

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 1 of 81

- 1- [Upcoming Schedule](#)
- 2- [Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- 3- [ADT Ad](#)
- 4- [Glimpses From Greenfield Column](#)
- 5- [American Standard Ad](#)
- 6- [Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- 7- [Christian Faith Publishing Ad](#)
- 8- [Prairie Doc Column](#)
- 9- [DirecTV Ad](#)
- 10- [Lana's Annals Column](#)
- 11- [Inogen Ad](#)
- 12- [No. 2 Wolves Spread the Wealth from Wachs](#)

Arena

- 13- [G-Force wins at Canton Tournament](#)
- 16- [Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- 18- [January 17th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- 26- [Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- 27- [Weather Pages](#)
- 31- [Daily Devotional](#)
- 32- [News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming Schedule

Monday, Jan. 18

- 5:30 p.m.: Junior High Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian with 7th grade at 5:30 p.m. followed by 8th grade at 6:30
6:30 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Langford Area with JV followed by Varsity

Tuesday, Jan. 19

- Doubleheader basketball at Ipswich with girls JV starting at 4 p.m. followed by boys JV, girls varsity and boys varsity.
Junior high boys basketball at Waubay with 7th grade at 4 p.m. and 8th grade at 8 p.m.
5 p.m.: Wrestling Quad at Groton (with Britton-Hecla, Clark/Willow Lake, Hamlin)
7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Thursday, January 21, 2021

- Junior High Boys Basketball at Britton-Hecla (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)
Girls Basketball hosting Clark/Willow Lake. JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity

Friday, January 22, 2021

- Boys Basketball at Clark. 7th grade at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 2 of 81

Coming up on GDILIVE.COM



Girls

6:30 p.m.,
Monday, Jan. 18, 2021
Groton at Langford

JV Girls, Varsity Girls

This poster features a lion's head on the left and a tiger's head on the right, both looking towards a basketball hoop with a white net. The word "Girls" is written in gold at the top right.



DoubleHeader

4 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021
Groton Area at Ipswich

JV Girls, JV Boys
Varsity Girls, Varsity Boys

This poster features two tiger heads, one on the left and one on the right, looking towards a basketball hoop with a white net. The word "DoubleHeader" is written in gold at the top right.

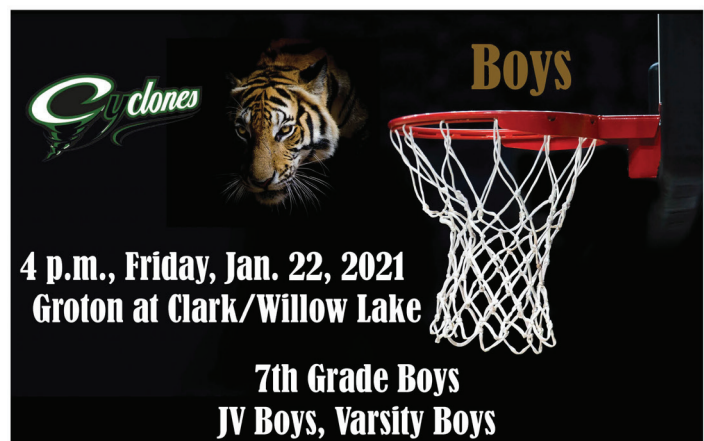


Cyclones **Girls**

6 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021
Clark/Willow Lake at Groton

Junior Varsity Girls
Varsity Girls

This poster features a tiger's head on the right looking towards a basketball hoop with a white net. The word "Cyclones" is written in green on the left, and "Girls" is written in gold at the top right.



Cyclones **Boys**

4 p.m., Friday, Jan. 22, 2021
Groton at Clark/Willow Lake

7th Grade Boys
JV Boys, Varsity Boys

This poster features a tiger's head on the right looking towards a basketball hoop with a white net. The word "Cyclones" is written in green on the left, and "Boys" is written in gold at the top right.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 3 of 81

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DF-CD-NP-Q121

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 4 of 81

Glimpses From Greenfield

Greetings, once again! In many regards, things remain the same, while in many other ways, everything has changed! First of all, I got married over the interim! My wife, Kelli, hails from the Winner area, and she is a nurse practitioner with Monument Health. We have known each other just over three years, and I count her as a tremendous blessing in my life!

I don't need to tell you the world has become almost unrecognizable over the past several months. The human caravans from Central America have cranked up again and are planning on flooding into America's southern border within weeks. Other "refugees" from the Middle East anxiously await Inauguration Day, which will signal the doors being thrown wide open to them after four years of relatively well-monitored and controlled immigration. Boys in Connecticut are the fastest runners in high school girls track. And even after four years of unprecedented prosperity and a challenge from a candidate who hid in the basement and offered American voters virtually zero opportunity to get to know him, one of the most successful Presidents in American history is being displaced and replaced this week by a candidate who won fewer counties and precincts than any candidate in modern times. Revisionist historians are rewriting our American history in real-time! Between them and the "woke" individuals who troll social media, they have effectively "cancelled" a whole lot of our fellow Americans, both past and present.

Nevertheless, we remain grounded and focused here in South Dakota. Most of us know that at the heart of it all is a God who created us and who will not forsake us. We have faced dozens upon dozens of challenges here in our state over the past year, but we remain undeterred. We have bent but not broken. I take very seriously the fact that we have lost some good people prematurely. It is a tragedy and a travesty. But here in our beloved South Dakota, we find strength to go on within ourselves and by leaning on our neighbors, friends, families, and churches, and we overcome. We are on the precipice of doing just that.

Over the course of the first week of session, we heard from the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the tribal leader from Standing Rock Reservation, and a lot of other folks with a vested interest in seeing South Dakotans from all walks of life achieve their highest potential. The messages were not those of a broken people. They were those of optimism and hope. They come from leaders who know that South Dakota can serve as an example for people from every other dot on the map and encourage them to become the shining cities on the hill that we are because of who our people are.

This year, I am serving on the Appropriations Committee. We have begun our hearings, and—as many of you have heard—we have a unique situation this year, in that we have a whole lot of money to consider how to apportion out. We want to do so in a way that makes South Dakota better in both the short and long-terms. Expect for there to be some serious long-range planning and mega investments in projects that will make several generations going forward better off than those who have gone before us. I look forward to seeing those of you who venture out to Pierre during the Session and hearing from those of you who either contact me in the usual ways or by attending cracker barrels as they take place.

Because the first week is generally mundane for the average citizen, I will wrap things up by telling you I will be back next week with a little more information about what is transpiring, as well as what bills I am going to be working on. In the meantime, stay well, stay positive, and may God bless you and yours!

Brock

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 5 of 81

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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 6 of 81

Playoff Edition, Divisional Round

At this time a week ago, there were eight teams left standing in the NFL. Now there are four.

The divisional round of the playoffs kicked off Saturday with a matchup between the number one seed Green Bay Packers and the six-seeded Las Angeles Rams. There will be plenty of storylines to come out of this game, from Aaron Rodgers reaching the NFL Championship Game for the fourth time in seven years to this being the first time the future Hall of Fame QB has

started a conference championship game with home-field advantage – but this game came down to one thing: the trenches. The Rams, led by defensive tackle Aaron Donald and boasting the league’s number one defense, was going up against a Green Bay offensive line that would be without left tackle David Bakhtiari. The Rams were still unable to put pressure on Aaron Rodgers, only registering one QB hit and zero sacks. Rodgers took full advantage, completing 23 of 36 passes for 296 yards and two touchdowns. On the other side of the ball, Green Bay was wreaking havoc in the Rams’ backfield, sacking Jared Goff four times and an additional seven QB hits (plus five other tackles behind the line of scrimmage). The Packers prevailed in this one, 32-18.

The second game on Saturday featured the Baltimore Ravens at the Buffalo Bills. This game was not much of a contest, even before 2019 MVP Lamar Jackson exited because of a concussion, with the Bills winning 17-3. The Bills only managed 220 yards on offense, relying on short passes from Josh Allen to move the ball down the field. Stefon Diggs led the way for the Bills, catching eight passes for 106 yards and a touchdown. On defense, the Bills harassed Baltimore’s quarterbacks all game. Defensive end Jerry Hughes, an eleven-year veteran, was the player of the game for the Bills with two sacks, two QB hits, and two tackles for a loss.

After two non-competitive games on Saturday, Sunday started with a bang. The Cleveland Browns went to Kansas City and nearly knocked off the reigning champion Chiefs before ultimately falling 22-17. Half-way through the third quarter, with the Chiefs up by nine points, Patrick Mahomes had to exit the game because of a concussion. Veteran QB Chad Henne took over and the promising drive ended in a field goal, and those would be the last points Kansas City scored on Sunday. The Browns were looking like they had all the momentum at that point, scoring a touchdown on their next possession and cutting the deficit to five points. Unfortunately for Cleveland fans, the Browns were unable to maintain the momentum, and the Chiefs were able to run out the clock for the win.

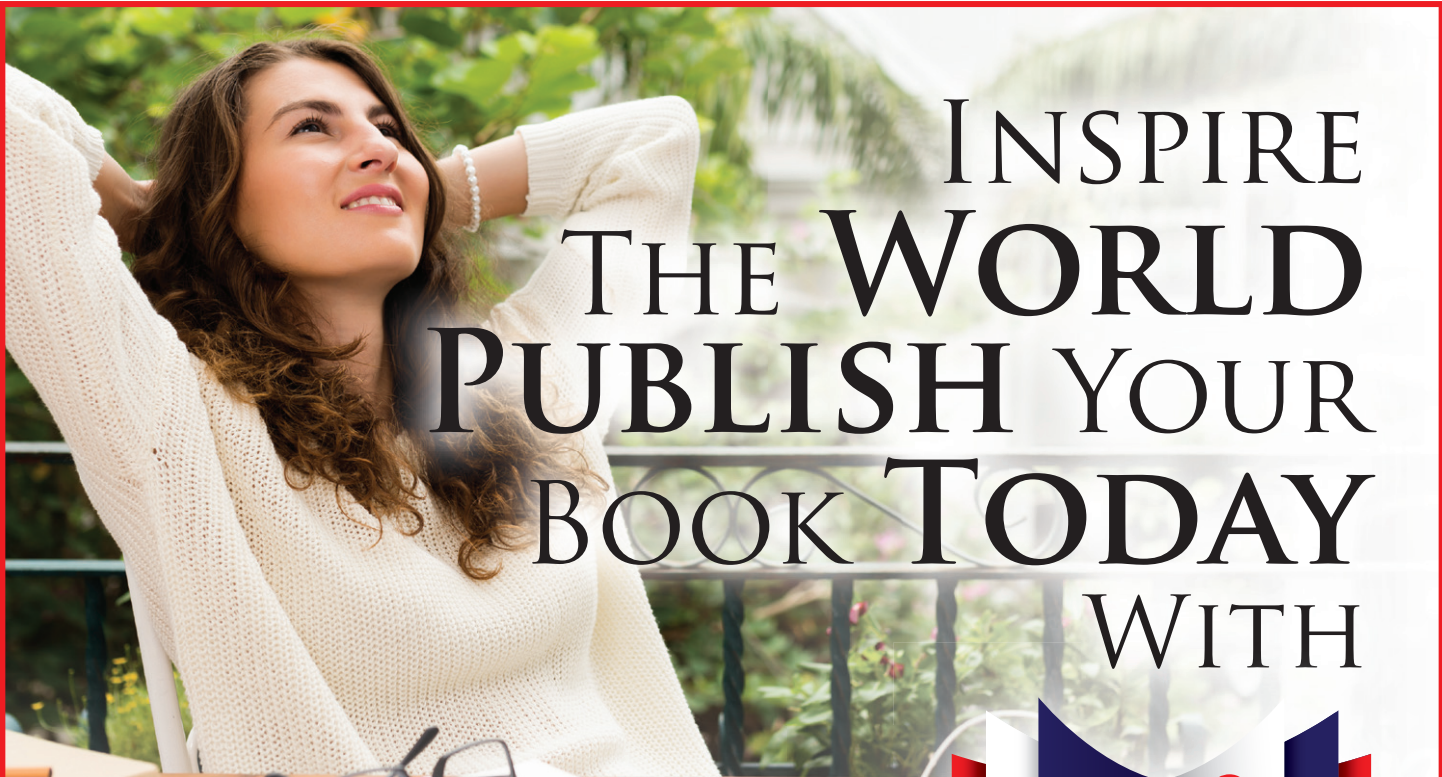
The final game of the weekend featured two of the best quarterbacks to ever play the game when Tom Brady and the Buccaneers traveled to New Orleans to take on the Saints. The two teams were tied at halftime, and the Saints got the second-half kickoff and drove down the field to give the Saints a 20-13 lead. It was all downhill from there for the Saints, as they gave up 17 unanswered points before falling to a final score of 30-20. Tom Brady went 18/33 for 199 yards and two touchdowns, and now prepares for another conference championship game. Drew Brees’ went 19/34 for 134 yards one touchdown and three interceptions, in what was likely the final game of his illustrious NFL career.

Looking ahead, the conference championship games are set. The Bucs will head to Lambeau to battle the Packers (Sunday, 2:05 PM CT), while the Bills head to Kansas City (Sunday, 5:40 PM CT). In the NFC, Tom Brady just knocked off a Hall of Fame QB and will look to duplicate the feat this week against Aaron Rodgers. The Packers open as four-point favorites, even though the two teams met earlier this season in Tampa and the Bucs won 38-10. In the AFC, the Chiefs open as three-point favorites, but that line will surely change this week depending on the severity of Mahomes’ concussion.

Since there is no Pro Bowl game this year, there are only three games left in the NFL season. The season will be over before we know it, so cherish these last few games. Skol!



By Jordan Wright



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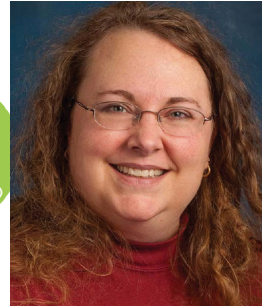
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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 8 of 81

We Are More Alike Than Different

America is grappling a difficult legacy. Our society was built by the blood and sweat of slaves, on land previously occupied by Native Americans. When we won independence, only white male property owners were fully enfranchised. Enslaved peoples were not fully counted under the constitution. Married women had no legal identity.



By Debra Johnston, M.D ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Immigrants, particularly from Ireland, southern Europe, and Asia faced open hostility. Catholic Churches were vandalized. Nearly 1000 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany were turned away in Miami harbor. Japanese Americans were forced from their homes and into internment camps.

We have a proud heritage of noble ideals, but we have often failed to live up to them. We have emphasized our differences, not to celebrate the rich tapestry of life they create, but to divide ourselves into "us" and "them."

In the last 250 years, our society has moved in meaningful ways toward equal participation. Slavery is illegal. Women can own property. People of different races can marry. We still face the consequences of generations of discrimination, but most of us find we have opportunities our grandparents did not.

The LGBTQ+ community is the most recent to demand an end to discrimination. Awareness is increasing, but many people still have little information, or have misinformation, about the diversity of human sexuality and sexual identity.

Three years ago, a high school friend shocked me when she revealed that she was, in fact, a trans woman. I wonder how many other people I've met and cherished have felt compelled to hide something so important. We know that suicide attempts in the LGBTQ+ community are higher than in the general population, particularly for young people who are bullied in their communities or rejected at home. LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to be victimized by violent crimes.

I often think of the saying "a rising tide lifts all boats." It reminds me that working to improve my neighbor's wellbeing makes my own more secure. This is especially true for the neighbors who don't look like me, who don't pray like me, who don't vote like me, who don't love like me. If their rights are threatened, it is only a matter of time before mine are, as well.

We can all look back in our family trees and find someone who faced discrimination for their race, religion, or class. And of course, we all have mothers and grandmothers! Let's remember those struggles and extend compassion. We are more alike than we are different.

Debra Johnston, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 9 of 81



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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 10 of 81

Lana's Annals

Capitol greetings to all. Week 1 was very preliminary so not a lot to report bill wise.

In the House chamber, we are getting acquainted with the many new legislators. The education committee, which I have been once again appointed to chair, has many new faces but all seem eager to participate. We have had one meeting thus far. I asked Tiffany Sanderson, our new secretary of education, and Dr. Wade Pogany, the executive director of Associated School Boards, to attend and report on any progress our schools are making and obstacles still present as a result of the pandemic.

This week we heard the Governor's State of the State address. She favors a continuation of broadband expansion as we get more industries and people in our state. Amazon's new warehouse and Schwan's Asian food industry to be coming to Sioux Falls are going to be huge economic gains for our state. Meanwhile on the other end of the state, the Rapid City area is building rapidly in order to ready itself for the arrival of the B-21 bomber and for the huge influx of personnel that comes with it. I attended an informational meeting and saw a model for a large building project proposal by the city of Box Elder. They wish to double the size of the city by creating an expansive housing and apartment project, a recreation center, including an indoor track, fitness, and daycare center. Parks, walkways, and many new stores are also included in the design. In this part of the state, we continue to fire the agriculture and tourism cannon. It is important that our individual areas showcase strengths. Our state must have something special as many people are thinking of coming or have already moved here.

I attended a National Guard presentation on Thursday. Major General. Jeff Marlette, the head of the Guard, hosted a slide presentation on the activities conducted by units across the state. He mentioned that they are busy with many training drills as well as actively moving covid vaccines across the state, getting them to places quickly and safely. He also praised our young people for enlisting without being drafted into service. Our National Guard units and individuals are outstanding and renowned leaders and national award winners. We should be proud of them and of our other military branches who sacrifice and serve so that we may have a good quality of life.

On the floor we listened to the new chief justice, Steven Jensen. He addressed the need for more money to pay our judges. Many people in private law practice can make a higher salary than a judge so it is hard to get them out of private practice in order to serve. This is an item we may need to research.

Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Faith also spoke to us about problems natives encounter in his area: lack of jobs and little industry, rampant alcohol and drug abuse, missing women and children, poor healthcare, lack of decent housing. Many of these problems are similar to a number of areas in our state and nation. I was impressed with his respectful demeanor, humor, and willingness to work together. Sometimes, though, it gets personally confusing.. I wonder if someday everyone will be able to assimilate; that would be easier.. For now, some prefer to keep their own nation, laws, language, customs, , and culture, which I respect. It just makes it harder to develop inclusive plans as a state if we are different pages.

Many bills have been or are in the process of being filed. Before I sign on, I ask myself this: is this bill something that many need and will benefit from, is it something that some people will benefit from some of the time, or is it a piece of feel good, unenforceable legislation that nobody will benefit from at any time.. Do I always get it right? No. Part of the problem I have is putting a bill into law that has unintended consequences or having one in place that will never be used or enforced.

If you are "for" or "against" a bill, please let me know before I vote. It does little good to write to us legislators to express displeasure after the fact.

With that, I wish all of you a blessed week.

Rep. Lana Greenfield, Dist. 2 House

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Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 12 of 81

No. 2 Wolves Spread the Wealth from Wachs Arena

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 2 Northern State men's basketball team extended their season opening streak to six games, following a Saturday win over Minnesota Crookston. The Wolves were efficient in the second half, shooting 65.4% from the floor and 54.6% from the 3-point line.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 88, UMC 64

Records: NSU 6-0 (4-0 NSIC), UMC 1-5 (0-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 689

HOW IT HAPPENED

- The Wolves continued their slow start to games, with the Golden Eagles jumping out to a narrow lead through the first 15 minutes of play
- Northern gained the lead around the five minute mark and led by as much as eight in the first, before running away with the game in the second
- NSU shot 57.7% from field goal range, 40.0% from beyond the arc, and 66.7% from the foul line in the win
- They out-rebounded the Golden Eagles 31-26, notching four second chance points
- The Wolves added 44 points in the paint, 19 points off turnovers, 14 points off the bench, and a season high 20 fast break points
- Despite being skunked from 3-point land in the first, Northern went 6-of-11 in the second led by Mason Stark with four made 3-pointers
- NSU combined for 20 assists, finishing the weekend with 42 against UMC, and added six blocks and six steals
- Four Wolves scored in double figures, while three dished out three or more assists and five grabbed three or more rebounds

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Parker Fox: 25 points, 9 rebounds, 7 assists (career high), 4 steals, 3 blocks, 72.7 FG%
- Mason Stark: 21 points, 4 rebounds, 70.0 FG%, 66.7 3-pt FG%
- Tommy Chatman: 12 points (season high), 62.5 FG%
- Jordan Belka: 10 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists

PHILLIPS' TAKE

"It's seems like it is coming slower for us, and I'd like it to come earlier in the game. We tried some different stuff defensively tonight. We weren't there this weekend defensively, like we were the first two weekends, and we need to be better there."

UP NEXT

Northern returns to the road next weekend at St. Cloud State. The Wolves and Huskies will face off at 6 p.m. on Friday and 2 p.m. on Saturday. Saturday's contest was originally scheduled for 4 p.m., but was moved up. Live video, stat, and audio links are available on the men's basketball schedule on nsuwolves.com.



Congratulations to G-Force-Jase Kroll and Travis Townsend (pictured on the left) on winning the Canton tournament! They were in alliance with Double Trouble from Eureka. (photo credit: Rockin' RV Photography, Canton, SD)

Groton Robotics

G-Force wins at Canton Tournament

The Groton Area Tigers Robotics team hit the road this past weekend for a tournament in Canton, SD. There were 22 teams in attendance, and due to Covid-19 related rules each school was only allowed to bring two participants per team, which meant we had to cut our roster down a bit to attend. We had a busy day working to fine tune our autonomous programs and one robot got completely rebuilt before the tournament, so there was plenty of fine tuning with that one. We finished the qualifying rounds with two out of our four teams in the top 10. Galaxy, which consists of Jack Dinger, Axel Warrington, and James Brooks finished in 7th place with a record of 5-2-1. G-Force finished in 1st place with a 7-0-1 record. Being the first seed, G-Force was able to pick up an alliance with the third seed team, Double Trouble from Eureka, SD. Geek Squad and Galaxy both lost their first matches in the finals, with Galaxy starting out in the quarterfinals. Gear Heads won their first match, making it to the quarterfinals, but lost there. G-Force and their alliance team went on to win the tournament. G-Force members being Travis Townsend, Jase Kroll, and Garrett Schultz, though Garrett spent the day assisting Geek Squad due to the two participant rule. The kids worked hard and had plenty of obstacles to overcome being short handed, but they pulled through well. They have a lot to be proud of. And a big congratulations to G-Force on their win!! Our next tournament is in Groton on Saturday, Feb. 6th. Following that will be our state tournament on the 27th in Harrisburg.

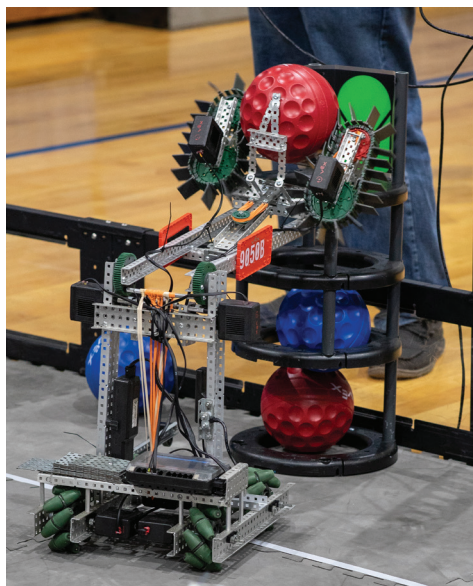
- By Co-Coach Neil Warrington

Groton Daily Independent

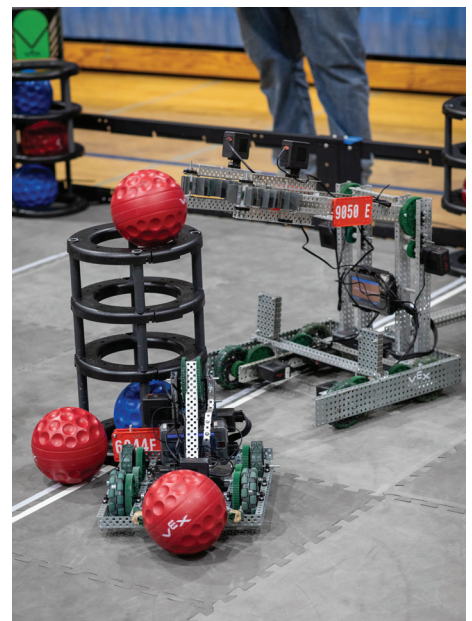
Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 14 of 81



Gear Heads-Issac Higgins and Ethan Clark get paired up with G-Force-Travis Townsend and Jase Kroll. (photo credit: Rockin' RV Photography)



Right Photo: Galaxy's robot 9050E drops a ball in to score! (photo credit: Rockin' RV Photography, Canton, SD)



Left Photo: Gear Heads 9050B dropping a ball and scoring a point. (photo credit: Rockin' RV Photography, Canton, SD)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 15 of 81



Axel Warrington and Jack Dinger from Galaxy prepping their robot to start a match. (photo credit: Rockin' RV Photography, Canton, SD)



-Charlie Frost-Geek Squad robot 9050D with assistance from Garrett Schultz waiting to start a match. (photo credit: Rockin' RV Photography, Canton, SD)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 16 of 81

#329 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We know the reporting tends to be slow on weekends, particularly on Sundays, and today doesn't disappoint in this regard. We're well down in all categories. Low weekend counts also run into Monday as a rule; given this is a three-day weekend, I'm thinking it might be Wednesday before things settle back into normal reporting. That said, here's where we are.

