history of our country.”

U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero’s ruling echoed his prior decision in the case, upheld last month by the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court had returned the case to Marrero’s courtroom to give Trump’s lawyers a chance to raise other concerns about the subpoena issued by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.

Vance has been seeking Trump’s tax returns from the president’s longtime accounting firm, Mazars USA, for more than a year, since Trump’s former personal lawyer Michael Cohen told Congress that the president had misled tax officials, insurers and business associates about the value of his assets. Congress is also pursuing Trump’s financial records.

Trump’s lawyers immediately appealed Marrero’s Thursday ruling to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. The president said he expected the case to end up back before the Supreme Court.

The appeal means it is unlikely Vance’s office will get its hands on Trump’s tax returns before November’s presidential election. Because they are being sought as part of a confidential grand jury investigation, they would not automatically be made public.

“The Supreme Court said it’s a fishing expedition. You don’t have to do it,” Trump said. “And this is a fishing expedition, but more importantly, this is a continuation of the witch hunt — the greatest witch hunt in history. There’s never been anything like it, where people want to examine everything you’ve ever done to see if they can find that there’s a comma out of place.”

Trump is the only president in modern times who has refused to make his tax returns public. Before he was elected he had promised to release them.

Messages seeking comment were left with Trump’s lawyer. Vance’s office declined comment.

Trump’s lawyers have said that the request for tax records dating back to 2011 was retaliatory after the president’s company, the Trump Organization, disputed the scope of a subpoena seeking records from June 1, 2015, through Sept. 20, 2018.

That time span pertains to an investigation related to payoffs to two women — porn actress Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal — to keep them quiet during the 2016 presidential campaign about alleged extramarital affairs with Trump. Trump has denied the affairs.

Trump, through his lawyers, has argued that the subpoena was issued in bad faith, might have been politically motivated and amounted to harassment of him, especially since the wording mimicked the language in congressional subpoenas.

Vance’s attorneys said they were entitled to extensive records to aid a “complex financial investigation” and they cited in their papers public reports of “extensive and protracted criminal conduct at the Trump Organization.”

In July, the Supreme Court rejected Trump’s arguments that he can’t even be investigated, let alone charged with any crime, while he is in office. But the court left open the prospect that Trump could make new arguments in a bid to keep the subpoena from being enforced.

Also in July, the Supreme Court kept a hold on banking and other documents about Trump, family members and his businesses that Congress has been seeking for over a year and returned the case to a lower court.

Trump, in reacting to Thursday’s developments, boasted about previous legal victories — including in Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation of Russian election interference — as he doubled down on his contention that there was a concerted effort to make him look bad.

“We’re not doing things wrong, but they’ll say, ‘Let’s go in and inspect every deal he’s ever done,’” Trump

said. "Let's get papers from 10 years, every paper, every deal he's ever signed, maybe we can find where some lawyer made a mistake, where they didn't dot an i, where they didn't put a comma down someplace, and then we can do something."

Associated Press writers Larry Neumeister in New York and Mark Sherman and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

Bomber's brother gets 55 years for Manchester concert attack

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The brother of the suicide bomber who set off an explosion at a 2017 Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, killing 22 people and injuring hundreds, was sentenced Thursday to a minimum of 55 years in prison.

Hashem Abedi, 23, had denied helping plan the attack at Manchester Arena but was found guilty of murder, attempted murder, and conspiring to cause explosions. His sentencing had been postponed due to travel restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic.

His elder brother Salman Abedi set off the bomb in the arena's foyer at the end of the May 22, 2017 concert, as fans — including thousands of children and young people — were leaving the pop star's show. He died in the explosion.

Hashem Abedi refused to attend court for the two-day sentencing hearing, which heard powerful testimony from the families of the victims, many of whom fought back tears as they described their grief.

Judge Jeremy Baker said that the two brothers were "equally culpable for the deaths and injuries caused by the explosion."

"Although Salman Abedi was directly responsible, it was clear the defendant took an integral part in the planning," Baker said.

The judge said that had the younger brother been over age 21 at the time of the explosion, he would have been given a "whole-life term." Instead, he was sentenced to serve a minimum of 55 years before parole may be considered.

