

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 1 of 49

- [1- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [2- Footings for tower being dug](#)
- [3- Obit: Charles Raap](#)
- [4- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [7- Area COVID-19 Cases](#)
- [8- Aug. 26th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [12- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [13- Weather Pages](#)
- [16- Daily Devotional](#)
- [17- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [18- News from the Associated Press](#)

***“The purpose of
a life is a life of
purpose.”***

-Robert Byrne



*Chicken Soup
for the Soul.*

Coming up on

GDILIVE.COM

Thursday, Aug. 27th: Volleyball at Britton sponsored by Ed and Connie Stauch
Friday, Aug. 28th: Football vs. EEK - Sponsored by Big Iron Auctions, Delbert Hinkelman
Saturday, Aug. 29th: Girls Soccer vs. Vermillion (sponsors being secured)

CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 2 of 49



The hole is being dug for the footing for the new water tower.

The Life of Charles Raap

Memorial services for Charles Raap, 87, of Groton will be 2:00 p.m., Saturday, August 29th at PaetznickGarness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Rev. Bill Duncan will officiate. Inurnment will follow in Union Cemetery.

Visitation will be held at the chapel on Friday from 5-7 p.m.

Chuck passed away August 23, 2020 at Avantara Groton.

Charles Henry Raap was born on April 16, 1933 to Harry and Lucy (Mielke) Raap at his grandparents' home in Groton on Easter Sunday. He grew up near Andover and graduated in 1951 from Andover High School. He enjoyed playing basketball with the Andover Gorillas and was a member of the State Independent team that won backto back championships. Following graduation, he farmed with his dad. On November 7, 1954 he married LaVonne Kirschman in Pierpont and together they were blessed with four children. Chuck and LaVonne moved to Aberdeen in 1960 where he was a route salesman for Coca-Cola for several years. In 1967 they moved to Groton and managed the Circle Pines Motel. Chuck also managed the Anchor Lounge prior to beginning a 40year career selling cars and trucks for Trail Chevrolet in Groton.

Chuck was a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church and served on the church council. He was community minded, serving in Jaycees, Kiwanis, the Groton City Council and was Mayor. He was a volunteer fireman and an early member of the Olive Grove Golf Course board. Chuck enjoyed bowling, golfing, snowmobiling, hunting, and spending time with family.

Grateful for sharing his life is his wife of 65 years, LaVonne; children Kim (DeeDee) Raap, Sioux Falls, Kris (Bob) Schneider, Pierre, Kevin (Marcia Hiles), Andover, and Koni (Seth) Sims, Sioux Falls; grandchildren Jess (Aaron) Johnson, Kelsey (Dave) Halpern, Sara (Matt) Odden, Kacie Olson, Brittany (Ryan) Tennant, Melissa (Brandon) Spanier, Misty (Brandon) Heck, Chelsea (Bubba) Hildebrandt, and Taylor (Tracy) Johnson and 18 great-grandchildren. Chuck is also survived by siblings Joan Van Dyke, Sioux Falls, Kay (Lyle) Kranzler, Sioux Falls, Laurel (Bob) Kost, Ft. Collins, CO, Jerry (Carol) Raap, Andover, Tom Raap, Sioux Falls, and Allana (Frank) Novotny, Wisner, NE; sisters-in-law Karleen Holler, Aberdeen, Ruth Rademacher, Amherst, and Judy (Gary) McKiver, Shakopee, MN; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents; siblings Patricia Jeter Lackey, Bert Raap and Steven Raap; brothers-in-law John Van Dyke, Ray Lackey, Wayne Holler and Burton Rademacher; sister-in-law Darlene Raap and grandson-in-law Dale Olson.



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 4 of 49

#185 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Today's an uptick, but not a big one. We have 5,832,900 cases, a 0.7% increase from yesterday, some 42,400 new cases. So we're back over 40,000 again, but we're on our eleventh day under 50,000. Let's hope we don't see that number again. Ever. We're on track to hit six million cases next week, probably early in the week. There were 1181 deaths reported today, an 0.7% increase to 179,519. We're looking at 200,000 deaths by mid-September or so if nothing changes radically between now and then.

I've found a new tracker; this one tracks infections at colleges and universities. It doesn't cover every institution in the country, but it includes more than 1500 of them, including every four-year public institution, every private college that competes in NCAA sports, every Research I institution, and a few others that identified cases. The damages so far: over 750 institutions, more than 26,000 cases, 64 deaths. We'll check in there again from time to time.

A troubling statistic is that cases in children have increased by 21% between August 6 and August 20, just as school was getting underway in many states. More than 440,000 children have been infected so far in the US. And while serious illness in children is still rare, hospitalization rates in children have been increasing; and once hospitalized, about one in three children is admitted to intensive care.

Quick update on that wedding in Maine. A couple of days ago when we last discussed it, there were 53 cases identified as associated with the reception. Now, we can add 18 cases at a prison in the state among both inmates and employees. Apparently a wedding guest is a worker at the prison. Such institutions have been highly problematic in terms of spread, inability to distance, and bad outcomes across the nation; it should be noted that the ten largest clusters of infection in the US are all in prisons.

As feared, college campuses are stacking up the cases of Covid-19. At least 24 states have institutions reporting positive tests. There have been more than 3300 cases in students and staff.

We have more good news out of California. Los Angeles County, one of the hardest-hit places in the state, reported fewer than 1000 new cases yesterday for the first time since June; they were reporting over 3000 cases per day in mid-to-late July, so this is real progress. The situation state-wide seems to be stabilizing: Positivity rates are 5.7% in the past week, and hospitalizations and ICU admissions have declined by nearly 20%. They're not out of the woods, and the recent wildfires could throw a monkey wrench into the works yet; but so far, so good.

We've talked about the fact that we now know that asymptomatic children carry high viral loads, making them capable of being transmitters of infections, even when they're not ill themselves. Illustrative of how this might play out is Florida's confirmation yesterday that almost 9000 new cases among children have been identified in the 15 days since school started. Hospitalizations of children have also increased sharply in that time.

Apparently, a lot of us have put on some weight during the pandemic; there's some data out on that. Whether the gain is coming from comfort eating, having more time to cook and eat, too much take-out, or drowning our anxiety with sweets and alcohol, this has become enough of an issue to have garnered its own clever monikers. Like the "Freshman 15," this phenomenon is being called, variously, the "Covid 19" or the "Quarantine 15," which may be amusing, but it's also indicative that weight gain during the pandemic has gained a certain social acceptance, according to the behavioral health folks.

The problem with this is that obesity is already a serious issue in the US and obesity is a risk factor—both for Covid-19 and for a host of other health problems. Coupled with anxiety from job loss, economic strain, working from home while trying to educate children, and the threat of this disease itself, the outcomes are detrimental to being optimally resilient and equipped to fight the virus if we should become exposed. We don't really need another public health problem layered on top of the current one. Doctors are encouraging us to concentrate on whole, nutrient-dense foods, lower calorie foods, and minimally processed foods. Even beyond weight, a diet that is not nutritious increases our risk of serious illness and complications from this virus.

I read a fascinating study of a superspreading event—probably the first one in the US (and from there, worldwide). The event was a Biogen conference held in Boston in late February when the US had just 15 Covid-19 cases. People flew in for the conference from across the US and all over the world; there were

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 5 of 49

around 175 participants from several countries. The meeting ended on February 27, and by March 4, dozens of attendees had developed flu-like symptoms. Everyone who'd attended was instructed to quarantine, but it was too late by then. In the end, 97 cases were diagnosed among those who'd been at the meeting and their household contacts; and now we have direct evidence of just which cases that turned up later, even much later, stemmed from that initial introduction of virus into the US.

A massive project to perform genomic analysis on every one of the associated cases possible was undertaken recently by a huge team at the Broad Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and several other Massachusetts institutions was made available yesterday in preprint (not yet peer-reviewed). We've talked about genomic analysis before; to review, this is the study of the genetic sequence of an organism. You may recall that genetic material is nucleic acid (DNA or RNA), and nucleic acid is nothing more than a string of building blocks called nucleotides, each one characterized by the presence of one of four possible nitrogen bases. So, if you're building RNA, you have four kinds of nucleotides to work with. We can tell one RNA nucleotide from another by which nitrogen base it contains; everything else about them is the same. To build RNA, the four nitrogen bases are adenosine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G), and uracil (T). (And if you're wondering why uracil is represented by T instead of by U, it isn't always, but in this genomic analysis, it was—and you don't want me to explain why anyone would do that. Just trust me on this.)

So every strand of RNA or DNA is composed of a string of "letters," A, C, G, and T, in varying order, and the order of those letters provides all of the instructions for building an organism. determines all of the characteristics of an organism: This is what makes you different from a virus and both you and the virus different from the mold that spoils the cheese in your refrigerator or an elephant or a fern. We're all built according to instructions encoded in our nucleic acids. And we are able to genetically sequence, that is, discover the order of those letters, in any organism we study. (That's what 23 and Me is doing with your your sample when you send it in for genetic analysis.) What we see when we do this with virus from different cases of Covid-19 is that there are minor genetic variations among a bunch of different strains that are making people sick, and because of that variation, we can trace a particular strain from person to person in an outbreak.

When a virus replicates—causes new copies of itself to be made in host cells—enough RNA needs to be produced to stuff inside each new virus particle that is produced; this means a lot of RNA copying goes on during replication. That copying process is remarkably accurate, but sometimes mistakes are made, what we call mutations. The mutations are faithfully copied when those new viruses replicate, carrying the mutation forward into succeeding generations of virus. We've talked before about the fact that a lot of mutations don't really make much difference to the virus or its host—a virus with a mutation, most of the time, looks and functions just the same way one without the mutation does; but mutations are detectable when you sequence the virus. In the case of the Biogen conference, the research team discovered that every single case linked to the conference they analyzed carried the same mutation, called C2416T because cytosine (C) was switched with uracil (T) in the 2416th spot in the genome. About a quarter of the attendees had a virus that carried both the C2416T mutation and another one, C26233T; they even found both strains in the same person in one case. It turns out the variant with both mutations (C2416T/C25233T) is a descendant of the C2416T one that has just the one mutation and arose during that conference; it then went on to establish its own lineage. And once these variants were identified, it became possible to track them around the world and across the US because that conference, with its close and lengthy and frequent contacts, amplified both variants, turning it into a superspreading event. Although SARS-CoV-2 had around 80 different introductions from Europe in those early months, the team was able to attribute 90% of Massachusetts cases to this one superspreading event. When you consider Massachusetts has had over 126,00 cases to date, this is pretty significant.

It appears C2416T came from Europe with one of the conference participants. (It was detected at about the same time in two nursing home residents in France.) Over the two weeks after the conference, this virus was implicated in at least 35 new cases. In April, it turned up in two Boston homeless shelters, infecting over two-thirds of the 230 cases identified there, which means the virus made its way from a gathering of high-powered executives to a homeless population within a month or so. It also found its

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 6 of 49

way to a skilled nursing facility in the Boston area. All in all, it infected hundreds of people in the Boston area, and people across the world. By the middle of last month, it had been found in about three percent of all genomes that have been sequenced in the US, which is a LOT of cases.

One of the conclusions from the study seems relevant here: "This study provides direct evidence that superspreading events may profoundly alter the course of an epidemic and implies that prevention, detection, and mitigation of such events should be a priority for public health efforts."

In many countries, some representative sample of positive case specimens is saved and sequenced to help in tracking the virus and understanding transmission patterns—what's being called genomic epidemiology; but there is no coordinated federal effort to do this in the US. A single state doesn't have access to the breadth of samples needed to do this task, so it would need to happen on the federal level. There have been a few regional coalitions doing work like this study, but these can't be done at this level for enough cases to bring much value to the control effort. Scientists have been encouraging federal investment and involvement in such an effort because coordinated and comprehensive sequencing efforts could dramatically improve contact tracing and infection control, but we're not moving on it at present.

Consider this example from Bronwyn MacInnis, one of the study's co-authors: "Suppose four students at an elementary school became sick. If genetic analysis showed they shared a common strain, the virus was most likely transmitted at school, suggesting the facility should close or at least conduct a thorough review of infection-control procedures. But if the infections were genetically unrelated, it's likely they independently contracted the illness elsewhere, in which case the students should stay home but the school could remain open. It's not testing that answers that question. It's having genomic data to tell you whether they appear to be connected."

MacInnis also pointed out the genetic analysis means "a record of our poor decisions is being captured in a whole new way." We didn't know better in February, or this conference would never have happened. Now that we know better, we must do better; and so far, we're not.

The Somali sengi, a tiny elephant shrew, *Elephantulus revoilii*, has been on earth for some 45 million years, far longer than most other mammals—a least it was until it disappeared in 1968, not to be seen again. This sengi was never well known or understood; only a small number of individuals had ever been collected for study. We do know that it mated for life, sharing a territory no larger than the average backyard with its mate, and that, with powerful hind legs, it could run nearly 20 miles per hour, which is killer-fast for a critter that small. Steven Heritage, a Duke University Lemur Center researcher, described the animal to NPR as "a teeny, tiny relative of an aardvark and an elephant that's the size of a mouse" with a long pointy nose sort of like a short trunk and large, baby-animal adorable eyes. It would fit in your palm. "In science we call them charismatic microfauna, which in lay-speak translates to cute little animal."

Scientists will tell you that loss of species has consequences for humankind, not just tangible economic losses—which is a case that can be made, but also in terms of the loss of a piece of our complex connection with other life forms. Biodiversity is responsible for fresh air, clean water, medicines, and regulation of our ecosystem. It also enriches our own existence to know of and study all of the wonderful forms life can take on Earth; so the loss of a species even before we've had an adequate opportunity to learn about it is a loss that cannot be made up.

Which is why we celebrate when something interrupts the narrative of ever-decreasing biodiversity, much of it pushed along by the activities of humans on the planet. And it is particularly gratifying when that interruption comes in the form of charismatic microfauna—a cute little animal we recently discovered isn't gone, after all, but thriving in abundant numbers in Djibouti. The elephant shrew didn't know there was a pandemic or that we've all been sad and worried or that it was lost. It was just minding its own business—scurrying around its tiny territory, Hoovering up insects, and hanging out with its mate-for-life. It was there all along; the problem was ours: We didn't know where to look.

If ever a year and a people needed a good-news story, that year is 2020 and that people is us. You and me. All of us who care about the world around us in the people we see in need and in the cute little animals that turned out to be no more lost than we are, as long as we don't give up and we figure out where to look.

