

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 1 of 70

- [2- City Council Agenda](#)
- [3- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [3- Groton Area COVID-19 Report](#)
- [4- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [7- Area COVID-19 Cases](#)
- [8- November 30th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [15- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [16- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [21- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Tuesday, December 1, 2020

- LifeTouch Picture Retake Day
- 3:15pm: Groton Novice Debate
- Junior High GBB at Clark-Willow Lake (7th at 4:30, 8th at 5:30)
- 7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

## Saturday, December 5, 2020

- 10:00am: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Jamboree at Groton



**CLOSED:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

December 1, 2020 – 7:00pm

Groton Community Center

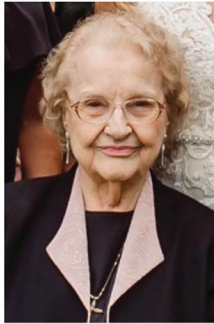
(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Midco Proposal Introduction
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. Department reports
6. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Ordinance #740 – Amend Liquor Laws
7. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Ordinance #738 – 2020 Supplemental Appropriation Ordinance
8. Holiday Lighting Contest – December 17<sup>th</sup>  
1<sup>st</sup> place - \$100  
2<sup>nd</sup> place - \$75  
3<sup>rd</sup> place - \$50
9. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
10. Set skating rink employee wages
11. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Ordinance #739 – 2021 Salary Ordinance
12. Adjournment

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 3 of 70

**GDILIVE.COM**



**Joyce Bawek  
Funeral Service  
10:30 a.m., Dec. 1  
Paetznick-Garness  
Funeral Chapel**

**GDILIVE.COM**

**City Council  
Meeting  
7 p.m., Dec. 1  
Groton Community center**

Groton Area School District																
Active COVID-19 Cases																
Updated November 30, 2020; 11:47 AM																
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total	
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	8	

*A positive case is considered active for a minimum of ten days after onset of symptoms. It is important to note that not all reported cases have been in school or school activities during their infectious periods (48 hours prior to onset of symptoms).*

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 4 of 70

**#281 in a series**

## **Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller**

Smallish day, probably the last hangover from the holiday weekend. Although some experts are telling us it will be a week before numbers normalize after the holiday, we'll see better where we are tomorrow; we can hope this lower-number thing continues.

Today, 157,600 new cases were reported, a 1.2% increase over yesterday's total. There have been 13,601,900 cases reported in the US so far in this pandemic. If the new-case numbers stay where they are, something that remains to be seen, we'll hit 14 million cases on Thursday, which would be the third consecutive period we've added a million new cases in six days.

Hospitalizations set a record again today, for the 19th day in the last 20 days. These are now at 93,265 across the country. I've been reading an unreasonable amount of garbage online lately from folks asserting that this pandemic isn't real, is a hoax, not that many people are dying, it's just a sort of flu, etc. And I don't really know what to say anymore about all of that. Even supposing we grant that the increase in cases is due simply to increased testing (and, for the record, it's not) and this really isn't as lethal as the folks perpetrating this "hoax" would have you believe, that doesn't explain the extreme stresses on hospitals across the nation. If it's not Covid-19 packing hospital wards all over the place, then we have some sort of new plague roaring through the population, putting records numbers of people into hospital beds and morgues, and we need to figure out what the hell it is. Because the increases in hospitalized people (for whatever cause) and deaths (from whatever cause) are real and measurable.

In Wisconsin, a rural health system is drawing up protocols for deciding which patients get care. That was unthinkable a year ago, and it's a reality now because there's simply nowhere to go for these systems running out of space and, more importantly, staff for those beds. According to the Washington Post, "In Arizona, a battle-weary doctor watched in horror as people flooded airports and flocked to stores for Black Friday sales, knowing it was only a matter of time before some of them wound up in his emergency room." More than a million people passed through US airports last Wednesday, the highest number since the pandemic began. This does not seem like a good thing at all. We're far from catching up to testing and reporting delays caused by the holiday, and our numbers are still not exactly great. Experts are suggesting it will take a week to get things back to normal, but it really does seem likely we're not going to like what we see when that happens.

Dave O'Connor, virologist at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, talked about a "surge on top of a surge," saying about Thanksgiving, "It is painful to watch, like seeing two trains in the distance and knowing they're about to crash, but you can't do anything to stop it. Because of the decisions and rationalizations people made to celebrate, we're in for a very dark December."

The recommendation is to stay at home for 14 days after you traveled and/or gathered for Thanksgiving to avoid further spread; but I'm going to hazard a guess folks who ignored recommendations not to do that are going to be fairly unlikely to quarantine either. You cannot make people care about their fellow humans; you can only recommend.

The scary thing is that Christmas is going to hit just about the time the consequences of Thanksgiving become apparent. Cleavon Gilman, Navy veteran and emergency room doctor in Yuma, Arizona, says this surge of holiday travel is a "slap in the face. It's as if there's not a pandemic happening. We're in a war right now, and half the country isn't on board."

California reported a record number of new cases today. Fifty-one of the state's 58 counties are classified at their highest risk level. 75% of ICU beds are occupied and, if nothing changes, that number is expected to reach 112% before Christmas. One in four Wisconsin residents hospitalized for Covid-19 are in ICU. A University of Arizona Covid-19 modeling team urged the state to take action or risk "a catastrophe on a scale of the worst natural disaster" ever experienced in the state, adding, "It would be akin to facing a major forest fire without evacuation orders." They project the state will exceed ICU capacity in the next few days and report their hospitals are full and there is nowhere to transfer new patients. Gilman says he and his colleagues are exhausted and there is no way they can handle the surge that's coming. The question will be whether enough of us give a damn about that.

Meanwhile, Gunderson Health System, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, chief executive, Scott Rathgaber, says,

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 5 of 70

"We've had to tell our hard-working staff, 'There's no one out there to come rescue us,'" adding, "We're not at a breaking point, but we are getting there. I'm concerned about what the next two weeks will bring."

There's big news in Vaccine World: Moderna has now recorded the number of infections needed to make the final determination of its candidate's effectiveness, and the additional data provides better news than the last set of preliminary data did. Overall, in the 30,000-volunteer trial in the US, there were 185 cases in participants who received placebo injections, 30 of those severe, and one ending in death. In the group of participants who received the vaccine candidate, there were 11 cases, which computes to 94.1% effectiveness. None of those 11 cases were severe, and that gives us 100% effectiveness in preventing severe disease. Even more, the efficacy rates were similar in elderly people and members of racial minority groups. This is beyond remarkable. Dr. Paul Offit, vaccine expert at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the FDA's vaccine advisory committee, said, "This is striking. These are amazing data." So it's not just me.

Moderna's chief medical officer, Dr. Tal Zaks, said he became emotional when he saw the data a couple of days ago. "It was the first time I allowed myself to cry. We have a full expectation to change the course of this pandemic."

Based on these findings and its analysis of safety data, the company was planning to submit an application to the FDA for emergency use authorization (EUA) today. Today will not be the first the FDA has seen of the Moderna findings; the company has been submitting "paper almost continuously from when we started," according to Stephen Hoge, president of Moderna. It is expected the FDA should be ready for a public meeting on December 17 to discuss these data. The company hopes to be putting vaccine into arms soon after. Supplies will be limited to begin with, but the company has been building up its production capability sort of on spec, for some time, just in case their candidate showed itself to be safe and effective. They expect to have some 20 million doses, enough for 10 million people, by the end of the year and between 500 million and a billion more doses next year. That early investment in production capacity looks as though it is about to pay off. The company was also planning to apply for authorization from the European Medicines Agency today.

Dr. Offit did say there is a need to look at the vaccine recipients who did get infected to determine why they did, explaining the remaining questions thus: "Were they more likely to be older? Were they more likely to be African-American or obese or have underlying medical problems like diabetes?" Understanding this can be important going forward. We also don't know whether vaccinated people can still get infected but have no symptoms; this is important to understand in terms of reducing transmission. Since the trials only record as cases those with symptoms, this whole issue remains to be explored. Moderna is collecting data on silent infections, but these won't be available until January or so. Until this issue can be evaluated, it is recommended for vaccinated people to continue taking precautions, wearing masks and such

You will recall the Pfizer vaccine has already been submitted in a request for EUA, and the public meeting to examine those data is scheduled for December 10. This is the same type of vaccine as the Moderna version, an mRNA vaccine, with similarly strong effectiveness numbers: 95% effectiveness in preventing infection with just one severe case in vaccinated participants. A similar number of doses is also expected to be available over the next several months. People, we need to hang on a while longer until we can start getting this stuff out there. No one wants to be the last soldier to die in a war that's just about over.

The order of events from here will be that the Advisory committee makes its recommendation and then the FDA commissioner makes his decision whether to accept that recommendation. With a couple of days after that, an advisory committee to the CDC will make its recommendation about prioritization for vaccination. That group has a meeting scheduled tomorrow; their work can get closer to final form as these new data come in. The expectation is that the first group recommended to receive vaccine will include health care workers, closely followed by nursing home residents and staff. Given the risk in the health care community and the large proportion of deaths seen in nursing home residents, these are reasonable ways to maximize the impact of limited supplies. It appears that, between the two companies, there will be just about enough vaccine available to cover those groups by year's end.

A quirky little study, as far as I know unpublished and likely to remain that way, was sparked by a research assistant at Harvard who studies affective science and social psychology noticing terrible Amazon



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 6 of 70

reviews for scented candles. (For the record, this is the sort of thing scientists do for spare-time fun.) Since loss of the sense of smell is fairly diagnostic for Covid-1, she decided to analyze reviews to see what they can tell us. She tweeted her analysis, "Since the beginning of 2020, customer satisfaction with scented has been dropping at a much faster rate compared to unscented candles." Turns out satisfaction dropped every time the pandemic surged, spiking in the spring, dropping off over the summer, and surging again now this fall. When she narrowed her analysis to focus only on reviews that complained about the candles lacking scent, the correlation got stronger. Still from her tweets, "Since the beginning of this year, the proportion of reviews mentioning lack of scent grew from <2% in January to close to 6% in November. These numbers may not seem like much, but the trajectory of no-scent reviews over the last 11 months is certainly an interesting one."

One review asked, "Why don't any of these . . . candles actually have any fragrance?" and another, at the height of irony, said, "There's virtually NO scent to these at all!!! If I wasn't confined to my home because of covid I would return these for sure."

Another odd thing, and one I'm not prepared to explain, is the case of a Singaporean woman who gave birth to a child with antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 virus months after she was infected. The mother is part of an ongoing study of pregnant women and their babies and the impact of Covid-19 on them. She and several family members got sick in March when she was 10 weeks pregnant; she experienced mild symptoms and recovered in due course. At the time her child was delivered early this month, her antibodies were no longer detectable, but the child did have them. While newborns can produce antibodies, the response is typically weak, so it seems likely the source of these antibodies would have been his mother. Antibodies of a certain class can be passed from mother to fetus through the placenta or from mother to child via breast milk. We don't know much about whether or how pregnant women might transmit this virus to their fetuses or about babies born with antibodies. Those antibodies, if they were transferred from Mom, as seems likely, generally don't last long; as the neonate's immune system develops, the foreign proteins are recognized as non-self and destroyed. An earlier study in China found that 11 babies born with antibodies began to lose them within a month of birth. We have a lot to understand yet here.

Guy Stanley Philoche is a successful artist in New York. His paintings go for up to \$125,000, but he remembers the lean days pretty well, trying to eke out a living, canvas by canvas. He had a highly successful show at a gallery in New York and decided to reward himself with a high-end designer watch.

Then the pandemic hit.

He started to worry about all the struggling artists who haven't gotten the breaks he did, and he needed to do something about that. So he went on a different sort of buying spree, buying works from other artists who were trying to stay above water in these difficult times. He put out a call on Instagram back in the spring, and so far, he's bought around \$60,000 worth of art, all works that appeal to him from the many offered. What's more, some of his patrons, people who breathlessly await what he's going to do next, are asking him to make purchases for them too, which multiplies the effect.

Philoche, who immigrated from Haiti at age 3 with his family and pretty much nothing else, feels a sense of obligation to help other artists. He has a budget, spending \$300 to \$500 on each piece and hanging everything on his walls in a glorious mash-up of color and form. He is putting together a gallery show for these pieces in the hope of bringing one or more of these artists to the world's attention. Throughout his career, he has had a simple rule to support other artists: "Sell a painting, buy a painting." He says, "It was just the right thing to do. . . . Some of these people have never sold a painting in their life. People didn't open the doors for me. I had to get into the room through the back door, or through the window. But now that I'm in the room, with a seat at the table, I have to open doors for these artists."

Funny thing: A guy who gets how lucky he's been and seeks to pass the luck along has opportunities to be even more successful. I feel like that's the way the world is supposed to work. How about we all take a look at all the ways we got lucky and resolve to pass the luck along?

Be well. We'll talk tomorrow.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 7 of 70

## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Nov. 18	Nov. 19	Nov. 20	Nov. 21	Nov. 22	Nov. 23	Nov. 24
Minnesota	236,949	242,043	249,906	256,700	262,952	270,157	276,500
Nebraska	103,805	106,617	109,280	111,661	113,029	114,061	115,921
Montana	49,398	50,582	51,818	53,293	54,542	55,580	56,381
Colorado	172,044	176,694	182,801	188,566	194,679	198,600	202,289
Wyoming	21,047	21,750	22,489	23,347	23,567	24,309	25,560
North Dakota	65,967	67,230	68,612	70,016	71,540	72,683	73,397
South Dakota	67,284	68,671	69,742	71,070	72,214	73,065	73,848
United States	11,360,125	11,530,345	11,718,867	11,913,945	12,090,469	12,247,487	12,421,216
US Deaths	248,707	250,548	252,564	254,424	255,905	256,783	257,707

Minnesota	+5,931	+5,094	+7,863	+6,794	+6,252	+7,205	+6,343
Nebraska	+2,204	+2,812	+2,663	+2,381	+1,368	+1,032	+1,860
Montana	+1,371	+1,184	+1,236	+1,475	+1,249	+1,038	+801
Colorado	+4,331	+4,650	+6,107	+5,765	+6,113	+3,921	+3,689
Wyoming	+1,162	+703	+739	+858	+220	+742	+1,251
North Dakota	+1,082	1,263	+1,382	+1,404	+1,524	+1,143	+714
South Dakota	+1,006	+1,387	+1,071	+1,328	+1,144	+851	+783
United States	+154,640	+170,220	+188,522	+195,078	+176,524	+157,018	+173,729
US Deaths	+1,487	+1,841	+2,016	+1,860	+1,481	+878	+924

	Nov. 25	Nov. 26	Nov. 28	Nov.29	Nov. 30	Dec. 01
Minnesota	282,916	289,303	295,001	304,023	306,603	318,763
Nebraska	117,682	120,076	124,066	125,323	126,466	128,407
Montana	57,504	58,565	59,796	60,845	61,801	62,198
Colorado	206,439	210,630	220,953	225,283	228,772	232,905
Wyoming	25,975	26,677	27,597	27,737	28,252	29,053
North Dakota	74,401	75,478	77,232	77,935	78,658	79,252
South Dakota	74,859	76,142	78,280	79,099	79,900	80,464
United States	12,597,333	12,780,410	13,092,661	13,247,386	13,385,494	13,545,793
US Deaths	259,962	262,282	264,866	266,074	266,887	268,103

Minnesota	+6,416	+6,387	+5,698	+9,022	+2,580	+12,160
Nebraska	+1,761	+2,294	+2,990	+1,257	+1,143	+1,941
Montana	+1,123	+1,061	+1,231	+1,049	+956	+397
Colorado	+4,150	+4,191	+10,323	+4,330	3,489	+4,133
Wyoming	+415	+702	+920	+140	+515	+801
North Dakota	+1,004	+1,077	+1,754	+703	+723	+594
South Dakota	+1,011	+1,283	+2,138	+819	+801	+564
United States	+176,117	+183,077	+312,251	+154,725	+138,108	+160,299
US Deaths	+2,255	+2,320	+2,584	+1,208	+813	+1,216

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 8 of 70

## November 30th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Faulk and Sully counties have been moved from substantial spread to moderate spread while Harding County has been elevated from minimal spread to moderate spread. Campbell, Jones and Miner counties remain in moderate spread. Everyone else in the state is substantial spread.

Three deaths were recorded with two in 70s and one in their 60s. They were one female and two males. One in each Day, Fall River and Hutchinson county.

Otherwise the numbers are low today with 564 positive cases and 307 recovered ones.

Glacial Lakes hospital beds being occupied by COVID-19 patients as well as Minnehaha and Pennington counties: Walworth: 5 (-0) Occupied Beds.; Potter: 3 (+0) Occupied Beds; Hughes: 12 (+1) Occupied Beds, 3 (-1) ICU Beds, 2 (-0) Ventilation; Hand: 0 (-1) Occupied Beds; Faulk: 1 (-1) Occupied Beds; Edmunds: 4 (+0) Occupied Bed; McPherson: 0 (-1) Occupied Bed; Brown: 32 (-2) Occupied Beds, 6 (+0) ICU, 0 (-1) Ventilation; Spink: 1 (-0) Occupied Beds; Day: 3 (+1) Occupied Beds; Marshall: 2 (+0) Occupied Beds; Grant: 2 (+0) Occupied Beds; Codington: 10 (+2) Occupied Beds, 2 (+1) ICU, 0 (-1) Ventilation; None (some counties have no hospitals): Clark, Hyde, Stanley, Sully, Campbell, Roberts; Minnehaha: 277 (+2) Occupied Beds, 66 (+9) ICU, 44 (+7) Ventilation; Pennington: 78 (-4) Occupied Beds, 14 (+0) ICU, 10 (+0) Ventilation.

Brown County:  
Total Positive: +32 (3641) Positivity Rate: 15.8%  
Total Tests: +202 (27,959)  
Total Individuals Tested: +75 (13,809)  
Recovered: +17 (2,883)  
Active Cases: +15 (737)  
Ever Hospitalized: +4 (214)  
Deaths: +0 (21)  
Percent Recovered: 79.2%  
Hospital Reports:  
Avera St. Luke's: Covid-19 Occupied 24 (-0); ICU 3 (+0), Ventilation 0 (0).  
Sanford Aberdeen: Covid-19 Occupied 8 (-2); ICU 3 (-0), Ventilation 0 (-1)  
Sanford Webster: Covid-19 Occupied 3 (+1).  
Marshall County Healthcare: Covid-19 Occupied: 2 (+0).

South Dakota:  
Positive: +564 (80,464 total) Positivity Rate: 19.5%  
Total Tests: 2,893 (609,900 total)  
Total Individuals Tested: 1108 (328,852)  
Hospitalized: +34 (4502 total). 546 currently hospitalized +2)  
Deaths: +3 (946 total)  
Recovered: +307 (62,334 total)  
Active Cases: +254 (17,184)  
Percent Recovered: 77.4%  
Total COVID-19 Occupied Beds: 546 (+2), Black Hills Region 109 (-2), Glacial Lakes Region 75 (-1) Sioux Empire Region 291 (-1), South Central Plains

71 (+6).

ICU Units: Total 100 (+9), BH 15 (-0), GL 11 (+0), SE 66 (+9), SCP 8 (-0).

Ventilation: Total 57 (+6), BH 10 (+0), GL 2 (-1), SE 44 (+7), SCP 1 (-0).

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 19% Covid, 41% Non-Covid, 40% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 48% Covid, 34% non-covid, 19% available.

Staffed Adult + Pediatric ICU Bed Capacity: 65% Occupied, 35% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 13% Covid, 12% Non-Covid, 75% Available

Beadle (29) +5 positive, +7 recovered (466 active cases)

Brookings (16) +19 positive, +3 recovered (471 active cases)

Brown (21): +32 positive, +17 recovered (736 active cases)

Clark (1): +2 positive, +0 recovered (62 active cases)

Clay (10): +5 positive, +5 recovered (280 active cases)

Codington (50): +41 positive, +18 recovered (507 active cases)

Davison (36): +20 positive, +11 recovered (642 active cases)

Day (10): +7 positive, +2 recovered (127 active cases)

Edmunds (2): +3 positive, +2 recovered (49 active cases)



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 9 of 70

cases)

Faulk (10): +2 positive, +1 recovered (26 active cases)

Grant (12): +2 positive, +5 recovered (157 active cases)

Hanson (2): +2 positive, +3 recovered (86 active cases)

Hughes (18): +6 positive, +8 recovered (344 active cases)

Lawrence (22): +26 positive, +8 recovered (423 active cases)

Lincoln (51): +14 positive, +23 recovered (1082 active cases)

Marshall (3): +5 positive, +2 recovered (61 active cases)

McCook (15): +1 positive, +1 recovered (142 active cases)

McPherson (1): +1 positive, +0 recovery (47 active case)

Minnehaha (183): +66 positive, +78 recovered (4059 active cases)

Pennington (77): +66 positive, +26 recovered (1919 active cases)

Potter (1): +4 positive, +0 recovered (75 active cases)

Roberts (19): +11 positive, +2 recovered (170 active cases)

Spink (14): +7 positive, +1 recovered (124 active cases)

Walworth (12): +9 positive, +4 recovered (129 active cases)

## NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Nov. 30:

- 12.4% rolling 14-day positivity
- 598 new positives
- 7,095 susceptible test encounters
- 331 currently hospitalized (+8)
- 6,477 active cases (-360)
- 927 total deaths (+7)

## Yesterday

Global Cases
<b>62,829,641</b>
13,385,494 US
9,431,691 India
6,314,740 Brazil
2,275,936 Russia
2,270,573 France
1,628,208 Spain
1,621,307 United Kingdom
1,585,178 Italy
1,418,807 Argentina
1,308,376 Colombia
1,107,071 Mexico
1,059,755 Germany
990,811 Poland
962,530 Peru

Global Deaths
<b>1,461,049</b>

266,887 deaths US
172,833 deaths Brazil
137,139 deaths India
105,655 deaths Mexico
58,342 deaths United Kingdom
54,904 deaths Italy
52,410 deaths France
48,246 deaths Iran

## Today

Global Cases
<b>63,347,492</b>
13,545,793 US
9,462,809 India
6,335,878 Brazil
2,302,062 Russia
2,275,016 France
1,648,187 Spain
1,633,733 United Kingdom
1,601,554 Italy
1,424,533 Argentina
1,316,806 Colombia
1,113,543 Mexico
1,072,412 Germany
999,924 Poland
975,951 Iran

Global Deaths
<b>1,470,456</b>

268,103 deaths US
173,120 deaths Brazil
137,621 deaths India
105,940 deaths Mexico
58,545 deaths United Kingdom
55,576 deaths Italy
52,819 deaths France
48,628 deaths Iran

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 10 of 70

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
▲						
Aurora	360	269	732	5	Substantial	36.54%
Beadle	2278	1783	4659	29	Substantial	21.19%
Bennett	314	262	1034	5	Substantial	7.14%
Bon Homme	1363	1214	1742	14	Substantial	23.85%
Brookings	2448	1961	8739	16	Substantial	9.32%
Brown	3641	2883	10168	21	Substantial	25.91%
Brule	566	459	1598	5	Substantial	27.07%
Buffalo	378	321	821	8	Substantial	21.62%
Butte	726	592	2576	13	Substantial	16.44%
Campbell	103	92	186	1	Moderate	16.67%
Charles Mix	878	586	3346	5	Substantial	19.08%
Clark	253	190	768	1	Substantial	20.00%
Clay	1373	1083	4131	10	Substantial	16.12%
Codington	2686	2129	7537	50	Substantial	25.30%
Corson	385	315	844	5	Substantial	41.18%
Custer	540	420	2160	7	Substantial	13.17%
Davison	2405	1727	5269	36	Substantial	26.75%
Day	381	244	1397	10	Substantial	35.19%
Deuel	311	236	907	2	Substantial	36.36%
Dewey	883	511	3361	3	Substantial	29.55%
Douglas	294	231	755	5	Substantial	17.46%
Edmunds	252	201	847	2	Substantial	11.88%
Fall River	365	293	2102	10	Substantial	9.04%
Faulk	280	244	555	10	Moderate	18.18%
Grant	620	451	1763	12	Substantial	30.32%
Gregory	439	339	974	20	Substantial	23.76%
Haakon	149	121	460	3	Substantial	10.99%
Hamlin	481	324	1376	4	Substantial	22.67%
Hand	283	214	659	1	Substantial	30.00%
Hanson	264	176	533	2	Substantial	54.32%
Harding	74	62	133	0	Moderate	38.89%
Hughes	1655	1293	4908	18	Substantial	20.40%
Hutchinson	573	395	1841	9	Substantial	39.17%