"The defendant should clearly understand the minimum term he should serve is 55 years. He may never be released," Baker added.

He added that there was a "significant degree of premeditation" and that the motivation for the brothers was "to advance the ideology of Islamism."

The brothers were born in Manchester to Libyan parents. They had travelled to Libya the month before the attack. Salman returned to the U.K. on May 18, 2017, when he finalized preparations for the attack. Hashem remained in Libya until he was extradited to Britain and arrested at a London airport last year.

Prosecutors say he played a key role in the attack, including ordering chemicals for the bomb and arranging transport for the materials.

The Manchester bombing was the deadliest in a string of extremist attacks in London and Manchester in the spring and summer of 2017. Targets in London included Westminster Bridge, London Bridge, and a north London mosque.

Commenting on Thursday's sentencing, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the Manchester attack was a "horrifying and cowardly act of violence which targeted children and families."

"Those who were taken from us will never be forgotten, nor will the spirit of the people of Manchester who came together to send a clear message to the entire world that terrorists will never prevail," Johnson said.

The youngest victim who was killed in the attack was age 8.

Caroline Curry, mother of Liam Curry, 19, held up a photo of her son in court and addressed an empty dock Wednesday.

"You took his future, my future, my family's future," she said. "All we have now is heartbreak and dreams of what if."

Analysis: UAE-Israel ties may get Abu Dhabi advanced weapons

By JON GAMBRELL and ARON HELLER Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A U.S.-brokered deal that saw Israel and the United Arab Emirates begin to open diplomatic ties may end up with Abu Dhabi purchasing advanced American weaponry, potentially upending both a longstanding Israeli military edge regionally and the balance of power with Iran.

Despite public objections by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Donald Trump on Wednesday told reporters that the Emiratis had expressed interest in buying “quite a few” F-35 stealth fighter jets and such a deal was “under review.”

Meanwhile, the UAE has sought for years to buy American armed drones — something now potentially allowed as the Trump administration loosened rules governing those purchases just last month.

Complicated arms deals take time to negotiate and gain Congressional approval. It would take years for the jet fighters and drones to reach the hands of foreign militaries, who then have to train their own pilots to fly them. There’s also the question of the November election and whether a possible Joe Biden administration would agree to such a sale.

But Trump has used arms sales as a metric to judge America’s relationship with Gulf Arab states. Selling the UAE fighter jets that cost over \$100 million a plane fits that pattern.

“They’ve definitely got the money to pay for it,” Trump said of the oil-rich Emirates on Wednesday.

Netanyahu repeatedly and strenuously denied there was any link between arms deals and opening ties to the Emirates. That was met with skepticism in Israel, particularly amid accusations that he bypassed Israel’s defense establishment in agreeing to a past German sale of advanced submarines to Egypt.

Critics have accused Netanyahu of lying over a key element that is believed to have clinched the deal for the UAE. Netanyahu’s defense minister and governing partner, former military chief Benny Gantz, said he was kept in the dark about the UAE deal until the last minute. Good governance groups also have called for an investigation.

As a rule, Israel opposes the sale of F-35s and other advanced weapons to any country in the Middle East to maintain what it calls its “qualitative military edge.” That includes Egypt and Jordan, the only two other Arab nations that currently have diplomatic ties with Israel, out of the memory of the multiple wars it has fought since the country’s creation in 1948. Israel also fears sparking a regional arms race.

“Israel must never forget, not even for a split second, that any dent in its strength is liable to pull the rug out from under its feet in the long term,” wrote Amos Gilead, director of the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center. “Intentions are fluid and vulnerable to rapid changes.”

A retired general and former top Defense Ministry official, Gilead added in his essay Thursday in the Yediot Ahronot daily newspaper: “Iran used to be Israel’s soul mate, and today is a bitter and dangerous enemy.”

For the UAE, its pilots have seen the F-35 in action as U.S. Air Force squadrons flying the stealth fighter have rotated in and out of Al-Dhafra Air Base near Abu Dhabi since 2019. The Emirati air force has dozens of F-16s and French-made Mirage 2000s already in service.

