

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 1 of 70

- [1- Groton Ford post on Craig Jondahl](#)
- [2- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [4- Area COVID-19 Cases](#)
- [5- November 22nd COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [9- South Dakota COVID-19 Numbers](#)
- [10- Brown County COVID-19 Numbers](#)
- [11- Day County COVID-19 Numbers](#)
- [12- Weekly Vikings Round](#)
- [13- Prairie Doc: Gratitude for Grandparents](#)
- [14- 2020 Quilts of Honor](#)
- [17- SDHSAA special meeting](#)
- [18- Thinking About Health](#)
- [20- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [21- Weather Pages](#)
- [25- Daily Devotional](#)
- [26- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [27- News from the Associated Press](#)



This post from Groton Ford's Facebook Page:

Our heartfelt condolences go out to the family of our good friend Craig Jondahl who passed away unexpectedly this weekend. Between Groton Ford and Pioneer Ford, Craig sold vehicles in the area for the past 40 years and his reputation preceded him. Craig was one of the best story tellers you would ever meet, was quick witted and could make anyone smile and laugh. Even though Craig played the big tuff Harley biker guy here's what we know for sure - Craig loved his bride very much, was super proud of his boys, their careers, families and doted over the grandkids. This is a tuff loss for the community, Shriners organization and Craig's many close friends he's made over the years. Craig was a huge Packer Backer and signed off every news letter as such so we will do the same for him. You will be missed very much, until we meet again - GO PACK GO!



Death Notice; Marjory Townsend

Andover, SD: Marjory Townsend, 88, of Andover passed away Saturday, November 21, 2020 at Sanford Hospital in Webster.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 2 of 70

#273 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

This was a typical Sunday—or what passes for typical these days, that is, it was lower than our general run has been lately, but would have been a record day just a couple of weeks ago. For today, we're at 12,307,100 cases reported in the US so far in the pandemic. Considering where we've been, 143,200 cases looks good, and it's almost unbelievable this is true. We've been over 100,000 daily new cases for 19 days running. We've been over 90,000 cases for a solid three weeks and over 70,000 for four weeks. The growth in new cases is continuing to accelerate. Hospitalizations are at 83,227, a new record for a twelfth consecutive day; this number is up 50% over two weeks, and the system is stretched to the limit.

There are more states in trouble this week than last, and the rate of growth continues to accelerate. We are seeing increasing rates of growth nearly everywhere. One-week increase in total cases was 1,057,300 (10.5%) last week and is 1,198,500 (10.8%) this week. Two-week increase was 1,830,200 (19.7%) last week and is 2,255,800 (22.4%) this week. We've added two million cases in 13 days and are almost one-third of the way to our next million today. I have us at a one-week daily average new-case number of 171,214, which is well above last week's 151,042. We have a lot of places in a lot of trouble.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and the number of these showing two-week rates of increase greater than 25% is still at 29. Here are the states and territories with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: Wyoming (62.73%), Vermont (51.71 – big increase), Colorado (51.28%), Minnesota (49.36%), New Mexico (49.22% - big increase), Michigan (43.54% - increase), West Virginia (42.51% - big increase), New Hampshire (40.92% - big increase), Montana (40.33%), Alaska (40.16%), Indiana (39.98% - big decrease), Connecticut (38.00%), Iowa (37.78% - decrease), Kansas (37.78% -big increase), Nebraska (37.18%), Ohio (35.02%), Maine (34.65%), Illinois (34.44% - increase), North Dakota (33.84% - big decrease), Utah (33.60%), Wisconsin (33.46%), Pennsylvania (33.43% - increased), Rhode Island (31.94% - increased), South Dakota (31.88 - decrease), Oregon (31.43% - increase), Missouri (31.11%), Kentucky (30.86% - increase), Oklahoma (27.94% - increase), and Idaho (25.57%). Maryland fell off the list this week, and we've added Oklahoma. We have 31 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate, which tells us there is still widespread transmission.

Fastest spread is, as it has been for some time, in the middle of the country. Highest per capita new-case numbers are in North Dakota, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Montana. This is not much different from the past several weeks.

There were 903 deaths reported today, a 0.4% increase to 256,581. Average daily deaths are way up at 1509.7; last week, they were are 1141.4. This is the first week we've reported over 10,000 deaths since spring, not exactly territory we wanted to visit again.

The daily number of new cases increased substantially from last week. We know this isn't simply an artifact of increased testing because, in that same period, testing increases lag new case increases. We have 44 states with test positivity rates above the recommended 5% threshold. The only states which meet that benchmark are Hawaii, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, and Massachusetts, plus the District of Columbia. "If a positivity rate is too high, that may indicate that the state is only testing the sickest patients who seek medical attention, and is not casting a wide enough net to know how much of the virus is spreading within its communities," according to Johns Hopkins, which has been tracking Covid-19 data since the pandemic began. At least 24 hospital leaders are saying they have staffing shortages, according to Nancy Foster, the American Hospital Association's vice president for quality and patient safety policy. Dr Megan Ranney, emergency medicine physician, points out, "If even 1% of the 50 million people who are traveling for Thanksgiving transmit or catch this virus, we're looking at an extra 500,000 cases across the country." We're going to feel that. She adds, "This is the year to stay home. If you must see people, do so only outdoors and at that safe distance. Because you just don't know who's infected."

The problem is, of course, that we have a whole lot of infected people who have not been identified as such. The CDC issued guidance last week which said that more than half of cases are spread by people

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 3 of 70

who do not exhibit symptoms, so those undiagnosed folks running around are a real hazard. Dr. Esther Choo, professor of emergency medicine at Oregon Health and Science University, explained that the real case count is "multitudes" higher than the 12 million in the official count; this is because there is not enough testing, a problem we've had since March and which isn't getting better fast enough, even after all these months. Choo expresses particular concern with the rate of acceleration in new case numbers: "So many states have test positivity rates above 20%, which means that we are vastly lagging behind in our confirmed cases." States with positivity rates over 40% are Idaho, Wyoming, South Dakota, and Iowa. Those are states in real trouble. I remember those quaint old days when we were using the metric that reopening should be delayed until test positivity rates stayed below 5% for 14 days. We never did that, and we're paying for it.

The FDA has issued emergency use authorization (EUA) for another monoclonal antibody treatment for Covid-19, this one the Regeneron version. You will recall that monoclonal antibodies are lab-made versions of the antibodies you produce yourself in your body in response to an infection. Because of the way they are made, they are highly specific for just one particular antigenic site on the virus, so they're very targeted. The antibodies in the drug bind to the S protein in the spikes of the virus, which impedes its binding to and entry into human cells, thus short-circuiting the virus in its attempts to invade. The Regeneron therapy is a combination of two such monoclonals, casirivimab and imdevimab, which is administered by intravenous injection. The combination of antibodies is expected to reduce the likelihood of a viral variant emerging which is resistant to the therapy. It is approved for people 12 years and older at high risk of developing severe disease; it is only for the treatment of mild to moderate Covid-19, and in a clinical trial significantly reduced viral levels in patients.

A couple of days ago, an EUA was issued for Eli Lilly's monoclonal antibody, baricitinib to be used in conjunction with remdesivir in the treatment of more severely ill patients, age 2 and over, requiring oxygen, mechanical ventilation, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO). This drug has already been approved and was already commercially available for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, so it's not a new drug, just a drug with a new use. A couple of weeks ago, their new monoclonal, bamlanivimab, also received EUA for treating Covid-19. That one is approved for the same group of patients as the Regeneron therapy: people 12 and over with mild to moderate illness at high risk of severe disease. This drug has shown to help prevent patients from progressing to more severe disease where they would require hospitalization.

Not all patients who are intubated are asleep while ventilated. One such was a retired orchestra teacher named Grover Wilhelmsen, who spent over a month in the hospital in Ogden, Utah. Now, you can't speak while you have that tube down your airway, so he communicated with the workers caring for him in writing. What he communicated was sort of amazing.

He asked his nurse to coordinate with his wife to bring his violin into the hospital. He wanted to thank the hospital staff for his care by playing for them. The doctor approved this as long as there was a nurse on hand to monitor his condition, and so he played. He played the "Tennessee Waltz" for her and, because she turned on her hospital communication device, for her colleagues as well. I watched the video the hospital posted to YouTube, and it was a remarkable sight, this man, hooked up to a machine breathing for him, sitting on the edge of his bed and playing his heart out for the people who are busy saving his life.

The nurse in the room at the time said, "It brought tears to my eyes. For all the staff to see a patient doing this while intubated was unbelievable. Even though he was so sick, he was still able to push through. You could see how much it meant to him." She added, "When I started to cry in the room after he was done playing, he wrote to me, 'Quit crying. Just smile,' and he smiled at me."

He went on to play several times a day for a couple of days. Wilhelmsen was recently discharged to a long-term care facility where he is expected to make a full recovery. And that makes me smile too.

If he could do that, it shouldn't be too much trouble to deny yourself a few social gatherings to help prevent more guys like this ending up on a vent. There's a lot of good in the world. Try to be some of it.

And take care. We'll talk again.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 4 of 70

Area COVID-19 Cases

	Nov. 18	Nov. 19	Nov. 20	Nov. 21	Nov. 22	Nov. 23
Minnesota	236,949	242,043	249,906	256,700	262,952	270,157
Nebraska	103,805	106,617	109,280	111,661	113,029	114,061
Montana	49,398	50,582	51,818	53,293	54,542	55,580
Colorado	172,044	176,694	182,801	188,566	194,679	198,600
Wyoming	21,047	21,750	22,489	23,347	23,567	24,309
North Dakota	65,967	67,230	68,612	70,016	71,540	72,683
South Dakota	67,284	68,671	69,742	71,070	72,214	73,065
United States	11,360,125	11,530,345	11,718,867	11,913,945	12,090,469	12,247,487
US Deaths	248,707	250,548	252,564	254,424	255,905	256,783

Minnesota	+5,931	+5,094	+7,863	+6,794	+6,252	+7,205
Nebraska	+2,204	+2,812	+2,663	+2,381	+1,368	+1,032
Montana	+1,371	+1,184	+1,236	+1,475	+1,249	+1,038
Colorado	+4,331	+4,650	+6,107	+5,765	+6,113	+3,921
Wyoming	+1,162	+703	+739	+858	+220	+742
North Dakota	+1,082	1,263	+1,382	+1,404	+1,524	+1,143
South Dakota	+1,006	+1,387	+1,071	+1,328	+1,144	+851
United States	+154,640	+170,220	+188,522	+195,078	+176,524	+157,018
US Deaths	+1,487	+1,841	+2,016	+1,860	+1,481	+878

	Nov. 11	Nov. 12	Nov. 13	Nov. 14	Nov. 15	Nov. 16	Nov. 17
Minnesota	189,681	194,570	201,795	207,339	213,582	223,581	231,018
Nebraska	87,733	89,942	92,553	94,922	96,834	98,161	101,601
Montana	41,151	42,070	43,031	44,244	45,886	47,158	48,027
Colorado	138,427	142,042	147,599	154,038	159,234	163,417	167,713
Wyoming	16,442	16,518	17,442	18,243	18,726	19,298	19,885
North Dakota	56,342	57,373	59,173	60,602	62,872	63,796	64,885
South Dakota	57,334	58,696	60,716	62,327	64,182	65,381	66,278
United States	10,258,090	10,402,273	10,557,451	10,746,996	10,905,597	11,038,312	11,205,485
US Deaths	239,695	241,808	242,436	244,366	245,614	246,224	247,220

Minnesota	+4,893	+4,889	+7,225	+5,554	+6,243	+9,999	+7,437
Nebraska	+2,182	+2,209	+2,611	+2,369	+1,912	+1,327	+3,440
Montana	+1,098	+919	+961	+1,213	+1,642	+1,272	+869
Colorado	+3,890	+3,615	+5,557	+6,439	+5,196	+4,183	+4,296
Wyoming	+1,131	+76	+924	+801	+483	+572	+587
North Dakota	+894	+1,031	+1,801	+1,429	+2,270	+924	1,089
South Dakota	+1,024	+1,362	+2,019	+1,611	+1,855	+1,199	+897
United States	+147,538	+144,183	+155,178	+189,545	+158,601	+132,715	+167,173
US Deaths	+1,444	+2,113	+628	+1,930	+1,248	+610	+996

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 5 of 70

November 22nd COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Thirty more active cases in South Dakota with the state recording an additional 42 deaths. That makes 819 people who have died from COVID-19 in South Dakota, with 840 total deaths in North Dakota.

Deaths by county: Bon Homme-1, Brown-3, Butte-1, Codington-2, Corson-1, Davison-4, Dewey-1, Edmunds-1, Hamlin-1, Hutchinson-2, Lake-1, Lawrence-3, Lincoln-2, Meade-1, Minnehaha-7, Oglala Lakota-3, Pennington-1, Spink-1, Sully-1, Todd-2, Turner-1, Walworth-1, Ziebach-1. There were 23 in the 80+ age group, 11 in their 70s, 4 in their 60s, 3 in their 50s and 1 in their 40s. There were 22 female and 20 male.

Glacial Lakes hospital beds being occupied by COVID-19 patients as well as Minnehaha and Pennington counties: Walworth: 1 (-0) Occupied Beds.; Potter: 2 (-0) Occupied Beds; Hughes: 16 (-4) Occupied Beds, 6 (+1) ICU Beds, 3 (+1) Ventilation; Hand: 5 (+0) Occupied Beds; Faulk: 2 (-0) Occupied Beds; Edmunds: 1 (-0) Occupied Bed; Brown: 30 (-6) Occupied Beds, 2 (-3) ICU, 1 (+0) Ventilation; Spink: 3 (+1) Occupied Beds; Day: 1 (+1) Occupied Beds; Marshall: 1 (+0) Occupied Beds; Grant: 3 (-0) Occupied Beds; Codington: 18 (-0) Occupied Beds, 4 (-0) ICU, 2 (-0) Ventilation; None (some counties have no hospitals): Clark, Hyde, Stanley, Sully, Campbell, McPherson, Roberts; Minnehaha: 285 (+5) Occupied Beds, 60 (+5) ICU, 37 (-1) Ventilation; Pennington: 72 (+7) Occupied Beds, 11 (+1) ICU, 5 (-1) Ventilation.

Brown County:
Total Positive: +47 (3260) Positivity Rate: 10.6%
Total Tests: +444 (25,642)
Total Individuals Tested: +91 (13,172)
Recovered: +25 (2,565)
Active Cases: +19 (678)
Ever Hospitalized: +2 (184)
Deaths: +3 (17)
Percent Recovered: 77.9%
Hospital Reports:
Avera St. Luke's: Covid-19 Occupied 22 (-4); ICU 1 (-3), Ventilation 0 (0).
Sanford Aberdeen: Covid-19 Occupied 8 (-2); ICU 1 (-0), Ventilation 1 (+0)
Sanford Webster: Covid-19 Occupied 1 (+1).
Marshall County Healthcare: Covid-19 Occupied: 1 (+0).

South Dakota:
Positive: +851 (73,065 total) Positivity Rate: 13.4%
Total Tests: 6367 (557,990 total)
Total Individuals Tested: 2048 (309,170)
Hospitalized: +42 (4094 total). 577 currently hospitalized -3)
Deaths: +42 (819 total)
Recovered: +779 (55,349 total)
Active Cases: +30 (16,897)
Percent Recovered: 74.7%
Total COVID-19 Occupied Beds: 577 (-3), Black Hills Region 112 (+9), Glacial Lakes Region 83 (-8) Sioux Empire Region 304 (+6), South Central Plains

78 (-10).

ICU Units: Total 97 (+3), BH 12 (+1), GL 12 (-2), SE 60 (+5), SCP 13 (-1).

Ventilation: Total 49 (-0), BH 5 (-1), GL 6 (+1), SE 37 (-1), SCP 1 (+1).

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 21% Covid, 45% Non-Covid, 35% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: No report available

Staffed Adult + Pediatric ICU Bed Capacity: 70% Occupied, 30% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 12% Covid, 16% Non-Covid, 73% Available

Beadle (25) +32 positive, +16 recovered (572 active cases)

Brookings (16) +32 positive, +31 recovered (446 active cases)

Brown (17): +47 positive, +25 recovered (681 active cases)

Clark (1): +1 positive, +0 recovered (63 active cases)

Clay (9): +5 positive, +10 recovered (229 active cases)

Codington (39): +13 positive, +21 recovered (509 active cases)

Davison (28): +17 positive, +35 recovered (744 active cases)

Day (5): +2 positive, +3 recovered (90 active cases)

Edmunds (2): +2 positive, +2 recovered (43 active cases)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 6 of 70

Faulk (8): +1 positive, +0 recovered (33 active cases)

Grant (5): +9 positive, +3 recovered (151 active cases)

Hanson (1): +4 positive, +4 recovered (64 active cases)

Hughes (17): +22 positive, +19 recovered (399 active cases)

Lawrence (21): +12 positive, +26 recovered (366 active cases)

Lincoln (46): +52 positive, +61 recovered (1169 active cases)

Marshall (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (44 active cases)

McCook (11): +5 positive, +2 recovered (162 active cases)

McPherson (1): +4 positive, +2 recovery (42 active case)

Minnehaha (162): +206 positive, +178 recovered (4051 active cases)

Potter (1): +8 positive, +4 recovered (62 active cases)

Roberts (17): +11 positive, +5 recovered (156 active cases)

Spink (12): +7 positive, +6 recovered (126 active cases)

Walworth (11): +11 positive, +1 recovered (121 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Nov. 22:

- 14.8% rolling 14-day positivity
- 1,150 new positives
- 9,961 susceptible test encounters
- 315 currently hospitalized (+19)
- 10,244 active cases (+178)
- 840 total deaths (+6)

Yesterday

Global Cases
58,228,713
12,090,469 US
9,095,806 India
6,052,786 Brazil
2,178,023 France
2,071,858 Russia
1,556,730 Spain
1,497,135 United Kingdom
1,380,531 Italy
1,366,182 Argentina
1,240,493 Colombia
1,025,969 Mexico
948,081 Peru

Today

Global Cases
58,704,217
12,247,487 US
9,139,865 India
6,071,401 Brazil
2,191,180 France
2,096,749 Russia
1,556,730 Spain
1,515,802 United Kingdom
1,408,868 Italy
1,370,366 Argentina
1,248,417 Colombia
1,041,875 Mexico
948,081 Peru

Global Deaths

1,381,822

255,905 deaths US
168,989 deaths Brazil
133,227 deaths India
100,823 deaths Mexico
54,721 deaths United Kingdom
49,261 deaths Italy
48,593 deaths France
44,327 deaths Iran

Global Deaths

1,388,926

256,783 deaths US
169,183 deaths Brazil
133,738 deaths India
101,676 deaths Mexico
55,120 deaths United Kingdom
49,823 deaths Italy
48,807 deaths France
44,802 deaths Iran

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 7 of 70

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	333	229	769	3	Substantial	52.13%
Beadle	2161	1564	4517	25	Substantial	32.61%
Bennett	303	239	1016	5	Substantial	10.92%
Bon Homme	1318	1136	1680	14	Substantial	41.51%
Brookings	2254	1792	7885	16	Substantial	23.64%
Brown	3260	2565	9912	17	Substantial	26.90%
Brule	521	407	1557	5	Substantial	41.57%
Buffalo	360	308	796	6	Substantial	29.69%
Butte	650	542	2467	13	Substantial	31.06%
Campbell	99	88	180	1	Moderate	31.82%
Charles Mix	760	525	3263	4	Substantial	22.72%
Clark	225	161	756	1	Substantial	11.56%
Clay	1219	981	3806	9	Substantial	29.44%
Codington	2463	1915	7348	39	Substantial	31.54%
Corson	350	286	823	4	Substantial	55.26%
Custer	492	387	1961	7	Substantial	25.52%
Davison	2214	1442	5094	28	Substantial	37.69%
Day	312	217	1349	5	Substantial	47.20%
Deuel	278	220	873	2	Substantial	34.88%
Dewey	741	420	3405	3	Substantial	30.02%
Douglas	274	204	737	5	Substantial	23.02%
Edmunds	228	183	823	2	Substantial	19.31%
Fall River	345	265	2013	8	Substantial	21.03%
Faulk	272	231	548	8	Substantial	31.25%
Grant	548	392	1706	5	Substantial	32.61%
Gregory	407	304	935	17	Substantial	32.00%
Haakon	133	108	456	3	Moderate	7.77%
Hamlin	430	270	1334	2	Substantial	18.53%
Hand	271	188	636	1	Substantial	41.30%
Hanson	215	150	521	1	Substantial	41.56%
Harding	64	60	128	0	Minimal	30.77%
Hughes	1535	1119	4769	17	Substantial	32.26%
Hutchinson	508	325	1795	5	Substantial	24.50%

Groton Daily Independent

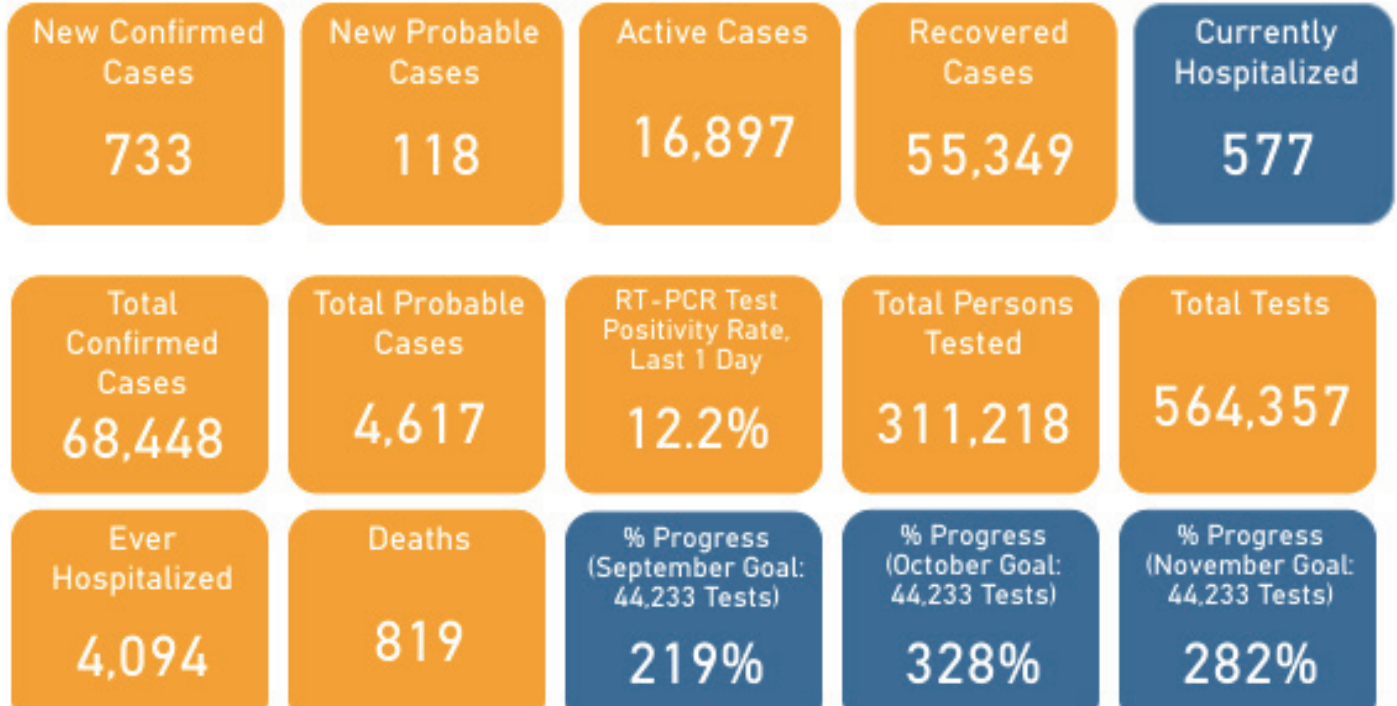
Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 8 of 70