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 11 of 70

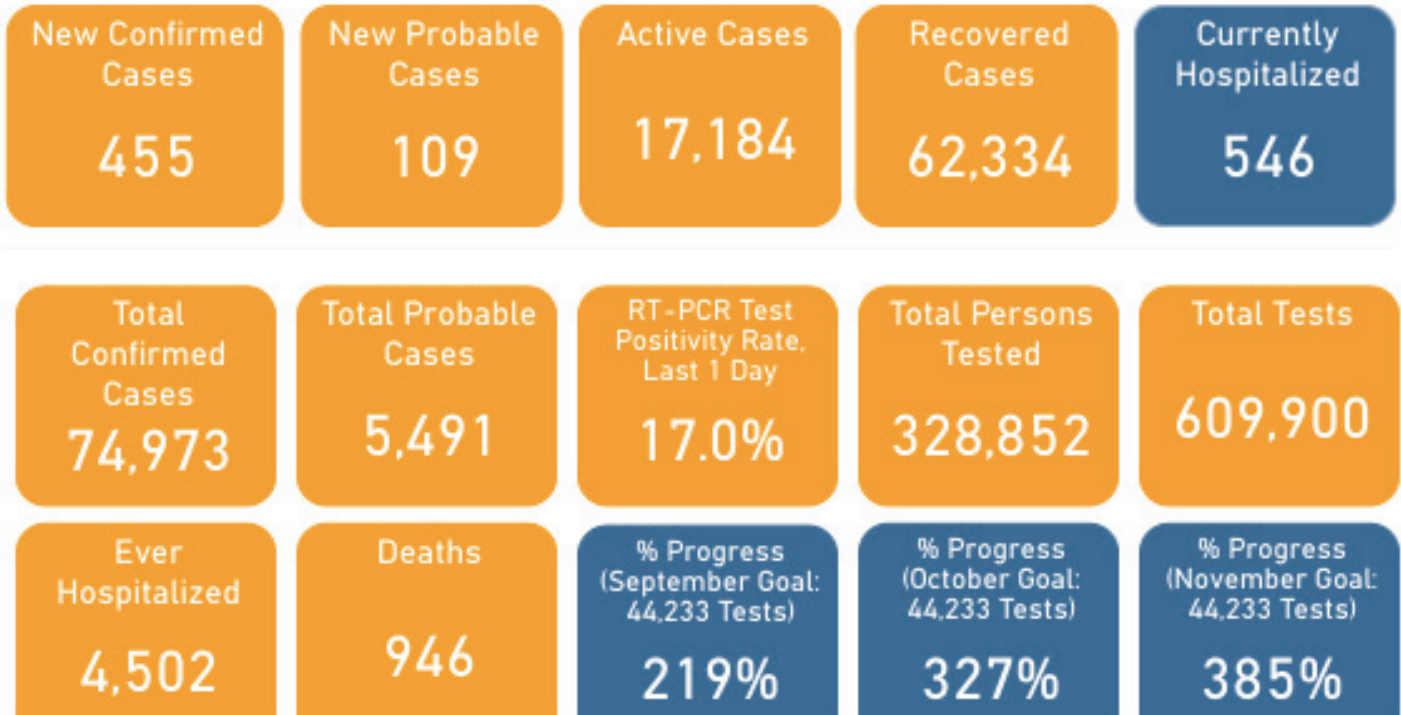
Hyde	125	86	338	0	Substantial	50.00%
Jackson	205	156	825	8	Substantial	23.19%
Jerauld	237	187	441	13	Substantial	17.86%
Jones	62	49	151	0	Moderate	10.00%
Kingsbury	441	322	1261	10	Substantial	15.22%
Lake	865	646	2529	10	Substantial	16.60%
Lawrence	2035	1590	6961	22	Substantial	14.10%
Lincoln	5424	4291	15616	51	Substantial	23.82%
Lyman	455	369	1563	8	Substantial	24.76%
Marshall	183	119	902	3	Substantial	31.58%
McCook	597	440	1271	15	Substantial	28.18%
McPherson	150	102	467	1	Substantial	11.27%
Meade	1753	1376	6096	13	Substantial	15.08%
Mellette	178	142	614	1	Substantial	15.79%
Miner	188	152	465	5	Moderate	8.33%
Minnehaha	20520	16278	61120	183	Substantial	23.48%
Moody	417	304	1489	10	Substantial	25.22%
Oglala Lakota	1640	1280	5956	23	Substantial	22.18%
Pennington	8670	6674	30460	77	Substantial	15.67%
Perkins	201	117	564	2	Substantial	38.67%
Potter	271	195	649	1	Substantial	17.89%
Roberts	714	525	3590	19	Substantial	20.68%
Sanborn	271	177	553	1	Substantial	22.39%
Spink	560	420	1745	14	Substantial	25.32%
Stanley	229	172	678	0	Substantial	21.74%
Sully	91	71	204	3	Moderate	15.00%
Todd	954	760	3591	12	Substantial	24.64%
Tripp	512	377	1242	4	Substantial	34.78%
Turner	784	619	2127	42	Substantial	15.09%
Union	1252	985	4828	25	Substantial	19.27%
Walworth	485	344	1460	12	Substantial	28.26%
Yankton	1787	1267	7511	9	Substantial	18.19%
Ziebach	207	121	585	7	Substantial	42.31%
Unassigned	0	0	1655	0		



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 12 of 70

## South Dakota



### AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	2788	0
10-19 years	8755	0
20-29 years	15181	2
30-39 years	13458	9
40-49 years	11504	17
50-59 years	11433	58
60-69 years	9033	126
70-79 years	4669	204
80+ years	3643	530

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	42012	464
Male	38452	482

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 13 of 70

## Brown County

New Confirmed Cases

32

New Probable Cases

0

Active Cases

737

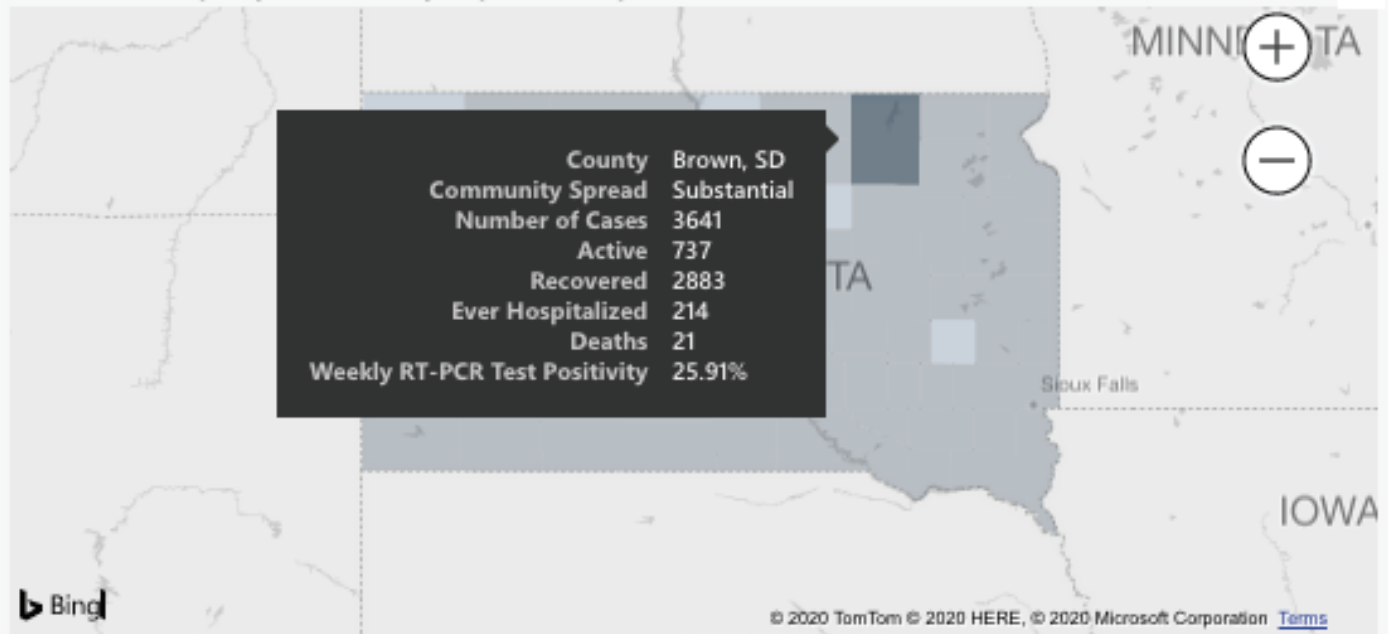
Recovered Cases

2,883

Currently Hospitalized

546

### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

Total Confirmed Cases

3,522

Total Probable Cases

119

RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate, Last 1 Day

14.2%

Total Persons Tested

13,809

Total Tests

27,959

Ever Hospitalized

214

Deaths

21

% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)

8%

% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)

327%

% Progress (November Goal: 44,233 Tests)

385%



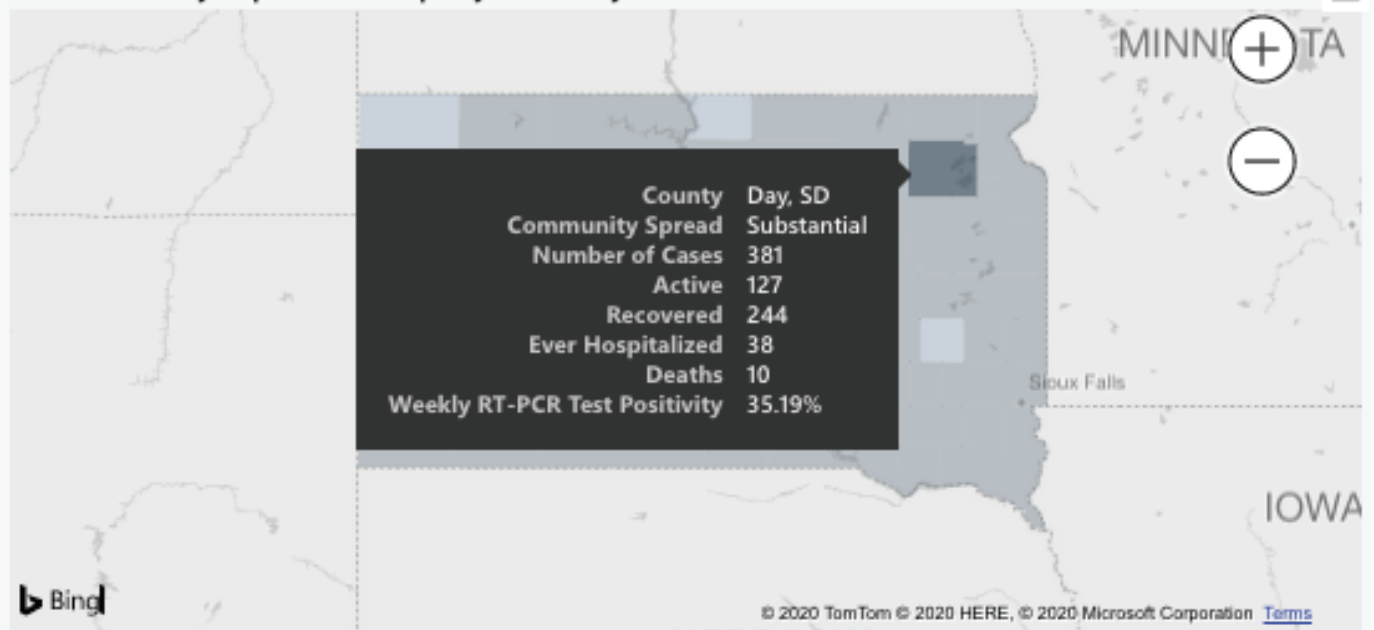
# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 14 of 70

## Day County

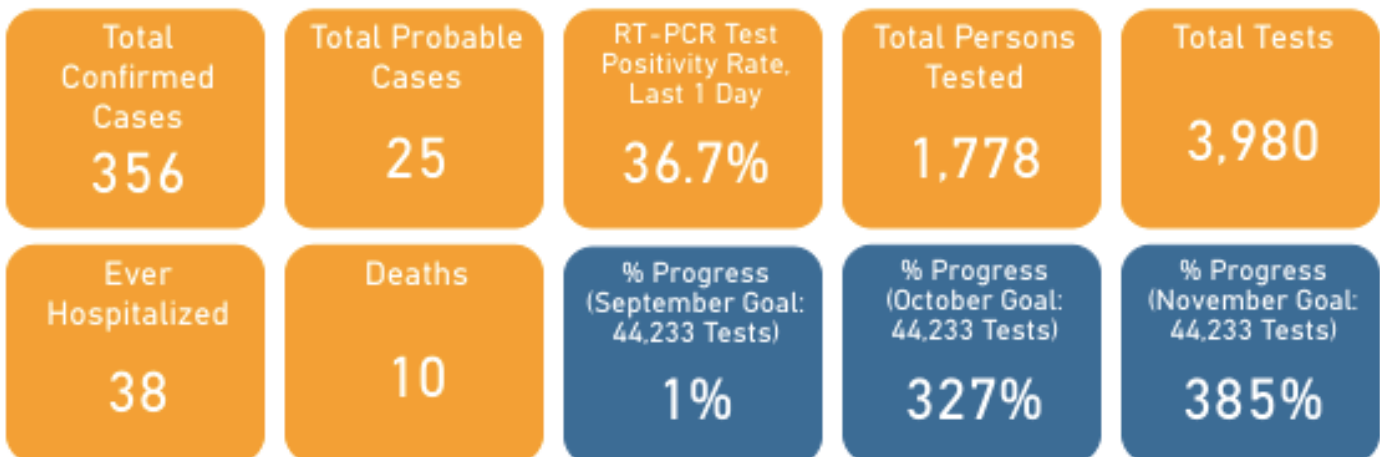


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread ● Moderate ● Substantial

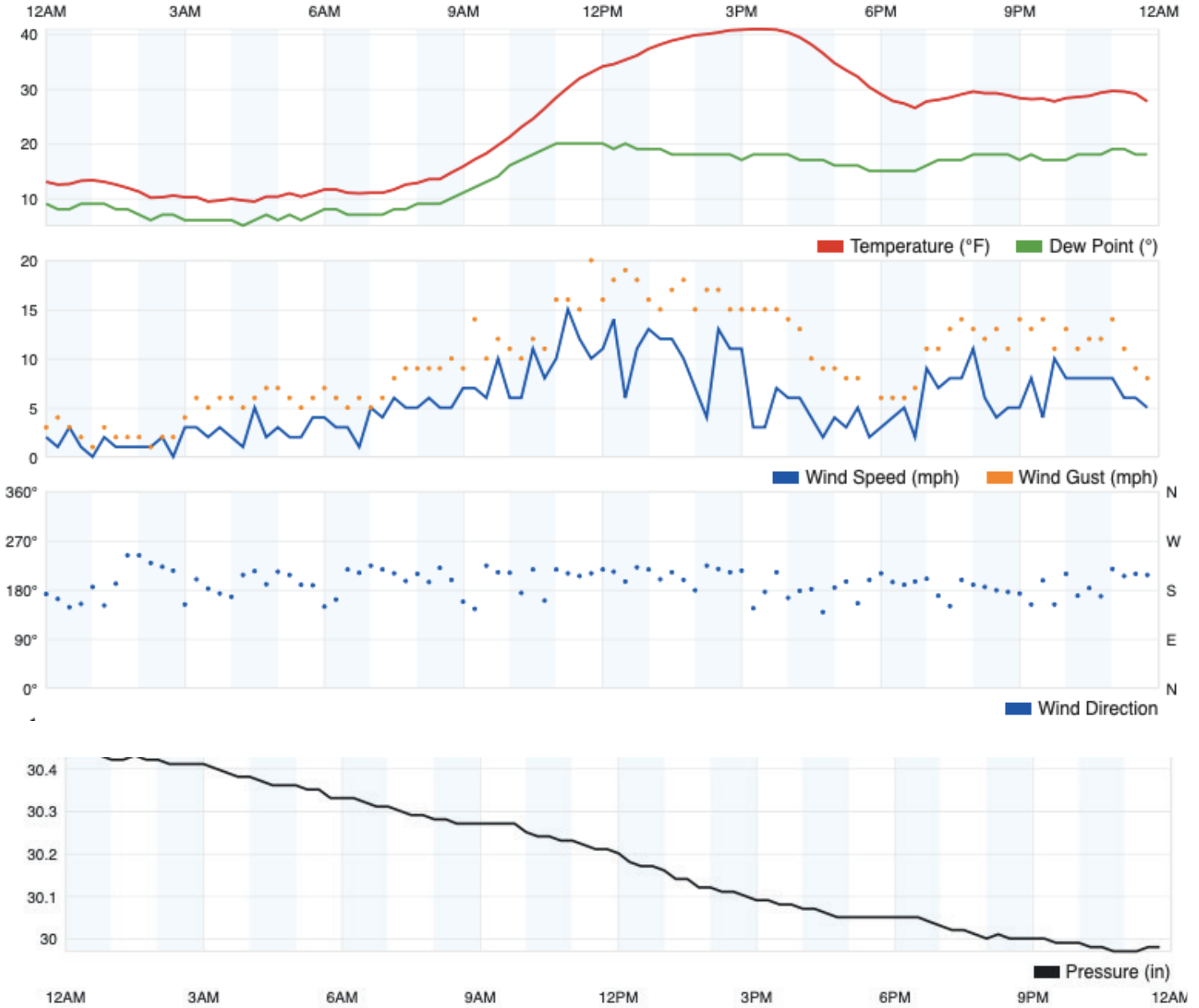
Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 15 of 70

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 16 of 70

Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 40 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 23 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 35 °F

Wednesday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 17 °F

Thursday



Sunny

High: 41 °F

**TODAY**

- Partly Cloudy, Windy West
- Highs 35-48°F

**WEDNESDAY**

- Mostly Cloudy & Colder with Snow Showers Possible West and South
- Highs 29-38°F

**THURSDAY**

- Mostly Sunny
- Highs 34-47°F

Graphic Created 12/1/2020 3:04 AM  
National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Other than a slight chance of snow showers Wednesday, it should remain dry through the latter part of the work week. #sdwx #mnwx



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 17 of 70

## Today in Weather History

November 30, 1981: A two-day winter storm, beginning as rain, changing to freezing rain and then to snow, completely paralyzed the eastern half of South Dakota, as well as west central Minnesota Monday, November 30 through Tuesday, December 1, 1981. Snow accumulations of between eight and twelve inches were common in South Dakota. Wind with gusts to near 50 mph whipped the snow into blizzard conditions. The Governor of South Dakota closed east-west Interstate 90 to all traffic. Hundreds of motorists were stranded. One person died during snow removal after the storm. Some storm total snowfall amounts included 8 inches at Kennebec, 7 inches at Pierre and Faulkton, 4 inches at Aberdeen, and 2 inches at Watertown. The winter precipitation was caused by a storm center that moved from Kansas Monday through Iowa Monday night and into Wisconsin Tuesday morning, December 1st. The same storm produced heavy snow and blizzard conditions over a large area of the central Plains. Travel was especially difficult because of the snow. Many roads were impassible and motorists were forced to find shelter.

November 30, 1991: The third major winter storm of the season moved from the central plains to eastern South Dakota. The storm generally dropped between 4 and 8 inches of snow over the eastern third of South Dakota from the 28th to the 30th. New snow accumulations of 2 to 5 inches occurred over most of the rest of the state. Some specific snow reports across the area included Aberdeen with 2 inches and Watertown with 3 inches. Five inches fell at Clear Lake and 3 inches fell near Summit. Strong winds developed after the snow fell, producing widespread blowing and drifting snow, especially across the northeast corner of South Dakota.

November 30, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 12 inches fell across a large part of northern South Dakota and into western Big Stone County in Minnesota, causing travel problems and school closings. Several accidents also occurred due to the slippery roads. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Milbank and Ortonville; 8 inches at McLaughlin, Ipswich, Summit, and Mellette; 9 inches northwest of Britton, Clear Lake, and Pollock; 10 inches at Leola and Faulkton; 11 inches at Aberdeen and Webster; and 12 inches at Houghton.

November 30, 1925: An extremely rare late November hurricane began to affect the west coast of Florida as it strengthened during the day. The storm made landfall very early on December 1st south of Tampa Bay, weakened to a tropical storm as it crossed central Florida, and exited around St. Augustine. The storm regained Hurricane strength off Jacksonville late on the 1st. Heavy rain continued over northeast Florida on the 2nd. Gale force winds were reported from the Keys to Jacksonville and over 50 people lost their lives, mostly on ships at sea. Damage along the coast south of Jacksonville was heavy and excessive rain and wind seriously damaged citrus and truck crops.

1875 - A severe early season cold wave set November records in the northeastern U.S. The temperature dipped to 5 above zero at New York City, 2 below at Boston MA, and 13 below at Eastport ME. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Lee slope winds enhanced by Hurricane Nina gusted to 82 mph at Honolulu, Hawaii, a record wind gust for that location. Wainiha, on the island of Kauai, was deluged with 20.42 inches of rain, and 35 foot waves pounded some Kauai beaches, even though the eye of the hurricane was never within 120 miles of the islands. (30th-1st) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A record November snowstorm struck the Washington D.C. area. It produced up to a foot of snow in a 12 hour period. (David Ludlum)

1976 - MacLeod Harbor, AK, reported a precipitation total for November of 70.99 inches, which established a state record for any month of the year. (The National Weather Summary)

# Groton Daily Independent

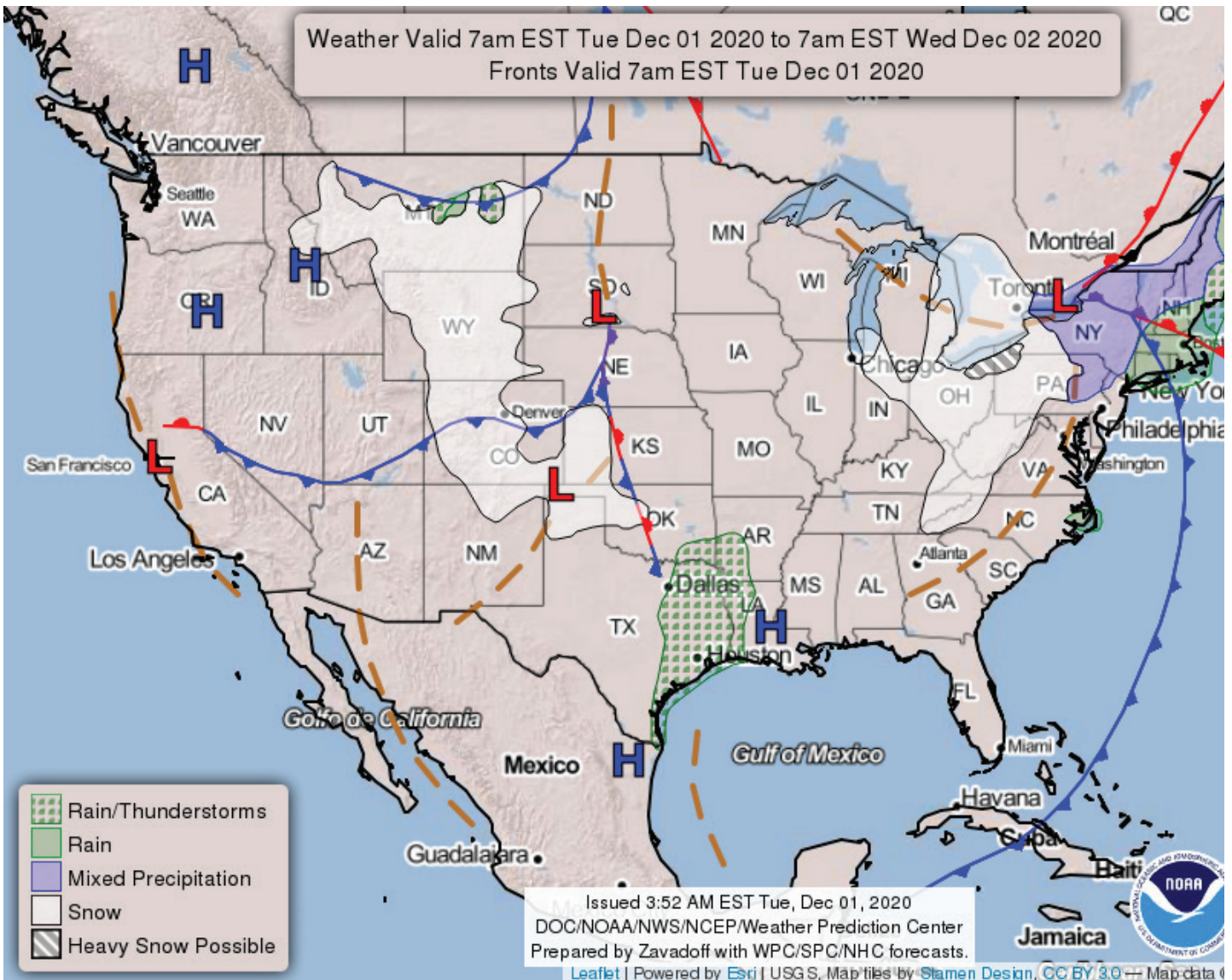
Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 18 of 70

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 41 °F at 3:20 PM**  
**Low Temp: 9 °F at 4:20 AM**  
**Wind: 20 mph at 11:44 AM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 62° in 1969**  
**Record Low: -24° in 1893**  
**Average High: 31°F**  
**Average Low: 11°F**  
**Average Precip in Nov.: 0.73**  
**Precip to date in Nov.: 0.18**  
**Average Precip to date: 21.20**  
**Precip Year to Date: 16.52**  
**Sunset Tonight: 4:52 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:55 a.m.**





# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 19 of 70



## ARE YOU READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

Hal and Matt, two longtime friends, accidentally met in a department store a few weeks before Christmas. They gave each other a forced smile – as if they were happy to see each other – but wished their meeting was under different circumstances.

“You know,” said Hal, “I’ve come to the conclusion that Christmas has become a wrap race.”