But the F-35s would provide a far-greater edge over Iran, whose air force largely dates back to purchases made before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and includes some locally built aircraft. The F-35’s stealth capability also make it far more difficult for Iranian anti-aircraft batteries, already internationally criticized for shooting down a Ukrainian passenger jet in January, to pick up.

The UAE also has repeatedly sought to purchase armed American Reaper drones. It already has used Chinese-made armed drones on the battlefield in Yemen, where the Emirates joined a Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels there who hold the capital. That war, which began in 2015, has become the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

Responding to questions Thursday about its efforts to purchase the F-35, the Emirati Foreign Ministry said the UAE-Israel agreement will eventually include “a security and defense aspect.” Anwar Gargash, the Emirati minister of state for foreign affairs, also said Thursday that obtaining the F-35 now should be

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 84 of 87

"easier" after the Israel deal amid a six-year effort by the UAE to obtain the jet fighter.

"This is something on the table," Gargash told an Atlantic Council videoconference. "We have legitimate requests that are there. We ought to get them."

In the region, only Israel now flies the fighter jet as a planned purchase by Turkey collapsed over Ankara purchasing Russia's S-400 anti-aircraft missile system.

Gargash has repeatedly said the UAE's decision to open diplomatic ties with Israel had nothing to do with Iran. In Tehran, state television only mentioned the F-35 in passing online as a "reward for peace," without elaborating.

However, the UAE's autocratic government long has considered Iran its top regional threat and recent tensions between Tehran and Washington have seen a series of incidents near it. Deployed Patriot missile batteries visible from one major Dubai highway remain pointed north toward Iran.

Since Trump unilaterally withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran has slowly broken every limit on its atomic program. While Iran insists its program is peaceful, Western nations fear it could be used to develop nuclear weapons.

Abu Dhabi's crown prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who serves as the UAE's day-to-day ruler, long has warned Israel may strike first to destroy Iran's nuclear program if it isn't contained. That would start a regional war that would see Tehran target the Emirates, he's repeatedly told U.S. officials.

"This is the Middle East and we will do what we need to do," Sheikh Mohammed was quoted in a February 2009 U.S. diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks. "When the Iranians fire their missiles we will go after them and kill them."

That sounds a lot like Netanyahu, who stood in front of an Israeli F-35 last year to issue a similar warning over Iran.

"Recently, Iran has been threatening the destruction of Israel," Netanyahu said at the time. "It would do well to remember that these planes can reach anywhere in the Middle East, including Iran and certainly Syria."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006. Correspondent Aron Heller, based in Jerusalem, has covered the Middle East for the AP since 2005.

Harris seizes historic moment in accepting VP nomination

By WILL WEISSERT, KAT STAFFORD and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic nomination for vice president on Wednesday, cementing her place in history as the first Black woman on a major party ticket and promising she and Joe Biden will rejuvenate a country ravaged by a pandemic and riven by racial and partisan divides.

In an address capping the third night of the virtual Democratic National Convention, the California senator evoked the lessons of her late mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a biologist and Indian immigrant, saying she instilled in her a vision of "our nation as a beloved community — where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from or who we love."

"In this election, we have a chance to change the course of history," Harris said. "We're all in this fight."

Mixing a former prosecutor's polish with the deeply personal, Harris also spoke of her Jamaican father and getting a "stroller's eye view" of the civil rights movement as her parents protested in the streets in the 1960s.

"There is no vaccine for racism," Harris said. "We have got to do the work."

Harris addressed a party that has staked its future on bringing together a racially diverse coalition of voters. She was preceded in the convention program by Barack Obama, meaning the nation's first Black president introduced the woman trying to be the first Black person to hold the vice presidency. Obama said Harris was an "ideal partner" for Biden and was "more than prepared for the job."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 85 of 87

Harris is a former district attorney and California state attorney general. She promised to speak “truths” to the American public. She said she and Biden, who tapped her as his running mate last week, believe in a country where “we may not agree on every detail, but we are united by the fundamental belief that every human being is of infinite worth, deserving of compassion, dignity and respect.”