Hang in there; keep looking. We'll talk again.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 7 of 49

Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 26	Aug. 27
Minnesota	70,707	71,236
Nebraska	32,348	32,727
Montana	6,624	6,785
Colorado	55,800	55,993
Wyoming	3,089	3,135
North Dakota	10,229	10,467
South Dakota	11,505	11,571
United States	5,779,395	5,823,685
US Deaths	178,533	179,743

Minnesota	+409	+529
Nebraska	+301	+379
Montana	+135	+161
Colorado	+459	+193
Wyoming	+21	+46
North Dakota	+229	+238
South Dakota	80	+66
United States	+41,339	+44,290
US Deaths	+1,504	+1,210

	Aug. 19	Aug. 20	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24	Aug. 25
Minnesota	66,061	66,618	67,308	68,133	68,867	69,584	70,298
Nebraska	30,825	31,040	31,348	31,626	31,780	31,889	32,047
Montana	5,846	5,956	6,072	6,216	6,376	6,429	6,489
Colorado	53,631	53,901	54,230	54,586	54,883	55,143	55,341
Wyoming	2,850	2,909	2,940	3009	3009	3,046	3,068
North Dakota	8782	8968	9242	9504	9736	9876	10,000
South Dakota	10,443	10,566	10,691	10,884	11,135	11,276	11,425
United States	5,482,823	5,530,247	5,576,089	5,628,070	5,668,564	5,701,557	5,738,056
US Deaths	171,833	173,193	174,290	175,467	176,371	176,797	177,029

Minnesota	+345	+557	+690	+825	+734	+717	+714
Nebraska	+262	+215	+308	+278	+154	+109	+158
Montana	+54	+110	+116	+144	+160	+53	+60
Colorado	+261	+270	+329	+356	+297	+270	+198
Wyoming	+21	+59	+31	+69	----	+37	+22
North Dakota	+135	+186	+274	+262	+232	+140	+124
South Dakota	+83	+123	+125	+193	+251	+141	+149
United States	+38,708	+47,424	+45,842	+51,981	+40,494	+32,993	+36,499
US Deaths	+1,274	+1,360	+1,097	+1,177	+904	+426	+232

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 8 of 49

August 26th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

Brown County had just one positive case and five recoveries as the active cases have dropped to 79. Edmunds County had one positive case and two recoveries with five active cases. Marshall County had a positive case and Spink County had one positive and one recovered case. Statewide, there were 760 tests administered with 66 positive. There were 82 more recovered cases. The positivity rate in South Dakota is 8.6 percent and Brown County is at 3.8 percent. North Dakota's positivity rate is 15.7 percent. The one death in South Dakota was an 80+ male from Lawrence County.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +1 (562) Positivity Rate: 3.8%
Recovered: +5 (480)
Active Cases: -4 (79)
Total Tests: 26 (7037)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (24)
Deaths: 0 (3)
Percent Recovered: 84.4% (+0.8)

South Dakota:

Positive: +66 (11,571 total) Positivity Rates: 8.6%
Total Tests: 760 (179,620 total)
Hospitalized: +7 (981 total). 58 currently hospitalized (down up 5 from yesterday)
Deaths: +1 (162 total)
Recovered: +82 (9,896 total)
Active Cases: -17 (1,513)
Percent Recovered: 85.5 +0.2
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 52% Non-Covid, 45% Available
ICU Bed Capacity: 4% Covid, 69% Non-Covid, 27% Available
Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 15% Non-Covid, 80% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Bennett) Harding 2-2, Jackosn 12-11-1, 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): +1 positive, +1 recovered (30 active cases)

Bennett: +2 positive (7 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +1 recovered (14 active cases)

Brookings (1): +2 positive, +4 recovered (33 active cases)

Brown (3): +1 positive, +5 recovered (79 active cases)

Brule: 5 active cases

Buffalo (3): 4 active cases

Butte (1): +2 positive (14 active cases)

Campbell: 1 active case

Charles Mix: +2 recovered (13 active cases)

Clark: 2 active case

Clay (1): 46 active cases

Codington (1): +1 positive, +3 recovered (54 active cases)

Corson: 9 active cases

Custer: +1 positive, +2 recovered (47 active case)

Davison (2): +1 positive (14 active cases)

Day: 5 active cases

Deuel: 9 active cases

Dewey: +3 positive, +1 recovered (24 active cases)

Douglas: 5 active cases

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 9 of 49

Edmunds: +1 positive, +2 recovered (5 active cases)
 Fall River: +3 positive (5 active cases)
 Faulk (1): 1 active case
 Grant: 7 active cases
 Gregory: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
 Haakon: 1 active case
 Hamlin: +2 positive, +3 recovered (13 active cases)
 Hand: 2 active cases
 Hanson: 3 active cases
 Harding: Fully Recovered
 Hughes (3): +2 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)
 Hutchinson (1): 4 active cases
 Hyde: 1 active case
 Jackson (1): Fully Recovered
 Jerauld (1): 1 active case
 Jones: 1 active case
 Kingsbury: +1 recovered (3 active cases)
 Lake (6): +1 positive (6 active cases)
 Lawrence (2): +4 positive, +1 recovered (60 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +7 positive, +6 recovered (107 active cases)
 Lyman (3): +1 positive (9 active cases)
 Marshall: +1 positive (6 active cases)
 McCook (1): 5 active cases
 McPherson: 3 active cases.
 Meade (1): +3 positive, +2 recovered (71 active cases)
 Mellette: Fully Recovered
 Miner: Fully Recovered
 Minnehaha (69): +16 positive, +28 recovered (434 active cases)

Moody: +2 recovered (6 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (2): 16 active cases
 Pennington (33): +9 positive, +7 recovered (181 active cases)
 Perkins: 4 active cases
 Potter: 2 active cases
 Roberts (1): 9 active cases
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: +1 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 Stanley: 1 active cases
 Sully: 4 active cases
 Todd (5): 3 active cases
 Tripp: Fully Recovered
 Turner: +1 recovered (11 active cases)
 Union (4): +1 recovered (21 active cases)
 Walworth: +2 recovered (13 active cases)
 Yankton (3): +3 recovered (37 active cases)
 Ziebach: 12 active cases

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 26:

- 4,446 tests (1,519)
- 10,467 positives (+238)
- 8,545 recovered (+135)
- 138 deaths (+0)
- 1,784 active cases (+103)

0-9 years	409	0
10-19 years	1045	0
20-29 years	2657	2
30-39 years	2241	6
40-49 years	1694	7
50-59 years	1683	18
60-69 years	1011	29
70-79 years	446	26
80+ years	385	74

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	5770	82
Male	5801	80

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 10 of 49

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	42	40	412	0	Minimal
Beadle	620	581	1975	9	Moderate
Bennett	13	6	552	0	Moderate
Bon Homme	39	24	899	1	Substantial
Brookings	197	163	3065	1	Moderate
Brown	562	480	5028	3	Substantial
Brule	50	45	796	0	Minimal
Buffalo	109	102	665	3	None
Butte	33	18	858	1	Moderate
Campbell	4	3	106	0	Minimal
Charles Mix	116	103	1544	0	Minimal
Clark	18	16	421	0	Minimal
Clay	176	129	1548	1	Substantial
Codington	221	166	3166	1	Substantial
Corson	52	43	590	0	Moderate
Custer	92	45	836	0	Substantial
Davison	113	97	2556	2	Moderate
Day	32	27	691	0	Moderate
Deuel	34	25	469	0	Substantial
Dewey	68	44	2364	0	Moderate
Douglas	22	17	429	0	Minimal
Edmunds	26	21	445	0	Moderate
Fall River	27	22	1033	0	None
Faulk	29	27	212	1	None
Grant	39	32	792	0	Moderate
Gregory	10	8	422	0	Minimal
Haakon	3	2	306	0	Minimal
Hamlin	44	31	745	0	Substantial
Hand	13	11	324	0	Minimal
Hanson	22	19	236	0	Minimal
Harding	2	2	59	0	None
Hughes	113	95	1977	3	Moderate
Hutchinson	35	30	962	1	Moderate

Groton Daily Independent

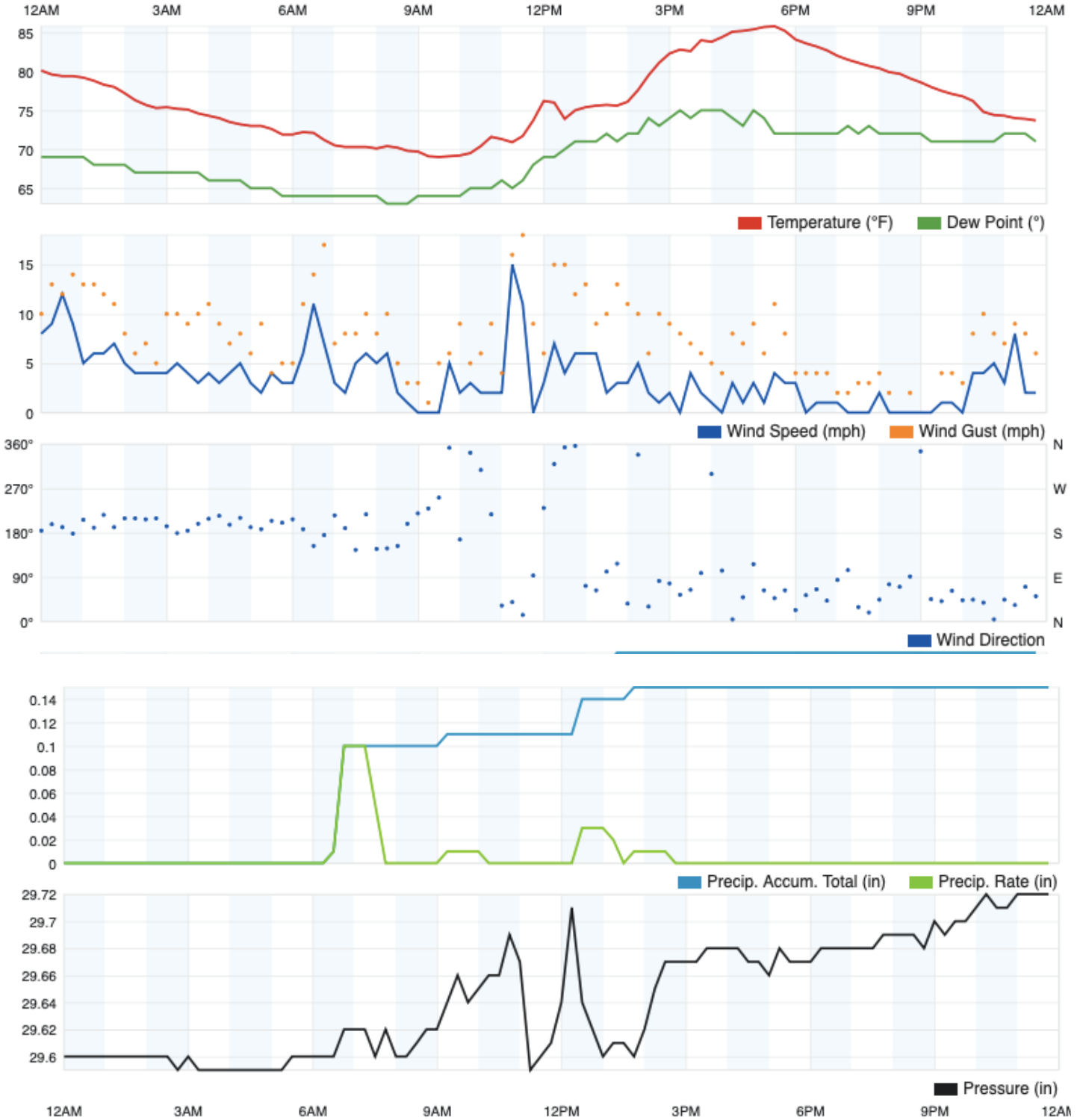
Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 11 of 49

Hyde	5	4	152	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	11	488	1	None
Jerauld	40	38	284	1	Minimal
Jones	3	2	65	0	Minimal
Kingsbury	18	15	617	0	Minimal
Lake	109	97	1020	6	Moderate
Lawrence	129	68	2288	2	Substantial
Lincoln	805	696	7647	2	Substantial
Lyman	95	83	1016	3	Minimal
Marshall	16	10	495	0	Minimal
McCook	39	33	693	1	Minimal
McPherson	10	7	233	0	Minimal
Meade	179	107	2199	1	Substantial
Mellette	24	24	402	0	None
Miner	15	15	270	0	None
Minnehaha	4954	4450	30370	70	Substantial
Moody	38	32	694	0	Moderate
Oglala Lakota	163	145	3011	2	Moderate
Pennington	1091	877	11821	33	Moderate
Perkins	9	5	208	0	Minimal
Potter	4	2	319	0	Minimal
Roberts	91	81	1973	1	Minimal
Sanborn	13	13	247	0	None
Spink	38	26	1227	0	Moderate
Stanley	20	19	292	0	Moderate
Sully	8	4	97	0	Minimal
Todd	77	69	2351	5	Minimal
Tripp	20	20	639	0	None
Turner	70	59	1005	0	Substantial
Union	237	212	2133	4	Moderate
Walworth	32	19	798	0	Substantial
Yankton	185	145	3405	3	Substantial
Ziebach	46	34	370	0	Substantial
Unassigned	0	0	10882	0	

Groton Daily Independent






Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 12 of 49

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 13 of 49

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
				
20%	70%			
Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	T-storms Likely	Mostly Sunny	Clear	Sunny
High: 85 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 78 °F

ENHANCED RISK of Severe T-Storms


ISSUED: 5:36 AM - Thursday, August 27, 2020

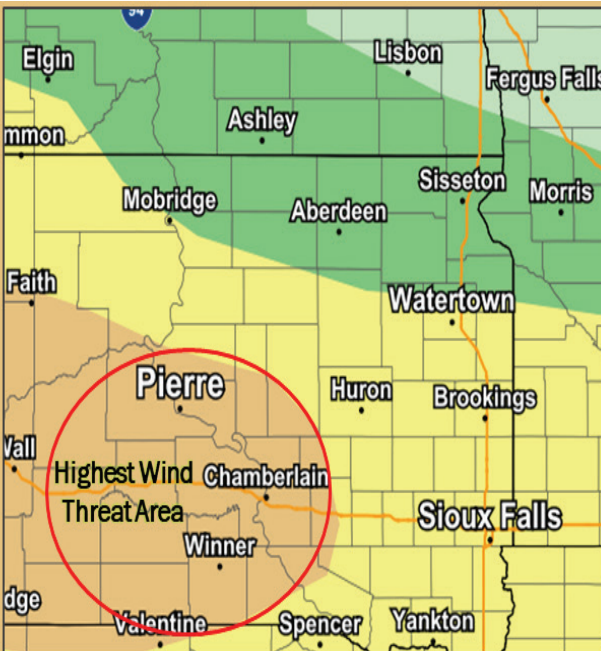
WHEN
Thunderstorms develop during the mid to late afternoon, mainly after 4pm CDT/3pm MDT, and continuing into the evening. The highest risk period will be this evening.

WHAT
Scattered severe storms possible. These storms could produce large hail and wind gusts of 70+ mph. An isolated tornado possible.

WHERE
The greatest threat area includes Murdo, Pierre, Miller, Clark, and Watertown.

ACTION
Pay close attention to the weather and be prepared to seek shelter if necessary.

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



MARGINAL	SLIGHT	ENHANCED	MODERATE
Isolated Severe Storms Possible	Scattered Severe Storms Possible	Numerous Severe Storms Possible	Widespread Severe Storms Likely

A few thunderstorms may impact central and north central South Dakota this morning. Additional thunderstorms will develop along a cold front over western South Dakota later this afternoon. These storms could become severe with large hail and damaging winds the main threats. Straight line winds may become

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 14 of 49

Today in Weather History

August 27, 1983: High winds tore through Glenham and Wakpala, destroying several structures and damaging crops. The worst damage occurred in Glenham, in Walworth County, where two mobile homes were damaged, the roof of a school torn off, and trees limbs down. A tall TV antenna was blown over, and a boat was blown off a trailer. High winds also tore through the Bowdle area, downing power lines and tree limbs. Numerous roofs were also damaged.

August 27, 2013: Numerous severe thunderstorms brought large hail along with wind gusts from 60 to 90 mph to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Numerous trees were downed along with many structures damaged. Eighty mph winds near Polo in Hand County snapped off two large cottonwood trees. Ninety mph winds snapped numerous trees off at their base along with destroying a garage and tipping several campers over onto their side at Cottonwood Lake near Redfield.

1854: A tornado struck downtown Louisville around noon on Sunday, August 27th, 1854. It first touched down near 25th Street, southwest of downtown and lifted at the intersection of 5th and Main Streets. Although the tornado was only on the ground for a little over two miles, the twister claimed at least 25 lives. Many of those who perished were killed in the Third Presbyterian Church, where 55 people were gathered for Sunday church services. Straight-line winds that accompanied the tornado did significant damage to the Ohio River, where at least one boat sunk.

1881: A Category 2 Hurricane made landfall between St. Simons Island and Savannah, Georgia, on this day. Landfall coincided with high tide and proved very destructive. The hurricane killed 700 people, including 335 in Savannah, making it the sixth deadliest hurricane in the United States.

1883: Krakatoa Volcano exploded in the East Indies. The explosion was heard more than 2500 miles away, and every barograph around the world recorded the passage of the airwave, up to seven times. Giant waves, 125 feet high and traveling 300 mph, devastated everything in their path, hurling ashore coral blocks weighing up to 900 tons, and killing more than 36,000 persons. Volcanic ash was carried around the globe in thirteen days producing blue and green suns in the tropics, and vivid red sunsets in higher latitudes. The temperature of the earth was lowered one degree for the next two years, finally recovering to normal by 1888.

1893: An estimated Category 3 hurricane made landfall near Savannah, Georgia on this day. This hurricane produced a high storm surge of 16 to 30 feet which cost the lives of 1,000 to 2,000 people. As of now, this storm is one of the top 5, deadliest hurricanes on record for the USA.

2005: Hurricane Katrina reached Category 3 intensity in the Gulf of Mexico about 335 miles south-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River with maximum sustained winds of 115 mph.