Hyde	112	72	335	0	Substantial	51.11%
Jackson	187	145	798	6	Substantial	30.30%
Jerauld	230	176	423	13	Substantial	29.55%
Jones	55	43	149	0	Moderate	40.00%
Kingsbury	406	271	1204	8	Substantial	22.60%
Lake	768	561	2132	10	Substantial	43.88%
Lawrence	1802	1415	6517	21	Substantial	24.00%
Lincoln	4973	3758	14983	46	Substantial	36.03%
Lyman	423	324	1529	8	Substantial	24.82%
Marshall	144	97	867	3	Substantial	38.04%
McCook	556	383	1229	11	Substantial	36.01%
McPherson	133	90	449	1	Substantial	17.83%
Meade	1570	1238	5877	13	Substantial	22.83%
Mellette	158	114	594	1	Substantial	50.00%
Miner	181	144	446	4	Substantial	35.14%
Minnehaha	18739	14526	59068	162	Substantial	30.61%
Moody	384	275	1441	10	Substantial	40.00%
Oglala Lakota	1530	1184	5855	20	Substantial	29.01%
Pennington	7764	5894	28725	67	Substantial	27.42%
Perkins	163	97	534	2	Substantial	27.91%
Potter	244	181	647	1	Substantial	16.39%
Roberts	645	472	3513	17	Substantial	23.10%
Sanborn	239	142	515	1	Substantial	42.86%
Spink	513	375	1733	12	Substantial	16.22%
Stanley	214	136	668	0	Substantial	28.33%
Sully	85	58	197	3	Substantial	43.48%
Todd	834	638	3495	12	Substantial	38.46%
Tripp	446	339	1210	2	Substantial	44.81%
Turner	754	574	2063	36	Substantial	25.00%
Union	1157	886	4643	23	Substantial	21.21%
Walworth	442	310	1428	11	Substantial	31.33%
Yankton	1512	1103	6876	8	Substantial	30.93%
Ziebach	159	105	599	6	Substantial	24.00%
Unassigned	0	0	1553	0		

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 9 of 70

South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	2445	0
10-19 years	7898	0
20-29 years	14060	2
30-39 years	12291	9
40-49 years	10459	16
50-59 years	10315	51
60-69 years	8121	106
70-79 years	4192	174
80+ years	3284	461

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	38145	404
Male	34920	415

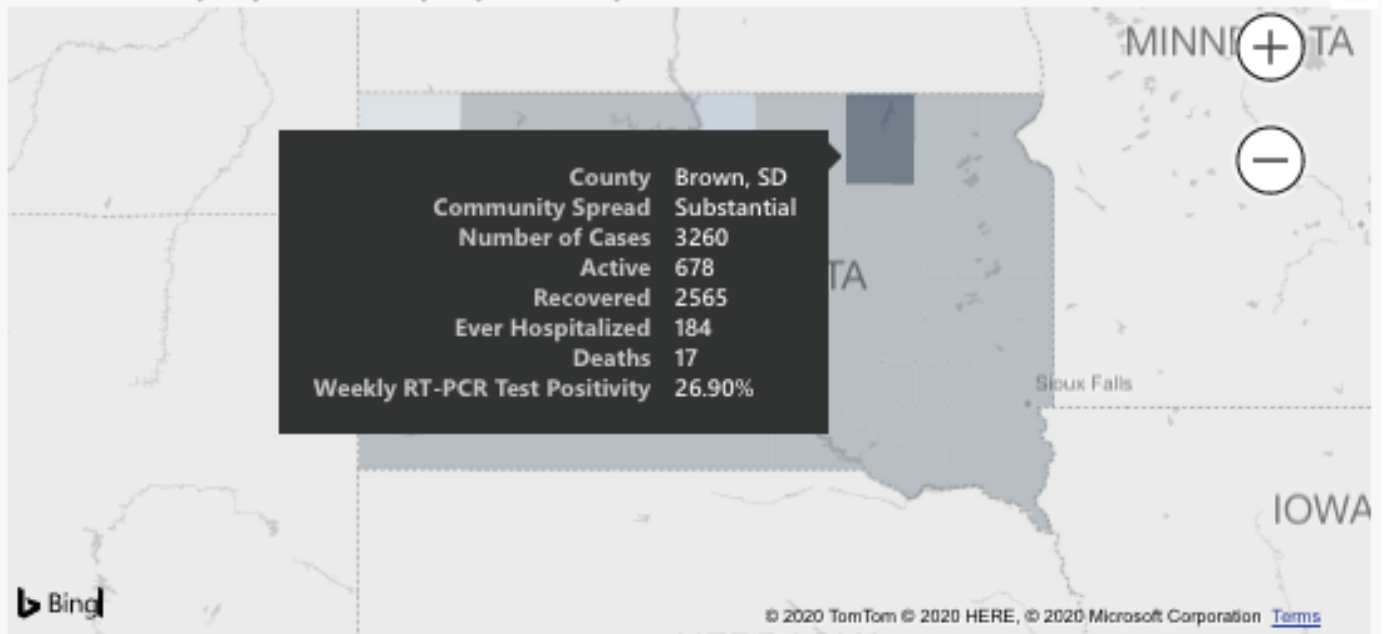
Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 10 of 70

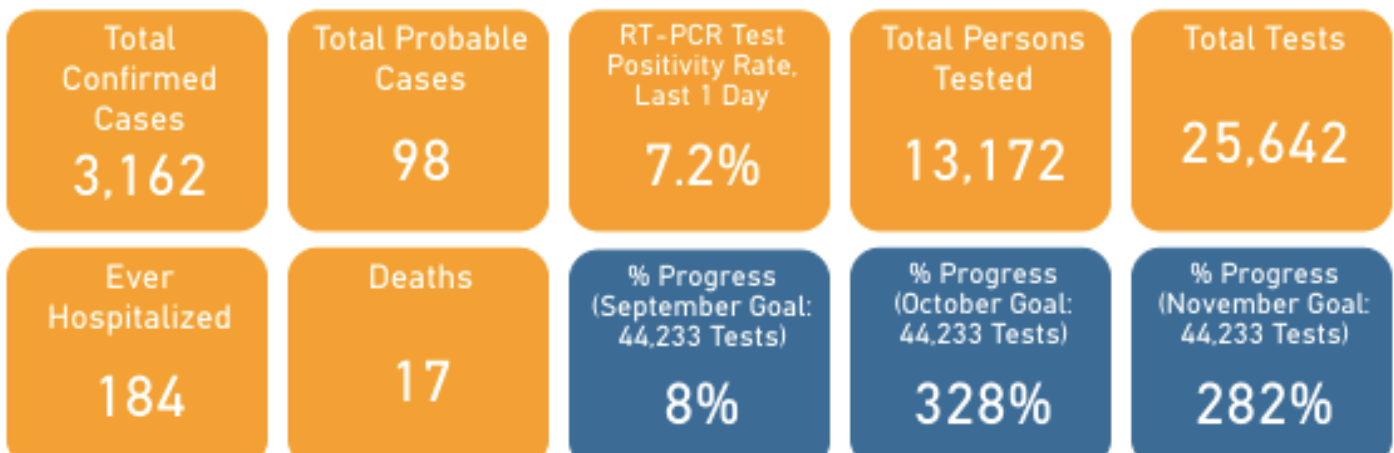
Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



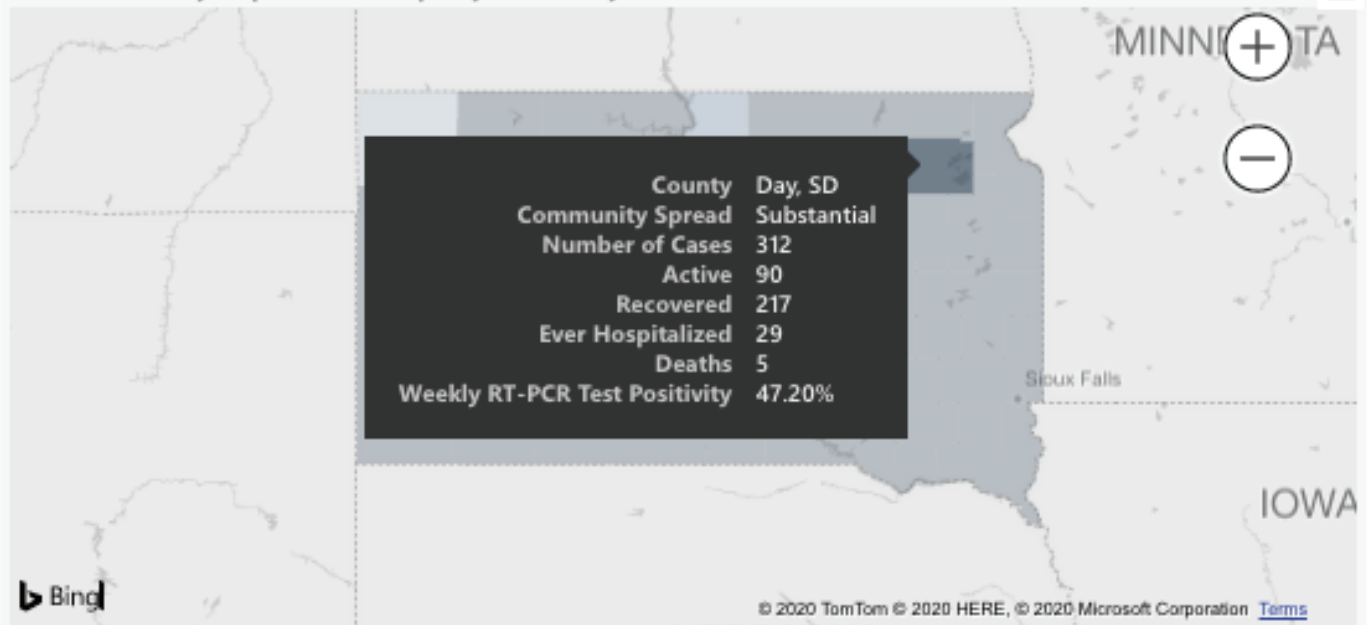
Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 11 of 70

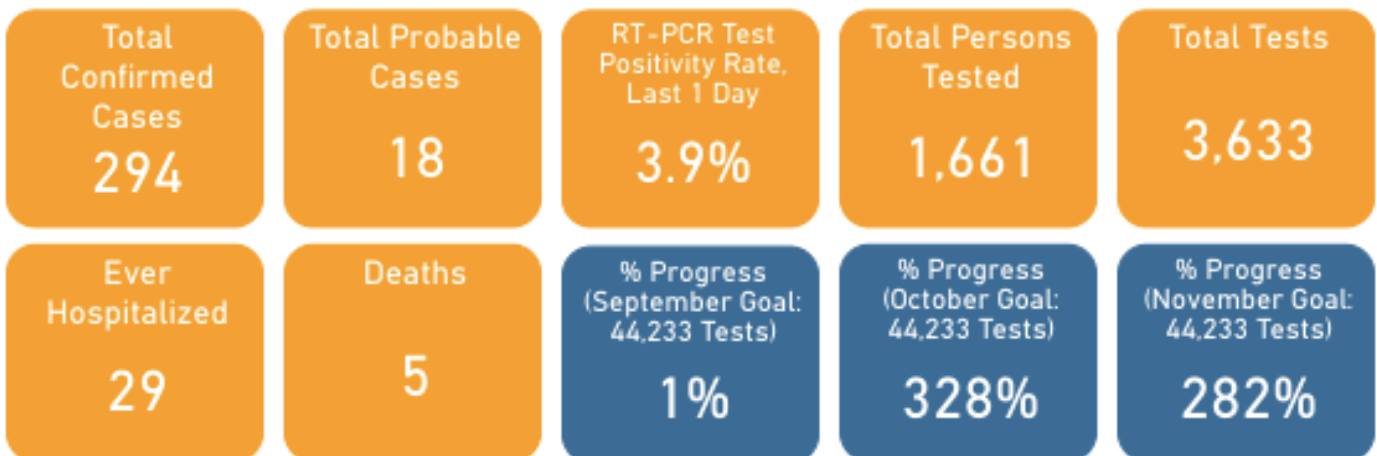
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 12 of 70

After winning three in a row and clawing their way back into the playoff picture, the Minnesota Vikings faltered on Sunday, losing to the Dallas Cowboys 31-28. This game was a reminder that the Vikings can win games when things go their way, but are not good enough yet to overcome much adversity. The Vikings now sit at 4-6 this season and are technically still in the playoff hunt but can't afford to lose many more games if they want to be playing in the postseason.



By Jordan Wright

The offense was able to move the ball and put up points against the Cowboys, totaling 430 yards and getting three touchdowns on their three red-zone trips. Kirk Cousins completed 22/30 passes for 314 yards and three touchdowns. He was under pressure all game because of the poor offensive line play, yet this was still one of the best games he's played so far this year. Dalvin Cook touched the ball 32 times for 160 yards and a touchdown, and has now rushed for over 1,000 yards this season. Adam Thielen was targeted early and often in this one, and he caught eight passes for 123 yards and two touchdowns – highlighted by an amazing one-handed catch in the corner of the endzone. The offense was its own worst enemy, however, as both Cousins and Cook fumbled the ball which led to 10 points for Dallas.

With no Dak Prescott and Andy Dalton just coming back from injury, it wasn't a secret that the Cowboys were going to run the ball. Unfortunately, nobody told Mike Zimmer. The Vikings' defense was gashed on the ground Sunday, allowing 180 yards and 5.8 yards per carry. Jaleel Johnson and Eric Kendricks were the only two players on defense who had a decent game – Johnson had the team's only sack while also adding a tackle for a loss and a quarterback hit, while Kendricks had two pass breakups and an impressive interception.

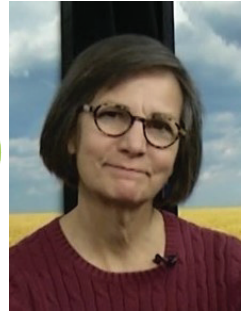
The drive of the game

With four minutes left in the fourth quarter, the Vikings were forced to punt. They were up by four points, so all the defense needed to do was bend but don't break – spoiler alert: they broke. The defense allowed Dallas to go on an 11-play, 61-yard touchdown drive. The Vikings had multiple chances to stop Dallas, including a fourth-and-six play (they gave up 10 yards) and a near-interception by Kris Boyd.

Looking ahead, the Vikings remain home and will prepare to face the Carolina Panthers. The big storyline in this one will be the return of Teddy Bridgewater, who signed with the Panthers this past offseason after spending time in New Orleans. The Panthers are 4-7 this season and have been without their top offensive weapon Christian McCaffrey – although he has a chance to play this week. This is another game the Vikings should win, which likely means it will be too close for comfort. Ultimately, the Vikings are a better team than the Panthers and should come out of this one with a win. Skol!

Gratitude for Grandparents

A three-pound baby entered the world in recent days. This precious child was born after his Mom spent seven weeks in the hospital on bedrest. At home, Dad and two siblings were working, going to school, and worrying. Surrounding the family were two sets of grandparents who ensured that the pieces all fell into place. From meals and lawn care, to virtual school, from evening shifts and overnights to early mornings, these grandparents were there every step of the way. They will continue to offer support while the baby remains hospitalized and growing, and after he comes home, because that is what grandparents do, if they are able.



By Joanie S. Holm, CNP ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Grandparenting can be an awesome stage in life, benefitting the grandchildren, the parents, and of course the grandparents in significant ways. Grandparents are known to influence values and behaviors and provide valuable life experiences. A child who has a connection with grandparents may have increased self-esteem, with better emotional and social skills. A relationship with a grandparent can give a child strength and comfort into adulthood.

In an article titled "Why Grandparents are VIPs," social researcher, educator and author, Susan V. Bosak writes, "The special kind of love you get from a grandparent is a love you can't get anywhere else. It is an important kind of love – in fact, a very important kind of love. Parents have to worry about who children will become in the future; their role is to be providers and disciplinarians. Grandparents can just enjoy children for who they are in the moment. The love of a grandparent is often freer, more unconditional, and far less psychologically complex than a parent's love. The love of a parent and the love of a grandparent are different, second in emotional importance only to the parent/child relationship."

In a world of many dual-career families, the benefits of active grandparents can be lifesaving for parents. Often grandparents fill in the gap between school and the time parents get off work, driving kids to different events or helping them with homework.

Lastly, active grandparents report less depression and a higher degree of life satisfaction and a hopeful feeling for the future.

Margaret Mead, a well-known American cultural anthropologist, said the connection between generations was "essential for the mental health and stability of a nation."

This Thanksgiving, may we celebrate the grandparent-grandchild relationship with gratitude.

Joanie S. Holm, R.N., C.N.P. is co-founder and president of Healing Words Foundation, a 501c3 which funds Prairie Doc® programs. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

2020 Quilts of Honor

Korean War Veterans & WWII Veteran American Legion Auxiliary

Karen Wolter, a member of Groton's American Legion Auxiliary, had a vision a few years ago to honor veterans through her love of quilting. The auxiliary fulfilled Karen's mission to honor veterans touched by war with love, prayer, and healing thoughts by presenting them with a quilt of honor. We hope that when you need a hug, you will wrap your quilt around yourself and it will provide you the comfort and healing that has been sewn into every seam. These quilts say, "Thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and OUR freedom." On behalf of the community and nation, with our deepest appreciation, we honor you with this Quilt of Honor.

Jerrold Abernathy

Jerrold served in the United States Marine Corp for nine years. He had the privilege of serving America in World War II and the Korean. During WWII, he was stationed in Japan.

After service, Jerrold attended SDSU using the G.I. Bill and graduated with a degree in Civil Engineering. He was employed with the Los Angeles County Road Department for 20 twenty years, and he also worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Aberdeen, for six years.

Jerrold has been married to Elizabeth for 58 years. They have five children, 16 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 15 of 70



Les Dohman

Les Dohman joined the U.S. Army and served during the Korean War. He was in the tank company of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division. From 1952 to 1954, Les served in Korea, the United States, and Japan. He had three job assignments through the years as a tank driver, gunner, and commander. One of Les's most memorable experiences during the war was when he flew from Japan to Korea in a storm. Les was honorable discharged from the service in 1954 as a Staff Sergeant.

Les worked and retired from Belle Telephone and farming. Les went south for the winter for 30 years.

Les is married to Carol and they have seven children, 18 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



Carroll "Spike" Nehls

In December of 1953, Spike enlisted in the Marine Corp and was sent to boot camp in San Diego, California. After boot camp, he served on El Toro Marine Air Base in California. Spike was such a great typist that he remained as an office assistant until June of 1957. One of his best friends at El Toro was Mike Hammer who is from Westport. The joke at the office was there was a Hammer and Nehls at work. Spike's job assignment was to report to the Adjutant every morning.

A few of his most memorable experiences have to do with athletics. Spike played basketball for the Santa Anna League, which played against the base team and won. Spike also participated on the track team and jumped to an all-time high of 5 feet 11 inches in the high jump competition. Another funny memory is that Spike and other Marines got to be in the movie "Battle Cry" when Tab Hunter arrived at the base and began shooting his film as Spike and the other marines where in dress uniform and parading.

Spike was honorably discharged in 1957 at the rank of sergeant and is grateful for all the friends he made in the service. After service, Spike worked as a carpenter for 40 years. Spike married Pat Vig from Veblen and they have two sons, Scott and Lance, and four grandchildren.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 16 of 70



Lester Nehls

Lester Nehls entered the US Army in 1951 with the 5th Heavy Transportation Company. He was stationed at Fort Story, Virginia. Lester's assignment was to drive and deliver supplies to other companies.

A few memorable experiences for Lester include maneuvers down in Fort Hood, Texas, and watching tanks go through farmers' land. Lester was a Corporal when honorably discharged from the Army in 1953.

Lester married Patricia and they have three children.



Benny Schaller

Ben Schaller enlisted in the Air Force January 2, 1951 at the age of eighteen. He was sent to San Antonio, Texas for two months of basic training then to Camp Gordon, Georgia for two months of combat training. After eighteen months of air police at Roswell, New Mexico, Ben was a sharpshooter and was sent to Fairford Air Force Base in England for thirty months where he guarded the A-Bomb.

Ben was honorably discharged January 7, 1955 and returned to Groton where he and a partner bought a service station and added a bowling alley to it. They sold that business and then he bought a truck route and built another bowling alley and lounge.

In 1966, Ben married Jean and they had three daughters. One of his twin daughters was a PIC Unit Navy Nurse, her twin an accountant, and the youngest is a 737 commercial airline captain. All three are married and have given Ben eight grandchildren. Ben retired as a rural mail carrier in 1994.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 17 of 70



SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

November 24, 2020

10:30 a.m. CT

Pierre, South Dakota

Board will participate via Zoom.

Office will be open to the public, meeting audio will be live-streamed.

Call the meeting to order and establish a quorum

Board Members:

Criag Cassens, Chair- Faulkton
Mark Murphy- Aberdeen Central
Marty Weismantel- Groton Area
Michael Talley- RC Central

Randy Soma, Vice Chair- Brookings
Barry Mann- Wakpala
Dr. Jerry Rasmussen- Dakota Valley
Tom Culver- Avon

ITEM #1 – Approve the agenda.

ITEM #2- Public Forum

ITEM #3 – Consider request from Crazy Horse, Little Wound, and Pine Ridge High School

ITEM #4 – Discussion on Competition start dates for Winter Activities

ITEM #5 – Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Daniel Swartos
SDHSAA Executive Director

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Misleading Sales Pitches for Medicare Advantage Plans Are Everywhere

By Trudy Lieberman, Community Health News Service

It seems that nothing ever changes when it comes to hawking insurance to fill the gaps in Medicare coverage for seniors. The fervent sales pitches, the misinformation, and the incomplete and deceptive information continue to proliferate.

For the last several weeks I've heard ad after ad, particularly on the TV news shows, urging older viewers to call 800 numbers to learn about the latest and greatest Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. Retired football star Joe Namath says you need to "get everything you're entitled to." Namath rattles off a bunch of extra benefits MA plans offer – dental, vision, hearing, prescription drug coverage – "all at no extra cost." He urges viewers to "call the number on your screen now. It's free."

These are new benefits the government has allowed private insurers to sell in the hope of getting more seniors to leave traditional Medicare in favor of a privatized system. By transferring more costs to seniors, the government saves money.

Another commercial promises "free eyeglasses and free rides," presumably to doctors' offices. Yet another tells viewers they "may qualify" to get \$144 added back to their Social Security benefits. The Medicare Part B premium for 2021 is \$148.50, which is, presumably, what the commercial promises to save those who choose the privatized system.

I suspected those ads were misleading and deceptive come-ons, designed to persuade listeners to make the call. So I made some calls. The 800 numbers lead to an insurance brokerage firm or agency that apparently has a network of licensed agents located around the country. Callers are asked to give their zip code and then are transferred to an agent who can give the "free benefits" review.

I have heard close to 100 Medicare sales pitches over the years and know that those free consultations are meant to result in a sale whether or not the senior needs the insurance or is really getting a better plan.

Seldom is there any talk about making sure people are covered for the huge amounts doctors and hospitals sometimes charge that Medicare doesn't cover. What are the trade-offs, for example, between buying an MA plan, which pays those charges after you satisfy a large annual out of pocket maximum – next year \$6,700 per person – or buying a traditional Medigap insurance supplement Plan G, which covers those charges right away? A couple with Medicare Advantage could pay as much as \$13,400 a year before their plan would pay for anything.

With so many choices, what's a consumer to do? I rang up Bonnie Burns, one of the best Medicare consumer advocates in the country, for advice.

"It's just too complicated," she said. "No wonder people throw up their hands. That's why people sign up for an Advantage plan with little or no premium and find out what the costs really are as they use benefits through the year." She added, "It would be so much easier if Medicare Advantage plans and drug plans were standardized so people could figure this out."

Congress' decision not to standardize Advantage plans or drug plans has resulted in today's chaotic marketplace. Congress wanted to allow every insurer in the universe to throw something out there so the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 19 of 70

companies could make money and could (<https://harpers.org/archive/2016/11/dont-touch-my-medicare/2/>) entice more people to leave the traditional Medicare program. The goal was to reduce the costs to the program, all the while side-stepping any action to control run-away medical costs.

Note that Congress did standardize Medicare supplement policies – known as Medigap policies – in the early 1990s because that market was as chaotic and misleading then as the MA market is today. I like to think of that action as the high-water mark of consumer protection, and I have no illusions that anything like it will happen again anytime soon.

One final bit of crucial advice is missing in today's ads. Even after you enroll in an MA plan, perhaps enticed by a few dollars in savings for a pair of glasses, you can return to traditional Medicare in the future. But in all but four states – New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine – state laws prohibit you from buying a Medigap supplement without an insurer scrutinizing your health status.