We're down slightly from the last week, but well over what we saw two weeks ago. The Christmas surge should be working its way though, but the New Year's surge is still going strong. We'll be seeing these effects for some time to come, certainly through the end of the month and into February; but we can hope for some tapering effect. We are at 23,976,400 cases reported in the US so far in the pandemic; we'll hit 24 million tomorrow for sure. There were 181,200 new cases reported today for a 0.5% increase in total cases. California topped three million cases today. We've been over 90,000 cases for a solid eleven weeks and over 70,000 for twelve weeks. Hospitalizations are not at record levels and have stayed below the record for nine days. There are 126,139 people hospitalized with this virus today. We haven't been below 100,000 hospitalized for seven weeks.

We're still at 49 states and territories in the red zone, three in orange, and two in yellow. One-week increase in total cases was 1,786,600 (8.6%) last week and is down to 1,528,100 this week. Two-week increase was 3,287,200 (17.2%) last week and is only slightly up to 3,314,700 this week. We've added just about four million cases in January, which means we're still on track to add seven million by the end of the month. I have us at a one-week daily average new-case number of 218,300.0, about 37,000 less than last week; it's looking as though things are slowing down. I hope it continues.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and the number of these showing two-week rates of increase greater than 25% is down to four. Here are the states and territories with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: Connecticut (38.00%), Maine (31.13%), Vermont (29.05%), and New Jersey (26.95). California, New Hampshire, Arizona, and West Virginia fell off the list this week. We have 20 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate. Looks like most of the trouble is in the Mid-Atlantic states and California.

There were 2002 deaths reported today, a 0.5% increase to 397,566. We'll be at 400,000 tomorrow or Tuesday; my bet's on Tuesday. Wisconsin had a record number of deaths today. Average daily deaths have increased to the highest number of the pandemic, just slightly greater than last week's record-setting average of 3244.1. We're at 3311.0 this week. This is the ninth consecutive week since spring we've reported over 10,000 deaths. States with the most per capita deaths over the past week are Arizona, California, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and South Carolina.

Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York has opened a center for the so-called long-haulers, post-Covid-19 patients who suffer symptoms long after the actual infection is gone. The condition now has a name, post-acute Covid syndrome, and it also now has some physicians around the country studying it and offering specialized help for to patients.

The symptoms, which can occur months after a person has seemed to recover, include difficulty concentrating, shortness of breath, especially with exertion, lack of energy, body aches, headaches, and loss of taste and smell, even if that did not occur during the acute phase of the disease. The CDC says as many as 35 percent of people who recover from Covid-19 have symptoms that last more than three weeks. One patient told ABC News, "You kind of wonder if you're, you know, are you ever going to get better?"

Dr. Michael Daignault, emergency medicine physician at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center, in an ABC interview, said that he sees many such patients and that five factors make you more likely to suffer this post-acute syndrome: "Being female, being overweight, having a history of asthma, being elderly. And if you had multiple symptoms during your acute phase and infection in your first couple weeks."

I don't think we've wrapped our heads around the long-term implications of this virus yet. Long after we've brought the infection rate down and reduced the deaths to a trickle, we're going to be dealing with the aftermath in folks who've been infected. We have the kidney dialysis patients; we have no idea whether

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 17 of 81

their kidney damage is permanent or they'll slowly recover their kidney function. We have the people with heart damage; I haven't seen any data on whether they seem to be healing or the damage is going to be life-long. Then there are those with neurologic damage from strokes or inflammation in the brain; they face long and expensive rehabilitation before they return to some semblance of normal life, if ever they can. And then we have these post-acute Covid syndrome patients; we are still learning about how severe and how long-lasting their symptoms are. All I can say is 35% of 24 million people (and counting) is a whole lot of people.

I was asked a few days ago about states with more success in delivering vaccines they've received to patients compared with states who are not getting that done so efficiently. I saw an analysis today that clarifies some of this. Thirty-one million doses have been delivered to states so far, but only 39 percent of those have been administered. There are states with far better track records: North Dakota, West Virginia, South Dakota, Connecticut, Texas, Louisiana, Kentucky, Colorado, and Montana, along with Washington, DC. North Dakota and West Virginia have actually administered over 65 percent of their doses.

So what's so special about them? Largely that they're rural and have only a few large health systems. That makes coordination far easier. In North Dakota and South Dakota, the state works with providers to make sure the supply that is distributed gets into people and to move it around as needed. When you have, as we do here in South Dakota, only three health systems, that simplifies things considerably and can't always be done in larger states with many more providers to coordinate. There was also some early planning done in these states, going back to last summer; this has to help. When we consider situations like the one we discussed a couple of days ago in Florida where a county executive had vaccine dumped on him unexpectedly with no warning and no help to work out logistics, it's no wonder things didn't go as smoothly there.

Mass vaccination sites are being set up all over the world as vaccines become available, our last best effort to get ahead of this virus, once and for all. When operating vaccination programs on the scale contemplated, one important consideration is choice of venue: There needs to be sufficient parking and/or mass transit access, there needs to be sufficient space for people to distance properly, there needs to be sufficient ventilation to reduce risk, there needs to be the ability to manage crowds of people under the constraints imposed by a pandemic caused by an airborne virus, and there needs to be great organ music.

Wait. What?? Organ music?

If you're lucky. One venue chosen as a vaccination site in the UK is England's historic Salisbury Cathedral. This 900-year-old example of medieval architecture, which has been added on to and renovated periodically through the near-millennium it has been standing, is home to one of only four existing contemporaneous copies of the Magna Carta. Pretty inspiring place to get poked with a needle containing genetically-engineered, super-sciencey mRNA, isn't it?

I imagine today is just another day to a structure that has seen so much, and so the over-80s lined up for vaccine doses were probably no big deal, really. But the building took notice in a way as its organist, John Challenger, played "Handel's Largo and much more great organ music," according to his tweet, as people moved through the lines. I think I'd really enjoy organ music as I receive my vaccination one day in (I sincerely hope) the relatively near future. Inspiring music for an inspiring step into our collective future: I approve.

Be well. We'll talk again.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 18 of 81

Jan. 17th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 11:

Moderate: Faulk, Sanborn changed from minimal to moderate.

Positive: +266 (105,545 total) Positivity Rate: 8.5%

Total Tests: 3139 (834,487 total)

Total Persons Tested: 902 (391,422 total)

Hospitalized: +24 (6063 total) 213 currently hospitalized (+4)

Avera St. Luke's: 7 (-0) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 4 (-1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 1 (+0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 1 (+0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +23 (1656 total)

50s=2, 60s=3, 70s=8, 80+=10

Female: 10, Male: 13

Counties: Brown-3, Buffalo-1, Clay-1, Davison-1, Lawrence-2, Lincoln-1, McPherson-1, Minnehaha-3, Oglala Lakota-1, Pennington-6, Todd-1, Union-2.

Recovered: +418 (99,226 total)

Active Cases: -175 (4662)

Percent Recovered: 94.0%

Vaccinations: +1094 (56625)

Vaccinations Completed: +94 (9829)

Brown County Vaccinations: +28 (2310) 22 (+0) completed

Beadle (38) +3 positive, +2 recovered (80 active cases)

Brookings (32) +16 positive, +18 recovered (242 active cases)

Brown (75): +14 positive, +24 recovered (246 active cases)

Clark (4): +0 positive, +1 recovered (3 active cases)

Clay (13): +5 positive, +4 recovered (81 active cases)

Codington (73): +0 positive, +13 recovered (165 active cases)

Davison (55): +1 positive, +2 recovered (103) active cases)

Day (23): +2 positive, +2 recovered (28 active cases)

Edmunds (5): +0 positive, +5 recovered (48 active cases)

Faulk (13): +0 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)

Grant (35): +3 positive, +3 recovered (35 active cases)

Hanson (3): +0 positive, +0 recovered (13 active cases)

Hughes (30): +7 positive, +5 recovered (92 active

cases)

Lawrence (35): +9 positive, +12 recovered (92 active cases)

Lincoln (70): +16 positive, +38 recovered (299 active cases)

Marshall (5): +2 positive, +0 recovered (13 active cases)

McCook (22): +0 positive, +5 recovered (18 active cases)

McPherson (4): +2 positive, +2 recovery (27 active case)

Minnehaha (296): +60 positive, +84 recovered (1061 active cases)

Pennington (158): +28 positive, +44 recovered (551 active cases)

Potter (3): +1 positive, +2 recovered (26 active cases)

Roberts (32): +2 positive, +5 recovered (62 active cases)

Spink (24): +2 positive, +4 recovered (32 active cases)

Walworth (14): +8 positive, +1 recovered (53 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 17:

- 4.1% rolling 14-day positivity
- 152 new positives
- 4209 susceptible test encounters
- 85 currently hospitalized (-10)
- 1,460 active cases (-53)
- 1,384 total deaths (+3)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 19 of 81

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	436	404	804	11	Moderate	17.24%
Beadle	2576	2458	5381	38	Substantial	10.69%
Bennett	372	355	1096	8	Moderate	4.44%
Bon Homme	1502	1456	1930	23	Substantial	15.52%
Brookings	3299	3025	10572	32	Substantial	13.38%
Brown	4769	4448	11528	75	Substantial	22.59%
Brule	671	631	1733	7	Moderate	26.09%
Buffalo	415	403	855	12	Minimal	19.05%
Butte	939	886	2949	20	Substantial	16.13%
Campbell	116	109	230	4	Minimal	25.00%
Charles Mix	1182	1101	3640	14	Substantial	12.05%
Clark	324	317	893	4	Moderate	2.22%
Clay	1720	1626	4766	13	Substantial	16.74%
Codington	3661	3423	8884	73	Substantial	19.61%
Corson	457	440	950	11	Moderate	19.35%
Custer	711	680	2501	10	Substantial	12.79%
Davison	2847	2689	5936	55	Substantial	15.84%
Day	581	530	1592	23	Substantial	17.65%
Deuel	449	410	1034	7	Substantial	9.09%
Dewey	1368	1312	3595	17	Substantial	21.25%
Douglas	405	375	842	9	Substantial	31.58%
Edmunds	437	384	914	5	Substantial	9.09%
Fall River	483	450	2375	13	Substantial	9.41%
Faulk	321	304	629	13	Moderate	14.29%
Grant	864	794	2008	35	Substantial	21.05%
Gregory	493	459	1140	26	Moderate	0.00%
Haakon	239	226	494	9	Moderate	10.00%
Hamlin	650	573	1595	38	Substantial	10.75%
Hand	321	307	722	4	Minimal	8.33%
Hanson	325	309	640	3	Moderate	23.81%
Harding	89	88	162	1	Minimal	0.00%
Hughes	2125	2003	5908	30	Substantial	4.11%
Hutchinson	735	683	2119	22	Substantial	13.21%

Groton Daily Independent

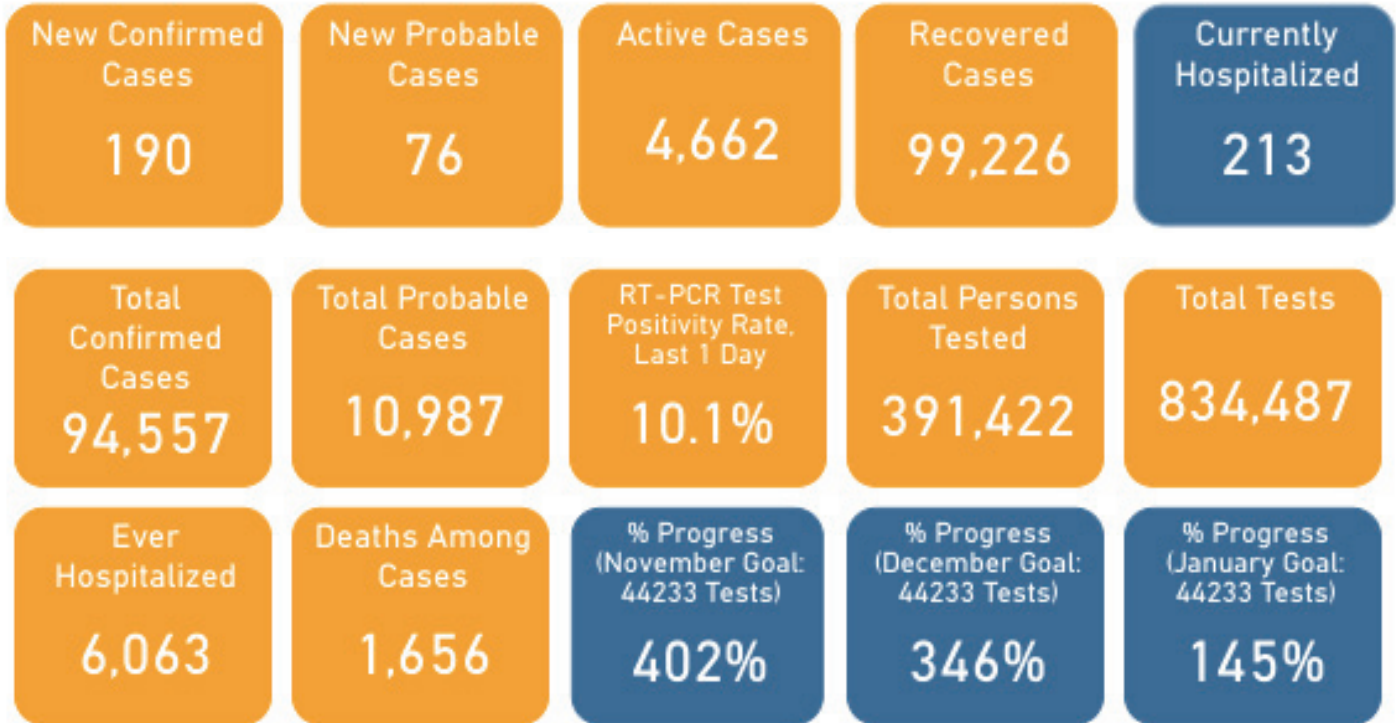
Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 20 of 81

Hyde	134	130	378	1	Minimal	0.00%
Jackson	269	252	872	13	Minimal	33.33%
Jerauld	265	242	521	16	Minimal	15.79%
Jones	75	69	183	0	Minimal	10.00%
Kingsbury	586	540	1476	13	Substantial	9.33%
Lake	1097	1023	2909	16	Substantial	29.13%
Lawrence	2704	2577	7868	35	Substantial	11.54%
Lincoln	7231	6862	18257	70	Substantial	19.74%
Lyman	573	525	1777	9	Moderate	16.67%
Marshall	277	259	1055	5	Moderate	4.00%
McCook	709	669	1470	22	Substantial	29.31%
McPherson	221	190	515	4	Moderate	2.94%
Meade	2411	2260	7009	26	Substantial	21.02%
Mellette	232	225	679	2	Minimal	10.34%
Miner	253	217	522	7	Moderate	10.00%
Minnehaha	26399	25042	70925	296	Substantial	16.17%
Moody	582	529	1621	15	Substantial	22.73%
Oglala Lakota	2005	1887	6335	39	Substantial	16.17%
Pennington	12043	11334	35752	158	Substantial	21.05%
Perkins	315	280	714	11	Substantial	16.67%
Potter	338	309	755	3	Moderate	8.57%
Roberts	1079	985	3855	32	Substantial	20.27%
Sanborn	323	303	623	3	Moderate	35.71%
Spink	741	685	1931	24	Substantial	10.20%
Stanley	303	285	817	2	Substantial	6.52%
Sully	129	111	259	3	Moderate	10.00%
Todd	1191	1155	3947	20	Substantial	8.42%
Tripp	645	621	1372	14	Substantial	12.12%
Turner	1022	924	2451	49	Substantial	23.53%
Union	1806	1615	5670	34	Substantial	14.38%
Walworth	684	617	1690	14	Substantial	23.00%
Yankton	2686	2536	8463	27	Substantial	12.68%
Ziebach	334	310	807	8	Moderate	14.29%
Unassigned	0	0	1983	0		

Broton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 21 of 81

South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	4032	0
10-19 years	11689	0
20-29 years	19131	4
30-39 years	17385	14
40-49 years	15085	32
50-59 years	14894	88
60-69 years	12032	210
70-79 years	6399	369
80+ years	4897	939

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	55143	791
Male	50401	865

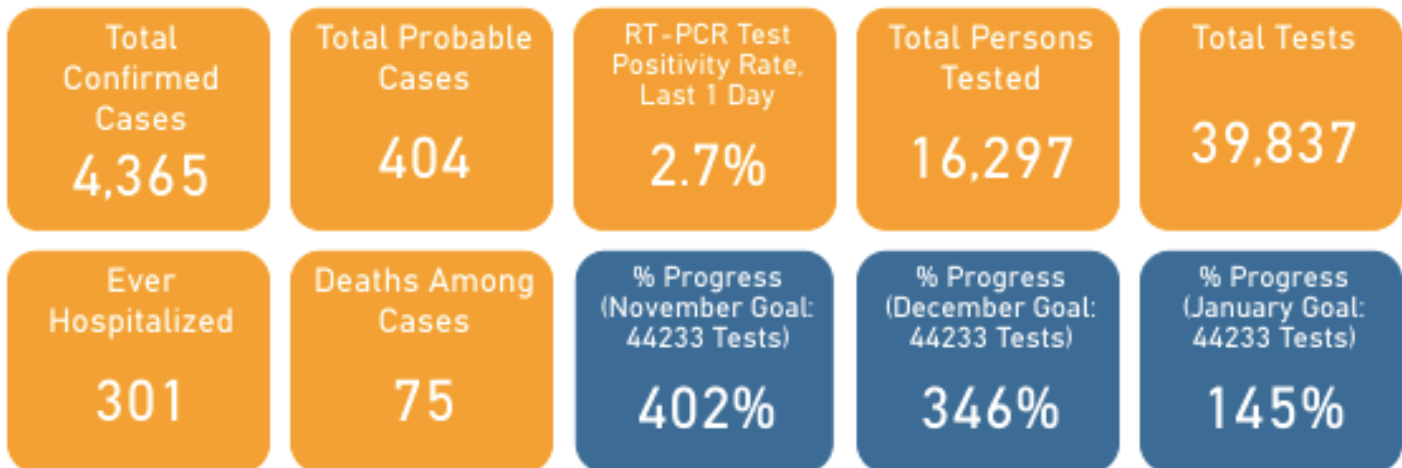
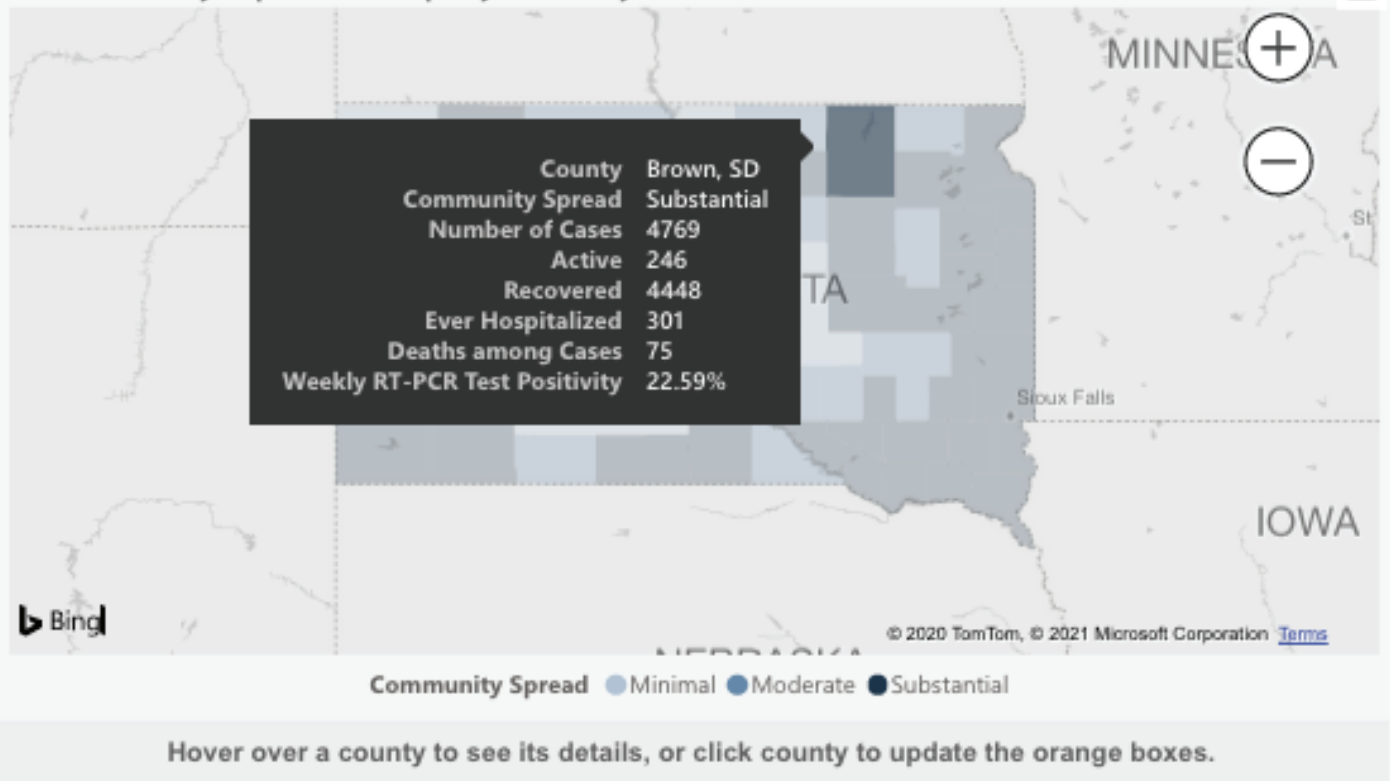
Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 22 of 81

Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



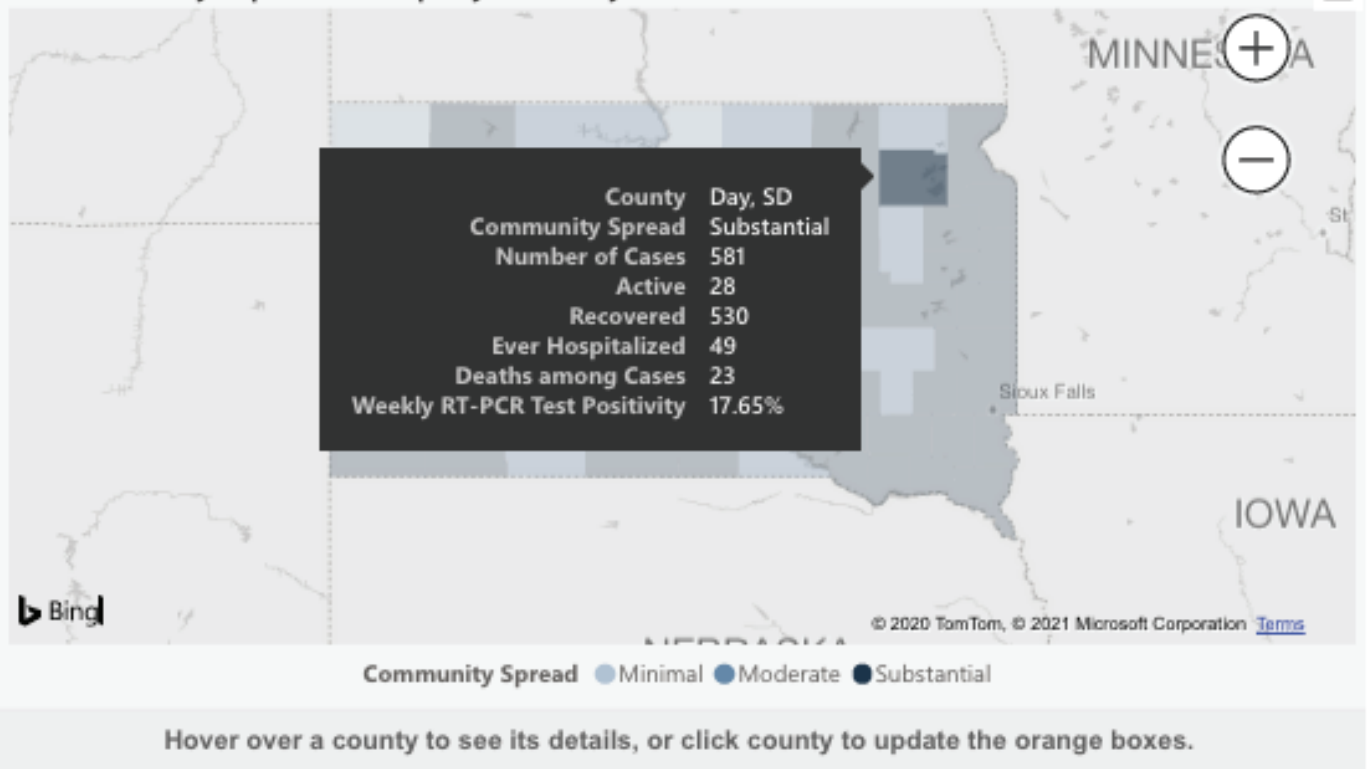
Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 23 of 81

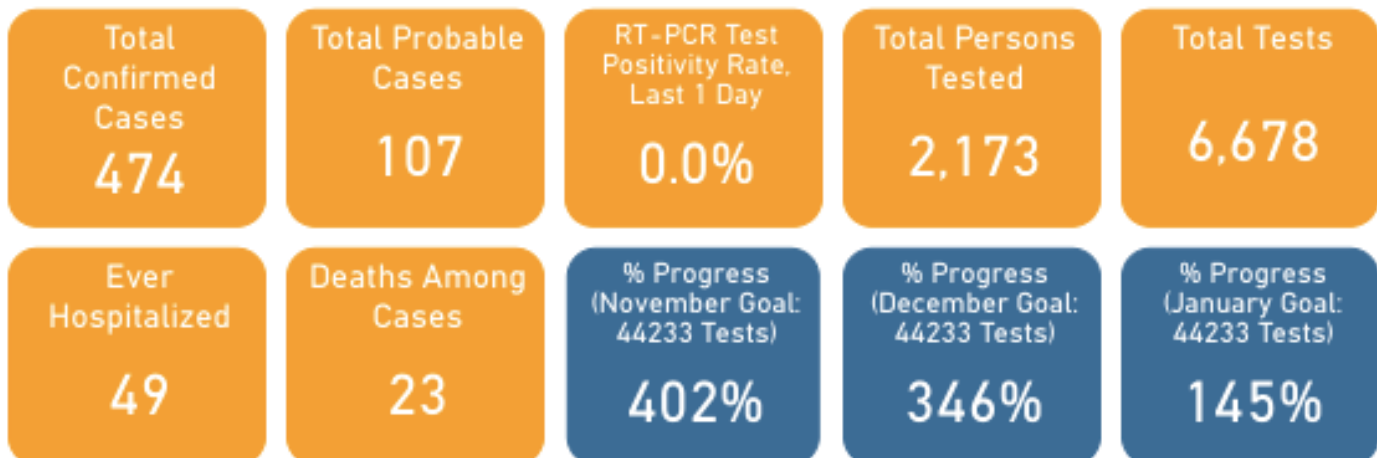
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 24 of 81

Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

56,625

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

46,796

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	27,591
Pfizer	29,034

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	27,591
Pfizer - 1 dose	9,376
Pfizer - Series Complete	8,029

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	87	87	0	87
Beadle	1051	665	193	858
Bennett*	52	48	2	50
Bon Homme*	444	428	8	436
Brookings	1549	1,113	218	1,331
Brown	2310	2,266	22	2,288
Brule*	233	229	2	231
Buffalo*	4	4	0	4
Butte	194	190	2	192
Campbell	202	176	13	189
Charles Mix*	322	316	3	319
Clark	169	157	6	163
Clay	822	750	36	786
Codington*	1594	1,218	188	1,406
Corson*	19	17	1	18
Custer*	348	318	15	333
Davison	1454	1,378	38	1,416
Day*	337	319	9	328
Deuel	187	159	14	173
Dewey*	89	87	1	88
Douglas*	210	206	2	208
Edmunds	167	163	2	165
Fall River*	417	411	3	414
Faulk	163	161	1	162
Grant*	438	422	8	430
Gregory*	240	232	4	236
Haakon*	90	90	0	90

Groton Daily Independent

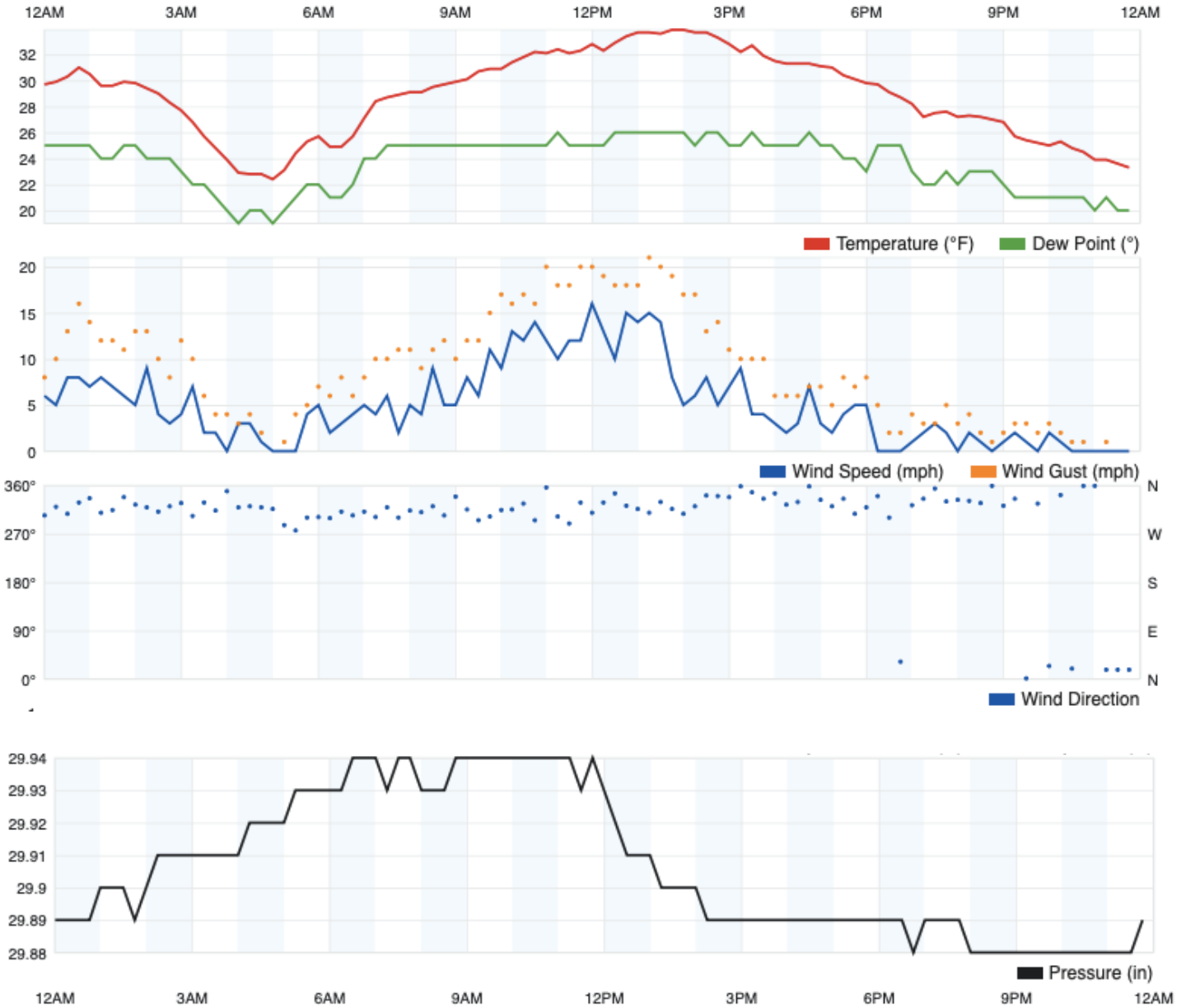
Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 25 of 81

Hamlin	237	187	25	212
Hand	209	189	10	199
Hanson	73	65	4	69
Harding	3	3	0	3
Hughes ⁺	1057	1,025	16	1,041
Hutchinson ⁺	579	529	25	554
Hyde ⁺	99	99	0	99
Jackson ⁺	49	49	0	49
Jerauld	77	63	7	70
Jones ⁺	95	91	2	93
Kingsbury	352	274	39	313
Lake	683	369	157	526
Lawrence	714	686	14	700
Lincoln	7063	2,771	2,146	4,917
Lyman ⁺	68	66	1	67
Marshall ⁺	225	219	3	222
McCook	411	289	61	350
McPherson	24	24	0	24
Meade ⁺	802	622	90	712
Mellette ⁺	6	6	0	6
Miner	143	115	14	129
Minnehaha	17628	7,656	4,986	12,642
Moody ⁺	277	229	24	253
Oglala Lakota ⁺	24	16	4	20
Pennington ⁺	5948	4,262	843	5,105
Perkins ⁺	63	63	0	63
Potter	125	121	2	123
Roberts ⁺	542	530	6	536
Sanborn	111	101	5	106
Spink	517	499	9	508
Stanley ⁺	146	140	3	143
Sully	33	27	3	30
Todd ⁺	29	25	2	27
Tripp ⁺	274	272	1	273
Turner	682	494	94	588
Union	283	251	16	267
Walworth ⁺	326	164	81	245
Yankton	1767	1,733	17	1,750
Ziebach ⁺	15	15	0	15
Other	1674	1,018	328	1,346

Groton Daily Independent






Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 26 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs








Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 27 of 81


M.L.King Day	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
				
60%	20% → 50%	20%		
Snow Likely	Slight Chance Snow then Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 27 °F	Low: 16 °F	High: 29 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 42 °F

5 Day Outlook

Snow Through The Day - Ending Early Tuesday

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				
HIGHS Low 20s to Upper 30s	HIGHS Low 20s to Mid 30s	HIGHS Low 40s to Near 50	HIGHS Low 30s to Near 40	HIGHS Teens to Low 30s

Snowfall Will Only Amount To An Inch or Two

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

www.weather.gov/abr Updated: 1/18/2021 3:39 AM Central

Light snow will continue off and on through the day and into early Tuesday. After that we will see very mild temperatures for mid-week, though its looking much closer to seasonal for the end of the work week.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 28 of 81

Halfway Report: Snowy Season 2020-2021

Oct 1st – Jan 15th



Location	Precipitation / Departure from normal	Rank	Snowfall / Departure from normal	Rank	Temperature / Departure from normal	Rank
Aberdeen	2.34" / -1.10"	52 nd driest 129 year record	18.9" / +1.3"	Tied 34 th snowiest 129 year record	33.5° / +5.1°	Tied 4 th warmest 129 year record
Watertown	2.74" / -0.60"	59 th driest 124 year record	16.1" / +0.6"	42 nd snowiest 123 year record	32.1° / +3.5°	Tied 15 th warmest 127 year record
Sisseton	2.46" / -1.32"	34 th driest 90 year record	16.5" / -1.1"	35 th snowiest 88 year record	34.1° / +4.4°	Tied 8 th warmest 90 year record
Wheaton	2.68" / -1.56"	39 th driest 105 year record	18.5" / +1.5"	22 nd snowiest 87 year record	33.6° / +4.4°	Tied 13 th warmest 90 year record
Pierre	1.56" / -1.66"	34 th driest 118 year record	9.9" / -4.5"	Tied 46 th driest 97 year record	36.8° / +3.8°	11 th warmest 88 year record
Mobridge	1.82" / -0.78"	Tied 48 th driest 105 year record	14.3" / +1.2"	34 th snowiest 102 year record	35.8° / +5.3°	Tied 5 th warmest 102 year record
Kennebec	1.75" / -1.11"	45 th driest 129 year record	17.2" / +0.4"	30 th snowiest 129 year record	37.6° / +4.0°	10 th warmest 127 year record
Timber Lake	1.68" / -1.22"	Tied 43 rd driest 102 year record	21.4" / +5.6"	14 th snowiest 102 year record	34.7° / +4.3°	Tied 7 th warmest 102 year record

Averages based on 1981-2020 values

How has the snow season (since October 1st) stacked up so far? Very warm! Most locations were the top 10 warmest during that time period, with Aberdeen and Mobridge cracking the top 5 warmest.

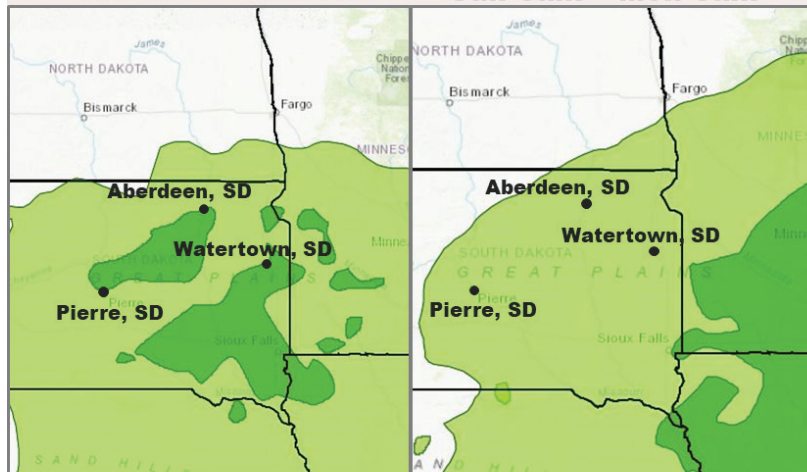
Some Snow Possible This Weekend?

Potential for Moderate to Heavy Snowfall



Sat 6am – Sun 6am

Sun 6am – Mon 6am



Updated: 1/18/2021 3:55 AM Central



What We Know

Currently, a low pressure system could spread some snow across central and northeast South Dakota and western Minnesota this weekend.

What We Don't Know

System strength, speed and track are yet to be determined.

What You Can Do

Travel impacts are possible this weekend. Continue to monitor the latest reliable-source forecast.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 29 of 81

Today in Weather History

January 18, 1979: An area of low pressure moving across the region brought widespread heavy snow of 5 to 10 inches to much of Minnesota from the 18th through the 20th. Travel was difficult if not impossible in many areas where there were near blizzard conditions. Schools and businesses closed along with many flights canceled.

January 18, 1999: One to 4 inches of snowfall combined with winds of 30 to 45 miles an hour brought blizzard conditions to part of northeast South Dakota. Highway 12 and Interstate 29 were most affected by the low visibilities. There was a seven-car pileup on Highway 12 near Andover with minor injuries. As a result, traffic was shut off in the westbound lanes for a few hours. Over 200 people were stranded overnight at a restaurant near Summit. There was also a rollover north of Summit which resulted in minor injuries. One traveler said the visibility was frequently near zero.

January 18, 2014: A strong Alberta Clipper low-pressure system moved over the Northern Plains Friday night and Saturday morning. Anywhere from a trace to just near 3 inches of fresh snowfall accompanied this low-pressure system. Over this area, strong northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph developed by late Friday night with gusts of 45 to 55 mph. A few areas even experienced gusts to 58 mph or higher again. This system packed such a wallop that a couple of instances of thundersnow occurred as evidenced by the cloud to ground lightning strikes showing up in southwestern Day County and northwestern Clark County early Saturday morning.

Numerous reports of visibility reduced to one-quarter mile or less across northeast South Dakota, specifically on or just to the east of the Glacial Lakes region, were received.

1943: Idaho's coldest night on record occurred as the low temperature dropped to 60 degrees below zero at Island Park Dam.

1950: Oregon continued in the grips of one of its worst winter months ever. A significant winter storm brought a thick glaze of ice to Columbia River Gorge, stopping automobile traffic in its tracks. Hundreds of motorists were stranded and had to be rescued by train. Even that was difficult with the coating of ice. The storm caused widespread power outages.

1971: A warm Santa Ana condition brought a 95 degree reading to Los Angeles, the highest January temperature on record. It was 95 degrees in Palm Springs, the highest temperature on record for January as well.

1973: The first tornado death of the year has been registered north of Core, Louisiana during the afternoon hours. Although a girl was killed when a tenant farm was destroyed, a baby received only minor injuries when it was carried 300 to 400 yards by the tornado.

1980: A tropical depression that developed on January 15th became Tropical Storm Hyacinthe on the 18th. From the 18th through the 27th this storm produced a world record rainfall amount of 223.5 inches at Cratère Commerson, on the island of La Réunion.

1857 - A great cold storm swept across the Atlantic Seaboard. Snowfall totals of 12 inches were common, whole gales caused shipwrecks and damage property on islands, and temperatures near zero prevailed from Virginia northward. Great drifts of snow blocked transportation. Richmond VA was cut off from Washington DC for a week. (David Ludlum)

1973 - A baby was carried 300 to 400 yards by the strong winds of a tornado at Core LA, yet received only minor injuries. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A storm in the south central U.S. blanketed Oklahoma City with eight inches of snow, their highest total since 1948. Snowfall totals in Oklahoma ranged up to 13 inches at Gage, with drifts five feet high. Roof collapses across the state resulted in seven million dollars damage. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A storm in the southwestern U.S. produced a 15 to 20 foot surf along the southern coast of California resulting in more than fifty million dollars damage. A small tornado in Orange County CA lifted a baseball dugout fifteen feet into the air and deposited it in the street, 150 yards away. The same storm also produced 26 inches of snow at Duck Creek UT. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 31 of 81



THE GREATNESS OF GOD

Martin Luther once wrote to a friend, "Your thoughts of God are too human!" That certainly was not true of David.

David saw the greatness of God and the glory of His creation: "O Lord, our Lord the majesty of Your name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens!" Perhaps he was thinking about the time when there was nothing and no one but God. Perhaps he was allowing his mind to wander and entertain the idea that God chose to make Himself known to man. It may have been that David was "awe-struck" to think of the possibility that he could actually communicate with God or get His attention by calling on Him.

And he continues His thoughts about the greatness of God when he writes of His "majesty and glory" – the power that He has over the heavens, the earth, and all that is in and on the planet. Nothing, thought David, is beyond Him.

Notice two very important things: David begins with "O Lord" – describing his personal relationship with God. He knew that by "speaking" His name he would get God's attention. How impressive is that! This powerful God is present with him at that moment and is personally concerned about him and will respond to him if he calls upon him. And this is just the beginning.

Notice that "O Lord" is followed by "Our Lord" which includes all of us. God, speaking through David, wants us to know that He, this "majestic" God, is always thinking about us, watching over us, concerned about us, and willing, waiting, wanting, and able to save and help us.

Prayer: O Lord, Our Lord, how humbling it is to know that You, our Creator, are also our Redeemer, our Comforter, our Companion, and our Source of life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. Psalm 8:1

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls man with COVID-19 awaits double lung transplant

By STEPHEN PEREZ Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man who battled COVID-19 for nearly two months needs a double lung transplant to save his life.

Nathan Foote, 42, is running out of time after an October diagnosis for COVID-19 hospitalized him and left his lung tissue scarred, according to his wife of 14 years, Angie Foote.

Nathan Foote didn't discover he had COVID-19 until he was tested for it before a routine dentist appointment

"He was tested for COVID because you have to be in order to see (our) dentist," Angie said. "He had no symptoms, nothing whatsoever. About three days later is when his symptoms started, and on Oct. 30 we had to take him to hospital due to a drop in his oxygen level."

After being hospitalized, Nathan contracted pneumonia. He recovered after a few weeks, but his lungs were severely damaged by scarring.

"Eighty percent of his lungs were scarred and 20 percent were healthy lungs," Angie Foote said.

The doctors informed the couple they had two options: Nathan would need to get on a lung transplant list or go into hospice and remain there until he dies, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

"For me it was no doubt I had to take the option of the transplant," Nathan said from his hospital room at Sanford. "I wasn't going to give up and just let myself die. I had to give myself that chance, my wife that chance, my kids that chance."

The father of five remains optimistic that if he were to get on the transplant list, his situation would put him toward the top of the eligible donor recipients, but a lot of factors could stand in the way.

The first obstacle for Nathan is getting on the transplant list, and due to COVID-19, that list is long. Once he is on the list, an eligible donor match needs to come from someone who dies.

"As morbid as it is for someone to receive lungs, someone has to pass away to give you those lungs," Angie said.

Angie and Nathan have prepared themselves and their kids for the worst in the event he can't receive a transplant.

After 70 days of Nathan not being able to see his children, Sanford Health approved time for each of his kids to have one-on-one time with him. He took that as an opportunity to cherish possibly one last moment with his five kids.

"I needed that time with them," he said. "Not a lot of people get to have that time with loved ones, and it is hard and emotional, but that's the situation we face."

Throughout his battle, Nathan and Angie have documented his journey on social media to show people how dangerous this virus could be. Nathan believes it holds weight coming from him, since he didn't believe COVID-19 was that dangerous to someone like him who was in good health before the positive test.

He wants people to take a look at his journey and grow aware of what they are facing and that it could happen to anybody.

A GoFundMe page has also been set up behalf of Nathan and his family to help cover expenses from medical bills. It had raised more than \$9,200 as of Jan. 8.

"No one is invincible," he said. "You don't want to go through this. Trust me."

South Dakota confirms 23 new deaths due to the coronavirus

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Sunday confirmed 23 deaths in the last day due to complications from the coronavirus.

The update lifted the total number of fatalities to 168 in January and 1,656 since the start of the pandemic. The death toll is the 40th highest in the country overall and the fifth highest per capita at about

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 33 of 81

185 deaths per 100,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers.

Six of the deaths reported Sunday were from Pennington County, in western South Dakota. There were three deaths confirmed in both Minnehaha and Brown counties and two in Lawrence County.

The state reported 266 positive tests since Saturday, for a total of 94,557 confirmed cases statewide. South Dakota ranks 39th in the country for new cases per capita over the last two weeks. One in every 371 people in South Dakota tested positive in the past week, researchers said.

Health officials say the state had administered 56,625 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to 46,79 people as of Sunday.

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

Italian PM Conte seeks to save his government from falling

By COLLEEN BARRY and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte on Monday acknowledged errors in fighting the unprecedented pandemic, but in a speech aimed at preserving his second mandate, he told lawmakers his government can “hold its head high.”

Conte was fighting for his political life after he lost his coalition majority with the defection of Cabinet ministers belonging to former Premier Matteo Renzi’s tiny but key Italia Viva (Italy Alive) party. Renzi has faced harsh criticism for the power play during a pandemic. But with billions of European Union pandemic funds expected to flow into the country, he has defended the move as necessary to prevent Conte from amassing too much power.

“Did we always take the best decisions? Everyone can make their evaluations,” Conte told the lower house. “For my part, I can say the government worked with the utmost care and attention for the delicate balances, including constitutional ones,” aware of the heavy implications for ordinary Italians.