Groton Daily Independent

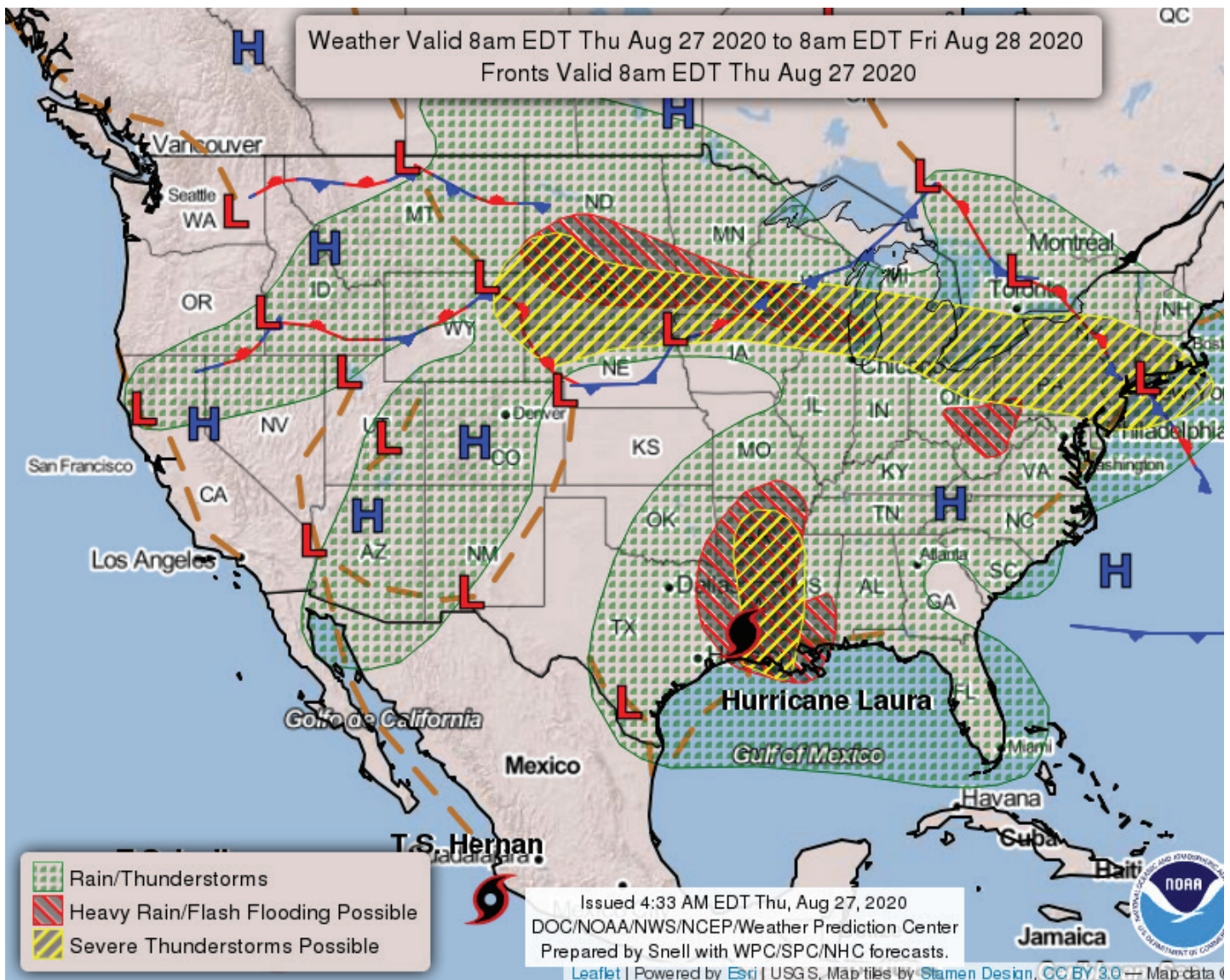
Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 15 of 49

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 5:20 PM
Low Temp: 69 °F at 9:30 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 6:36 AM
Precip: .15

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1973
Record Low: 38° in 1967
Average High: 80°F
Average Low: 54°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 2.04
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.70
Average Precip to date: 15.90
Precip Year to Date: 12.31
Sunset Tonight: 8:19 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:51 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 16 of 49



PRAY OR WORRY: WHICH?

Each morning Josie and her Mom prayed together before she left for school. One morning after they prayed, Josie noticed a look of distress and worry on her Mom's face.

Concerned, she said, "Mom, we just prayed together and thanked the Lord for everything we had and then told Him about everything we needed. I thought that if we prayed, we wouldn't have to worry. I didn't know that we could do both at the same time."

Worry and faith are incompatible. If we have faith, there is no need to worry, and if we worry, we do not need to pray. One seems to cancel out the other.

Many would argue that it is impossible not to worry at least some of the time. But, listen to Paul: "Don't worry about anything," he said. "Instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and then thank Him for all He has done" and is going to do!

Maybe that's the key to avoid worrying: When we thank God for all that He has done for us, we can see His hand at work in our lives. And, rather than worrying about what might or might not happen, we can see that what has happened has benefited us in one way or another. When we have this attitude, we will realize that God is protecting us and providing for our every need.

Paul advised the church members at Philippi to turn their worries into prayers. He wanted them to have a strong faith, deep trust, and sincere belief in the Lord for all things. And, think of this: If our faith and trust belief are weak, worrying won't help.

Prayer: Lord, increase our faith to exceed the size of our fears and our trust to be large enough to combat the uncertainties of life. May we become steadfast and sure. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Philippians 4:6

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 17 of 49

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

11-19-22-23-34

(eleven, nineteen, twenty-two, twenty-three, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$134,000

Lotto America

05-16-22-24-31, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 5

(five, sixteen, twenty-two, twenty-four, thirty-one; Star Ball: nine; ASB: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.05 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$68 million

Powerball

08-12-19-47-58, Powerball: 2, Power Play: 2

(eight, twelve, nineteen, forty-seven, fifty-eight; Powerball: two; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$37 million

The Latest: Trump makes surprise RNC appearance on Night 3

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has made a surprise appearance at Baltimore's Fort McHenry following Vice President Mike Pence's speech at the Republican National Convention.

The president, first lady, Pence and Pence's wife stood on stage with their hands over their hearts as country music star Trace Adkins performed "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Trump didn't make any comments at the podium, but after the national anthem, he and the first lady greeted people in the audience, chatting with supporters while standing a few feet away.

Pence was delivering the evening's keynote from Fort McHenry, where Americans defended Baltimore Harbor from the British in the War of 1812 and inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner."

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WEDNESDAY'S REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION:

- GOP convention defends police as racial tension rises anew
- RNC speech serves as farewell address for Kellyanne Conway
- GOP convention takeaways: Pence pounces while crises swirl
- AP Fact Check: Pence presses a distorted case on economy

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

Vice President Mike Pence is denouncing violence in American streets but not acknowledging the Black people who have been injured or killed by law enforcement.

In his speech to the Republican National Convention of Wednesday, Pence brought up the violence that erupted in Kenosha, Wisconsin, following the shooting by police of Jacob Blake.

A white 17-year-old police admirer was arrested earlier Wednesday on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide after two people were shot to death during a third straight night of protests in Kenosha over Blake's shooting.

Blake was shot in the back seven times on Sunday as he leaned into his SUV, three of his children seated

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 19 of 49

inside. His family says he is paralyzed from the waist down.

Pence, accepting the GOP nomination for vice president, said, "The violence must stop, whether in Minneapolis, Portland or Kenosha." He added, "We will have law and order on the streets of this country for every American of every race and creed and color."

Vice President Mike Pence says people in the path of Hurricane Laura should heed warnings about the strength of the storm and he pledged the Trump administration's help.

He said, "Stay safe and know that we'll be with you every step of the way."

Pence spoke at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, as he "humbly" accepted the GOP's nomination for vice president at the Republican National Convention. It was not clear until just before he took the stage that he would address the looming Category 4 hurricane.

The strengthening storm menaced Texas and Louisiana along the Gulf Coast, raising fears of a 20-foot (6-meter) storm surge that forecasters said would be "unsurvivable." Authorities implored coastal residents of Texas and Louisiana to evacuate, but not everyone did before winds began buffeting trees back and forth.

A Black conservative running for a Utah congressional seat says America needs more leaders like President Donald Trump who stand by their principles, won't compromise and who "will stand up to the lawlessness supported by the radical left."

On Wednesday at the Republican National Convention, Burgess Owens decried civil unrest that's followed some racial injustice protests and said America is at a crossroads in November.

He declared, "Mobs torch our cities while popular members of Congress promote the same socialism my father fought against in World War II."

Owens is in a race that could test GOP's ability to recapture the suburban districts that gave Democrats control of the House. The former NFL player and Fox News commentator handily won the Republican primary by running to the right of his opponents, and he is trying to reclaim the suburban Salt Lake City district once held by Mia Love, another Black conservative who lost in 2018 to a moderate Democrat, Ben McAdams.

A young Republican congressional candidate from North Carolina is decrying "the radical left" but urging Americans to "to be a radical" for freedom, liberty and the republic.

Twenty-five-year-old Madison Cawthorn made the comments in an address at the Republican National Convention on Wednesday.

Cawthorn, who is white, says national leaders on the left have embraced "radicalized identity politics" that rejects the vision of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Cawthorn says millions of people risk their lives to come to the U.S. "because they believe in the dream of MLK and the American dream," and urged people to join the GOP as "the party of freedom."

Cawthorn defeated Trump's preferred candidate in an upset in the June GOP primary runoff. He would be among the youngest members of Congress ever if elected in November.

At the end of his speech, Cawthorn, who uses a wheelchair after being partially paralyzed years ago, stood up with the help of a walker.

A supporter of President Donald Trump's who is charged with insider trading ended up speaking at the Republican National Convention after all.

The campaign would not definitively say earlier Wednesday whether Jack Brewer, a former professional football player and a member of Black Voices for Trump, would speak. But he did address the convention on Wednesday night.

Brewer argued that not liking Trump's tone was not enough to merit a vote for Democrat Joe Biden.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission accused Brewer this month of illegal insider trading in the stock of a small company that operated a communications network for police. Brewer's investment advisory firm is registered with the SEC.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 20 of 49

A message to Brewer through one of his companies wasn't returned Wednesday.

A Washington nun who is also a surgeon and retired U.S. Army officer says, "Donald Trump is the most pro-life President that this nation has ever had."

Sister Deirdre "Dede" Byrne of the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary focused her remarks Wednesday night at the Republican National Convention on abortion.

She says the president's "belief in the sanctity of life transcends politics."

While Trump has fully embraced an anti-abortion agenda, some people of faith — particularly more liberal ones — point to a broader view of the "pro-life" label in criticizing some of his policy proposals as inconsistent with that interpretation. For example, Trump's administration has slashed the refugee admissions cap for the U.S. to historic lows, while also pursuing a policy of separating migrant families at the border.

One of President Donald Trump's most visible and vocal supporters says her boss's empathy for the changes in her life portray the type of world she wants for her daughter.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said Wednesday night during the Republican National Convention that Trump has supported her "both as a new mom and as an American with a preexisting condition."

McEnany underwent a preventative mastectomy in 2018 after learning she carried a genetic mutation that enhanced her chances for breast cancer.

Despite claiming he has ensured that people with preexisting medical problems will always be covered by health insurance, Trump's administration has urged the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn President Barack Obama's health care law, which provides health insurance protections for people with preexisting medical problems.

McEnany, who has a 9-month-old child, said, "I want my daughter to grow up in President Donald Trump's America."

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem is echoing many of her fellow Republicans' dark portrayal of America under Democratic leadership who have spoken at the Republican National Convention this week.

But she's doing so as she elevates her national profile with some talk of her running for president in 2024.

Noem on Wednesday night broadly cast cities governed by Democrats as "being overrun by violent mobs," as many have before her on the two previous nights of the convention.

Noem has crept into the national conservative discussion by appearing regularly on Fox News in the past year after installing a satellite television link-up in her office in remote Pierre, South Dakota, and consulting often with former Trump campaign adviser Corey Lewandowski.

Noem did not mention her praise of hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for COVID-19, a position that won her praise from President Trump, as did her lifting of the ban on fireworks at Mount Rushmore where she appeared with Trump for an Independence Day weekend rally in July.

Studies have shown hydroxychloroquine isn't effective against the virus and may even be harmful as a treatment for COVID-19.

A speaker who had been expected to deliver remarks on the third night of the Republican National Convention has been unexpectedly removed from the program hours before airtime. Another speaker's appearance is up in the air.

The campaign confirmed that Robert Unanue, the president and CEO of Goya Foods, will not be speaking Wednesday night, citing a "logistical problem."

Unanue's praise of President Donald Trump at the White House last month sparked a boycott of his company's products.

Also unclear is the status of a speech by former professional football player Jack Brewer.

Brewer was charged with insider trading by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission earlier this

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 21 of 49

month. The campaign would not say definitively whether he will speak.

Organizers on Tuesday pulled another featured speaker, "Angel Mom" Mary Ann Mendoza, after she directed her Twitter followers to a series of anti-Semitic, conspiratorial messages hours before her prerecorded segment was set to air.

-- Jill Colvin and Zeke Miller

South Dakota's Noem speaks at RNC as state virus cases rise

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — From the earliest days of the coronavirus pandemic, President Donald Trump called on governors to "liberate" residents, reopen schools and get businesses back to normal.

No governor followed that advice more closely — and with more attention-seeking fervor — than South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem.

The first-term governor never shut down businesses, never mandated mask-wearing and welcomed two massive public gatherings to her state this summer — a fireworks display at Mount Rushmore, which Trump attended, and a motorcycle rally attended by hundreds of thousands of people. When Professional Bull Riders wanted to allow spectators back into the arena, Noem hopped on a horse and brandished the American flag at the event.

"Let's remember to 'put our positive pants on,'" the governor said in a recent email to supporters.

Noem was rewarded for her optimism Wednesday with a speaking slot at the Republican National Convention. She gave an address hitting the themes she has emphasized during the pandemic — personal responsibility and freedom.

"We are not — and will not be — the subjects of an elite class of so-called experts. We the people are the government," she said in leading off the convention speeches in Washington Wednesday.

Trump has praised her support for hydrochloroquine as a COVID-19 remedy, despite no proof of its usefulness. He also publicly hailed her lifting of the ban on fireworks at her state's Mount Rushmore, and appeared there with her at a July rally.

The appearance with Trump in July and at the RNC Wednesday capped a year of deliberate work raising her national profile, much of it in consultation with former Trump campaign adviser Corey Lewandowski, who has promoted Noem and opened doors for her.

In return, Noem praised Trump as having "lifted people of all races and backgrounds out of poverty," despite a global pandemic his administration was slow to address, which led to a deep economic recession.

"You can look back 50 years, and you won't find anyone that has surpassed President Trump's success on these four issues alone," Noem said, referring to the economy, taxes, religious freedom and gun rights.

But at home, it is an awkward time for the governor to celebrate, especially considering her own handling of the crisis.

Health experts are warning the virus is far from done in South Dakota, with the state seeing the nation's third-highest upward trend in daily cases over the last two weeks, according to data from the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.

In recent days, reports of infections tied to the motorcycle rally at Sturgis have popped up in eight states. Noem supported it as health experts warned it could become a super-spreader event.

"Maybe people should listen to the medical experts and not to the politicians," said Dr. Jawad Nazir, an infectious disease professor at the University of South Dakota medical school.

While news of the infections landed, the governor focused on politics, joining Lewandowski on multiple campaign stops in Pennsylvania, where she appeared without a mask and posed for photos shoulder-to-shoulder with people. She is also scheduled to speak at a Republican event in Iowa next week, an indication that, despite her insistence that she is not interested in running for president, she is placing herself in the conversation of who will take up Trump's mantle.

Noem's coveted exposure at the RNC is a measure of her rising stature in Trump's Republican Party, which is eager to highlight its female leaders as it vies for female voters.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 22 of 49

Along with installing a satellite link-up in her office in Pierre for live television spots, she has traveled widely with Lewandowski, been promoted by conservative commentator Charlie Kirk and accepted the invitation to a Republican county GOP dinner in western Iowa this year.

"We need more women out there," said Sarah Chamberlain, a GOP strategist, who said Noem has recently come up in focus groups of female voters. "She's young, she's intelligent, she's aggressive. They like that."

Noem, 48, has angled for increased attention from Trump since shortly after taking office as South Dakota's first female governor in 2019. But before the pandemic, her most eye-catching move was an anti-drug campaign with a tagline — "Meth. We're On It" — that was savaged by social media.

The pandemic gave her the opportunity to distinguish herself on a national stage. Governing from one of the most sparsely populated states in the country, Noem has championed a hands-off approach to the crisis and made it clear that she believes the dangers of the virus are not as bad as feared.

"I had never seen a situation where people were so gripped by fear and that what we really needed was information in people's hands and give them the opportunity to make the best decision for their family," she said in a July interview on the podcast "The Charlie Kirk Show."

Noem has said that widespread infections were inevitable, predicting that up to 70% of people would be infected with the virus and prepping the state's hospitals to handle 5,000 patients. She also followed the president's cue in hoping that hydroxychloroquine was an antidote and worked with the White House to conduct a large-scale trial of the drug.

Noem did not fully divulge the potential scope of the pandemic's impact, declining to provide exact numbers on the state's projected death toll. Documents obtained through a public records request by The Associated Press show that the Department of Health estimated 2,956 people would die from COVID-19 among South Dakota's population of 885,000. Health officials also warned that over 275,000 people were vulnerable to the virus and that the influx of patients could be more than eight times hospitals' capacity.

Early on in the pandemic, Noem discouraged large gatherings, closed schools and issued an order in April directing vulnerable people in two hard-hit counties to stay home.

But the dire projections from epidemiological models have not come to fruition. The virus moved through the state much slower than models predicted, with 161 people dying from COVID-19 so far.