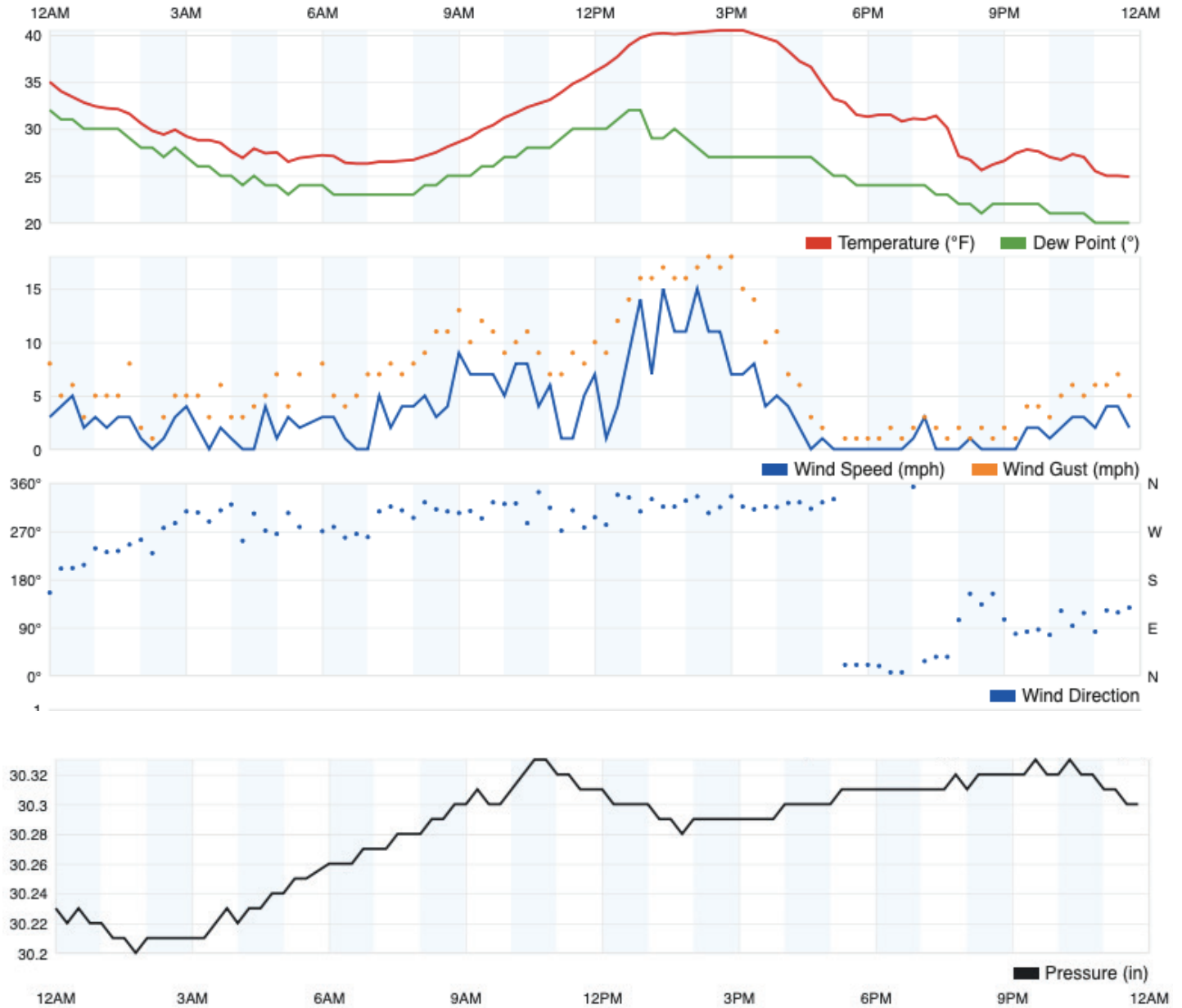
If you have developed a preexisting condition, you may be ineligible for a Medigap policy. I've met many people over the years who bought an Advantage plan, got sick, and needed to go to out of network for treatment. They learned the hard way they were shut out of the Medigap market for good.

What choices have you made for covering Medicare's gaps? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 20 of 70

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 21 of 70

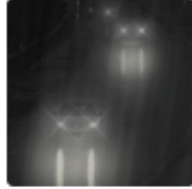
Today



Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

High: 45 °F

Tonight



Chance
Drizzle and
Breezy

Low: 32 °F

Tuesday



Slight Chance
Drizzle then
Partly Sunny

High: 41 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 18 °F

Wednesday



Sunny

High: 38 °F

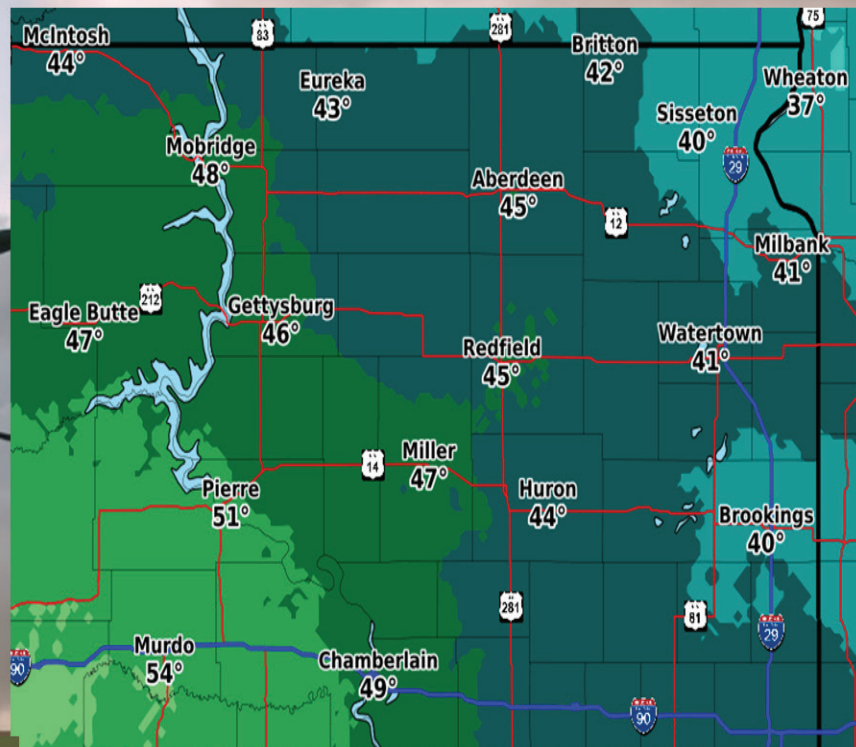
Mild & Windy Today

South Winds at
30 to 40mph

Increasing Clouds
Through The Day

Light Drizzle
Tonight

Temperatures
Tonight Fall To
The 20s and 30s



 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Seasonally mild temperatures are expected again today, though with increasing clouds through the day, and a strong south wind. We will see some light drizzle develop overnight. Temperatures will dip into the 20s and 30s, and there could be a few spots that get a little ice by morning

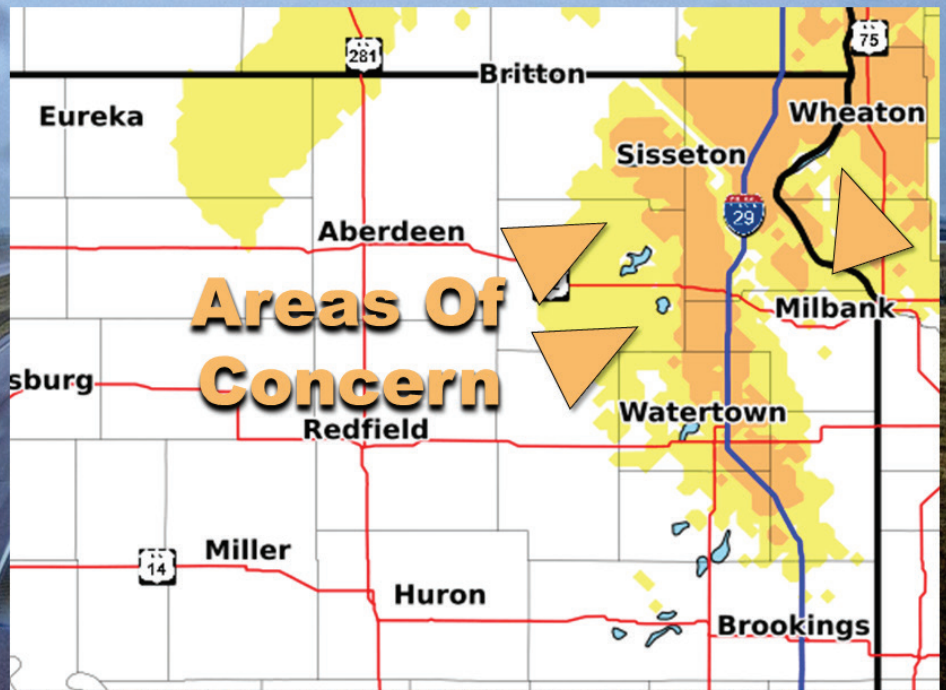
Icing Potential Tonight

Low Clouds & Drizzle

Temperatures Very Close To Freezing Mark (Lower Confidence – Uncertainty Over Temperatures)

A Few Hundredths of Rain

Just Be Cognizant That Ice May Develop on Roads Tonight & Tuesday Morning



Drizzle will develop across northeast South Dakota and western Minnesota tonight. For the far northeast corner of the state, and parts of western Minnesota, temperatures overnight will dip into the low 30s. There is the potential for some light ice to accumulate on road surfaces, though there is a high degree of uncertainty whether temperatures will actually dip below the freezing mark. Therefore, you should be cognizant if you are traveling this area early Tuesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 23 of 70

Today in Weather History

November 23, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across most of northern South Dakota, adding to already significant snow depth. Roads became snow-packed, which hampered travel, resulting in the postponement of many activities. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Aberdeen, Isabel, Roscoe, and Mellette; 7 inches at Eagle Butte, Timber Lake, Selby, Faulkton, Leola, Frederick, Webster, and Sisseton; and 8 inches at Britton, Ipswich, Eureka, and McLaughlin.

1912: The Rouse Simmons was a three-masted schooner famous for sinking during a violent storm on Lake Michigan on this day. The ship was bound for Chicago with a cargo of Christmas trees when it foundered off the coast of Two Rivers, Wisconsin, killing all on board.

1641 - An observer at Boston, MA, recorded a great tempest of wind and rain from the southeast all night, as fierce as a hurricane, and thereupon followed the highest tide which we have seen since our arrival here. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Extremely destructive Santa Ana winds blew from Oxnard to San Diego and inland parts of southern California. The high winds produced a 28,000 acre brush fire on a 40-mile front west of Crystal Lake. People were ordered off streets in some areas due to flying debris. (21st-22nd) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Eight cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Elkins, WV, reported a low of 5 degrees above zero. Gale force winds continued along the Northern Atlantic Coast. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Wet and windy weather prevailed across the western U.S., with heavy snow in some of the higher elevations. Winds gusted to 62 mph at Vedauwoo WY, and reached 75 mph at Tillamook OR. Shelter Cove CA was drenched with 4.37 inches of rain in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Strong northerly winds produced squalls along the shore of Lake Michigan, with heavy snow in extreme southeastern Wisconsin. Milwaukee WI received nine inches of snow, and in Racine County there were more than one hundred automobile accidents. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

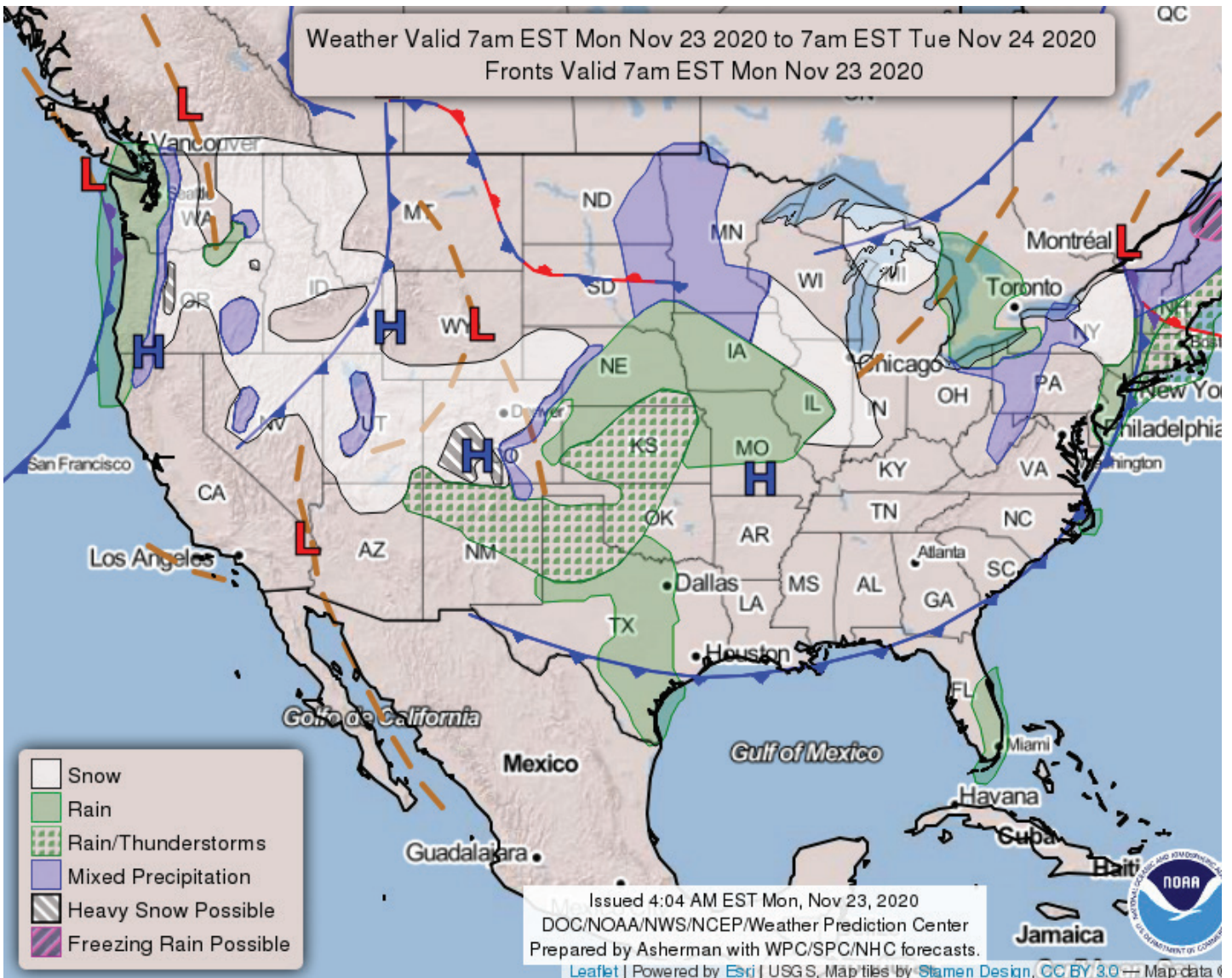
Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 24 of 70

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 41 °F at 3:03 PM
Low Temp: 25 °F at 11:20 PM
Wind: 18 mph at 2:21 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 59° in 2017
Record Low: -17° in 1985
Average High: 35°F
Average Low: 15°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.57
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.18
Average Precip to date: 21.04
Precip Year to Date: 16.52
Sunset Tonight: 4:56 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 25 of 70



THE SIGNS OF A GRATEFUL HEART

An attitude of gratitude is always obvious. If we are grateful for what God has done for us and given to us, others will see in us our grateful appreciation for it in everything we do. David provided a fourfold formula for us to follow to prove our gratitude.

"I will thank You, Lord, with all my heart." The thanks he described is total and consumed all of his being - his entire self. The word he used for heart would include his consciousness of God's presence, his memories of God's goodness, and his awareness of God's grace. He worshiped God with excitement, enthusiasm, and expectation.

"I will tell all of the marvelous things You have done." Marvelous comes from a word that means "extraordinary, not surpassed by anything, wonderful!" He is so overwhelmed by God's blessings on and in his life that he wants everyone to know it.

"I will be filled with joy!" Joy is the natural state of the one who trusts in the Lord. Knowing that "all things work together for our good" should cause His joy to radiate from our heads into our hearts and out through our hands. Everything we do should be done with a smile on our face and gladness in our eyes.

"I will sing praises to Your Name, O Most High." Notice that there is only one letter difference between the word "sin" and "sing" - the letter "g" - that stands for God. When we give up sin for the Savior, God gives us a new song to sing. It is a song about the Savior who loves us, gave Himself for us, is present in us, and works through us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the goodness and grace of our salvation. May we always have a joyous, grateful, thankful, radiant heart. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. Psalm 9:2

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 26 of 70

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)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/30/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** 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

Fargo emerges as new favorite to host Sanford golf tourney

By MATT ZIMMER Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Upon the announcement earlier this month that Minnehaha Country Club had decided to reject an extension of the Sanford International PGA Tour Champions tournament, tournament director Josh Brewster and Sanford executive vice president Micah Aberson both intimated that without the host site's involvement, the event would likely end after the expiration of the original five-year agreement that runs through 2022.

Now Sanford is singing a different tune. Aberson said Sanford officials fielded dozens of phone calls and inquiries since the announcement from interested cities and golf courses, and plans are moving forward to find a new home for Sioux Falls' biggest golf event.

"I would say we're a long ways away from throwing in the towel," Aberson said. "It's just a matter of what city, what golf course and what state that it takes place."

And a new favorite has already emerged: Fargo.

Sanford has established a major presence with North Dakota's largest city, both in health care facilities and Sanford's enthusiasm for supporting and sponsoring local sports. Making the move of just over 200 miles would make for a relatively smooth transition for a tournament that's been a huge hit in its three years in Sioux Falls, raising hundred of thousands of dollars for charity and being one of the first major American sporting events to allow fans this past summer.

"It's a huge market for Sanford Health," Aberson said. "Our largest medical center is in Fargo. We have more employees that are residents of North Dakota than South Dakota, and the business community has already begun to reach out. It's a generous, supportive and welcoming business community, and we're gonna go up there and have a discussion, see where it goes and kick the tires."

The host golf course hasn't been discussed yet, though more than one could be an option. Right now, establishing that Fargo has the appetite to financially support the event is the main priority. In addition to Sanford's contribution to making the tournament happen, sponsorships contribute up to \$3 million to the Sanford International, and one possible advantage to Fargo would be retaining some of the current sponsors in addition to securing new ones in North Dakota, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

Aberson said a regional home for the tournament is preferable, but not necessarily a requirement. Sanford is about to merge with Intermountain Health Care in Utah, and PGA events have been held in that state.

While Sanford officials have not closed the door on staying in Sioux Falls with two years still left on the original agreement, Aberson downplayed the idea that other sites are being floated as a bargaining chip. There's been little discussion with Minnehaha, he said.

Minnehaha Country Club COO Bret Coad said in a statement that having South Dakota's relatively short golf season interrupted by the tournament left members divided on the proposed extension, and that, for now, MCC remains fully committed to hosting the final two years of the tournament.

"We're legitimately trying to pursue options and see what might be available to us," Aberson said. "We've become really passionate about this tournament and what it brings to the community. I don't know what (Minnehaha's) appetite is for (revisiting negotiations) and as we continue to go down this path I don't know what ours will be, but I wouldn't consider that door closed."

South Dakota reports 42 deaths due to COVID-19 in last day

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Sunday confirmed 42 deaths due to the coronavirus in the last day, lifting the state's death toll to 819 since the start of the pandemic.

There have been 404 virus fatalities in the state in the month of November.

South Dakota ranks No. 2 behind North Dakota for the number of virus cases per capita in the last two weeks, according to statistics compiled Saturday by The COVID Tracking Project. One in every 110 people

in South Dakota tested positive in the past week.

The state processed 851 positive tests since Saturday, lifting the total case count to 73,065. Hospitalizations fell by three in the last day, to 577.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

AstraZeneca: COVID-19 vaccine shown to be 'highly effective'

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — AstraZeneca said Monday that late-stage trials showed its coronavirus vaccine was up to 90% effective, giving public health officials hope they may soon have access to a vaccine that is cheaper and easier to distribute than some of its rivals.

The results are based on interim analysis of trials in the U.K. and Brazil of a vaccine developed by Oxford University and manufactured by AstraZeneca. No hospitalizations or severe cases of COVID-19 were reported in those receiving the vaccine.

AstraZeneca is the third major drug company to report late-stage results for a potential COVID-19 vaccine as the world anxiously waits for scientific breakthroughs that will bring an end to a pandemic that has wrought economic devastation and resulted in nearly 1.4 million confirmed deaths.

Pfizer and Moderna last week reported preliminary results from late-stage trials showing their vaccines were almost 95% effective. But, unlike its rivals, the AstraZeneca vaccine doesn't have to be stored at ultra-cold temperatures, making it easier to distribute, especially in developing countries.

"I think these are really exciting results," Dr. Andrew Pollard, chief investigator for the trial, said during a news conference. "Because the vaccine can be stored at fridge temperatures, it can be distributed around the world using the normal immunization distribution system. And so our goal ... to make sure that we have a vaccine that was accessible everywhere, I think we've actually managed to do that."

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is also cheaper. AstraZeneca, which has pledged it won't make a profit on the vaccine during the pandemic, has reached agreements with governments and international health organizations that put its price at about \$2.50 a dose. Pfizer's vaccine costs about \$20 a dose, while Moderna's is \$15 to \$25, based on agreements the companies have struck to supply their vaccines to the U.S. government.

All three vaccines must be approved by regulators before they can be widely distributed.

The results come as a second wave of COVID-19 hits many countries, once again shutting businesses, restricting social interaction and pummeling the world economy.

AstraZeneca said it will immediately apply for early approval of the vaccine where possible, and it will seek an emergency use listing from the World Health Organization, so it can make the vaccine available in low-income countries.

The AstraZeneca trial looked at two different dosing regimens. A half-dose of the vaccine followed by a full dose at least one month later was 90% effective. Another approach, giving patients two full doses one month apart, was 62% effective. The combined results showed an average efficacy rate of 70%.

The vaccine uses a weakened version of a common cold virus that is combined with genetic material for the characteristic spike protein of the virus that causes COVID-19. After vaccination, the spike protein primes the immune system to attack the virus if it later infects the body.

The vaccine can be transported under "normal refrigerated conditions" of 2 to 8 degrees Celsius (36 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit), AstraZeneca said. By comparison, Pfizer plans to distribute its vaccine using specially designed "thermal shippers" that use dry ice to maintain temperatures of minus-70 degrees Celsius (minus-94 degrees Fahrenheit).

Peter Openshaw, professor of experimental medicine at Imperial College London, said the finding that a smaller initial dose is more effective than a larger one is good news because it may reduce costs and mean more people can be vaccinated.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 29 of 70

"The report that an initial half-dose is better than a full dose seems counterintuitive for those of us thinking of vaccines as normal drugs: With drugs, we expect that higher doses have bigger effects, and more side-effects," he said. "But the immune system does not work like that."

The results reported Monday come from trials in the U.K. and Brazil that involved 23,000 people. Late-stage trials are also underway in the U.S., Japan, Russia, South Africa, Kenya and Latin America, with further trials planned for other European and Asian countries.

AstraZeneca has been ramping up manufacturing capacity, so it can supply hundreds of millions of doses of the vaccine starting in January, Chief Executive Pascal Soriot said earlier this month.

Soriot said Monday that the Oxford vaccine's simpler supply chain and AstraZeneca's commitment to provide it on a nonprofit basis during the pandemic mean it will be affordable and available to people around the world.

"This vaccine's efficacy and safety confirm that it will be highly effective against COVID-19 and will have an immediate impact on this public health emergency," Soriot said.

British Health Secretary Matt Hancock said he felt "a great sense of relief" at the news from AstraZeneca.

Britain has ordered 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine, and the government says several million doses can be produced before the end of the year if it is approved by regulators.

Just months ago, "the idea that by November we would have three vaccines, all of which have got high effectiveness ... I would have given my eye teeth for," Hancock said.

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Election 2020 Today: Fraud rejected, Biden's top diplomat

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Monday in Election 2020:

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

FRAUD REJECTED : President Donald Trump's campaign has filed plenty of lawsuits in six states as he tries to upend an election he lost to Joe Biden. The strategy may have played well in front of TV cameras, but it's proved a disaster in court, where judges uniformly have rejected claims of vote fraud. The latest case ended Saturday, when a federal judge in Pennsylvania said Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani presented only "speculative accusations" and no proof of rampant corruption in the vote.

EXPECTED NOMINEE: A longtime national security aide to President-elect Biden, Antony Blinken, is expected to become Biden's nominee for secretary of state. Multiple people familiar with the Biden team's planning tell The Associated Press that Blinken is at the front of his choices to be America's top diplomat. Blinken served as deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser during the Obama administration.

BOXING-IN ATTEMPT: The Trump administration is enacting new rules and regulations that it hopes will box in Biden on numerous foreign policy matters. In a bid to cement Trump's legacy in international affairs, the White House, the State Department and other agencies have been working on new pronouncements on Iran, Israel, China and elsewhere. While many of these actions can be reversed by Biden with the stroke of a pen, they will still demand the time and attention of the new administration amid a host of other priorities.

BLACK VOTERS ALARMED: Biden was in part powered to victory in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia by Black voters, many of them concentrated in cities such as Detroit, Philadelphia and Atlanta where he received a significant share of their support. Since Election Day, Trump and his allies have sought to expose voter fraud that simply does not exist. The strategy could erode Black voters' trust in elections. Voting rights advocates say they stand ready to beat back any efforts to water down the Black vote.

QUOTABLE: "The poison of Trump was deeper into the bloodstream of the electorate than anyone noticed." — Bradley Beychok, who ran an advertising program for the Democratic super PAC American

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 30 of 70

Bridge targeting Trump in northern swing states.