“If I can speak in the name of the whole government, with head high, it is not out of the arrogance of someone who believes not to have made errors,” Conte said. “It is out of awareness of how the whole government put all of its physical and mental energy into best protecting the nation.”

He expressed perplexity at the political crisis for which he saw “no plausible basis” at a moment when “the pandemic is still in full course.”

Conte addressed the lower house on Monday, to be followed by the Senate on Tuesday. Each speech will be followed by a voice vote that is tantamount to a confidence vote. The Senate vote, where Renzi’s party has 18 members, is expected to be decisive.

As Conte wrapped up his nearly hour-long discussion, some lawmakers held up: “Conte Resign” signs. He got a standing ovation from much of the rest of the house, however.

Conte, a lawyer by training hailed for his mediation skills, was tapped by Italy’s 5-Star Movement to run the government after the indecisive 2018 election led to a governing coalition of the 5-Stars with a right-wing group led by League party leader Matteo Salvini.

That government fell when Salvini, then interior minister, mounted a failed power grab. Conte was able to form a new government with the support of the left-wing Democratic Party, which then included Renzi. Renzi later defected from the party he once ran, giving himself the ability to shake up the government by yanking loyal ministers.

While Conte enjoyed broad support during the first phase of the pandemic, which overwhelmed Italy first in the West after emerging in China, he has come under criticism for making decisions and policy without consulting Parliament. Renzi acted after Conte unveiled a plan to manage the EU recovery funds himself, which was widely seen as accumulating too much power.

Barry reported from Milan.

What Biden can and can't get from an evenly divided Senate

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — So what does a 50-50 Senate get President-elect Joe Biden?

Washington has barely had time to process the implications of Democratic control after two Georgia runoff elections that are delivering the Senate to Democrats. Hours after the races were decided, a mob of zealots ransacked the U.S. Capitol and reshaped the national and political landscape.

The unexpected new balance of power giving Democrats only the barest control of Congress has big consequences for the president-elect — easy confirmation of his Cabinet most importantly — but the road ahead for his ambitious legislative agenda remains complicated and murky.

Republicans remain poised to block most of Biden's proposals, just as they thwarted much of President Barack Obama's efforts on Capitol Hill. But 50/50 control permits action on special legislation that can't be filibustered, and momentum for the popular parts of COVID-19 relief could easily propel an early aid bill into law.

What 50-50 really gets — and doesn't get — Biden as he takes office:

WHAT BIDEN DOES GET NOMINATIONS

With Democrats chairing committees in the Senate and only needing a majority to win floor votes on nominations, Biden is now assured of sealing confirmation of his Cabinet and judicial picks — including potentially for the Supreme Court. It also means controversial choices such as Neera Tanden, Biden's pick for budget director, can look ahead to assuming their posts. Republicans can slow but not stop nominations.

BUDGET 'RECONCILIATION'

Democrats also have the opportunity to pass special budget-related legislation by a simple majority, an often-arcane process that enabled Obama to finish his 2010 health care bill and gave President Donald Trump's GOP allies a failed chance to repeal "Obamacare" and passage of a tax overhaul bill. Biden could use this so-called budget reconciliation process to pass more controversial elements of COVID-19 relief with only Democratic votes, repeal some of Trump's tax cuts or make federal health care programs more generous, for example.

SETTING THE AGENDA

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer — he'll be majority leader once the two new Georgia senators and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are all sworn into office — now has the opportunity to bring legislation to the floor and force votes. That could permit passage of \$2,000 direct COVID-19 relief payments and other aid, for instance, and could mean debates on issues like police reform, immigration and climate change. But passage of such legislation would require support from Republicans, which gives the minority party enormous leverage.

WHAT BIDEN DOESN'T GET ELIMINATION OF THE FILIBUSTER

Before the November election, pressure had been mounting from the Democratic left to eliminate the filibuster, leading Republicans to charge that Democrats would pack the Supreme Court or give statehood to Democratic strongholds such as the District of Columbia. Moderate Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia says he'll block any attempt to eliminate the filibuster, so party progressives may be wasting their breath on this topic now.

BIPARTISANSHIP

Unified control of the government by one party almost invariably drives the two sides apart. Recent events — hard-won passage of a \$900 billion COVID-19 relief bill and a sweeping override of Trump's veto of the annual defense bill — have been evidence that the vanishing congressional middle can help drive outcomes on Capitol Hill. But issues like increasing the debt limit instantly become partisan, and the political incentives for many Republicans heading into the 2022 midterms and the 2024 presidential election

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 35 of 81

are to vilify Biden and Democrats controlling Congress. Expect a short honeymoon for Biden.

PROGRESSIVE MESSAGING PRIORITIES

A 50-50 Democratic Senate and bare control of the House grant virtually any individual Democrat the ability to gum up the works. That means impossible-to-pass ideas like "Medicare for All" and a Green New Deal aren't going to be the focus of Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. That could, over time, frustrate liberals and cause them to issue demands related to bills that actually can pass like infrastructure spending and budget reconciliation proposals.

The Latest: WHO: 'Not right' to vaccinate young before old

By The Associated Press undefined

GENEVA —The head of the World Health Organization says it's "not right" that younger, healthier adults in rich countries get vaccinated against COVID-19 before older people in poorer countries.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus kicked off WHO's week-long executive board meeting -- virtually from its headquarters in Geneva -- on Monday by lamenting that only 25 vaccine doses have been provided in a single poor country, while over 39 million doses have been administered in nearly 50 richer nations.

"Just 25 doses have been given in one lowest income country -- not 25 million, not 25,000 -- just 25. I need to be blunt," Tedros said. He did not specify the country.

Tedros, an Ethiopian who goes by his first name, nonetheless hailed the scientific achievement behind rolling out vaccines less than a year after the pandemic erupted in China, where a WHO-backed team has now been deployed to look into origins of the coronavirus.

"Vaccines are the shot in the arm we all need, literally and figuratively," he said. "But we now face the real danger that even as vaccines bring hope to some, they become another brick in the wall of inequality between the worlds of the world's haves and have-nots."

In some of his toughest public words yet against vaccine makers, Tedros again criticized "bilateral deals" between drug companies and countries that hurt the ability of the WHO-backed COVAX program that aims to get vaccines to all countries based on need.

"Most manufacturers have prioritized regulatory approval in rich countries, where the profits are highest, rather than submitting" data to WHO, he said, so it can approve vaccines for wider use.

THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

— Japan's prime minister vows to hold the already postponed Olympics this summer as proof of victory over virus

— Israel trades Pfizer vast troves of medical data for the continued flow of its hard-to-get vaccine

— Brazil approves two coronavirus vaccines, ones by Sinovac and Oxford-AstraZeneca

— China's economy grows in 2020 as it rebounds from virus, likely only major economy to expand

— Britain vows to give all adults 1st shot of the virus by September

— Tennis players find ways to keep fit even during hotel room quarantines in Australia

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

PARIS — France on Monday began a campaign to inoculate people over 75 against coronavirus, as its death toll rose past 70,000 over the weekend.

There is increasing concern that delays in delivering the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine might hinder the drive to vaccinate in France and beyond. French authorities have already been criticized for the country's slow pace in delivering shots, especially compared to Britain, Germany and Italy.

French health authorities have been worried over polls showing that the majority of French people are wary of vaccines against COVID 19, so they may have been surprised by the number of people who have

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 36 of 81

signed for shots, reserved for those 75 and older or with a high health risk.

The health agency reported that more than 500,000 appointments scheduled for the first of two shots until Feb.14 have overwhelmed its system. An internet site set up as one other way to make vaccine appointments was receiving up to 20,000 connections a minute, the agency said.

BRUSSELS — The new variant of COVID-19 first detected in Britain is now starting to gain a foothold in Belgium, officials say, with cases reported several northern schools on top of an outbreak in a nursing home. "The variant has settled into our country," pre-eminent virologist Marc Van Ranst told HLN network. "Like in other nations, it is getting traction."

The town of Houthulst in northwestern Belgium shot up to the top of the country's infection rate with 1,207 cases per 100,000 over the past 14 days after a spike in cases at a nursing home this year left over 100 people infected. Tests showed the new variant was to blame.

In the Antwerp area, two schools reported cases over the weekend and closed Monday for a week due to the new variant. Authorities said students, teachers and their families should all quarantine for ten days.

Belgium has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, seeing 20,435 confirmed deaths.

LONDON — Britain is to expand the rollout of its coronavirus vaccine program by offering jabs to those over the age of 70 in areas where those deemed to be the most vulnerable have already received their first dose.

More than 3.8 million people across the U.K. — more than 5% of the population — have already received their first dose of vaccine.

The early phase of the vaccination program has been focused on the most vulnerable groups — those over the age of 80, residents in nursing homes and their carers, and staff in hospitals.

Britain is also opening another 10 mass vaccination centers this week. And a pilot program to provide 24-hour vaccinations will commence in London hospitals by the end of January.

Britain's vaccines minister, Nadhim Zahawi, said the normal daytime slots work "much more conveniently" for those over the age of 80 but that nighttime appointments may be handier for those in lower age groups.

Britain, which has Europe's highest virus-related death toll at nearly 90,000, is aiming to have offered a first dose of vaccine to the four groups deemed most vulnerable to COVID-19 by mid-February.

BERLIN — Frankfurt airport, Germany's busiest and one of Europe's main hubs, saw passenger numbers drop to their lowest level in over three decades last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Operator Fraport said Monday that the airport handled some 18.8 million passengers in 2020, 73.4% fewer than the previous year. Fraport CEO Stefan Schulte said that "passenger volumes dropped to a level last seen in 1984."

But he said cargo traffic reached almost at the same level as in 2019, despite the loss of capacity in passenger planes' holds.

Schulte said that Fraport expects passenger traffic to "rebound noticeably" in this year's second half as vaccinations lead to the lifting of travel restrictions. But he said it will still be a "difficult year" and passenger numbers in Frankfurt in 2021 are expected to reach only 35 to 45% of the 2019 level.

BERLIN — Germany's health minister says the country will step up its monitoring of coronavirus variants amid concern that some mutant version could spread faster or cause more serious illness.

Jens Spahn told reporters in Berlin on Monday that he is ordering laboratories to sequence the genome of 5% of positive samples, or up to 10% if case numbers fall.

Spahn noted that Britain, where one apparently more contagious variant was first detected last year, has a very strong surveillance network.

German officials have expressed worry about the sharp rise in cases seen in Britain and Ireland in recent weeks.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 37 of 81

Germany's disease control agency said there 7,141 newly confirmed cases and 214 deaths in the country over the past day, though numbers reported over the weekend are often incomplete.

BEIJING — A Chinese province grappling with a spike in coronavirus cases is reinstating tight restrictions on weddings, funerals and other family gatherings, threatening violators with criminal charges.

The notice from the high court in Hebei province did not give specifics, but said all types of social gatherings were now being regulated to prevent further spread of the virus.

Hebei has had one of China's most serious outbreaks in months and it comes amid measures to curb the further spread during February's Lunar New Year holiday.

Authorities have called on citizens not to travel, ordered schools closed a week early and conducted testing on a massive scale.

Hebei recorded another 54 cases over the previous 24 hours, the National Health Commission said on Monday, while the northern province of Jilin reported 30 cases and Heilongjiang further north reported seven.

Beijing had two new cases and most buildings and housing compounds now require proof of a negative coronavirus test for entry.

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel's Foreign Ministry says the United Arab Emirates has decided to suspend visa exemptions for Israelis amid surging numbers of coronavirus cases.

The measure will make it harder for Israelis to fly to the UAE, where they have traveled in droves recently. The two countries established ties last year and until recently the UAE was one of the few countries Israelis could travel to without having to self-quarantine for two weeks.

But both countries have seen their coronavirus infections spike in recent weeks, prompting the change in travel requirements.

Dubai has remained open to foreign tourists who came in the tens of thousands to celebrate holidays and New Year's in the United Arab Emirates, sending coronavirus cases surging to new heights. The UAE has shattered its daily infection record for six consecutive days over the past week.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said Monday that following the change, entry visas to each country will be required for traveling Emiratis and Israelis until July.

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistan has started reopening schools in phases after about two months of closure despite a steady increase in infections and fatalities from the coronavirus.

Wearing masks, children entered schools on Monday with smiles on their faces, as teachers welcomed them back to their classes.

To lower the spread of the virus, students are being kept at a distance from each other in classrooms.

Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood wished good luck to students who return to their classes.

Pakistan has reported 10,997 deaths from the coronavirus among 521,211 cases since February, when the first case was detected in the country.

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel says it has recorded more than 4,000 coronavirus deaths since the pandemic began as it continues to battle a spiraling outbreak.

The Health Ministry said Monday that 4,005 people have died since the beginning of the pandemic. The grim milestone comes as Israel is in its third nationwide lockdown, with schools, shops, malls and other non-essential businesses closed until at least the end of this week. Daily case numbers have continued to rise despite the lockdown, which was tightened last week and could be extended.

The lockdown comes as Israel has unleashed a rapid vaccination campaign, with some 2 million people, or more than one in five Israelis, already having received the first dose of the vaccine.

The country has identified more than 550,000 total virus cases.

MANILA, Philippines — Coronavirus infections in the Philippines have surged past 500,000 in a new bleak

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 38 of 81

milestone, with the government facing criticism for failing to immediately launch a vaccination program amid a global scramble for COVID-19 vaccines.

The Department of Health reported 1,895 new infections Sunday, bringing confirmed coronavirus cases in the country to 500,577, the second highest in Southeast Asia.

The Philippines has been negotiating with seven Western and Chinese companies to secure vaccines but the effort has been fraught with uncertainties and confusion.

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia — Slovakia is launching a project to test almost all citizens for the coronavirus in nine days.

The government hopes the nationwide testing will speed up a recovery from the latest wave of the infections, make it possible for students to return to school in February, help the health system and ease restrictions that harm the economy.

The nationwide testing is set to start Monday and will be completed on Jan. 26. It's not mandatory, but all people who want to go to work will need to have a negative test for the coronavirus beginning Jan. 27.

Slovakia entered a tough lockdown before Christmas that includes a round-the-clock curfew.

The exceptions include necessary trips to work, to do business or see doctors. People are also allowed to do necessary shopping in the stores that are the closest to their homes.

Close to 3,500 people have died of the virus in the country of 5.4 million.

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil's health regulator on Sunday approved the urgent use of coronavirus vaccines made by Sinovac and AstraZeneca, enabling Latin America's largest nation to begin an immunization program that's been subject to months of delay and political disputes.

Brazil currently has 6 million doses of Sinovac's CoronaVac vaccine ready to distribute in the next few days, and is awaiting the arrival of another 2 million doses of the vaccine made by AstraZeneca and partner Oxford University.

On Saturday night, the health regulator Anvisa rejected an application for use of a Russian vaccine called Sputnik V, submitted by Brazilian company União Química. Anvisa said it didn't evaluate the application because it didn't meet minimum requirements to start an analysis.

Vaccination in Brazil is beginning later than neighbors such as Argentina and Chile despite a robust public health system and decades of experience with immunization campaigns. The process to present and approve the COVID-19 vaccines was fraught with conflict, as allies of President Jair Bolsonaro sought to cast doubt on the efficacy of the Sinovac shot backed by his political rival, Sao Paulo state's Gov. João Doria.

WASHINGTON — Incoming White House chief of staff Ron Klain says the coronavirus pandemic will get worse before it gets better, projecting another 100,000 deaths from COVID-19 in the first five weeks of President-elect Joe Biden's administration.

Speaking to CNN's "State of the Union," Klain said Biden was inheriting a dire situation, saying even with vaccines, "It's going to take a while to turn this around."

Biden has set a goal of injecting 100 million doses of coronavirus vaccine in his first 100 days in office, a goal Klain said they were on pace to meet.

Klain added he believed there was enough supply of the pair of vaccines currently granted emergency approval to ensure that those who have received their first shot will get the required second.

Harris prepares for central role in Biden's White House

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris will make history on Wednesday when she becomes the nation's first female vice president — and the first Black woman and the first woman of South Asian descent to hold that office. But that's only where her boundary-breaking role begins.

With the confluence of crises confronting Joe Biden's administration — and an evenly divided Senate in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 39 of 81

which she would deliver the tie-breaking vote — Harris is shaping up to be a central player in addressing everything from the coronavirus pandemic to criminal justice reform.

Symone Sanders, Harris' chief spokeswoman, said that while the vice president-elect's portfolio hasn't been fully defined yet, she has a hand in all aspects of Biden's agenda.

"There are pieces that Biden may specifically ask her to champion, but outside of that she is at the table for everything, involved in everything, and giving input and feedback and being a supportive partner to him on all pieces," she said.

People working closely with Harris on the transition resist the idea of siloing her into any specific issue early on, because the sheer number of challenges the Biden administration faces means it will be "all hands on deck" during their early months. They say she'll be involved in all four of the major priorities they've set out: turning around the economy, tackling COVID-19, and addressing climate change and racial justice.

"She has a voice in all of those. She has an opinion in all those areas. And it will probably get to a point where she is concentrating on some of the areas more specifically," Sanders said. "But right now, I think what we're faced with in this country is so big, it's all hands on deck."

Harris has been closely involved with all of Biden's biggest decisions since winning the election in November, joining him for every one of his key meetings focused on Cabinet picks, the COVID-19 relief bill, security issues and more. The two talk over the phone nearly every day, and she travels to Delaware sometimes multiple times a week for transition events and meetings.

Those involved in the transition say both have taken seriously Biden's insistence that he wants Harris to be the "last voice in the room" on key decisions. Biden is known to turn to Harris first during meetings to ask for her opinion or perspective on the matter at hand.

Biden and Harris knew each other prior to the 2020 presidential campaign in part through Harris' friendship with Biden's deceased son, Beau. But they never worked closely together.

Since joining the ticket, and particularly since the election, Harris has made efforts to deepen their relationship and is in frequent contact with the president-elect, people close to Harris say. That personal relationship, according to presidential historian Joel Goldstein, will be key to their success as working partners.

"The relationship of the vice president to the president is the most important relationship. Establishing mutual understanding and trust is really a key to a successful vice presidency," Goldstein said.

Goldstein pointed to Biden and President Barack Obama's relationship as a potential model for the incoming team.

Biden and Obama were from similarly different backgrounds and generations and also entered the White House with a relatively fresh working relationship. But their relationship and mutual understanding grew throughout the presidency, and Obama trusted Biden with some of his administration's biggest endeavors, like the implementation of the 2009 Recovery Act and the troop withdrawal from Iraq.

Harris is said to be looking at Biden's vice presidency as a guide for her own.

But unlike Biden during his first term, Harris will face constant questions about her political future. While Biden has skirted questions about whether he plans to run for reelection, at 78 he'll be the oldest president in history, leaving questions about whether he'll retire at the end of his term. That would make Harris the immediate frontrunner in any 2024 Democratic presidential primary.

Early in the vice presidential vetting process, her potential presidential ambitions gave some Biden allies pause. But since her selection, Harris has proven a loyal partner to Biden, rarely if ever contradicting him publicly.

Still, California Rep. Barbara Lee, who was the first Congressional Black Caucus member to endorse in the primary when she backed Harris, said the vice president-elect isn't afraid to speak her mind.

"She's no shrinking violet," Lee said. "If she believes that one decision should be made versus another she's gonna weigh in and give her thoughts and opinions."

Biden has a personal affection for the work of diplomacy and deep relationships with global leaders that Harris can't match. But aides say she'll be deeply involved in the administration's diplomatic priorities simply because of the sheer amount of issues that will take up Biden's time. She may also be given a particular aspect of the administration's coronavirus response to oversee.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 40 of 81

One of her main priorities early on is certain to be the passage of the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill that Biden announced Thursday. Those working with Harris on the transition say that while Biden will be intimately involved with ushering the package through the Senate because of his longstanding relationships with longer-serving lawmakers, Harris knows the newer members and can help build fresh relationships in Congress.

The first few months of the Biden administration will be focused on COVID-19 and the economy. But Harris is certain to face scrutiny — and pressure — from advocates to ensure the perspectives of Black and brown Americans are reflected in those policies and the Biden White House's priorities.

Leah Daughtry, a former chief of staff at the Democratic National Committee, said Harris will make a difference simply by being in the room.

"The fact that Kamala Harris is a Black woman, is a woman of Indian ancestry, is a woman, automatically makes her different from every other vice president this country has ever seen," she said. "That combination of experiences brings a set of values and lived experiences into a room where they have not previously existed. And that can only be good for this American democracy."

But as South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn put it, "There will be a lot of weight on those shoulders."

"Those of us who come to these positions, we come to them knowing full well that we have a burden to make sure that we do it in such a way, that there will be people coming behind us," he said.

Clyburn also acknowledged that Harris could also be a flashpoint for controversy among the portion of President Donald Trump's followers who are motivated by racial animus, which Clyburn said contributed to the deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol.

"They're still holding on to a lot of animus about Barack Obama, and they're gonna transfer it to her, just like they transferred it to others here in this building," Clyburn said. "And they're never gonna get beyond that."

But Harris' allies say as a child of civil rights activists, and a Black woman who's spent her life confronting and trying to address racism and inequality, navigating those pressures as vice president will come as second nature for her.

"Kamala Harris didn't just fall out of the Harvard Law School like Josh Hawley or Ted Cruz or somebody like that," said Bakari Sellers, referencing two Republican senators who objected to the congressional certification of Biden's win. (Hawley graduated from Yale Law School.)

Sellers, a former South Carolina state lawmaker and an early Harris endorser, likened her to other civil rights trailblazers.

"She comes from the same lineage as Fannie Lou Hamer and Shirley Chisholm and Ella Baker," he said. "I mean, she's built for this."

FBI vetting Guard troops in DC amid fears of insider attack

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. defense officials say they are worried about an insider attack or other threat from service members involved in securing President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, prompting the FBI to vet all of the 25,000 National Guard troops coming into Washington for the event.

The massive undertaking reflects the extraordinary security concerns that have gripped Washington following the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by pro-Trump rioters. And it underscores fears that some of the very people assigned to protect the city over the next several days could present a threat to the incoming president and other VIPs in attendance.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told The Associated Press on Sunday that officials are conscious of the potential threat, and he warned commanders to be on the lookout for any problems within their ranks as the inauguration approaches. So far, however, he and other leaders say they have seen no evidence of any threats, and officials said the vetting hadn't flagged any issues that they were aware of.

"We're continually going through the process, and taking second, third looks at every one of the indi-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 41 of 81

viduals assigned to this operation," McCarthy said in an interview after he and other military leaders went through an exhaustive, three-hour security drill in preparation for Wednesday's inauguration. He said Guard members are also getting training on how to identify potential insider threats.

About 25,000 members of the National Guard are streaming into Washington from across the country — at least two and a half times the number for previous inaugurations. And while the military routinely reviews service members for extremist connections, the FBI screening is in addition to any previous monitoring.

Multiple officials said the process began as the first Guard troops began deploying to D.C. more than a week ago. And they said it is slated to be complete by Wednesday. Several officials discussed military planning on condition of anonymity.

"The question is, is that all of them? Are there others?" said McCarthy. "We need to be conscious of it and we need to put all of the mechanisms in place to thoroughly vet these men and women who would support any operations like this."

In a situation like this one, FBI vetting would involve running peoples' names through databases and watchlists maintained by the bureau to see if anything alarming comes up. That could include involvement in prior investigations or terrorism-related concerns, said David Gomez, a former FBI national security supervisor in Seattle.

Insider threats have been a persistent law enforcement priority in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. But in most cases, the threats are from homegrown insurgents radicalized by al-Qaida, the Islamic State group or similar groups. In contrast, the threats against Biden's inauguration have been fueled by supporters of President Donald Trump, far-right militants, white supremacists and other radical groups. Many believe Trump's baseless accusations that the election was stolen from him, a claim that has been refuted by many courts, the Justice Department and Republican officials in key battleground states.

The insurrection at the Capitol began after Trump made incendiary remarks at the Jan. 6 rally. According to McCarthy, service members from across the military were at that rally, but it's not clear how many were there or who may have participated in the breach at the Capitol. So far only a couple of current active-duty or National Guard members have been arrested in connection with the Capitol assault, which left five people dead. The dead included a Capitol Police officer and a woman shot by police as she climbed through a window in a door near the House chamber.

Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, has been meeting with Guard troops as they arrive in D.C. and as they gather downtown. He said he believes there are good processes in place to identify any potential threats.

"If there's any indication that any of our soldiers or airmen are expressing things that are extremist views, it's either handed over to law enforcement or dealt with the chain of command immediately," he said.

The insider threat, however, was just one of the security concerns voiced by officials on Sunday, as dozens of military, National Guard, law enforcement and Washington, D.C., officials and commanders went through a security rehearsal in northern Virginia. As many as three dozen leaders lined tables that ringed a massive color-coded map of D.C. reflected onto the floor. Behind them were dozens more National Guard officers and staff, with their eyes trained on additional maps and charts displayed on the wall.

The Secret Service is in charge of event security, but there is a wide variety of military and law enforcement personnel involved, ranging from the National Guard and the FBI to Washington's Metropolitan Police Department, U.S. Capitol Police and U.S. Park Police.

Commanders went over every aspect of the city's complicated security lockdown, with McCarthy and others peppering them with questions about how the troops will respond in any scenario and how well they can communicate with the other enforcement agencies scattered around the city.

Hokanson said he believes his troops have been adequately equipped and prepared, and that they are rehearsing as much as they can to be prepared for any contingency.

The major security concern is an attack by armed groups of individuals, as well as planted explosives and other devices. McCarthy said intelligence reports suggest that groups are organizing armed rallies leading up to Inauguration Day, and possibly after that.

The bulk of the Guard members will be armed. And McCarthy said units are going through repeated

drills to practice when and how to use force and how to work quickly with law enforcement partners. Law enforcement officers would make any arrests.

He said Guard units are going through "constant mental repetitions of looking at the map and talking through scenarios with leaders so they understand their task and purpose, they know their routes, they know where they're friendly, adjacent units are, they have the appropriate frequencies to communicate with their law enforcement partners."

The key goal, he said, is for America's transfer of power to happen without incident.

"This is a national priority. We have to be successful as an institution," said McCarthy. "We want to send the message to everyone in the United States and for the rest of the world that we can do this safely and peacefully."

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Lockdown: Tennis players getting on with life in Australia

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

With no way out, tennis players in lockdown are figuring out ways to keep themselves fit within the confines of their Melbourne hotel rooms as they prepare for the Australian Open.

Angelique Kerber, who won the Australian Open in 2016, spent her birthday in quarantine on Monday. At times in the past, she's spent the day playing or preparing for matches in the later stages of the tournament.

This year, with the season-opening Grand Slam event not starting until Feb. 8 because of travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, she had to settle for a message posted on social media by Australian Open organizers to mark the occasion.

Kerber is among the 72 players doing hard quarantine for 14 days after a five positive coronavirus tests were returned from charter flights that brought almost 1,200 players, coaches, officials and media to Melbourne for what has previously been dubbed the Happy Slam.

That means those players won't be allowed to leave their hotel rooms or practice for 14 days, creating a two-speed preparation period for the tournament. Others in less rigorous quarantine will be allowed to practice for five hours daily.

Those outdoor sessions started Monday in Melbourne. A smaller group of players who landed in the South Australia capital of Adelaide, including Serena Williams, Naomi Osaka, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal, are also allowed outside to practice under bio-secure protocols.

Players such as Yulia Putintseva and Belinda Bencic initially complained in social media posts about being ill informed of the quarantine rules but have found ways to practice indoors by hitting balls against walls and windows and setting up other unique sessions.

Some players have expressed anger at being classified as close contacts merely for being on board charter flights with people who later tested positive. But local government, tennis and health authorities have said all players were warned of the risks well in advance.

"There's been a bit of chatter from a number of players about the rules. Well, the rules apply to them as they apply to everybody else, and they were all briefed on that before they came and that was a condition on which they came," Victoria state premier Daniel Andrews said Monday. "There's no special treatment here ... because the virus doesn't treat you specially, so neither do we."

Responding to unconfirmed reports that Djokovic, an eight-time Australian Open champion, had proposed a list of ideas to change the quarantine conditions for players, Andrews said: "People are free to provide lists of demands, but the answer is no."

Australia's international borders are mostly closed, although there are exemptions in special circumstances. All arrivals must do mandatory quarantine. Each of Australia's states and territories has its own border and travel restrictions, and those can change on very short notice.

Victoria state, which has Melbourne as its capital, accounted for 810 of Australia's 909 deaths from COVID-19, most of those during a deadly second wave three months ago which resulted in curfews and

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 43 of 81

lockdowns for the city.

So there's been some debate locally about whether it's right to stage a Grand Slam tournament bringing in people from parts of the world where the coronavirus is still taking a big toll.

With that in mind, Australian health and government officials aren't taking any chances.

So far, three people from a Los Angeles to Melbourne flight have tested positive since landing in Australia and have been transferred to a medi-hotel, along with Sylvain Bruneau, the coach of 2019 U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu, who flew in from Abu Dhabi, and another person who traveled from Doha, Qatar. All passengers on those three flights — including a total of 72 players — are in enforced hard quarantine. So far, no players have returned positive tests since arriving in Melbourne or Adelaide.

Players have been warned that breaching the rules could result in fines or being moved to a more secure quarantine complex with police stationed at their doors.

Victoria state COVID-19 quarantine commissioner Emma Cassar said over the weekend there would be "zero tolerance" for people trying to breach the rules.

"This is designed to make people safe," said Cassar, who is also in charge of the state's prisons. "We make no apologies for that."

Being unable to leave their hotel rooms would mean the only workouts some players are able to have would be on exercise equipment left in the rooms.

Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley remains adamant the tournament will start Feb. 8, saying organizers would have to "manage an environment over the next 14 days for those who won't be able to practice."

"It's a tough situation," he said in a weekend television interview. "We've got to do whatever we can to make it as fair as possible for those players that are in lockdown."

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

Navalny's arrest adds to tension between Russia and the West

By GEIR MOULSON and DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's arrest as he arrived in Moscow after recovering from his poisoning with a nerve agent drew criticism from Western nations and calls for his release, with Germany's foreign minister on Monday calling it "incomprehensible."

Navalny was detained at passport control at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport after flying in Sunday evening from Berlin, where he was treated following the poisoning in August that he blames on the Kremlin.

Navalny's arrest adds another layer of tension to relations between Moscow and the West that have long been strained and were worsened by his poisoning.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas noted that Navalny had returned of his own volition and said "it is completely incomprehensible that he was detained by Russian authorities immediately after his arrival."

"Russia is bound by its own constitution and by international commitments to the principle of the rule of law and the protection of civil rights," Maas added. "These principles must of course also be applied to Alexei Navalny. He should be released immediately."

The politician's allies said Monday he was being held at a police precinct outside Moscow and has been refused access to his lawyer. According to Navalny's lawyers, in an unexpected turn of events, a court hearing into whether Navalny should remain in custody started on Monday at the precinct itself, and they were notified minutes before.

"It is impossible what is happening over here," Navalny said in video from the improvised court room, posted on his page in the messaging app Telegram. "It is lawlessness of the highest degree."

Calls for Navalny's immediate release have also come from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and top officials of other EU nations.

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's pick for national security adviser called on Russian authorities to free Navalny. "Mr. Navalny should be immediately released, and the perpetrators of the outrageous attack on

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 44 of 81

his life must be held accountable," Jake Sullivan tweeted.

The outgoing U.S. secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, said the U.S. "strongly condemns" the decision to arrest Navalny, which he called "the latest in a series of attempts to silence Navalny and other opposition figures and independent voices who are critical of Russian authorities."

Navalny's detention was widely expected because Russia's prisons service said he had violated parole terms from a suspended sentence on a 2014 embezzlement conviction.

The prisons service said it would seek to have Navalny serve his 3 1/2-year sentence behind bars.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Monday the stream of reactions to Navalny's arrest by Western officials reflects an attempt "to divert attention from the crisis of the Western model of development."

"Navalny's case has received a foreign policy dimension artificially and without any foundation," Lavrov said, arguing that his detention was a prerogative of Russian law enforcement agencies that explained their action. "It's a matter of observing the law," he added.

Navalny, 44, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent and determined foe, brushed off concerns about arrest as he boarded his flight in Berlin on Sunday.

"It's impossible. I'm an innocent man," he said.

Navalny fell into a coma while aboard a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20. He was transferred from a hospital in Siberia to a Berlin hospital two days later.

Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

Russian authorities insisted that the doctors who treated Navalny in Siberia before he was airlifted to Germany found no traces of poison. Russia refused to open a full-fledged criminal inquiry, citing a lack of evidence that Navalny was poisoned, and officials have challenged Germany to provide proof of the poisoning.

Last month, Navalny released the recording of a phone call he said he made to a man he alleged was a member of a group of officers of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, who purportedly poisoned him in August and then tried to cover it up. The FSB dismissed the recording as fake.

Navalny has been a thorn in the Kremlin's side for a decade, unusually durable in an opposition movement often demoralized by repression.

Moulson reported from Berlin.

China economy grows in 2020 as rebound from virus gains

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China eked out 2.3% economic growth in 2020, likely becoming the only major economy to expand as shops and factories reopened relatively early from a shutdown to fight the coronavirus while the United States, Japan and Europe struggled with rising infections.

Growth in the three months ending in December rose to 6.5% over a year earlier as consumers returned to shopping malls, restaurants and cinemas, official data showed Monday. That was up from the previous quarter's 4.9% and stronger than many forecasters expected.

In early 2020, activity contracted by 6.8% in the first quarter as the ruling Communist Party took the then-unprecedented step of shutting down most of its economy to fight the virus. The following quarter, China became the first major country to grow again with a 3.2% expansion after the party declared victory over the virus in March and allowed factories, shops and offices to reopen.

Restaurants are filling up while cinemas and retailers struggle to lure customers back. Crowds are thin at shopping malls, where guards check visitors for signs of the disease's tell-tale fever.

Domestic tourism is reviving, though authorities have urged the public to stay home during the Lunar New Year holiday in February, normally the busiest travel season, in response to a spate of new infections in some Chinese cities.

Exports have been boosted by demand for Chinese-made masks and other medical goods.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 45 of 81

The growing momentum "reflected improving private consumption expenditure as well as buoyant net exports," said Rajiv Biswas of IHS Markit in a report. He said China is likely to be the only major economy to grow in 2020 while developed countries and most major emerging markets were in recession.

The economy "recovered steadily" and "living standards were ensured forcefully," the National Bureau of Statistics said in a statement. It said the ruling party's development goals were "accomplished better than expectation" but gave no details.

2020 was China's weakest growth in decades and below 1990's 3.9% following the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement, which led to China's international isolation.

Despite growth for the year, "it is too early to conclude that this is a full recovery," said Iris Pang of ING in a report. "External demand has not yet fully recovered. This is a big hurdle."

Exporters and high-tech manufacturers face uncertainty about how President-elect Joseph Biden will handle conflicts with Beijing over trade, technology and security. His predecessor, Donald Trump, hurt exporters by hiking tariffs on Chinese goods and manufacturers including telecom equipment giant Huawei by imposing curbs on access to U.S. components and technology.

"We expect the newly elected U.S. government will continue most of the current policies on China, at least for the first quarter," Pang said.

The International Monetary Fund and private sector forecasters expect economic growth to rise further this year to above 8%.

China's quick recovery brought it closer to matching the United States in economic output.

Total activity in 2020 was 102 trillion yuan (\$15.6 trillion), according to the government. That is about 75% the size of the \$20.8 trillion forecast by the IMF for the U.S. economy, which is expected to shrink by 4.3% from 2019. The IMF estimates China will be about 90% of the size of the U.S. economy by 2025, though with more than four times as many people average income will be lower.

Exports rose 3.6% last year despite the tariff war with Washington. Exporters took market share from foreign competitors that still faced anti-virus restrictions.

Retail spending contracted by 3.9% over 2019 but gained 4.6% in December over a year earlier as demand revived. Consumer spending recovered to above the previous year's levels in the quarter ending in September.

Online sales of consumer goods rose 14.8% as millions of families who were ordered to stay home shifted to buying groceries and clothing on the internet.

Factory output rose 2.8% over 2019. Activity accelerated toward the end of the year. Production rose 7.3% in December.

Despite travel controls imposed for some areas after new cases flared this month most of the country is unaffected.

Still, the government's appeal to the public to avoid traditional Lunar New Year gatherings and travel might dent spending on tourism, gifts and restaurants.

Other activity might increase, however, if farms, factories and traders keep operating over the holiday, said Chaoping Zhu of JP Morgan Asset Management in a report.

"Unusually high growth rates in this quarter are likely to be seen," said Zhu.

National Bureau of Statistics (in Chinese): www.stats.gov.cn

SKorean court gives Samsung scion prison term over bribery

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Billionaire Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong was sent back to prison on Monday after a South Korean court handed him a two and a half-year sentence for his involvement in a 2016 corruption scandal that spurred massive protests and ousted South Korea's then-president.

In a much-anticipated retrial, the Seoul High Court found Lee guilty of bribing then-President Park Geun-hye and her close confidante to win government support for a 2015 merger between two Samsung

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 46 of 81

affiliates. The deal helped strengthen his control over the country's largest business group.

Lee's lawyers had portrayed him as a victim of presidential power abuse and described the 2015 deal as part of "normal business activity."

Wearing a mask and black suit and tie, Lee was taken into custody following the ruling. He didn't answer questions by reporters upon his arrival at the court.

Injae Lee, an attorney who leads Lee Jae-yong's defense team, expressed regret over the court's decision, saying that the "essence of the case is that a former president abused power to infringe upon the freedom and property rights of a private company."

He didn't specifically say whether there would be an appeal. Samsung didn't issue a statement over the ruling.

Lee Jae-yong helms the Samsung group in his capacity as vice chairman of Samsung Electronics, one of the world's largest makers of computer chips and smartphones.

In September last year, prosecutors separately indicted Lee on charges of stock price manipulation, breach of trust and auditing violations related to the 2015 merger.

It isn't immediately clear what his prison term would mean for Samsung. Samsung didn't show much signs of trouble during the previous time Lee spent in jail in 2017 and 2018, and prison terms have never really stopped South Korean corporate leaders from relaying their management decisions from behind bars.

Samsung is coming off a robust business year, with its dual strength in parts and finished products enabling it to benefit from the coronavirus pandemic and the prolonged trade war between United States and China.

Samsung's semiconductor business rebounded sharply after a sluggish 2019, driven by robust demand for PCs and servers as virus outbreaks forced millions of people to stay and work at home.

The Trump administration's sanctions against China's Huawei Technologies have meanwhile hindered one of Samsung's biggest rivals in smartphones, smartphone chips and telecommunications equipment.

Samsung Electronics said earlier this month that its operating profit for the last quarter likely rose by 26% from the same period a year earlier to 9 trillion won (\$8.1 billion). The company will release its finalized earnings later this month.

Lee, 52, was originally sentenced in 2017 to five years in prison for offering 8.6 billion won (\$7 million) in bribes to Park and her longtime friend Choi Soon-sil. But he was freed after 11 months in February 2018 after the Seoul High Court reduced his term to 2½ years and suspended his sentence, overturning key convictions and reducing the amount of his bribes.

The Supreme Court last week confirmed a 20-year prison sentence for Park, who was convicted of colluding with Choi to take millions of dollars in bribes and extortion money from some of the country's largest business groups, including Samsung, while she was in office from 2013 to 2016.

The ruling meant that Park, who also has a separate conviction for illegally meddling in her party's candidate nominations ahead of 2016 parliamentary elections, could potentially serve 22 years behind bars until 2039, when she would be 87.

Choi is serving an 18-year prison sentence.

In a news conference Monday, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said he has no immediate plans to grant presidential pardons to Park and another imprisoned former president, Lee Myung-bak, who's serving a 17-year term for corruption.

Conservative politicians and some members of Moon's liberal party have endorsed the idea of pardoning the former presidents for the sake of "national unity" as the country's deeply split electorate approaches presidential elections in March 2022.

Israel trades Pfizer doses for medical data in vaccine blitz

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — After sprinting ahead in the race to inoculate its population against the coronavirus, Israel has struck a deal with Pfizer, promising to share vast troves of medical data with the international

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 47 of 81

drug giant in exchange for the continued flow of its hard-to-get vaccine.

Proponents say the deal could allow Israel to become the first country to vaccinate most of its population, while providing valuable research that could help the rest of the world. But critics say the deal raises major ethical concerns, including possible privacy violations and a deepening of the global divide that enables wealthy countries to stockpile vaccines as poorer populations, including Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, have to wait longer to be inoculated.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who is stumping ahead of the country's March elections as Israel's vaccinator-in-chief — said earlier this month that he reached the deal with Pfizer's chief executive to speed up vaccine deliveries to Israel.

"Israel will be a global model state," he said. "Israel will share with Pfizer and with the entire world the statistical data that will help develop strategies for defeating the coronavirus."

Israeli Health Minister Yuli Edelstein told The Associated Press the government will turn over data to "see how it influences, first of all, the level of the disease in Israel, the possibility to open the economy, different aspects of social life, and whether there are any effects of the vaccination."

Pfizer's vaccine, developed with German partner BioNTech, has received emergency approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Union's regulatory agency and is believed to provide up to 95% protection against COVID-19. But much remains unknown, including its long-term protection and whether it can prevent transmission of the virus.

Israel, home to some 9.3 million people, is considered an ideal place for studying these questions. Its mandatory universal health care is provided by four publicly funded HMOs with meticulously digitized medical records. This centralized system has helped Israel administer more than 2 million doses of the vaccine in under a month. Israel has also purchased doses of the Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines.

The inoculation blitz is a matter of national pride. It also is at the center of Netanyahu's reelection campaign as he seeks to deflect attention from his ongoing corruption trial, Israel's deep economic crisis and the latest virus surge.

The Health Ministry has recorded over 551,000 cases since the beginning of the pandemic and more than 4,000 deaths. Israeli officials say they aim to have most of the country vaccinated by the end of March, just around election day.

But the exact quid pro quo between Israel and Pfizer is unclear, even after a redacted version of the agreement was released by the Israeli Health Ministry on Sunday.

Neither Israel nor Pfizer would say how much Israel has paid for the vaccines, though Edelstein called it a "classical win-win" for both sides. Israeli media have reported that Israel paid at least 50% more than other countries. The data is reportedly being shared with the World Health Organization, but the global body did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Earlier this month, the head of the WHO appealed to drugmakers and wealthier countries to "stop making bilateral deals," saying they hurt a U.N.-backed effort to widen access. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus did not single out any countries or companies.

Last week, Dr. Siddhartha Datta, WHO Europe's program manager for vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization, said the agency is trying to collect "disaggregated" data — based on age, gender, local area, employment and other factors — and reporting on any safety issues as the vaccines are deployed.

Israel had already announced the acquisition of millions of vaccine doses before the Pfizer deal was announced. It's unclear how the quantity or pace of deliveries has changed, or whether the vaccines have been diverted from other countries.

The arrangement has drawn attention to the unequal distribution of vaccines between rich and poor nations. A recent estimate from the International Rescue Committee said that the WHO's global COVAX campaign is likely to vaccinate only 20% of the world's lower-income countries by the end of 2021.

"This is a shady, under-the-table deal that preferences certain countries over others without any transparency," said Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global health law at Georgetown University in Washington. "In the end, it's going to be low- and middle-income countries that are going to be left behind."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 48 of 81

Dr. Nadav Davidovitch, head of the school of public health at Israel's Ben Gurion University and an adviser to the government on coronavirus policy, said the deal has raised troubling concerns about the deepening disparity of vaccination efforts.

"In order to eradicate COVID-19 or at least control it in an efficient manner, we need to see the global picture," Davidovitch said.

That disparity is particularly striking in the case of Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who live under varying degrees of Israeli control and have yet to receive any vaccines.

While vaccinating its own Arab citizens and Palestinian residents of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, Israel says it is not responsible for inoculating the Palestinians. Edelstein said Israel will consider helping once it takes care of its own citizens.

But the Palestinians and major human rights groups say Israel remains an occupying power and is responsible for providing them vaccines. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh recently accused Israel of "racism" but has not publicly requested vaccines.

With tens of thousands of West Bank Palestinians working in Israel and its West Bank settlements, experts say Israel should share vaccines on ethical and practical grounds.

"I truly think that we need to see how we get the vaccine for the Palestinian Authority," said Davidovitch, acting chairman of Israel's association of public health professionals. "We are talking about it with the minister of health, and I really hope that soon this thing will be solved."

It's also uncertain exactly what information is being shared with Pfizer. According to the redacted agreement, "no identifiable health information" shall be shared, and the research is to be published in a recognized medical journal.

It said Israel will provide weekly data to Pfizer about various age and demographic groups. The objective, it said, is to "analyze epidemiological data arising from the product rollout, to determine whether herd immunity is achieved after reaching a certain percentage of vaccination coverage in Israel."

The data, it added, is "aimed at helping end the global COVID-19 pandemic for the benefit of all patients inside and outside of Israel."

Privacy Israel, an advocacy group that had petitioned the government to disclose the deal, welcomed its release but said certain questions remained unanswered, mostly about the handling and security of private information. It also blacked out certain details, such as key dates and the names of officials involved. Still, it said there is a "little more certainty" about sharing information with a global corporation.

Tehilla Shwartz Altshuler, an expert in digital privacy at the Israel Democracy Institute, questioned the ethics of a deal that could bring millions in profits to Pfizer. She also said sharing large quantities of information could still potentially put individuals' privacy at risk, even if it's supposedly made anonymous.

"If, God forbid, the data set is going to be hacked, then the risk is going to be yours," she said, referring to Israeli citizens.

'Rooting hard for you': Will departure notes end with Trump?

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Presidential traditions are usually known for their solemnity and carry the weight of future historical significance. This one began with cartoon turkeys and a reference to lunch.

As he was preparing to leave the White House in January 1989, President Ronald Reagan wanted to leave a note for his successor, George H.W. Bush, and reached for a pad emblazoned with a cartoon by humorist Sandra Boynton under the phrase, "Don't Let the Turkeys Get You Down." It featured a collection of turkeys scaling a prone elephant, the symbol of both men's Republican Party.

"Dear George, You'll have moments when you'll want to use this particular stationary. Well, go to it," Reagan scrawled. He noted treasuring "the memories we share" and said he'd be praying for the new president before concluding, "I'll miss our Thursday lunches. Ron."

Thus was born the tradition of departing presidents leaving a handwritten note in the Oval Office for their successors. The missives' contents start off as confidential, but are often eventually made public by

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 49 of 81

archivists, references in presidential memoirs or via social media after journalists and others filed requests to obtain them.

The 32-year tradition is in peril this year. President Donald Trump has refused to accept the results of November's election and vowed not to attend Joe Biden's inauguration on Wednesday. That makes it doubtful Trump will leave behind any handwritten, friendly advice for Biden.

Presidents often write reflectively at the end of their time in office, including George Washington, who stated that he was "tired of public life" in recording why he wasn't seeking a third presidential term. But historians say Reagan's is likely the first instance of a personal letter being passed between presidents as they left and entered office.

"It was a sort of a revelation that a note like this was left," said Jim Bendat, author of "Democracy's Big Day: The Inauguration of Our President." "We've come to expect them. It's a great tradition. It's one of those new traditions. And the traditions for Inauguration Day are like that — they often evolve through the years."

The notes are striking in their simplicity given just how big the job of the presidency is. But they are also notable in their camaraderie and common purpose — especially since the handoff of power is often an unhappy one: Reagan to Bush was the last time the country had one president from the same party succeed another.

Despite losing to Bill Clinton in the bitter 1992 election, Bush followed Reagan's lead, this time on more stately, White House stationary. "I leave a note on the desk for Bill Clinton. It looks a little lonely sitting there," Bush recalled in his book "All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings."

"When I walked into this office just now I felt the same sense of wonder and respect that I felt four years ago. I know you will feel that, too," Bush wrote in the note, adding, "I wish you great happiness here. I never felt the loneliness some presidents have described."

He continued, "I'm not a very good one to give advice; but just don't let the critics discourage you or push you off course," before concluding, "Your success now is our country's success. I am rooting hard for you. Good luck — George."