“I agree,” replied Matt. “And I’ll tell you something else. I’ve finally discovered the real meaning of the word Yule.”

“Oh,” responded Hal. “What is it? I’d like to know myself.”

“It’s my wife saying in a very convincing voice, ‘You’ll buy me this and then you’ll buy me that!’ I feel like I have no choice but to buy her whatever she asks for,” replied Matt. “Everything seems to be about things.”

It would be a wise investment of our time this Christmas to try to imagine what God might have seen when He looked into the manger. Certainly it was more, much more, than a Baby. Did He see the crowds ridiculing and mocking His Son? Did He turn His head when He saw the “kiss of betrayal” from Judas? Was His mind troubled by the trial that unjustly condemned His Son? Did He weep when He saw Jesus hanging from the cross? Certainly. But let’s not forget to see the smile that was on His face and the peace that flooded into His heart when He saw the empty tomb.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to get ready for Christmas by seeing its sights and sounds through Your eyes. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 20 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

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 21 of 70

## News from the Associated Press

### Girl's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school girl's preseason poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points.

#### Class AA

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Sioux Falls O'Gorman	(10)	65
2. Sioux Falls Washington	(4)	56
3. Harrisburg	-	43
4. Brandon Valley	-	21
5. Stevens	-	13

Others receiving votes: Aberdeen Central 9, SF Lincoln 2, Mitchell 1.

#### Class A

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Winner	(13)	69
2. St. Thomas More	(1)	55
3. Hamlin	-	30
4. Tea Area	-	23
5. West Central	-	17

Others receiving votes: Flandreau 5, Lennox 4, Red Cloud 4, Dakota Valley 2, Hill City 1.

#### Class B

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Corsica-Stickney	(14)	70
2. Castlewood	-	48
3. Colman-Egan	-	26
4. Faith	-	23
5. De Smet	-	18

Others receiving votes: Ethan 5, White River 4, Viborg-Hurley 4, Howard 4, Bridgewater-Emery 4, Deubrook Area 2, Waubay-Summit 2.

### Boy's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press \

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school boy's preseason poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points.

#### Class AA

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Sioux Falls Roosevelt	(9)	64
2. Yankton	(5)	61
3. Brandon Valley	-	36
4. Sioux Falls Washington	-	17
5. Harrisburg	-	13

Others receiving votes: Sioux Falls O'Gorman 7, Mitchell 5, Rapid City Central 5, Aberdeen Central 2.

#### Class A

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Dakota Valley	(11)	67
2. Sioux Falls Christian	(3)	55

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 22 of 70

3. Tea Area - 38

4. Dell Rapids - 15

5. Sioux Valley - 14

Others receiving votes: Vermillion 11, St. Thomas More 7, Red Cloud 3.

Class B

Rank-School FPV TP

1. De Smet (11) 66

2. White River (1) 47

3. Platte-Geddes (2) 38

4. Viborg-Hurley - 17

5. Dell Rapids St. Mary - 16

Others receiving votes: Aberdeen Christian 14, Canistota 5, Howard 5, Hanson 2.

## Townsend, No. 18 Gonzaga women rally past South Dakota 54-50

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Jill Townsend scored 20 points, including six free throws in the final 30 seconds, and No. 18 Gonzaga rallied to defeat South Dakota 54-50 on Monday.

Down 18 in the first half, 12 at halftime and seven entering the fourth quarter, Townsend and Kayleigh Truong combined for the first nine points, giving the Bulldogs a 40-38 lead on a Truong jumper.

The lead reached seven with four minutes to play but the Coyotes cut it to one. Townsend then answered every South Dakota State challenge with a pair of free throws, at 27 seconds, 22 seconds and the clinchers at three seconds.

Gonzaga (1-1) was 6 of 10 from the foul line through three quarters after going 5 of 13 in a 79-72 loss to No. 1 South Carolina on Sunday, made 9 of 10 in the fourth quarter. The Bulldogs also made 6 of 12 from the field after shooting 25% in the first half. They shot 53% against South Carolina and moved up three spots in the poll after the opening loss.

Truong finished with 12 points.

South Dakota (0-2), which lost 81-71 to South Carolina on Saturday, was 8 of 16 in the first quarter but 9 of 33 after and only went 3 of 18 from distance.

Liv Korngable led the Coyotes with 20 points and six assists and Hannah Sjerven had 12 points with nine rebounds.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/hub/womens-college-basketball> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25).

## Doctors hope virus downtick holds as deadliest month ends

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Doctors from South Dakota's largest hospital systems said Monday they hope that a recent downtick in virus cases holds steady after the Thanksgiving holiday as the state concluded its deadliest month of the pandemic to date.

Health officials reported three deaths from COVID-19, bringing November's total of deaths reported to 521. That's more than all other months of the pandemic combined. The total death toll from the virus is currently at 946.

During November, South Dakota had the nation's highest rate of COVID-19 deaths per capita, with Johns Hopkins researchers tracking 59 per 100,000 people. The state has the nation's ninth-highest rate of virus deaths over the course of the entire pandemic. Most of the people killed by the virus were over the age of 79.

The state has seen its average number of new cases reported over the last week decline to 976 a day. But it still had the nation's third-highest number of new cases per capita over the last two weeks, accord-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 23 of 70

ing to Johns Hopkins researchers. One in every 129 people tested positive in the past week.

"For the first time in about three months, we've seen kind of a leveling off of cases and hospitalizations," Dr. David Basel, vice president for clinical quality with Avera Medical Group, said at a news conference. "But they're leveling off at a very high level still."

Basel said the hospital system's ICU wards are running at or above capacity and administrators are looking to convert more space to take care of patients needing ICU care. There are currently 546 people hospitalized with COVID-19 statewide.

The Department of Health reported one of the lowest numbers of new cases and tests completed in recent weeks, a slowdown likely caused by the Thanksgiving holiday. Health officials reported 564 people tested positive.

Basel urged people to take precautions against spreading infections in the next "weeks to months" before vaccines become available to the general public.

Faced with some of the nation's worst rates of coronavirus cases, cities across the state have moved to pass mask requirements. But Republican Gov. Kristi Noem has opposed mask mandates or other government interventions aimed at preventing infections.

The Rapid City Council will consider a mask mandate in a special session on Monday. Students in the city's school district are also returning to in-person instruction after several weeks of distance learning due to infections among staff members.

District spokeswoman Katy Urban says school officials have continued to monitor coronavirus case numbers throughout the Thanksgiving break and since they've stabilized, the COVID-19 team feels a return to in-person instruction is appropriate.

## Remains in Watertown well are not those of missing woman

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — Authorities said Monday that the remains removed from an abandoned well in Deuel County in early November are not those of a missing woman — and are not human at all.

Deuel County Sheriff Cory Borg said the remains were identified as belonging to an immature hooved animal, probably a deer or cattle, the Aberdeen American News reported.

The bones were found Nov. 3 as part of an investigation into the 2001 disappearance of Pamela Dunn, after a Deuel County resident gave authorities a lead that led them to dig up the well north of Clear Lake.

"We will continue the search for Pamela and follow up on any leads," Borg said. Anyone with information is asked to call Watertown police.

Dunn's ex-boyfriend, David Asmussen, is serving a life sentence in prison after he was convicted of kidnapping her. However, prosecutors say no homicide charges have been filed because a body was never found.

## European regulator to decide Dec. 29 on 1st virus vaccine

By FRANK JORDANS, MARIA CHENG and SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The European Medicines Agency will convene a meeting on Dec. 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved, the regulator said Tuesday.

The agency also said Tuesday it could decide as early as Jan. 12 whether to approve a rival COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc.

The German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its U.S. partner Pfizer said earlier Tuesday that they had asked the regulator for speeded-up, conditional approval of their coronavirus vaccine, concluding the rolling review process they initiated with the agency on Oct. 6.

The move comes a day after rival Moderna said it was asking U.S. and European regulators to allow the use of its COVID-19 vaccine.

BioNTech said if the vaccine, currently named BNT162b2, is approved, its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020. The companies said last month that clinical trials with 44,000 participants showed the vaccine is 95% effective. The efficacy rate in particularly vulnerable older age groups was more than



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 24 of 70

94%, they said.

In a statement, the EU medicines regulator said it had already begun a "rolling review" of the Moderna vaccine based on laboratory data previously submitted by the company and would now assess data on how well that vaccine triggers an immune response and whether it is safe enough for broad use across Europe.

The agency said that "if the data are robust enough to conclude on quality, safety and effectiveness," then it could approve the Moderna vaccine at a meeting scheduled for Jan. 12.

BioNTech and Pfizer have already submitted a request for emergency approval with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.K. regulator MHRA, as well as rolling submissions in other countries including in Australia, Canada and Japan.

"We have known since the beginning of this journey that patients are waiting, and we stand ready to ship COVID-19 vaccine doses as soon as potential authorizations will allow us," Pfizer's chief executive Albert Bourla said in a statement.

BioNTech said it stands ready to ship stockpiles of vaccines where they are needed when the Amsterdam-based agency or the FDA approve the vaccine.

"Depending on how the authorities decide we can start delivering within a few hours," said BioNTech's chief operating officer, Sierk Poetting.

The European Union's top official said around 2 billion doses of potential COVID-19 vaccines have been secured for the bloc's 27 nations, with the first deliveries likely to start before the end of the year.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said EU nations have started working on their vaccination plans and on the logistics for delivering tens of millions of doses across the bloc, a major challenge for the EU.

"If everything goes well, the first European citizens might already be vaccinated before the end of December," Von der Leyen said. "And it will be a huge step forward toward our normal life. In other words, I just wanted to say there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

The Commission, the EU's executive arm, has secured deals allowing to purchase doses with Moderna, AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, BioNTech-Pfizer and CureVac.

Von der Leyen however urged EU citizens to remain "disciplined till we have reached finally a vaccination that is appropriate to eradicate this virus."

Germany's science minister said Tuesday that the same safety standards are being applied in the approval process for coronavirus vaccines as for other drugs and that this would be key to gaining the widest possible public acceptance for COVID immunization.

Anja Karliczek cited the fact that European regulators plan to hold a public hearing on Dec. 11 about the approval request by BioNTech and Pfizer.

Speaking to reporters in Berlin, Karliczek stressed that the vaccine will be voluntary and that authorities will work hard to inform the public about possible side effects that a small percentage of recipients might experience after immunization, such as headaches, exhaustion and fever.

Marylyn Addo, a doctor at Hamburg's UKE hospital who is involved in the trials for a rival vaccine, said the rapid development of a vaccine was the result of enormous efforts by scientists, early funding and experience from previous vaccines.

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Cheng reported from London and Petrequin reported from Brussels.

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

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This story has been updated to correct that Pfizer and BioNTech asked for expedited approval of their vaccine, not an emergency use authorization.

**The Latest: Germany vows that virus vaccines will be safe**

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 25 of 70

By The Associated Press undefined

BERLIN — Germany's science minister says the same safety standards are being applied in the approval process for coronavirus vaccines as for other drugs.

Anja Karliczek told reporters on Tuesday that ensuring the same standards is key to gaining the widest possible public acceptance for the COVID vaccine.

Karliczek noted that the European Medicines Agency will be holding a public hearing on Dec. 11 on an approval request by German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its U.S. partner Pfizer.

She added that the vaccine will be voluntary and that authorities will work hard to inform the public about possible side effects that might be expected after immunization, such as headaches, localized pain and fever.

Marylyn Addo, a doctor at Hamburg's UKE hospital who is involved in the trials for a rival vaccine, said that the rapid development of a vaccine was the result of enormous efforts by scientists, early funding and experience from previous vaccines.

## THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- BioNTech and Pfizer ask European regulator for emergency approval for their coronavirus vaccine
- Americans face new COVID-19 restrictions after Thanksgiving
- At tiny rural hospitals, exhausted medical workers treat friends and family
- Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton tests positive for coronavirus
- U.K. stocks up on vaccines, hopes to start virus shots within days
- Virus forces businesses to adapt or close down on the streets of London

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

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BERLIN — German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its U.S. partner Pfizer say they have submitted an application for conditional approval of their coronavirus vaccine with the European Medicines Agency.

The two companies said Tuesday that the submission, which occurred Monday, completes the rolling review process they initiated with the agency on Oct. 6.

The move comes a day after rival Moderna said it was asking U.S. and European regulators to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine.

BioNTech said that if the vaccine, currently named BNT162b2, is approved, its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020.

ROUEN, France — Lockdowns that are forcing millions of people to once again stay home — cutting them off from families and friends, shuttering businesses they invested in, university classes that fed their minds and the nightspots where they socialized — has begun to turn back the coronavirus resurgence in France.

Still, in the country that passed the bleak milestone of 52,000 dead in November, the costs to mental health have been considerable.

With numbers now falling for French COVID-19 patients in intensive care, psychiatrists are facing a follow-up wave of psychological distress. Health authorities' surveys point to a surge of depression most acute among people without work, those in financial hardship and young adults.

The Rouvray Hospital Center in the Normandy town of Rouen is among places where psychiatrists are finding themselves on the front line of the pandemic's mental-health fallout. They are fearful that a growing crisis of depression, anxiety and worse may be on the horizon as more livelihoods, futures and hopes are lost to the pandemic.

Associated Press journalists spent 10 hours in the sprawling 535-bed facility, the day after French President Emmanuel Macron laid out a blueprint stretching into mid-January for the gradual lifting of lockdown

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 26 of 70

restrictions.

"Being alone between four walls is terrible," one patient says. "The halting of life like this, it reverberates on people. It is not good."

BRUSSELS — Nonessential shops in Belgium were reopening Tuesday in the wake of encouraging figures about declining daily coronavirus infection rates and hospital admissions.

The government is fearful, however, that the change might lead to massive gatherings in the nation's most popular shopping centers and streets. Over the weekend, pre-Christmas light festivals already led to crowded scenes in several cities, prompting warnings from virologists about the dangers of reopening too soon.

Belgium, host to the headquarters of the 27-nation European Union, has been one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe during the pandemic. Belgium has reported more than 16,500 deaths linked to the virus during two surges in the spring and the fall.

Under the new rules, shopping has to be done alone or with a minor or a dependant person. Time in a shop is limited to half an hour. Restaurants and bars remain closed.

UNITED NATIONS — Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad says the COVID-19 pandemic has increased trafficking of women and gender-based violence, leaving the health and safety of women "on the line."

The 27-year-old activist, who was forced into sexual slavery by Islamic State fighters in Iraq, said curfews, lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by governments to slow the spread of the virus "have had unintended consequences on women worldwide."

"Rather than reducing human trafficking and gender-based violence, the pandemic has increased the risk of exploitation and brutality against those most vulnerable," she said.

Murad said domestic tensions have intensified in confined living spaces, and stay-at-home orders "are increasing human trafficking farther underground, out of sight of law enforcement."

A member of Iraq's Yazidi minority, Murad was among thousands of women and girls who were captured and forced into sexual slavery by Islamic State extremists in 2014. Her mother and six brothers were killed by Islamic State fighters. She became an activist on behalf of women and girls after escaping and finding refuge in Germany, and shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018.

HANOI, Vietnam -- Vietnamese authorities are conducting intensive contact tracing after the country's first confirmed local transmission of the coronavirus in 89 days.

State media said Tuesday that a 32-year-old man in Ho Chi Minh City tested positive for the coronavirus on Monday after visiting a flight attendant who was undergoing self-quarantine at his home following his return from Japan two weeks ago. The flight attendant tested positive on Saturday, the Tuoi Tre newspaper said.

Health authorities ordered 137 people who had been in close contact with the man to stay in a central quarantine facility and shut down an English center where the man works as a teacher.

The new case ended Vietnam's streak of 89 days without any known local transmission of the virus. Vietnam's borders remain closed in an attempt to keep out the virus. Only limited international flights are operating to repatriate Vietnamese nationals and transport foreign diplomats and experts.

The country has reported 1,347 coronavirus cases, including 35 deaths.

HONG KONG — Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam on Tuesday urged residents to stay home as the city grapples with a resurgence of the coronavirus, which has infected over 500 people in the past week.

Lam asked citizens to "refrain from social gatherings" and said that people, in particular the elderly, should remain at home.

"The latest wave of the epidemic is rather severe. Every one of us should do our best and exercise a high level of discipline to fight the pandemic," she said at a regular news conference. "The coming two weeks is a crucial period."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 27 of 70

Many of the new infections in Hong Kong have been tied to dance studios, and outbreaks have also been found among staff and guests at several restaurants.

The new wave of infections has led authorities to tighten social distancing restrictions, including closing entertainment venues such as karaoke bars and game centers and limiting public gatherings to two people.

The growing number of cases has delayed a "travel bubble" between Singapore and Hong Kong initially slated for November.

MANILA, Philippines — Coronavirus quarantine restrictions will remain imposed in the Philippine capital during the Christmas season this month and officials said they will ban big Christmas parties in Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation to prevent new infection spikes.

President Rodrigo Duterte said in televised remarks late Monday that aside from Metropolitan Manila, the bustling capital region of more than 12 million, the "general community quarantine" would be imposed in seven other cities and provinces in December.

The restrictions ban large public gatherings, actual school classes and entertainment businesses but allow shopping malls, restaurants and essential shops, including barber shops, to operate with required safeguards, including the wearing of face masks and shields and social distancing.

Duterte lamented that many still defy quarantine restrictions like the wearing of face masks and warned of a possible resurgence of infections like in some Western countries.

"In the Philippines, it's hard-headedness," Duterte said.

The Philippines has reported more than 431,600 confirmed coronavirus infections, the second-highest in Southeast Asia, with at least 8,392 deaths.

UNITED NATIONS -- The head of the world's largest humanitarian network is urging governments and institutions to combat "fake news" about COVID-19 vaccines which has become "a second pandemic" and start building trust in communities around the world about the critical importance of vaccinating people.

Francesco Rocca, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said in a virtual briefing to the U.N. Correspondents Association on Monday that "to beat this pandemic, we also have to defeat the parallel pandemic of distrust."

He said there is "a growing hesitancy about vaccines in general, and about a COVID vaccine in particular" around the world, pointing to a recent Johns Hopkins University study in 67 countries that found vaccine acceptance declined significantly in most countries from July to October this year.

In a quarter of countries, Rocca said, the study found that the acceptance rate for a vaccine against the coronavirus was near or below 50 percent, with Japan dropping from 70 percent to 50 percent acceptance, and France dropping from 51 percent to 38 percent acceptance.

He stressed that the lack of trust "is by no means a Western phenomenon," citing the federation's research in recent months in eight African countries -- Congo, Cameroon, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Lesotho and Kenya -- which showed a steady decline in the perceptions of the risk of COVID-19 infection.

A growing number of people indicated the virus doesn't affect young people or Africans, that the disease doesn't exist now but did exist and the pandemic has ended, he said.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California could see a tripling of hospitalizations by Christmas and is considering stay-home orders for areas with the highest case rates as it tries to head off concerns that severe coronavirus cases could overwhelm intensive care beds, officials said Monday.

"The red flags are flying in terms of the trajectory in our projections of growth," said Gov. Gavin Newsom. "If these trends continue, we're going to have to take much more dramatic, arguably drastic, action."

Hospitalizations have increased 89% over the past 14 days and nearly 7,800 coronavirus patients were hospitalized as of Monday. About 12% of Californians testing positive are likely to need hospital care within the next two to three weeks.

The biggest concern is intensive care cases, which have increased 67% in the past two weeks. If that



continues, it would push ICU beds to 112% of capacity by mid-December.

That statistic is likely to drive state-mandated stay-at-home orders in 51 of California's 58 counties that already are seeing the most restrictions on business activities, said Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state's secretary of health and human services.

TORONTO — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government is vowing to spend tens of billions more dollars to help the country recover from the pandemic.

Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland says the country is facing its most severe challenge since the second World War, the worst economic shock since the Great Depression and the worse health crisis since the Spanish flu over a century ago.

The cost to date has the federal deficit reaching a record \$381.6 billion Canadian (US\$294 billion) this year, but the government says it could close in on \$400 billion Canadian (US\$308 billion) if widespread lockdowns return in the coming weeks. Toronto, Canada's largest city, is on lockdown.

The government's fall economic update proposes to send extra child benefit payments to families next year. The government is proposing \$25 billion Canadian (US\$19 billion) in new spending.

## Joe Biden weighs Rahm Emanuel for transportation secretary

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden is considering former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a substantial and somewhat divisive figure in Democratic Party politics, to serve as his transportation secretary.

Biden's selection of his nominee to lead the Transportation Department is not believed to be imminent, and Emanuel is among multiple candidates in the running for the Cabinet position, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private deliberations.

But his candidacy threatens to pull at the divisions among Democrats that Biden has largely managed to avoid as he begins to fill out his administration. Progressive leaders, including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, have been especially vocal in criticizing the prospect of Emanuel joining the Cabinet.

Emanuel, a former three-term congressman who served as Barack Obama's first White House chief of staff and was a senior adviser in Bill Clinton's administration, has been a significant force in Democratic Party politics for much of the last three decades.

He also turned reviving Chicago's ragged public transportation system and overhauling the city's two busy, worn airports into a top issue during his eight years as mayor. He is also credited with making Chicago one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in country during his time in office.

But selecting Emanuel could be a tough sell to some in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party who are critical of his handling of the high-profile police shooting death of Laquan McDonald, a Black teenager killed by a white officer, during his time as Chicago's mayor.

Whether Emanuel is ultimately picked could also be affected by other factors as Biden has placed a premium on building out a Cabinet and team of senior advisers from a diverse set of backgrounds, according to people familiar with the matter.

The Biden transition team did not respond to requests for comment.

Allies of Emanuel in the Illinois congressional delegation have made the case to Biden transition officials that Emanuel's knowledge of Congress and breadth of experience on big transportation projects during his eight years as mayor of the nation's third-largest city would make him an effective leader at the Transportation Department, according to one person familiar with the matter.

Some of the city's Black elected officials are also vouching for him.

"Here's a guy who understands government at all levels," said Michelle Harris, a Chicago alderman who represents a predominantly Black ward on Chicago's south side that benefited from Emanuel's push for Chicago Transit Authority modernization. "He's the perfect candidate for the job. You don't get many candidates that have more experience on how government works. He can start running Day One. He's not going to be crawling or walking. He's going to be running."



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 29 of 70

Emanuel announced in September 2018 that he would not run for a third term as Chicago mayor, citing a desire to step away from the hectic life of elected office.

The decision came as he saw his popularity erode in the city's large African American community following the McDonald police shooting.

The death of McDonald, who was shot 16 times, became a touchstone moment in the ongoing national conversation about racial injustice. Emanuel said he did not see the grisly video until it was set to be made public in November 2015.

Still, he faced rebuke from some Black leaders in the city who accused him and his administration of covering up the shooting. The city agreed to pay a \$5 million settlement to McDonald's family before they could file suit. The former officer, Jason Van Dyke, was convicted in 2018 of second-degree murder and 16 counts of aggravated battery with a firearm and sentenced to six years and nine months in prison.

Emanuel denied the coverup allegations. He also embraced a series of reforms in the city's police department, including a federally court-monitored consent decree to ensure that changes were carried out.

Backers of Emanuel say his efforts to revamp the Chicago Transit Authority's "L" system, including significant swaths of the city's predominantly Black neighborhoods, as well as adding more than 100 miles (161 kilometers) of protected bike lanes, should make him a leading candidate for the post.

During his time as mayor, Chicago saw \$11 billion in airfield, terminal and infrastructure investments at the city's airports. His administration also secured more than \$4.6 billion in federal funding for Chicago transit, including the modernization of the city's iconic train system. His allies noted that Emanuel's push to rehab transit included hiring more than 1,000 nonviolent ex-offenders to work on projects.

"I can't debate some of the opinions or assertions about him," said Michael Scott Jr., a Chicago alderman who represents a ward on the city's west side that has benefited from the modernization under Emanuel's watch. "What I am concerned about are things that will be impacted in neighborhoods like the one I serve. I know the ability of him to get the work done if he's put in that spot."

Still, some progressive House Democrats have already made clear they are vigorously opposed to seeing Emanuel in a Biden White House.

"What is so hard to understand about this? Rahm Emanuel helped cover up the murder of Laquan McDonald. Covering up a murder is disqualifying for public leadership," Ocasio-Cortez tweeted last week. "This is not about the 'visibility' of a post. It is shameful and concerning that he is even being considered."

Cori Bush, an incoming Democratic congresswoman from Missouri, added that "the thing about covering up the murder of Laquan McDonald is that it disqualifies you from holding any type of public office. Forever."

As members of the House, neither Ocasio-Cortez nor Bush has a vote in a Senate confirmation, though their voices hold weight with a segment of voters who helped Biden beat President Donald Trump.

Matt Bennett, executive vice president at the center-left think tank Third Way, predicted that opposition by some on the left to Emanuel would have little impact on whether Biden would ultimately pick Emanuel to serve in his Cabinet.

"There will be a lot of bellyaching by some on the left, but I think he can get past that if (Biden) picks him," Bennett said. "Elections have consequences and so do the nominating elections. We voted for Joe Biden and not Bernie Sanders. If you don't like it, work harder next time. You don't get to dictate after losing a hard-fought primary who the winner chooses to serve in their Cabinet."

Miller reported from Wilmington, Delaware.