ICYMI:

Trump appeals rejection of effort to block Pennsylvania vote

Trump campaign legal team distances itself from Powell

How Democrats came up short in bid to expand House majority

Biden expected to nominate Blinken as secretary of state

By MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden is expected to nominate Antony Blinken as secretary of state, according to multiple people familiar with the Biden team's planning.

Blinken, 58, served as deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser during the Obama administration and has close ties with Biden. If nominated and confirmed, he would be a leading force in the incoming administration's bid to reframe the U.S. relationship with the rest of the world after four years in which President Donald Trump questioned longtime alliances.

In nominating Blinken, Biden would sidestep potentially thorny issues that could have affected Senate confirmation for two other candidates on his short list to be America's top diplomat: Susan Rice and Sen. Chris Coons.

Rice would have faced significant GOP opposition and likely rejection in the Senate. She has long been a target of Republicans, including for statements she made after the deadly 2012 attacks on Americans in Benghazi, Libya.

Coons' departure from the Senate would have come as other Democratic senators are being considered for administrative posts and the party is hoping to win back the Senate. Control hangs on the result of two runoff elections in Georgia in January.

Biden is likely to name his Cabinet picks in tranches, with groups of nominees focused on a specific top area, like the economy, national security or public health, being announced at once. Advisers to the president-elect's transition have said they'll make their first Cabinet announcements on Tuesday.

If Biden focuses on national security that day, Michèle Flournoy, a veteran of Pentagon policy jobs, is a top choice to lead the Defense Department. Jake Sullivan, a longtime adviser to Biden and Hillary Clinton, is also in the mix for a top job, including White House national security adviser.

For his part, Blinken recently participated in a national security briefing with Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and has weighed in publicly on notable foreign policy issues in Egypt and Ethiopia.

Biden's secretary of state would inherit a deeply demoralized and depleted career workforce at the State Department. Trump's two secretaries of state, Rex Tillerson and Mike Pompeo, offered weak resistance to the administration's attempts to gut the agency, which were thwarted only by congressional intervention.

Although the department escaped massive proposed cuts of more than 30% in its budget for three consecutive years, it has seen a significant number of departures from its senior and rising mid-level ranks, from which many diplomats have opted to retire or leave the foreign service given limited prospects for advancements under an administration that they believe does not value their expertise.

A graduate of Harvard University and Columbia Law School and a longtime Democratic foreign policy presence, Blinken has aligned himself with numerous former senior national security officials who have called for a major reinvestment in American diplomacy and renewed emphasis on global engagement.

"Democracy is in retreat around the world, and unfortunately it's also in retreat at home because of the president taking a two-by-four to its institutions, its values and its people every day," Blinken told The Associated Press in September. "Our friends know that Joe Biden knows who they are. So do our adversaries. That difference would be felt on day one."

Blinken served on the National Security Council during the Clinton administration before becoming staff director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when Biden was chair of the panel. In the early years of the Obama administration, Blinken returned to the NSC and was then-Vice President Biden's national security adviser before he moved to the State Department to serve as deputy to Secretary of State John

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 31 of 70

Kerry.

Biden has pledged to build the most diverse government in modern history, and he and his team often speak about their desire for his administration to reflect America. He is being watched to see whether he will make history by nominating the first woman to lead the Pentagon, the Treasury Department or the Department of Veterans Affairs or the first African American at the top of the Defense Department, the Interior Department or the Treasury Department.

Ron Klain, Biden's incoming chief of staff, said Sunday the Trump administration's refusal to clear the way for Biden's team to have access to key information about agencies and federal dollars for the transition is taking its toll on planning, including the Cabinet selection process. Trump's General Services Administration has yet to acknowledge that Biden won the election — a determination that would remove those roadblocks.

"We're not in a position to get background checks on Cabinet nominees. And so there are definite impacts. Those impacts escalate every day," Klain told ABC's "This Week."

Even some Republicans have broken with Trump in recent days and called on him to begin the transition. Joining the growing list were Sens. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota, Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. Former Republican Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey, a longtime Trump supporter, told ABC that it was time for the president to stop contesting the outcome and called Trump's legal team seeking to overturn the election a "national embarrassment."

Meanwhile, planning was underway for a pandemic-modified inauguration Jan. 20. Klain said the Biden team was consulting with Democratic leadership in the House and the Senate over their plans.

"They're going to try to have an inauguration that honors the importance and the symbolic meaning of the moment, but also does not result in the spread of the disease. That's our goal," Klain said.

Associated Press writers Julie Pace in Washington, Alexandra Jaffe in Wilmington, Delaware, and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Reports: Israeli PM flew to Saudi Arabia, met crown prince

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli media reported Monday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flew to Saudi Arabia for a clandestine meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which would mark the first known encounter between senior Israeli and Saudi officials.

Hebrew-language media cited an unnamed Israeli official as saying that Netanyahu and Yossi Cohen, head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, flew to the Saudi city of Neom on Sunday, where they met with the crown prince. The prince was there for talks with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

A Gulfstream IV private jet took off just after 1740 GMT from Ben-Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv, according to data from website FlightRadar24.com. The flight traveled south along the eastern edge of the Sinai Peninsula before turning toward Neom and landing just after 1830 GMT, according to the data. The flight took off from Neom around 2150 GMT and followed the same route back to Tel Aviv.

The Israeli prime minister's office did not respond to requests for comment. Officials in Saudi Arabia did not respond to requests for comment, nor did its state-run media immediately acknowledge Netanyahu's reported visit.

Pompeo traveled with an American press pool on his trip throughout the Mideast, but left them at the Neom airport when he went into his visit with the crown prince.

While Bahrain, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have reached deals under the Trump administration to normalize ties with Israel, Saudi Arabia so far has remained out of reach.

King Salman long has supported the Palestinians in their effort to secure an independent state. However, analysts and insiders suggest his 35-year-old son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, likely is more open to the idea of normalizing relations without major progress in the moribund peace process.

The kingdom approved the use of Saudi airspace for Israeli flights to the UAE, a decision announced the day after Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, met with Prince Mohammed in Riyadh.

Bahrain normalizing ties also suggest at least a Saudi acquiescence to the idea, as the island kingdom relies on Riyadh.

Israel has long had clandestine ties to Gulf Arab states that have strengthened in recent years as they have confronted a shared threat in Iran.

Associated Press writer Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates contributed.

China tests millions after coronavirus flare-ups in 3 cities

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese authorities are testing millions of people, imposing lockdowns and shutting down schools after multiple locally transmitted coronavirus cases were discovered in three cities across the country last week.

As temperatures drop, large-scale measures are being enacted in the cities of Tianjin, Shanghai and Manzhouli, despite the low number of new cases compared to the United States and other countries that are seeing new waves of infections.

Many experts and government officials have warned that the chance of the virus spreading will be greater during the cold weather. Recent flare-ups have shown that there is still a risk of the virus returning, despite being largely controlled within China.

On Monday, the National Health Commission reported two new locally transmitted cases in Shanghai over the last 24 hours, bringing the total to seven since Friday. China has recorded 86,442 total cases and 4,634 deaths since the virus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

The two latest cases confirmed in Shanghai were close contacts of another airport worker who was diagnosed with COVID-19 earlier in November. On Sunday night, the city's Pudong International airport decided to test its workers, collecting 17,719 samples through the early hours of Monday morning. Plans call for testing others in surrounding communities if further cases are detected.

Videos on social media purportedly from workers showed what appeared to be chaotic scenes at the airport as they were given last-minute orders to get tested. In the videos, people are seen standing in large groups pushing back and forth against officials in hazmat suits.

Shanghai has been more selective with mass testing, targeting people associated with a particular place, such as the airport or the hospital where someone who has tested positive had worked, rather than an entire district.

In Tianjin, health workers have collected more than 2.2 million samples for testing from residents in the Binhai new district, after five locally transmitted cases were discovered there last week.

In Manzhouli, a city of more than 200,000 people, local health authorities are testing all residents after two cases were reported on Saturday. They also shut down all schools and public venues and banned public gatherings such as banquets.

China has resorted to its heavy, top-down approach each time new cases of local transmission are found — shutting down schools and hospitals, locking down residential communities and entire neighborhoods, and testing millions.

Tianjin authorities shut down a kindergarten and moved all the teachers, family and students to a centralized quarantine space. They also sealed the residential compound where the five cases were found.

A worker for UPS at Pudong airport said one of those who tested positive earlier in the month had visited her office. Since then, her company has asked employees to quarantine themselves in the office and were forbidden to leave for four days, unless they signed an agreement to quarantine themselves at home for two weeks, she said, declining to be named out of fear of retaliation. She said she had been sleeping at the office since Friday, but was able to leave Monday. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China's approach to controlling the pandemic has been criticized for being draconian. It locked down the city of Wuhan, where cases were first reported, for more than two months to contain the virus, with the local government shutting down all traffic and confining residents to their homes. Domestically, however,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 33 of 70

China has called its strategy “clear to zero” and has boasted of its success.

“In the entire world, only China has the ability to get to zero. Other countries don’t have this ability,” Zeng Guang, the chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said in a webinar hosted by Chinese media in September. “It’s not just getting to zero, even for them to control the first wave of the epidemic is hard.”

“Clearing to zero’ is actually the most economically effective way to do epidemic prevention. If you don’t do that, then this problem will get more troublesome,” he said. “Use a heavier hand, and get to zero, then people will feel reassured.”

AP researcher Chen Si contributed reporting from Shanghai.

Cut off: School closings leave rural students isolated

By CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press / Report for America

CUBA, N.M. (AP) — The midday arrival of a school bus at Cyliss Castillo’s home on the remote edge of a mesa breaks up the long days of boredom and isolation for the high school senior.

The driver hands over food in white plastic bags, collects Castillo’s school assignments and offers some welcome conversation before setting out for another home.

The closing of classrooms and the switch to remote learning because of the coronavirus have left Castillo and other students in this school district on the sparsely populated fringe of the Navajo Nation in New Mexico profoundly isolated — cut off from direct human contact and, in many cases, unconnected to the grid.

Like many of his neighbors, Castillo does not have electricity, let alone internet.

It is yet another way in which the pandemic has exposed the gap between the haves and have-nots in the U.S.

“There’s not a lot to do here. You clean up, pick up trash or build stuff. Like, I built that shed right there,” the 18-year-old Castillo said, pointing at a pitched-roof plywood shed.

“Hopefully, hopefully by next semester we’ll be going back into school,” he said. “I don’t like online. I like to be, you know, in school, learning. That’s just not me. I just find it a lot easier and a lot better than just out here, not doing nothing.”

The Cuba Independent School District, centered in a village of 800 people, has kept the buses running as a way to bring school to far-flung students who live on a vast checkboard of tribal, federal and county land.

On their routes, the buses carry school assignments, art supplies, meals and counselors who check in with students who are struggling with online bullying, abuse, thoughts of suicide or other problems.

The buses are a lifeline for families in the Cuba school district, of whom nearly half are Hispanic and half are Native American, including many Navajo-speaking English-language learners.

Many do not have running water. Castillo and others with no electricity charge their school-issued laptops with car batteries or at a relative’s house. One student has sent her laptop on the buses to be charged at school. This far out, internet service is unavailable or prohibitively expensive.

For students without home internet, the buses bring USB drives loaded with assignments and video lessons from teachers. Some students like Castillo eventually asked for paper packets because of the difficulty in charging laptops.

With COVID-19 cases spiking in New Mexico to their highest levels yet, it is unclear when the district will begin offering in-person classes again.

The district has a record of adapting to challenges, and a high school graduation rate of 83% — well above the state average — to show for it. It has long employed a “community school” approach in which social workers, nurses and teachers help students around the clock, not just during the school day, on the theory that they will do better academically if their home life can be made better.

All students were issued Chromebooks in 2019, well before the coronavirus outbreak. That made the shift to distance learning easier in March when school buildings shut down.

Other rural districts around the country have likewise been engineering ways to connect with students

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 34 of 70

who are otherwise disengaged during the pandemic.

In San Joaquin, California, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of Fresno, the Golden Plains Unified School District found early in the pandemic that students were out working rather than doing schoolwork.

"We would have kids call from the fields. They were picking peaches," said Andre Pecina, an assistant superintendent, who noted only 40% of high school students were participating in distance learning. "Once COVID happened, parents were like, 'Let's go to work.'"

To bring students back into the fold, the district reached out to parents by phone to set teacher conferences early in the school year and ordered hundreds of internet hot spots. It is also delivering school materials and electronic devices to students.

In New Mexico, before the buses set out from Cuba High School each day, about 25 cafeteria workers, bus drivers and other staff spend over an hour loading them with milk, produce, prepared meals, toilet paper and other necessities for the families.

On board one day in late October was head district counselor Victoria Dominguez, who was checking on two students who had suicidal thoughts. She was bringing one a pair of skateboard shoes. In the spring, a screening system for messages sent by students flagged one or two a week as showing signs of possible emotional trouble. Now she is seeing dozens in single week.

"I'm worried for the winter months. It's going to get darker. It's going to get colder and you can't go outside," Dominguez said.

As COVID-19 rates spiked, the school switched to making bus deliveries every other day, instead of every day.

"They'll still get the same amount of food, but they won't get the same amount of human contact," she said.

The road from the high school turned from asphalt to gravel to deeply rutted dirt. The oak and pine trees gave way to sagebrush and gaunt junipers before the bus came to halt in front of a cluster of houses.

Students poured out to greet the bus driver, Kelly Maestas. He asked them how they were doing and handed out lunches. Dominguez went to shoot baskets with some of the older kids.

Among them was 15-year-old Autumn Wilson, a shy sophomore whose father died after she started high school last year. Then school shut down. Now she can't play on the volleyball team anymore. Dominguez connected her with a therapist on an earlier visit.

Autumn said the sadness over the loss makes it difficult for her to finish schoolwork. But she finds joy riding horses when her grandfather takes her to the family corral. And she looks forward to the visits from Maestas, who brought her candy for her birthday.

"Kelly, he's really funny to talk to. And if you're feeling sad you can really talk to him," she said, "and you can trust him."

Associated Press writer Jeff Amy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Attanasio is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues. Follow Attanasio on Twitter.

Mahomes hits Kelce in last minute, Chiefs edge Raiders 35-31

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Even after Jason Witten's touchdown put the Las Vegas Raiders ahead with 1:43 to play, the mood on the Kansas City Chiefs' sideline was calm and cool.

Not much can stop the Super Bowl champs lately. Not when they have the quarterback who makes everything go.

"We've got Patrick Mahomes," running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire said. "I'm not worried about anything."

Mahomes threw a 22-yard touchdown pass to Travis Kelce with 28 seconds to play, and the Chiefs

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 35 of 70

avenged their only loss in the last 12 months with a 35-31 victory over the Raiders on Sunday night.

Mahomes passed for 348 yards and led two go-ahead scoring drives in the frantic fourth quarter for the Chiefs (9-1), who split their season series with Las Vegas (6-4) in dramatic fashion. Kansas City also took firm control of the race for its fifth straight AFC West title with an assertive comeback in its closest rivals' home building.

"I'd take him over everybody," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said of Mahomes. "And I'm lucky to have him, as we are as a football team, as we are as a city. When you're behind, he can make things happen."

The Chiefs' supreme confidence in their Super Bowl MVP wasn't shaken when they lost 40-32 at home to Las Vegas last month, prompting the Raiders to take a celebratory victory lap around Arrowhead Stadium in their buses.

Kansas City also didn't worry when Mahomes threw only his second interception of the season late in the first half of the rematch.

And when Derek Carr found Witten for the Raiders' go-ahead score, Mahomes said he knew what would happen next.

"We're going to score," Mahomes said. "I just didn't know if it was going to be overtime, or we were going to win it."

The Chiefs didn't need a tying field goal: They only needed 75 seconds to march 75 yards, with Mahomes going 6 of 7 on the drive.

Kelce, who caught eight passes for 127 yards, slipped free of Las Vegas' safeties for the easy winning catch and then went back to the sideline to give a joking shoulder massage to Reid. The Chiefs can laugh at fourth-quarter tension, thanks to the man behind center.

"He turns it up when it matters the most, and he was out there showing out tonight," Kelce said about Mahomes.

Carr passed for 275 yards and three touchdowns, but the Raiders couldn't match their offensive excellence in Kansas City last month. The Chiefs have won five straight since that defeat, and the Raiders made just enough minor mistakes to prevent them from getting out of reach of Mahomes' comeback ability.

"It's as good as you can play," Raiders coach Jon Gruden said of Carr. "He had four or five balls that were magnificent throws that we could have caught that we didn't make the play on. He played tremendous tonight. He played almost flawless."

The Raiders led 24-21 on Darren Waller's TD catch on the first play of the fourth quarter, but Mahomes led a 91-yard scoring drive midway through the period capped by Le'Veon Bell's first TD for Kansas City on a 6-yard pitch.

Carr and the Raiders replied with a crisp drive ending on Witten's 1-yard catch just inside the goal line for his second TD with the Raiders and the 74th of his career.

"You're really excited," Carr said. "(But) they're a real good offense, too. They go down the field, they score. The wave, the range of emotion — you try your best to stay even-keeled. You try your best not to get frustrated."

That's not easy when your counterpart is Mahomes.

Daniel Sorensen picked off a heave to midfield by Carr with 19 seconds left, and the Chiefs knelt out their 18th win in the last 19 games since Nov. 10, 2019.

Nelson Agholor caught a TD pass and Josh Jacobs rushed for a score for the Raiders, who dropped to 2-3 at Allegiant Stadium in their new hometown.

Tyreek Hill caught an early touchdown pass for the Chiefs, and Edwards-Helaire rushed for 69 yards and two TDs in a fierce rivalry game. These teams' mutual distaste was obvious, with plenty of confrontations and yapping after whistles. Kelce and Johnathan Abram had particularly active mouths.

"The rivalry between the Raiders and the Chiefs, I think, is a great thing for football," said Reid, who improved to 19-3 after his bye week. "It's great to be a part of it. I look forward to more future challenges like the ones they presented against us."

The teams traded touchdown drives on the opening four possessions. Agholor made an exceptional toe-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 36 of 70

tap 17-yard TD catch to end the first quarter, but Edwards-Helaire's first TD evened it at 14.

RARE PICK

Mahomes drove the Chiefs deep into Raiders territory right before halftime, but Trayvon Mullen snared a pass intended for Demarcus Robinson at the Raiders 3 to preserve Vegas' 17-14 lead. Mahomes had matched Drew Brees' NFL record by throwing 26 touchdown passes this season before his second interception.

SHORT-HANDED

Las Vegas' defense hung in against the high-powered Chiefs despite having nine players on the reserve/COVID-19 list earlier this week, essentially preventing the defense from practicing for its toughest opponent. Six of those players returned for the game, but the Raiders still played without starters Cory Littleton and Clelin Ferrell.

INJURIES

Chiefs: WR Byron Pringle hurt his ankle, but returned to the game.

Raiders: RT Sam Young missed the game with a knee injury, forcing Vegas to use its seventh offensive line combination in 10 games. ... DL David Irving injured his knee.

UP NEXT

Chiefs: Visit the Tampa Bay Buccaneers next Sunday.

Raiders: Visit the Atlanta Falcons next Sunday.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Trump aims to box in Biden abroad, but it may not work

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — On its way out the door, the Trump administration is enacting new rules, regulations and orders that it hopes will box in President-elect Joe Biden's administration on numerous foreign policy matters and cement President Donald Trump's "America First" legacy in international affairs.

Yet, the push may not work, as many of these decisions can be withdrawn or significantly amended by the incoming president when he takes office on Jan. 20.

In recent weeks, the White House, State Department and other agencies have been working overtime to produce new policy pronouncements on Iran, Israel, China and elsewhere that aim to lock in Trump's vision for the world. Some have attracted significant attention while others have flown largely under the radar.

And, while Biden could reverse many of them with a stroke of the pen, some will demand the time and attention of his administration when it comes into power with a host of other priorities that perhaps need more urgent attention.

The most recent of these moves took place this past week as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made what may be his last visit to Israel as secretary of state and delivered two announcements in support of Israel's claims to territory claimed by the Palestinians.

Biden's team has remained silent about these announcements, but Biden has made clear he supports few, if any, of them and will reverse many as he intends to return to a more traditional policy toward Israel and the Palestinians.

The Trump administration's determined efforts to thwart potential Biden policy reversals actually began months earlier, half a world away from the Jewish state, with China, even before the former vice president was formally declared the Democratic Party's presidential nominee.

As opinion polls started to show Biden as a clear favorite to beat Trump in November, the administration began to move even as the president maintained a public face of defiance and absolute confidence in his reelection.

Some officials point to a July 13 declaration from Pompeo that the United States would now reject virtually all of China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, a 180-degree shift from previous administrations' positions that all such claims should be handled by arbitration.

While many of Trump's foreign policy decisions from early on have been designed to blow up the previous

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 37 of 70

administration's foreign policy achievements — withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Climate Accord and the Trans Pacific Partnership on trade — the South China Sea decision was the first to be linked by administration officials to the possibility that Biden might be the next president.

One administration official said at the time that decisions made after that would all be taken with an eye toward Biden becoming president. Thus, the fear that Trump might be a one-term president began to take hold in July and has been followed by an acceleration of pronouncements aimed mainly at thwarting any reversal by Biden.

A look at some of those moves:

ISRAEL

On Thursday, before making an unprecedented trip to an Israeli settlement in the West Bank, Pompeo announced that the U.S. would henceforth consider "antisemitic" the groups that advocate for Palestinian rights by supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel.

He also announced a change in import labeling rules that will require products made in settlements to be identified as "Made in Israel." The product labeling will take some time to take effect and, as yet, no groups have been hit with the antisemitic designation. But, even if they are implemented, Biden could reverse them on Day One.

Those moves followed numerous other Israel-friendly steps the administration has taken since it came to office. They include recognizing Jerusalem as the capital, moving the U.S. Embassy there from Tel Aviv, and cutting off aid to the Palestinian Authority and the U.N. refugee agency that works with Palestinians. While Biden is unlikely to move the embassy back to Tel Aviv, the other measures can be reversed quickly.

IRAN

Pompeo and other officials have spoken of a new push for sanctions against Iran, but the fact is that the administration has been ramping up such penalties since Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal two years ago. New sanctions could potentially target supporters of Iranian-backed militia in Iraq and Afghanistan along with the Shiite Houthi movement in Yemen, which has been involved in a disastrous war with the country's internationally recognized government.

Biden has spoken of wanting to rejoin the nuclear accord, and Iranian officials have said they would be willing to come back into compliance with the accord if he does. Biden could eliminate many of the Trump administration's reimposed sanctions by executive order, but it remains unclear how high a priority it will be for him.

BROADER MIDDLE EAST

While the withdrawal of significant numbers of U.S. forces from Afghanistan and Iraq — bringing troop levels down to 2,500 in each country — is a clear indication of Trump's intentions, Biden's approach remains less certain. The withdrawals could be delayed or slow-rolled by the Pentagon, and it remains unclear how the State Department will handle staffing at its embassies in Baghdad and Kabul, both of which are dependent on U.S. military support.

Pompeo has threatened to close the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad unless rocket attacks by Iranian-backed militias against the area in which it's located are halted. However, despite the troop withdrawal determination last week, there has been no announcement about the embassy's status.

CHINA

Although the administration's most strident actions against China began more than a year ago, they have gained momentum since March, when Trump determined that he would at once blame China for the spread of the novel coronavirus and accuse Biden of being soft on Beijing.

Since then, the administration has steadily ramped up sanctions against China over Taiwan, Tibet, trade, Hong Kong and the South China Sea. It has also moved against the Chinese telecoms giant Huawei and sought restrictions on Chinese social media applications like TikTok and WeChat.

Last week, the State Department's policy planning office released a 70-page China policy strategy document. While it contains little in the way of immediate policy recommendations, it advocates for increased support and cooperation with Taiwan. Indeed, as the document was released, U.S. officials were meeting

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 38 of 70

with Taiwanese counterparts in Washington to discuss economic cooperation.

RUSSIA

Sunday marked the formal withdrawal of the U.S. from the "Open Skies Treaty" with Russia, which allowed each country overflight rights to inspect military facilities. The withdrawal, six months after the U.S. notified the Russians of its intent, leaves only one arms-control pact still in force between the former Cold War foes — the New START treaty, which limits the number of nuclear warheads each may have. That treaty will expire in February.

The Trump administration had said it wasn't interested in extending the New START treaty unless China also joined, something Beijing has rejected. In recent weeks, however, the administration has eased its stance and said it's willing to consider an extension. As the transition to the Biden administration approaches, those negotiations remain a work in progress.

Swift wins top prize at AMAs, says she's re-recording music

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Taylor Swift won her third consecutive artist of the year prize at the American Music Awards, but she missed the show for a good reason: She said she's busy re-recording her early music after her catalog was sold.