Those words were so touching that the new president's wife, Hillary, later recalled they made her cry.

"It speaks not only to his grace, but ultimately what the presidency should be all about, which is thinking about your country first," said Mark K. Updegrove, a historian and CEO of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation, who has written about the Bush family. "Though he had been soundly defeated by Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, as a good American, was wishing the new president well."

Writing to that president's son, incoming President George W. Bush in 2000, Clinton noted that the "burdens you now shoulder are great but often exaggerated" and that the "sheer joy of doing what you believe is right is inexpressible."

In his own letter to President Barack Obama eight years later, the younger Bush advised that "critics will rage. Your 'friends' will disappoint you," but "no matter what comes, you will be inspired by the character and compassion of the people you now lead."

Bush's twin daughters, Jenna and Barbara, were 27 at the time. They wrote a sort of kids' guide to the White House for Malia and Sasha Obama, then 10 and 7. It included such advice as "slide down the banister of the solarium" and "when your dad throws out the first pitch for the Yankees, go to the game."

In his letter to Trump in 2017, Obama wrote, "This is a unique office, without a clear blueprint for success, so I don't know that any advice from me will be particularly helpful."

But Obama did offer some words that now appear prophetic given Trump's impeachment for inciting the deadly mob violence at the U.S. Capitol. "We are just temporary occupants of this office," he wrote. "That makes us guardians of those democratic institutions and traditions — like rule of law, separation of powers, equal protection and civil liberties — that our forebears fought and bled for."

"It's up to us to leave those instruments of our democracy at least as strong as we found them," Obama continued.

Updegrove said even if the note tradition stops with Trump, it could easily start again when Biden leaves office. He has already been vice president and spent 36 years in the Senate, where tradition and bipar-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 50 of 81

tisan congeniality are strong.

"There's no doubt in my mind that he would do it graciously," Updegrave said.

Phil Spector, famed music producer and murderer, dies at 81

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and LINDA DEUTSCH Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Phil Spector, the eccentric and revolutionary music producer who transformed rock music with his "Wall of Sound" method and who later was convicted of murder, has died. He was 81.

California state prison officials said he died Saturday of natural causes at a hospital.

Spector was convicted of murdering actress Lana Clarkson in 2003 at his castle-like mansion on the edge of Los Angeles. After a trial in 2009, he was sentenced to 19 years to life.

While most sources give Spector's birth date as 1940, it was listed as 1939 in court documents following his arrest. His lawyer subsequently confirmed that date to The Associated Press.

Clarkson, star of "Barbarian Queen" and other B-movies, was found shot to death in the foyer of Spector's mansion in the hills overlooking Alhambra, a modest suburban town on the edge of Los Angeles.

Until the actress' death, which Spector maintained was an "accidental suicide," few residents even knew the mansion belonged to the reclusive producer, who spent his remaining years in a prison hospital east of Stockton.

Decades before, Spector had been hailed as a visionary for channeling Wagnerian ambition into the three-minute song, creating the "Wall of Sound" that merged spirited vocal harmonies with lavish orchestral arrangements to produce such pop monuments as "Da Doo Ron Ron," "Be My Baby" and "He's a Rebel."

He was the rare self-conscious artist in rock's early years and cultivated an image of mystery and power with his dark shades and impassive expression.

Tom Wolfe declared him the "first tycoon of teen." Bruce Springsteen and Brian Wilson openly replicated his grandiose recording techniques and wide-eyed romanticism, and John Lennon called him "the greatest record producer ever."

The secret to his sound: an overdubbed onslaught of instruments, vocals and sound effects that changed the way pop records were recorded. He called the result, "Little symphonies for the kids."

By his mid-20s his "little symphonies" had resulted in nearly two dozen hit singles and made him a millionaire. "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," the operatic Righteous Brothers ballad which topped the charts in 1965, has been tabulated as the song most played on radio and television — counting the many cover versions — in the 20th century.

But thanks in part to the arrival of the Beatles, his chart success would soon fade. When "River Deep-Mountain High," an aptly-named 1966 release that featured Tina Turner, failed to catch on, Spector shut down his record label and withdrew from the business for three years. He would go on to produce the Beatles and Lennon among others, but he was now serving the artists, instead of the other way around.

In 1969, Spector was called in to salvage the Beatles' "Let It Be" album, a troubled "back to basics" production marked by dissension within the band. Although Lennon praised Spector's work, bandmate Paul McCartney was enraged, especially when Spector added strings and a choir to McCartney's "The Long and Winding Road." Years later, McCartney would oversee a remixed "Let it Be," removing Spector's contributions.

A documentary of the making of Lennon's 1971 "Imagine" album showed the ex-Beatle clearly in charge, prodding Spector over a backing vocal, a line none of Spector's early artists would have dared cross.

Spector worked on George Harrison's acclaimed post-Beatles triple album, "All Things Must Pass," co-produced Lennon's "Imagine," and the less successful "Some Time in New York City," which included Spector's picture over a caption that read, "To Know Him is to Love Him."

Spector also had a memorable film role, a cameo as a drug dealer in "Easy Rider." The producer himself was played by Al Pacino in a 2013 HBO movie.

"A genius irredeemably conflicted, he was the ultimate example of the Art always being better than the Artist, having made some of the greatest records in history based on the salvation of love while remain-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 51 of 81

ing incapable of giving or receiving love his whole life," Steven Van Zandt of Springsteen's E Street Band said Sunday on Twitter.

The volume, and violence, of Spector's music reflected a dark side he could barely contain even at his peak. He was imperious, temperamental and dangerous, remembered bitterly by Darlene Love, Ronnie Spector and others who worked with him.

Years of stories of his waving guns at recording artists in the studio and threatening women would come back to haunt him after Clarkson's death.

According to witnesses she had agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to accompany him home from the Sunset Strip's House of Blues in West Hollywood, where she worked Shortly after their arrival in Alhambra in the pre-dawn hours of Feb. 3, 2003, a chauffeur reported Spector came out of the house holding a gun, blood on his hands, and told him, "I think I killed somebody."

He would later tell friends Clarkson had shot herself. The case was fraught with mystery, and it took authorities a year to file charges. In the meantime, Spector remained free on \$1 million bail.

When he was finally indicted for murder, he lashed out at authorities, angrily telling reporters: "The actions of the Hitler-like DA and his storm trooper henchmen are reprehensible, unconscionable and despicable."

As a defendant, his eccentricity took center stage. He would arrive in court for pretrial hearings in theatrical outfits, usually featuring high-heeled boots, frock coats and wildly styled wigs. He arrived at one hearing in a chauffeur-driven stretch Hummer.

Once the 2007 trial began, however, he toned down his attire. It ended in a 10-2 deadlock leaning toward conviction. His defense had argued that the actress, despondent about her fading career, shot herself through the mouth. A retrial got underway in October 2008.

"Lana Clarkson was a warm, compassionate, kind, loving woman who would be 58 years old now. Her energy, brightness and love of life have sustained her family since her murder 18 years ago in 2003," Clarkson's mother, Donna Clarkson, said in a statement Sunday.

Harvey Phillip Spector, in his mid-60s when he was charged with murder, had been born on Dec. 26, 1939, in New York City's borough of the Bronx. Bernard Spector, his father, was an ironworker. His mother, Bertha, was a seamstress. In 1947, Spector's father killed himself because of family indebtedness, an event that would shape his son's life in many ways.

Four years later, Spector's mother moved the family to Los Angeles, where Phil attended Fairfax High School, located in a largely Jewish neighborhood on the edge of Hollywood. For decades the school has been a source of future musical talent. At Fairfax, Spector performed in talent shows and formed a group called the Teddy Bears with friends.

He was reserved and insecure, but his musical abilities were obvious. He had perfect pitch and easily learned to play several instruments. He was just 17 when his group recorded its first hit single, a romantic ballad written and produced by Spector that would become a pop classic: "To Know Him is to Love Him," was inspired by the inscription on his father's tombstone.

A short, skinny kid with big dreams and growing demons, Spector went on to attend the University of California, Los Angeles for a year before dropping out to return to New York. He briefly considered becoming a French interpreter at the United Nations before falling in with the musicians at New York's celebrated Brill Building. The Broadway edifice was then at the heart of popular music's Tin Pan Alley, where writers, composers, singers and musicians turned out hit songs.

He began working with star composers Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, who had met at Fairfax High a few years before Spector arrived. Ultimately, he found his niche in producing. During this period he also co-wrote the hit song, "Spanish Harlem," with Ben E. King, and played lead guitar on the Drifters' "On Broadway."

"I had come back to New York from California where there were all these green lawns and trees, and there was just this poverty and decay in Harlem," he would recall later. "The song was an expression of hope and faith in the young people of Harlem ... that there would be better times ahead."

For a time he had his own production company, Phyllis Records, with partner Lester Silles, where he

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 52 of 81

developed his signature sound. He assembled such respected studio musicians as arranger Jack Nitzsche, guitarist Tommy Tedesco, pianist Leon Russell and drummer Hal Blaine, and gave early breaks to Glen Campbell, Sonny Bono and Bono's future wife, Cher.

In the early 1960s, he had hit after hit and one notable flop: the album "A Christmas Gift to You," released, tragically, on Nov. 22, 1963, the day President Kennedy was assassinated, the worst possible time for such a joyous record. "A Christmas Gift," featuring the Ronettes singing "Frosty the Snowman" and Love's version of "White Christmas," is now considered a classic and a perennial radio favorite during the holiday season.

Spector's domestic life, along with his career, eventually came apart. After his first marriage, to Annette Merar, broke up, Ronettes leader singer Ronnie Bennett became his girlfriend and muse. He married her in 1968 and they adopted three children. But she divorced him after six years, claiming in a memoir that he held her prisoner in their mansion, where she said he kept a gold coffin in the basement and told her he would kill her and put her in it if she ever tried to leave him.

When the Ronettes were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007, Spector sent along his congratulations. But in an acceptance speech by his ex-wife, she never mentioned him while thanking numerous other people.

On Sunday Ronnie Spector said, "he was a brilliant producer, but a lousy husband."

"Unfortunately Phil was not able to live and function outside of the recording studio," she wrote on Instagram. "Darkness set in, many lives were damaged. I still smile whenever I hear the music we made together, and always will. The music will be forever."

Darlene Love also feuded with him, accusing Spector of failing to credit her for her vocals on "He's a Rebel" and other songs, but she did praise him when inducted into the Hall.

Spector himself became a Hall member in 1989. As his marriages deteriorated, recording artists also began to quit working with Spector and musical styles passed him by.

He preferred singles to albums, calling the latter, "Two hits and 10 pieces of junk." He initially refused to record his music in multichannel stereo, claiming the process damaged the sound. A Spector box set retrospective was called "Back to Mono."

By the mid-1970s, Spector had largely retreated from the music business. He would emerge occasionally to work on special projects, including Leonard Cohen's album, "Death of a Ladies' Man" and The Ramones' "End of the Century." Both were marred by reports of Spector's instability.

In 1973, Lennon worked on an album of rock 'n roll oldies with Spector, only to have Spector disappear with the tapes. The finished work, "Rock 'n' Roll," didn't come out until 1975.

In 1982 Spector married Janis Lynn Zavala and the couple had twins, Nicole and Phillip Jr. The boy died at age 10 of leukemia.

Six months before his first murder trial began, Spector married Rachele Short, a 26-year-old singer and actress who accompanied him to court every day. He filed for divorce in 2016.

In a 2005 court deposition, he testified that he had been on medication for manic depression for eight years.

"No sleep, depression, mood changes, mood swings, hard to live with, hard to concentrate, just hard — a hard time getting through life," he said. "I've been called a genius and I think a genius is not there all the time and has borderline insanity."

Linda Deutsch is a retired special correspondent for The Associated Press. The Spector murder trial was one of many sensational cases she covered during her 48-year career as a Los Angeles-based trial reporter.

FBI vetting Guard troops in DC amid fears of insider attack

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. defense officials say they are worried about an insider attack or other threat from service members involved in securing President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, prompting the FBI to

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 53 of 81

vet all of the 25,000 National Guard troops coming into Washington for the event.

The massive undertaking reflects the extraordinary security concerns that have gripped Washington following the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by pro-Trump rioters. And it underscores fears that some of the very people assigned to protect the city over the next several days could present a threat to the incoming president and other VIPs in attendance.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told The Associated Press on Sunday that officials are conscious of the potential threat, and he warned commanders to be on the lookout for any problems within their ranks as the inauguration approaches. So far, however, he and other leaders say they have seen no evidence of any threats, and officials said the vetting hadn't flagged any issues that they were aware of.

"We're continually going through the process, and taking second, third looks at every one of the individuals assigned to this operation," McCarthy said in an interview after he and other military leaders went through an exhaustive, three-hour security drill in preparation for Wednesday's inauguration. He said Guard members are also getting training on how to identify potential insider threats.

About 25,000 members of the National Guard are streaming into Washington from across the country — at least two and a half times the number for previous inaugurations. And while the military routinely reviews service members for extremist connections, the FBI screening is in addition to any previous monitoring.

Multiple officials said the process began as the first Guard troops began deploying to D.C. more than a week ago. And they said it is slated to be complete by Wednesday. Several officials discussed military planning on condition of anonymity.

"The question is, is that all of them? Are there others?" said McCarthy. "We need to be conscious of it and we need to put all of the mechanisms in place to thoroughly vet these men and women who would support any operations like this."

In a situation like this one, FBI vetting would involve running peoples' names through databases and watchlists maintained by the bureau to see if anything alarming comes up. That could include involvement in prior investigations or terrorism-related concerns, said David Gomez, a former FBI national security supervisor in Seattle.

Insider threats have been a persistent law enforcement priority in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. But in most cases, the threats are from homegrown insurgents radicalized by al-Qaida, the Islamic State group or similar groups. In contrast, the threats against Biden's inauguration have been fueled by supporters of President Donald Trump, far-right militants, white supremacists and other radical groups. Many believe Trump's baseless accusations that the election was stolen from him, a claim that has been refuted by many courts, the Justice Department and Republican officials in key battleground states.

The insurrection at the Capitol began after Trump made incendiary remarks at the Jan. 6 rally. According to McCarthy, service members from across the military were at that rally, but it's not clear how many were there or who may have participated in the breach at the Capitol. So far only a couple of current active-duty or National Guard members have been arrested in connection with the Capitol assault, which left five people dead. The dead included a Capitol Police officer and a woman shot by police as she climbed through a window in a door near the House chamber.

Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, has been meeting with Guard troops as they arrive in D.C. and as they gather downtown. He said he believes there are good processes in place to identify any potential threats.

"If there's any indication that any of our soldiers or airmen are expressing things that are extremist views, it's either handed over to law enforcement or dealt with the chain of command immediately," he said.

The insider threat, however, was just one of the security concerns voiced by officials on Sunday, as dozens of military, National Guard, law enforcement and Washington, D.C., officials and commanders went through a security rehearsal in northern Virginia. As many as three dozen leaders lined tables that ringed a massive color-coded map of D.C. reflected onto the floor. Behind them were dozens more National Guard officers and staff, with their eyes trained on additional maps and charts displayed on the wall.

The Secret Service is in charge of event security, but there is a wide variety of military and law enforcement personnel involved, ranging from the National Guard and the FBI to Washington's Metropolitan Police

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 54 of 81

Department, U.S. Capitol Police and U.S. Park Police.

Commanders went over every aspect of the city's complicated security lockdown, with McCarthy and others peppering them with questions about how the troops will respond in any scenario and how well they can communicate with the other enforcement agencies scattered around the city.

Hokanson said he believes his troops have been adequately equipped and prepared, and that they are rehearsing as much as they can to be prepared for any contingency.

The major security concern is an attack by armed groups of individuals, as well as planted explosives and other devices. McCarthy said intelligence reports suggest that groups are organizing armed rallies leading up to Inauguration Day, and possibly after that.

The bulk of the Guard members will be armed. And McCarthy said units are going through repeated drills to practice when and how to use force and how to work quickly with law enforcement partners. Law enforcement officers would make any arrests.

He said Guard units are going through "constant mental repetitions of looking at the map and talking through scenarios with leaders so they understand their task and purpose, they know their routes, they know where they're friendly, adjacent units are, they have the appropriate frequencies to communicate with their law enforcement partners."

The key goal, he said, is for America's transfer of power to happen without incident.

"This is a national priority. We have to be successful as an institution," said McCarthy. "We want to send the message to everyone in the United States and for the rest of the world that we can do this safely and peacefully."

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Heavily fortified statehouses around US see small protests

By DAVID A. LIEB and ADAM GELLER Associated Press

Small groups of right-wing protesters — some of them carrying rifles — gathered outside heavily fortified statehouses around the country Sunday, outnumbered by National Guard troops and police brought in to prevent a repeat of the violence that erupted at the U.S. Capitol. As darkness fell, there were no reports of any clashes.

Security was stepped up in recent days after the FBI warned of the potential for armed protests in Washington and at all 50 state capitol buildings ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Wednesday.

Crowds of only a dozen or two demonstrated at some boarded-up, cordoned-off statehouses, while the streets in many other capital cities remained empty. Some protesters said they were there to back President Donald Trump. Others said they had instead come to voice their support for gun rights or decry government overreach.

"I don't trust the results of the election," said Michigan protester Martin Szelag, a 67-year-old semi-retired window salesman from Dearborn Heights. He wore a sign around his neck that read, in part, "We will support Joe Biden as our President if you can convince us he won legally. Show us the proof! Then the healing can begin."

As the day wore on with no bloodshed around the U.S., a sense of relief spread among officials, though they were not ready to let their guard down.

The heavy law enforcement presence may have kept turnout down. In the past few days, some extremists had warned others against falling into what they called a law enforcement trap.

Washington State Patrol spokesman Chris Loftis said he hoped the apparently peaceful day reflected some soul-searching among Americans.

"I would love to say that it's because we've all taken a sober look in the mirror and have decided that we are a more unified people than certain moments in time would indicate," he said.

The security measures were intended to safeguard seats of government from the type of violence that broke out at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, when far-right Trump supporters galvanized by his false claims

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 55 of 81

that the election had been stolen from him overran the police and bashed their way into the building while Congress was certifying the Electoral College vote.

The attack left a Capitol police officer and four others dead. More than 125 people have been arrested over the insurrection.

Dozens of courts, election officials and Trump's own attorney general have all said there was no evidence of widespread fraud in the presidential race.

On Sunday, some statehouses were surrounded by new security fences, their windows were boarded up, and extra officers were on patrol. Legislatures generally were not in session over the weekend.

Tall fences also surrounded the U.S. Capitol. The National Mall was closed to the public, and the mayor of Washington asked people not to visit. Some 25,000 National Guard troops from around the country are expected to arrive in the city in the coming days. U.S. defense officials told The Associated Press those troops would be vetted by the FBI to ward off any threat of an insider attack on the inauguration.

The roughly 20 protesters who showed up at Michigan's Capitol, including some who were armed, were significantly outnumbered by law enforcement officers and members of the media. Tensions have been running high in the state since authorities foiled a plot to kidnap Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer last year.

At the Ohio Statehouse, about two dozen people, including several carrying long guns, protested outside under the watchful eyes of state troopers before dispersing as it began to snow.

Kathy Sherman, who was wearing a visor with "Trump" printed on it, said she supports the president but distanced herself from the mob that breached the U.S. Capitol.

"I'm here to support the right to voice a political view or opinion without fear of censorship, harassment or the threat of losing my job or being physically assaulted," she said.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican, said he was pleased with the outcome but stressed that authorities "continue to have concerns for potential violence in the coming days, which is why I intend to maintain security levels at the Statehouse as we approach the presidential inauguration."

Utah's new governor, Republican Spencer Cox, shared photos on his Twitter account showing him with what appeared to be hundreds of National Guard troops and law enforcement officers standing behind him, all wearing masks. Cox called the quiet protests a best-case scenario and said many "agitating groups" had canceled their plans for the day.

At Oregon's Capitol, fewer than a dozen men wearing military-style outfits, black ski masks and helmets stood nearby with semiautomatic weapons slung across their bodies. Some had upside-down American flags and signs reading such things as "Disarm the government."

At the Texas Capitol, Ben Hawk walked with about a dozen demonstrators up to the locked gates carrying a bullhorn and an AR-15 rifle hanging at the side of his camouflage pants. He condemned the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and said he did not support Trump.

"All we came down here to do today was to discuss, gather, network and hang out. And it got blown and twisted completely out of proportion," Hawk said.

At Nevada's Capitol, where demonstrators supporting Trump have flocked most weekends in recent months, all was quiet except for a lone protester with a sign.

"Trump Lost. Be Adults. Go Home," it read.

More than a third of governors had called out the National Guard to help protect their capitols and assist local law enforcement. Several governors declared states of emergency, and others closed their capitols to the public until after Biden's inauguration.

Some legislatures also canceled sessions or pared back their work for the coming week.

Even before the violence at the Capitol, some statehouses had been the target of vandals and angry protesters during the past year.

Last spring, armed protesters entered the Michigan Capitol to object to coronavirus lockdowns. People angry over the death of George Floyd under a Minneapolis police officer's knee vandalized capitols in several states, including Colorado, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin.

Last last month, crowds in Oregon forced their way into the Capitol in Salem to protest its closure to the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 56 of 81

public during a special legislative session on coronavirus measures.

Amid the potential for violence in the coming days, the building's first-floor windows were boarded up and the National Guard was brought in.

"The state Capitol has become a fortress," said Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney, a Democrat. "I never thought I'd see that. It breaks my heart."

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri in Columbus, Ohio; Gillian Flaccus in Salem, Oregon; Mike Householder and David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan; Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina; Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington; Sam Metz in Carson City, Nevada; Marc Scoloro in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Paul Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

Records: Trump allies behind rally that ignited Capitol riot

By RICHARD LARDNER and MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of President Donald Trump's failed presidential campaign played key roles in orchestrating the Washington rally that spawned a deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol, according to an Associated Press review of records, undercutting claims the event was the brainchild of the president's grassroots supporters.

A pro-Trump nonprofit group called Women for America First hosted the "Save America Rally" on Jan. 6 at the Ellipse, an oval-shaped, federally owned patch of land near the White House. But an attachment to the National Park Service public gathering permit granted to the group lists more than half a dozen people in staff positions for the event who just weeks earlier had been paid thousands of dollars by Trump's 2020 reelection campaign. Other staff scheduled to be "on site" during the demonstration have close ties to the White House.

Since the siege, several of them have scrambled to distance themselves from the rally.

The riot at the Capitol, incited by Trump's comments before and during his speech at the Ellipse, has led to a reckoning unprecedented in American history. The president told the crowd to march to the Capitol and that "you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength, and you have to be strong."

A week after the rally, Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives, becoming the first U.S. president ever to be impeached twice. But the political and legal fallout may stretch well beyond Trump, who will exit the White House on Wednesday before Democrat Joe Biden takes the oath of office. Trump had refused for nearly two months to accept his loss in the 2020 election to the former vice president.

Women for America First, which applied for and received the Park Service permit, did not respond to messages seeking comment about how the event was financed and about the Trump campaign's involvement. The rally drew tens of thousands of people.

In a statement, the president's reelection campaign said it "did not organize, operate or finance the event." No campaign staff members were involved in the organization or operation of the rally, according to the statement. It said that if any former employees or independent contractors for the campaign took part, "they did not do so at the direction of the Trump campaign."

At least one was working for the Trump campaign this month. Megan Powers was listed as one of two operations managers for the Jan. 6 event, and her LinkedIn profile says she was the Trump campaign's director of operations into January 2021. She did not respond to a message seeking comment.

The AP's review found at least three of the Trump campaign aides named on the permit rushed to obscure their connections to the demonstration. They deactivated or locked down their social media profiles, removed tweets that referenced the rally and blocked a reporter who asked questions.

Caroline Wren, a veteran GOP fundraiser, is named as a "VIP Advisor" on an attachment to the permit that Women for America First provided to the agency. Between mid-March and mid-November, Donald J. Trump for President Inc. paid Wren \$20,000 a month, according to Federal Election Commission records. During the campaign, she was a national finance consultant for Trump Victory, a joint fundraising committee between the president's reelection campaign and the Republican National Committee.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 57 of 81

Wren was involved in at least one call before the pro-Trump rally with members of several groups listed as rally participants to organize credentials for VIP attendees, according to Kimberly Fletcher, the president of one of those groups, Moms for America.