## Dutch climate activists take Shell to court over emissions

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A group of environmental organizations backed by thousands of Dutch citizens launched a civil case Tuesday against the energy giant Shell, asking a court to order the multinational to commit to reining in its carbon emissions by 45% by the year 2030.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 30 of 70

Lawyer Roger Cox told a panel of three judges at The Hague District Court that Royal Dutch Shell's corporate policy is "at odds" with global climate goals.

"The claimants therefore conclude that Royal Dutch Shell's corporate policy is on collision course with global climate targets," Cox said as he opened four days of hearings spread over the coming weeks.

Shell lawyers were to make their opening statement later Tuesday.

The legal battle led by Milieudefensie, the Dutch arm of Friends of the Earth, is the latest in a string of cases around the world in which activists are using the courts as a venue to fight for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from governments and companies.

A victory for climate activists in a Dutch courtroom could spur even more legal challenges.

"Everybody needs to pitch in if we are to tackle the climate crisis, especially big polluters like Shell. But Shell and its shareholders are not taking their responsibility, that's why we are taking legal action," said Nils Mollema of ActionAid Netherlands, another group involved in the case.

Ahead of the opening of hearings, Shell said that it agrees with Friends of the Earth that action is needed to cut emissions and has already invested billions of dollars in low-carbon technologies from wind power to electric vehicle charging. But it said the company cannot do it alone.

"What will accelerate the energy transition is effective policy, investment in technology and changing customer behavior. None of which will be achieved with this court action," Shell said in a statement to The Associated Press. The company said it has set "an ambition to be a net zero emissions energy business by 2050, or sooner."

Under the 2015 Paris climate change agreement, the European Union's greenhouse gas emissions target is a reduction by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

The Shell case, which has more than 17,000 claimants, follows in the footsteps of a groundbreaking 2015 court ruling — later upheld by an appeals court — that ordered the Dutch government to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by 2020 from benchmark 1990 levels.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte responded by saying: "I can guarantee we will do everything we can to achieve the goal." But it remains to be seen if the target will be met by year's end.

The Urgenda and Shell cases are similar because they are based in part on a duty of care enshrined in Dutch law.

Not all climate cases are successful. Last month, German judges threw out a lawsuit by three farming families who had taken Chancellor Angela Merkel's government to court and argued that it wasn't doing enough to tackle climate change.

Roda Verheyen, a German lawyer who brought that case but is not involved in the Dutch case, said the outcome of the civil case against Shell could have repercussions for businesses around the world as it poses questions about how businesses balance their bottom line with their duty of care responsibilities.

"The Shell case taken by Milieudefensie and others is the first to actually do this in court," she said. "So whatever comes out will be very interesting. I think you could say globally."

Follow AP's full coverage of climate change issues at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

## Iran's parliament advances bill to stop nuclear inspections

By NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's parliament Tuesday advanced a bill that would end U.N. inspections of its nuclear facilities and require the government to boost its uranium enrichment if European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal do not provide relief from oil and banking sanctions.

The vote to debate the bill, which would need to pass through several other stages before becoming law, was a show of defiance after the killing of a prominent Iranian nuclear scientist last month. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say on all nuclear policies.

The official IRNA news agency said 251 lawmakers in the 290-seat chamber voted in favor, after which many began chanting "Death to America!" and "Death to Israel!"

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 31 of 70

The bill would give European countries three months to ease sanctions on Iran's key oil and gas sector, and to restore its access to the international banking system. The U.S. imposed crippling sanctions on Iran after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear agreement, triggering a series of escalations between the two sides.

The bill would have authorities resume enriching uranium to 20%, which is below the threshold needed for nuclear weapons but higher than that required for civilian applications. It would also commission new centrifuges at nuclear facilities at Natanz and the underground Fordo site.

Parliament would need to hold another vote to pass the bill, which would also require approval by the Guardian Council, a constitutional watchdog. Lawmakers have pressed for a more confrontational approach since the U.S. withdrew from the nuclear agreement in 2018.

Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei acknowledged the limitations of such an approach on Tuesday, saying the nuclear file is under the authority of the Supreme National Security Council, and "nobody can work on it independently." President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate, heads the council, which answers to the supreme leader.

The bill was first tabled in parliament in August but gained new momentum after the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who headed a program that Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003. U.S. intelligence agencies concurred with that assessment in a 2007 report.

Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies. Iran long has maintained that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Iran has blamed Fakhrizadeh's killing on Israel, which has long waged a covert war against Tehran and its proxies in the region. Israeli officials have declined to comment on the killing, and no one has claimed responsibility.

Some Iranian officials have suggested that the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has been regularly inspecting Iran's nuclear facilities in recent years as part of the 2015 agreement, may have been a source of intelligence for Fakhrizadeh's killers.

Iran began publicly exceeding uranium enrichment levels set by the nuclear agreement after the U.S. restored sanctions. It currently enriches a growing uranium stockpile up to 4.5% purity.

That's still far below weapons-grade levels of 90%, though experts warn Iran now has enough low-enriched uranium to reprocess into fuel for at least two atomic bombs if it chose to pursue them.

## Metcalfe, Wilson lead Seahawks over Eagles 23-17

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — DK Metcalfe got extra motivation he didn't even need.

Metcalfe caught 10 passes for 177 yards, Russell Wilson threw for 230 yards and a touchdown and the Seattle Seahawks beat the Philadelphia Eagles 23-17 on Monday night.

Before the game, Metcalfe said Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz, who coached Calvin Johnson in Detroit, compared him to the former Lions star.

"I'm getting a little respect, but you know I still got work to do. One of the defensive coaches came up to me and it kind of made me mad that he was like, 'You know, I was in Detroit with Megatron but you're not there yet,'" Metcalfe said. "In my mind, I'm not trying to be Megatron. I'm trying to be me. So I had a little chip on my shoulder the whole game."

The Seahawks (8-3) moved one game ahead of the Rams in the NFC West. The Eagles (3-7-1) fell a half-game behind the Giants and Washington in the woeful NFC East.

Carson Wentz didn't cede many snaps to backup Jalen Hurts but had another rough game. He was 25 of 45 for 215 yards, two TDs — one in garbage time — and one interception.

Seattle's defense entered the game allowing the most yards in the NFL and most yards passing but held Philadelphia's inept offense to 250 yards.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 32 of 70

Metcalfe was on the board when the Eagles took J.J. Arcega-Whiteside in the second round with the 57th pick in 2019. Arcega-Whiteside has 12 career catches and was a healthy inactive before landing on the COVID-19 list. Metcalfe, who was the final pick of the second round, had the best game of his rookie year in Seattle's playoff win at Philadelphia last season and again showed why he's one of the best receivers in the NFL.

Metcalfe's 52-yard catch on third-and-13 set up Wilson's 1-yard TD pass to David Moore that gave the Seahawks a 7-0 lead.

"It's kind of like coming home, a place that had a chance to draft me but they didn't so I've got to make them pay," Metcalfe said.

Cornerback Darius Slay, who followed Metcalfe in coverage, called it the worst game of his career.

"I lost every 50-50 ball. I let the team down. I gotta play better," Slay said.

Chris Carson made it 14-0 when he bullied his way through Philadelphia's defense on a 16-yard run.

"You know me, I saw that end zone so my game is physical so I wanted to get it in," Carson said.

The Eagles didn't get a first down until Wentz ran for 20 yards with under five minutes left in the first half. Wentz scrambled for 13 yards on third-and-5 to keep the drive going and tossed a 3-yard TD pass to Dallas Goedert to cut it to 14-6 at halftime. Jake Elliott missed the extra point wide left.

Elliott's 42-yard field goal cut it to 14-9 in the third quarter. Jason Myers hit one from 44 yards to extend it to 17-9.

After a holding call on Cedric Ogbuehi negated a 17-yard TD run by Carlos Hyde, Myers connected from 33 yards. He hit another one from 39.

Richard Rodgers caught a tipped ball on a desperation heave by Wentz for a 33-yard TD in the final minute.

Trailing by 11, Eagles coach Doug Pederson passed up a field goal and went for it on fourth-and-4 from the Seahawks 15. Wentz's pass went straight to Seattle's Quandre Diggs as Goedert turned the other way on the route.

The Eagles got a huge stop on Seattle's opening series. After a pair of unsportsmanlike conduct penalties helped the Seahawks reach the 3, Derek Barnett stuffed Moore for a 5-yard loss on fourth down from the 2. Barnett sacked Wilson on fourth-and-2 from Philadelphia's 37 on Seattle's second drive.

## OWNING PHILLY

Wilson is 6-0 against the Eagles and the Seahawks have won seven in a row in the series.

## NO QB ROTATION

Hurts took the snap on two plays. He completed a 6-yard pass to Alshon Jeffery on one and handed off on the other. Wentz was split wide on the running play and on the sideline for the pass.

## GOING BACKWARD

The Eagles had minus-4 yards in the first quarter, matching their worst first quarter in the past 30 seasons (also minus-4 vs Minnesota on Oct. 7, 2018). The last team to have negative yards in the first quarter was Chicago with minus-1 against Philadelphia on Nov. 3, 2019.

The Eagles went three-and-out on their first five drives.

## INJURY REPORT

Both teams were missing their starting right tackle.

Seattle's Brandon Shell was inactive because of an ankle injury. Ogbuehi took his spot.

Philadelphia's Lane Johnson is sidelined for the rest of the season with an ankle injury. Matt Pryor started in his place.

## UP NEXT

Seahawks: Host the New York Giants (4-7) on Sunday.

Eagles: Visit the Green Bay Packers (8-3) on Sunday.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)



## As the virus resurges, mental health woes batter France

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

ROUEN, France (AP) — The panicked 22-year-old is led to Consultation Room No. 2, with its easy-mop floor and honeycombed meshing over the window. Behind her, the psychiatric emergency ward's heavy double doors — openable only with a staff member's key — thud shut.

With anxious taps of her white sneakers, she confides to an on-duty psychiatrist how the solitude of the coronavirus lockdown and the angst of not finding work in the pandemic-battered job market are contributing to her maelstrom of anxieties. She is unnerved that she is starting to obsess about knives, fearful that her mental health might be collapsing.

"The lockdown — let's not pretend otherwise — worries me," the young woman explains through her surgical mask, as the psychiatrist, Irene Facello, listens intently.

"I want to be reassured," the woman says, "that I'm not going mad."

Forcing millions of people to once again stay home — cutting them off from families and friends, shuttering businesses they invested in, university classes that fed their minds and nightspots where they socialized — has, for now, begun to turn back the renewed coronavirus surge in France that pushed it in November past the bleak milestone of 52,000 dead.

But the costs to mental health have been considerable. With numbers now falling for French COVID-19 patients in intensive care, psychiatrists are facing a follow-up wave of psychological distress. Health authorities' surveying points to a surge of depression most acute among people without work, those in financial hardship and young adults.

The Rouvray Hospital Center in the Normandy town of Rouen is among places where psychiatrists are finding themselves on the front line of the pandemic's mental-health fallout. They are fearful that a growing crisis of depression, anxiety and worse may be on the horizon as more livelihoods, futures and hopes are lost to the pandemic. Associated Press journalists spent 10 hours in the sprawling 535-bed facility, the day after French President Emmanuel Macron laid out a blueprint stretching into mid-January for the gradual lifting of lockdown restrictions.

At the psychiatric emergency unit, as Facello sends the 22-year-old home with a prescription for anti-anxiety drugs and an appointment to see her again in two weeks, the double doors swing open once more.

It is another young woman, aged 25, a linguistics student. She is steered to Consultation Room No. 1, where she sits silently in the gloom as night falls.

On the ward's whiteboard, which lists patients' names and details, an abbreviated initial diagnosis handwritten on a slip of paper uses acronyms to spell out how closely she may have brushed with the irreparable. For the past week, it says, she'd suffered "IDS" — suicidal ideas — and imagined "IMV," or voluntarily ingesting medicines.

The ward's chief psychiatrist, Sandrine Elias, gently teases out of the student how the lockdown has left her completely alone, with classes suspended.

It isn't the sole cause of her malaise. Elias learns that the young woman had a difficult adolescence, with suicide attempts. Isolation during the epidemic has only amplified the student's distress. In a quiet voice, she tells Elias that it "confronts us with ourselves."

"I'm a stay-at-home type of person, but this absolute constraint is a real weight," she says.

Elias promptly decides to hospitalize her. Supervised rest and medication, Elias determines, can help her through.

"You need a framework, to be taken into care. All alone, in your studio apartment, it's not possible," the psychiatrist says. "It's very good that you came here."

Not all of those seeking help have previous psychiatric histories. Mental health professionals say lockdowns and curfews have also destabilized people who, in less challenging times, might have surmounted difficulties by talking them through with family and friends rather than ending up in psychiatric treatment wards.

"Being alone between four walls is terrible," Elias says. "The halting of life like this, it reverberates on people. It is not good."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 34 of 70

Nathan, a 22-year-old student, came through the emergency ward two days earlier. The log book shows he was admitted at 5:20 p.m. and was moved that evening to a longer-stay unit.

There, in Room 14, he told psychiatrist Olivier Guillin that he'd sought emergency help "because I felt that my morale was declining very rapidly, that I was at the point of tipping over, with suicidal thoughts."

Similar thoughts had first laid him low in the summer, after France's initial lockdown from March to May. They struck again when the country was confined for a second time from Oct. 30. His university shuttered. His political science classes went virtual. Rather than be alone in his student flat, he moved back with his parents in Rouen, severed from his support network and ruminating on his uncertain future.

"The first lockdown didn't really have much of an effect on me," he tells Guillin, but the second one "really sank me."

"Being confined again, having to always stay in a limited perimeter, not being able to see my friends as often as usual, it disordered me," he says.

The security of hospitalization and medication have quickly started to stabilize him. Resting on his bedside table was a Rubik's Cube that he'd solved.

Guillin, who heads several units at the hospital and has 200 medical staff working under him, says they are seeing a sharp increase in young adults seeking help with anxieties, depression, addictions and other difficulties. He's bracing for more.

"We'll very likely see the crest of the wave in the months to come," he says.

The pandemic has also had other mental health repercussions that are less evident but no less devastating.

Guillin still rues the death of a patient who killed herself during the first lockdown, 48 hours after what turned out to be their final appointment. She wore a mask to that meeting, to protect against the virus. It interfered with his reading of the depth of her distress, he says.

"She was a very expressive lady and there, with the mask, I incorrectly evaluated things," he says. "Retrospectively, I tell myself that perhaps, without the mask, I would have been more alert and done more."

Patients have also been hurt by the diversion of resources from mental health to battling COVID-19.

The electroconvulsive therapy that had been helping Laura, a student, emerge from her severe depression was thrown into disarray when anesthesiologists — who are needed to put her to sleep while electrical currents passed through her brain — were requisitioned to care for virus patients.

"My morale went downhill shortly after that, and the suicidal ideas came back," she tells Guillin.

Laura says for her, the therapy is "as urgent as COVID-19." She says prioritizing virus patients "is a bit stupid and mean." Now, instead of being released from the hospital by mid-November as she'd hoped, Laura has had to stay.

In the emergency ward, for the third time in two hours, another young woman comes in through the double doors, dressed in black, looking hollow. With Room 1 already occupied by the 25-year-old, the 18-year-old high school student is shown into Room 2. After her initial interview by a nurse and a caregiver, she curls up on her chair.

The nurse, Sebastien Lormelet, and the caregiver, Anita Delarue, exchange notes in the staff room where the teenager's name and admission time, 5:02 p.m., are written in black marker on the whiteboard.

"The lockdown has a lot to do with it, because she says that the first one was hard. With the second one, now, if she could slip away, she would," Delarue says.

"She wouldn't withstand a third one."

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## Coronavirus robs biblical Bethlehem of Christmas cheer

By JELAL HASSAN Associated Press

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP) — The coronavirus has cast a pall over Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem, all but shutting down the biblical town revered as Jesus' birthplace at the height of the normally

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 35 of 70

cheery holiday season.

Missing are the thousands of international pilgrims who normally descend upon the town. Restaurants, hotels and souvenir shops are closed. The renowned Christmas tree lighting service will be limited to a small group of authorized people, as will church services on Christmas Eve.

"Bethlehem is dead," said Maryana al-Arja, owner of the 120-room Angel Hotel on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

The hotel was the site of the West Bank's first coronavirus outbreak — when a group of Greek tourists came down with the virus last March.

She kept her 25 workers on staff for several months but ultimately couldn't continue to pay them. Al-Arja, who herself was infected with the virus, said she has been forced to close the hotel and lay off the entire staff because there is no sign of the pandemic ending or tourists visiting anytime soon.

"We had 351 tourist groups booked in our hotel this year, each one 150 people," she said. "But they all canceled."

Elyas al-Arja, the head of the city's hotel association, said Bethlehem received some 3 million tourists in 2019. With Israel, the main entry point for international visitors to the region, banning tourists because of the coronavirus crisis, and the West Bank's border crossing with Jordan closed to foreigners, that number is close to zero this year, he said.

"Sixty percent of the city relies on tourism, and their income disappeared when the tourists disappeared," said al-Arja, a cousin of the Angel Hotel owner.

The Ambassador Hotel, which is located near the Church of the Nativity, built on the site where Christians believe Jesus was born, has reopened one floor in hopes that some local visitors may want to come celebrate in the coming weeks.

Mahmoud Tarman, the hotel's receptionist, said the Ambassador has brought back eight of its 60 workers to serve local guests. But with the West Bank's economy devastated by repeated lockdowns, it remains unclear how many people will come.

"At this time of the year, this empty hotel would be bustling with life. But as you see, there is no life, not even a Christmas tree yet," he said as he pointed at the empty lobby.

The Palestinian Authority, which administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, this week imposed a new nighttime lockdown to help contain a spike in coronavirus cases. People must remain indoors from 7 p.m. until 6 a.m., and Bethlehem is included in the lockdown.

Officials say the lockdown could be extended through Christmas and into the new year if the infection levels don't come down. The Health Ministry has reported a total of about 65,000 coronavirus cases in the West Bank, and over 620 deaths.

Bethlehem's mayor, Anton Salman, said the city had planned to receive 3,000 invited guests, including local scout troops and musical bands from around the world that normally entertain visitors during Christmas Eve festivities.

He said the famed Christmas tree lighting, scheduled on Thursday, will be limited to just 15 guests, including local mayors, the district governor and the Latin Patriarch and other clergy. The 85-year-old Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who usually joins the celebration, has been invited but has not said whether he will attend.

Midnight Mass, a solemn event led by the Latin Patriarch that is usually attended by religious leaders, local VIPs and hundreds of pilgrims from around the world, has also been scaled back, Salman said. He said officials are still working on the guest list, but it is expected to include religious leaders and some foreign diplomats. The event will be closed to the general public but broadcast live for people to watch.

"No one can hold the responsibility of inviting large numbers of people to Christmas events," he said. "Nothing will be the same during the pandemic."

## Study: Students falling behind in math during pandemic

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 36 of 70**

A disproportionately large number of poor and minority students were not in schools for assessments this fall, complicating efforts to measure the pandemic's effects on some of the most vulnerable students, a not-for-profit company that administers standardized testing said Tuesday.

Overall, NWEA's fall assessments showed elementary and middle school students have fallen measurably behind in math, while most appear to be progressing at a normal pace in reading since schools were forced to abruptly close in March and pickup online.

The analysis of data from nearly 4.4 million U.S. students in grades 3-8 represents one of the first significant measures of the pandemic's impacts on learning.

But researchers at NWEA, whose MAP Growth assessments are meant to measure student proficiency, caution they may be underestimating the effects on minority and economically disadvantaged groups. Those students made up a significant portion of the roughly 1 in 4 students who tested in 2019 but were missing from 2020 testing.

NWEA said they may have opted out of the assessments, which were given in-person and remotely, because they lacked reliable technology or stopped going to school.

"Given we've also seen school district reports of higher levels of absenteeism in many different school districts, this is something to really be concerned about," researcher Megan Kuhfeld said on a call with reporters.

The NWEA findings show that, compared to last year, students scored an average of 5 to 10 percentile points lower in math, with students in grades three, four and five experiencing the largest drops.

English language arts scores were largely the same as last year.

NWEA Chief Executive Chris Minnich pointed to the sequential nature of math, where one year's skills — or deficits — carry over into the next year.

"The challenge around mathematics is an acute one, and it's something we're going to be dealing with even after we get back in school," he said.

NWEA compared grade-level performance on the 2019 and 2020 tests. It also analyzed student growth over time, based on how individual students did on assessments given shortly before schools closed and those given this fall.

Both measures indicated that students are advancing in math, but not as rapidly as in a typical year. The findings confirm expectations that students are losing ground during the pandemic, but show those losses are not as great as projections made in spring that were based in part on typical "summer slide" learning losses.

A November report by Renaissance Learning Inc., based on its own standardized testing, similarly found troubling setbacks in math and lesser reading losses.

The Renaissance Learning analysis looked at results from 5 million students in grades 1-8 who took Star Early Literacy reading or math assessments in fall 2019 and 2020. It found students of all grades were performing below expectations in math at the beginning of the school year, with some grades 12 or more weeks behind.

Black, Hispanic, American Indian and students in schools serving largely low-income families fared worse but the pandemic so far hasn't widened existing achievement gaps, the Renaissance report said.

NWEA said that while it saw some differences by racial and ethnic groups emerging in its data, it was too early to draw conclusions.

Andre Pecina, assistant superintendent of student services at Golden Plains Unified School District in San Joaquin, California, said his district has scrambled to stem learning loss by issuing devices to all of its students, but the district continues to struggle with connectivity for students at home.

Students who are typically 1.5 grades behind are now two grades behind, he said.

"We've really just gone back to the basics where we're focusing on literacy and math. That's all we do," Pecina said.

"I feel like we're trying our best," he said. "Our students are engaged, but it's not optimal. The learning environment is not optimal."



Associated Press reporter Jeff Amy contributed from Atlanta, Georgia.

## Trump headed to Georgia as turnout driver, but also a threat

By BILL BARROW and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Some establishment Republicans are sounding alarms that President Donald Trump's conspiratorial denials of his own defeat could threaten the party's ability to win a Senate majority and counter President-elect Joe Biden's administration.

The concerns come ahead of Trump's planned Saturday visit to Georgia to campaign alongside Sens. David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler, who face strong Democratic challengers in Jan. 5 runoffs that will determine which party controls the Senate at the outset of Biden's presidency.

Republicans acknowledge Trump as the GOP's biggest turnout driver, including in Georgia, where Biden won by fewer than 13,000 votes out of about 5 million cast. That means every bit of enthusiasm from one of Trump's signature rallies could matter. But some Republicans worry Trump will use the platform to amplify his baseless allegations of widespread voter fraud — arguments roundly rejected in state and federal courts across the country. That could make it harder for Perdue and Loeffler to keep a clear focus on the stakes in January and could even discourage Republicans from voting.

"The president has basically taken hostage this race," said Brendan Buck, once a top adviser to former House Speaker Paul Ryan.

Especially fraught are Trump's continued attacks on Georgia's Republican state officials and the state's election system, potentially taking away from his public praise of Loeffler and Perdue.

"Trump's comments are damaging the Republican brand," argued Republican donor Dan Eberhart, who added that the president is "acting in bad sportsmanship and bad faith" instead of emphasizing Republicans' need to maintain Senate control.

The GOP needs one more seat for a majority. Democrats need Jon Ossoff to defeat Perdue and Raphael Warnock to defeat Loeffler to force a 50-50 Senate, positioning Vice President-elect Kamala Harris as the tie-breaking majority vote.

Trump on Monday blasted Gov. Brian Kemp as "hapless" for not intervening to "overrule" Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger's certification of Biden's win. A day earlier, Trump told Fox News he was "ashamed" he'd endorsed Kemp in his 2018 GOP primary for governor. Kemp's office noted in response that state law gives Kemp no authority to overturn election results, despite Trump's contention that Kemp could "easily" invoke "emergency powers." Meanwhile, Raffensperger, a Trump supporter like Kemp, has accused the president of throwing him "under the bus" for doing his job.

Perdue and Loeffler have attempted to stay above the fray.

They've long aligned themselves with Trump and even echoed some of his general criticisms of the fall elections, jointly demanding Raffensperger's resignation. But the crux of their runoff argument — that Republicans must prevent Democrats from controlling Capitol Hill and the White House — is itself a tacit admission that Biden, not Trump, will be inaugurated Jan. 20. And at one recent campaign stop, Perdue heard from vocal Trump supporters who demanded that he do more to help Trump somehow claim Georgia's 16 electoral votes.

Republicans see three potential negative outcomes to Trump fanning the flames.

Some GOP voters could be dissuaded from voting again if they accept Trump's claims that the system is hopelessly corrupted. Among Republicans more loyal to Trump than to the party, some could skip the runoff altogether out of anger at a party establishment the president continues to assail. Lastly, at the other end of the GOP spectrum are the moderate Republicans who already crossed over to help Biden win Georgia and could be further alienated if the runoff becomes another referendum on Trump.

Josh Holmes, a top adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, said Republicans "haven't seen any evidence of lack of enthusiasm in the Senate races."

But none of those potential bad effects would have to be sweeping to tilt the runoffs if they end up as

close as the presidential contest in Georgia.

"We'll see how it plays out. It changes day by day and week by week. But so far, so good," Holmes said. In Georgia, any Republican concerns are more circumspect.