As the number of cases plateaued and dozens, rather than thousands, occupied hospital beds, Noem's strategy on the coronavirus took an increasingly ideological edge. The governor began emphasizing the failure of the epidemiological models in June and arguing that "no model is capable of replacing human freedom" to respond to the coronavirus crisis.

Noem learned to get the White House's attention after once pleading with Trump for more testing supplies. She increased her appearances on Fox News, and on one occasion, she received a call from the administration within 15 minutes of appearing on the network, according to a Republican official with knowledge of the exchange. The official was not authorized to discuss private conversations and demanded anonymity.

Like Trump, Noem was reluctant to wear a mask, casting doubt on a broad consensus by health experts that masks help prevent the spread of the virus, and discouraged schools from requiring students to wear masks. She has yet to appear at a news conference with a mask to the exasperation of health experts and moderate Republicans in her state.

Nazir, the infection disease expert, worries that the lack of masking, combined with large gatherings, could lead to increased spread. Infections from an event like the Sturgis rally, which drew people from all over the country, could be impossible to trace.

"We are dealing with human lives here," he said.

Others say Noem is harnessing the politics of the pandemic at the expense of people's health. Tom Dempster, a Republican and former lawmaker, said he initially praised the governor's handling of the coronavirus outbreak, but believes her pursuit of national attention is dividing the state and discouraging efforts to mitigate infections.

"Today I fear that one is testing fate," he said of Noem's efforts to hold large events. "We may very well pay for this."

Cold case units focus on missing, murdered Indigenous women

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Ida Rose Jacomet, 37, was last seen Oct. 2, 1975, at the Circle M Bar on an old highway near Fairbanks, Alaska. The only clue left behind was that her purse was found in the parking lot. If she is alive today, she would be 82.

Valerie Sifsof disappeared from a campground about 65 miles southeast of Anchorage, last seen by her boyfriend about midnight on July 7, 2012. Search teams tried in vain but never found Sifsof or her body. She would be 51 years old, if she's alive.

In the village of Fort Yukon, located just above the Arctic Circle 400 miles north of Anchorage, 62-year-old Lorraine Juanita Ginnis was spotted walking near her home Oct. 4, 2018. She hasn't been seen since.

These women are among the hundreds of Alaska Native or American Indian women who have gone missing over the years, and in many instances, their cases have gone cold.

Now the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services is opening seven Operation Lady Justice Task Force cold case offices across the country to concentrate on the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Tara Sweeney, the Department of Interior's assistant secretary for Indian Affairs and an Inupiat from Utqiagvik, the nation's northernmost community and formerly known as Barrow, opened the Anchorage office Wednesday.

"I think as an Alaska Native woman, it's extremely humbling to be able to work on an initiative that has impacted our community at levels beyond, I would say, the national level," Sweeney said.

Cases for investigators will be pulled from the FBI's National Crime Information Center. In late July, when the first cold case office opened in Bloomington, Minnesota, the database indicated there were more than 1,500 unsolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women.

Alaska has about 300 cases. "That number leads the nation, sadly," Sweeney said. Alaska also is among the states with the highest rates of violence against women.

Sweeney said she recently went through the database and could identify by last names alone where in Alaska they came from or family members that she personally knows.

"And I'm one person, and there are so many Alaska Natives that are impacted because of this epidemic," she said.

She was very direct when asked what success for this initiative would look like.

"I'm just going to put it in very simple terms: Justice for victims and resolution and closure for families," she said.

The cold case teams stem from the Operation Lady Justice Task Force, which was created by an executive order from President Donald Trump in November. It is a multi-agency effort led by Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and U.S. Attorney General William Barr.

There will be a special agent in charge of the Anchorage office and investigators. But it will require cooperation at every level.

"It's a multi-disciplinary team, which is going to include folks from all the different law enforcement agencies, our partners at FBI, the U.S. attorney's office, as well as their state and local partners," said Charles Addington, the deputy director for Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services.

He added that personnel from social services agencies and tribal governments, people who "can be a help to bring these cases to bear," will also be included.

Sweeney said the duties for the cold case officers will be to gather intelligence on missing and murdered cases, prioritize those cases for assignment to investigative teams, and develop plans to help guide investigators. This will include identifying outside resources, including social services, which could provide meaningful input and coordinating that with investigators.

"It's important to manage expectations because the need is so great," she said.

Greg Razo with the Alaska Native Justice Center said at a news conference announcing the opening

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 24 of 49

of the cold case office that historically, the federal justice presence in Alaska has been intermittent and inconsistent, and the state of Alaska has failed to meet the challenge of public safety.

He asked federal agencies to look at new and innovative ways to bring public safety services to Alaska, and to pay particular attention to both prevention and intervention in cases of missing and murdered Native persons.

"Opening this office is a great first step," Razo said. "And we stand ready to partner with all of you as we work to reverse the disproportionality that has put so many of our Alaska Native people, families and children at risk."

Besides Bloomington and Anchorage, other offices have opened in Rapid City, South Dakota; Billings, Montana; Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Sacaton, Arizona, just outside Phoenix. Arizona has the second highest count of cold cases, at about 240.

The seventh office is scheduled to open next month in Nashville.

South Dakota universities report over 90 COVID-19 cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota universities reported over 90 cases of coronavirus cases among students and staff through an online dashboard that was launched on Tuesday.

The University of South Dakota reported the highest number of people affected by the coronavirus, with 61 active cases and 331 people in quarantine. Four other public universities reported cases among students and staff, with a total of 32 cases.

Executive Director of the Board of Regents Brian Maher said the dashboards will provide the public with a real-time look at case numbers, the Argus Leader reported. The Department of Health is giving a weekly report on the number of cases in schools and universities statewide, but will not provide a breakdown by school or district. The Department is leaving it up to individual districts or schools to report cases to parents and students.

Aberdeen police make arrest after stabbing investigation

Police in Aberdeen made an arrest on Wednesday after responding to a call for a stabbing where one man was killed.

The Aberdeen Police Office said they were called to home for a reported stabbing early Wednesday morning. They found a man inside who was pronounced dead at the scene.

The police arrested Jacob Lane Lee Bad Wound, 24, of Aberdeen. Bad Wound has been charged with second-degree murder and is on parole.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, Aug. 21

Don't play political games with mail service, census count

The fundamental right to vote for thousands of South Dakotans is jeopardized while political games are played with the 2020 Census count and dismantling of the United States Postal Service.

This trend toward disenfranchisement is not only unconstitutional – it flies in the face of the state's own interests.

There's no doubt that absentee voting will have a historically outsized importance this November. South Dakota Secretary of State Steve Barnett says that 97,000 absentee ballot requests have already been received, accounting for almost 20% of the state's registered voters.

With less than a month before county auditors begin mailing out absentee ballots, requests will continue to pour in. In June's primary election, the first conducted state-wide amid the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic, 58% of South Dakotans who voted did so by absentee ballot. That rate easily eclipsed the 13.9 and 15.6% absentee rates in 2016 and 2018.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 25 of 49

So if the majority of South Dakotans voted by mail in the last election and the practice has more than a century of success, why are we here today needing to defend it?

The coronavirus effect on Minnehaha County's June election stood out. Standard in-person voting was hobbled by a critical shortage of poll volunteers. The county auditor's office struggled to manage the unprecedented deluge of 28,000 absentee ballots. The election saw a 20% voter turnout. The November election is expected to draw 64 to 70% of the state's registered voters.

Though tallying the votes cast correctly and on time will present a monumental challenge, there is a greater threat to its integrity. At a time when a New York Times analysis found that three-fourths of American voters are eligible to do so by mail, the postal service's ability to deliver those ballots in a timely fashion is being cast in doubt by the actions of Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a prominent Republican donor who appeared before a U.S. Senate committee Friday.

DeJoy has tried to defend the practice of physically removing post collection boxes and dismantling one-tenth of the Postal Service's sorting machines as cost-cutting measures exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. After reams of negative coverage, he issued a statement that he would be halting the implementation of these initiatives "to avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail."

But damage to the delivery infrastructure has been done, and DeJoy's assurances ring hollow at a time when President Trump has made unfounded statements regarding fraud in mail-in voting, creating a cloud of electoral suspicion where none should exist.

Elderly South Dakotans and those with preexisting medical conditions are understandably reluctant to vote in-person on Election Day and put themselves at unnecessary risk of coronavirus transmission. Nonetheless, their right to have their votes counted is fundamental to the American ideal of citizen participation.

Voters should know key dates – absentee voting begins Sept. 18 and the voter registration deadline is Oct. 19 – to avoid a late rush to get their ballot in the mail, which is where delivery problems could arise. Submissions by mail must arrive by Election Day on Nov. 3, while in-person submissions are due Nov. 2.

South Dakota's Native American population, comprising about 10% of the state's population, faces greater voting hurdles even in the best of times. As the pandemic rolls on, tribal members living on reservations are on shelter-in-place lockdown, meaning the postal crisis will take on redoubled urgency.

But the Trump administration is also debilitating the execution of another constitutional mandate: the decennial census, delayed from spring to late summer as a response to the COVID-19 emergency. Indian Country is historically vulnerable to undercounting in the census. Tribal leaders estimate that every member not counted equals a loss of \$3,500 in government funding and programs.

The Census Bureau announced this week that it would be moving up the deadline for accepting census returns from Oct. 31 to Sept. 30. That means that the process will have only six weeks to be completed, versus the normal 10-week window. This count, for good or more likely ill, will determine policy, the disbursement of federal dollars and the apportionment for representation in the United States House of Representatives for the next decade.

Most states have formed "complete count committees" to ensure accuracy. South Dakota has not, despite the fact that the estimated 1.4% undercount in 2010 – more than 13,000 people – has cost the state around \$15 million in federal funding every year since.

Earlier this month, Montana announced that it would spend more than \$500,000 from its Coronavirus Relief Fund to boost census count efforts with a statewide initiative that recognizes the urgency of the situation. The fact that Gov. Kristi Noem has not mobilized any census counting efforts doesn't speak well of her desire to ensure that all South Dakotans, regardless of their political or geographic positioning, be counted.

Whether on census lists or voter rolls, that basic expectation – to be counted – takes on greater urgency as the pandemic alters the way our civic interactions are carried out. It's the job of responsible government to ease the strain of this unfortunate reality, not take advantage of it for potential political gain.

Madison Daily Leader, Aug. 24

Growing salinated soils have solution on hand

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 26 of 49

Cropland in parts of northeast South Dakota is battling salinated soils, but we're glad to see that potential solutions are available.

Salinated soils have excess soluble salts, which decrease plant growth. "Those saline areas in the field are just deserts," says Matthew Hubers, Day County district conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "They don't produce crops, and they don't produce wildlife."

The fields are usually identified by a white crusty surface and no crops. The problem is mostly northwest of us in the Upper James River Basin, where an estimated 2 million acres are now affected.

The problem can be addressed with soil conservation practices, including crop rotations, the planting of cover crops and the implementation of reduced-tillage or no-till practices.

In addition, a new source of funding for conservation practices designed to remedy these areas is now available. The NRCS in South Dakota has implemented a new Environmental Quality Incentives Program signup for producers in those upper James River counties. "There's approximately \$1 million annually in designated funds for this effort," Hubers said.

We're glad to see this program, and other soil conservation programs, available to agriculture producers. The rest of the nation may think that farm programs only provide subsidies, without realizing the great long-term environmental and producer benefits of other programs.

Rescuers poised to move in as Hurricane Laura still howls

By GERALD HERBERT, MELINDA DESLATTE, and STACEY PLAISANCE Associated Press

LAKE ARTHUR, La. (AP) — Hurricane Laura pounded the Gulf Coast for hours with ferocious wind, torrential rains and rising seawater as it roared ashore over southwestern Louisiana near the Texas border early Thursday, threatening the lives of people who didn't evacuate.

Authorities had ordered coastal residents to get out, but not everyone did in an area devastated by Rita in 2005.

Laura's howling winds battered a tall building in Lake Charles, blowing out windows as glass and debris flew to the ground. Hours after landfall, the wind and rain were still blowing too hard to check for survivors.

"There are some people still in town and people are calling ... but there ain't no way to get to them," Tony Guillory, president of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, said early Thursday morning over the phone as he hunkered down in a Lake Charles government building that was shaking from the storm.

Guillory said he hopes stranded people can be rescued later Thursday but fears that blocked roads, downed power lines and flooding could get in the way.

"We know anyone that stayed that close to the coast, we've got to pray for them, because looking at the storm surge, there would be little chance of survival," Louisiana Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser told ABC's Good Morning America.

With nearly 470,000 homes and businesses without power in the two states, near-constant lightning provided the only light for some.

The National Hurricane Center said Laura slammed the coast with winds of 150 mph (241 kph) at 1 a.m. CDT as a Category 4 hurricane near Cameron, a 400-person community about 30 miles (48 kilometers) east of the Texas border.

"Unsurvivable storm surge with large and destructive waves will cause catastrophic damage," forecasters warned. They said the storm surge could reach 15-20 feet in Port Arthur, Texas, and a stretch of Louisiana including Lake Charles, a city of 80,000 people on Lake Calcasieu.

"This surge could penetrate up to 40 miles inland from the immediate coastline, and flood waters will not fully recede for several days," the hurricane center said.

Hours after landfall, Laura was still a Category 2 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 110 mph (175 kph). Its center was past Lake Charles, moving north at about 15 mph (24 kph), but with damaging winds that stretched over much of Louisiana and parts of eastern Texas, reaching as far as 175 miles (280

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 27 of 49

kilometers) from Laura's center.

Dick Gremillion, the emergency director in Calcasieu Parish, said hours after landfall that they hadn't been able to get out and look for damage.

"The wind is still over 50 mph. It's going to have to drop significantly before they can even run any emergency calls. We also need daylight," Gremillion said in an interview with KPLC-TV.

More than 580,000 coastal residents were ordered to join the largest evacuation since the coronavirus pandemic began and many did, filling hotels and sleeping in cars since officials didn't want to open mass shelters and worsen the spread of COVID-19.

But in Cameron Parish, where Laura came ashore, Nungesser said 50 to 150 people refused pleas to leave and planned to weather the storm in everything from elevated homes to recreational vehicles. The result could be deadly, since some houses weren't raised high enough to withstand the massive storm surge.

"It's a very sad situation," said Ashley Buller, assistant director of emergency preparedness. "We did everything we could to encourage them to leave."

Becky Clements, 56, didn't take chances; she evacuated from Lake Charles after hearing that it could take a direct hit. With memories of the destruction almost 15 years ago by Hurricane Rita, she and her family found an Airbnb hundreds of miles inland.

"The devastation afterward in our town and that whole corner of the state was just awful," Clements recalled Wednesday. "Whole communities were washed away, never to exist again."

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Pete Gaynor urged people in Laura's path to stay home, if that's still safe. "Don't go out sightseeing. You put yourself, your family at risk and you put first responders at risk," he told "CBS This Morning."

FEMA has plenty of resources staged to help survivors, Gaynor said. Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards mobilized the National Guard to help, and state Department of Wildlife crews had boats prepared for water rescues.

Forecasters expected a weakened Laura to cause widespread flash flooding in states far from the coast. An unusual tropical storm warning was issued as far north as Little Rock, where forecasters expected gusts of 50 mph (80 kph) and a deluge of rain through Friday. After turning eastward and reaching the Atlantic Ocean, it could again become a tropical storm and threaten the Northeast.

Laura hit the U.S. after killing nearly two dozen people on the island of Hispaniola, including 20 in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic, where it knocked out power and caused intense flooding.

Laura was the seventh named storm to strike the U.S. this year, setting a new record for U.S. landfalls by the end of August. The old record was six in 1886 and 1916, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

Deslatte reported from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Plaisance from Stephenville, Louisiana. Associated Press contributors include Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; John L. Mone in Port Arthur, Texas; Paul J. Weber in Austin, Texas; Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland; Juan A. Lozano in Houston; Jake Bleiberg in Dallas; Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama; Jill Bleed in Little Rock, Arkansas; Julie Walker in New York and Sophia Tulp in Atlanta.

Putin: Russia stands ready to offer security help to Belarus

By YURAS KARMANAU and VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV undefined

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that he stands ready to send police to Belarus if protests there turn violent, but added in an interview broadcast Thursday that there is no such need now and voiced hope for stabilizing the situation in the neighboring country.

Belarus' authoritarian president of 26 years, Alexander Lukashenko, is facing weeks of protests against his reelection to a sixth term in the Aug. 9 vote, which the opposition says was rigged.

Putin told Russia's state television that Lukashenko has asked him to prepare a Russian law enforcement contingent to deploy to Belarus if necessary.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 28 of 49

Putin said that he and Lukashenko have agreed that "there is no such need now, and I hope there won't be."

He said they agreed that Russia will send a contingent to help only if "the situation spins out of control" and extremist groups unleash violence and try to seize government buildings.