Wren retweeted messages about the event ahead of time, but a cache of her account on Google shows at least eight of those tweets disappeared from her timeline. She apparently removed some herself, and others were sent from accounts that Twitter suspended.

One of the messages Wren retweeted was from "Stop the Steal," another group identified as a rally participant on a website promoting the event. The Jan. 2 message thanked Republican senators who said they would vote to overturn Biden's election victory, including Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas. She also retweeted a Jan. 1 message from the president promoting the event, as well as promotional messages from one of the president's son, Eric Trump, and Katrina Pierson, a Tea Party activist and a spokesperson for Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

Wren did not return messages seeking comment, and locked her Twitter account after the AP reached out to her last Monday to ask her about her involvement in the Trump rally and the tweets she had removed. Several days later, she blocked the AP reporter.

Maggie Mulvaney, a niece of former top Trump aide Mick Mulvaney, is listed on the permit attachment as the "VIP Lead." She worked as director of finance operations for the Trump campaign, according to her LinkedIn profile. FEC records show Maggie Mulvaney was earning \$5,000 every two weeks from Trump's reelection campaign, with the most recent payment reported on Nov. 13.

Maggie Mulvaney had taken down her Twitter account as of last Monday, although it reappeared after an AP reporter asked her about the account's removal. On Sunday, the same day the AP published this report, she blocked that AP reporter on Twitter.

Maggie Mulvaney retweeted several messages on Jan. 6, including one from the president that urged support for the Capitol Police. Trump's Twitter account has been suspended, but the message could be seen in a cache of her Twitter account captured by Google. She also retweeted a message from her uncle, urging Trump to address the nation.

Maggie Mulvaney did not respond to messages seeking comment.

The insurrection at the Capitol prompted Mick Mulvaney to quit his position as Trump's special envoy to Northern Ireland. He told CNBC a day after the assault that remaining in the post would prompt people to say "Oh yeah, you work for the guy who tried to overtake the government."

The leaders of Women for America First aren't new to politics.

Amy Kremer, listed as the group's president on records filed with Virginia's state corporation commission, is "one of the founding mothers of the modern day tea party movement," according to her website. Her daughter, Kylie Jane Kremer, is the organization's treasurer, according to the records.

The IRS granted Women for America First tax-exempt status as a social welfare organization a year ago, with the exemption retroactive to February 2019. The AP requested that the group provide any tax records it may have filed since then, but received no response.

In a statement issued the same day rioters attacked the Capitol, Amy Kremer denounced the assault and said it was instigated after the rally by a "handful of bad actors," while seeming to blame Democrats and news organizations for the riot.

"Unfortunately, for months the left and the mainstream media told the American people that violence was an acceptable political tool," she said. "They were wrong. It is not."

The AP reviewed social media posts, voter registrations, court files and other public records for more than 120 people either facing criminal charges related to the Jan. 6 unrest or who, going maskless during the pandemic, were later identified through photographs and videos taken during the melee.

The review found the crowd was overwhelmingly made up of longtime Trump supporters, including Republican Party officials, GOP political donors, far-right militants, white supremacists, off-duty police, members of the military and adherents of the QAnon myth that the government is secretly controlled by a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophile cannibals.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 58 of 81

Videos posted on social media in the days following the Capitol attack shows that thousands of people stormed the Capitol. A Capitol Police officer died after he was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher as rioters descended on the building and many other officers were injured. A woman from California was shot to death by Capitol Police and three other people died after medical emergencies during the chaos.

Trump's incendiary remarks at the Jan. 6 rally culminated a two-day series of events in Washington, organized by a coalition of the president's supporters who echoed his baseless accusations that the election had been stolen from him. A website, MarchtoSaveAmerica.com, sprung up to promote the pro-Trump events and alerted followers, "At 1 PM, we protest at US Capitol." The website has been deactivated.

Another website, TrumpMarch.com shows a fist-raised Trump pictured on the front of a red, white and blue tour bus emblazoned with the words, "Powered by Women for America First." The logo for the bedding company "My Pillow" is also prominent. Mike Lindell, the CEO of My Pillow, is an ardent Trump supporter who's falsely claimed Trump didn't lose the election to Biden and will serve another four-year term as president.

"To demand transparency & protect election integrity," the web page reads. Details of the "DC PROTEST" will be coming soon, it adds, and also lists a series of bus stops between Dec. 27 and Jan. 6 where Trump backers can "Join the caravan or show your support."

Kimberly Fletcher, the Moms for America president, said she wasn't aware the Trump campaign had a role in the rally at the Ellipse until around New Year's Day. While she didn't work directly with the campaign, Fletcher did notice a shift in who was involved in the rally and who would be speaking.

"When I got there and I saw the size of the stage and everything, I'm like, 'Wow, we couldn't possibly have afforded that,'" she said. "It was a big stage. It was a very professional stage. I don't know who was in the background or who put it together or anything."

In addition to the large stage, the rally on the Ellipse featured a sophisticated sound system and at least three Jumbotron-style screens projecting the president's image to the crowd. Videos posted online show Trump and his family in a nearby private tent watching the rally on several monitors as music blared in the background.

Moms for America held a more modest "Save the Republic" rally on Jan. 5 near the U.S. Capitol, an event that drew about 500 people and cost between \$13,000 to \$14,000, according to Fletcher.

Justin Caporale is listed on the Women for America First paperwork as the event's project manager. He's identified as a partner with Event Strategies Inc., a management and production company. Caporale, formerly a top aide to first lady Melania Trump, was on the Trump campaign payroll for most of 2020, according to the FEC records, and he most recently was being paid \$7,500 every two weeks. Caporale didn't respond to requests for comment.

Tim Unes, the founder and president of Event Strategies, was the "stage manager" for the Jan. 6 rally, according to the permit paperwork. Unes has longstanding ties to Trump, a connection he highlights on his company's website. Trump's presidential campaign paid Event Strategies \$1.3 million in 2020 for "audio visual services," according to the campaign finance records. The company declined to comment for this story.

Another person with close ties to the Trump administration, Hannah Salem, was the rally's "operations manager for logistics and communications," according to the permit paperwork. In 2017, she took a hiatus from the consulting firm she founded and spent three years as senior White House press aide, "executing the media strategy for President Trump's most high-profile events," according to her company bio and LinkedIn profile.

Last week, within minutes of an AP reporter sending her a LinkedIn message asking about her involvement in and understanding of what happened on Jan. 6, Salem blocked the reporter and did not respond to questions.

Smith reported from Providence, Rhode Island.

Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York and Associated Press writer Zeke Miller con-

tributed to this report.

Kremlin critic Navalny detained after landing in Moscow

By MSTYSLAV CHERNOV and JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was arrested Sunday at a Moscow airport as he tried to enter the country from Germany, where he had spent five months recovering from nerve agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin.

Navalny's detention at passport control in Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport was widely expected because Russia's prisons service said he had violated parole terms from a suspended sentence on a 2014 embezzlement conviction.

The prisons service said he would be held in custody until a court rules on his case. No date for a court appearance was immediately announced. The service earlier said that it would seek to have Navalny serve his 3 1/2-year sentence behind bars.

Navalny, 44, who is President Vladimir Putin's most prominent and determined foe, brushed off concerns about arrest as he boarded the plane in Berlin.

"It's impossible. I'm an innocent man," he said.

The arrest raises tensions in Russia as it approaches national parliament elections this year, in which Navalny's organization is expected to be active in trying to defeat pro-Kremlin candidates. Navalny decided to leave Berlin of his own free will and wasn't under any apparent pressure to leave from Germany.

"This is a real act of bravery for Alexei Navalny to return to Russia, given that government agents already tried to kill him once," Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth tweeted. "But he understandably wants to be part of the pro-democracy movement in Russia, not a dissident in exile."

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's pick for national security adviser called on Russian authorities to free Navalny. "Mr. Navalny should be immediately released, and the perpetrators of the outrageous attack on his life must be held accountable," Jake Sullivan said in a tweet.

The outgoing U.S. secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, said the U.S. "strongly condemns" his decision to arrest Navalny and called his detention "the latest in a series of attempts to silence Navalny and other opposition figures and independent voices who are critical of Russian authorities."

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, responded to a question about the arrest by saying "Was he arrested in Germany? I'm not up to date," according to the online news site Podyom. Peskov, like Putin, is noted for avoiding saying Navalny's name.

Navalny has sizable popularity in Moscow. Many supporters on Sunday went to Vnukovo airport where his flight was scheduled to land, though it was diverted to Sheremetyevo without explanation.

The OVD-Info organization that monitors political arrests said at least 53 people were arrested, including Navalny supporters and journalists, at Vnukovo, where where the arrivals hall had been blocked off and prisoner transport vehicles were parked outside. There were at least three detentions at Sheremetyevo, it said.

The independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta and opposition social media reported Sunday that several Navalny supporters in St. Petersburg had been removed from Moscow-bound trains or been prevented from boarding flights late Saturday and early Sunday, including the coordinator of his staff for the region of Russia's second-largest city.

Navalny fell into a coma while aboard a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20. He was transferred from a hospital in Siberia to a Berlin hospital two days later.

Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

Russian authorities insisted that the doctors who treated Navalny in Siberia before he was airlifted to Germany found no traces of poison and have challenged German officials to provide proof of his poisoning. Russia refused to open a full-fledged criminal inquiry, citing a lack of evidence that Navalny was poisoned.

Last month, Navalny released the recording of a phone call he said he made to a man he described as an

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 60 of 81

alleged member of a group of officers of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, who purportedly poisoned him in August and then tried to cover it up. The FSB dismissed the recording as fake.

Navalny has been a thorn in the Kremlin's side for a decade, unusually durable in an opposition movement often demoralized by repressions.

He has been jailed repeatedly in connection with protests and twice was convicted of financial misdeeds in cases that he said were politically motivated. He suffered significant eye damage when an assailant threw disinfectant into his face and was taken from jail to a hospital in 2019 with an illness that authorities said was an allergic reaction but that many suspected was poisoning.

A lawyer by training, he began his rise to prominence by focusing on corruption in Russia's murky mix of politics and business. In 2008, he bought shares in Russian oil and gas companies, so he could push for transparency as an activist shareholder.

Navalny's work to expose corrupt elites had a pocketbook appeal to the Russian people's widespread sense of being cheated. Russia's state-controlled television channels ignored Navalny, but his investigations of dubious contracts and officials' luxurious lifestyles got wide attention through the back channels of YouTube videos and social media posts that often showed his sardonic sense of humor.

In 2013, he placed second in the race for Moscow mayor behind the candidate of Putin's power-base United Russia party. That established him as a formidable force and a worry to the Kremlin.

He intended to run for president in 2018, but was kept off the ballot because of his previous criminal convictions. His own legal obstacles and the widespread obstruction authorities set before other independent candidates seeking public office led Navalny and his organization to adopt a new strategy for the 2019 Moscow city council elections.

The "Smart Vote" initiative analyzed which candidate in each district appeared to have the best chance of beating United Russia's pick and tried to drum up support for that candidate.

The initiative appeared to be a success, with nearly half of the city council seats going to "systemic opposition" candidates, although its effectiveness couldn't be quantified. Navalny intends to redeploy the same strategy in this year's national parliament elections.

Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this report.

Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit reaches space on 2nd try

By JOHN ANTCZAK Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit reached space on Sunday, eight months after the first demonstration flight of its air-launched rocket system failed, the company said.

A 70-foot-long (21.34-meter-long) LauncherOne rocket was released from beneath the wing of a Boeing 747 carrier aircraft off the coast of Southern California, ignited moments later and soared toward space.

The two-stage rocket carried a cluster of very small satellites known as CubeSats developed and built as part of a NASA educational program involving U.S. universities.

The launch occurred after the Boeing 747-400 took off from Mojave Air and Space Port in the desert north of Los Angeles and flew out over the Pacific Ocean to a drop point beyond the Channel Islands.

"According to telemetry, LauncherOne has reached orbit!" Virgin Orbit tweeted later. "Everyone on the team who is not in mission control right now is going absolutely bonkers."

The rocket's upper stage coasted for a period, reignited to circularize the orbit and then deployed the nine CubeSats.

The flight developments were announced on social media. The launch was not publicly livestreamed.

Virgin Orbit, based in Long Beach, California, is part of a wave of companies targeting the launch market for increasingly capable small satellites, which may range in sizes comparable to a toaster on up to a home refrigerator.

Competitor Rocket Lab, also headquartered in Long Beach, has deployed 96 payloads in 17 launches of its Electron rocket from a site in New Zealand. Another of its rockets was nearing launch Sunday.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 61 of 81

Virgin Orbit touts the flexibility of its capability to begin its missions by using airports around the globe. Virgin Orbit attempted its first demonstration launch in May 2020. The rocket was released and ignited but only briefly flew under power before it stopped thrusting. The lost payload was only a test satellite.

The company later said an investigation determined there was a breach in a high-pressure line carrying cryogenic liquid oxygen to the first-stage combustion chamber.

Virgin Orbit is separate from Virgin Galactic, the company founded by Branson to carry passengers on suborbital hops in which they will experience the sensations and sights of spaceflight.

Virgin Galactic expects to begin commercial operations this year in southern New Mexico.

Vice President-elect Harris to resign her Senate seat Monday

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will resign her Senate seat on Monday, two days before she and President-elect Joe Biden are inaugurated.

Aides to the California Democrat confirmed the timing and said Gov. Gavin Newsom was aware of her decision, clearing the way for him to appoint fellow Democrat Alex Padilla, now California's secretary of state, to serve the final two years of Harris' term.

Padilla will be the first Latino senator from California, where about 40% of residents are Hispanic. Newsom announced his choice in December, following intense lobbying for the rare Senate vacancy from the nation's most populous state.

Harris will give no farewell Senate floor speech. The Senate is not scheduled to reconvene until Tuesday, the eve of Inauguration Day, two weeks after supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol as lawmakers were meeting to affirm Biden's election victory.

That siege, Harris said in an interview broadcast Sunday, "was seismic. It was an inflection moment. You know, sometimes we think an inflection moment is the bringing of something that is positive. No. It was in many ways a reckoning. It was an exposure of the vulnerability of our democracy."

Padilla's arrival, along with Harris becoming the Senate's presiding officer when she's sworn-in as vice president, is part of Democrats' upcoming Senate majority. But the party still needs Sens.-elect Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock of Georgia to be certified as victors in their Jan. 5 elections and then be sworn in.

Harris is the first woman ever elected vice president — and the first Black woman and first woman of South Asian descent to serve in that office. But her Senate departure leaves the chamber's roster without a Black woman. Harris was just the second Black female senator, winning her California election 17 years after Democrat Carol Moseley Braun finished a single term representing Illinois.

Among many potential successors to Harris, Newsom passed over at least two prominent Black women, U.S. Reps. Karen Bass and Barbara Lee. Bass also was among Biden's finalists for running mate.

Democrats were in the minority during Harris' four years on Capitol Hill. Perhaps her biggest mark came as a fierce questioner of judicial nominees and other witnesses as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Harris was viewed as a future presidential candidate almost immediately upon joining the Senate in 2017. She announced her White House bid in January 2019 but dropped out the subsequent December after a lackluster campaign and before the ballots were cast in Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucuses. Biden, himself a former senator, invited her to join the national ticket in August.

The wins by Ossoff and Warnock in Georgia ensured a 50-50 Senate, positioning Harris as the tie-breaking vote for Democratic control. But Ossoff and Warnock cannot join the chamber until Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger certifies the final vote tally. Raffensperger, a Republican, has said he could act as soon as Tuesday, conceivably allowing Padilla, Ossoff and Warnock to join the Senate together as early as that afternoon's session.

But Republicans will maintain a narrow majority until all three take office and Harris sits in the presiding officer's chair.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 62 of 81

Harris' early departure from the Senate has multiple precedents.

Biden was the last sitting senator to be elected vice president. He resigned his Delaware post on Jan. 15, 2009, five days before he and Barack Obama were inaugurated. Obama, a senator at the time of his election, had resigned his Illinois seat two months before Biden.

Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff, have enjoyed conversations and debates over how Emhoff should be addressed when Harris takes office.

During their joint interview with "CBS Sunday Morning," Harris joked that some of Emhoff's friends suggested he could be dubbed the "first dude." Emhoff added there were other ideas "I can't repeat on national television."

Vice presidents' spouses — all of them wives before Emhoff have at times been called the "second lady," a nod to the "first lady" being the president's wife.

All kidding aside, Emhoff told CBS' Jane Pauley, he would be the first "second gentleman" in U.S. history.

Biden's long political evolution leads to his biggest test

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. has navigated a half-century in American politics by relentlessly positioning himself at the core of the Democratic Party.

Wherever that power center shifted, there Biden has been, whether as the young senator who opposed court-ordered busing in school integration cases or the soon-to-be 46th president pitching an agenda on par with Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society.

The common thread through that evolution is Biden always pitching himself as an institutionalist -- a mainstream liberal but also a pragmatist who still insists that governing well depends on compromise and consensus.

Now Biden's central political identity faces the ultimate trial.

On Wednesday, the 78-year-old president-elect will inherit stewardship of a nation wrenched by pandemic, seismic cultural fissures and an opposition party's base that considers him illegitimate, even to the point of President Donald Trump's supporters violently attacking the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress convened to certify Biden's victory.

Biden's answer follows two tracks: defending the fabric of society and institutions of government that Trump's tenure has stressed and calling for sweeping legislative action. His agenda includes an initial \$1.9 trillion pandemic response, along with proposed overhauls for health care, taxation, infrastructure, education, criminal justice, the energy grid and climate policy.

"A message of unity. A message of getting things done," Ron Klain, his incoming White House chief of staff, explained Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union."

The first approach, rooted in Biden's campaign pledge to "restore the soul of the nation," netted a record 81 million votes in the election. In his Nov. 7 victory speech, Biden called that coalition "the broadest and most diverse in history" and framed it as evidence Americans are ready to "lower the temperature" and "heal."

Biden's second, policy-based approach, however, still must confront a hyperpartisan age and a closely divided Congress.

The outcome will determine the reach of Biden's presidency and further test the lifetime politician's ability to evolve and meet events.

"We can't have a claim to want to heal the nation if what people mean is just having the right tone and being able to pat one another on the back," said the Rev. William Barber, a leading social justice advocate who has personally pushed Biden to prioritize the marginalized and poor of all races.

"Real healing of the nation," Barber said, "must be dealing with the sickness in the body of the nation caused by policy, by racism, by polity."

Activists such as Barber represent just one of many flanks surrounding Biden.

Republicans are clear they won't passively ratify Biden's responses to the pandemic or deep-seated

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 63 of 81

problems that came before it: institutional racism, widening wealth gaps, the climate crisis. The Democratic Party isn't marching in lockstep, either, as progressives, liberals and moderates dicker over details.

"I wouldn't expect big, sweeping change," said Michael Steel, once a top aide to former House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio.

Democrats will control a 50-50 Senate with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris's tiebreaking vote as presiding officer. But the chamber's 60-vote filibuster threshold for major legislation remains. Biden's longtime friend, California Rep. Nancy Pelosi, is the House speaker, but presides over a diminished Democratic majority and slim margin for error.

Harris framed the stakes Sunday, telling "CBS Sunday Morning" that the Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6 "was an exposure of the vulnerability of our democracy."

John Anzalone, Biden's campaign pollster, noted in a recent interview that Biden won with a message spanning ideology. Some voters "may not believe in his politics. But they believe in him," Anzalone said. "They believe in his compassion and they believe in, quite frankly, his leadership skills."

Anzalone loosely compared Biden's appeal to Ronald Reagan's. Reagan was a hero of movement conservatives yet drew support from a wide swath of "Reagan Democrats" to win the presidency in 1980 amid economic and international instability. By extension, Reagan could count on support or at least good faith from many Democrats on Capitol Hill, most notably then-Speaker Tip O'Neill, D-Mass.

"The analogy sort of fails when you ask who are the Tip O'Neills for Republicans at this point?" Anzalone acknowledged. But, he said, Biden "is not averse to big fights."

Biden projects confidence regardless, in part, those close to him say, because of his long tenure in Washington buttressed now with the presidential megaphone.

"Part of the president's job is making the case to the American people and persuading them what the right way forward is," said Stef Feldman, policy director for Biden's campaign.

Through that lens, it becomes less surprising to see the politician who joined Republicans in the mid-1990s to clamor for a balanced budget now declares emergency spending measured by the trillions "more urgent than ever," even "including deficit spending."

It was a similar course for Biden as he aged from a young senator in a chamber still stocked with old-guard segregationists into the trusted lieutenant for the nation's first Black president. The Senate Judiciary Chairman who in 1991 led an all-male panel in Supreme Court confirmation hearings involving sexual harassment claims turned the widely panned experience into invitations for the committee to seat its first Democratic female members.

The Catholic politician who for decades acknowledged his struggle over abortion policy flouted church teachings as vice president by announcing his support for same-sex marriage before most other elected Democrats, including the ostensibly more socially progressive Obama. And during the 2020 campaign, even as Biden started to the left of Obama and 2016 nominee Hillary Clinton, he inched further leftward on health care, college tuition aid and climate policy.

While Biden aides argue his shifts don't involve changes in principle or fundamental values, some other observers say the point is moot. The question, said Maurice Mitchell, who leads the progressive Working Families Party, is simply whether Biden will continue to evolve and leverage his political capital into both post-Trump stability and big policy wins.

"We can't control people's convictions but we can shift the politics of the possible," Mitchell said, noting that Johnson signed seminal civil rights laws less than a decade after quashing such measures as Senate majority leader.

Barber, the minister, pointed to other historical figures whom Biden sometimes mentioned while campaigning: Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Both, Barber noted, were savvy, even ruthless politicians who reached for their biggest achievements only after winning the nation's highest office -- and they did so against vicious opposition and during times of existential national threats.

"There's good record in our history that there are moments in this country can and has taken great steps forward," Barber said. "And many times, it was right on the heels of great pain. The movement and

the moment can cause leaders -- presidents, senators, congresspeople -- to be much greater than they even intended or imagined."

The Latest: Slovakia wants tests for nearly all in nine days

By The Associated Press undefined

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia — Slovakia is launching a project to test almost all citizens for the coronavirus in nine days.

The government hopes the nationwide testing will speed up a recovery from the latest wave of the infections, make it possible for students to return to school in February, help the health system and ease restrictions that harm the economy.

The nationwide testing is set to start Monday and will be completed on Jan. 26. It's not mandatory, but all people who want to go to work will need to have a negative test for the coronavirus beginning Jan. 27.

Slovakia entered a tough lockdown before Christmas that includes a round-the-clock curfew.

The exceptions include necessary trips to work, to do business or see doctors. People are also allowed to do necessary shopping in the stores that are the closest to their homes.

Close to 3,500 people have died of the virus in the country of 5.4 million.

THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- U.K. to offer first vaccine dose to every adult by September
- Widespread vaccine skepticism hurts coronavirus vaccination efforts in Eastern Europe
- Italy faces a political crisis amid the pandemic as it anticipates European Union pandemic funds

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil's health regulator on Sunday approved the urgent use of coronavirus vaccines made by Sinovac and AstraZeneca, enabling Latin America's largest nation to begin an immunization program that's been subject to months of delay and political disputes.

Brazil currently has 6 million doses of Sinovac's CoronaVac vaccine ready to distribute in the next few days, and is awaiting the arrival of another 2 million doses of the vaccine made by AstraZeneca and partner Oxford University.

On Saturday night, the health regulator Anvisa rejected an application for use of a Russian vaccine called Sputnik V, submitted by Brazilian company União Química. Anvisa said it didn't evaluate the application because it didn't meet minimum requirements to start an analysis.

Vaccination in Brazil is beginning later than neighbors such as Argentina and Chile despite a robust public health system and decades of experience with immunization campaigns. The process to present and approve the COVID-19 vaccines was fraught with conflict, as allies of President Jair Bolsonaro sought to cast doubt on the efficacy of the Sinovac shot backed by his political rival, Sao Paulo state's Gov. João Doria.