Democrats hope Harris can galvanize their party’s faithful — who are divided between progressive and moderate wings — and win over swing voters still deciding between Biden and Trump. But she also was introducing herself to a national audience that may not have been paying close attention to the race until now.

“For somebody with her wealth of background and experience, she’s still fresh. She’s still new,” said Ohio Rep. Marcia Fudge, a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus who endorsed Harris’ 2020 presidential primary run before throwing her support behind Biden in March.

Harris spoke at a convention center in Biden’s home state of Delaware that was empty except for socially distanced reporters and a few campaign staffers. She was introduced by her sister, Maya, her niece Meena and Ella Emhoff, her stepdaughter who calls her “Momala.” At the end of her speech, Biden walked out to join her from a distance and both were soon joined by their spouses.

In sweeping remarks that touched on the legacy of Black women who paved the way for this moment, Harris noted that this week marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Except that right, Harris said, came much later for most Black women, who helped secure that victory yet were still prohibited from voting.

“Without fanfare or recognition, they organized, testified, rallied, marched, and fought — not just for their vote, but for a seat at the table,” Harris said. “We’re not often taught their stories. But as Americans, we all stand on their shoulders.”

Harris also blistered Trump, something she’s expected to do frequently as she campaigns with Biden in the coming months — though in-person events may remain impossible as the coronavirus rages. She recalled her days in the courtroom when she would declare “Kamala Harris for the people,” reviving a slogan from her presidential campaign, while noting, “I know a predator when I see one.” She didn’t mention the president by name then but didn’t spare him later.

“Donald Trump’s failure has cost lives and livelihoods,” Harris said. She later added, “Right now, we have a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons. Joe will be a president who turns our challenges into purpose.”

The Biden campaign is hoping Harris can excite young voters and people of color, especially after months of protests over institutional racism and police brutality that swept the country. She’s known for her tough questioning in the Senate, particularly during confirmation hearings of two Trump nominees, Brett Kavanaugh for Supreme Court justice and William Barr for attorney general. She also caused a stir by broadsiding Biden during a primary debate last summer over his opposition to busing in the 1970s to integrate public schools.

But things didn’t always go smoothly. Harris launched her presidential bid with expectations that she would electrify the field, only to see her campaign struggle to find a consistent message and fizzle months before the first votes were cast.

Some voters are paying particularly close attention to Harris because she could be called upon to step into the role of party standard-bearer as soon as 2024, should Biden — who will be 81 by then — opt not to seek a second term. Biden hasn’t expressly said he’d serve just a single term, but he has talked about being a bridge to a new generation.

Harris said her mother instilled in her and her sister values that charted the course of their lives.

“She raised us to be proud, strong Black women,” Harris said. “And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage.”

The campaign is deeply personal for Harris in others ways, too. She spoke Wednesday of her friendship with the former vice president’s son Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015. He and Harris became close while both were state attorneys general.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 86 of 87

"I knew Joe as vice president. I knew Joe on the campaign trail," she said. "But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend."

Weissert reported from Washington and Stafford from Detroit.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Aug. 21, the 234th day of 2020. There are 132 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 21, 1831, Nat Turner launched a violent slave rebellion in Virginia resulting in the deaths of at least 55 whites. (Turner was later executed.)

On this date:

In 1609, Galileo Galilei demonstrated his new telescope to a group of officials atop the Campanile (kahm-pah-NEE'-lay) in Venice.

In 1911, Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" was stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris. (The painting was recovered two years later in Italy.)

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman ended the Lend-Lease program that had shipped some \$50 billion in aid supplies to America's allies during World War II.

In 1961, country singer Patsy Cline recorded the Willie Nelson song "Crazy" in Nashville for Decca Records. (The recording was released in October 1961.)

In 1963, martial law was declared in South Vietnam as police and army troops began a violent crackdown on Buddhist anti-government protesters.

In 1983, Philippine opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino (beh-NEEG'-noh ah-KEEN'-oh) Jr., ending a self-imposed exile in the United States, was shot dead moments after stepping off a plane at Manila International Airport.