In an apparent jab at the West that condemned Lukashenko's crackdown on protesters and urged him to launch a dialogue with the opposition, Putin accused unidentified foreign forces of trying to win political advantages from the turmoil in Belarus.

Russia has a union agreement with Belarus, envisaging close political, economic and military ties, seeing the neighbor as a key bulwark against Western expansion and an important conduit for Russian energy exports.

Lukashenko on Thursday accused Belarus' neighbors of open interference in its affairs with a push for new elections in what he described as a "hybrid war" and "diplomatic carnage." He charged that Poland was harboring plans to take over the Grodno region on the border, saying that it prompted the deployment of additional Belarusian troops to the frontier.

The United States and the European Union have criticized the Aug. 9 election that extended Lukashenko's rule as neither free nor fair and encouraged Belarusian authorities to engage in a dialogue with the opposition.

The Belarusian leader, who has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist since 1994, has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and refused to engage in dialogue with the opposition, which is contesting his reelection to a sixth term.

After a brutal crackdown on demonstrators in the first days of post-election protests, which caused international outrage and helped swell protesters' numbers, the authorities changed tactics and let daily demonstrations go unhindered for nearly two weeks. The government, meanwhile, has maintained pressure on the opposition with threats and selective jailing of its leaders.

On Wednesday, police dispersed protesters who gathered on the capital's main Independence Square, detaining dozens. The action signaled a return to force, albeit without violence that marked the post-election crackdown, when nearly 7,000 people were detained, hundreds were injured and at least three protesters died.

Vladimir Isachenkov reported from Moscow.

New Zealand mosque shooter sentenced to life without parole

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — The white supremacist who slaughtered 51 worshippers at two New Zealand mosques was sentenced Thursday to life in prison without the possibility of parole, the first time the maximum available sentence has been imposed in the country.

Judge Cameron Mander said the crimes committed by 29-year-old Australian Brenton Harrison Tarrant were so wicked that a lifetime in jail could not begin to atone for them. He said they had caused enormous loss and hurt and stemmed from a warped and malignant ideology.

"Your actions were inhuman," Mander said. "You deliberately killed a 3-year-old infant by shooting him in the head as he clung to the leg of his father."

After the sentence was announced, survivors of the shootings raised hands and fists in celebration and greeted supporters waving signs with painted hearts and carrying roses outside the court building.

The March 2019 attacks targeting people praying at the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch shocked New Zealand and prompted new laws banning the deadliest types of semi-automatic weapons. They also prompted global changes to social media protocols after the gunman livestreamed his attack on Facebook.

During the four-day sentencing hearing, 90 survivors and family members recounted the horror of that day and the trauma they continue to feel. One of those who spoke was Temel Atacocugu, who survived

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 29 of 49

being shot nine times during the attack at the Al Noor mosque.

Atacocugu said he felt relieved at the sentence.

"Finally we can breathe freely, and we feel secure, and my kids feel secure," Atacocugu said. "The justice system has locked up this ideology forever."

Tarrant pleaded guilty in March to 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one count of terrorism, reversing his earlier not guilty pleas.

He fired his lawyers and told the judge he didn't wish to speak at his sentencing. A standby lawyer appointed by the court told the judge that Tarrant did not oppose the maximum sentence.

The judge said Tarrant recently told a psychiatrist that he now rejects his extremist views and considers his attacks "abhorrent and irrational."

But Mander said he was skeptical Tarrant had abandoned his ideology, especially considering that the gunman told police after the attacks he wished he'd killed more people. Mander said Tarrant had shown no empathy toward his victims and remained detached and self-centered.

Tarrant arrived in New Zealand in 2017, never sought work, and began planning for his attack by stockpiling high-powered weapons and joining shooting clubs, the judge said.

"It appears that while traveling in Europe you developed deep-seated radical views regarding the migrant population of some Western countries," the judge said.

Tarrant flew a drone over the Al Noor mosque and researched the layout, according to prosecutors. On the day of the attacks, he drove to the mosques with six guns, including two AR-15s.

"You committed mass murder," the judge said. "You slaughtered unarmed and defenseless people. You maimed, wounded and crippled many others. Your victims include the young and the old, men, women and children."

Dressed in a gray prison tracksuit, Tarrant showed little emotion during his four-day sentencing. He watched the speakers, occasionally giving a small nod or covering his mouth as he laughed at jokes, often made at his expense.

He was noticeably thinner than when he was first arrested. He didn't show the brazenness he did at his first court appearance the day after the attacks, when he made a hand gesture sometimes adopted by white supremacists.

The sentencing hearing gave survivors and family members a chance to confront the gunman. As the hearing went on, the speakers became more emboldened and the numbers who signed up to speak swelled.

Some chose to yell at the gunman and give him the finger. Others called him a monster, a coward, a rat. Some sung verses from the Quran or addressed him in Arabic. A few spoke softly to Tarrant, saying they forgave him.

"It was very empowering," said Aya Al-Umari, who spoke about the death of her brother, Hussein. "Every one of us was so powerful in delivering our statements."

Al-Umari said the hearing had shown how resilient the Muslim community in Christchurch has been in recovering from the trauma of the attacks.

"No sentence will bring our loved ones back," she said. "But at least we can close this chapter and move on."

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who was praised globally for her empathy and leadership after the attacks, said the crime was still raw for many.

"Nothing will take the pain away but I hope you felt the arms of New Zealand around you through this whole process, and I hope you continue to feel that through all the days that follow," Ardern said.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said he was sending his love across to New Zealand. He said the world must never see or hear from the gunman again.

A Nine Network television news crew spoke to Tarrant's mother, Sharon Tarrant, after the sentencing near his hometown of Grafton in Australia, but said she declined to comment.

New Zealand abolished the death penalty for murder in 1961. Since then, the maximum non-parole sentence had been 30 years for a triple murder.

Europe is going back to school despite recent virus surge

By ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A mother and her three children scanned the school supplies in a Paris supermarket, plucking out multicolored fountain pens, crisp notebooks — and plenty of masks. Despite resurgent coronavirus infections, similar scenes are unfolding across Europe as a new school year dawns.

Virus or no virus, European authorities are determined to put children back into classrooms, to narrow the learning gaps between haves and have-nots that deepened during lockdowns — and to get their parents back to work.

Facing a jump in virus cases, authorities in France, Britain, Spain and elsewhere are imposing mask rules, hiring extra teachers and building new desks en masse.

While the U.S. back-to-school saga has been politicized and chaotic, with a hodgepodge of fast-changing rules and backlash against President Donald Trump's insistence on reopening, European governments have faced less of an uproar.

And even though the virus has invaded classrooms in recent days from Berlin to Seoul, and some teachers and parents warn that their schools aren't ready, European leaders from the political left, right and center are sending an unusually consistent message: Even in a pandemic, children are better off in class.

France's prime minister promised Wednesday to "do everything" to get people back to school and work. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called reopening schools a "moral duty," and his government even threatened to fine parents who keep kids at home. Italy's health minister abruptly shut down discos this month with one goal in mind — "to reopen schools in September in complete safety."

As both a parent and a teacher, Mathieu Maillard has plenty to worry about before French schools reopen Tuesday. The number of virus infections per 100,000 people has grown five-fold in France in the last month.

How will his 5-year-old daughter keep a safe distance from preschool friends she's so excited to see for the first time in six months? How will he gain the trust of his high school students, from one of Marseille's roughest neighborhoods, if he has to police their mask use?

But overall, Maillard thinks it's time to go back. School "has to start up again at some point," he says. "The health risk exists, but the risk of not putting children in school is even bigger."

During lockdown, he said, some students never joined his online French literature classes. Some had no place to work, or no computers, just telephones they used to send blurry photos of handwritten work.

"Our students really, really need school," he said. For some of those growing up in an environment plagued with violence and drugs, school "is a place where they can breathe."

Unlike the U.S., many European schools reopened at the end of the last term, offering lessons for the fall.

Among measures in place: hand-washing stations, one-way corridors, staggered starts and lunch times. Some regions are giving out free laptops, in case of new lockdowns. Many countries require masks in school, but rules vary on where to wear them and from what age.

In southeast London, father of three Mark Davis is looking forward to schools reopening in early September but is vexed about what will happen if there's a new virus wave.

"Everyone is gunning for this (return to school), but it's no good just hoping for the best," he said. "Plans need to be put in place."

So far the government says schools will only close as a last resort. But parents say the government's message hasn't been clear.

Most of the U.K.'s 11 million students haven't seen a classroom since March, and reopening schools tops the political agenda. Britain has 41,515 virus-related deaths, the highest confirmed toll in Europe, and Johnson's government has been strongly criticized for its handling of the pandemic.

Some European schools are planning or considering a hybrid academic year, with some physical classes and some online. But most are aiming for full in-person classes.

That's in line with guidance by global organizations like UNICEF, which said Thursday that at least a third of the world's schoolchildren were unable to access remote learning during lockdowns. It warned that "the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 31 of 49

repercussions could be felt in economies and societies for decades.”

Medical experts say the risk of opening schools depends on how widespread COVID-19 infections are in the community and what safety measures are taken.

Evidence suggests young children don't spread the disease very easily, while kids aged 10 and up may transmit as easily as adults. But experts say more conclusive proof is needed. And even though children appear less likely to get infected than adults, severe cases and deaths have occurred.

Amid an unexpected new wave of infections in hard-hit Spain, officials are scrambling to adapt plans to reopen schools Sept. 4.

They include hiring 11,000 additional teachers, building makeshift classrooms in schoolyards to gain space, and creating “bubbles” of students who are allowed to mix with each other but not with outsiders.

But teachers' unions decry funding shortages and have called for strikes starting next week.

Italy, Europe's first virus hot spot, is hiring 40,000 more temporary teachers and ordering extra desks, but some won't be ready until October. And many parents and teachers remain in the dark about exactly how it will work when most schools reopen Sept. 14. They notably wonder how overcrowded, run-down schools can ensure one-meter (three-foot) distances and smaller class sizes.

“They are in over their heads,” said Cristina Tedesco, a parent representative for a high school class in Verona province.

Germany may serve as a cautionary tale, or an example, for its neighbors.

At least 41 of Berlin's 825 schools reported virus cases as classes resumed this month, and thousands of students have been quarantined around the country. But Germany is determined not to close schools anew, so they're sending individual students or classes into quarantine instead.

Schools remained shut in most of Africa, Latin America and in some of the world's most populated nations including India and Bangladesh. In the U.S., some school districts are planning a mix of in-person and online learning to help maintain social distancing. Other districts are starting classes online only.

Denmark this week saw an unusual endorsement for reopening schools. Its second-largest city, Aarhus, sent all high school students home after a spike in virus cases, but the teens pushed back, saying they don't learn as much online.

Protesting Monday, they held signs reading: “I just want to go to school.”

Associated Press writers Pan Pylas in London, Colleen Barry in Milan, Aritz Parra in Madrid and Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen contributed.

The Latest: Laura still a dangerous Category 2 hurricane

The Associated Press undefined

The Latest on Hurricane Laura:

MIAMI — The National Hurricane Center says Laura has weakened to a Category 2 hurricane as it moves deeper inland over Louisiana.

That's no longer a major hurricane but it still has extremely dangerous maximum sustained winds of 110mph (175 kph), nearly five hours after striking the coast and pushing what forecasters called an un-survivable storm surge miles inland.

Forecasters say it's centered about 45 miles (70 kilometers) north-northwest of Lake Charles and moving north at 15 mph (24 kph).

Laura's eye hit a stretch of Louisiana near the Texas state line early Thursday as a Category 4.

Authorities had ordered more than 580,000 coastal residents to evacuate, but not everyone did. Now they have to wait until conditions ease before attempting search and rescue missions and assessing the damage.

LAKE CHARLES, La. — “Louisiana Strong! We shall persevere.” That's a tweet from the Louisiana State Police just before Laura blew ashore as a Category 4 hurricane.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 32 of 49

Forecasters warned it would cause "complete destruction" of mobile homes, carve new cuts in the Gulf Coast shoreline and wash away entire buildings. The National Weather Service in Lake Charles warned that some communities will be "uninhabitable for weeks or months."

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards tweeted just before landfall that "this is a time for all of us to be praying for the best, while we're prepared for the worst."

LAKE CHARLES, La. — The National Hurricane Center says Hurricane Laura has weakened to a Category 3 hurricane with top winds of 120 mph (195 kph) a few hours after making landfall.

It's centered about 30 miles (50 kilometers) north-northwest of Lake Charles and moving north at 15 mph (24 kph). Hurricane-force winds and damaging wind gusts are spreading well inland into parts of eastern Texas and western Louisiana.

The hurricane center has updated its guidance on the ocean water pushed ashore, saying they expect unsurvivable storm surge with large and destructive waves will cause catastrophic damage from Sea Rim State Park, Texas, to Intracoastal City, Louisiana, including Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes.

Forecasters predict the highest surge, up to 20 feet, along a stretch of Louisiana coastline that includes Johnson Bayou and the towns of Holly Beach and Cameron.

Forecasters say this surge could penetrate up to 40 miles inland from the immediate coastline, and flood waters won't fully recede for days.

LAKE CHARLES, La. — Videos on social media show heavy winds and rain battering a tall building in Lake Charles, Louisiana, blowing out windows and littering glass and debris into the air and onto the ground as Hurricane Laura moves over southwestern Louisiana.

The damage was observed in Lake Charles, which is about 45 miles (72 kilometers) north of where the storm made landfall in Cameron early Thursday.

Other videos from the area show road signs bending, trees shaking violently and a large recreational vehicle being blown over.

More than 290,000 homes and businesses were without power in Texas and Louisiana, as near-constant lightning provided the only light for some. Officials say search and rescue missions will begin as soon as conditions allow, along with damage assessments.

LAKE CHARLES, La. — An official in a southwestern Louisiana parish says some people who did not evacuate are now requesting assistance.

Tony Guillory, president of Calcasieu Parish's police jury, was hunkering down in a Lake Charles government building that was shaking from the storm early Thursday as phones were ringing.

"People are calling the building but there ain't no way to get to them," he said over the phone.

Guillory said he hopes those stranded can be rescued later Thursday, but blocked roads, downed power lines and flooding could complicate the process.

CAMERON, La. — Forecasters say Hurricane Laura has made landfall in southwestern Louisiana as an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 hurricane.

The National Hurricane Center reports the storm made landfall at 1 a.m. CDT on Thursday near Cameron, a 400-person community about 30 miles (48 kilometers) east of the Texas border. It had maximum sustained winds of 150mph (240 kph), making it the most powerful hurricane to strike the U.S. so far this year.

Forecasters warned the strong winds could rip apart buildings, level trees and toss vehicles like toys.

Video and photos on social media showed torrents of rain flying sideways past street lights in Lake Charles, and streets covered with water closer to the coast. A sudden storm surge knocked over cameras meant to capture the hurricane's effects.

Forecasters also issued a string of tornado warnings as the storm pushed on to land, but there were no immediate reports of damage. More than 100,000 homes and businesses were without power in Texas

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 33 of 49

and Louisiana.

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said the state is closing Interstate 10 from around the Atchafalaya Bridge outside of Lafayette all the way into part of Texas, because several stretches within that area are expected to flood.

In a radio interview Wednesday night, Edwards talked of the “apocalyptic” language that meteorologists have used for the storm. “The language I’ve heard from the National Weather Service I’ve never heard before ... They’re sending the strongest possible message about how serious this storm is,” he said.

He talked specifically about concerns in Cameron Parish, which could receive wind gusts up to 180 mph (290 kph) and storm surge up to 20 feet (6 meters.)

“When people built back after Rita, they routinely built back to 15 feet,” Edwards said. He noted those structures would be overwhelmed.

Edwards said search and rescue efforts will begin Thursday as soon as it’s safe enough for officials to go out into floodwaters.

CAMERON PARISH, La. — At least 150 people refused to evacuate a coastal Louisiana parish that could be covered by ocean water as Hurricane Laura makes landfall, officials said.

Officers went door-to-door in Cameron Parish urging the roughly 7,000 residents to get out before Laura struck, and they all used social media and phone calls to warn people of the danger.

But Ashley Buller, assistant director of the parish Office of Emergency Preparedness, said officials knew of about 150 people who decided to stay put in structures ranging from seemingly safe elevated homes to recreational vehicles, which could easily be swept away by rushing storm surge.

“It’s a very sad situation,” Buller said in a telephone interview from Lake Charles, where parish officials relocated from an office closer to the coast in Cameron. “We did everything we could to encourage them to leave.”

Forecasters said Gulf waters could rise 20 feet along the coast of the low-lying parish without adding the height of waves, meaning the entire parish could be inundated.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said: “They’re thinking Cameron Parish is going to look like an extension of the Gulf of Mexico for a couple of days.”

NEW ORLEANS — A meteorologist in western Louisiana said there are increasing signs Hurricane Laura could reach Category 5 strength.