In a video that aired during Sunday's awards show, the pop star said "the reason I'm not there tonight is I'm actually re-recording all of my old music in the studio where we originally recorded it. So it's been amazing. And I can't wait for you to hear it."

Last year music manager Scooter Braun — who manages Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande — announced that his Ithaca Holdings company had acquired Big Machine Label Group, the home to Swift's first six albums. This month Braun said he has sold the master rights to Swift's first six albums to an investment company; Swift acknowledged the sale on social media and said she would not work with the new buyers because Braun was still involved.

Instead, she headed back to the studio.

Swift beat out Bieber, Post Malone and Roddy Ricch to win the top award. She also won favorite music video and favorite pop/rock female artist, winning three honors and tying Bieber, Dan + Shay and the Weeknd for most wins Sunday.

The Weeknd lost artist of the year, but he still kicked off his all-star week as a big winner: Days before he's expected to land multiple Grammy nominations, he won favorite soul/R&B male artist, favorite soul/R&B album for "After Hours" and favorite soul/R&B song for "Heartless" two days before the 2021 Grammy nominations are announced.

"The last time I received this award it was given to me by the late, great Prince," he said after winning favorite soul/R&B album. "And, you know, he's the reason I get to constantly challenge the genre of R&B and yeah, I'd like to dedicate this to him."

The Weeknd didn't break character throughout the three-hour show with his gauze-wrapped face, which matched the vibe of his recent album and music videos where he appears blooded and bruised. He accepted his awards and performed with his face wrapped in gauze.

Kenny G joined the Weeknd for his performance, playing the sax in downtown Los Angeles as the Weeknd walked across a bridge singing "In Your Eyes." He finished the performance singing "Save Your Tears."

The Weeknd was one of several artists who appeared live at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles for the fan-voted awards show. Others recently taped their performances because of the coronavirus pandemic, though host Taraji P. Henson — who appeared live from the venue — said the few audience members sitting in the mezzanine practiced social distancing, wore masks and were tested for the virus.

Henson joked that A-list celebrities were in the audience, including Beyoncé, though cardboard cut-out of the singer, Jay-Z and other stars appeared in seats.

But a good number of chart-toppers were in the building. Breakthrough singer-rapper Doja Cat performed and won new artist of the year and favorite soul/R&B female artist. Grammy-winning country duo

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 39 of 70

Dan + Shay beautifully performed "I Should Probably Go to Bed" and won favorite country duo or group, collaboration of the year and favorite country song for "10,000 Hours," the latter two shared with Bieber. And Megan Thee Stallion — won favorite rap/hip-hop songs for "WAP" with Cardi B — performed "Body" from her recently released debut album "Good News."

Bieber and Shawn Mendes kicked off the AMAs with a pre-taped performance of their new duet "Monster," marking the first time they performed the song together. It began with a stripped-down Bieber singing his recent hit "Lonely," with songwriter-producer Benny Blanco on piano, and "Holy," where background dancers wearing masks joined him.

Mendes, strumming his guitar, then appeared for "Monster," which featured the twentysomethings singing lyrics about fame and growing up as celebrities who attracted massive public attention. Mendes later sang his song "Wonder" during the show, which aired on ABC.

Katy Perry, in her first performance since giving birth to her first child, gave a strong performance of the emotional and hopeful song "Only Love," which featured a surprise guest appearance from Darius Rucker, who sang and played guitar. With flaming red lights glaring behind her, Billie Eilish sang her new song "Therefore I Am," as her brother-songwriter-producer Finneas backed her on guitar. Jennifer Lopez and Maluma teamed up to perform their new songs "Pa' Ti" and "Lonely" from the film "Marry Me," which both of them star in, while Dua Lipa — who won favorite pop/rock song — floated in the air during her performance of "Levitating."

24kGoldn and Iann Dior — who currently have the country's No. 1 song with the smash hit "Mood," also performed. The multi-genre track is the rare song that has reached No. 1 on both the rap and rock charts.

Other performers included BTS, Lewis Capaldi, Machine Gun Kelly, Lil Baby, Bell Biv DeVoe and Nelly, who performed hits from his diamond-certified debut album "Country Grammar," which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

This year the AMAs, which typically awards one Latin honor, launched more categories in the genre. Becky G — who burst on the music scene in 2014 with the pop hit "Shower" but has recently had success singing in Spanish and launching hits on the Latin charts — won favorite Latin female artist.

She used her speech to honor immigrant families.

"I proudly wave both flags, Mexican and American. And like many, many children and grandchildren of immigrants, no matter where they're from, we have learned from the ones before us what sacrifice and hard work looks like," she said. "And I dedicate this award to all of our immigrant workers in this pandemic; the students and immigrant families. It's because of my family, my abuelitos, that I stand here today."

Nominees for the AMAs were based on streaming, album and digital sales, radio airplay and social activity, and reflect the time period of Sept. 27, 2019, through Sept. 24, 2020.

Jury duty? No thanks, say many, forcing trials to be delayed

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Jury duty notices have set Nicholas Philbrook's home on edge with worries about him contracting the coronavirus and passing it on to his father-in-law, a cancer survivor with diabetes in his mid-70s who is at higher risk of developing serious complications from COVID-19.

Philbrook and his wife, Heather Schmidt, of Camarillo, California, have been trying to convince court officials that he should be excused from jury duty because her father lives with them. But court officials told him that is not a valid reason and he must appear in court early next month.

"My main concern is you still have to go into a building, you still have to be around a set number of people," said Philbrook, 39, a marketing company editor. "In an enclosed space, how safe are you? It just doesn't feel like a right time still to be doing that kind of stuff on a normal basis."

People across the country have similar concerns amid resurgences of the coronavirus, a fact that has derailed plans to resume jury trials in many courthouses for the first time since the pandemic started.

Within the past month, courts in Hartford, Connecticut, San Diego and Norfolk, Virginia, have had to delay jury selection for trials because too few people responded to jury duty summonses. The non-response

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 40 of 70

rates are much higher now than they were before the pandemic, court officials say.

Judges in New York City, Indiana, Colorado and Missouri declared mistrials recently because people connected to the trials either tested positive for the virus or had symptoms.

"What the real question boils down to are people willing to show up to that court and sit in a jury trial?" said Bill Raftery, a senior analyst with the National Center for State Courts. "Many courts have been responsive to jurors who have said that they're not comfortable with coming to court and doing jury duty and therefore offering deferrals simply because of concerns over COVID."

Also this month, state court systems in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey and courts in Denver, Colorado, were among those to suspend all jury trials because of rising virus rates. On Friday, federal officials announced that about two dozen U.S. district courts across the country have suspended jury trials and grand jury proceedings because of virus outbreaks and too few people showing up for jury duty.

Courts are under pressure to resume trials because of the case backlogs piling up during the pandemic.

A few courts have held trials in person and by video conference. Although video conferences may appear to be the best bet, many criminal defense lawyers oppose them because it's harder to determine witness credibility and to see if jurors are paying attention, said Christopher Adams, a lawyer in Charleston, South Carolina, and president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

"For almost everybody, there is no compelling need for trials to go forward during the pandemic," he said, adding that most courts are not holding jury trials at the moment.

Adams said another concern is how representative juries would be if trials went ahead — the virus' impact and the level of concern about it across different demographics, such as Black, Latino and elderly populations that are dying at higher rates, could affect who feels safe to serve jury duty.

"What we can't allow is to have trials where there's not a fair cross section of the community represented," he said.

But many criminal defense lawyers are pointing to a major issue with not holding trials — defendants who are detained while awaiting trial. Although jails and prisons across the country have released thousands of low-risk inmates because of concerns about the virus, many people remain locked up in pretrial detention.

A case in federal court in Hartford, Connecticut, offers a glimpse of how the virus can upend proceedings.

In October, 150 people were summoned for jury duty for the trial of Amber Foley, who is fighting child pornography charges and demanding her constitutional right to a speedy trial. It would be the first criminal trial in Connecticut, in state or federal court, since the pandemic began.

Only about half the potential jurors showed up and many others were excused for various reasons including concerns about COVID-19. Only 19 people were left, short of the 31 people estimated to be needed to pick a jury of 12 and one alternate juror.

And then, two court security officers tested positive for the virus, forcing the temporary closure of the courthouse for cleaning and prompting Judge Vanessa Bryant's law clerk to go into isolation and get tested because of contact with the officers.

Bryant decided last week to postpone Foley's jury selection until mid-January. Like judges in other parts of the country, she ruled the interests of public health outweigh those of a speedy trial.

"Despite every effort being made by the Court, the Court must reluctantly conclude that it is unable to empanel a representative jury from the 200 prospective jurors summoned without jeopardizing the safety of all trial participants," Bryant wrote in a ruling.

Federal officials have designated one courtroom for jury trials in each of the three federal courthouses in Connecticut, with an entire second courtroom set aside for jurors to gather for breaks and deliberations. Some plexiglass has been installed, air circulation systems have been improved and seating arrangements have been reconfigured for social distancing. Masks are required.

Foley has been free on bail awaiting trial. Her lawyer, Todd Bussert, argued in court documents that the coronavirus does not trump Foley's speedy trial rights and other courts around the country have held trials during the pandemic. He also noted he has two children attending in-person classes in public schools.

"That schools can operate and remain open ... even when members of their communities test positive for COVID-19 ... belies any hyperbolic assertion seeking to abridge defendants' rights," he wrote.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 41 of 70

In San Diego, a criminal case had to be postponed last month because too few people showed up for jury duty. Officials twice summoned 900 people, but only about 40 people showed up each time, KGTV reported.

In Norfolk, Virginia, efforts to resume jury trials during the pandemic stalled recently because roughly nine out of 10 possible jurors weren't showing up in court, The Virginian-Pilot reported.

Failure to report to jury duty is a crime in most places. Punishment can include fines and, in some cases, short jail sentences. Officials in some court systems have said they were considering increasing enforcement to improve response rates.

Philbrook, the California man, said he and his wife are trying to get a letter from his father-in-law's doctor saying his health could be put in jeopardy if Philbrook has to serve jury duty. Philbrook also is concerned for his own health.

"You just never know with this virus. It seems to not care," he said. "It doesn't seem to care how healthy you are or unhealthy you are. You hear about healthy people getting it really badly. That bothers me. I feel I'm healthy. I feel like, OK, if I get it, I should be OK, but I don't actually know."

Trump's legal team cried vote fraud, but courts found none

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — As they frantically searched for ways to salvage President Donald Trump's failed reelection bid, his campaign pursued a dizzying game of legal hopscotch across six states that centered on the biggest prize of all: Pennsylvania.

The strategy may have played well in front of television cameras and on talk radio to Trump's supporters. But it has proved a disaster in court, where judges uniformly rejected their claims of vote fraud and found the campaign's legal work amateurish.

In a scathing ruling late Saturday, U.S. District Judge Matthew Brann — a Republican and Federalist Society member in central Pennsylvania — compared the campaign's legal arguments to "Frankenstein's Monster," concluding that Trump's team offered only "speculative accusations," not proof of rampant corruption.

The campaign on Sunday filed notice it would appeal the decision to the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a day before the state's 67 counties are set to certify their results and send them to state officials. And they asked Sunday night for an expedited hearing Wednesday as they seek to amend the Pennsylvania lawsuit that Brann dismissed.

Trump's efforts in Pennsylvania show how far he is willing to push baseless theories of widespread voter fraud, even as the legal doors close on his attempts to have courts do what voters would not do on Election Day and deliver him a second term.

The effort is being led by Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer, who descended on the state the Saturday after the Nov. 3 election as the count dragged on and the president played golf. Summoning reporters to a scruffy, far-flung corner of Philadelphia on Nov. 7, he held forth at a site that would soon become legendary: Four Seasons Total Landscaping.

The 11:30 a.m. news conference was doomed from the start.

Only minutes earlier, news outlets had started calling the presidential contest for Democrat Joe Biden. The race was over.

Just heating up was Trump's plan to subvert the election through litigation and howls of fraud — the same tactic he had used to stave off losses in the business world. And it would soon spread far beyond Pennsylvania.

"Some of the ballots looked suspicious," Giuliani, 76, said of the vote count in Philadelphia as he stood behind a chain link fence, next to a sex shop. He maligned the city as being run by a "decrepit Democratic machine."

"Those mail-in ballots could have been written the day before, by the Democratic Party hacks that were all over the convention center," Giuliani said. He promised to file a new round of lawsuits. He rambled.

"This is a very, very strong case," he asserted.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 42 of 70

Justin Levitt, a Loyola Law School professor who specializes in election law, called the Trump lawsuits dangerous.

"It is a sideshow, but it's a harmful sideshow," Levitt said. "It's a toxic sideshow. The continuing baseless, evidence-free claims of alternative facts are actually having an effect on a substantial number of Americans. They are creating the conditions for elections not to work in the future."

Not a single court has found merit in the core legal claims, but that did not stop Trump's team from firing off nearly two dozen legal challenges to Biden's victory in Pennsylvania, including an early morning suit on Election Day filed by a once-imprisoned lawyer.

The president's lawyers fought the three-day grace period for mail-in ballots to arrive. They complained they weren't being let in to observe the vote count. They said Democratic counties unfairly let voters fix mistakes on their ballot envelopes. Everywhere they turned, they said, they sniffed fraud.

"I felt insidious fraud going on," Philadelphia poll watcher Lisette Tarragano said when Giuliani called her to the microphone at the landscaping company.

In fact, a Republican runs the city's election board, and has said his office got death threats as Trump's rants about the election intensified. No judges ever found any evidence of election fraud in Pennsylvania or any other state where the campaign sued — not in Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona, Nevada or Georgia.

Instead, Trump lawyers found themselves backpedaling when pressed in court for admissible evidence, or dropping out when they were accused of helping derail the democratic process.

"I am asking you as a member of the bar of this court, are people representing the Donald J. Trump for president (campaign) ... in that room?" U.S. District Judge Paul Diamond asked at an after-hours hearing on Nov. 5, when Republicans asked him to stop the vote count in Philadelphia over their alleged banishment.

"There's a nonzero number of people in the room," lawyer Jerome Marcus replied.

The count continued in Philadelphia. The Trump losses kept coming. By Friday, Nov. 6, when a state appeals court rejected a Republican complaint over provisional ballots and a Philadelphia judge refused to throw out 8,300 mail-in ballots they challenged, Biden was up by about 27,000 votes.

Nationally, the race had not yet been called. But it was becoming clear that a Biden win in Pennsylvania, with its 20 electoral votes, was imminent.

When it came, Trump quickly pivoted to litigation. It did not go well.

A U.S. appeals court found Pennsylvania's three-day extension for mail-in ballots laudatory, given the disruption and mail delays cause by the pandemic. Judges in Michigan and Arizona, finding no evidence of fraud, refused to block the certification of county vote tallies. Law firms representing the campaign started to come under fire and withdrew.

That left Giuliani, who had not argued a case in court for three decades, in charge of the effort to overturn the election.

"You can say a lot at a driveway (news conference). ... When you go to court, you can't," said lawyer Mark Aronchick, who represented election officials in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and elsewhere in several of the Pennsylvania suits. "I don't really pay attention to the chatter until I see a legal brief."

On Tuesday, Giuliani stepped into the courtroom. He was a late addition to the docket after election lawyers from Porter Wright Morris & Arthur had bowed out over the previous weekend. He had an entourage in tow, a show of force that had everything but a compelling legal argument.

Giuliani asked Brann to hold up the certification of the state's 6.8 million ballots over two Republican voters whose mail-in ballots were tossed over technical errors.

"I sat dumbfounded listening," said Aronchick, a seasoned trial lawyer.

"We were ready to argue the one count. Instead, he treated us to an even more expanded version of his Total Landscaping press conference," Aronchick said. "It didn't bear any relationship to the actual case."

Giuliani, admired by some for his tough talk as Manhattan's top prosecutor and his leadership as New York City's mayor during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, struggled to answer even basic legal questions.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 43 of 70

But he waxed on about a supposed conspiracy to rig the state election.

"The best description of this situation is widespread, nationwide voter fraud," Giuliani argued. Under questioning, though, he acknowledged their complaint no longer included a fraud claim.

And then, just as it had at Four Seasons, reality came crashing down on him, when news broke in the courtroom that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court had rejected the campaign's appeal over observer access in Philadelphia. It was one of the campaign's last remaining claims.

Even the dissent was crushing.

"The notion that presumptively valid ballots cast by the Pennsylvania electorate would be disregarded based on isolated procedural irregularities that have been redressed ... is misguided," Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor wrote for the minority in the 5-2 decision.

Brann, who sits in Williamsport, let the federal court hearing drag on past the dinner hour, and gave both sides time to file additional motions. The campaign filings were replete with typos, spelling mistakes and even an errant reference to a "Second Amendment Complaint" instead of a second amended complaint.

The campaign took the opportunity to answer one of the more puzzling questions that its election challenge raised: It only wanted the presidential election results set aside, not votes on the same ballots for other offices. The briefs were filed by Giuliani and co-counsel Marc Scaringi, a local conservative talk radio host who, before he was hired, had questioned the point of the Trump litigation, saying "it will not reverse this election."

Aronchick balked at the campaign's core premise that local election workers — perhaps working for the Mafia, as Giuliani suggested — had plotted to spoil Trump's win.

"You're going to suggest part of them are in a conspiracy? How does that work?" Aronchick asked. "Who? Where? When? How?"

Brann, in his ruling, said he expected the campaign to present formidable evidence of rampant corruption as it sought to nullify millions of votes. Instead, he said, the campaign presented "strained legal arguments without merit and speculative accusations."

The 3rd Circuit, based in Philadelphia, may have already tipped its hand. In its Nov. 13 ruling, the appeals court called it "indisputable in our democratic process: that the lawfully cast vote of every citizen must count."

Biden's lead in the state has expanded to more than 80,000 votes.

"Our system depends on the possibility that you might lose a fair contest. If that possibility doesn't exist, you don't have a democracy," said Levitt, the law school professor. "There are countries that run like that. It just doesn't describe America."

Follow Maryclaire Dale on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Maryclairedale>

The Latest: Cowboys win, NFC East teams all have 3 wins

By The Associated Press undefined

The Latest on Week 11 in the NFL (all times EST):

7:35 p.m.

Somehow, the NFC East race has become even tighter and weirder.

The Dallas Cowboys beat the Minnesota Vikings 31-28 on Sunday to earn their third win of the season. Andy Dalton threw three touchdown passes. Elsewhere in the division, the Eagles lost, Washington won and the New York Giants are off this week.

That means the NFC East leader is still Philadelphia at 3-6-1. The Giants, Cowboys and Washington are all right behind with a 3-7 record.

7:20 p.m.

Rookie quarterback Tua Tagovailoa is no longer undefeated.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 44 of 70

The Denver Broncos beat the Miami Dolphins 20-13 on Sunday, denying Tagovailoa a fourth straight victory to start his career.

The Broncos not only prevented Tagovailoa from becoming just the second rookie in the last 40 years to win his first four starts but they sacked him a half-dozen times and knocked him from the game in the fourth quarter.

The Dolphins didn't announce an injury to Tagovailoa before game's end, but the lefty walked gingerly to the sideline after his final sack. Ryan Fitzpatrick closed the game for the Dolphins at quarterback.

6:45 p.m.

Adam Thielen's second touchdown gave the Minnesota Vikings a brief lead on the Dallas Cowboys early in the fourth quarter, before the Cowboys went back ahead 24-21.

Thielen's first score was a one-handed, falling-down grab in the back corner of the end zone as he was being held by Cowboys cornerback Anthony Brown.

Thielen leads the NFL with 11 touchdown receptions this year. The single-season Vikings record is 17, shared by Cris Carter (1995) and Randy Moss (1998 and 2003).

— Dave Campbell reporting from Minneapolis

6 p.m.

Aaron Rodgers threw three touchdown passes in the first half to give Green Bay a 28-14 halftime lead over Indianapolis in a strange but entertaining game.

The Packers and Colts had two turnovers each, with Rodgers taking advantage of Indy's second give-away by leading the Packers to two scores in less than 2 1/2 minutes. That gave Green Bay a 21-7 lead.

Rodgers also drew a 51-yard pass interference penalty against Indianapolis cornerback Rock Ya-Sin with 20 seconds left in the first half. The penalty moved the ball to the Colts 4-yard line and Rodgers hooked up with Jamaal Williams for a touchdown pass on the next play.

5:45 p.m.

Justin Herbert had the best first half by a rookie quarterback since at least 1991 to give the Los Angeles Chargers a 24-6 lead over the New York Jets at halftime.

Herbert completed 23 of 31 passes for 277 yards and two touchdowns. The completions, attempts and yards are the most by a rookie QB in the last 30 years.

His touchdown passes to Mike Williams and Hunter Henry also extended his streak of multiple touchdown games to seven, which is also a rookie record.

— Joe Reedy reporting in Inglewood, Calif.

5:40 p.m.

The winless New York Jets don't look much closer to getting that elusive victory.

The Los Angeles Chargers were beating the Jets 24-6 at halftime on Sunday. The Chargers have struggled this season with a 2-7 record but put up big passing numbers against New York's defense. Rookie quarterback Justin Herbert is 23 of 31 passing for 277 yards and two touchdowns.

The Jets, who would fall to 0-10 if they lose, have just 82 total yards of offense. Joe Flacco is 3 of 8 passing for 30 yards and one interception.

5:30 p.m.

Some football fans are making \$9 donations to Joe Burrow's Hunger Relief Fund for southeast Ohio after the quarterback's knee injury on Sunday.

The Cincinnati Bengals rookie, who wears No. 9, was hurt in the third quarter of the team's 20-9 loss to Washington and had to be carted off the field. After the game, he posted on Twitter: "Thanks for all the love. Can't get rid of me that easy. See ya next year."

Burrow has lots of fans in Cincinnati and also in Louisiana, where he led LSU to a national championship

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 45 of 70

during his final college season.

5 p.m.

Packers center Corey Linsley has left the game with a back injury and his return is questionable.

Green Bay adapted by moving left guard Elgton Jenkins to center and plugging rookie Jon Runyan in at left guard. Linsley was charged with a fumble on a botched snap on the Packers' opening possession.

4:50 p.m.

Justin Herbert tied George Ratterman for the fourth fastest to reach 20 career touchdown passes during the second quarter of the Los Angeles' Chargers game against the New York Jets.

Herbert connected with Mike Williams for a 39-yard score to extend the Chargers' lead to 14-6. Williams caught it at the Jets' 27 and shook off two New York defenders before scoring.

Patrick Mahomes, Deshaun Watson and Kurt Warner achieved the milestone in eight games. Herbert is playing his ninth game.

-- Joe Reedy reporting from Inglewood, California

4:35 p.m.

When quarterback Philip Rivers took the Indianapolis Colts' first snap Sunday, he made his 234th consecutive start, tying Eli Manning for the 10th longest streak in league history.

Manning spent his entire 16-year career with the New York Giants after being drafted No. 1 overall by the San Diego Chargers in 2004. Rivers was the fourth overall pick that year but was traded to San Diego for Manning.

Rivers' latest milestone also came at Lucas Oil Stadium, where Peyton Manning starred. Peyton Manning, the top draft pick in 1998, started 227 consecutive games before missing the entire 2011 season with Indy because of a neck injury.

4:20 p.m.

Denver's Drew Lock got the start against the Dolphins on Sunday after dealing with bruised ribs and a strained oblique.

But the quarterback threw an interception on his second pass. Xavien Howard stepped in front of Tim Patrick and intercepted the ball, giving the Dolphins possession at the Denver 22.

It was the 11th interception this season by Lock and followed a four-interception day at Las Vegas last week.

— Arnie Stapleton reporting from Denver.

4:15 p.m.

The Pittsburgh Steelers are still undefeated after a dominant 27-3 win over the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The Steelers — who now have a 10-0 record — fell into an early 3-0 hole in the first quarter but scored 27 unanswered points to cruise to the win. Pittsburgh's Ben Roethlisberger completed 32 of 46 passes for 267 yards, two touchdowns and an interception.

4 p.m.

It appears that Cincinnati quarterback Joe Burrow's rookie season is done six games early.

Burrow was carted off the field early in the third quarter with a left knee injury. After the game, he posted on Twitter: "Thanks for all the love. Can't get rid of me that easy. See ya next year."

Teammates and opponents ran over to offer their support to Burrow after the injury. The No. 1 overall pick's day ended 22 of 34 passing for 203 yards and a touchdown. Washington beat Cincinnati 20-9.

Burrow has thrown for 2,688 yards, 13 touchdowns and five interceptions this season.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 46 of 70

3:25 p.m.

Baltimore's Dez Bryant has three receptions for 12 yards in the third quarter, his first catches in an NFL game since Dec. 31, 2017 with Dallas.

The 32-year-old Bryant closed his career with the Cowboys after the 2017 season, tore his Achilles tendon in 2018 and was inactive last season. The 2014 All-Pro signed with Baltimore earlier this season. He played in one game without a catch before being activated from the practice squad Saturday.

3:10 p.m.