In 1987, Sgt. Clayton Lonetree, the first Marine court-martialed for spying, was convicted in Quantico, Va., of passing secrets to the KGB. (Lonetree ended up serving eight years in a military prison.)

In 1991, the hard-line coup against Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev collapsed in the face of a popular uprising led by Russian Federation President Boris N. Yeltsin.

In 1992, an 11-day siege began at the cabin of white separatist Randy Weaver in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, as government agents tried to arrest Weaver for failing to appear in court on charges of selling two illegal sawed-off shotguns; on the first day of the siege, Weaver's teenage son, Samuel, and Deputy U.S. Marshal William Degan were killed.

In 1993, in a serious setback for NASA, engineers lost contact with the Mars Observer spacecraft as it was about to reach the red planet on a \$980 million mission.

In 2000, rescue efforts to reach the sunken Russian nuclear submarine Kursk ended with divers announcing none of the 118 sailors had survived.

In 2014, Gov. Jay Nixon ordered the Missouri National Guard to begin withdrawing from Ferguson, where nightly scenes of unrest had erupted since a white police officer fatally shot a Black 18-year-old nearly two weeks earlier.

Ten years ago: Iranian and Russian engineers began loading fuel into Iran's first nuclear power plant, which Moscow promised to safeguard to prevent material at the site from being used in any potential weapons production. A Vincent van Gogh painting, "Poppy Flowers," was stolen in broad daylight from Cairo's Mahmoud Khalil Museum. (Although Egyptian authorities initially said they'd recovered the painting the same day at the Cairo airport, that report turned out to be erroneous; the painting remains missing.) Emmy-winning CBS News correspondent Harold Dow died at age 62.

Five years ago: A trio of Americans, U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Spencer Stone, National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos and college student Anthony Sadler, and a British businessman, Chris Norman, tackled and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Aug. 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 049 ~ 87 of 87

disarmed a Moroccan gunman on a high-speed train between Amsterdam and Paris. First Lt. Shaye Haver of Copperas Cove, Texas, and Capt. Kristen Griest of Orange, Connecticut, became the first female soldiers to complete the Army's rigorous Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Mike Fiers pitched the second no-hitter in the major leagues in nine days, leading the Houston Astros to a 3-0 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

One year ago: Escalating an international spat, President Donald Trump said he had scrapped his trip to Denmark because the country's prime minister had made a "nasty" statement when she rejected his idea of buying Greenland as absurd. Trump signed an order erasing the hundreds of millions of dollars in federal student loan debt owed by tens of thousands of disabled military veterans.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Melvin Van Peebles is 88. Actor Clarence Williams III is 81. Rock-and-roll musician James Burton is 81. Singer Jackie DeShannon is 79. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Willie Lanier is 75. Actor Patty McCormack is 75. Pop singer-musician Carl Giammarese (jee-ah mah-REE'-see) is 73. Actor Loretta Devine is 71. NBC newsman Harry Smith is 69. Singer Glenn Hughes is 68. Country musician Nick Kane is 66. Actor Kim Cattrall is 64. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL quarterback Jim McMahon is 61. Actor Cleo King is 58. Retired MLB All-Star John Wetteland is 54. Rock singer Serj Tankian (TAN'-kee-ahn) (System of a Down) is 53. Figure skater Josee Chouinard is 51. Actor Carrie-Anne Moss is 50. MLB player-turned-manager Craig Counsell is 50. Rock musician Liam Howlett (Prodigy) is 49. Actor Alicia Witt is 45. Singer Kelis (kuh-LEES') is 41. Actor Diego Klattenhoff is 41. TV personality Brody Jenner is 37. Singer Melissa Schuman is 36. Olympic gold medal sprinter Usain (yoo-SAYN') Bolt is 34. Actor Carlos Pratts is 34. Actor-comedian Brooks Wheelan is 34. Actor Cody Kasch is 33. Country singer Kacey Musgraves is 32. Actor Hayden Panettiere (pan'-uh-tee-EHR') is 31. Actor RJ Mitte is 28. Actor Maxim Knight is 21.