“There’s been a lot of question about whether this storm would make it to Category 5 strength before landfall -- I think that is becoming increasingly likely,” said meteorologist Donald Jones, of the National Weather Service’s regional office that covers parts of the Louisiana and Texas coastlines that are in the bullseye of Laura’s path.

“I think all evidence right now indicates that we’re probably going to be looking at a Category 5 storm,” he said.

Jones noted that there’s also debate within the weather service about whether Laura would maintain Category 5 status all the way to landfall, even it reaches that strength in the next few hours.

He made the comments during a Wednesday night briefing at the weather service’s New Orleans office, where he evacuated to from the Lake Charles office because of the storm.

17-year-old arrested after 2 killed during unrest in Kenosha

By STEPHEN GROVES and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — A white, 17-year-old police admirer was arrested Wednesday after two people were shot to death during a third straight night of protests in Kenosha over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake.

Kyle Rittenhouse, of Antioch, Illinois, about 15 miles (24.14 kilometers) from Kenosha, was taken into

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 34 of 49

custody in Illinois on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide in the attack Tuesday that was largely captured on cellphone video. The shooting left a third person wounded.

"I just killed somebody," the gunman, carrying a semi-automatic rifle, could be heard saying at one point.

In the wake of the killings, Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers authorized the deployment of 500 members of the National Guard to Kenosha, doubling the number of troops in the city of 100,000 midway between Milwaukee and Chicago. The governor's office said he is working with other states to bring in additional National Guard members and law officers. Authorities also announced a 7 p.m. curfew, though protesters ignored it again Wednesday.

Protesters marched past the intersection where two people were shot Tuesday night, stopping to gather around the spot where one person was shot, and to pray and lay flowers. Daijon Spann said he decided to join the demonstration because one of those killed the night before was a friend.

"I couldn't take it any more," he said. "I couldn't just sit there and watch my friend die."

Evers, a Democrat, issued a statement asking those who wanted to exercise their First Amendment rights to "please do so peacefully and safely" and urging others to "please stay home and let local first responders, law enforcement and members of the Wisconsin National Guard do their jobs."

"A senseless tragedy like this cannot happen again," Evers said.

As of early Thursday, the protests were mostly peaceful, in contrast to the violent clashes that marked earlier nights of protests. There were no groups patrolling with long guns as they had on previous nights, and protesters stayed away from a courthouse that had been the site of standoffs with law enforcement.

In Washington, the Justice Department said it is sending in more than 200 federal agents from the FBI, U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The White House said up to 2,000 National Guard troops would be made available.

The dead were identified only as a 26-year-old Silver Lake, Wisconsin, resident and a 36-year-old from Kenosha. The wounded person, a 36-year-old from West Allis, Wisconsin, was expected to survive, police said.

"We were all chanting 'Black lives matter' at the gas station and then we heard, boom, boom, and I told my friend, 'That's not fireworks,'" 19-year-old protester Devin Scott told the Chicago Tribune. "And then this guy with this huge gun runs by us in the middle of the street and people are yelling, 'He shot someone! He shot someone!' And everyone is trying to fight the guy, chasing him, and then he started shooting again."

Scott said he cradled a victim in his arms, and a woman started performing CPR, but "I don't think he made it."

According to witness accounts and video footage, police apparently let the gunman walk past them and leave the scene with a rifle over his shoulder and his hands in the air as members of the crowd were yelling for him to be arrested because he had shot people.

As for how the gunman managed to slip away, Sheriff David Beth described a chaotic, high-stress scene, with lots of radio traffic and people screaming, chanting and running — conditions he said can cause "tunnel vision" among law officers.

Rittenhouse was assigned a public defender in Illinois for a hearing Friday on his transfer to Wisconsin. The public defender's office had no comment. Under Wisconsin law, anyone 17 or older is treated as an adult in the criminal justice system.

Much of Rittenhouse's Facebook page is devoted to praising law enforcement, with references to Blue Lives Matter, a movement that supports police. He also can be seen holding an assault rifle.

In a photograph posted by his mother, he is wearing what appears to be a blue law enforcement uniform as well as the kind of brimmed hat that state troopers wear.

The sheriff told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that militia members or armed vigilantes had been patrolling Kenosha's streets in recent nights, but he did not know if the gunman was among them. However, video taken before the shooting shows police tossing bottled water from an armored vehicle to what appear to be armed civilians walking the streets. And one of them appears to be the gunman.

"We appreciate you being here," an officer is heard saying to the group over a loudspeaker.

Before the shooting, the conservative website The Daily Caller conducted a video interview with the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 35 of 49

suspected gunman in front of a boarded-up business.

"So people are getting injured, and our job is to protect this business," the young man said. "And part of my job is to also help people. If there is somebody hurt, I'm running into harm's way. That's why I have my rifle -- because I can protect myself, obviously. But I also have my med kit."

Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who is Black, said in an interview with the news program "Democracy Now!" that the shootings were not surprising and white militias have been ignored for too long.

"How many times across this country do you see armed gunmen, protesting, walking into state Capitols, and everybody just thinks it's OK?" Barnes said. "People treat that like it's some kind of normal activity that people are walking around with assault rifles."

In Wisconsin, it is legal for people 18 and over to openly carry a gun without a license.

Witness accounts and video indicate the gunman first shot someone at a car lot just before midnight, then jogged away, fell in the street, and opened fire again as members of the crowd closed in on him.

A witness, Julio Rosas, 24, said that when the gunman stumbled, "two people jumped onto him and there was a struggle for control of his rifle. At that point during the struggle, he just began to fire multiple rounds, and that dispersed people near him."

"The rifle was being jerked around in all directions while it was being fired," Rosas said.

Blake, 29, was shot in the back seven times on Sunday as he leaned into his SUV, three of his children seated inside. Kenosha police have said little about what happened other than that they were responding to a domestic dispute.

On Wednesday, three days after the shooting, state authorities identified the officer who shot Blake as Rusten Sheskey, a seven-year veteran of the Kenosha Police Department. Sheskey shot Blake while holding onto his shirt after officers first unsuccessfully used a Taser, the Wisconsin Justice Department said. State agents later recovered a knife from the driver's side floorboard of the vehicle, the department said.

The man who said he made the widely circulated cellphone video of Blake's shooting has said he heard officers yell, "Drop the knife! Drop the knife!" before the gunfire erupted. He said he didn't see a knife in Blake's hands.

State authorities did not say Blake threatened anyone with the knife.

On Tuesday, Ben Crump, the lawyer for Blake's family, said it would "take a miracle" for Blake to walk again. He called for the officer who opened fire to be arrested and for the others involved to lose their jobs. State officials have announced no charges.

Vice President Mike Pence, speaking on the third night of the Republican convention, called for an end to violence in Kenosha and "law and order on the streets of this country for every American of every race and creed and color." But Pence made no direct mention of Blake or other Black Americans shot or killed by police this year.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden posted a video saying he had spoken with Blake's parents and other family members.

"What I saw on that video makes me sick," Biden said. "Once again, a Black man, Jacob Blake, has been shot by the police in broad daylight, with the whole world watching."

Elsewhere, the Minnesota governor activated the National Guard on Wednesday night to help quell unrest that broke out in downtown Minneapolis following what authorities said was misinformation about the suicide death of a Black homicide suspect. The unrest comes three months after the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer touched off a nationwide reckoning over racial injustice.

Associated Press reporters Mike Householder in Kenosha, Wisconsin; Todd Richmond in Madison, Wisconsin; Gretchen Ehlke in Milwaukee, Jeff Baenen and Amy Forliti in Minneapolis; Don Babwin in Chicago and Tammy Webber in Fenton, Michigan, contributed, as did news researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York.

5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 36 of 49

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

1. HURRICANE LAURA POUNDS GULF COAST The storm roared ashore with 150 mph winds over southwestern Louisiana with whipping rains and pushing a surge of ocean water that could lead to catastrophic flooding and loss of life.

2. PENCE DEFENDS LAW ENFORCEMENT But the vice president made no mention of the Black Americans killed by police this year as he addressed Republican convention proceedings that unfolded amid new protests against racial injustice.

3. MILITIA PLEA MADE BEFORE DEADLY WISCONSIN ATTACK Calls for armed vigilantes to travel to Kenosha to protect businesses following the police shooting of Jacob Blake spread across social media in the hours before two people were slain during the unrest.

4. IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL IN EUROPE Despite a spike in coronavirus infections, authorities want to narrow learning gaps between haves and have-nots that deepened during virus lockdowns – and to get their parents back to work.

5. 'FIGHTING FOR WHAT'S RIGHT' NBA players didn't come to Disney solely for a restart, they wanted social reform and the Milwaukee Bucks set off a chain of postponements in the sports world.

Trump's big night: Expect talk of GOP progress, Dem anarchy

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four years ago, Donald Trump accepted the Republican Party's nomination for president with a dark convention speech that painted a dystopian portrait of America in decline and offered a singular solution: himself.

Though Trump has been president for three-and-a-half years, his rhetoric on the state of the nation has remained bleak. And as he prepares to deliver his second acceptance speech on Thursday, the president faces a country in crisis, one gripped by a once-in-a-century pandemic, a battered economy, a racial reckoning and a massive hurricane taking aim at the Gulf Coast.

Though he will promise national greatness, there was little expectation he would deliver a message designed to unify the divided electorate.

In 2016, his message was "I alone can fix it." This time, while trailing in the polls, he will offer himself as the last remaining defense against radical forces threatening the American way of life.

Aides have closely guarded details of the address, which was being revised the night before Trump was to speak from the White House South Lawn. While Trump has centered his recent stump speech on anarchists that he depicts overrunning city streets, aides signaled that Thursday's speech will not be as dark as his infamous "American carnage" inaugural address.

Against a backdrop of patriotism, Trump will describe America as a work in progress, one that is not perfect but has achieved much. It's an argument meant to offer a contrast with Democrats whom the president has described as not loving their country. In a similar vein, aides said, Trump would speak to progress made on combating the coronavirus, which has been treated as something of an afterthought during much of the convention although it is still killing 1,000 Americans a day.

But it is Trump's handling of the pandemic that has sent him tumbling in the polls and maximized the pressure around his speech. And while aides recognize that few Joe Biden supporters are likely to switch sides, their goal with the speech is to set up a permissions structure for Republicans who have defected from Trump over his rhetoric or policies to come home.

"He needs to give those people who don't approve of him an excuse to be for him," said Ari Fleischer, who served as White House press secretary for President George W. Bush.

Fleischer said Trump should speak personally about his experiences with COVID-19 — including friends lost to the virus. And while much of the convention has been about energizing Trump's base, Fleischer also saw openings for Trump to address the public's concerns about social unrest and crime, particularly after violence erupted in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where a white officer shot a Black man seven times.

"It strikes me that the choice for Republicans, the choice for the county, is that Biden is a good man who

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 37 of 49

will do a lot of bad things to the country. Trump is a pretty rough and boorish guy who has done and will do a lot of good things for the country," Fleischer said.

The Trump campaign has struggled to make this a choice election. So far, voters have instead viewed it as a referendum on how the president has handled a pandemic that has killed more than 175,000 Americans and left millions unemployed.

Most of the convention has been aimed at former Trump supporters or nonvoters as well as trying to drive up negative impressions of Biden so that some of his possible backers stay home. Aides said Trump is expected to deliver some direct attacks on his Democratic opponent and will sharply juxtapose the far left — whom he argues has Biden in its thrall — with the rest of the nation.

But Jeff Shesol, who served as a speechwriter for President Bill Clinton, said Trump should use the moment to try to broaden his appeal to moderates and independents.

"Here's a guy who's never had 50 percent approval at any point in his presidency, who's down in the polls considerably nationally and in many of the battleground states," Shesol said. "If there ever was an occasion for someone to sort of extend his arms and sweep more people in, if he conceivably could, it would be this moment."

"Yet it would be unwise to suggest that he's going to do it," Shesol said, "or that he, you know, is capable of doing it."

Trump met with top aides Wednesday afternoon to edit the speech before traveling to Baltimore to support Vice President Mike Pence's turn in the convention spotlight. Further revisions could come until shortly before he was to appear on the White House lawn.

New security fencing went up around the perimeter of the White House complex to prepare for possible protesters — some in town for a civil rights march on Friday. Aides were not certain if the noise from protesters would be heard during the speech. Earlier in the summer, demonstrators were audible during some outdoor presidential events.

Stripped of the ability to do his mega-rallies, Trump has few set pieces left in the race's remaining 68 days to overtake Biden. Beyond the fall debates, Thursday's speech may be his biggest moment, but historians say there are few acceptance speeches that have truly altered races.

Franklin Roosevelt's 1932 speech, in which he laid out the New Deal, set the course for his time in office. George H.W. Bush's 1988 speech, which helped him win that year, also tripped up his reelection bid four years later after he broke his "read my lips: no new taxes" promise, said presidential historian Julian Zelizer of Princeton University.

"He'll offer a few lines, I'm sure, about building a consensus," Zelizer said. "But the focus will be divisive comments, dark rhetoric and blaming his failures on his enemy. It will be classic Trumpism."

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Pence defends police at convention amid rising race tension

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence forcefully defended law enforcement but made no mention of the Black Americans killed by police this year as he addressed Republican convention proceedings that unfolded amid new protests against racial injustice following the latest shooting.

Wednesday evening's featured speaker, Pence argued that Democratic leaders are allowing lawlessness to prevail from coast to coast. He and others described cities wracked by violence, though protests in most locations have been largely peaceful.

"The American people know we don't have to choose between supporting law enforcement and standing with African American neighbors to improve the quality of life in our cities and towns," he said. He assailed Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden for saying there is an "implicit bias" against people of color and "systemic racism" in the U.S.

"The hard truth is ... you won't be safe in Joe Biden's America," Pence said. "Let me be clear: The vio-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 38 of 49

lence must stop — whether in Minneapolis, Portland or Kenosha.”

Absent from Pence’s 37-minute speech: a direct mention of Jacob Blake, the Black man who was wounded by police on Sunday in Kenosha, Wisconsin. There was also no reference to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or other Black people who have been killed by police this year, spurring a new nationwide protest movement.

As their convention nears its conclusion on Thursday, Republicans are seeking to reconcile their depiction of President Donald Trump as a smooth, stable leader with the reality that the United States is facing a series of crises that include the demonstrations, a potentially catastrophic hurricane and a raging pandemic that is killing more than 1,000 Americans a day.

The historic convergence of health, economic, environmental and social emergencies is only increasing the pressure on Trump, as he looks to reshape the contours of his lagging campaign against Biden with Election Day just 10 weeks off and early voting beginning much sooner.

The convention keynote gave Pence another opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to Trump. The vice president, who is also the chair of the White House coronavirus task force, defended the administration’s handling of the pandemic, a political liability that was otherwise largely absent from the convention program. He also delivered sober, encouraging words to Gulf Coast residents as Hurricane Laura neared.

“This is a serious storm,” Pence said. “And we urge all those in the affected areas to heed state and local authorities. Stay safe and know that we’ll be with you every step of the way to support, rescue, respond, and recover in the days and weeks ahead.”

Positioning himself as a potential heir to Trump in 2024, Pence delivered sharp attacks against Biden but also presented an optimistic vision of the country’s future. He spoke from Baltimore’s Fort McHenry, where an 1814 battle inspired the National Anthem — which has been at the center of a cultural debate, fueled by Trump, over athletes who kneel rather than stand in protest of racial injustice.

Trump made an unannounced appearance to join Pence after his remarks for a performance of the anthem at the fort. The president, the vice president and their wives later greeted guests, some of whom were in wheelchairs and stood for the anthem.

Some in the crowd gathered close together to get a glimpse of the Pences and the Trumps in violation of social distancing guidelines. Pence was seen shaking a greeter’s hand.

While the Fort McHenry speech was orchestrated to present a grand scene, earlier portions of the program were lower energy. The show for Americans at home lacked some of the production elements that had made previous nights memorable, including slickly produced videos and surprise announcements, such as an unexpected presidential pardon and a citizenship ceremony.

Besides Pence, there was no major headline speaker and few boldface names. George W. Bush, the sole living former Republican president, isn’t expected to address the convention. Mitt Romney, the party’s 2012 nominee who has emerged as a Trump foe, is also absent from the lineup.

The convention unfolded after three nights of protests in Kenosha prompted Trump to issue repeated calls for Democratic Gov. Tony Evers to increase the deployment of National Guard troops to help keep the peace. Trump also directed the Department of Justice to send FBI agents and U.S. marshals to the city as reinforcements, a day after a white 17-year-old who had been outspoken in support of police, was accused of killing two protesters and wounding another.

Many of the speakers Wednesday night reinforced Trump’s law-and-order message, warning that electing Biden would lead to violence in cities spilling into the suburbs, a message with racist undertones. Trump’s campaign believes his aggressive response will help him with suburban women who may be concerned by the protests — though it may only deepen his deficit with Black voters.