Brian Robinson, a former adviser to Kemp's Republican predecessor as governor, said Trump should "drive a strong, forward-looking message" about what's at stake for a Republican base that "is fervently devoted to him."

"The best thing he can do for the party," Robinson said, "is to talk about the importance of having a Republican Senate majority to project his policy legacy and to make sure the Democrats can't reverse a lot of what he has put in place that Republicans support."

Asked what Trump should avoid, Robinson circled back to what he believes the president should say.

Former U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, a Trump ally, downplayed the potential for GOP splintering, framing an "inner-family squabble" as a sideshow to the "incredible" consequences that define the runoffs.

"Followers of Trump will follow Trump, but they're not blind to the huge stakes. And neither is he," Kingston said. "He knows to keep his legacy. He's got to get these people reelected." Trump, Kingston argued, is "keeping the base interested," a necessary component of any successful runoff campaign since second rounds of elections often see a drop-off in voter participation.

Robinson added that Democrats face their own challenge in replicating record turnout for Biden.

"What's the best motivator? Fear," he said. Before November, Democrats dreaded a second Trump term more than Republicans feared Trump losing, Robinson reasoned. "Republicans have reason to be scared now," he said, because of the prospect that Democrats could control both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

"That could make a difference in turnout" beyond anything Trump says, Robinson concluded.

For their parts, the senators continue their public embrace of all things Trump ahead of the visit.

"I couldn't be more excited to welcome" the president "back to Georgia," Loeffler wrote on Twitter after Trump confirmed his plans. Perdue's campaign quickly retweeted the comment, which Loeffler punctuated with a reminder that the runoffs are "an all-hands-on-deck moment."

It's not clear, though, if all Republicans will be on hand at all.

Kemp, the governor who appointed Loeffler upon Sen. Johnny Isakson's retirement last year, has on previous Trump visits greeted the president as he disembarks from Air Force One. Asked Monday whether Georgians will see a similar scene Saturday, Kemp spokesman Cody Hall said he could not comment "yet."

Fram reported from Washington.

## It's Major: Pets poised for a return to the White House

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Major Biden is getting an early start in the spotlight as a presidential pet after a play date ended with his owner, President-elect Joe Biden, suffering a broken foot. As if that weren't enough for one weekend, it was also confirmed that Major will have to share the White House with, of all things, a cat.

It'll get better, Major.

In a few weeks, Major, fellow German shepherd Champ and the TBD feline are expected to make the move to the White House. Presidential pets provide their owners with a source of comfort, entertainment, occasional drama and generally good PR.

The arrival of the Biden pets will also mark the next chapter in a long history of pets residing at the White House after a four-year hiatus during the Trump administration.

"Pets have always played an important role in the White House throughout the decades," said Jennifer Pickens, an author who studies White House traditions. "It not only provides companionship to the president and their family, but I believe it also humanizes and softens their political image."

Having a dog or cat will give some pet-loving constituents a connection with the president, added Tom Whalen, a presidential historian at Boston University.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 39 of 70

"When a president, the leader of the country, the leader of the free world really, is seen with a dog or a cat, you know, basically there is a bond that they have with their public, whether they're Republican or Democrat," Whalen said.

President Theodore Roosevelt had Skip, who is described by the White House Historical Association as a "short-legged Black and Tan mongrel terrier brought home from a Colorado bear hunt." Warren G. Harding had Laddie Boy, who sat in on meetings and had his own Cabinet chair. And President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had his beloved terrier Fala. At night, Fala slept in a special chair at the foot of the president's bed.

More recently, President George H.W. Bush's English springer spaniel Millie was featured on "The Simpsons" and starred in a bestseller, "Millie's Book: As dictated to Barbara Bush." Hillary Clinton followed Bush's lead with a children's book about family dog Buddy and cat Socks: "Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kids' Letters to the First Pets."

When he declared victory in the 2008 presidential race, Barack Obama told his daughters: "You have earned the new puppy that's coming with us to the White House." Several months later, Bo joined the family, a gift from Sen. Ted Kennedy. A few years later, fellow Portuguese water dog Sunny would arrive to provide companionship.

Among the stranger White House pets was Calvin Coolidge and first lady Grace Coolidge's raccoon named Rebecca. She was given to the Coolidge family by a supporter who suggested the raccoon be served for Thanksgiving dinner, according to the White House Historical Association. But instead she got an embroidered collar with the title "White House Raccoon" and entertained children at the White House Easter Egg Roll.

Some notable pets belonged to first kids, including Amy Carter's Siamese cat, Misty Malarky Ying Yang, and Caroline Kennedy's pony, Macaroni. The Kennedy family had a veritable menagerie, complete with dogs, cats, birds, hamsters and a rabbit named Zsa Zsa.

President Harry Truman famously said that "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog." It should not be a surprise that many presidents have taken him up on that advice. The first President Bush once said, "There is nothing like the unconditional love of a dog to help you get through the rough spots."

"From a presidential perspective, you know, a dog or cat or horse, they're great because they're non-judgmental. They're going to give you their unqualified love. And they're not going to criticize what you did in Somalia or how the economy is doing," Whalen said. "The pets are always there for you. And I think presidents, whether you're a Democrat or Republican, need that kind of reassurance from time to time, given how things are."

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Associated Press video journalist Mike Householder contributed to this report from Detroit.

## **Top secret: Biden gets access to President's Daily Brief**

By DEB RIECHMANN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden has had his first look as president-elect at the President's Daily Brief, a top secret summary of U.S. intelligence and world events — a document former first lady Michelle Obama has called "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book."

Biden has already had eyes on different iterations of the so-called PDB, which is tailored to the way each president likes to absorb information.

More than a decade ago, Biden read President George W. Bush's PDB during Biden's transition into the vice presidency. After that, he read President Barack Obama's PDB for eight years. Beginning Monday, after a four-year break, he's reading President Donald Trump's PDB.

"The briefers almost certainly will be asking Biden what he prefers in terms of format and style," said David Priess, author of "The President's Book of Secrets," a history of the PDB. "At a minimum, they're seeing what seems to resonate most with him so that when they make the book his book, they can tailor it to him."

Obama's PDB was a 10- to 15-page document tucked in a leather binder, which he found waiting for

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 40 of 70

him on the breakfast table. Later in his presidency, he liked reading the ultra-secret intelligence brief on a secured iPad.

"Michelle called it "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book," Obama wrote in his recently released book, "A Promised Land."

"On a given day, I might read about terrorist cells in Somalia or unrest in Iraq or the fact that the Chinese or Russians were developing new weapons systems," Obama wrote. "Nearly always, there was mention of potential terrorist plots, no matter how vague, thinly sourced, or unactionable — a form of due diligence on the part of the intelligence community, meant to avoid the kind of second-guessing that had transpired after 9/11."

From now until Inauguration Day, Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will be reading the PDB crafted for Trump, who had delayed giving Biden and Harris access to it as he contests the outcome of the election.

Trump, who prefers absorbing information in visual ways, likes short texts and graphics.

"Trump himself said during his campaign and during the transition in 2016 that he did not like reading long documents — that he preferred bullet points," said Priess, who has not seen any of Trump's PDBs. "It probably has charts, tables, graphs — things like that. Not the parody that people make that it's like a cartoon book ... but something that is more visual. But we don't know for sure."

The written brief, which Trump doesn't always read, often is followed by a verbal briefing with an intelligence official, although those oral briefings stopped at least for a time in October. Priess said he didn't know why they stopped or if they had resumed, but that they stopped at a time when Trump was spending much of his time on the campaign trail.

Before Trump authorized Biden to get the PDB as president-elect, Biden was given some intelligence background briefings as a candidate. But they were more general and did not include the nation's top secrets.

The other thing that a president-elect gets is a briefing "on CIA's covert actions," former acting CIA director Mike Morell said at an event hosted by the Center for Presidential Transition based in Washington. "It's important for the president-elect to get this briefing ... because on Inauguration Day, these covert actions will become the new president's."

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy read his first brief while sitting on the diving board of a swimming pool at his retreat in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. President Lyndon Johnson liked to read his brief in the afternoon. President Richard Nixon relied on his national security adviser Henry Kissinger to peruse the briefs and tell him what he thought the president should know.

As the laborious recount of ballots dragged on in 2000, President Bill Clinton decided that then-Gov. George W. Bush should get access to his PDB just in case he was the winner. Bush became the first incoming president to read it before he was president-elect.

Biden is getting the PDB later than usual because of Trump's ongoing protest of the election results. Trump approved the briefings for Biden last Tuesday, a day after his administration approved the formal transition process to his successor.

When Biden walks into the Oval Office, he'll be inheriting nuclear threats from North Korea and Iran, changing political dynamics in the Middle East, the winding down of America's presence in Afghanistan and rising competition from China.

Biden had access to the PDB in Wilmington, Delaware. Harris received it in a secure room at the Commerce Department, where the presidential transition offices are located.

Even Biden, who has decades of experience in foreign policy, could be the victim of an old political adage that no matter how informed he thinks he is, he could learn otherwise from the PDB.

Former CIA Director Michael Hayden wrote in his book that revelations and new insight found in the PDB are known as "aw s---" moments. As in: "Aw s---," he wrote, "wish we hadn't said that during that campaign stop in Buffalo."



Riechmann reported from Washington.

## **Biden names liberal econ team as pandemic threatens workers**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — With unemployment still high and the pandemic threatening yet another economic slump, President-elect Joe Biden is assembling a team of liberal advisers who have long focused on the nation's workers and government efforts to address economic inequality.

Janet Yellen, announced Monday as Biden's nominee for treasury secretary, served as chair of the Federal Reserve from 2014 to 2018, when she placed a greater emphasis than previous Fed chairs on maximizing employment and less focus on price inflation. Biden also named Cecilia Rouse as chair of his Council of Economic Advisers, and Heather Boushey and Jared Bernstein as members of the council.

All are outspoken supporters of more government stimulus spending to boost growth, a major issue with the coronavirus pandemic cramping the U.S. economy.

Those choices "signal the desire of the Biden administration to take the CEA in a direction that really centers on working people and raising wages," said Heidi Shierholz, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute and former Labor Department chief economist during the Obama administration.

Biden's nominees are also a more personally diverse group than those of previous presidents.

Yellen, if confirmed by the Senate, would be the first woman to serve as treasury secretary, after breaking ground as the first woman to chair the Fed. Rouse would be the first Black woman to lead the CEA in its 74 years of existence. And Neera Tanden, Biden's pick for director of the Office of Management and Budget, would be the first South Asian American in that job.

Biden also selected Wally Adeyemo to be Yellen's deputy, which would make him the first Black deputy treasury secretary. Rouse, Tanden and Adeyemo will all require Senate confirmation, and Tanden in particular is already drawing heavy Republican criticism.

Along with its progressive cast, Biden's team also has years of experience in government and policymaking. And that's earning plaudits from some conservatives, who note that the nominees are not a far-left group bent on strangling the economy, as President Donald Trump repeatedly warned during the 2020 campaign.

"They are intellectual liberals, but not burn-it-all-down socialists," said Brian Riedl, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and an adviser to Sen. Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. "They're fairly conventional liberal economists and experts."

Still, the Biden administration's ambitious goals will face solid opposition from Republicans in Congress. The GOP needs to win one of two Georgia Senate seats in a Jan. 5 special election to retain control of the Senate, and the Republicans made major inroads on Nov. 3 in the Democrats' House majority.

"Most of the policies that Biden ran on will not survive a Republican Senate," Riedl said. Those include proposals to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and significantly increase taxes on wealthy Americans.

Biden could secure another round of stimulus spending early next year, particularly if the recent spikes in confirmed virus cases push the economy into recession again. But such a package will likely have to come in under \$1 trillion to get Senate Republican support, Riedl said, rather than the higher figure House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is seeking.

Tanden is the president and CEO of the liberal think tank Center for American Progress and was the director of domestic policy for the Obama-Biden presidential campaign. She first made her mark in the Clinton orbit, and served as policy director for Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential race.

A spokesman for GOP Sen. John Cornyn of Texas tweeted that Tanden "stands zero chance of being confirmed" as budget director, citing "an endless stream of disparaging comments about" Republican senators. And Josh Holmes, a political adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, tweeted that her confirmation was likely doomed.

Brian Deese, a former senior economic adviser in the Obama administration and now the managing director and global head of sustainable investing at BlackRock, is expected to be named director of the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 42 of 70

White House National Economic Council, according to a person familiar with transition plans who was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Deese worked on the auto bailout and environmental issues in the Obama White House, where he held the title of deputy director of both the NEC and the OMB.

Deese and Adeyemo are both under fire from progressives for their connections to BlackRock, a giant Wall Street asset management firm. BlackRock has sought to avoid greater regulatory scrutiny by Treasury. And many activists assail the firm for owning huge stakes in oil and gas companies.

Rouse, a labor economist and head of Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, served on the CEA from 2009 to 2011, and served on the NEC from 1998 to 1999 in the Clinton administration.

Notably, she organized a letter earlier this year signed by more than 100 economists calling for more government action to help Americans caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"The planning for a fairer economy, grounded in facts and evidence, begins now," Rouse tweeted Monday.

Alan Blinder, former vice chair of the Fed and a currently an economics professor at Princeton, praised Rouse's management style and her expertise in the economics of education and workforce training. Biden has proposed making two years of community college tuition-free.

"That kind of stuff is right in her wheelhouse," Blinder said.

Boushey, picked to be one of the three members of the CEA, is president and co-founder of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, a think tank focused on inequality. The center conducts its own research and also provides grants to mostly left-leaning academics to study aspects of inequality.

Bernstein, also nominated for the CEA, was an adviser to then-Vice President Biden during the Obama administration before becoming a fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a left-leaning think tank. Bernstein has also worked as a social worker and was an economist at the Economic Policy Institute, a labor-supported think tank.

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Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe, Paul Wiseman and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

## At tiny rural hospitals, weary doctors treat friends, family

By JEFF ROBERSON and JIM SALTER Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Mo. (AP) — As Dr. Shane Wilson makes the rounds at the tiny, 25-bed hospital in rural north-eastern Missouri, many of his movements are familiar in an age of coronavirus. Masks and gloves. Zippered plastic walls between hallways. Hand sanitizer as he enters and exits each room.

But one thing is starkly different. Born and raised in the town of just 1,800, Wilson knows most of his patients by their first names.

He visits a woman who used to be a gym teacher at his school, and later laughingly recalls a day she caught him smoking at school and made him and a friend pick up cigarette butts as punishment. Another man was in the middle of his soybean harvest when he fell ill and couldn't finish.

In November, Wilson treated his own father, who along with his wife used to work at the same hospital. The 74-year-old elder Wilson recovered from the virus.

The coronavirus pandemic largely hit urban areas first, but the autumn surge is devastating rural America, too. The U.S. is now averaging more than 170,000 new cases each day, and it's taking a toll from the biggest hospitals down to the little ones, like Scotland County Hospital.

The tragedy is smaller here, more intimate. Everyone knows everyone.

Memphis, Missouri, population 1,800, is the biggest town for miles and miles amid the cornfields of the northeastern corner of Missouri. Agriculture accounts for most jobs in the region. The area is so remote that the nearest stoplight, McDonald's and Wal-Mart are all an hour away, hospital public relations director Alisa Kigar said.

People come to the hospital from six surrounding counties, typically for treatment of things like farm and sports injuries, chest pains and the flu. Usually, there's plenty of room.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 43 of 70

Not now. The small hospital with roughly six doctors and 75 nurses among 142 full-time staff, is in crisis. The region is seeing a big increase in COVID-19 cases, and all available beds are usually taken.

Scotland County Hospital's doctors already are making difficult, often heartbreaking decisions about who they can take in. Wilson said some moderately ill people have been sent home with oxygen and told, "If things get worse, come back in, but we don't have a place to put you and we don't have a place to transfer you."

Meanwhile, a staffing shortage is so severe that the hospital put out an appeal for anyone with health care experience, including retirees, to come to work. Several responded and are already on staff, including a woman working as a licensed practical nurse as she studies to become a registered nurse.

The hospital's chief nursing officer, Elizabeth Guffey, said nurses are working up to 24 extra hours each week. Guffey sometimes sleeps in an office rather than go home between shifts.

"We're in a surge capacity almost 100% of the time," Guffey said. "So it's all hands on deck."

It's especially difficult to watch friends and relatives struggle through the illness while a large majority of the community still doesn't take it seriously, she said.

"We spend our time indoors taking care of these very sick people, and then we go outdoors and hear people tell us the disease is a hoax or it doesn't really exist," Guffey said.

Glen Cowell wasn't so sure about the virus until it knocked him to his knees.

At 68, Cowell still works his 500-acre farm near Memphis and is healthy enough that he takes no daily pills. He started feeling poorly around Nov. 11, tested positive four days later, then gradually got sicker. On Nov. 18, an ambulance took him to the emergency room. He was treated and went home.

"They only had one bed left and I didn't feel I was sick enough to take somebody else's bed," Cowell said.

But soon, breathing became difficult and nausea set in. Worst of all, his temperature spiked to 104 degrees. Another ambulance trip was followed by a lengthy hospital stay.

He's not sure where he got the virus but admits he wasn't overly cautious.

"I'm as independent as a hog on ice," Cowell said. "I was pretty ambivalent about it. If Dollar General said I had to wear a mask, I wore a mask. If I walked across the street to Farm & Home, I didn't wear a mask. I really wasn't aware of the fact that it could get ahold of you and not let go."

Brock Slabach, senior vice president of the National Rural Health Association, based in suburban Kansas City, said it takes "space, staff and stuff" to run a rural hospital. "If you don't have any one of those three, you're really hamstrung," he said, noting that many hospitals face shortages in all three areas.

Wilson spent hours on the phone one day, trying to find a larger hospital capable of providing the critical care that might save a man in his 50s who was critically ill with the virus.

By the time the University of Iowa Hospital agreed to take him, it was clear he couldn't survive the 120-mile trip.

"I don't know that getting him to Iowa City would have made a difference," Wilson said. "Sometimes people are sick enough that they're not going to survive, and that's the reality of what we have to deal with. But it's still pretty damn frustrating when you're sitting here with your hands tied."

Salter reported from O'Fallon, Mo.

## Olympic rings back in Tokyo Bay; a sign of hope in pandemic

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The five Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay.

They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Tokyo Olympics were postponed until next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rings arrived on Tuesday after a short cruise from nearby Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the shadow on Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge.

The rings — painted blue, black, red, green, and yellow — are gigantic. They stand about 15 meters tall and 33 meters in length — about 50 feet tall and 100 feet in length.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 44 of 70

The rings will be lighted at night and herald the coming of the Tokyo Olympics, which are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on Aug. 24.

The rings made their first appearance early in 2020, just a few months before the Olympics were postponed late in March.

The reappearance of the rings is the latest sign that organizers and the International Olympic Committee are increasingly confident that 15,400 Olympic and Paralympic athletes can safely enter Japan during the pandemic.

These Olympics are sure to be like no other.

They will hinge partly on the availability of vaccines and rapid testing for COVID-19, and on athletes and other participants following strict rules that could involve quarantines, a limited number of fans in venues, and athletes leaving Japan shortly after they finish their competitions.

Organizers have been vague about exactly how the Olympics will be held. Plans are in flux with dozens of COVID-19 countermeasures being floated involving athletes, fans, and tens of thousands of officials, judges, VIPs, and media and broadcasters.

Protocols should become clearer early in 2021 when decisions must be made about permitting fans from abroad, which will affect revenue from ticket sales.

The meter continues to run on billions in costs, with Japanese taxpayers picking up most of the bills. Reports in Japan this week say the cost of the postponement is about \$3 billion.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **Biden names liberal econ team as pandemic threatens workers**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — With unemployment still high and the pandemic threatening yet another economic slump, President-elect Joe Biden is assembling a team of liberal advisers who have long focused on the nation's workers and government efforts to address economic inequality.

Janet Yellen, announced Monday as Biden's nominee for treasury secretary, served as chair of the Federal Reserve from 2014 to 2018, when she placed a greater emphasis than previous Fed chairs on maximizing employment and less focus on price inflation. Biden also named Cecilia Rouse as chair of his Council of Economic Advisers, and Heather Boushey and Jared Bernstein as members of the council.

All are outspoken supporters of more government stimulus spending to boost growth, a major issue with the coronavirus pandemic cramping the U.S. economy.

Those choices "signal the desire of the Biden administration to take the CEA in a direction that really centers on working people and raising wages," said Heidi Shierholz, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute and former Labor Department chief economist during the Obama administration.

Biden's nominees are also a more personally diverse group than those of previous presidents.

Yellen, if confirmed by the Senate, would be the first woman to serve as treasury secretary, after breaking ground as the first woman to chair the Fed. Rouse would be the first Black woman to lead the CEA in its 74 years of existence. And Neera Tanden, Biden's pick for director of the Office of Management and Budget, would be the first South Asian American in that job.

Biden also selected Wally Adeyemo to be Yellen's deputy, which would make him the first Black deputy treasury secretary. Rouse, Tanden and Adeyemo will all require Senate confirmation, and Tanden in particular is already drawing heavy Republican criticism.

Along with its progressive cast, Biden's team also has years of experience in government and policymaking. And that's earning plaudits from some conservatives, who note that the nominees are not a far-left group bent on strangling the economy, as President Donald Trump repeatedly warned during the 2020 campaign.

"They are intellectual liberals, but not burn-it-all-down socialists," said Brian Riedl, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and an adviser to Sen. Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. "They're fairly conventional liberal economists and experts."

Still, the Biden administration's ambitious goals will face solid opposition from Republicans in Congress.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 45 of 70

The GOP needs to win one of two Georgia Senate seats in a Jan. 5 special election to retain control of the Senate, and the Republicans made major inroads on Nov. 3 in the Democrats' House majority.

"Most of the policies that Biden ran on will not survive a Republican Senate," Riedl said. Those include proposals to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and significantly increase taxes on wealthy Americans.

Biden could secure another round of stimulus spending early next year, particularly if the recent spikes in confirmed virus cases push the economy into recession again. But such a package will likely have to come in under \$1 trillion to get Senate Republican support, Riedl said, rather than the higher figure House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is seeking.

Tanden is the president and CEO of the liberal think tank Center for American Progress and was the director of domestic policy for the Obama-Biden presidential campaign. She first made her mark in the Clinton orbit, and served as policy director for Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential race.

A spokesman for GOP Sen. John Cornyn of Texas tweeted that Tanden "stands zero chance of being confirmed" as budget director, citing "an endless stream of disparaging comments about" Republican senators. And Josh Holmes, a political adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, tweeted that her confirmation was likely doomed.

Brian Deese, a former senior economic adviser in the Obama administration and now the managing director and global head of sustainable investing at BlackRock, is expected to be named director of the White House National Economic Council, according to a person familiar with transition plans who was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

Deese worked on the auto bailout and environmental issues in the Obama White House, where he held the title of deputy director of both the NEC and the OMB.

Deese and Adeyemo are both under fire from progressives for their connections to BlackRock, a giant Wall Street asset management firm. BlackRock has sought to avoid greater regulatory scrutiny by Treasury. And many activists assail the firm for owning huge stakes in oil and gas companies.

Rouse, a labor economist and head of Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, served on the CEA from 2009 to 2011, and served on the NEC from 1998 to 1999 in the Clinton administration.

Notably, she organized a letter earlier this year signed by more than 100 economists calling for more government action to help Americans caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"The planning for a fairer economy, grounded in facts and evidence, begins now," Rouse tweeted Monday.

Alan Blinder, former vice chair of the Fed and a currently an economics professor at Princeton, praised Rouse's management style and her expertise in the economics of education and workforce training. Biden has proposed making two years of community college tuition-free.

"That kind of stuff is right in her wheelhouse," Blinder said.

Boushey, picked to be one of the three members of the CEA, is president and co-founder of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, a think tank focused on inequality. The center conducts its own research and also provides grants to mostly left-leaning academics to study aspects of inequality.

Bernstein, also nominated for the CEA, was an adviser to then-Vice President Biden during the Obama administration before becoming a fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a left-leaning think tank. Bernstein has also worked as a social worker and was an economist at the Economic Policy Institute, a labor-supported think tank.

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Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe, Paul Wiseman and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

## Trump science adviser Scott Atlas leaving White House job

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dr. Scott Atlas, a science adviser to President Donald Trump who was skeptical of measures to control the coronavirus outbreak, is leaving his White House post.

A White House official confirmed that the Stanford University neuroradiologist, who had no formal experience in public health or infectious diseases, resigned at the end of his temporary government assignment.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 46 of 70

Atlas confirmed the news in a Monday evening tweet.

Atlas joined the White House this summer, where he clashed with top government scientists, including Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx, as he resisted stronger efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic that has killed more than 267,000 Americans.

Atlas has broken with government experts and the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community to criticize efforts to encourage face covering to slow the spread of the virus. Just weeks ago on Twitter he responded to Michigan's latest virus restrictions by encouraging people to "rise up" against the state's policies.

His views also prompted Stanford to issue a statement distancing itself from the faculty member, saying Atlas "has expressed views that are inconsistent with the university's approach in response to the pandemic."

"We support using masks, social distancing, and conducting surveillance and diagnostic testing," the university said Nov. 16. "We also believe in the importance of strictly following the guidance of local and state health authorities."

Atlas defended his role in his resignation letter, saying, "I cannot think of a time where safeguarding science and the scientific debate is more urgent."