Joe Burrow has been ruled out for the rest of the Cincinnati Bengals' game at Washington with a left knee injury.

Burrow got hurt early in the third quarter when he was hit high by Montez Sweat and low by Jonathan Allen after throwing a pass. Burrow's left leg bent the wrong direction, and the No. 1 pick was unable to put any weight on it as he was helped onto a cart.

Teammates and opponents ran over to offer their support to Burrow after the injury. His day ended 22 of 34 passing for 203 yards and a touchdown.

Cincinnati led 9-7 when Burrow went down. After Alex Smith led Washington on a touchdown drive to take a 14-9 lead, Ryan Finley entered at quarterback for the Bengals.

— Stephen Whyno reporting.

3 p.m.

No. 1 pick Joe Burrow has left the Cincinnati Bengals' game at Washington with a left leg injury.

Burrow was unable to put any weight on his left leg as he was helped onto a cart and driven off the field after the play. Washington's Jonathan Allen hit Burrow after he let go of a pass early in the third quarter.

Burrow had completed 22 of 34 passes for 203 yards and a touchdown before the injury. The Bengals lead Washington 9-7 in the third quarter.

— Stephen Whyno reporting

3 p.m.

Houston receivers Kenny Stills and Randall Cobb and New England running back Rex Burkhead were all injured on Sunday.

Stills injured a leg in the first half and Cobb injured a foot on a touchdown catch in the first quarter.

Burkhead injured a knee on a run early in the third quarter. Burkhead remained on the ground for several minutes while he was attended to by trainers and medical personnel. He was eventually helped to his feet and limped to the sideline with the help of two people and the team announced he was out soon after that.

— Kristie Rieken reporting from Houston

2:35 p.m.

The Pittsburgh Steelers are well on their way to a 10-0 start after taking a 17-3 halftime lead over the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The undefeated Steelers fell into a 3-0 hole in the first quarter but responded with 17 unanswered points in the second. Ben Roethlisberger completed 17 of 25 passes for 180 yards and a touchdown.

The Steelers had a chance to pad their lead, but Big Ben threw an interception in the end zone on the final play of the first half.

Jacksonville, which has lost eight in a row, might be on the verge of a quarterback change. Rookie Jake Luton is 7 of 18 for 87 yards, with consecutive interceptions on his last two drives. Adding in how he finished last week's loss at Green Bay, Luton has misfired on 17 of his last 25 passes.

Gardner Minshew is inactive, so if Jacksonville does make a change it would be to Mike Glennon.

Around the league, the Ravens had a 14-10 halftime lead over the Titans. Both teams have a 6-3 record.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 47 of 70

The Saints scored a touchdown late in the second quarter to take a 10-9 lead over the Falcons. Taysom Hill, who is filling in for the injured Drew Brees, has completed 9 of 13 passes for 127 yards for New Orleans.

2 p.m.

A fumble on a fourth-and-goal run by No. 1 pick Joe Burrow forced by No. 2 pick Chase Young gave Washington the ball at its own 20 after a lengthy review.

Burrow, the Cincinnati Bengals rookie quarterback, fumbled into the end zone, and replay showed Washington's Kamren Curl didn't possess the ball before fumbling again. Instead of a safety or a field goal attempt for the Bengals, Washington got possession up 7-0.

1:05 p.m.

The Carolina Panthers have announced that P.J. Walker will make his first NFL start at quarterback today against the Detroit Lions in place of Teddy Bridgewater, who is inactive with a knee injury.

Walker, who was one of the stars of the XFL before it shut down, has thrown eight passes this season. Panthers coach Matt Rhule has a history with Walker, who played for him at Temple.

Walker gets the start over former third round draft pick Will Grier.

1 p.m.

The Denver Broncos are playing their last home game in front of fans today when they host the Miami Dolphins.

The Broncos are allowing 5,700 fans into the game but because of a surge in COVID-19 cases, they'll play their last three games in an empty stadium.

The coronavirus is also keeping Denver defensive end Shelby Harris sidelined for a third consecutive week and defensive coordinator Ed Donatell is missing his fourth game as he recovers from the virus that hospitalized him last week.

— Arnie Stapleton reporting from Denver.

12:50 p.m.

From stars such as Cleveland's Myles Garrett to practice squad players and coaches, many NFL teams are missing manpower because of COVID-19 protocols in Week 11.

About 20 players and coaches are expected to miss Sunday's first batch of NFL games because they're on the COVID-19/reserve list. The 24-year-old Garrett is the biggest name: The defensive end leads the NFL with 9 1/2 sacks but won't be available for the team's game against Philadelphia on Sunday.

The undefeated Pittsburgh Steelers will be without tight end Vance McDonald and rookie offensive lineman Kevin Dotson for their game against Jacksonville.

The roster juggling isn't limited to the players on the field. Both Philadelphia and Cincinnati each won't have three assistant coaches for Sunday's games.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

US Rhodes Scholars chosen virtually for the 1st time

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

The U.S. Rhodes Scholars for 2021 were elected virtually this year for the first time as the coronavirus pandemic swept across the globe, though that didn't extinguish enthusiasm among the 32 students who won scholarships to Oxford University.

The Rhodes Trust announced the winners early Sunday, which include 22 students of color. Ten are Black, which ties the record for the most Black students elected in a single year.

Shera Avi-Yonah, a 22-year-old Harvard University student, said she found out about her win Saturday night while she was sitting in her parents' basement in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 48 of 70

"A wave of gratitude washed over me," Avi-Yonah said, adding that she ran upstairs to tell her parents. "I'm going to have a very happy Thanksgiving."

The winners were chosen from a pool of more than 2,300 applicants — of which 953 were endorsed by 288 different colleges and universities to study at Oxford University in England.

Avi-Yonah is planning to study history at Oxford, comparing the libel laws of the U.S. and United Kingdom. She is a reporter at the Harvard Crimson, the campus newspaper, and has been the subject of several lawsuits for various stories -- prompting her interest in the limits of press freedom.

Sixteen committees from the Rhodes Trust invited the strongest applicants to interview virtually. The committees then made their selection of two students from each district.

Asma Rahimyar, a 20-year-old senior at Southern Connecticut State University, is the first-ever Rhodes winner from that institution. The University of California, Santa Cruz was also represented on the list of Rhodes Scholars for the first time.

The daughter of parents who emigrated from Afghanistan, Rahimyar was raised in Trumbull, Connecticut and grew up listening to her parents' stories of war-torn Kabul. She hopes to earn two master's degrees, one in forced migration and refugee studies and one in global governance and diplomacy, with an eye toward a career in international human rights law.

Rahimyar said she was still marveling at having won the scholarship 24 hours after getting the call. "It's all still very new and very surreal to me," she said.

Hattie Seten, a senior at South Dakota State University, was the first Rhodes Scholar from her university in 68 years. She said she wasn't sure "if I would fit what a Rhodes Scholar looks like" and felt some apprehension about applying from a public university in a mostly rural area.

But she focused her application on what she called "a strong moral sense of character" and highlighted the leadership she had taken on campus, including navigating the coronavirus pandemic.

When the selection committee named her one of the scholarship recipients on a Zoom meeting, she said, "I was so surprised, I started crying. I would have never expected something like this."

The winners include 17 women, 14 men and one nonbinary person.

Scholarship-winners expressed incredulity at hearing they would be Rhodes Scholars, a distinction that has launched the careers of famous politicians, academics, scientists and journalists.

"I think I'm still in shock," said Brian Reyes, 21, of the Bronx. "It's nice to actually see my name on the Rhodes website and have it confirmed that it's real."

Reyes, a history major at Yale University, is the son of immigrants from the Dominican Republic. He is a student counselor who has been living on campus this school year and taking his classes online. He is planning on a two-year degree program in comparative social policy and a career in government or the nonprofit sector.

For many students, the pandemic has given new urgency to their research and career goals. Amytess Girgis, a University of Michigan student in Ann Arbor, is writing an honors thesis on informal community aid groups that formed in Detroit.

She said there's a disconnect between how political candidates operate, with so much time spent raising money for example, and people's needs, particularly in low-income communities or for people of color.

Scholarship-winner Vijayasundaram Ramasamy has spent the last months as a policy advisor in the Kansas governor's office, helping draft that state's reopening plan during the coronavirus pandemic. The experience has given the 2018 Johns Hopkins University graduate a passion for public service through government, and he plans to pursue a master's degree in public policy and a master's in social policy.

But for the moment, he enjoyed how the virtual format gave him a chance to celebrate with his family.

"It's actually kind of the silver lining of COVID. I was at home and my whole family was here -- both of my brothers, my nieces -- and we were all in one room together when they made the announcement," Ramasamy said. "Coming from an immigrant family who came to the United States, being with them when it was announced was absolutely surreal."

Karen Matthews and Sophie Rosenbaum in New York, Ron Todt in Philadelphia and Sophia Tareen in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 49 of 70

Chicago contributed to this report.

Michigan leader: Trump didn't ask for election interference

By DAVID EGGERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — President Donald Trump did not ask Michigan Republican lawmakers to “break the law” or “interfere” with the election during a meeting at the White House, a legislative leader said Sunday, a day before canvassers plan to meet about whether to certify Joe Biden’s 154,000-vote victory in the battleground state.

House Speaker Lee Chatfield was among seven GOP legislators who met with Trump for about an hour on Friday, amid his longshot efforts to block Biden’s win.

“There was this outrage that the president was going to ask us to break the law, he was going to ask us to interfere, and that just simply didn’t happen,” he told Fox News of the highly unusual meeting. He did not elaborate on what was discussed, except to say the delegation asked for additional federal aid to help Michigan’s coronavirus response.

Michigan’s elections agency has recommended that the Nov. 3 results — including Biden’s 2.8-percent-age point victory — be certified by the Board of State Canvassers, which has two Democrats and two Republicans. The Republican National Committee and the state Republican Party want the board to adjourn for 14 days to investigate alleged irregularities in Wayne County, the state’s largest and home to Detroit.

Staff for the state elections bureau said that claimed irregularities, even if verified, would not significantly affect the outcome. The Michigan Democratic Party said the total number of Detroit votes implicated by imbalanced precincts — where the number of ballots does not equal the number of names on the pollbook — is at most 450, or “0.029% of the margin” separating Biden from Trump.

“The certification process must not be manipulated to serve as some sort of retroactive referendum on the expressed will of the voters. That is simply not how democracy works,” chairwoman Lavora Barnes wrote to the board on Sunday.

If the board does not confirm the results and the Michigan Supreme Court does not subsequently order it to do so, Chatfield said “now we have a constitutional crisis.” He and other Republicans, however, have indicated that they would not undermine the voters’ will.

“Michigan election law clearly requires that the state’s electors must be those nominated by the party that received the most votes — not the Legislature,” says a stock email House Republicans are sending in response to people who contact their offices.

Experts on Michigan election law have said the state board’s authority is limited in scope and that it must certify the results now that all 83 counties have reported theirs to the state. There is concern, though, because Trump personally called the two Republicans on Wayne County’s board last week and they said a day later that they were rescinding their previous vote — following an earlier deadlock — but it was too late.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey, a Republican who met with Trump, suggested in a Sunday tweet that the state canvassers might “take the full time allowed by law to perform their duties” instead of voting Monday and said “it’s inappropriate for anyone to exert pressure on them.”

The deadline is Dec. 13, but that is five days after the federal “safe harbor” date — when Congress cannot challenge any electors named by that date in accordance with state law.

There is no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election. In fact, election officials from both political parties have stated publicly that the election went well and international observers confirmed that there were no serious irregularities.

The issues Trump’s campaign and its allies have pointed to are typical in every election.

Republican U.S. Rep. Fred Upton, Michigan’s current longest-serving member of Congress, told CNN on Sunday that “the voters spoke” and the state had no razor-thin presidential race.

“No one has come up with any evidence of fraud or abuse,” he said. He called the request to delay the certification “out of bounds.”

The trip to the White House has come under heavy scrutiny. The lawmakers stayed at the luxury Trump International Hotel, and two of them were photographed with expensive drinks at the hotel bar after the meeting.

Spokespeople for Shirkey and Chatfield said the legislators covered their expenses and that no taxpayer money was used. However, they did not say if the men paid for the trip themselves or if it was paid for in some other way such as by them tapping into their nonprofit "administrative" accounts that can accept contributions from corporate or other donors.

Finding out about who runs such lawmaker-connected organizations, who donates to them and what the money is spent on can be extremely difficult, according to a 2016 joint investigation by MLive and the Michigan Campaign Finance Network. Such accounts can be used to reimburse legislators for travel.

Follow David Eggert: <https://twitter.com/DavidEggert00>

In Wisconsin recount, Trump challenges pile up, slow tally

By MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Wisconsin recount observer Ardis Cerny stretched her neck as far as she could toward a Plexiglas divider separating her from two vote counters, eagle-eyeing them as they scrutinized ballot papers one by one.

When one tabulator told the ardent supporter of President Donald Trump she was leaning too far over a yellow line on a Milwaukee conference-hall floor meant to keep observers 3 feet away, Cerny bristled.

"I know you don't want us to see the ballots," she said. "You think we'll find something."

Cerny is part of a large contingent of pro-Trump observers participating in a recount the president requested and paid \$3 million for in the state's two biggest and most liberal counties, Milwaukee and Dane, in a long shot bid to erase Democrat Joe Biden's more than 20,000-vote lead after the initial count.

With no precedent to erase such a large margin, it's widely expected that Trump's eventual plan in Wisconsin is litigation over thousands of absentee ballots that he argues were improperly cast.

But that doesn't mean his recount observers aren't trying.

The atmosphere inside the convention hall where Milwaukee County's recount is taking place has turned acrimonious and chaotic at times. Lawyers for the Trump and Biden camps constantly walk the floor monitoring the hundreds of tables over a space the size of several football fields.

"We're chasing our tails here," Milwaukee County Elections Director Julietta Henry told a three-member commission overseeing the recount Saturday, referring to the flurry of challenges by Trump representatives. She said they sometimes resulted in confusing instructions to tabulators.

The commissioners occasionally walked up to recount tables themselves to investigate alleged rules violations. When too many people gathered around one table Friday, violating social distancing rules, Republican commission member Rick Baas suddenly shouted, "I've had it! Clear this floor now!"

On another occasion, he rebuked some observers for being disruptive and called on them to behave with civility: "We will not be like ... other states."

At least some didn't heed that appeal.

One Trump observer was escorted from the building by sheriff's deputies Saturday after pushing an election official who had lifted her coat from an observer chair. Another was removed Friday for not wearing a face mask properly as coronavirus infection rates have soared in the state.

"You have to stand back and sit down," one election official, flanked by deputies, told another Trump observer. "If you don't, you'll be escorted out." After arguing for a moment, the observer sat down.

The county's election commissioners — two Democrats and one Republican — have been in almost perpetual session to address a stream of Trump challenges that county clerk George Christenson said was slowing the recount to a crawl and putting the process far behind schedule. On Saturday, election officials accused Trump representatives of flouting rules to obstruct and delay the recount, noting some of their observers were objecting to every ballot at a particular table. Challenges were being made over absentee ballots that were folded — a necessary step for voters to put them in envelopes.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 51 of 70

Another Trump challenge sought to disqualify mail-in ballots submitted in envelopes with official stickers that had become unstuck.

"Some of the stuff we're getting into is ridiculous," an increasingly exasperated Tim Posnanski, the commission chairman, said Saturday.

When one Trump representative sounded dismissive about advice that Milwaukee County's corporation counsel, Margaret Daun, offered commissioners, she admonished him: "Please don't talk down to me, sir."

While the recount itself almost certainly won't change the result, Trump's campaign appears to be intent on getting as many challenges on the record as possible so they can eventually ask a judge to toss whole categories of ballots. Trump lost to Biden in Milwaukee County, the state's most populous county that includes a large Black population, by more than a 2-to-1 margin. The focus of disputes are tens of thousands of absentee ballots.

By law, the recount must be finished by Dec. 1. But by Saturday evening, few of the hundreds of Milwaukee tabulators had gotten around to actually counting votes, the county clerk said. They'd spent most of the two days since the process began Friday sorting ballot papers, including mail-in ballot envelopes and applications.

Joe Voiland, speaking to commission members Saturday on behalf of the Trump campaign, denied his side was acting in bad faith.

"I want to get to the point of dialing everything down ... and not yelling at each other," Voiland said.

Elections officials asked reporters not to speak to tabulators or observers as they worked. But Cerny was singled out to commissioners by name as an example of supporters posing as independents to get around rules limiting observers to one per table from each campaign. She stood, gave her name and asked to speak to commissioners but was told she couldn't.

She wore a name tag on her blouse that identified her as an "independent observer," but when asked by a reporter if she was there to support Trump, she didn't hesitate. "Yes," she said. She declined to comment further.

A Biden observer sitting next to Cerny earlier told her to lean back from the yellow line intended to separate observers from tabulators, then softened her tone.

"We want every vote counted," she told Cerny, "just like you do."

Follow Michael Tarm on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/mtarm>

Inequality 'baked into' virus testing access as cases surge

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO and CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

The day after Amanda Serulneck found out she might have been exposed to COVID-19, she visited a rapid testing center in New Jersey but was turned away because they ran out of tests.

She returned at 7 a.m. the next day. After waiting for an hour, officials said they had run out again. On her third try, Serulneck and her friend called several testing centers before driving for an hour to one with availability.

Lines for free COVID-19 tests stretch for blocks and hours in cities where people feel the dual strain of the coronavirus surge and the approaching holidays. But an increasing number of pop-up clinics promise visitors instant results — at a cost. Some charge \$150 or more for a spot at the front of the queue.

While her friend who lacked insurance had to pay \$125 for the test, Serulneck's price was only \$35. The real cost came from the two days she had to take off from work, she said.

"People are just trying to get by, and they can't be taking off work for a week to wait for results," said Serulneck, who works at a spa. "People need rapid testing to be available and affordable."

Dr. Mark Shrime said his work gave him the flexibility to wait in line six hours for a test in New York City last week, but he knows not everyone can do the same.

"If I'm an hourly worker, I can't take off six hours just so I can get a test so I can go back to work," said Shrime, who needed a test to avoid a 14-day quarantine after traveling from Boston. "Another option was another place 10 blocks away from me where I could pay 250 bucks to get a rapid test, so the structure

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 52 of 70

that we set up for people to be able to keep themselves safe from COVID baked into those structures is an inequity.”

Serulneck says it’s been frustrating to watch people do rapid tests so that they can go to parties or travel for the holidays.

“Some people who need rapid testing to work can’t afford it,” she said. “It’s not fair. The majority of people are in my position.”

As numbers of infections cases climb in the United States and the country faces what health experts say will be a dark winter due to the uncontrolled spread of the virus, the demand for testing becomes greater. The U.S. has had more than 12 million reported cases and more than 255,000 deaths from the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic.

Social worker Chelsea Collins said she had to pay \$150 for a test at a drug store after she lost her insurance due to the pandemic. After her husband, a union painter, learned he may have been exposed to COVID-19 last week, she was faced with finding a way to get tested again.

After visiting a free drive-thru testing site at 5:30 a.m. in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on Saturday and waiting about 1½-2 hours for a test, the 32-year-old Collins said she considers herself lucky. But she thought about those people without the means to get to a testing site not served by public transit.

“I feel for a lot of people with families, at the holidays and having to shell out \$150 because they’re exposed,” Collins said.

Dan Fulwiler, president and CEO of Esperanza Health Centers in southwest Chicago, said costly rapid testing centers won’t help the communities that his nonprofit serves. About 70% of the center’s clients live in poverty, according to his estimate.

Fulwiler laments the lack of a national testing strategy that’s led to the proliferation of pop-up clinics. Daily demand also has risen at Esperanza -- the Spanish word for “Hope” -- from up to 150 in the summer to 400 now.

“I’m less worried about predatory pricing than I am concerned about access,” Fulwiler said. “Our clients will walk a mile to get a test for free rather than pay \$15 here. A \$150 test won’t be an option, and even at \$30, they’ll think hard about it.”

It’s not just the cost and access that are raising questions about rapid tests.

Rapid testing sites could create “a lot of headaches for those of us who are trying to understand surveillance data,” said Jaline Gerardin, an epidemiologist and infectious disease monitor who helps compile weekly forecasts of pandemic trends for the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Officials already struggle to interpret reams of data from different tests that can produce different results, said Gerardin, an assistant professor at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. New sites may not report ethnicity, outbreaks and income levels necessary to monitor a pandemic that already disproportionately affects Hispanics and African Americans, she said.

Gerardin says there are three goals of testing: Individuals want to know if they’re infected; health and government officials want to understand trends and make policy decisions based on those trends; and test results provide a way to measure mitigation efforts such as quarantines and self-isolation.

Rapid testing may help with mitigation, she said.

“People who are getting tested less tend to be the same who are disadvantaged,” she said. “I don’t really see how an expensive testing option helps a testing infrastructure that is thin and under-resourced.”

The sites haven’t had a discernible impact in New York City, thanks to aggressive testing strategies by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill DeBlasio, said Maxine Golub, spokesperson for The Institute for Family Health, which serves underserved communities in the New York metropolitan area.

The institute partners with government to set up regular testing sites in areas of need, such as Harlem or parts of the Bronx, Golub said.

But many people don’t have those options.

Korri Williams, a public school teacher in Virginia, is mulling whether to get a rapid test to give her peace of mind to visit her 78-year-old mother after finding out that co-workers tested positive.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 53 of 70

TherG-20 summit ends with support for COVID-19 vaccines for all

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Leaders of the world's most powerful nations wrapped up the Group of 20 summit on Sunday, vowing to spare no effort to protect lives and ensure affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all people.

The two-day summit of heads of state was held virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed at least 1.38 million people globally, with the world's highest death tolls recorded in seven of the G-20 countries. The virus has wiped out hundreds of millions of jobs globally and plunged millions into extreme poverty.

The virus "revealed vulnerabilities in our preparedness and response and underscored our common challenges," the G-20 said in a final statement that focused heavily on battling the coronavirus, enhancing environmental protections and supporting the global economy.

The group vowed "to spare no effort to protect lives."

The G-20, which includes the U.S., India, China, the U.K., France, Germany, Japan and others, also stressed the importance of global access to COVID-19 vaccines, drugs and tests.

"We will spare no effort to ensure their affordable and equitable access for all people, consistent with members' commitments to incentivize innovation," the statement said.

The G-20 expressed support for efforts like COVAX, an international initiative to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to countries worldwide. The U.S., however, has declined to join under President Donald Trump.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel told reporters Sunday in Berlin after the virtual summit that Germany had given financial support to the COVAX initiative, but that more money was needed.

The G-20 statement did not directly address an urgent appeal by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who said \$28 billion in additional investment is needed for mass manufacturing, procurement and delivery of new COVID-19 vaccines around the world, including \$4 billion immediately.

There is also concern that countries such as Britain, the U.S., France and Germany have directly negotiated deals with pharmaceutical companies, meaning that the vast majority of the world's vaccine supply next year is already reserved.

"Fortunately, there's now hope for vaccines," Merkel said, adding that "it is important that not only Europe secures vaccines, as the European Union is doing now, but ... that it is important for the entire world" to have access to vaccines.

She said it is important that COVAX starts negotiating with the producers of potential vaccines based on the money it already has, but that she was somewhat worried those negotiations had not happened yet.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman rounded out the summit, saying the G-20's final statement "succeeded in sending out a message of hope and reassurance to our citizens and all people around the world."

"This is what the world has been expecting from us. This achievement today is a culmination of our joint efforts throughout this challenge-fraught year," the Saudi monarch said.

Saudi Arabia presided over the G-20 this year and was host of the virtual summit, which was originally intended to be held in-person in Riyadh before the pandemic. During the Saudi king's speech, small video squares showed the leaders of Germany, France, the U.K., Canada, South Korea, China, India and South Africa watching the final remarks. Trump participated in the summit with prerecorded speeches, but was not in attendance for the virtual summit's conclusion.

It appeared all G-20 countries agreed to the full content of the final statement, with the exception of Turkey, which was due to give a press conference later Sunday explaining further.

Delegates from the G-20 had convened virtually throughout the year to discuss the coronavirus, agreeing to suspend debt payments for the world's poorest nations until mid-2021 to allow those countries to focus their spending on health care and social support programs. The G-20 called on private lenders to join the effort.

Already, 46 countries have requested to benefit from the debt suspension initiative, amounting to \$5.7 billion in debt referral. The U.N. secretary general, however, has called on the G-20 to extend debt repay-

ments through the end of 2021 and expand the scope to middle-income countries in need.

G-20 countries are allowing low-income countries with unsustainable debts to apply for permanent debt relief on a case-by-case basis.

In final remarks at the summit, Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte laid out his country's objectives for the G-20 next year as it assumes the rotating presidency from Saudi Arabia.

"The existential threat, represented by climate change, soil degradation and by the decline of global biodiversity, has brought us to a crossroads, which will determine if we are able to save our planet and construct a sustainable future," Conte said.