The Trump campaign’s focus on law enforcement continued a weeklong emphasis on motivating his political base — rather than appealing to moderate voters.

An August Fox News poll found that registered voters were somewhat more likely to say they trusted Biden than Trump on handling issues related to policing and criminal justice, 48% to 42%, and significantly more likely to trust Biden than Trump on handling race relations, 53% to 34%. Biden’s advantage on criminal justice issues mirrored his advantage overall.

Michael McHale, the president of the National Association of Police Organizations, told the convention,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 39 of 49

"The violence and bloodshed we are seeing in these and other cities isn't happening by chance. It's the direct result of refusing to allow law enforcement to protect our communities."

And Burgess Owens, a former NFL player now running for Congress in Utah, declared, "This November, we stand at a crossroads. Mobs torch our cities while popular members of Congress promote the same socialism that my father fought against in World War II."

The night included remarks from the president's daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, as well as several administration officials including departing counselor Kellyanne Conway, the manager of Trump's 2016 general election campaign, and press secretary Kayleigh McEnany.

"This is the man I know and the president we need," said Conway, a week before she is to leave the White House. "He picks the toughest fights and tackles the most complex problems. He has stood by me, and he will stand up for you."

Associated Press writers Michelle L. Price in Las Vegas, Darlene Superville in Baltimore, Dave Bauder in New York and Amer Madhani in Chicago contributed.

Does a face mask protect me, or just the people around me?

By The Associated Press undefined

Does a face mask protect me, or just the people around me?

It likely provides protection for both.

Studies on the new coronavirus and other germs show wearing a mask helps stop infected people from spreading disease to others. Evidence also suggests that masks may offer some protection for the people wearing them.

The virus spreads from droplets people spray when they cough, sneeze or talk. Surgical or cloth face masks can block most of those particles from spreading.

While some droplets may still spread out, wearing a mask could reduce the amount, providing a benefit to others. Research shows people don't get as sick when exposed to smaller amounts of virus, said Dr. Monica Gandhi, a virus expert at University of California, San Francisco.

And masks may protect the people wearing them by reducing the amount of droplets from others that might make contact with them.

In two U.S. food processing plants where masks were required and infection clusters occurred, Gandhi noted that most workers who developed COVID-19 had mild illness or no symptoms.

Research on a different coronavirus has also found low infection rates among people who frequently wore masks in public.

Experts say masks are particularly important with the new coronavirus because infected people can be contagious even if they don't have symptoms.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org.

More Viral Questions:

Can mosquitoes spread the coronavirus?

Is it safe to drink from a fountain during the pandemic?

Can you get the coronavirus from secondhand smoke?

Games stop again, this time players decide when they resume

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP) — NBA players didn't come to Disney solely for a restart. They wanted social reform.

The Milwaukee Bucks showed how far they're willing to go to get it by opting not to play in their playoff game Wednesday. Two more games were postponed later in the day, the second time this season NBA

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 40 of 49

basketball came to an immediate halt.

Other sports followed, just as they did in March when the season was suspended four months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

This time, the players will decide how long the stoppage lasts.

"The biggest thing that we all understand is if we're not playing, what are we doing? What are we doing to show and to help what's going on outside this bubble?" Boston Celtics forward Grant Williams said, shortly before the Bucks were scheduled to tip off their game against the Orlando Magic.

Instead, the Bucks players remained in the locker room, finally emerging hours later to read a statement demanding action from lawmakers and encouraging voting by citizens.

They changed the narrative across the entire sports landscape, putting the focus squarely on social justice reform in protest of the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, while three of his children in his car looked on.

While players and teams from baseball, the WNBA, MLS and tennis sat out their competitions Wednesday night, NBA players and coaches met for nearly three hours in a Disney hotel to determine next steps, including whether the season should continue. They did not come to a consensus, a person with knowledge of the meeting told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because details weren't revealed publicly.

The NBA's board of governors will meet Thursday morning and likely address whether the playoff games scheduled for that day will be played. The Western & Southern Open won't be, with the U.S. Tennis Association, along with the ATP and WTA Tours, announcing play would be paused after two-time Grand Slam women's champion Naomi Osaka had already said she wouldn't play her semifinal match.

"I don't expect anything drastic to happen with me not playing, but if I can get a conversation started in a majority white sport I consider that a step in the right direction," Osaka tweeted. "Watching the continued genocide of Black people at the hand of the police is honestly making me sick to my stomach."

More lost NBA games would be another punishing financial blow in a season in which the league was already headed to losses of hundreds of million of dollars, potentially leading to ramifications that would be felt in future years.

Before coming to Disney, many NBA players wrestled for weeks about whether it was even right to play, fearing that a return to games would take attention off the deaths of, among others, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in recent months.

They ultimately decided coming to the bubble and playing televised games would give them the largest platform, though now at least some are wondering if that's still true. Toronto coach Nick Nurse said he's heard some players on his team say they were thinking about going home.

Clippers coach Doc Rivers hopes they won't.

His players considered boycotting a playoff game in 2014 after audio tapes featuring former owner Donald Sterling were revealed. He said this time is different because it's the whole league, rather than one team, weighing the decision.

"I think every team has to decide what they want to do and honestly I hope everyone plays," Rivers said. "I just think showing the excellence in doing your job, there's nothing wrong with that, but also fighting for what's right is important as well."

It certainly is for the Bucks, who play about 40 miles from Kenosha. Sterling Brown, one of the players to read the statement, has a federal lawsuit pending against the city of Milwaukee alleging he was targeted because he was Black and that his civil rights were violated in January 2018 when officers used a stun gun on him after a parking violation.

And it is for the Raptors, whose team president, Masai Ujiri, had an altercation with an Oracle Arena security guard after Game 6 of last year's NBA Finals. A video of it released recently appears to show an Alameda County sheriff's deputy initially shoved Ujiri, who is Black, twice.

They are scheduled to open the second round Thursday against Boston, but Nurse said his players were already having discussions about not playing.

"Boycotting the game has come up for them and again, as a way to try to demand a little more action

and I think that's really what they want," Nurse said.

"I think there's enough attention and there's not quite enough action and I think that's what I can sense from the discussion. Their disappointment of man, how can we get something to change?"

It probably starts with actions like the Bucks took. Rivers and LeBron James had passionately described the emotions the NBA community felt after seeing the video of Blake's shooting.

But it's going to take more than players sitting out NBA games.

"It's going to take all our institutions to stand up for our values," former President Barack Obama tweeted, commending the NBA and WNBA players while posting a link to Rivers' comments from earlier this week.

AP Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds in Miami contributed to this report.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Trolls flood social media in Pakistan amid virus lockdown

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — It was a music video meant to depict a young bride's joy: Actress Saba Qamar, in a flowing white wedding gown with a golden hem, was twirled by the singer playing her groom in front of the mosaics of a 17th-century mosque in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore.

As soon as the video emerged earlier this month, it went viral — but for the wrong reasons. It infuriated religious radicals who inundated social media with claims that Qamar's dancing sullied the historic Wazir Khan Mosque.

The uproar was the latest example of how trolling has surged online in Pakistan since a lockdown, imposed in March over coronavirus concerns, confined tens of millions to their homes, leading to a 50% increase in internet use in this conservative Muslim nation of over 220 million people.

Minority rights activists and social media trackers say they've seen a sharp rise in online sectarian attacks, hate speech and cries of "Blasphemy!"

"It is unprecedented," Shahzad Ahmad of Bytesforall, an Islamabad-based social media rights group, told The Associated Press.

Toxic trending on Twitter has also taken aim at minorities, blaming the ethnic Hazaras for allegedly bringing the coronavirus to Pakistan from neighboring Iran. Like most Iranians, Hazaras are Shiites, and traditionally make pilgrimages to holy sites in Iran, which has the deadliest virus outbreak in the region. Some Pakistani pilgrims returning home were among the first reported cases of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

After #Shiavirus began trending on Twitter in April, Hazaras say they were denied jobs, service at stores — even treatment in medical facilities.

Claire Thomas, deputy head of the Britain-based Minority Rights Group International, said minority Ahmadis and Hindus have also been targeted.

Sunni militant groups often target Ahmadis, also known as Qadianis, named after the birthplace in northern India of their sect's founder. The militants consider them heretics because they believe a prophet after Muhammad arrived more than 100 years ago by the name of Ahmad.

In 1974, Pakistan declared Ahmadis non-Muslims — and any Ahmadi claiming to be Muslim can land in jail. In a single day this month, #AhmadisAreNotMuslims registered 45,700 tweets; #QadianisAreInfidel 50,600 tweets; #QadianisAreTheWorstInfidelsInTheWorld 32,600 tweets while #Expose_Qadyani_ProMinisters had 50,600 tweets.

"Since the lockdown began ... there have been over half a dozen concerted hashtag campaigns against the community, either describing the community as worthy of death, or non-Muslim or traitors to Pakistan," said Saleem Uddin, an Ahmadi community leader.

Extremists recently also attacked the construction site for a Hindu temple in Islamabad and warned Muslim faithful online that it would be blasphemy to support the temple.

In an ominous video on social media, a man introduces a young boy as his son. The child then speaks into the camera, delivering a message to Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan that he "will kill each and

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 42 of 49

every Hindu" if the temple is built. The video got nearly 100,000 clicks.

Particularly worrisome is the unprecedented number of claims of blasphemy that Ahmad, from the rights group, says have driven some of those accused into hiding. The onslaught has continued even after the pandemic lockdown was lifted in early August.

Under Pakistani law, the charge of blasphemy, or insulting Islam, carries the death penalty. But even mere allegations of blasphemy can cause mobs to riot. Any attempt to amend the law to make it more difficult to bring charges, has brought angry radicals out on the street.

Last month, a gunman shot and killed Tahir Naseem, a Pakistani-American, in a courtroom in the northwestern city of Peshawar. Arrested two years ago, Naseem was on trial for blasphemy for allegedly declaring himself Islam's prophet. Rights activists said he was mentally challenged.

The U.S. State Department said Naseem had been "lured to Pakistan" from his home in Illinois and entrapped by the blasphemy law.

Within days of the fatal shooting, religious radicals demonstrated across Pakistan in support of the killer, praising his actions. Selfies surfaced online of police guards smiling as they transported Naseem's killer to his arraignment hearing — smiles meant to show support for the killer.

Qamar, the actress who danced in the promo video with popular singer Bilal Saeed in the Lahore mosque, apologized online.

"If we have unknowingly hurt anyone's sentiments we apologize to you all with all our heart. Love & Peace," she tweeted.

But the trolls were unmoved and last week, Qamar and Saeed appeared in court, charged with blasphemy. The two have not responded to AP requests for comment.

The same radical religious party that assailed them over the dancing — Tehreek-e-Labbaik, which won three seats in the 2018 local elections in Sindh province — also claimed a young entrepreneur's soccer ball design was "satanic."

The list goes on: a university professor whose views are seen as too liberal; a poet who defended him; a lawmaker who said no religion was superior to another.

Sunni Muslim cleric Muhammad Ali Mirza was targeted after one of his sermons went viral condemning vigilantes and clerics who incite them to kill anyone suspected of blasphemy.

This unleashed a vitriolic attack and eventually blasphemy charges were brought against Mirza. The court rejected them.

Haroon Baloch, also of the Bytesforall rights group, said he's been using sensitive software that tracks not only hashtags involving a specific name or an extraordinarily heavy use of a particular word, but that also identifies some of the underlying emotions behind the postings.

Such tracking can offer early warnings of "an escalation from online threats to physical threats," he said.

Facebook said it has increased its "content review team, including in Pakistan, and we now find and take action on more than 95% of hate speech before anyone reports it to us."

"We're also in close contact with partners on the ground to identify and remove misinformation that has the potential to incite physical harm offline," the company told the AP.

Twitter said it does "not tolerate the abuse or harassment of people on the basis of religion."

Journalist Marvi Sirmed was targeted after tweeting about forced disappearances of activists in southwestern Baluchistan province, many believed to be in the custody of Pakistani security agencies. Her Urdu-language "tongue-in-cheek" tweet mentioned Jesus, setting off a flood of threats.

Amnesty International on Tuesday cited Sirmed's case and that of Qamar and Saeed, noting that "Pakistani authorities need no more evidence to see how dangerous the blasphemy laws are" and urging for their repeal.

Hassan Javid, a history professor in Lahore, blamed the government for its silence and for allowing rampant abuse on social media.

"Levying allegations of this kind — to intimidate, control, and endanger the accused — has become a national pastime in Pakistan, abetted by a state that continues to watch on in deliberate silence," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 43 of 49

Associated Press writer Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: Pence presses a distorted case on economy

By JOSH BOAK, HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence and fellow Republicans pressed a distorted case Wednesday that President Donald Trump took over a moribund economy from Barack Obama and supercharged it. That's not what happened.

Speakers at the Republican National Convention also hailed Trump for protecting the health insurance of people with preexisting illness, flipping reality on its head as his administration tries to overturn the law that guarantees those protections.

A look at how some of the the rhetoric from the convention's third night compares with the facts:

ECONOMY

PENCE: "Four years ago we inherited ... an economy struggling to break out of the slowest recovery since the Great Depression. ... In our first three years we built the greatest economy in the world."

THE FACTS: That's a highly misleading portrait. Obama started the longest expansion in U.S. history and prevailed over most of it.

The expansion was indeed slow, but growth under Trump has basically been the same: 2.3% in the final four years of Obama compared with 2.5% in the first three years of Trump. Trump took office with unemployment at a low 4.7%, steady job growth and a falling federal budget deficit.

And Trump's record on economic growth is about to get crushed by the current recession brought on by the pandemic, a public-health crisis that the White House said early on would not hurt the economy.

GOV. KRISTI NOEM of South Dakota: "In just four years, President Trump has lifted people of all races and backgrounds out of poverty. He shrunk government and put money back into the pockets of hard-working, ordinary Americans."

THE FACTS: Only this is true: Americans did get money back in the form of tax cuts and in direct government payments after the economy plunged into a recession this year from the coronavirus.

Everything else is wrong. The government is still huge, not shrinking as she said. Federal spending was 20.6% of the gross domestic product in 2016, Obama's last year, according to the White House Office of Management and Budget. That percentage has gone up and down but was 20.8% in 2019. It probably surged this year due to the fastest and sharpest downturn in modern U.S. history.

The pandemic-induced recession has also flung millions of Americans back into poverty — as expanded government aid has expired. The unemployment rate is 10.2%, versus 4.7% when Trump took office. There are 14.8 million Americans collecting jobless aid, while just 2 million were doing so when Trump became president.

POLICE

PENCE: "When asked whether he'd support cutting funding to law enforcement, Joe Biden replied, 'Yes, absolutely.' Under President Trump, we will always stand with those who stand on the thin blue line, and we're not going to defund the police."

THE FACTS: That's misleading, a selective use of Biden's words on the subject. Biden does not propose defunding the police, but rather giving them more money, conditioned on improvements in policing. Biden's actual position on this has been ignored at the GOP convention.

Pence is referring to an excerpted video clip of Biden's conversation with liberal activist Ady Barkan. In the fuller conversation, Biden declined to support defunding police, his consistent stance.

Barkan raises the issue of police reform and asks whether Biden would funnel money into social services, mental health counseling and affordable housing to help reduce civilian interactions with police. Biden responds that he is calling for more money for mental health providers but "that's not the same as getting rid of or defunding all the police" and that more money for community policing must be provided, too.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 44 of 49

Barkan asks: "So we agree that we can redirect some of the funding?" Biden then answers "absolutely yes."

Biden then gives the caveat that he means "not just redirect" federal money potentially but "condition" it on police improvements. "If they don't eliminate chokeholds, they don't get (federal) grants, if they don't do the following, they don't get any (federal) help," Biden replied, noting federal aid is only a supplement to departments financed mainly by localities and states.

HEALTH CARE

KAYLEIGH McENANY, White House press secretary: "I can tell you that this president stands by Americans with preexisting conditions."

THE FACTS: No, people with preexisting medical problems have health insurance protections because of Obama's health care law, which Trump is trying to dismantle.

One of Trump's alternatives to Obama's law — short-term health insurance, already in place — doesn't have to cover preexisting conditions. Another alternative is association health plans, which are oriented to small businesses and sole proprietors and do cover preexisting conditions.

Neither of the two alternatives appears to have made much difference in the market.

Meanwhile, Trump's administration is pressing the Supreme Court for full repeal of the Obama-era law, including provisions that protect people with preexisting conditions from health insurance discrimination.

With "Obamacare" still in place, preexisting conditions continue to be covered by regular individual health insurance plans.

Before the Affordable Care Act, any insurer could deny coverage — or charge more — to anyone with a preexisting condition who was seeking to buy an individual policy.

CHARLOTTESVILLE

JACK BREWER, former NFL player: "Are you going to allow the media to lie to you by falsely claiming that he said there are very fine white supremacists in Charlottesville? He didn't say that. It's a lie."