Atlas was hired as a "special government employee," which limited his service to government to 130 days in a calendar year — a deadline he reached this week.

## Americans face new COVID-19 restrictions after Thanksgiving

By TAMMY WEBBER and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

Americans returning from Thanksgiving break faced strict new coronavirus measures around the country Monday as health officials brace for a disastrous worsening of the nationwide surge because of holiday gatherings over the long weekend.

Los Angeles County imposed a stay-at-home order for its 10 million residents, and Santa Clara County, in the heart of Silicon Valley, banned high school, college and professional sports and decreed a quarantine for those who have traveled more than 150 miles outside the county.

In Hawaii, the mayor of Hawaii County said trans-Pacific travelers arriving without a negative COVID-19 test must quarantine for 14 days, and even those who have tested virus-free may be randomly selected for another test upon arrival. New Jersey is suspending all youth sports.

"The red flags are flying in terms of the trajectory in our projections of growth," said California Gov. Gavin Newsom. "If these trends continue, we're going to have to take much more dramatic, arguably drastic, action."

Health experts had pleaded with Americans to stay home over Thanksgiving and not gather with anyone who didn't live with them. Nevertheless, almost 1.2 million people passed through U.S. airports Sunday, the most since the pandemic gripped the country in March, and others took to the highways to be with family and friends.

Now they're being urged to watch for any signs of illness and get tested right away if they experience symptoms.

Some families are already seeing the fallout from Thanksgiving gatherings.

Jonathan Eshnaur lugged his 32-inch TV to a Thanksgiving Day family gathering at his sister's home in Olathe, Kansas, so he could watch football outside. He wore a mask and only went into her house for the prayer and to use the bathroom.

His father began feeling terrible that day and tested positive the next. His mother now is showing symptoms, and six others were exposed.

"I think we all have a tendency to think it won't happen to me," said Eshnaur, a 34-year-old special education teacher. "But that is kind of the issue with these kinds of viruses is it does happen, especially when we have widespread community spread that is going on."

Priya Patel, 24, is isolating at her parents' home in San Antonio after visiting friends over the weekend and coming down with a sore throat.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 47 of 70

Patel, who works in public health in New York City, said she had been careful, wearing masks in public and staying out of restaurants and bars. But she spent time at a friend's home in Texas over Thanksgiving.

"I'm an extremely extroverted person, and there is just so much time I can spend with my parents at home," said Patel, who will stay away from her parents, both of whom have preexisting medical conditions, and wear a mask inside their home for the next 14 days.

Health officials are urging people to remain vigilant until a vaccine becomes widely available, which is not expected to happen for at least a few months.

On Monday, Moderna Inc. said it will ask U.S. and European regulators to allow emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine as new study results confirm the shots offer strong protection. Pfizer is also seeking approval for its vaccine and hopes to begin administering shots in the U.S. in December.

The virus is blamed for over 267,000 deaths and more than 13.4 million confirmed infections in the U.S. The country on average is seeing more than 160,000 new cases per day and over 1,400 deaths — a toll on par with what the nation witnessed in mid-May, when New York City was the epicenter.

A record 90,000 people were in the hospital with the virus in the U.S. as of Sunday, pushing many medical institutions to the limit.

West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice said hospitals across the state will reduce elective surgeries to ensure there is room for coronavirus patients. The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 jumped 29% in the past week. In Kansas City, Kansas, hospital and nursing officials said they fear there will not be enough nurses to staff new hospital beds in the metro area if COVID-19 cases continue unchecked. Health officials on Monday added 4,425 confirmed infections and 87 hospitalizations to the state's pandemic tally since Friday.

Rhode Island's hospitals reached their COVID-19 capacity on Monday, the same day the state's two-week pause took effect. Under restrictions announced by Gov. Gina Raimondo, some businesses will be required to shut down, while others are restricted. Residents are also asked to limit their social circles to people in their household.

"This will not be easy, but I am pleading with you to take it seriously," Raimondo said in a statement.

In suburban St. Louis, a hospital official warned that hospitalizations could double in two to three weeks if people don't quarantine after Thanksgiving gatherings. SSM Health DePaul Hospital in Bridgeton, Missouri, last week brought in a morgue trailer to store the dead, canceled elective surgeries and doubled up patients in rooms.

"We will be absolutely overwhelmed," said Shelly Cordum, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer. "I can't even imagine what we are going to be facing in three weeks if we stay on this path."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's foremost infectious-disease expert, warned on ABC over the weekend that the country could see a "surge upon surge" of infections tied to Thanksgiving. And White House coronavirus task force coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx told CBS that people who traveled should "assume that you were exposed and you became infected," and get tested if they experience symptoms.

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Associated Press writers Daisy Nguyen in Oakland, California, Alan Clendenning in Phoenix; Jeff McMillan in New York City; John Raby in Charleston, West Virginia; Michelle Monroe in Los Angeles; Lauran Neergaard in Washington; William J. Kole in Warwick, Rhode Island; and Paul Davenport in Phoenix contributed to this report.

## Wisconsin certifies Joe Biden as winner following recount

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Joe Biden's victory in battleground Wisconsin was certified Monday following a partial recount that only added to his 20,600-vote margin over President Donald Trump, who has promised to file a lawsuit seeking to undo the results.

Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, signed a certificate that completed the process after the canvass report showing Biden as the winner following the recount was approved by the chairwoman of the bipartisan

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 48 of 70

Wisconsin Elections Commission. Evers' signature was required by law and is typically a procedural step that receives little attention.

"Today I carried out my duty to certify the November 3rd election," Evers said in a statement. "I want to thank our clerks, election administrators, and poll workers across our state for working tirelessly to ensure we had a safe, fair, and efficient election. Thank you for all your good work."

The action Monday now starts a five-day deadline for Trump to file a lawsuit, which he promised would come no later than Tuesday. Trump is mounting a longshot attempt to overturn the results by disqualifying as many as 238,000 ballots. Trump's attorneys have alleged without evidence that there was widespread fraud and illegal activity.

Biden's campaign has said the recount showed that Biden won Wisconsin decisively and there was no fraud. Even if Trump were successful in Wisconsin, the state's 10 Electoral College votes would not be enough to undo Biden's overall victory as states around the country certify results. Earlier Monday, Arizona officials certified Biden's narrow victory in that state.

"There's no basis at all for any assertion that there was widespread fraud that would have affected the results," Wisconsin's Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul said in a statement Monday. He noted that Trump's recount targeted only the state's two most populous counties where the majority of Black people live.

"I have every confidence that this disgraceful Jim Crow strategy for mass disenfranchisement of voters will fail," Kaul said. "An election isn't a game of gotcha."

State law gives the power to confirm the election results to the chair of the bipartisan Wisconsin Elections Commission. The position rotates between Republicans and Democrats and is currently held by Ann Jacobs, a Democrat. She signed the canvass statement certifying Biden as the winner over objections from Republicans who wanted to wait until after legal challenges were exhausted.

Under state law, the elections staff next sent a certificate to Evers to sign and send to the U.S. administrator of general services — a procedural step since the law says the governor "shall sign" it. Evers did so about an hour after the canvassed results were confirmed.

Trump's legal challenges have failed in other battleground states, including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Pennsylvania. Two lawsuits from others seeking to disqualify ballots in Wisconsin were filed last week with the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which has not taken action.

Trump paid \$3 million for recounts in Dane and Milwaukee counties, the two largest Democratic counties in Wisconsin, but the recount ended up increasing Biden's lead by 74 votes. Biden won statewide by nearly 20,700 votes.

Trump, during the recount, sought to have ballots discarded where election clerks filled in missing address information on the certification envelope where the ballot is inserted. The state elections commission told clerks before the election that they could fill in missing information on the absentee ballot envelopes, a practice that has been in place for at least the past 11 elections and that no court has ever ruled illegal.

Trump also challenged any absentee ballot where a voter declared themselves to be "indefinitely confined" under the law, a designation that increased from about 57,000 in 2016 to nearly 216,000 this year due to the pandemic. Such a declaration exempts the voter from having to show a photo identification to cast a ballot, which Trump attorney Christ Troupis called "an open invitation for fraud and abuse." The conservative-controlled Wisconsin Supreme Court this spring ruled that it is up to individual voters to determine whether they are indefinitely confined, in line with guidance from the state elections commission.

Trump also sought to discard any absentee ballot where there was not a written application on file and all absentee ballots cast in-person during the two weeks before Election Day.

People who vote in-person early fill out a certification envelope that they then place their ballot in and that envelope serves as the written record. But the vast majority of absentee requests these days are made online, with a voter's name entered into an electronic log with no paper record.

Disqualifying all of the ballots in Milwaukee and Dane counties that Trump identified during the recount would result in more than 238,000 votes not counting, according to an analysis by the Milwaukee Journal



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 49 of 70

Sentinel.

The conservative Wisconsin Voters Alliance sued last week seeking to block certification of the results and give the Republican-controlled Legislature the power to appoint presidential electors to cast the state's 10 Electoral College votes. The Wisconsin Democratic Party previously selected Biden's 10 electors as prescribed by law. The signing of the canvass statement on Monday confirmed that Biden receives the state's 10 Electoral College votes from those electors.

Another lawsuit filed over the weekend by Wisconsin resident Dean Mueller argues that ballots placed in drop boxes are illegal and must not be counted.

This story has been corrected to show the recount increased Biden's margin by 74 votes, not 87, based on corrected totals issued earlier Monday by Dane County.

## **VIRUS TODAY: Vaccine gains momentum, NFL season in chaos**

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Monday with the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S.:

### THREE THINGS TO KNOW TODAY

— The rush to develop a vaccine gained steam with the news from Moderna Inc. that it would ask U.S. and European regulators to allow emergency use of its vaccine. Early results show the vaccine is more than 94 percent effective.

— The virus has thrown the NFL season into chaos yet again. The Baltimore Ravens-Pittsburgh Steelers contest was moved from Thanksgiving to Wednesday with more than 20 Ravens on the COVID-19 list, and the game is still in jeopardy of not being played as scheduled. The Denver Broncos started an undrafted rookie wide receiver at quarterback because of COVID-19 protocol violations.

— Tough new restrictions are taking effect across California as the state hit a new record with 7,400 coronavirus hospitalizations. Los Angeles County, home to 10 million people — imposed new rules calling for residents to stay home as much as possible.

THE NUMBERS: The long Thanksgiving weekend will create volatility in the major virus metrics early this week. The U.S. is averaging 162,000 new cases a day over the past week, and a record 93,000 people are hospitalized with the virus.

QUOTABLE: "I allowed myself to cry for the first time." — Dr. Tal Zaks, chief medical officer for Moderna after learning about the positive results from its vaccine study.

ICYMI: Law enforcement authorities around the country are on high alert for potential scams related to the COVID-19 vaccine. They are worried about criminal organizations exploiting Americans with things like fake vaccines.

ON THE HORIZON: With the advances in vaccine development, the ball will soon be in the court of the Food and Drug Administration. Its Dec. 10 meeting could pave the way for the immediate distribution of the Pfizer vaccine.

Find AP's full coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## **Powell says pace of economic improvement has moderated**

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell says that the pace of improvement in the economy has moderated in recent months with future prospects remaining "extraordinarily uncertain."

In remarks released by the Fed on Monday, Powell said that the increase in new COVID-19 cases both in the United States and abroad was "concerning and could prove challenging for the next few months. A full economic recovery is unlikely until people are confident that it is safe to reengage in a broad range of activities."

Powell said while progress on developing vaccines had been "very positive," significant challenges re-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 50 of 70

mained regarding the timing, production and distribution of the vaccines, and it remained difficult to assess the economic implications of this process with any degree of confidence.

Powell's remarks were prepared for a joint appearance he will make on Tuesday with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin before the Senate Banking Committee. The hearing is part of the panel's oversight responsibilities required under the \$2 trillion CARES Act legislation Congress passed in March.

In Mnuchin's prepared remarks, which were also released Monday, the Treasury secretary said the Trump administration was still willing to support targeted fiscal package to provide further economic relief.

"I strongly encourage Congress to use the \$455 billion in unused funds from the CARES Act to pass an additional bill with bipartisan support," Mnuchin said. "The administration is standing ready to support Congress in this effort to help American workers and small businesses that continue to struggle with the impact of COVID-19."

Mnuchin announced on Nov. 19 that he would not grant extensions for five lending programs being operated jointly by the Fed and the Treasury Department that were scheduled to expire on Dec. 31. Mnuchin said that the money allocated to the Fed for those programs should be used now instead to provide support to Congress for additional assistance to individuals and businesses.

The five programs that Mnuchin announced he would not extend past this year included backstops for corporate and municipal debt and the purchase of loans for small businesses and nonprofits.

Earlier on Monday, the Fed and Treasury announced as expected that four other lending facilities that do not utilize CARES Act funds would be extended through next March. Those facilities helped to stabilize short-term funding markets when the coronavirus hit last spring, sending shockwaves through the financial system.

The four Fed loan programs that were extended included the Commercial Paper Funding Facility, which provided critical support for the market that supplies short-term corporate IOUs. Also extended was operation of the Money Market Fund Liquidity Facility, which helped to prevent potential runs on money-market mutual funds.

In his remarks, Powell said that the Fed's "broad and forceful actions" had helped unlock almost \$2 trillion in funding to support "businesses large and small, nonprofits and state and local governments since April."

Following their appearance Tuesday before the Senate Banking Committee, Powell and Mnuchin were scheduled to testify Wednesday at an oversight hearing being held by the House Financial Services Committee.

## **This holiday season, everyone is shopping from home**

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The viral pandemic is accelerating a transformation of America's holiday shopping season.

Few people showed up at the mall this weekend, with millions of pandemic-wary shoppers staying home to shop online.

The result? Overall holiday sales are projected to rise a slight 0.9% in November and December — and even that modest gain will be due to an explosion in online shopping, according to the research firm eMarketer. It expects online sales to jump nearly 36%, while sales at physical stores fall 4.7%.

The online rush was on fully display Monday, known as Cyber Monday, a day of sales promoted by retailers back in 2005. Once the final numbers are tallied up, this year's Cyber Monday is projected to become the biggest online shopping day in American history.

Here's how this holiday shopping season is shaping up:

**"BLEAK FRIDAY"**

Black Friday, typically the frenzied kick-off of the holiday shopping season, was eerily quiet this year. Health officials had warned shoppers to stay home, and stores followed suit by putting their best deals online to discourage crowds.

Half as many people shopped inside stores this Black Friday than last year, according to retail data com-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 51 of 70

pany Sensormatic Solutions.

"Black Friday was really Bleak Friday," says David Bassuk, a member of the retail practice at the consulting firm AlixPartners.

Online was a decidedly different story. Sales hit a record \$9 billion on Black Friday — up a sharp 22% from last year, according to Adobe Analytics, which tracks online shopping.

## CYBER MONDAY STILL ON TOP

Even though shoppers had access to weeks of online deals, many held out for bargains that they could get only on Cyber Monday, the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Amazon offered 30% off on board games and discounts on many of its gadgets. Target had 40% off Legos and robot vacuums for \$75 off.

Cyber Monday is expected to generate as much as \$12.7 billion in sales — a 35% jump from a year ago, according to Adobe Analytics.

## SHIPPING SLOWDOWN

A big unknown hanging over the shopping season is this: Will retailers and shippers be able to deliver all those online orders in time for Christmas? Retailers have been warning shoppers to buy early this year, because with far more people shopping online during the pandemic, shippers may become overwhelmed with packages to deliver.

Prolonged delays could send people back to physical stores closer to Christmas, if many people eventually decide that old-fashioned stores are a more reliable way to obtain their gifts on time, said Charlie O'Shea, a retail analyst at Moody's.

## MORE CURBSIDE PICKUP

Curbside pickup, in which people order online and pick up at a store's parking lot, is becoming a popular option for those who want their gifts right away or who fear that they won't be shipped on time.

Some stores, like Macy's, are offering curbside pickup for the first time this holiday. Others are making more space in their parking lots for people to park and pick up orders.

In the weekend after Thanksgiving, curbside pickup rose 67% from a year ago, according to Adobe Analytics.

## ONLINE SMALL BUSINESSES GAIN, TOO

While retail giants Amazon and Walmart are likely to be the biggest winners this holiday season, smaller businesses that have an online presence are racking up sales, too.

Adobe Analytics says online sales at smaller retailers were up 349% on Thanksgiving and Black Friday. And at the more than 1 million businesses that use Shopify to build their websites, sales rose 75% from a year ago to \$2.4 billion on Black Friday, according to Shopify.

Some shoppers are purposefully skipping big stores for smaller ones.

Bernadette Vielhaber, a technical writer in Avon, Ohio, says she bought books, T-shirts and other gifts from small businesses online, instead of giving her money to large companies that she feels don't need it, like Amazon.

"I'm trying to be more supportive of people who are struggling to keep their businesses open," she says.

## AP Exclusive: Cardinal Pell on the Vatican and vindication

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The pope's former treasurer, Cardinal George Pell, said Monday he feels a dismayed sense of vindication as the financial mismanagement he tried to uncover in the Holy See is now being exposed in a spiraling Vatican corruption investigation.

Pell made the comments to The Associated Press in his first interview since returning to Rome after his conviction-turned-acquittal on sexual abuse charges in his native Australia. Pell told the AP that he knew in 2014 when he took the treasury job that the Holy See's finances were "a bit of a mess."

"I never, never thought it would be as Technicolor as it proved," Pell said from his living room armchair in his apartment just outside St. Peter's Square. "I didn't know that there was so much criminality involved."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 52 of 70

Pell spoke to the AP before the Dec. 15 release of the first volume of his jailhouse memoir, "Prison Journal," chronicling the first five months of the 404 days he spent in solitary confinement in a Melbourne lockup.

Pell left his job as prefect of the Vatican's economy ministry in 2017 to face charges that he sexually molested two 13-year-old choir boys in the sacristy of the Melbourne cathedral in 1996. After a first jury deadlocked, a second unanimously convicted him and he was sentenced to six years in prison. The conviction was upheld on appeal only to be thrown out by Australia's High Court, which in April found there was reasonable doubt in the testimony of his lone accuser.

In the prison diary, Pell reflects on the nature of suffering, Pope Francis' papacy and the humiliations of solitary confinement as he battled to clear his name for a crime he insists he never committed.

Pell and his supporters believe he was scapegoated for all the crimes of the Australian Catholic Church's botched response to clergy sexual abuse. Victims and critics say he epitomizes everything wrong with how the church has dealt with the problem.

In the book, Pell makes repeated reference his three years at the Vatican trying to impose international accounting, budgeting and transparency standards on the Holy See's notoriously siloed bureaucracy, where prefects guard their money, turf and power as fiefdoms.

That secretive culture has come under a microscope as Vatican prosecutors investigate the Vatican secretariat of state's 350 million-euro investment in a London real estate venture and the tens of millions of euros in donations from the faithful that it paid to Italian middlemen to manage the deal.

After more than a year of investigation, no one has been indicted, though a handful of Vatican officials and Italian businessmen are under investigation. Pell said he is watching the developments as they unfold.

"It just might be staggering incompetence," he said of the scandal, adding that he hoped eventual trials would ascertain the truth.

"It would be better for the church if these things hadn't happened, if I wasn't vindicated in this way," he said. "But given that they have happened, it's quite clear," that the reforms he sought to impose were necessary.

Pell, with his rather brusque, no-nonsense Australian sensibilities, clashed frequently with the Vatican's Italian old guard as he sought to get a handle on the Vatican's assets and spending. His most well-known nemesis was the then-No. 3 in the Vatican's secretariat of state, Cardinal Angelo Becciu.

Pell famously boasted in 2014 that he had "discovered" hundreds of millions of dollars that were "tucked away in particular sectional accounts and did not appear on the balance sheet" -- a reference to the secretary of state's in-house asset portfolio that Becciu controlled that never appeared on the Vatican's consolidated financial statements.

Becciu hasn't been charged in the corruption investigation, but it came as little surprise that Pell issued a blistering statement after Francis on Sept. 24 fired Becciu, over apparently unrelated allegations of embezzlement, which Becciu denies.

Pell congratulated Francis then and said: "I hope the cleaning of the stables continues in both the Vatican and Victoria," a reference to his home state of Victoria, where he was initially convicted.

After Pell returned to Rome last month, he had a well-publicized private audience with Francis.

"He acknowledged what I was trying to do," Pell said of the pope. "And, you know, I think it's been sadly vindicated by revelations and developments."

Pell and his lawyers have suggested a possible link between the resistance he faced in his reform efforts at the Vatican and his forced departure from Rome to face prosecution in Australia.

"I hope for the sake of the church, there's nothing in it," Pell said. "In fact — I say that quite sincerely — because some Australian people, my own family, said to me: 'Well, if the Mafia is going after you or somebody else is going after you, that's one thing. It's a little bit worse if it comes from within the church.'"

Pell said he's not sure if there is a connection or not.

"But I think we will find out, whether there is or there isn't," he said. "Certainly the party's not over."

**Holiday air travel surges despite dire health warnings**



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 53 of 70

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

Nearly 1.2 million people passed through U.S. airports Sunday, the largest number since the pandemic gripped the country in March, despite pleas from health experts for Americans to stay home over Thanksgiving.

The Transportation Security Administration screened at least 1 million people on four of the last 10 days through Sunday. That's still half the crowd recorded last year at airports, when more than 2 million people were counted per day.

With new reported cases of coronavirus spiking across the country, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had issued a warning against Thanksgiving travel just a week before the holiday.

The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases in the U.S. has climbed to more than 160,000, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Public-health experts believe others who are infected don't show signs of carrying the virus.

Previous holidays including Memorial Day, July 4 and Labor Day were followed by increases in new cases. David O'Connor, a virologist at the University of Wisconsin who has studied the role of travel in the pandemic, expects the same thing to happen after Thanksgiving and leading up to Christmas.

"Travel is going to be contributing to a bigger surge. What we see in the next couple weeks will tell us a lot about what will happen after Christmas," he said. "We're in the midst of a catastrophe as it is. You don't need a surge for it to become horrible. The health care systems are already stretched."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said Sunday that the U.S. could see "surge upon a surge" of coronavirus cases, and he does not expect guidelines advising against travel to be relaxed before Christmas.

It's unclear whether the pleas of experts like Fauci had any effect on travel and large gatherings at Thanksgiving. Some airlines reported a pullback in bookings as virus cases grew in the days before the holiday.

Airlines say the risk of transmission during flights is very low if everyone on board wears a mask. Experts on epidemics say even if that is true, travelers can spread the virus once they get off the plane.

Before the latest surge in infections, airlines had added more flights for Thanksgiving, hoping for the same kind of boost in travel they saw over the July 4 and Labor Day holidays. They ended up canceling some of those flights, however, and demand is expected to fall back in early December before another potential pick-up in travel around Christmas.

Over a 10-day period ending Sunday, TSA screened about 975,000 people a day on average. That's down 60% from a year ago, when more than 2.3 million people per day went through U.S. airports.

On Monday, JetBlue Airways said "booking trends remain volatile," and a recovery in travel demand will be uneven into next year.

JetBlue, the nation's sixth-largest airline, plans to fly only half its normal schedule in the fourth quarter and revenue will fall about 70% from the same period last year. Those are slightly deeper reductions in flying and revenue than the New York carrier had expected before the recent spike in infections.

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## Art world star gives back by buying work of the undiscovered

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Painter Guy Stanley Philoche, a star in the New York art world, had wanted to treat himself to a fancy watch after a hugely successful gallery show. Then the pandemic hit, and he feared for all the struggling artists who haven't been so lucky.

So he gave up his \$15,000 Rolex dreams and went on a different kind of buying spree, putting out a call on Instagram in late March to any artist anywhere who had creations to sell. The submissions rolled in, hundreds at a time.

He's spent about \$60,000 so far with plans to continue as long as he can, and Philoche's own patrons have taken notice and asked him to make purchases on their behalf as well.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 54 of 70

"It's about artists helping artists," said the 43-year-old Philoche, who came to America from Haiti with his family at age 3, nearly nothing to their names.

"I'm not a rich man," he said, "but I owe a big debt to the art world. Art saved my life, and I made a promise to myself that once I made it, to always buy from artists who hadn't gotten their big break."

Philoche has a budget, seeking out works in the \$300 to \$500 range. He buys only what he loves, from as far away as London and as close as the studio next to his in East Harlem. An abstract mixed-media piece by Michael Shannon, his studio neighbor, was his first purchase, leading Philoche to include him and others he's discovered in an upcoming group gallery show.

About half the artists Philoche has chosen are people he knows, many in New York. The others sent him direct messages on Instagram with sample work in hopes of being picked.

Philoche, who went to art school in Connecticut where his family settled, has lined the walls of his tiny apartment with his Philoche Collection During Covid, ranging from graffiti-inspired work and portraiture to pop art and a huge pistol done in bright yellow, red and blue paint.

Philoche's own work goes for up to \$125,000 a piece. During a recent interview at his studio, he slid out from storage large canvases from his breakthrough, Mark Rothko-esque abstract Untitled Series and a collection of female nudes with duct tape over their mouths. Often whimsical, he has also produced paintings inspired by Monopoly and other board games, as well as comics such as Charlie Brown.

Among his clients: Deutsche Bank, Merrill Lynch and Barclay Investments Inc., along with Uma Thurman, George Clooney and fellow artist Julian Schnabel.