Conte said the pandemic will continue to be at the top of the group's agenda and reiterated his support for universal access to vaccines.

Associated Press writers Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin and Frances D'Emilio in Rome contributed to this report.

e are limited options for rapid testing in her Williamsburg area, and without symptoms, she worries a test won't be covered by her insurance.

"All of it comes down to economics in the pocketbook at the end of the day," she said. "It's not that I can't purchase the test. But you know, sometimes you don't have that extra \$100 to go out and get a rapid test."

It's an equity issue, Williams said.

"I'm blessed to have a job ... but i do feel like it's one of those things that is afforded to those who have means," she added.

Fernando reported from Carmel, Indiana. Thompson reported from Buffalo, N.Y. Associated Press reporter Jennifer Kelleher also contributed.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

Trump team making false argument about his 2016 transition

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's not just President-elect Joe Biden's transition that's under a microscope.

President Donald Trump and his allies are harking back to his own transition four years ago to make a false argument that his own presidency was denied a fair chance for a clean launch. Press secretary Kayleigh McEnany laid out the case from the White House podium last week and the same idea has been floated by Trump's personal lawyer and his former director of national intelligence.

The comparisons are part of a broader attempt by Trump and his team to undermine the legitimacy of Biden's election and his right to an orderly transition by unspooling mistruths about both this election season and Trump's treatment four years ago.

"It's worth remembering that this president was never given an orderly transition of power. His presidency was never accepted," McEnany told reporters who questioned the Trump administration's refusal to cooperate with the Biden transition.

But the situations are far different.

The day after her defeat in 2016, Democrat Hillary Clinton conceded.

"Donald Trump is going to be our president," she said. "We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead."

The next day, President Barack Obama, who had portrayed Trump as an existential threat to the nation,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 55 of 70

invited the president-elect to the White House and visited with him in the Oval Office. Obama's aides offered help to Trump's incoming staffers.

"My number one priority in the coming two months is to try to facilitate a transition that ensures our president-elect is successful," Obama said.

During his inaugural address, Trump thanked Obama and his wife, Michelle, "for their gracious aid throughout this transition" and called them "magnificent."

Trump's team is not wrong that his own transition was chaotic, but the disarray in many ways was of his own doing.

Trump fired the head of his transition, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, and abandoned months of planning in favor of a Cabinet hiring process that at times resembled a reality show. His team ignored offers of help from the outgoing Obama administration.

That's a far cry from the description issued by McEnany as pressure mounts for Trump to concede and for his administration to begin cooperating with Biden's transition team. Among other things, Biden is being denied access to the presidential daily intelligence briefing and to detailed briefings on the vaccine distribution plan as COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. eclipse 255,000.

Trump has refused to concede, instead making baseless claims of electoral fraud and trying longshot legal challenges that risk undermining the nation's democratic traditions.

In 2016, despite his claims, Trump did receive standard cooperation during the transition.

But Trump's team largely ignored advice from Obama staffers, leaving briefing books unopened and ignoring special iPads loaded with materials. The lack of preparation left aides clueless even about how to work the overhead intercom in the West Wing.

A potential transition plan worked on for months by Christie was cast aside. He was dismissed from his post as part of a long-running feud with the president's son-in-law and future senior White House adviser Jared Kushner.

Some of Trump's hires were done on whim, as Cabinet candidates visited him in Trump Tower. The president-elect chose Michael Flynn for national security adviser after a recommendation from Trump's children and despite Obama's warnings. Flynn was out after less than a month in office.

Christie, in his recent autobiography, wrote that 30 binders were discarded and that members of Trump's team "got rid of guidance that would have made their candidate an immensely more effective president" and "stole from the man they'd just helped elect the launch he so richly deserved."

McEnany and others have claimed that Trump was undermined by an FBI investigation that was opened in the summer of 2016 into possible election interference, a probe that was taken over by special counsel Robert Mueller the following May after Trump fired FBI Director James Comey.

Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, in a news conference last week, claimed the FBI "made up the Russia collusion plot" that damaged Trump and "cost our country \$40 million." Ric Grenell, Trump's former ambassador to Germany and acting director of national intelligence, has said that what Obama offered "was not a peaceful transition" because the FBI was already working to undermine Trump.

After nearly two years, Mueller found insufficient evidence to charge anyone in the Trump campaign with conspiring with Russia to sway the election. Throughout his term, Trump has framed the investigation as part of a "witch hunt" meant to destroy his presidency and said it showed the federal bureaucracy was working against him.

Obama had no role in directing the FBI's investigation into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign or in impeding Trump's transition to president. Though Obama was aware that his intelligence officials were investigating Russian interference, and had concerns about Trump and his background, the investigative decisions were made not by him but by his law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Since his loss to Biden, Trump has repeatedly challenged the fairness of the election with false claims about voting and he has looked for ways to block certification of the vote. The Trump administration has yet to formally acknowledge Biden's victory, slowing the transition at a time when the nation is facing a confluence of economic and health crises.

"The lack of the transition and cooperation is the most reckless and irresponsible thing he has ever done," David Plouffe, a former senior Obama adviser, said in a recent interview. "We have an election in early November, the new president takes over in the third week of January. It's no time at all, it's over in the blink of an eye. The damage is severe."

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Ethiopia warns civilians of 'no mercy' in Tigray offensive

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's military is warning civilians in the besieged Tigray regional capital that there will be "no mercy" if they don't "save themselves" before a final offensive to flush out defiant regional leaders — a threat that Human Rights Watch on Sunday said could violate international law.

"From now on, the fighting will be a tank battle," spokesman Col. Dejene Tsegaye said late Saturday, asserting that the army was marching on the Tigray capital, Mekele, and would encircle it with tanks. "Our people in Mekele should be notified that they should protect themselves from heavy artillery."

He accused the Tigray leaders of hiding among the population of the city of roughly a half-million people and warned civilians to "steer away" from them.

But "treating a whole city as a military target would not only unlawful, it could also be considered a form of collective punishment," Human Rights Watch researcher Laetitia Bader tweeted Sunday.

"In other words, war crimes," former U.S. national security adviser Susan Rice tweeted.

Ethiopia's Nobel Peace Prize-winning prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, in a new statement is giving the leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front 72 hours to surrender, saying that "you are at a point of no return." He accused the TPLF leaders of using religious sites, hotels, schools "and even cemeteries" as hideouts and using Mekele residents as human shields.

For days, Abiy's government has asserted it was marching to Mekele in a final push to end the deadly conflict that erupted on Nov. 4 between the federal government and the heavily armed Tigray regional government. The TPLF dominated Ethiopia's ruling coalition for a quarter century before Abiy took office and introduced dramatic political reforms and sidelined TPLF leaders.

Now, each side regards each other as illegal, complicating international pleas for dialogue amid worries that one of Africa's most powerful and populous nations could fracture and destabilize the strategic Horn of Africa.

With communications and transport to the Tigray region almost completely severed, it's difficult to verify the warring sides' claims.

And Ethiopia's government has expelled an analyst with the International Crisis Group, William Davison. The government hasn't given a formal reason, the organization said, but "ultimately, there is little doubt that the reason for his deportation relates to the current tense situation in the country and the authorities' increasing sensitivity to points of view that do not hew to its line."

It added: "It is noteworthy that on the same day Mr. Davison was expelled, authorities also issued warning letters to the news agency Reuters' Ethiopia correspondent and to the BBC and Deutsche Welle stations."

Meanwhile, a vast humanitarian crisis is unfolding, with the United Nations saying about 2 million people in Tigray urgently need help as food, fuel, medical and other supplies run desperately short.

Two refugee crises are growing. Over 35,000 Ethiopians have fled into a remote area of Sudan, where local communities and humanitarians have struggled to feed and accommodate them. And inside the Tigray region, the fighting has come close to camps that are home to nearly 100,000 refugees from Eritrea. Some of the Eritreans have now fled a second time, into Sudan.

Confrontation at German coronavirus protest goes viral

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A video went viral Sunday in Germany of a confrontation at a coronavirus protest, where

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 57 of 70

a young woman compared herself to a famous Nazi resistance fighter and then was accused by a security guard of "trivializing" the Holocaust.

Several people protesting coronavirus restrictions in Germany that seek to tamp down new infections have tried to depict themselves as victims of government persecution. Some have even put on Stars of David, symbols that the Nazis forced Jews to wear during the Third Reich before they killed them.

The woman spoke on stage Saturday evening in the northern city of Hannover, telling fellow protesters "I feel like Sophie Scholl, since I've been active in the resistance, giving speeches, going to protests, distributing flyers."

Scholl fought the Nazis with her brother and other members of the resistance group White Rose. After distributing flyers at a Munich university, she was convicted of high treason and was executed at age 22 by the Nazis in 1943.

While the female protester was talking, a young security guard approached the stage, saying repeatedly that "I'm not going to be a security guard for this kind of idiocy." The woman looked at him in disbelief while he called her speech "a trivialization of the Holocaust." He was ushered away by security and she threw down the mic in anger.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas tweeted Sunday that the comparison with Scholl "mocks the bravery that was needed to take a stand against the Nazis."

"Nothing connects the corona protests with the resistance fighters. Nothing!" Maas wrote.

The Nazis orchestrated the genocide of six million European Jews during the Third Reich. They also killed tens of thousands of other people who opposed their regime, such as communists, Social Democrats, members of the church or resistance fighters.

German officials, meanwhile, have been generally praised for their handling of the pandemic. The European Union nation has reported over 14,000 coronavirus-related deaths, a toll only one-fourth that of Britain's.

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Burkina Faso votes amid ongoing extremist violence, threats

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP) — Fears of attacks by extremists prevented voting in many parts of Burkina Faso on Sunday, as the country went to the polls for presidential and legislative elections marred by ongoing violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

Election and local government officials told The Associated Press that certain polling stations in the Center North, Sahel and East regions that were expected to open had not, and those that did had to close early because of the fear of attacks.

Two polling stations in the capital, Ouagadougou, also didn't open, according to Halidou Ouedraogo, president of Codel, a local organization monitoring the elections. He wouldn't elaborate on why.

Some towns weren't able to conduct voting at all, including Bartiebourgou and Tin Akoff, where 14 soldiers were killed in an ambush by IS earlier this month, Newton Ahmed Barry, president of the National Independent Electoral Commission, told a news conference Sunday.

"The reasons are mainly security and also it's impossible to find someone to manage the polling stations," Barry said. Even if the army can secure the area, the electoral commission didn't have staff willing to go there, he said. Other poll stations remained closed because people were threatened and told that if they voted and put ink on their fingers, they can "say goodbye to their finger," he said.

While the elections that did take place were for the most part peaceful, observers worry what might happen after the election given that so many people were prevented from voting.

"It's not clear yet how people will react vis-a-vis the people elected, because they have not voted ... Will the population accept the people elected despite the fact that all of them didn't vote?" said Julien

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 58 of 70

Oussou, regional coordinator for the West African Network of Peace building, an organization focused on human rights.

This election is a major test for the nation's young democracy in the face of rising extremist attacks. Burkina Faso experts say the violence and intimidation show how limited the authorities' control and legitimacy really are.

Whoever "wins (the election) will confront the challenge not just of restoring security, but also showing Burkinabe that every citizen matters," said Alex Thurston, assistant professor of political science at the University of Cincinnati in the United States.

President Roch Marc Christian Kabore has promised to secure the country and is vying for another five years against 12 other candidates. Kabore is expected to win, but the opposition hopes to split the vote, depriving him of the 51% support needed for an outright victory in the first round. Then it plans to form a coalition behind the strongest opposition candidate for the second round.

Violence has displaced more than 1 million people and cut off swaths of the country, preventing at least 166,000 new voters from being able to register, according to election officials.

A change in Burkina Faso's electoral code this year means that election results will be valid even if people can't vote in parts of the country.

Opposition candidates accused the ruling party of fraud, including bribing people. The parties also accused the National Independent Electoral Commission of making changes to the electoral map, said Zephirin Diabre, a leading candidate from the Progress and Change Party.

After voting today in Ouagadougou, he told the media that he will congratulate whoever the winner is, but "won't accept results that are stained with fraud and irregularities."

Even though voter turnout wasn't high, according to estimates by some observers, dozens of people lined up at polling stations in Ouagadougou, before sunrise.

Oumar Zorome, 55, was the first to vote in the city's Patte D'Oie district and is backing Kabore, who he says has built roads and is not responsible for the country's struggles with extremists.

"I'm voting for the change in this country that's already been taking place to continue," he said.

Voter Paul Lengane, however, said he'd vote for an opposition candidate because there has been too much corruption and insecurity.

"My expectations in the last five years were not met so I want to try something new," he told AP.

With police guarding polling stations, poll worker Habibata Ouedraogo said everything was running smoothly so far but she was concerned about the insecurity.

"I'm worried that a voting station could be targeted," she said.

Kabore urged citizens to vote as he cast his ballot Sunday.

"I'm calling on all Burkinabe not to be lazy and go vote. It's about the development of Burkina Faso, it's about peace in our country, so it's important that each Burkinabe vote," he said.

Diabre is one of the main challengers, together with Eddie Komboigo, head of the Congress for Democracy and Progress, the party of former President Blaise Compaore, who was ousted by a popular uprising in 2014.

"We are convinced that the CDP will return to power," Komboigo said Sunday. "If we return to power it won't be to retaliate, but to meet the needs of the population, bringing back security as soon as possible."

Results are expected in the next few days.

AP reporter Arsene Kabore in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, contributed to this report.

Trump slams global climate agreement Biden intends to rejoin

By DEB RIECHMANN and AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump railed against the Paris climate accord on Sunday, telling world leaders at a virtual summit that the agreement was designed to cripple the U.S. economy, not save the planet.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 59 of 70

"To protect American workers, I withdrew the United States from the unfair and one-sided Paris climate accord, a very unfair act for the United States," Trump said in a video statement from the White House to the Group of 20 summit hosted by Saudi Arabia. His comments came during a discussion among the world's largest economies on safeguarding the Earth.

President-elect Joe Biden, who takes office in January, has said he will rejoin the global pact that the U.S. helped forge five years ago.

Trump contended the international accord was "not designed to save the environment. It was designed to kill the American economy."

Trump, who has worked to undo most of President Barack Obama's efforts to fight climate change, said that since withdrawing from the climate agreement, the U.S. has reduced carbon emissions more than any nation.

That is true, but not that remarkable. With its giant economy, the U.S. has far more raw emissions of climate-damaging carbon dioxide to cut than any other country except China.

A more telling measure of progress in various countries is to look at what percentage of emissions a county has cut. Since 2005, the United States hasn't been even in the top 10 in percentage of greenhouse gas emission reductions.

More than 180 nations have ratified the accord, which aims to keep the increase in average temperatures worldwide "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and ideally no more than 1.5C (2.7 F), compared with pre-industrial levels. Scientists say that any rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius could have a devastating impact on large parts of the world, raising sea levels, stoking tropical storms and worsening droughts and floods.

The U.S. formally exited the Paris pact on Nov. 4. On Saturday, the U.S. formally left the Open Skies Treaty, which permits 30-plus nations to conduct unarmed, observation flights over each other's territory. Those overflights were set up decades ago to promote trust and avert conflict.

The administration said it wanted out of the treaty because Russia was violating the pact, and imagery collected during the flights can be obtained quickly at less cost from U.S. or commercial satellites.

During the discussions at the climate session, President Xi Jinping of China, the world's largest emitter, said the G-20 should continue to take the lead in tackling climate change and push for the full implementation of the Paris accord.

"Not long ago, I announced China's initiative to scale up its nationally determined contributions and strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060," he said. "China will honor its commitment and see the implementation through."

India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, said "climate change must be fought not in silos, but in an integrated, comprehensive and holistic way."

Batrawy reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Business owners upbeat about vaccine, wary as virus spreads

By JOYCE M. ROSENBERG AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Promising news about a coronavirus vaccine has small business owners feeling more upbeat despite cases of the virus surging in many parts of the U.S.

Owners hope consumers and businesses will be more relaxed about spending now that two drug companies, Pfizer and Moderna, have vaccines that data show were highly effective in testing. Some owners are rethinking their plans — some are holding off on staff cuts, while others say they're more likely to renew their office leases even as employees still work from home.

But owners also realize many hurdles remain — the vaccines still require approval by the Food and Drug Administration, and then it will take time for millions of doses to be manufactured and widely distributed. It's not clear how many people will decide to receive the vaccine, and in turn, how much of the population would be immune to the virus.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 60 of 70

Meanwhile, the pandemic shows no signs of abating heading into the winter, prompting some state and local officials to increase restrictions on gatherings in public and private places. And regardless of what steps governments take, many people are limiting their activities as they fear contracting the virus.

John Ross had been concerned about his company's revenue possibly slowing in the coming months, so he contemplated moving three of his 10 employees to part-time status and giving up his office when the lease is up for renewal in March. News about the vaccine has encouraged Ross, CEO of online educational company Test Prep Insight, to hold off on any major changes.

"I fully expect this vaccine news to give consumers the same jolt of confidence that I have felt. This hopefully means a quicker and strong recovery," says Ross, whose company is based in Auburn, California.

Ross, whose website offers reviews of test prep materials for college and graduate school entrance exams and bar exams, has kept revenue stable by offering discounts. With those price breaks expiring soon, he was worried that students and their parents would have less incentive to buy. Many tests were canceled in the early months of the outbreak, and it's not yet known whether the virus's resurgence will lead to more cancellations.

Ross is more optimistic now, but still cautious — he won't decide for sure on his office lease until more is known about the vaccine.

The pandemic has hit small businesses particularly hard. They don't have the same cash reserves and access to lines of credit as larger businesses to help make up for a drop in revenue. While it's not known how many companies have permanently closed during the pandemic, based on an estimate issued by the National Bureau of Economic Research during the spring the actual number is probably well into the hundreds of thousands. Additional government restrictions could put more companies at risk.

"The vaccine's not coming tomorrow — it's going to take a while," says Michael Goldberg, an entrepreneurship professor at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management. "It's going to be tough."

Gregg and Arlene Humble are caught in that tug of war. The vaccine news gives the couple hope that Humble Travel in Cedar Falls, Iowa, will reach its 60th anniversary in 2021. But they're also worried because revenue is just 10% of what it was before the pandemic hit.

The Humbles closed a satellite office in West Des Moines in July, laid off three employees and cut other costs when it seemed like there was no end in sight to the outbreak. They were able to get government financial help including a Paycheck Protection Program loan and it helps that they own the building the travel agency is in. They're also in the process of setting up a second business they hope will support the travel company.

Gregg Humble believes people would start booking 2021 and 2022 trips if they expect to be vaccinated.

"Having a vaccine for COVID-19 available makes a decision to keep Humble Travel open much more of a viable proposition," he says.

In the meantime, recent data show air travel in the U.S. is still down about 65% from a year ago and hotel occupancy remains below 50%.

"If this drags past the end of March, and if you don't see a big uptick in business, it's going to be a lot more challenging," Humble says.

Graham Cooke and his business partner Jordan Griffith started Café Last, a retailer of espresso machines and coffee grinders for home and restaurant use, during the summer. They're selling online but have had to put off renting warehouse space and hiring people to staff it.

The vaccine news makes Cooke more optimistic about the future of the fledgling business, but also brings a new set of questions.

"With the news of a vaccine on the horizon, we need to make some serious decisions. Do we move into a storefront? Continue selling online? Even if there is a vaccine, will people even get it? What is the future of the restaurant industry?" Cooke says.

For now, Cooke and Griffith are running the business out of their homes; sales are split between restaurants and consumers.

When the pandemic forced Cardinal Education to close its offices in Burlingame and Woodside, California,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 61 of 70

CEO Allen Koh decided to sublet the Woodside location to reduce overhead. The company, whose services including tutoring and school admissions counseling, had moved all its operations including its work with students online in March.

News about the vaccine is making Koh reconsider subletting. Children and their parents like to come to the offices not only for the company's services but also as a gathering place, and now it's looking like they'll be able to visit again.

"We think there is going to be a real need for physical space — but it's such a cost center and burden right now," Koh says.

Putin holding off on US presidential congratulations

MOSCOW (AP) — President Vladimir Putin says Russia is willing to work with whomever is officially declared the next president of the United States, but that he won't offer congratulations until the winner is formally decided or a candidate concedes.

Putin's remarks broadcast Sunday on state television reiterate earlier Kremlin comments on why Putin had not congratulated Joe Biden after major news organizations called him president-elect, as did many other world leaders.

"We are just waiting for the end of the internal political confrontation," Putin said, referring to Republican challenges to the vote count.

"We will work with any person who will be given the trust of the American people. But who will be given this trust? It must either be indicated by political custom when one of the parties recognizes the victory of the other, or the final results of the elections are summed up in a legitimate, legal way," he said.

Trump election challenges sound alarm among voters of color

By AARON MORRISON, KAT STAFFORD and CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — When longtime Detroit community advocate Frank McGhee watched two Republican canvassers vote against certifying election results in the majority Black city, he was furious.

McGhee, 58, has spent more than two decades working with Detroit youth and educating them on the electoral process. He said it was "outrageous" to see hard-fought Black voter-mobilization efforts threatened.

"I thought, these are the ultimate executioners, if you will, put in place so that quietly they could take what belongs to us," he said.

President-elect Joe Biden was in part powered to victory in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia by Black voters, many of them concentrated in cities such as Detroit, Philadelphia and Atlanta where he received a significant share of their support. Since Election Day, President Donald Trump and his allies have sought to expose voter fraud that simply does not exist in these and other overwhelmingly Black population centers.

Such a plainly racist strategy to contest the election could erode Black voters' trust in elections. Voting-rights advocates say they stand ready to beat back any efforts to water down the Black vote. But fears persist that Trump's allies will undermine democracy and disenfranchise Black Americans and other voters of color.

Trump renewed his attack on Motown voters Thursday, tweeting without evidence, "Voter Fraud in Detroit is rampant, and has been for many years."

The GOP effort in Michigan came to a head Tuesday, when the Wayne County Board of Canvassers initially deadlocked on a vote to certify election results that included ballots from Detroit, the nation's largest Black-majority city.

Two Republican canvassers tried to block the routine certification, which provoked an outcry from people attending the meeting and civil rights leaders who questioned whether race was a factor. The two GOP board members eventually reversed their votes and certified the results. They later tried to revert to their original position and were rebuffed by state officials who said the certification could not be rescinded.

"I think it's a dose of reality of the times that we are living in," said Nicole Small, vice chair of the Detroit

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 62 of 70

Charter Commission, who believes the vote was a "blatant attempt at voter suppression."

"I do not believe that Trump has created racism amongst people, but I do think he was the safety net and the vehicle for people to be more active in practicing their racism and their prejudiced beliefs publicly," Small said.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel blasted the Trump campaign and other groups for filing election-related lawsuits that were frivolous and lacked evidence.

"The themes we see that persist here are this: 'Black people are corrupt. Black people are incompetent, and Black people can't be trusted,'" she said on a call with the nonpartisan Voter Protection Program.

Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said the Republican canvassers' conduct was part of the ongoing effort "to disenfranchise voters on a scale that is simply unprecedented in modern times."

Beyond Michigan, the Trump campaign sought a partial recount in Wisconsin — in Milwaukee and Dane counties, which include the majority of the state's Black population. On Thursday, Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani renewed unproven claims of voter fraud and impropriety during mail-in vote counting in Pennsylvania, naming Philadelphia and nearby Camden, New Jersey, which is also predominantly Black.

In Philadelphia, state Sen. Sharif Street said Trump's attacks on the city are neither new nor surprising, given his "abject failure" around COVID-19 and the resulting economic fallout.

"This is an attempt to delegitimize our voters, but it only served to delegitimize himself."

During a news conference Thursday in Wilmington, Delaware, Biden said Americans are "witnessing incredible irresponsibility. Incredibly damaging messages are being sent to the rest of the world about how democracy functions."

Black voters are not the only targets. A Trump-allied group behind challenges in four states, True the Vote, filed a lawsuit alleging officials relaxed voter ID requirements for absentee voters in Menominee County, Wisconsin, which is essentially the Menominee Nation Indian reservation. Most of the group's lawsuits have been tossed out or withdrawn.

Another lawsuit seeks nullification of votes in Nevada over fraud and irregularities. The Trump campaign and Nevada Republicans alleged the Nevada Native Voter Project illegally enticed Native American voters with gift cards, gas cards, raffle tickets and T-shirts if they voted early or on Election Day. That lawsuit has been dismissed.

And in Arizona, the Trump campaign and the state Republican Party jointly asked courts to halt certification of votes in Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix and a significant portion of the state's Hispanic population. The lawsuit sought a hand-count of a sampling of ballots from the county. A judge dismissed that lawsuit on Thursday.

The rate of dismissal proves "there's really no there there to the challenges," said Anne Houghtaling, deputy director of the Thurgood Marshall Institute, which houses the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's voting rights projects.