THE FACTS: Trump said this at a news conference: Racial protests in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017 had "very fine people on both sides." One side was made up of a loosely connected mix of white nationalists, neo-Nazis and other far-right extremists.

Trump's comment conveyed sympathy for racists by declining to single out and call out the violence they perpetuated and by suggesting the episode was merely a contest of legitimate grievances.

The violence broke out after those protesters assembled to demonstrate against the city's decision to remove a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Pressed at the Aug. 15, 2017, news conference, Trump acknowledged there were "some very bad people" looking for trouble in the group protesting plans to remove the statue. "But you also had people that were very fine people on both sides," he continued. "You had people in that group, excuse me, excuse me, I saw the same pictures as you did. You had people in that group that were there to protest the taking down of, to them, a very, very important statue and the renaming of a park, from Robert E. Lee to another name."

Later in the news conference, he tried to clarify that "I'm not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists — because they should be condemned totally."

But he went on to assert that the conspicuously racist rally — partly organized by white nationalist Richard Spencer and with former Ku Klux Klan head David Duke as a scheduled speaker — had many other people who weren't white supremacists, and there are "two sides to a story ... two sides to the country."

VETERANS

PENCE: "We reformed the VA and Veterans Choice is now available for every veteran in America."

THE FACTS: Veterans Choice is far from available to every veteran.

It's true that Trump expanded the Obama-era program, which allows veterans to see a private doctor for primary or mental health care if their VA wait is 20 days (28 for specialty care) or their drive to a VA

facility is 30 minutes or more.

But in March, VA halted much of the program due to the coronavirus outbreak and restricted veterans' access to private doctors, citing the added risks of infection and limited capacity at private hospitals.

Under the temporary guidelines, the VA reviewed referrals for non-emergency care "on a case-by-case basis for immediate clinical need and with regard to the safety of the veteran when being seen in-person, regardless of wait time or drive time eligibility," according to VA.

The move drew criticism from several veterans' groups and conservatives as rendering the program ineffective.

SAWMILLS, PAPERMILLS

SCOTT DANE, representing Minnesota loggers and truckers: "But the last time Joe Biden was in the White House, Minnesota lost over half of its mills, thousands of jobs, and experienced nearly a decade of decline."

THE FACTS: The decline in Minnesota's sawmills and paper manufacturing has continued under Trump. And nationwide, sawmill jobs improved under Obama and slumped during Trump's first three years.

Minnesota lost 20% of its papermills during Obama's presidency, according to the Quarterly Census of Wages and Employment. It lost 18% of its sawmills. That's a far cry from the "over half" claimed by Dane. The state's sawmill sector lost 25 jobs under Obama, compared with 69 jobs lost during the first three years of the Trump administration. Papermills did let go of 1,368 workers during Obama's presidency, while 674 jobs were shed during the Trump era.

But nationwide, the Obama era saw 7,221 new jobs in the sawmill sector. There were 69 sawmill jobs lost under Trump before the pandemic.

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

Associated Press writers Amanda Seitz in Chicago and David Klepper in Providence, Rhode Island, contributed to this report.

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GOP Convention takeaways: Pence pounces while crises swirl

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans proceeded with the third night of their national convention, but many Americans — particularly those in the path of Hurricane Laura — were focused on more immediate concerns.

Takeaways:

PENCE TAKES ON ATTACK ROLE

The attack role often assigned to vice presidential candidates is an ill-fitting suit for the typically genial Vice President Mike Pence, but on Wednesday he took it on, with relish.

He also laid bare the case that he and President Donald Trump will press in the fall campaign, with an emphasis on backing law enforcement, while saying little about Black Americans killed or maimed by police shootings. "We're not going to defund the police," Pence said.

"Joe Biden said America is systemically racist," Pence said, criticizing the Democratic challenger as soft on crime. "The hard truth is you won't be safe in Joe Biden's America."

In a speech from Fort McHenry in Maryland, the site of the 1812 battle that inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner," he added: "Law and order are on the ballot. ... The choice in this election is whether America remains America."

With Trump trailing in the polls, Pence has endured months of rumors that he could be replaced on the ticket. But the president has singled him out for praise repeatedly in recent weeks, and his place, decidedly second to Trump, seems safe.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 46 of 49

The president joined Pence onstage after his speech.

CRISES DRAIN CONVENTION ATTENTION

A political convention is the most scripted, tightly controllable of events, especially when it is mostly virtual and much of it is prerecorded.

That is, until events beyond the control of convention planners make the political ritual seem almost inconsequential.

As Republicans gathered, a massive hurricane was taking aim at the Gulf Coast, wildfires continued to scorch California and the National Guard was being deployed to a city in the battleground state of Wisconsin after a white police officer shot a Black man. And all the while a deadly pandemic continued to claim the lives of nearly 1,000 Americans a day.

In true Trump style, though, campaign officials said the show must go on, so far anyway.

Officials said the president had been regularly briefed and may visit the Gulf by early next week. But the hurricane threatened to shine a spotlight on Trump's poor handling of other disasters, including Hurricane Maria, which ravaged Puerto Rico — and, even more dramatically, the pandemic itself.

TRYING TO REGAIN SUPPORT OF WOMEN

Republicans offered an emotional appeal to female voters Wednesday, looking to shore up support from a group that has abandoned the party in droves since Trump took office.

Some of his most loyal aides, including senior counselor Kellyanne Conway — in her final days in the White House — and press secretary Kayleigh McEnany, spoke about the president's support for women within the West Wing, following second lady Karen Pence's tribute to the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which allowed women to vote.

But Trump has work to do.

He lost the votes of women handily to Hillary Clinton. Things have only gotten worse since, polls show, with many female voters turned by his harsh policies and manner. That trend accelerated ahead of the 2018 midterms, on the heels of the administration's enforcement of a policy that separated immigrant children from their families at the southern border, and Democrats rode the votes of suburban women en route to retaking control of the House.

The erosion has continued amid criticism of Trump's handling of the pandemic. His campaign is hoping Wednesday's repeated homages to women can prompt a reset.

ODE TO POLICE, NOT TO VICTIMS

Over and over, Trump's allies highlighted the heroism of police Wednesday night. But listening to the program, you'd wouldn't know that an unarmed African American man was shot in the back multiple times by a Wisconsin police officer just three days earlier as his children watched.

The shooting, the latest police-involved violence against an unarmed African American captured on video, led to dozens of professional basketball players boycotting Wednesday night's playoff games, and several major league baseball games and soccer matches were also postponed.

It was essentially ignored by the Republican convention speakers. They did, however, reference the large protests against police brutality which have been overwhelmingly peaceful but have led to incidents of violence and looting. Wednesday night, the National Guard was on hand in Wisconsin to try to quell violent protests.

Former professional football player Jack Brewer, the first person of color featured in the program more than an hour after it began, cheered Trump's impact on the Black community and condemned what he called the "so-called Black Lives Matter movement."

And Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn repeatedly praised what she described as heroes in law enforcement and she slammed the Democratic White House ticket.

"Joe Biden, Kamala Harris and their radical allies try to destroy these heroes, because if there are no heroes to inspire us, government can control us," she said.

NOTABLE IN THEIR ABSENCE

Elected officials like Blackburn and South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem heaped praise on Trump Wednesday

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 47 of 49

night. But it's worth noting which Republican officials did not.

The speaking program almost completely excluded Republicans facing tough elections this fall, such as Maine Sen. Susan Collins, Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner and Arizona Sen. Martha McSally. There was also no sign of the GOP's only living former president, George W. Bush, or its most recent presidential nominee before Trump, Mitt Romney.

Such exclusions may be becoming common in the Trump era, but they are not normal.

Conventions are designed to convey a sense of party unity heading into the final phase of a presidential election. Democrats last week featured all three of their former living presidents and elected officials across the political spectrum.

But Trump's GOP has alienated once respected leaders like Bush and Romney. And vulnerable Republican officials still in office risk making their November election more difficult if they align themselves too closely with their party's divisive leader.

ANOTHER SPEAKER DOESN'T MAKE THE SHOW

For the second consecutive night, Trump's campaign was forced to reshuffle its speaking lineup just hours before the prime-time program began.

Organizers confirmed Tuesday morning that Robert Unanue, the president and CEO of Goya Foods, would be featured in the convention as part of the president's opposition to "cancel culture." Goya faced boycotts earlier in the month after Unanue publicly praised Trump.

But by early evening, the president's team had canceled the CEO's appearance, citing "a logistical problem."

While viewers may never know about the lineup tweaks, they were at best a minor embarrassment and at worst evidence of incompetence for what is supposed to be a most carefully planned event.

On Tuesday night, Trump's team was forced to pull another featured speaker, "Angel Mom" Mary Ann Mendoza, after she directed her Twitter followers to a series of anti-Semitic, conspiratorial messages hours before her prerecorded segment was set to air.

Vigilante calls on social media before deadly Kenosha attack

BARBARA ORTUTAY and ANITA SNOW Associated Press

Repeated calls for armed vigilantes to travel to Kenosha, Wisconsin, to protect businesses following the police shooting of Jacob Blake spread across social media in the hours before two people were shot to death and a third was wounded during a third night of unrest in the city.

Multiple threads on Facebook and Reddit urged militias and other armed people to head to the protests, researchers at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Lab said in a blog post Wednesday. The demonstrations broke out after Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, was left paralyzed Sunday when he was shot from behind by officers answering a domestic dispute call.

Two people were killed by gunfire Tuesday night and Kyle Rittenhouse, a white 17-year-old from nearby Antioch, Illinois, was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide.

A video director for the conservative website The Daily Caller tweeted Wednesday that he had conducted a video interview with the suspected gunman before the shooting and posted a clip in which the armed young man, standing in front of a boarded-up building, said "our job is to protect this business."

"And part of my job is to also help people," he said. "If there is somebody hurt, I'm running into harm's way. That's why I have my rifle -- because I can protect myself, obviously. But I also have my med kit."

The Atlantic Council researchers said that before the attack some of the online discussions encouraged acts of violence while the conspiracy website InfoWars amplified the call to arms, potentially encouraging more armed people to head to Kenosha. In Wisconsin, people 18 and over can legally openly carry a gun without a permit.

Facebook confirmed Wednesday that it took down a page called Kenosha Guard for violating its policy against militia organizations. The company said it also is in the process of removing other accounts and material tied to the shootings that violate its policies, such as for glorifying violence, and it is in contact

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 48 of 49

with local and federal law enforcement on the matter.

Facebook later said it removed the suspected shooter's accounts from Facebook and Instagram.

The company said it had not found evidence on Facebook that suggests the suspected shooter followed the Kenosha Guard Page or was invited on its Event Page to go to the protests.

"However, the Kenosha Guard Page and their Event Page violated our new policy addressing militia organizations and have been removed on that basis," the company said in a statement.

The Atlantic Council researchers said that 13 hours before the shootings, the Kenosha Guard Facebook page "actively solicited armed individuals to protect neighborhoods that evening."

"At 10:44 a.m. local time, the administrator of the 'Kenosha Guard' page asked if any members were willing to 'take up arms and defend out (sic) City tonight from the evil thugs,'" the researchers said. "They continued, 'Nondoubt (sic) they are currently planning on the next part of the City to burn tonight!'"

Kenosha County Sheriff David Beth said Wednesday militia members or armed vigilantes had been patrolling the city's streets in recent nights and asked about being deputized.

"Yesterday, I had a person call me and say, 'Why don't you deputize citizens who have guns to come out and patrol the city of Kenosha, and I am like, 'Oh, hell no.'"

He said once he deputizes someone "they are a liability to me and the county."

Ray Roberts, a 38-year-old Black Kenosha resident and Army veteran, said men from "rural areas got in big trucks loaded up with guns and flags and got into town."

"You would see them driving into town after curfew and cops not stopping them," Roberts said.

Ortutay reported from Oakland, Calif. Snow reported from Phoenix. AP writer Corey Williams contributed from Detroit.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Aug. 27, the 240th day of 2020. There are 126 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 27, 2008, Barack Obama was nominated for president by the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

On this date:

In 1776, the Battle of Long Island began during the Revolutionary War as British troops attacked American forces who ended up being forced to retreat two days later.

In 1858, the second debate between senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas took place in Freeport, Ill.

In 1908, Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th president of the United States, was born near Stonewall, Texas.

In 1949, a violent white mob prevented an outdoor concert headlined by Paul Robeson from taking place near Peekskill, New York. (The concert was held eight days later.)

In 1963, author, journalist and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois died in Accra, Ghana, at age 95.

In 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson accepted his party's nomination for a term in his own right, telling the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, "Let us join together in giving every American the fullest life which he can hope for."

In 1979, British war hero Lord Louis Mountbatten and three other people, including his 14-year-old grandson Nicholas, were killed off the coast of Ireland in a boat explosion claimed by the Irish Republican Army.

In 1989, the first U.S. commercial satellite rocket was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida — a Delta booster carrying a British communications satellite, the Marcopolo 1.

In 1998, two suspects in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya were brought to the United States to face charges. (Mohamed Rashed Daoud al-'Owhali (moh-HAH'-mehd rah-SHEED' dah-ood ahl-oh-WAHL'-ee) and Mohammed Saddiq Odeh (sah-DEEK' oh-DAY') were convicted in 2001 of conspiring to carry out

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 055 ~ 49 of 49

the bombing; both were sentenced to life in prison.)

In 2005, coastal residents jammed freeways and gas stations as they rushed to get out of the way of Hurricane Katrina, which was headed toward New Orleans.

In 2006, a Comair CRJ-100 crashed after trying to take off from the wrong runway in Lexington, Ky., killing 49 people and leaving the co-pilot the sole survivor.

In 2009, mourners filed past the closed casket of the late Sen. Edward Kennedy at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. Jaycee Lee Dugard, kidnapped when she was 11, was reunited with her mother 18 years after her abduction in South Lake Tahoe, California.

Ten years ago: Aijalon Gomes (EYE'-jah-lahn gohms), an American who'd been held for seven months in North Korea for trespassing, stepped off a plane in his hometown of Boston accompanied by former President Jimmy Carter, who had flown to Pyongyang to negotiate his freedom. Cuba issued a pair of surprising free market decrees, allowing foreign investors to lease government land for at least 99 years and loosening state controls on commerce to let citizens grow and sell their own fruits and vegetables.

Five years ago: Visiting residents on tidy porch stoops and sampling food at a corner restaurant, President Barack Obama held out the people of New Orleans as an extraordinary example of renewal and resilience 10 years after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Ex-NBA star Darryl Dawkins, 58, whose board-shattering dunks earned him the moniker "Chocolate Thunder" and helped pave the way for breakaway rims, died in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

One year ago: Sixteen women who said they had been sexually abused by Jeffrey Epstein poured out their anger in court, as a judge gave them a chance to testify even though Epstein had died behind bars; the hearing was held on a normally routine request to throw out the indictment because of the defendant's death. Rapper Meek Mill pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor gun charge in a deal resolving a 2007 arrest that had kept the rapper on probation or in prison for most of his adult life. In her debut at the U.S. Open, 15-year-old Coco Gauff trailed by a set and a break before recovering to beat Anastasia Potapova of Russia.

Today's Birthdays: Author Lady Antonia Fraser is 88. Actor Tommy Sands is 83. Bluegrass singer-musician J.D. Crowe is 83. Actor Tuesday Weld is 77. Actor G.W. Bailey is 76. Rock singer-musician Tim Bogert is 76. Actor Marianne Sagebrecht is 75. Country musician Jeff Cook is 71. Actor Paul Reubens is 68. Rock musician Alex Lifeson (Rush) is 67. Actor Peter Stormare is 67. Actor Diana Scarwid is 65. Rock musician Glen Matlock (The Sex Pistols) is 64. Golfer Bernhard Langer is 63. Country singer Jeffrey Steele is 59. Gospel singer Yolanda Adams is 59. Movie director Tom Ford (Film: "Nocturnal Animals") is 59. Country musician Matthew Basford (Yankee Grey) is 58. Writer-producer Dean Devlin is 58. Rock musician Mike Johnson is 55. Rap musician Bobo (Cypress Hill) is 53. Country singer Colt Ford is 51. Actor Chandra Wilson is 51. Rock musician Tony Kanal (No Doubt) is 50. Actor Sarah Chalke is 44. Actor RonReaco (correct) Lee is 44. Rapper Mase is 43. Actor-singer Demetria McKinney is 42. Actor Aaron Paul is 41. Rock musician Jon Siebels (Eve 6) is 41. Actor Shaun Weiss is 41. Contemporary Christian musician Megan Garrett (Casting Crowns) is 40. Actor Kyle Lowder is 40. Actor Patrick J. Adams is 39. Actor Karla Mosley is 39. Actor Amanda Fuller is 36. Singer Mario is 34. Actor Alexa PenaVega is 32. Actor Ellar Coltrane is 26. Actor Savannah Paige Rae is 17.