Giving back isn't something the affable Philoche just recently decided to do. Over his 20-plus year career, he has tried to stick to a simple rule to support other artists: Sell a painting, buy a painting. But it was a chance meeting with a friend and fellow artist who was anxious about the pandemic with a baby on the way that set him on his pandemic buying spree.

"I'm not on the first line, but my community was impacted as well," he said. "It was just the right thing to do. I love waking up in my apartment every morning seeing the walls. There's paintings on the floor, all over. Some of these people have never sold a painting in their life."

His feisty French bulldog Picasso at his side, Philoche recalled his own meager start in New York after he put himself through art school while working full-time as a bartender.

"People didn't open the doors for me. I had to get into the room through the back door, or through the window," he said with a laugh. "But now that I'm in the room, with a seat at the table, I have to open doors for these artists."

## Supreme Court seems skeptical of Trump's census plan

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court sounded skeptical Monday that President Donald Trump could categorically exclude people living in the country illegally from the population count used to allot seats among the states in the House of Representatives.

But it also appeared possible that the justices could avoid a final ruling on the issue until they know how broadly the Trump administration acts in its final days in office and whether the division of House seats is affected.

No president has tried to do what Trump outlined in a memo in July — remove millions of noncitizens from the once-a-decade head count of the U.S. population that determines how many seats each state gets in the House of Representatives, as well as the allocation of some federal funding.

The court, meeting by telephone because of the coronavirus pandemic, heard arguments in its second case in two years related to the 2020 census and immigrants.

The census already is facing novel questions over deadlines, data quality and politics, including whether the incoming Biden administration would do anything to try to reverse decisions made under Trump.

One possibility outlined by acting Solicitor General Jeffrey Wall, Trump's top Supreme Court lawyer, is that Trump might try to leave out of the count people who are in immigration detention or those who

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 55 of 70

have been ordered to leave the country.

But under questioning from Justice Elena Kagan, Wall would not rule out larger categories of immigrants, including those who have protection from deportation under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programs.

"We can't be certain at this point, and we don't know what the president will decide to do with respect to that," Wall said.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett was among several members of the court who said the administration's argument for broad discretion in deciding whom to exclude is troublesome because "a lot of the historical evidence and long-standing practice really cuts against your position."

The court decided to hear the case on a fast track, based on the administration's plea for a decision by early January, when Trump is required by law to transmit census numbers to Congress. The Census Bureau is supposed to send the data to Trump by Dec. 31.

But Wall told the court Monday, "We are not currently on pace to send the report to the president by the year-end statutory deadline." He said census officials told him they hope some data is available in January.

A delay of even three weeks would mean the Census Bureau would be turning in the numbers to a new president. President-elect Joe Biden takes office on Jan. 20.

Several conservative justices suggested that the better course for the court would be to avoid ruling immediately on lawsuits filed by New York and other Democratic-led states as well as immigration advocates because Trump's intentions are speculative at this point.

"Mr. Ho, if the additional information would be beneficial in a few weeks, wouldn't it be beneficial to actually resolving this case? As the questioning seems to suggest, there's some difficulty in assessing exactly what information will be available and what that information will be," Justice Clarence Thomas said to Dale Ho, the American Civil Liberties Union lawyer representing immigration groups.

The court could simply sit on the case in front of it to see what happens, or dismiss it as premature. The second option would allow Trump to move forward with his plan and lead inevitably to a new lawsuit.

Trump has a mixed record at the high court on immigration. The justices upheld his ban on travel to the U.S. by residents of some largely Muslim countries. But the court shot down his attempt to end the DACA program and blocked his bid to add a citizenship question to the census for the first time in 70 years.

## Gonzaga, Baylor stay atop AP Top 25; Va. Tech, Richmond in

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

The first Associated Press men's college basketball poll of the regular season remained steady at the top.

The rest, predictably, was filled with change as teams exceeded or failed to live up to preseason expectations.

Gonzaga and Baylor remained Nos. 1-2 in the poll released Monday. The Zags received 57 of 63 first-place votes from a media panel and the Bears had six first-place votes. They were the only two teams to hold their places from the preseason poll.

Gonzaga kept the top spot by a commanding margin with impressive wins in Fort Myers, Florida. The Zags (2-0) rolled over Kansas 102-90 and crushed Auburn 90-67 the next day.

"We feel we can score on anybody," said Gonzaga's Drew Timme, who had 28 points and 10 rebounds against Auburn. "We've got great coaching. If we execute our offense and move the ball and not get stymied, we feel we can score on every team."

Baylor was forced to drop out of the "Bubbleville" tournament in Uncasville, Connecticut, after coach Scott Drew tested positive for COVID-19. The Bears (2-0) adjusted their schedule and had no trouble playing under assistant coach Jerome Tang, routing Louisiana-Lafayette and Washington.

Villanova fell nine places to No. 12 after losing to Virginia Tech, which moved into the poll at No. 16. Virginia also took a big tumble after losing to San Francisco, dropping 11 spots to No. 15.

The two losses allowed Iowa to move up two spots to No. 3, with Wisconsin and Illinois rounding out the top five. The Illini are in the top five for the first time since reaching No. 1 in 2004-05.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 56 of 70

## JAYHAWKS BREAK RECORD

Kansas dropped a spot to No. 7 after the loss to Gonzaga. The Jayhawks still managed to move atop the all-time consecutive polls list.

Kansas was ranked for the 222nd week, breaking the record set by UCLA from 1966-80.

No. 6 Duke has the second-longest active poll streak at 85 straight weeks.

## HAWKEYES CLIMB

Iowa has its highest ranking since the 2015-16 team reached No. 3.

Luka Garza had a lot to do with it.

The preseason All-American kicked off his senior season with 26 points and 10 rebounds in a win over North Carolina Central, then scored 41 points on 14-of-15 shooting in a rout over Southern.

"Whenever I get the ball, I feel like I can score," Garza said. "Sometimes you have those days where you're just making shots. I put enough work into each shot that when I put it up, I have a strong feeling that it's going to go in."

## HOKIES MOVE IN

Virginia Tech was picked to finish 11th in the Atlantic Coast Conference preseason poll.

The Hokies may be better than expected, based on their opening week.

Virginia Tech (3-0) opened the season with an easy win over Radford, then pulled off an upset by knocking off then-No. 3 Villanova in overtime in Bubbleville. The Hokies closed out their week with an 18-point victory over South Florida after their game against Temple was canceled due to COVID-19 concerns.

## RISING/FALLING

Virginia and Villanova had two of the biggest drops in the opening regular-season poll, but there was plenty of other movement.

Houston climbed seven spots from No. 17 after knocking off No. 17 Texas Tech, which dropped three spots from last week.

No. 8 Michigan State climbed five spots after beating Notre Dame and Eastern Michigan.

No. 20 Kentucky fell 10 spots after losing at home to Richmond. The win was the Spiders' first on the road against a top-10 team and helped them enter the poll at No. 19.

No. 25 Arizona State also fell seven spots following two wins and a loss to Villanova.

## MOVING OUT

UCLA dropped out of the poll after losing to San Diego State and needing triple overtime to beat Pepperdine.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Iran says Israel killed military nuclear scientist remotely

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A top Iranian security official on Monday accused Israel of using "electronic devices" to remotely kill a scientist who founded the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program in the 2000s.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the country's Supreme National Security Council, made the comment at the funeral for Mohsen Fakhrazadeh, where Iran's defense minister separately vowed to continue the man's work "with more speed and more power."

Israel, long suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over the last decade, has repeatedly declined to comment on the attack.

Fakhrazadeh headed Iran's so-called AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon. The International Atomic Energy Agency says that "structured program" ended in 2003. U.S. intelligence agencies concurred with that assessment in a 2007 report.

Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies. Iran long has maintained that its nuclear program



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 57 of 70

is for peaceful purposes.

Shamkhani's remarks drastically change the story of Fakhrizadeh's killing, which took place Friday. Authorities initially said a truck exploded and then gunmen opened fire on the scientist, killing him and a body-guard. State TV even interviewed a man the night of the attack who described seeing gunmen open fire.

State TV's English-language broadcaster Press TV reported earlier Monday that a weapon recovered from the scene of the attack bore "the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry." State TV's Arabic-language channel, Al-Alam, claimed the weapons used were "controlled by satellite," a claim also made Sunday by the semiofficial Fars news agency.

None of the outlets immediately offered evidence supporting their claims, which also give authorities a way to explain why no one was reportedly arrested at the scene.

"Unfortunately, the operation was a very complicated operation and was carried out by using electronic devices," Shamkhani told state TV. "No individual was present at the site."

Satellite control of weapons is nothing new. Armed, long-range drones, for instance, rely on satellite connections to be controlled by their remote pilots. Remote-controlled gun turrets also exist, but typically see their operator connected by a hard line to cut down on the delay in commands being relayed. Israel uses such hard-wired systems along the border with the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

While technically feasible, it wasn't immediately clear if such a system had been used before, said Jeremy Binnie, the Mideast editor of Jane's Defence Weekly.

"Could you set up a weapon with a camera which then has a feed that uses an open satellite communications line back to the controller?" Binnie said. "I can't see why that's not possible."

It also raised the question whether the truck that exploded during the attack detonated afterward to try to destroy a satellite-controlled machine gun that was hidden inside the vehicle. Iranian officials did not immediately acknowledge that. It also would require someone on the ground to set up the weapon.

Shamkhani blamed the Iranian exile group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq as well for "having a role in this," without elaborating. The MEK, as the exile group is known, has been suspected of assisting Israeli operations in Iran in the past. Shahin Gobadi, an MEK spokesman, dismissed Shamkhani's remarks as "rage, rancor and lies" sparked by the group's earlier exposes over Iran's nuclear program.

Monday's service for Fakhrizadeh took place at an outdoor portion of Iran's Defense Ministry in Tehran, with officials including Revolutionary Guard chief Gen. Hossein Salami, the Guard's Quds Force leader Gen. Esmail Ghaani, civilian nuclear program chief Ali Akbar Sahei and Intelligence Minister Mamoud Alavi. They sat apart from each other and wore masks due to the coronavirus pandemic as reciters melodically read parts of the Quran and religious texts.

Defense Minister Gen. Amir Hatami gave a speech after kissing Fakhrizadeh's casket and putting his forehead against it. He said Fakhrizadeh's killing would make Iranians "more united, more determined."

"For the continuation of your path, we will continue with more speed and more power," Hatami said in comments aired live by state television.

Hatami also criticized countries that hadn't condemned Fakhrizadeh's killing and warned: "This will catch up with you someday."

Overnight, the United Arab Emirates, which just reached a normalization deal with Israel, issued a statement condemning "the heinous assassination." The UAE, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, warned the killing "could further fuel conflict in the region."

Last year, the UAE found itself in the middle of an escalating series of incidents between Iran and the U.S. Though long suspicious of Iran's nuclear program, the Emirates has said it wants to de-escalate the crisis. The UAE just started passenger air service to Israel and Israelis are expected to vacation in the country over Hanukkah in the coming days.

Bahrain, an island kingdom off Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf that also recently normalized relations with Israel, similarly condemned Fakhrizadeh's killing.

"In light of the current situation in the region, the kingdom of Bahrain calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid new levels of instability," Bahrain's Foreign Affairs Ministry said.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Ministry Director-General Alon Ushpiz has sent a cable to all Israeli diplomatic delegations around the globe urging diplomats to maintain "the highest level of readiness and awareness

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 58 of 70

of any irregular activity" around missions and Jewish community centers.

Hebrew-language media in Israel reported that following the Fakhrizadeh's killing, the Foreign Ministry ordered security increased at certain Israeli diplomatic missions overseas. The ministry declined to comment on diplomatic security matters.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writer Ilan Ben Zion in Jerusalem contributed.

## 'Mercenary' donor sold access for millions in foreign money

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — As an elite political fundraiser, Imaad Zuberi had the ear of top Democrats and Republicans alike — a reach that included private meetings with then-Vice President Joe Biden and VIP access at Donald Trump's inauguration.

He lived a lavish, jet-setting lifestyle, staying at fine hotels and hosting lawmakers and diplomats at four-star restaurants. Foreign ambassadors turned to Zuberi to get face time in Congress. A CIA officer called him the "best connected person I know," marveling at the depth of his Rolodex.

He was a charming networker and an inveterate namedropper. His Facebook account was filled with pictures of him next to the powerful and famous: having dinner with Hillary Clinton and Robert De Niro and rubbing shoulders with Trump's then-chief of staff Reince Priebus outside Mar-A-Lago. Zuberi raised huge amounts for Clinton in the 2016 election before becoming a top donor to the Trump Presidential Inauguration Committee.

But federal prosecutors say Zuberi's life was built on a series of lies and the lucrative enterprise of funding American political campaigns and profiting from the resulting influence.

"Everyone wants to come to Washington to meet people," Zuberi said in a 2015 email obtained by The Associated Press, seeking a meet-and-greet between the president of Guinea and a powerful congressman. "We get request(s) for meeting(s) from all scumbag of the world, warlords, kings, queens, presidents for life, military dictators, clan chiefs, tribal chiefs and etc."

Prosecutors describe Zuberi as a "mercenary" political donor who gave to anyone — often using illegal straw donor cutouts — he thought could help him. Pay to play, he explained to clients, was just "how America work(s)."

Zuberi's story underscores how loosely regulated campaign finance and foreign lobbying laws are and raises an embarrassing question: How does such a cynical fraudster find favor with so many officials at the highest levels of the U.S. government?

"The Zuberi case explicitly verifies, through evidentiary proof, pervasive, corrupt foreign interference with our elections and policy-making processes," Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel J. O'Brien said in a sentencing memo.

Zuberi pleaded guilty last year to campaign finance violations, failing to register as a foreign agent and tax evasion. He also admitted obstructing a New York-based federal investigation into whether foreign nationals unlawfully contributed to Trump's inaugural committee. He faces several years in prison and is set to be sentenced early next year.

But the U.S. Justice Department's probe has left many unanswered questions about Zuberi's foreign entanglements and who benefited from his actions. Aside from a minor associate who pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor tax charge, no one who assisted Zuberi has been charged.

And the government has not publicly named the politicians who benefited from Zuberi's donations and did favors for him.

But an AP investigation identified associates, enablers and targets of Zuberi's influence efforts, drawing on private emails, court documents, campaign finance reports, and interviews with more than three dozen people including diplomats, law enforcement officials, lobbyists, and former members of Congress.

Taken together, they present a fuller picture of Zuberi's rapid rise and fall in politics and the cracks in

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 59 of 70

the system that allowed it to happen.

The documents and interviews show Zuberi used an unsophisticated straw donor scheme in which he paid for others' donations with his credit cards and used cutouts that included a dead person and names of people prosecutors say he made up. The Justice Department said Zuberi, over a five-year period, funneled nearly \$1 million in illegal campaign donations, in what law enforcement officials say is one of the largest such schemes ever prosecuted.

His donations gave Zuberi first-name access to top foreign and American diplomats and well as members of Congress who controlled foreign policy, such as Sens. Bob Casey and Lindsey Graham. Casey and Graham, like many lawmakers who took Zuberi's money, declined to comment.

Prosecutors say Zuberi worked for years as an unregistered foreign agent for at least a half dozen countries and officials, including a Ukrainian oligarch close to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Zuberi also used his extensive ties to U.S. elected officials to pass on potentially useful information to foreign officials, including information related to Biden. He also kept in close contact with a West Coast-based CIA officer and bragged to associates of his ties to the intelligence community.

Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles have asked U.S. District Judge Virginia Phillips to sentence Zuberi to at least 10 years behind bars at his sentencing on Jan. 7. They also want him to pay a \$10 million fine and nearly \$16 million restitution to the Internal Revenue Service.

Zuberi says he deserves a much lighter punishment and disputes the scope of his wrongdoing. The former political fundraiser admits he violated campaign laws by making donations in the names of others but said the amount of illegal donations is lower than what prosecutors claim.

Zuberi said he "helped facilitate" donations from foreign sources but said federal law in that area is unclear and that he received "conflicting advice from various campaigns" about the legality of such donations. Zuberi admits he did unregistered lobbying for Sri Lanka but said the type of work he did for other countries and officials didn't require him to register as a foreign agent.

"The government really, really wants to make an example of Mr. Zuberi well beyond that merited by his actions," his lawyers argued in court filings.

In recent months, Zuberi has secretly petitioned Phillips to credit him for law enforcement leads and intelligence he says he's provided to the federal government. He contends in sealed court records that he's given usable national security-related information to multiple agencies, according to people familiar with the records.

Zuberi's lawyers did not respond to requests for comment.

"I KNOW MOST OF THEM ON BOTH SIDES"

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has been among the most aggressive foreign officials in trying to shape U.S. foreign policy in recent years, spending heavily on hiring well-connected lobbyists. Other well-known officials like Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani and former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn have advanced Erdogan's interests.

Zuberi was also in the mix, private emails and court records show.

Turkey has a poor record on censorship and suppressing free speech and, in 2015, more than 30 House members sponsored a proposed House resolution urging "respect for freedom of expression and human rights in Turkey."

Turkey's ambassador to the U.S., Serdar Kilic, obtained a draft of the resolution before it was filed and asked Zuberi to help kill it, saying in an email that its advancement "would be extremely counterproductive" before a general election in Turkey.

Zuberi responded a few hours later saying he thought Erdogan was a hero and would be happy to help Kilic lobby the two most powerful members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee: then-Republican Chairman Ed Royce and Democratic ranking member Eliot Engel.

"Why don't you come to Los Angeles as my guest and I can have you meet both over dinner in private?" Zuberi wrote. "Let me know who else in the Foreign Affairs Committee you need help with? I know most of them on both sides."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 60 of 70

Zuberi was a regular donor and cultivated ties to both congressmen. He was exceptionally close with Engel, who gave Zuberi early heads-ups on legislation he intended to file and shared other details that could be useful to Zuberi, the emails show.

"I should be filing a Syria bill on either Thursday or Friday. We are also going to file an Iran bill. Again, thank you for everything. I am glad that we agree so much," Engel said in a 2013 email to Zuberi discussing a campaign fundraiser.

Zuberi actively lobbied to kill the resolution related to Turkey and was able to flip one of the sponsors, prosecutors said. The legislation died in committee without ever getting a vote.

Neither Royce, who has retired from Congress, nor Engel, who lost a primary earlier this year, agreed to an interview with the AP but said through spokespeople that Zuberi's lobbying efforts on Turkey, or any other matter, never had any impact on policy decisions.

"It's unacceptable that anyone coming before the committee would ignore laws that deal with lobbying for foreign governments, but nothing at the time seemed unusual about Mr. Zuberi's requests," said Engel spokesperson Tim Mulvey. "Setting up meetings isn't the same as exerting influence."

Former U.S. Rep. Alan Grayson, the resolution's lead sponsor, said he had no idea what was going on behind the scenes to kill the resolution.

"It's pretty shocking," he told the AP after reading the sentencing memos.

An internal Trump inaugural document obtained by the AP showed that Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was listed as one of Zuberi's guests at a VIP inaugural event, and deleted pictures from his Facebook page show him posing with Cavusoglu and Kilic at a black-tie event around the time of the inauguration.

Officials from the Turkish embassy did not return requests for comment.

Prosecutors said in recent filings that Zuberi also secretly lobbied the White House and Congress on behalf of Qatar, a small gas-rich monarchy that has engaged in a multimillion-dollar battle for influence during the Trump administration with its bitter rival, the United Arab Emirates, according to the recent sentencing memos.

In the memos, prosecutors say Zuberi made \$9.8 million from the Qatari government, most of which they said appears to come from illegal lobbying efforts. Law enforcement officials say Zuberi's lobbying for Qatar is still under investigation — a probe that has not previously been revealed. They have not released details about his work but said "U.S. policy was changed to align with Qatar's interests."

Zuberi accompanied Qatari officials on a trade mission to South Carolina in 2018 as well as Qatar's foreign minister to Trump Tower in New York in December 2016, a month after Trump won the election.

Qatar declined to comment. A spokesman for Zuberi at the time, Steve Rabinowitz, told the AP last year that Zuberi was meeting the Qataris elsewhere in Manhattan to discuss investment opportunities when he accompanied them to Trump Tower, but did not attend any meetings there. The White House declined to comment.

Campaign donations, many of them illegal, were often a key part of Zuberi's lobbying effort, prosecutors said. He used straw donors to get around campaign donation limits in a scheme that was not particularly well hidden.

Zuberi used the same address for multiple members of his straw donor network: a nondescript warehouse east of Los Angeles that was home to his sister-in-law's Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture supply company. Among the names listed as giving from that address: a Saudi tycoon, a Kuwaiti educator, and a person prosecutors said Zuberi fabricated. Prosecutors said Zuberi frequently used his mother as a straw donor, and campaign records show one donation several months after she died.

Prosecutors did not name any of the straw donors. The AP identified them through private emails, interviews, and campaign contribution records.

Sometimes Zuberi would make donations in straw donors' names but pay for them with his or his wife's credit card, prosecutors said in charging papers.

Prosecutors note in sentencing memos that Zuberi donated about \$225,000 — including \$78,000 from illegal straw donations — to lawmakers as he persuaded them to write a letter to Bahrain expressing



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 61 of 70

concern about the Persian Gulf's country's "harassment" of U.S. investors in that country.

Prosecutors say in charging documents the letters were part of an elaborate scheme to dupe Congress and to put pressure on the Bahraini government on behalf of Esam Janahi, a businessman who was in a dispute with a high-ranking Bahraini government official. Zuberi's lawyers said the letters were a "common constituent service" that served a legitimate purpose. Prosecutors refer to Janahi only as "Person J" in their court filings, but the AP was able to identify him through private emails and interviews. Janahi did not return emails seeking comment.

The 12 members of Congress who wrote the letters are not named in court records. But the AP obtained copies of their letters, which were sent on official congressional letterheads and all used the same talking points.

Lawmakers who sent letters include Engel; Rep. Karen Bass, who was on the short-list to be Biden's vice president; Rep. Brad Sherman, who may replace Engel as chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who was DNC chairman at the time. Bass, Sherman and Wasserman Schultz did not return requests for comment.

The AP's investigation found several instances where Zuberi-linked donations to lawmakers occurred within a few weeks or even days of him receiving something he sought in return, like the letters to Bahrain's government or letters of introductions to U.S. ambassadors overseas.

Private emails show that, in 2014, Zuberi obtained letters from several congressmen he regularly donated to as part of an effort to oppose a Pakistani wind energy project that was receiving financial support from the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a government agency now known as the International Development Finance Corporation, which assists businesses looking to invest abroad.

A week after Zuberi and his wife gave \$10,400 to Texas Rep. Ted Poe's campaign account, the lawmaker sent a letter to OPIC questioning the wind project and asking to freeze any aid to Pakistan. Poe said he also met with the agency's director.

Poe, who left office in 2019, told the AP he had a duty to investigate Zuberi's claims of corruption related to the wind project and the campaign contributions did not affect his actions.

"There was no quid pro quo," said Poe.

Sentencing memos and private emails obtained by the AP show that one major aspect of Zuberi's work was obtaining official letters from members of Congress inviting foreign officials to the U.S. for visits.

That includes invites for former Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, who has used visits with top U.S. lawmakers to boost his image back home after he left office in 2013; associates of Dmitry Firtash, a Putin-friendly oligarch fighting extradition to the United States on federal bribery and racketeering charges; and Libyan officials seeking to unfreeze billions of dollars in assets.

Prosecutors say in sentencing memos that Zuberi made \$1 million doing unregistered lobbying for Firtash, which Zuberi said was for legitimate business transactions. A company spokesperson for Firtash did not respond to requests for comment.

Zuberi also used his extensive ties to American officials to pass on potentially useful information to foreign officials, his emails show.

Greg Schultz — then a senior advisor to Biden who at one point served as his 2020 presidential campaign manager — sent Zuberi an email arranging a Sunday morning coffee with the vice president at a Beverly Hills hotel in 2014. At the meeting, Zuberi pumped Biden for information about his views on Saudi Arabia and its objection to U.S. negotiations with Iran, according to his emails.

Zuberi then reported back to a Saudi ambassador to the U.S. that Biden said "the Saudis are whining because they know North America will be energy independent and their usefulness will be greatly diminished for United States."

"It doesn't seem like he is a fan of Saudi Arabia. We can discuss when we meet," Zuberi said in an email to then-Saudi Ambassador Adel al-Jubeir.

Court records include a 2016 text message where Zuberi indicated he was paid handsomely by the Saudis, though no other details are provided.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 62 of 70

"I get million times more from Saudis for doing less than I have done for Turkey," Zuberi said.

An official from the Saudi Embassy official said it does not have any "agreement or relationship" with Zuberi and "engages with a broad segment of Americans as a normal part of its activities."

Zuberi met multiple times with Biden. Topics he says in emails he planned to discuss with the vice president, according to Zuberi's emails, included Chinese-U.S. relations, a Bahraini development and a potential Biden trip to Pakistan.

Biden transition spokesperson Andrew Bates confirmed the two men met but said that Zuberi's meetings with the then-vice president were always "in group settings — mostly donor roundtables." Zuberi's emails misrepresent and embellish his interactions with Biden, who did not have "any way of knowing" about Zuberi's illicit activities, Bates said.