"It's all sort of tilting at windmills," Houghtaling said.

Black voters and other voters of color were guaranteed free and fair access to the polls through the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965. Prior to its passage, Black voters, primarily in the South, were routinely subjected to intimidation and deadly violence for simply registering to vote. In places where they could register, some voters faced literacy tests and poll taxes that effectively left them disenfranchised.

In some states, voter discrimination complaints worsened after a 2013 Supreme Court ruling gutted a section of the voting rights law requiring states with a history of discrimination to get federal approval before changing voter regulations. States have passed strict voter ID requirements, carried out voter roll purges and limited early voting in places where minority voters were disproportionately affected.

Election officials from both political parties have stated publicly that the 2020 election went well, and international observers confirmed there were no serious irregularities.

"It's not the use of the word 'legal' vote, it's the constant insinuation that there are so many illegal or fraudulent votes out there," said Rick Hasen, a professor of law and political science at the University of California Irvine and author of the Election Law blog. "There's no evidence produced by the campaign to

support there has been a lot of fraud.”

Morrison reported from New York, Stafford reported from Detroit, and Fernando reported from Carmel, Indiana. Associated Press writer Colleen Long in Washington contributed. Morrison, Fernando and Stafford are members of AP’s Race and Ethnicity team.

Pompeo touts Iran policy in Gulf ahead of Biden presidency

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Sunday defended his tour of Gulf Arab states and the Trump administration’s continued efforts to squeeze Iran, even as a new U.S. administration led by Joe Biden prepares to enter the White House in January.

Although Pompeo has not taken questions from U.S.-based reporters traveling with him over the past 10 days, he sat down with the Saudi-owned broadcaster Al-Arabiya in Dubai for brief televised remarks Sunday.

“Our policies don’t change. Our duty doesn’t change. My responsibilities don’t change,” he said. “I still have an obligation — every hour, every minute — to defend the American people and to keep them foremost in our efforts, and we’ll do that. We’ll do that to the very last minute.”

In what was likely his final tour of the Persian Gulf as secretary of state, he touted the Trump administration’s Mideast strategy that focused on Iran as “the central threat inside the region” and for a maximum pressure campaign that hampered Iran’s ability to support militias in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria.

“It’ll be our policy until our time is complete,” he said, stopping short of saying when he’d cease work as the top U.S. diplomat.

President Donald Trump has refused to concede to Biden, despite the Trump campaign’s futile efforts to block the certification of votes in various states.

The Trump administration is attempting to ramp up pressure on Iran before Biden takes office as president. Biden has said he wants to return to rapprochement with Iran. Analysts say Biden is expected to be more willing to engage the Iranians in order to avoid major escalation, although he’s likely to press Tehran on its missile program and not just its nuclear program.

Trump is viewed favorably by Gulf heavyweights Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for pulling the U.S out of a nuclear accord with Iran and reimposing sweeping sanctions that have drained Iran of vital oil revenue.

Pompeo is scheduled to travel to Saudi Arabia late Sunday to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman before heading back to Washington. His tour also included stops in France, Turkey and Israel, including an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank and a museum that honors Christian Zionists.

Trump was recently talked back from moving ahead with a military strike on Iran’s main nuclear site by advisors who included Pompeo, according to a New York Times report. When asked about this, a State Department official traveling with Pompeo told reporters that “all options are on the table” and that the Trump administration “will continue to pursue its policies until it’s not in office anymore.”

Pompeo started his Gulf tour in the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi early Saturday, meeting the emirate’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, who’s seen as the day-to-day ruler and the powerful figure behind the country’s major policy decisions.

The State Department said they discussed the progress of the UAE’s decision to normalize ties with Israel — a move that was followed by Bahrain and Sudan. They also discussed “security cooperation and countering Iran’s malign influence in the region, as well as that of China,” the U.S. statement said.

Pompeo “also underscored the importance of Gulf unity.”

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt have largely balked at U.S. efforts to reconcile with Qatar, which they accuse of sponsoring terrorism and backing violent Islamist groups across the region. The quartet cut ties with Qatar in mid-2017 and have demanded the gas-rich Arab state shutter its flagship Al Jazeera news network among other demands, which Qatar has rejected outright, along with the accusations.

Pompeo departed Abu Dhabi for Qatar on Saturday, although there are no direct commercial flights due

to the stalemate.

He had lunch with the ruler, Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and met with Qatar's foreign minister. The State Department said Pompeo discussed regional issues, and "the importance of a united Gulf to stand against the Iranian regime's destabilizing activity, and the risk to the region presented by China."

Qatar, however, has warm ties with Iran. The two countries also share a massive underwater gas field in the Persian Gulf.

While in Qatar, Pompeo additionally met with representatives of the Afghan government and Taliban, where the warring sides are holding talks about the future of the country. Despite a sharp rise in violence this year, Washington plans to withdraw an estimated 2,500 troops before the middle of January, leaving about 2,000 soldiers in Afghanistan.

Black clergy, United Way to launch anti-coronavirus effort

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) —

Black clergy leaders are joining forces with the United Way of New York City for a new initiative designed to combat the coronavirus' outsized toll on African Americans through ramped-up testing, contact tracing and treatment management.

Details of the new effort, shared with The Associated Press in advance of its Monday launch, rest on harnessing the on-the-ground influence of church leaders to circulate resources that can better equip Black Americans in safeguarding against and treating the virus. Its rollout will begin in five major cities with initial seven-figure funding, focusing on expanded testing and public health education, with a goal of further expansion and ultimately reaching several hundred thousand underinsured or uninsured Black Americans.

The Rev. Calvin Butts, pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City, said participating churches were stepping forward to serve as a "first line of defense" for the Black community against the virus.

"I'm delighted to say we are strongly together across denominational lines and, even when there may be political differences, we still stand shoulder to shoulder in meeting this crisis," Butts said.

The coronavirus has killed more than 250,000 Americans, with hospitalizations reaching an all-time high this week as U.S. deaths from the virus reached their highest levels since the pandemic surged in the spring. The Black community has been hit hard, with an August study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finding that African Americans had a virus hospitalization rate 4.7 times higher and a death rate 2.1 times higher than the white population.

Sheena Wright, CEO of the United Way of New York City, highlighted that impact in describing plans to help boost the partnership's technical and fundraising capacities.

"We are focused on really closing the opportunity gap for communities of color around the city, and we've certainly seen in COVID-19 the profound disparities and impact on the Black community," Wright said, pointing to a historic "lack of investment in health institutions" that serve Black Americans.

The virus testing is set to start in January in five cities: New York, Detroit, Atlanta, Washington and Newark, New Jersey. Among the clergy helping to spearhead the effort are the civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton and the Rev. Raphael Warnock, pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and a Democratic Senate candidate in Georgia.

Funding support will come from testing company Quest Diagnostics and Resolve to Save Lives, a nonprofit-backed public health initiative led by Tom Frieden, director of the CDC during the Obama administration.

The project is modeled in part on the strategy used by the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, founded in the 1980s to battle another epidemic that disproportionately hit Black Americans. The coronavirus initiative will involve the establishment of leadership roles at participating churches with responsibility to coordinate testing, tracing and connection of virus-positive people with health care, said Debra Fraser-Howze, founder of the AIDS commission and a partner in the new project.

The coronavirus struggle "is similar to the AIDS epidemic" in that the Black community has "been again left out, locked out of resources," Fraser-Howze said. "We have the highest rates of death and illness. So

it is time for those that lead us to understand what is going on.”

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Grounded Baltic Sea ferry pulled off seabed, resumes trip

by JARI TANNER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — A passenger ferry that ran aground in heavy winds in a Baltic Sea archipelago between Finland and Sweden was dragged off the shore and towed early Sunday to a port, where some of its over 300 passengers disembarked.

The M/S Viking Grace was sailing Saturday from the Swedish capital of Stockholm to the western Finnish city of Turku with a brief stop at Mariehamn, capital of the Aland Islands, when it hit ground just few hundred of meters (yards) short of the passenger terminal at Mariehamn. No injuries were reported in the grounding.

The Viking Grace's 331 passengers and crew of 98 spent the night on board the vessel while the Finnish coast guard and rescue units got two tug boats to drag the ship off the seabed and towed it to Mariehamn early Sunday.

Later Sunday, the ship resumed its journey under its own engines to Turku, where it will be put into a local shipyard for a closer inspection and repairs.

“(The ship) has been cleared by authorities and the classification society Lloyd’s Register to transport passengers to Turku by its own engines,” ferry operator Viking Line said Sunday.

Divers inspected the vessel twice in the Aland Islands and found no leaks or major damages. The Viking Line, headquartered in Mariehamn, said no security risks were involved with Sunday’s transfer trip to Turku.

Viking Line CEO Jan Hanses told Finnish media that a strong gust of wind likely pushed the ship into the shore at the time of the accident, about 2 p.m. on Saturday.

The Aland Islands is an autonomous Swedish-speaking Finnish territory that consists of thousands of named and unnamed islands. Its shallow waters and narrow passageways are particularly tricky to navigate for large vessels such as the Viking Grace, which is capable of carrying up to 2,800 passengers.

In September, Viking Line’s M/S Amorella passenger ferry also ran aground in the Aland Islands. No one was hurt in the accident.

Charleston weighs wall as seas rise and storms strengthen

By MICHELLE LIU Associated Press/Report for America

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Vickie Hicks, who weaves intricate sweetgrass baskets in Charleston, South Carolina’s historic city market, remembers climbing onto the table at her grandmother’s booth downtown when the floodwaters rushed by.

Decades later, the seasoned seller of this art form passed down by descendants of West African slaves still works downtown, where merchants regularly set out sandbags and scrutinize daily weather forecasts. Hicks says the flooding’s only gotten worse.

“God’s taking back his land,” she said.

Now, the low-lying Atlantic seaport is considering its most drastic measure yet to protect the lives and livelihoods of residents like Hicks from the threats of climate-driven flooding: walling off its peninsula from the ocean.

Although residents recognize the need for action before Charleston is overwhelmed by the unfolding effects of climate change, many are not certain the wall will do enough to address flooding woes that go beyond storm surges. Some oppose walling off the city from its picturesque waterfront that helps draw millions of visitors each year. Others fear the wall will damage wetlands and wildlife, or that poor neighborhoods will be left out of flooding solutions.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 66 of 70

Though Charleston has remained relatively unscathed this hurricane season, the city of 136,000 has seen higher tides and wetter, more frequent rainstorms in recent years with climate change.

In 2019, the downtown flooded a record 89 times according to the National Weather Service — mostly from high tides and wind pushing water inland. And the city could flood up to 180 times per year by 2045 according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

There's also the threat each year that hurricane-driven storm surge could inundate the city's peninsula, which is at the confluence of three rivers and mostly less than 20 feet (6.1 meters) above sea level.

Earlier this year, the Army Corps of Engineers unveiled a proposal for an eight-mile-long (12.9-kilometer-long) wall that would surround the peninsula and reach a height of 12 feet (3.7 meters) above sea level.

The barrier is reminiscent of fortifications that colonists built around Charleston 350 years ago to keep out invaders, but the Corps says the new wall is designed to keep out storm surge.

The agency's proposal includes a floating breakwater offshore and some nonstructural measures, such as raising homes not situated behind the sea wall. The entire project is estimated to cost \$1.75 billion.

The Corps has three years and \$3 million to find a fix for storm surge on the peninsula, though there's no guarantee yet that it will be funded and built.

The Charleston study is part of \$111 million funded by Congress in 2018 to address flooding and coastal storm issues in 14 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The wall is one of several engineering solutions, along with pumps, surge gates and levees proposed by the Corps in cities including Miami and Galveston, Texas.

Mark Wilbert, Charleston's chief resilience officer, said the city needs to do something to address current flooding and plan for the future.

"Why the wall? Why now?" Wilbert said. "It's about preparedness. You know, it's about preserving property and preventing lives lost for a future that we know will bring more frequent storms, more intense storms, in an area that we know is very vulnerable to that."

The Corps plan, which requires city approval and cost sharing, has created confusion among some residents who wonder why the city might pursue a solution only for storm surge at the expense of other flooding problems.

The Corps says it's constrained by its congressional mandate, which doesn't address other sources of flooding the city faces, such as stormwater runoff. That's mostly handled by the city.

A call for public comments this summer elicited hundreds of responses.

Conservation groups said the proposal needed a more rigorous environmental review, because the wall would cut through water-absorbing wetlands and wildlife habitats.

Resoundingly, residents said they needed more time to make sense of the proposal that would wall off one of the city's most defining traits — the waterfront, with its oleander-lined promenades, antebellum houses, fountains and expansive oaks — from the harbor.

Trying to please everyone by expanding the wall's scope may drive the project's costs past viability, Wilbert said, noting non-structural measures such as raising flood-prone homes could still provide adequate protection to neighborhoods left out of the plan.

The plan focuses on the peninsula, where the city's economic engines — its historic downtown, tourism hub and medical district — are located although some neighborhoods extend beyond that.

The wall stops short of two mostly Black neighborhoods — one a low-income apartment complex and the other a historic community called Rosemont.

The Corps has said both areas are high enough to use other solutions, such as floodproofing homes and buying out property owners. But residents of Rosemont, many elderly, are not readily able to move, said Nancy Button, Rosemont Neighborhood Association president: "Where are they going to go?" she said.

Naomi Yoder from the environmental policy organization Healthy Gulf questioned whether money for expensive engineering solutions posed by the Corps in coastal cities could be better used to elevate and fortify houses, and to create evacuation corridors for disasters. "Is there really a possibility for us to out-engineer the storms?" Yoder said.

Whether the city builds the wall or not, the process has accelerated the conversation Charleston needs

to have about sea level rise, said Winslow Hastie of the Historic Charleston Foundation.

"There's a benefit to the community coming together and having some soul searching," he said.

Michelle Liu is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

Azerbaijanis who fled war look to return home, if it exists

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP) — As Azerbaijan regains control of land it lost to Armenian forces a quarter-century ago, civilians who fled the fighting decades ago wonder if they can go back home now — and if there's still a home to go back to.

An estimated 600,000 Azerbaijanis were displaced in the 1990s war that left the Nagorno-Karabakh region under the control of ethnic Armenian separatists and large adjacent territories in Armenia's hands. During six weeks of renewed fighting this fall that ended Nov. 10, Azerbaijan took back parts of Nagorno-Karabakh itself and sizeable swaths of the outlying areas.

More territory is being returned as part of the ceasefire agreement that stopped the latest fighting. But as Azerbaijani forces discovered when the first area, Aghdam, was turned over on Friday, much of the recovered land is uninhabitable. The city of Aghdam, where 50,000 people once lived, is now a shattered ruin.

Adil Sharifov, 62, who left his hometown in 1992 during the first war and lives in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, knows he will find similar devastation if he returns to the city of Jabrayil, which he longs to do.

Jabrayil is one of the outlying areas regained by Azerbaijani troops before the recent fighting ended. Soon after it was taken, one of Sharifov's cousins went there and told him the city was destroyed, including the large house with an orchard where Sharifov's family once lived.

Nonetheless, "the day when I return there will be the greatest happiness for me," he said.

For years, he said, his family had followed reports about Jabrayil on the internet. They knew the destruction was terrible, but Sharifov's late mother retained a desperate hope that their house had been spared and held on to the keys.

"I will build an even better house," he vowed.

Ulviya Jumayeva, 50, can go back to better, though not ideal circumstances in her native Shusha, a city that Azerbaijani forces took in the key offensive of the six-week war.

Her younger brother, Nasimi, took part in the battle and phoned to tell her the apartment their family fled in 1992 was intact, though mostly stripped of the family's possessions.

"According to him, it is clear that Armenians lived there after us, and then they took everything away. But our large mirror in the hallway, which we loved to look at as children, remains," Jumayeva said, adding: "Maybe my grandchildren will look in this mirror."

"We all have houses in Baku, but everyone considered them to be not permanent, because all these years we lived in the hope that we would return to Shusha," she said. "Our hearts, our thoughts have always been in our hometown."

But she acknowledged that her feelings toward Armenians have become more bitter.

"My school friends were mostly Armenian. I never treated ordinary Armenians badly, believing that their criminal leaders who unleashed the war were to blame for the massacre, war, and grief that they brought to their people as well," Jumayeva said.

"But after the current events, after the shelling of peaceful cities ... after the Armenians who are now leaving our territories, which are even outside of Karabakh, burn down the houses of Azerbaijanis in which they lived illegally ... something fractured in me. I changed my attitude toward them," she said. "I understood that we, Azerbaijanis, will not be able to live peacefully next to the Armenians."

While Sharifov has less to go back to, he has a more moderate view, saying the two ethnic groups with different religious traditions still have the potential to live together amicably.

"If the Armenians observe the laws of Azerbaijan, and do not behave like bearded men who came to

kill, then we will live in peace," he said. "The time to shoot is over. Enough casualties. We want peace, we do not want war."

Associated Press writers Aida Sultanova in London and Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this story.

For rookie Thanksgiving cooks, expert tips to avoid disaster

By CANDICE CHOI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — After Christopher Hughey tweeted that he's tackling his first Thanksgiving turkey this year, the advice started rolling in.

Brine it. Don't bother. Try "spatchcocking" -- grilling the bird split open. Remember to turn on the oven, and expect that something will burn.

"One extreme is that it's going to be dry, and inedible and gross," said the Charlotte, North Carolina, resident, who already doesn't like cooking poultry because of fears he'll undercook it and sicken people. "The other extreme is that we'll all wind up in urgent care."

With health officials urging Americans to stay home or limit Thanksgiving gatherings, food experts say rookie cooks nervous about attempting their first Turkey Day spreads can avoid disaster and keep everyone healthy by following a few basic tips.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is also offering advice on how to prevent coronavirus infections while celebrating, including eating outside if possible, limiting traffic in the kitchen and just have one person serve the food.

As for the meal itself, experts say to get started well before the big day. A common mistake: Failing to plan so all the dishes can be ready in time. That includes leaving enough time for frozen turkeys to defrost in the fridge, where temperatures are cold enough to prevent bacteria from multiplying.

Since it takes a day of thawing for every 4 to 5 pounds, that could add up to several days depending on the turkey's size. Otherwise, sticking a frozen turkey in the oven could result in a bird that looks nicely browned, but is still cold inside.

"You'll basically have a turkey popsicle that maybe looks good, but it's not going to be cooked," said Frank Proto at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York.

Once the bird is thawed, experts say to resist any instincts to rinse it before cooking, which could end up splattering germs around. Thoroughly cooking should kill any germs on the turkey.

Making sure the bird is properly cooked -- it should be 165 degrees at the thickest part -- also means using a meat thermometer. Contrary to the advice many offered to Hughey, experts aren't fans of the pop-up thermometers that come stuck in some birds.

"Those are not always effective in determining the temperature," said Angela Shaw, a specialist at the Iowa State University's food safety extension.

Though there's debate about it, Shaw also recommends cooking the stuffing outside the turkey. Otherwise, she said it could pick up bacteria from the bird. Getting the stuffing hot enough to kill any germs could mean burning or drying out the turkey, she said.

Temperature control can be a problem even after everyone is done eating; experts say to refrigerate leftovers within two hours, since bacteria can grow quickly on food that's left out.

A dry, overcooked bird is the main worry for Celeste Molina, who's staying home with her partner and their roommates instead of spending it with family because of the pandemic. Molina, who works at a screen printing firm in Portland, Oregon, knows how badly first attempts can go; years ago, her aunt ended up burning the Thanksgiving bird.

"We got to her house and she's like, 'I'm just going to order you guys McDonald's,'" she said.

Molina isn't worried about her first turkey, but just in case, she and her partner plan to buy a chicken to roast alongside it.

Lori DeSanti, a real estate agent in Meriden, Connecticut, will also be making turkey with her husband for the first time, instead of going to her dad's or relative's home.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 69 of 70

DeSanti isn't that concerned about the turkey – she's never been a huge fan – and is focusing on pulling off a stuffing recipe.

"That's what I'm more worried about ruining," she said.

Advance planning could be important for another reason this year: Making sure you can get the right size bird, since gatherings are expected to be smaller.

In suburban Detroit, Robyn Dwoskin plans to get a turkey breast instead of a whole bird for her first attempt at a Thanksgiving spread, since it will just be her husband, their daughters and her mom. She's cooked turkey breasts in her slow cooker before, but hasn't yet figured out what she'll do for Thanksgiving.

"I'm still in denial that I'm actually making Thanksgiving this year," said Dwoskin, who owns a social media engagement company.

Back in North Carolina, Hughey is rethinking his game plan for the dinner he's cooking for his ex-wife and sons.

"Honestly, I hate to say this. I'm thinking about cheating," said Hughey, who owns a health care technology company. "I'm thinking my next stop is this place that does a fully cooked turkey."

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 23, the 328th day of 2020. There are 38 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 23, 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed Nov. 25 a day of national mourning following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

On this date:

In 1887, actor Boris Karloff was born William Henry Pratt in London.

In 1914, the seven-month U.S. military occupation of Veracruz, Mexico, ended.

In 1936, *Life*, the photojournalism magazine created by Henry R. Luce (loos), was first published.

In 1971, the People's Republic of China was seated in the U.N. Security Council.

In 1980, some 2,600 people were killed by a series of earthquakes that devastated southern Italy.

In 1996, a commandeered Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the water off the Comoros Islands, killing 125 of the 175 people on board, including all three hijackers.

In 2000, in a setback for Al Gore, the Florida Supreme Court refused to order Miami-Dade County officials to resume hand-counting its election-day ballots. Meanwhile, Gore's lawyers argued in a brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court that the high court should stay out of the Florida election controversy.

In 2001, the U.N. war crimes tribunal said it would try former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic (sloh-BOH'-dahn mee-LOH'-shuh-vich) for genocide in Bosnia, linking him for the first time in court to the murders of thousands of non-Serbs and the displacement of a quarter million people. (Milosevic died in March 2006 while his trial was in progress.)

In 2003, five U.S. soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan. Eduard Shevardnadze (sheh-vahrd-NAHD'-zeh) resigned as president of Georgia in the face of protests.

In 2006, former KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko (leet-vee-NYEN'-koh) died in London from radiation poisoning after making a deathbed statement blaming Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In 2012, supporters and opponents of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi clashed in the streets of Cairo and other major cities in the worst violence since Morsi took office nearly five months earlier. Actor Larry Hagman, best known for playing the scheming oil baron J.R. Ewing on TV's "Dallas," died in Dallas at the age of 81.

In 2016, President-elect Donald Trump selected two Republican women who'd had unflattering things to

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 143 ~ 70 of 70

say about him during the campaign: South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley to serve as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and charter school advocate Betsy DeVos to lead the Department of Education.

Ten years ago: North Korea bombarded South Korea's Yeonpyeong (yuhn-pyuhng) Island with artillery fire, killing four people and raising tensions between the two countries. Texas outfielder Josh Hamilton was a runaway winner of the American League's Most Valuable Player award. Ingrid Pitt, who'd survived a Nazi concentration camp and dodged Communist police to become one of Britain's best known horror stars, died in London at 73.

Five years ago: The White House urged its allies to step up their contributions to the campaign against the Islamic State, as President Barack Obama faced pressure to show the U.S.-led coalition would intensify efforts even without a major shift in strategy. Blue Origin, a private space company, landed a rocket called New Shepard upright and gently enough to be used again, a milestone in commercial aeronautics. Cynthia Robinson, 71, a trumpeter and vocalist who was a key member of Sly and the Family Stone, died in Carmichael, California.

One year ago: Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph was fined \$50,000 by the NFL for his involvement in a melee that began when Cleveland Browns defensive end Myles Garrett pulled off his helmet and hit him over the head with it. (In all, the league assessed more than \$700,000 for discipline stemming from the brawl; Garrett was indefinitely suspended.) Beginning a three-day visit to Japan, Pope Francis denounced the "evil" of nuclear weapons.

Today's Birthdays: Former Labor Secretary William E. Brock is 90. Actor Franco Nero is 79. Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas (ES'-tur-hahs) is 76. Actor-comedy writer Bruce Vilanch is 73. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., is 70. Singer Bruce Hornsby is 66. Former Sen. Mary Landrieu (LAN'-droo), D-La., is 65. Actor Maxwell Caulfield is 61. Actor John Henton is 60. TV personality Robin Roberts ("Good Morning America") is 60. Rock singer-musician Ken Block (Sister Hazel) is 54. Actor Salli Richardson-Whitfield is 53. Actor Oded Fehr (OH'-dehd fayr) is 50. Rapper-actor Kurupt (Tha Dogg Pound) is 48. Actor Page Kennedy is 44. Actor Kelly Brook is 41. Actor Lucas Grabeel (GRAY'-beel) is 36. TV personality Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi is 33. Actor-singer Miley Cyrus is 28. Actor Austin Majors is 25. Actor Olivia Keville (TV: "Splitting Up Together") is 18.