**"WE MAKE THE BEST WEAPONS IN THE WORLD"**

Prosecutors and Zuberi's legal team have been feuding for months over his punishment. More than 100 filings have been made under seal, an unheard degree of secrecy for a sentencing fight in a supposedly non-national security case.

The AP's investigation found that Zuberi regularly exchanged encrypted messages with a CIA officer, who once expressed amazement at Zuberi's broad network of contacts.

It is not clear whether the agency knew of Zuberi's illicit dealings. A spokesperson for the agency referred questions to the U.S. Justice Department, which did not respond to requests for comment.

A former foreign diplomat told AP that Zuberi boasted of having "helped the CIA with China" and having "smoothed relations for the ISI," referring to the Pakistani intelligence agency. The diplomat spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

In a 2013 email to a State Department official, Zuberi asked if he could set up meetings with members of Congress for a Libyan intelligence officer who was visiting Washington.

"Because of the sensitive nature of this request, he needs to be handled through other channels," David McFarland, a high-ranking State Department official stationed in Libya, responded to the email.

In his private emails, Zuberi frequently discussed selling U.S. arms abroad.

In one email, Zuberi asked then-U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson for "talking points" before meeting with lawmakers to discuss a potential arms sale to that country.

"We make the best weapons in the world. Per our conversation, I will coordinate our friends from Saudi and Kuwait," Zuberi said in an 2015 email to Linden Blue, a co-owner of General Atomics, as a deal to sell unarmed versions of the company's drones to the UAE was nearing final approval.

In the same email, Zuberi invited Blue over email to dinner with U.S. senators on the armed services committee, which Blue agreed to. "Thanks for the note," Blue replied, before agreeing to dates for the meetings with lawmakers.

A spokesman for General Atomics said neither Blue nor the company had a business relationship with Zuberi.

**"OVERWHELMING MAJORITY"**

When Zuberi started giving money and rising in the political scene less than a decade ago, prosecutors said he was worth \$1.5 million, with an unknown amount coming from foreign sources.

Currently, prosecutors estimate that his net worth is more than \$30 million and said the "overwhelming majority" of it came from illegal activity. Prosecutors say that includes stealing from some of his foreign clients, which Zuberi has denied.

"Zuberi's ability to obtain introductions to wealthy clients, politicians and business associates often began with false representations concerning his pedigree, education, experience, business, investment successes, and financial condition," prosecutors wrote.

The Federal Elections Commission has long been mired in partisan gridlock and, until recently, the Justice Department had all but ignored violations of foreign lobbying registration requirements. Between 1966 and 2015 the department brought just seven criminal cases for violating the law related to registering as a foreign lobbyist, according to a 2016 inspector general's report.

Political candidates are under constant pressure to raise money and have little incentive to scrutinize do-

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 63 of 70

nations too closely. And lawmakers say it's not their job to ensure whoever is lobbying them has properly registered, including major donors like Zuberi.

A key feature of the Trump era has been a mounting focus on foreign interference in U.S. foreign policy, including multiple investigations of Russia's high-tech efforts to interfere with the 2016 presidential election.

But Zuberi's story shows there are easier ways to try to bend American foreign policy than using sophisticated hacking tools or well-funded troll farms.

Brendan Fischer, director of federal reform at the Campaign Legal Center, said it's impossible to know how many other access brokers in Washington are operating like Zuberi and evading detection but said it's fair to suspect there are many others.

But, he added, many lobbyists make a lucrative living operating like Zuberi out in the open — without having to break any laws.

"If Zuberi was willing to comply with the minimal, basic transparency requirements in law and just knew more rich people who might have given more money to politicians in response to solicitations, he might have been able to do this in a lawful way," Fischer said.

Suderman reported from Richmond and McLean, Virginia. Mustian reported from Los Angeles and New York.

Contact AP's Global Investigative Team at [Investigative@ap.org](mailto:Investigative@ap.org). Follow the reporters on Twitter at @AlanSuderman and @JimMustian

## Uproar in France over proposed limits on filming police

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French activists fear that a proposed new security law will deprive them of a potent weapon against abuse — cellphone videos of police activity — threatening their efforts to document possible cases of police brutality, especially in impoverished immigrant neighborhoods.

French President Emmanuel Macron's government is pushing a new security bill that makes it illegal to publish images of police officers with intent to cause them harm, amid other measures. Critics fear the new law could hurt press freedoms and make it more difficult for all citizens to report on police brutality.

"I was lucky enough to have videos that protect me," said Michel Zecler, a Black music producer who was beaten up recently by several French police officers. Videos first published Thursday by French website Loopsider have been seen by over 14 million viewers, resulting in widespread outrage over police actions.

Two of the officers are in jail while they are investigated while two others, also under investigation, are out on bail.

The draft bill, still being debated in parliament, has prompted protests across the country called by press freedom advocates and civil rights campaigners. Tens of thousands of people marched Saturday in Paris to reject the measure, including families and friends of people killed by police.

"For decades, descendants of post-colonial immigration and residents in populous neighborhoods have denounced police brutality," Sihame Assbague, an anti-racism activist, told The Associated Press.

Videos by the public have helped to show a wider audience that there is a "systemic problem with French police forces, who are abusing, punching, beating, mutilating, killing," she said.

Activists say the bill may have an even greater impact on people other than journalists, especially those of immigrant origin living in neighborhoods where relationships with the police have long been tense. Images posted online have been key to denouncing cases of officers' misconduct and racism in recent years, they argue.

Assbague expressed fears that, under the proposed law, those who post videos of police abuses online may be put on trial, where they would face up to a year in jail and a 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fine.

"I tend to believe that a young Arab man from a poor suburb who posts a video of police brutality in his neighborhood will be more at risk of being found guilty than a journalist who did a video during a protest," she said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 64 of 70

Amal Bentounsi's brother, Amine, was shot in the back and killed by a police officer in 2012. The officer was sentenced to a five-year suspended prison sentence. Along with other families of victims, in March she launched a mobile phone app called Emergency-Police Violence to record abuses and bring cases to court.

"Some police officers already have a sense of impunity. ... The only solution now is to make videos," she told the AP. The app has been downloaded more than 50,000 times.

"If we want to improve public confidence in the police, it does not go through hiding the truth," she added.

The proposed law is partly a response to demands from police unions, who say it will provide greater protection for officers.

Abdoulaye Kante, a Black police officer with 20 years of experience in Paris and its suburbs, is both a supporter of the proposed law and strongly condemns police brutality and violence against officers.

"What people don't understand is that some individuals are using videos to put the faces of our (police) colleagues on social media so that they are identified, so that they are threatened or to incite hatred," he said.

"The law doesn't ban journalists or citizens from filming police in action ... It bans these images from being used to harm, physically or psychologically," he argued. "The lives of officers are important."

A "tiny fraction of the population feeds rage and hatred" against police, Jean-Michel Fauvergue, a former head of elite police forces and a lawmaker in Macron's party who co-authored the bill, said in the National Assembly. "We need to find a solution."

Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti has acknowledged that "the intent (to harm) is something that is difficult to define."

In an effort to quell criticism, lawmakers from Macron's party announced Monday they would rewrite the criticized article of the bill, which will be debated by the Senate early next year.

Activists consider the draft law just the latest of several security measures to extend police powers at the expense of civil liberties. A statement signed by over 30 groups of families and friends of victims of police abuses said since 2005, "all security laws adopted have constantly expanded the legal field allowing police impunity."

Riots in 2005 exposed France's long-running problems between police and youths in public housing projects with large immigrant populations.

In recent years, numerous security laws have been passed following attacks by extremists.

Critics noted a hardening of police tactics during protests or while arresting individuals. Hundreds of complaints have been filed against officers during the yellow vest movement against economic injustice, which erupted in 2018 and saw weekends of violent clashes.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said out of 3 million police operations per year in France, some 9,500 end up on a government website that denounces abuses, which represents 0.3%.

France's human rights ombudsman, Claire Hedon, is among the most prominent critics of the proposed law, which she said involves "significant risks of undermining fundamental rights."

"Our democracy is hit when the population does not trust its police anymore," she told the National Assembly.

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AP writer John Leicester contributed from Le Pecq, France.

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Follow all AP stories on racism and police brutality at <https://apnews.com/Racialinjustice>

## Charging the 'Beatles': Inside the case against IS militants

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As two Islamic State militants faced a judge in Virginia last month, Diane Foley listened from home through a muffled phone connection and strained to make out the voices of the men prosecutors say kidnapped her son before he was murdered.

Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh stand accused of belonging to an IS cell dubbed "the Beatles,"



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 65 of 70

an incongruously lighthearted nickname for British citizens blamed for the jailing, torture and murder of Western hostages in Syria.

After geopolitical breakthroughs and stalemates, military actions in Syria and court fights in London, the Justice Department's most significant terrorism prosecution in years was finally underway. For Foley, who months earlier had pleaded with Attorney General William Barr to pursue justice by forswearing the death penalty, the fact the case was proceeding at all felt miraculous.

"We'd met so many blocks over the years, I couldn't believe it was happening," Foley said. "I was in awe of it, really, and almost didn't trust it — a bit incredulous. Is this really happening?"

The prosecution is a counterterrorism success in the waning weeks of the Trump administration. But it almost didn't happen.

Interviews with 11 people connected to the case make clear the hurdles along the way, including a death penalty dispute that required two normally close allies, the U.S. and U.K., to navigate fundamental differences in criminal justice systems. In the end, the interviews show, grieving families reached a gradual consensus to take capital punishment off the table while a key commitment by Barr to do the same enabled the U.S. to obtain crucial evidence it needed.

At another time, the case might not have even been handled in civilian courts. After the Sept. 11 attacks, the Republican-led Justice Department favored detaining foreign fighters at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for military tribunals. But that approach changed. Now federal prosecutors are pursuing the highest-profile terrorism case since trials over the Boston Marathon bombing and Benghazi attack, aiming to secure convictions and punishments that can keep the men, in their 30s, imprisoned for life.

"There was never a time when I thought we didn't have any case," said John Demers, assistant attorney general for national security. But, "we didn't want to bring them here unless we had really good charges, a really strong case, and ultimately expected a conviction that was going to result in a very significant prison sentence."

The group of militants, called "the Beatles" by their captives because of their British accents, came to embody IS barbarism with the 2014 release of grisly propaganda videos depicting the beheadings of American hostages. The first showed James Foley, captured as a freelance journalist covering Syria's civil war, kneeling in the desert in an orange jumpsuit beside a masked man in black brandishing a knife to his throat.

The beheadings were part of a reign of terror that officials say also involved waterboarding, mock executions and electric shocks. Elsheikh once videotaped the shooting of a Syrian hostage as Kotey directed hostages to watch while holding signs pleading for their release, prosecutors say.

The pair also coordinated ransom demands, the indictment says. An email to the Foleys tauntingly told them the U.S. government treated them "like worthless insects."

An airstrike killed the group's most notorious member, who had killed Foley and was known by the moniker of "Jihadi John." Another was prosecuted in Turkey.

That left Kotey and Elsheikh, who were captured in Syria in 2018 by American-backed forces. Weeks later, they appeared unapologetic while speaking to The Associated Press at a Kurdish security center, denouncing the U.S. and Britain as hypocrites who wouldn't give them a fair trial.

Inside the Justice Department, officials weighed whether the men should be tried in the U.K. or U.S. or even transferred to Guantanamo, which then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions had called a "very fine place" even though prosecutions there have floundered, lagging behind the speedier justice of American courts.

U.S. officials initially leaned toward a U.K. prosecution. British authorities had accumulated compelling evidence during their own investigation and U.S. policy encouraged other nations to repatriate and prosecute their citizens who'd joined IS.

Yet the U.K., which had stripped the men of their British citizenship, resisted doing the case in part over concerns about the ability to get convictions and significant prison sentences in British courts.

Once that position became clear, officials coalesced around bringing the men to America, said State Department counterterrorism coordinator Nathan Sales. But the British balked at sharing evidence with U.S. prosecutors without assurances they wouldn't impose the death penalty, which was abolished in the

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 66 of 70

U.K. That was an impediment for American officials, who say they considered Britain's evidence vital in tracing the men's travel and path of radicalization.

They decided they wouldn't do the case without that evidence, Demers said.

The British later relented and agreed to share evidence without any assurances. But Elsheikh's mother sued over the evidence transfer, delaying the case well over a year. Last March, a British court effectively blocked the evidence-sharing over the death penalty issue, a hurdle U.S. officials assumed might require additional litigation to overcome.

Despite the ruling, prosecutors pressed forward. G. Zachary Terwilliger, the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, whose office is handling the case, was among those arguing internally that prosecuting the defendants was more important than leaving the death penalty on the table.

"You certainly can make an argument, and maybe it's not even a close call, that capital punishment would have been appropriate given the horrific nature of this crime," Terwilliger said. But, "getting justice for the victims was paramount to me."

The families, too, began uniting around the idea of removing the death penalty from consideration.

That had long been Diane Foley's position. The most vocal of the group, she met regularly over the years with government officials and cultivated high-level Washington contacts like her hometown senator, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, with whom she co-authored a 2019 newspaper op-ed warning against "impunity for these monsters."

Still, the budding consensus in recent months was notable because the families had not always shared the same perspective of the case.

The executions of Foley and two other hostages, Steven Sotloff and Peter Kassig, were documented in propaganda videos, the men's fates apparent to the world. But the circumstances of the death of a fourth, Kayla Mueller, who prosecutors say was sexually abused by late IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, were less established and her parents initially believed keeping the death penalty on the table could be leverage to get answers.

Mueller's mother, Marsha, said in a text message that the couple had not wanted anyone to die but was eager for information about Kayla.

Ultimately, though, she concluded: "The other families who we care so deeply for wanted the men brought here and this seemed to be the only way they would come."

Meanwhile, current and former FBI officials who were helping the families, including the head of the bureau's hostage recovery cell, encouraged them to speak out in unison to prod the Trump administration toward prosecution. Ali Soufan, a former FBI counterterrorism agent who'd partnered with Mueller's parents to investigate Kayla's death, made the case that waiving the death penalty was essential for cooperating with the U.K. and even customary in international terrorism cases like this one.

Other options were hardly optimal. A trial in Iraq, where the men had been held in U.S. military custody over the past year, could produce a human rights outcry creating empathy for the men. The proceedings could also result in their release, or potentially execution if they were convicted.

Concerned a U.S. prosecution might not happen at all, or that the men might be left in Iraq, the families accelerated their public advocacy. In July, all four signed onto an opinion piece in The Washington Post imploring the U.S. to prosecute the pair as a message that anyone who harms American citizens "will not escape." That month, NBC News aired an interview with the men in which they admitted involvement in Mueller's captivity.

When Foley met with Barr in 2019, he said he shared her desire for accountability. But she said he and other Justice Department officials were firm in their convictions that the death penalty, a punishment Barr had brought back after a 16-year federal government hiatus, was merited.

Last summer, though, as the families conveyed their wishes to remove death from consideration and as the case dragged on without obvious resolution, Barr was ready to break the logjam.

"I don't know if it was the deciding factor or not, but I think it did help when we finally spoke up again and said, 'Please. Please bring them to the U.S.,'" Foley said. "If you need that evidence and you need to waive the death penalty, please do it."

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 67 of 70

A senior Justice Department official prepared Foley for the news about to break, writing in an Aug. 14 email that once the U.S. message is delivered and becomes public, "we are sure it will generate a lot of attention and discussion — and that many will be interested to hear from all of you."

That happened days later with the release of Barr's letter to U.K. Home Secretary Priti Patel. In it, he committed to forgo the death penalty but also issued an ultimatum: If the Justice Department received Britain's evidence by Oct. 15, it would proceed with prosecution. If not, it would transfer the men to Iraqi custody for prosecution.

"That was a real option. It wasn't posturing," Demers said. "I didn't know if the U.K. could do everything it needed to do in time to get us that evidence."

The evidence came, resulting in a 24-page indictment with counts punishable by life imprisonment.

Justice Department prosecutors announced their case on Oct. 7 as the men were flown to Dulles International Airport and taken to jail, where because of the pandemic they faced a judge via video link. They have pleaded not guilty.

As Foley listened to court proceedings she once doubted would ever come, she couldn't help but wonder if, under different circumstances, the men might have been friends with James, who years earlier had taught jail inmates.

But she also is gratified.

"To my last dying breath, I will do my best to bring some accountability and justice for the horror of the murders of these four Americans."

## **Beware of COVID-19 scams as vaccine approaches FDA approval**

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The coronavirus vaccine inching toward approval in the U.S. is desperately anticipated by weary Americans longing for a path back to normal life. But criminals are waiting, too, ready to use that desperation to their advantage, federal investigators say.

Homeland Security investigators are working with Pfizer, Moderna and dozens of other drug companies racing to complete and distribute the vaccine and treatments for the virus. The goal: to prepare for the scams that are coming, especially after the mess of criminal activity this year with phony personal protective equipment, false cures and extortion schemes.

"We're all very excited about the potential vaccine and treatments," said Steve Francis, assistant director for global trade investigations with Homeland Security Investigations. "But I also caution against these criminal organizations and individuals that will try to exploit the American public."

No vaccine has yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The FDA has approved the first treatment for COVID-19, the antiviral drug remdesivir. With vaccines and treatments both, it has warned about the potential for fraud.

"The FDA is particularly concerned that these deceptive and misleading products might cause Americans to delay or stop appropriate medical treatment, leading to serious and life-threatening harm," the agency said in a recent statement.

The drug companies are to have safeguards and brand-protection features in place to help avoid fraud, but that may not be available until the second generation of vaccine because everything is operated on such an emergency basis, said Karen Gardner, chief marketing officer at SIPCA North America, a company that works as a bridge between the government, businesses and consumers. She said that makes it more important to educate health care providers on what the real thing looks like.

"When you have anything in high demand and limited supply, there is going to be fraud," she said. Desperation will drive people around normal channels.

Meanwhile, investigators are learning about how the vaccine will be packaged and getting the message out to field agents, creating a mass database of information from more than 200 companies, so they can be prepared to spot fakes and crack down on dangerous fraud. They are monitoring tens of thousands of false websites and looking for evidence of fake cures sold online.

Earlier this year as cases exploded, hospitals and governments grew short on masks, gloves and other

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 68 of 70

protective gear. Scams grew, too. Tricksters preyed on unwitting citizens to hand over money for goods they'd never receive.

Homeland Security Investigations started using its 7,000 agents in tandem with border, FDA and FBI officials to investigate scams, seize phony products and arrest hundreds of people. The effort is headquartered at the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, a government watchdog aimed at enforcement of its international trade laws and combating intellectual property theft.

The agency has already analyzed more than 70,900 websites suspected as being involved in some type of COVID-19 fraud. Millions of fake or unapproved personal protective equipment products and antiviral pharmaceuticals were seized. Homeland Security Investigations made more than 1,600 seizures of products worth more than \$27 million and made more than 185 arrests.

Home test kits, for example, were only recently made available to the public in the past few weeks. But investigators seized tens of thousands of fake kits in the months before. On the dark web, scammers were selling domain names like "coronaprevention.org," attractive to counterfeiters. In the U.S. alone, more than 1,000 fake websites a day have been removed during the pandemic.

A vaccine can't come fast enough, as virus cases have topped 13 million in the U.S. and many cities have started restricting movement again as the country heads into winter. The pandemic has killed more than 1.4 million people worldwide, more than 266,000 of them in the U.S., according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University. But Francis and other investigators are worried that desperation will make Americans more susceptible.

If the FDA allows emergency use of a vaccine, there will be limited, rationed supplies before the end of the year.

Gen. Gus Perna, in charge of the government's efforts to distribute the vaccine, said on CBS' "60 Minutes" the government was prepared to distribute the vaccine within 24 hours of approval. There's a stockpile of the prospective vaccine itself plus kits of needles, syringes and alcohol swabs needed to give the dose. The secret stash is watched by armed guards.

"We have taken extraordinary precaution in this area," he said. "It's such a commodity to us, we're taking the full steps to make sure that the vaccine's secure."

Who is first in line has yet to be decided. But Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said the hope is that enough doses are available by the end of January to vaccinate adults over age 65, who are at the highest risk from the coronavirus, and health care workers. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious-diseases expert, said it may take until spring or summer before anyone who is not high risk and wants a shot can get one.

States already are gearing up for what is expected to be the biggest vaccination campaign in U.S. history. First the shots have to arrive where they're needed, and Pfizer's must be kept at ultra-cold temperatures — around minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit, or minus 70 degrees Celsius. Moderna's vaccine also starts off frozen, but the company said it can be thawed and kept in a regular refrigerator for 30 days, easing that concern.

Governments in other countries and the World Health Organization, which aims to buy doses for poor nations, will have to decide separately if and when vaccines should be rolled out broadly.

Meanwhile, Homeland Security investigators and others are trying to send the message now to the public before the vaccines are approved and begin distribution. They say people should only get a vaccine from an approved medical provider. They shouldn't respond to calls seeking personal information. And they shouldn't click on social media posts purporting to sell cures.

"If it sounds too good to be true, it is," Francis said.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 1, the 336th day of 2020. There are 30 days left in the year.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 69 of 70

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a Black seamstress, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus; the incident sparked a year-long boycott of the buses by Blacks.

On this date:

In 1824, the presidential election was turned over to the U.S. House of Representatives when a deadlock developed between John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William H. Crawford and Henry Clay. (Adams ended up the winner.)

In 1860, the Charles Dickens novel "Great Expectations" was first published in weekly serial form.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln sent his Second Annual Message to Congress, in which he called for the abolition of slavery, and went on to say, "Fellow-citizens, we can not escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves."

In 1941, Japan's Emperor Hirohito approved waging war against the United States, Britain and the Netherlands after his government rejected U.S. demands contained in the Hull Note.

In 1942, during World War II, nationwide gasoline rationing went into effect in the United States; the goal was not so much to save on gas, but to conserve rubber (as in tires) that was desperately needed for the war effort.

In 1965, an airlift of refugees from Cuba to the United States began in which thousands of Cubans were allowed to leave their homeland.

In 1969, the U.S. government held its first draft lottery since World War II.

In 1974, TWA Flight 514, a Washington-bound Boeing 727, crashed in Virginia after being diverted from National Airport to Dulles International Airport; all 92 people on board were killed. Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 6231, a Boeing 727, crashed near Stony Point, New York, with the loss of its three crew members (the plane had been chartered to pick up the Baltimore Colts football team in Buffalo, New York).

In 1989, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev met with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican.

In 1990, British and French workers digging the Channel Tunnel between their countries finally met after knocking out a passage in a service tunnel.

In 1991, Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union.

In 2006, Felipe Calderon took the oath of office as Mexico's president amid catcalls and brawling lawmakers, a chaotic start to a term in which he pledged to heal a country divided by his narrow victory.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama's bipartisan deficit commission unveiled its recommendations including lower income taxes, fewer tax breaks and higher age for retirement benefits (however, the panel failed to advance the package to Congress two days later.) LPGA players meeting in Orlando, Florida, voted to allow transgender players to compete on tour.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama told a U.N. climate conference that parts of the global warming deal being negotiated in Paris should be legally binding on the countries that signed on, setting up a potential fight with Republicans at home. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said the United States was expanding its special operations forces in Iraq and Syria to help fight Islamic State militants. The Philadelphia 76ers ended the longest losing streak in the history of major professional sports in the United States, topping the Los Angeles Lakers 103-91 to snap a 28-game skid.

One year ago: "Frozen 2" set a record for the five-day period starting on the day before Thanksgiving, taking in \$132.7 million at the box office. A powerful winter storm that had tormented travelers across the U.S. since before Thanksgiving moved to the Northeast. Actor Shelley Morrison, best known for playing maid Rosario Salazar on "Will & Grace," died at the age of 83.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Woody Allen is 85. World Golf Hall of Famer Lee Trevino is 81. Singer Dianne Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 81. Country musician Casey Van Beek (The Tractors) is 78. Television producer David Salzman is 77. Rock singer-musician Eric Bloom (Blue Oyster Cult) is 76. Rock musician John Densmore (The Doors) is 76. Actor-singer Bette Midler is 75. Singer Gilbert O'Sullivan is 74. Former child actor Keith Thibodeaux (TV: "I Love Lucy") is 70. Actor Treat Williams is 69. Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., is 68. Country singer Kim Richey is 64. Actor Charlene Tilton is 62. Actor-model Carol Alt is 60. Actor Jer-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, Dec. 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 150 ~ 70 of 70**

emy Northam is 59. Actor Katherine LaNasa is 54. Producer-director Andrew Adamson is 54. Actor Nestor Carbonell is 53. Actor Golden Brooks is 50. Actor-comedian Sarah Silverman is 50. Actor Ron Melendez is 48. Contemporary Christian singer Bart Millard (MIL'urd) is 48. Actor-writer-producer David Hornsby is 45. Singer Sarah Masen is 45. Rock musician Brad Delson (Linkin Park) is 43. Actor Nate Torrence is 43. Rock/Christian music singer-songwriter Mat Kearney is 42. Actor Riz Ahmed (Film: "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story") is 38. Actor Charles Michael Davis is 36. Actor Ifenesh Hadera is 35. R&B singer-actor Janelle Monae is 35. Actor Ashley Monique Clark is 32. Pop-rock-rap singer Tyler Joseph (Twenty One Pilots) is 32. Actor Zoe Kravitz is 32. Pop singer Nico Sereba (Nico & Vinz) is 30. Actor Jackson Nicoll is 17.