WASHINGTON — Incoming White House chief of staff Ron Klain says the coronavirus pandemic will get worse before it gets better, projecting another 100,000 deaths from COVID-19 in the first five weeks of President-elect Joe Biden's administration.

Speaking to CNN's "State of the Union," Klain said Biden was inheriting a dire situation, saying even with vaccines, "It's going to take a while to turn this around."

Biden has set a goal of injecting 100 million doses of coronavirus vaccine in his first 100 days in office, a goal Klain said they were on pace to meet.

Klain added he believed there was enough supply of the pair of vaccines currently granted emergency approval to ensure that those who have received their first shot will get the required second.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 65 of 81

OTTERLO, Netherlands — Police in Amsterdam turned a water cannon on hundreds of demonstrators who were taking part in a banned protest Sunday against the Dutch government and its tough coronavirus lockdown.

Police on horseback also moved in to break up the demonstration on a large square ringed by museums, including the Van Gogh Museum and Rijksmuseum.

Amsterdam municipality said riot police took action to disperse the crowd because people weren't adhering to social distancing measures.

"Because of the danger to public health, it is important that everybody sticks to the measures in force. The demonstrators are not doing that," the municipality said in a tweet.

BERLIN — Austria is extending its lockdown until Feb. 7 in an attempt to bring down still-high infection figures, as authorities worry about the possible impact of more infectious variants of the coronavirus.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Sunday that distancing rules will be toughened, with people asked to stay 2 meters apart instead of 1 meter. They will also be told to wear full protective masks in public transport and shops, rather than just fabric face coverings.

Austria's current lockdown, its third, started on Dec. 26 and had been due to end on Jan. 24.

Kurz said Austria needs to get as close as it can to an infection level of 50 new cases per 100,000 residents over 7 days. The figure now stands at 131.

He said the plan is to reopen shops, schools and other services such as hairdressers on Feb. 8. But he said it won't be possible to reopen restaurants and hotels in February.

LONDON — The U.K. government plans to offer a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to every adult by September as the nation's health care system battles the worst crisis in its 72-year-history.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Sunday that the government will soon begin a trial of round the clock injections at some locations as it continues to add more vaccination sites to increase the pace of delivery. The National Health Service opened a mass vaccination center on Saturday at the historic Salisbury Cathedral, where injections were accompanied by organ music.

"Our target is by September to have offered all the adult population a first dose," he told Sky News. "If we can do it faster than that, great, but that's the road map."

Britain has more than 51 million adults in its population of 67.5 million people.

The ambitious vaccination program comes amid crushing pressures on the National Health Service. Already beleaguered hospitals are admitting another COVID-19 patient every 30 seconds, putting the service in its most precarious situation ever, said Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England.

MADRID — Spain on Sunday started to administer the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at nursing homes.

Spain has administered 768,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, according to the health ministry. Spain is also rolling out the Moderna vaccine, with less than 500 doses administered as of Friday. The government has pledged to vaccinate 70% of Spain's 47 million inhabitants by summer.

Also on Sunday, Spain's government appealed to a court to overturn a decision by the regional authorities in Castilla y León to start its nightly curfew at 8:00 p.m., outside the range of 10 p.m.-12 p.m. established by the nation's state of emergency.

Health Minister Salvador Illa tells the El País newspaper that regional authorities "already have at their disposal the legal tools necessary to bend the curve" of infections. He left open the possibility of adjusting those tools, yet discarded the option of another at-home lockdown order like the one used in March and April.

Illá blamed family gatherings during the Christmas holidays for a sharp rise in infections. On Friday, Spain reported 49,197 new infections, its highest daily figure yet.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 66 of 81

WASHINGTON -- Dr. Anthony Fauci is calling the confusion over a federal reserve stockpile of COVID-19 vaccines to help ramp up state distribution a likely "misunderstanding."

The government's top infectious diseases expert says he's not exactly sure what happened after the Trump administration said last week it would release doses right away rather than hold second doses in reserve -- only to find that no such stockpile actually existed. President-elect Joe Biden was the first to initially announce the government would immediately release the doses when he took office.

Fauci tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that Gen. Gustavo Perna, who is overseeing distribution, explained that the government had actually started to release the second doses late last year after it became clear that vaccine production had become "consistent."

Several governors have expressed exasperation after being assured last week that the federal government had enough vaccine stockpiled to speed up or expand state rollouts.

INDIANAPOLIS — An Indianapolis man and woman who were married for more than three decades died one day apart from COVID-19.

WRTV-TV reports Ernest "Ronald" and Ann Wilkins, ages 66 and 59, were married for 33 years.

Friends and family described their deep connection and said they had been planning to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

Ronald died Jan. 8 and Ann, a former Indianapolis school teacher, died the following day.

Health officials say Indiana logged 3,228 more confirmed COVID-19 cases and 24 additional deaths on Sunday.

BELGRADE, Serbia — Vaccines from the West, Russia or China? Or none at all? That dilemma faces nations in southeastern Europe, where coronavirus vaccination campaigns are off to a slow start — overshadowed by heated political debates and conspiracy theories.

In countries like the Czech Republic, Serbia, Bosnia, Romania and Bulgaria, vaccine skeptics have included former presidents and even some doctors. Serbian tennis champion Novak Djokovic was among those who said he did not want to be forced to get inoculated.

False beliefs that the coronavirus is a hoax or that vaccines would inject microchips into people have spread in the countries that were formerly under harsh Communist rule. Those who once routinely underwent mass inoculations are deeply split over whether to get the vaccines at all.

Only about 200,000 people applied for the vaccine in Serbia, a country of 7 million, in the days after authorities opened the procedure. By contrast, 1 million Serbians signed up for 100 euros (\$120) on the first day the government offered the pandemic aid.

Hoping to encourage vaccinations, Serbian officials have gotten their shots on TV. Yet they themselves have been split over whether to get the Western-made Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or Russia's Sputnik V. Doses of vaccine from China's Sinopharm arrived Saturday.

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's planning minister says the country's drug regulatory authority has approved the use of Oxford-AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine and the government is trying to make it available by the first quarter of the year.

Asad Umar, who is also the head of the national agency for COVID-19, told Geo TV that the vaccine in the first phase will be administered to health workers and those aged 65 and above.

Umar said the Chinese company CanSino is also holding clinical trials in Pakistan and hoped its vaccine would also be registered next month.

He said Pakistan will get the vaccines through the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, or GAVI, and other alternative international sources. The AstraZeneca vaccine is being prepared in India, which has strained relations with rival Pakistan and says it will prioritize its own population.

Pakistan reported 2,521 new cases and 43 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 67 of 81

BEIJING — China on Sunday reported 109 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, two-thirds of them in a northern province that abuts Beijing, and no deaths.

There were 72 new cases in Hebei province, where the government is building isolation hospitals with a total of 9,500 rooms to combat an upsurge in infections, according to the National Health Commission.

China had largely contained the virus that first was detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019 but has reported hundreds of new infections since December. The Health Commission on Saturday blamed them on travelers and imported goods it said brought the virus from abroad.

China's death toll stands at 4,653 out of 88,227 total cases.

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana has identified the state's first case of a coronavirus variant believed to be more transmissible than the original.

The governor's office said Saturday the case was detected in a person in the New Orleans area.

The variant, first detected in Britain, has alarmed officials in many nations because studies indicate it may spread more easily than other viral strains. Gov. John Bel Edwards issued a statement saying it is urgent "that everyone double down on the mitigation measures that we know are effective in reducing the spread of the virus."

Edwards noted that the variant has been detected in at least 15 other states.

WILMINGTON, Del. — President-elect Joe Biden introduced his team of scientific advisers on Saturday, saying they will lead with "science and truth. We believe in both."

Biden is elevating the position of science adviser to Cabinet level, a White House first. He called Eric Lander, a pioneer in mapping the human genome is in line to be director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, "one of the most brilliant guys I know."

Lander is the founding director of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard and was the lead author of the first paper announcing the details of the human genome.

Lander says Biden has tasked his advisers and "the whole scientific community and the American public" to "rise to this moment."

As the rollout of coronavirus vaccines begins, the U.S. leads the world with 23.6 million cases and more than 393,000 confirmed deaths.

National Guard sleeping in the Capitol an echo of Civil War

By ALLEN G. BREED AP National Writer

To most Americans, the sight of armed National Guard troops sleeping in the Capitol Rotunda this past week was shocking and disturbing. To me, it was an echo of the far-distant past.

"Don't despond," Maj. Bowman Bigelow Breed wrote to his anxious wife back home in Massachusetts as his comrades lounged around him on the polished marble floors in the grand hall that was now their bivouac. "You must know by this time that we are here in safety. We may have to fight but my own opinion is that the overwhelming force concentrated here will prevent an attack."

Insurrection was in the air, and these citizen soldiers had been called up to secure the seat of government.

The date was April 27, 1861. The writer was surgeon of the 8th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia.

My great-grandfather.

Having transcribed my great-grandparents' Civil War correspondence, I knew that Bowman's unit had spent the first days of the war bivouacked in what he called "the Hall of the Dome." Harper's Weekly published an illustration of the 8th's men, their weapons leaned against the marble walls or stacked, bayonets intertwined, like fodder shocks in a farmer's field.

"I wish you could look in on us this morning and see how comfortably we are settled here," he wrote in that first missive, scribbled on letterhead for the "Thirty Sixth Congress House of representatives."

The regiment called itself "the Minutemen," after those New England patriots who grabbed their muskets and rushed to face the Redcoats at Lexington and Concord in April 1775. My great-grandmother, Hannah

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 68 of 81

Pope Breed, was descended from one of those men.

And, so, when President Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the insurrection of the Southern states, there was no question but that Bowman -- privileged son of a wealthy industrialist -- would go.

The 8th headed south just four days after rebels opened fire on Fort Sumter. Passing through hostile territory in slaveholding Maryland, Bowman was unable to fulfill his promise to write every day.

"How I have suffered when I knew that all communication was cut off and that you were torn hour after hour by the terrible suspense of hope deferred," he apologized to Hannah, who was left alone to care for their infant son, Isaiah. "Don't despond my darling. God will preserve us all and in time of war you must have faith in the handy old proverb that no news is good news."

While the enlisted men slept in the rotunda, the 10 officers shared a small room just off the main hall.

"A little room opening from that serves for my hospital, very small and very inconvenient," Bowman wrote. "I have not been able to open my medical stores yet and can use only what I can carry about in my bag. I have been on the run ever since I came here, trying to arrange matters, but red tape rules here and I have been referred from one to another till I am tired out."

The Capitol was undergoing a massive expansion. The regimental chaplain held services in the old Senate chamber.

"The men all stood in a circle with the officers on one side and the chaplain in the centre," he wrote. "He made a very appropriate prayer and then we all sang, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'"

The day after their arrival, Bowman and his comrades were treated to a visit from Secretary of State William H. Seward and the president himself.

"We were all introduced and had quite a chat with them," he wrote. "They were both in good spirits. Lincoln said that if the city had been as unprotected then as it was a week before it would have been taken."

The regiment was drawn up, Bowman said, "and the Pres made them a little speech." It was early in the Republican's first term, and most did not yet know what to make of this "dirty Hoosier," as Hannah referred to the Kentucky-born, Indiana-bred Lincoln.

"All that has ever been said of Lincoln's awkwardness is mild compared with the reality," Bowman wrote. "Some of his gestures would make the fortune of a circus clown."

Nonetheless, the new president inspired confidence in the citizen soldiers.

"The men gave three cheers for Lincoln, three for Seward and three rouses for the Union," Bowman wrote. When the 8th was stationed there, the higher, more ornate Capitol dome was not yet complete. As the war dragged on, critics suggested that the costly work be halted.

Lincoln felt otherwise.

"If people see the Capitol going on," he said, "it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on."

Bowman would serve throughout the entire war. As painful as their separation would be, he told Hannah in that first letter from Washington, he hoped that the struggle was "the means God in his goodness has provided to remove the dark cloud under which we have seemed to be resting for so long."

"I have faith to believe that all our steps are ordered for the best," he wrote. "Let our prayers mingle now as heretofore and all the blessing of a holy calm will descend, to strengthen us."

Allen G. Breed, a native of Lynn, Massachusetts, is based in Raleigh, North Carolina.

'Little old West Virginia' sets pace on vaccine rollout

By CUNEYD DIL Associated Press

KENOVA, W.Va. (AP) — Griffith & Feil Drug has been in business since 1892, a family-owned, small-town pharmacy. This isn't their first pandemic.

More than a century after helping West Virginians confront the Spanish flu in 1918, the drugstore in Kenova, a community of about 3,000 people, is helping the state lead the nation in COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

West Virginia has emerged as an unlikely success in the nation's otherwise chaotic vaccine rollout, largely

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 69 of 81

because of the state's decision to reject a federal partnership with CVS and Walgreens and instead enlist mom-and-pop pharmacies to vaccinate residents against the virus that has killed over 395,000 Americans.

More shots have gone into people's arms per capita across West Virginia than in any other state, with at least 7.5% of the population receiving the first of two shots, according to federal data.

West Virginia was the first in the nation to finish offering first doses to all long-term care centers before the end of December, and the state expects to give second doses at those facilities by the end of January.

"Boy, have we noticed that. I think the West Virginia model is really one that we would love for a lot more states to adopt," said John Beckner, a pharmacist who works at the Alexandria, Virginia-based National Community Pharmacists Association, which advocates for pharmacies across the country.

It's early in the process, but that has not stopped Republican Gov. Jim Justice from proclaiming that the vaccine effort runs counter to preconceived notions about the Mountaineer State.

"Little old West Virginia, that was thought of for hundreds of years, you know, as a place where maybe we were backward or dark or dingy," Justice said last week.

Instead, it turns out that "West Virginia has been the diamond in the rough," Justice said on CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday.

Rather than relying on national chains, 250 local pharmacists set up clinics in rural communities. The fact that residents who may be wary of the vaccine seem to trust them makes a difference.

"As my uncle always told me, these people aren't your customers, they're your friends and neighbors," said Ric Griffith, the pharmacist at Griffith & Feil in Kenova, a town near the Kentucky state line.

A chatty raconteur and former mayor of Kenova, he can recall generations of patrons frequenting the shop, which is almost unchanged since the 1950s, with a soda fountain and jukebox in the front and prescriptions in the back.

Griffith, 71, began taking over the pharmacy from his father in the early 1990s and was elected to the House of Delegates as a Democrat last year. His daughter, Heidi Griffith Romero, 45, followed into the family business and is also administering shots.

Holding a vaccination clinic at the town high school, he recalled his uncle telling him he lost four classmates to the 1918 flu pandemic, which killed more than 50 million people worldwide.

"And it was a tragedy that I thought I would never be involved with," he said, taking a break from giving vaccines to teachers aged 50 and over.

When Mark Hayes, a middle school guidance counselor in Kenova, walked up to receive his first dose, he spotted Griffith, who holds local celebrity status for hosting an extravagant annual Halloween pumpkin-carving party that attracts thousands.

"I recognized him right away," Hayes said. "The Pumpkin King? Are you giving me the shot?"

Kevin Roberts, a 59-year-old school bus driver in Kenova, said "it makes a difference" for a pharmacist he knows to administer the shots. "I hope that a lot of these skeptics change their mind," he said.

Officials also credit a 50-person command center at the state's National Guard headquarters in the capital of Charleston. Inside a cavernous hall, leaders of the vaccine operation and state health officials sit between plexiglass dividers to oversee shipments of the precious doses to five hubs. From there, deliveries go to drugstores and local health departments.

CVS has so far declined to work with state officials on vaccinating people at its stores, but Walgreens is participating and has joined in to hold clinics at some nursing homes, officials said.

The federal partnership involving both companies would have allowed Washington officials to dictate the terms of nursing home vaccinations, said Marty Wright, the head of the West Virginia Health Care Association, which represents health care companies.

"If the state would've activated the federal plan, the state would've had zero control over the situation," Wright said.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar praised West Virginia's efforts to vaccinate the elderly.

"Expanding eligibility to all of the vulnerable is the fastest way to protect the vulnerable," Azar said Tuesday at an Operation Warp Speed meeting. He also highlighted Connecticut as a bright spot in the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 70 of 81

vaccine rollout.

Given West Virginia's success so far, leaders are now seeking more doses so they can open vaccinations for more groups. The Griffith & Feil store has had to decline shots for out-of-state customers who caught word of West Virginia's success.

The governor recently lowered the age of eligibility for members of the general public to 70.

The efforts have not been without errors. The Boone County Health Department was barred from distributing the vaccine last month after it mistakenly gave 44 people an antibody treatment instead of vaccines.

The state began vaccinating school workers aged 50 or older less than two weeks ago. The governor wants in-person learning to resume at as many schools as possible by Tuesday, long before teachers will have received their second vaccine doses.

As of Sunday, over 130,100 first doses have been administered, and 23,066 people have received both shots in the state with a population of about 1.78 million people. Nearly 55,800 of the first doses have gone to residents aged 65 and older.

Mitchel Rothholz, who leads immunization policy at the American Pharmacists Association, said other governors would be wise to enlist local pharmacies.

"Especially at a time when you have vaccine hesitancy and concerns in vaccine confidence, having access to a health care provider like a community pharmacist provides a comfort level to the patients and communities," Rothholz added.

Associated Press Writer John Raby contributed to this report.

Israel OKs hundreds of settlement homes in last-minute push

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli authorities on Sunday advanced plans to build nearly 800 homes in West Bank settlements, in a last-minute surge of approvals before the friendly Trump administration leaves office later this week.

COGAT, the Israeli defense body that authorizes settlement construction, confirmed the approvals, which drew swift condemnations from the Palestinians.

The anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now said that over 90% of the homes lay deep inside the West Bank, which the Palestinians seek as the heartland of a future independent state, and over 200 homes were located in unauthorized outposts that the government had decided to legalize.

Israel has stepped up settlement construction during President Donald Trump's term. According to Peace Now, Israel approved or advanced construction of over 12,000 settlement homes in 2020, the highest number in a single year since it began recording statistics in 2012.

"By promoting hundreds of settlement units, Prime Minister Netanyahu is once again putting his personal political interests over those of the country," the group said. "Not only will this settlement activity erode the possibility for a conflict-ending resolution with the Palestinians in the long-term, but in the short-term it needlessly sets Israel on a collision course with the incoming Biden administration."

Netanyahu's office said last week he would seek approvals for the latest construction projects. They include 100 homes in Tal Menashe, a settlement where an Israeli woman was killed last month in an attack for which a Palestinian man has been charged.

The Palestinians claim all of the West Bank, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, as part of a future independent state. They say the growing settler population, approaching some 500,000 people, makes it increasingly difficult to achieve their dream of independence.

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said Sunday's decision marked a "preemptive attempt by the Israeli government to undermine any effort that the U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's administration might make to relaunch the stalled peace process."

Jordan, which borders the West Bank, and the European Union also condemned the Israeli announcement. The EU said it is "contrary to international law and further undermines the prospects of a viable

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 71 of 81

two-state solution.”

A string of U.S. administrations, along with the rest of the international community, opposed settlement construction. But Trump, surrounded by a team of advisers with close ties to the settler movement, took a different approach. His administration did not criticize Israeli settlement announcements, and in a landmark decision, announced in 2018 that it did not consider settlements to be illegal under international law.

As a result, Israel approved plans for over 27,000 settler homes during Trump’s four-year term, more than 2.5 times the number approved during the Obama administration’s second term, according to Peace Now.

Biden is expected to return to the traditional U.S. position of opposing settlements, setting the stage for a possible clash with Netanyahu.

Dog and goat serving as mayor raise money for a playground

FAIR HAVEN, Vt. (AP) — A goat and a dog who were each elected mayor have helped raise money to renovate a Vermont community playground.

The oddball idea of pet mayor elections to raise money to rehabilitate the playground and to help get local kids civically involved came from a local town manager.

In 2018, Fair Haven residents elected Lincoln the goat as its honorary mayor. Lincoln helped raise about \$10,000 while the current mayor, Murfee, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, has raised \$20,000, Town Manager Joe Gunter told the Rutland Herald. The town chipped in another \$20,000.

Murfee’s owner, Linda Barker, said that when she was talked into having Murfee get involved in politics, she thought it would be easy to raise money through T-shirts. Then the pandemic struck.

So she shifted to masks. She’s made nearly 1,000 of them, and will be making another round of them for Valentine’s Day. She raised more than \$5,000 from the masks and a similar amount from basket raffles.

The town was also recently awarded a \$50,000 grant from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, she said.

Ironically, the honorary mayor is not welcome on the playground. Barker said there’s a “no dogs allowed” sign.

“Murfee is going to take that up with the town,” Barker said Sunday with a chuckle. “He’s going to contest that.”

In inaugural address, Biden will appeal to national unity

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden will deliver an appeal to national unity when he is sworn in Wednesday and plans immediate moves to combat the coronavirus pandemic and undo some of President Donald Trump’s most controversial policies, his incoming chief of staff said Sunday.

Biden intends a series of executive actions in his first hours after his inauguration, an opening salvo in what is shaping up as a 10-day blitz of steps to reorient the country without waiting for Congress, aide Ron Klain said.

Klain told CNN’s “State of the Union” that Biden, in his inaugural address to the nation, will deliver “a message of moving this country forward. A message of unity. A message of getting things done.”

Biden will end Trump’s restriction on immigration to the U.S. from some Muslim-majority countries, move to rejoin the Paris climate accord and mandate mask-wearing on federal property and during interstate travel. Those are among roughly a dozen actions Biden will take on his first day in the White House, incoming chief of staff Ron Klain said Saturday in a memo to senior staff.

Other actions include extending the pause on student loan payments and actions meant to prevent evictions and foreclosures for those struggling during the pandemic.

“These executive actions will deliver relief to the millions of Americans that are struggling in the face of these crises,” Klain said in the memo. “President-elect Biden will take action — not just to reverse the gravest damages of the Trump administration — but also to start moving our country forward.”

Incoming White House communications director Kate Bedingfield said Biden would use his address to

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 72 of 81

the American people to appeal to those frustrated by the rancor of Washington and to explain how his administration will tackle the nation's challenges.

"I think you can expect that this will be a moment where President-elect Biden will really work to try to turn the page on the divisiveness and the hatred over the last four years and really lay out a positive, optimistic vision for the country, and lay out a way -- lay out a path forward that really calls on all of us to work together," she told "Fox News Sunday."

Despite the flurry of expected executive action, "full achievement" of Biden's goals will require Congress to act, Klain said memo, and that includes the \$1.9 trillion virus relief bill that Biden outlined last Thursday. Klain said that Biden would also propose a comprehensive immigration bill to lawmakers on his first day in office.

Some lawmakers have already balked at the aid bill's price tag, and immigration overhaul efforts over the past decade and a half have all stalled in Congress. Still, Klain expressed optimism.

"I think there are people in both parties we can work with to move this agenda forward," Klain said Sunday, noting voters elected a 50-50 Senate, where Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will serve as the tie-breaking vote. "We're going to have to find ways to get Democrats and Republicans to work together to get things done."

Providing a path to citizenship for millions of immigrants in the U.S. illegally will be part of Biden's agenda, according to people briefed on his plans.

Ali Noorani, president of the National Immigration Forum and among those briefed, said immigrants would be put on an eight-year path. There would be a faster track for those in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which shields people from deportation who came to the U.S. as children, and for those from strife-torn countries with temporary status.

On Thursday, the new president's second day in office, Biden would sign orders related to the COVID-19 outbreak aimed at reopening schools and businesses and expanding virus testing, Klain said. The following day, Friday, will see action on providing economic relief to those suffering the economic costs of the pandemic.

In the following week, Klain said, Biden would take additional actions relating to criminal justice reform, climate change and immigration — including a directive to speed the reuniting of families separated at the U.S.-Mexico border under Trump's policies.

More actions will be added, Klain said, once they clear legal review.

Incoming presidents traditionally move swiftly to sign an array of executive actions when they take office. Trump did the same, but he found many of his orders challenged and even rejected by courts.

Klain maintained that Biden should not suffer similar issues, saying "the legal theory behind them is well-founded and represents a restoration of an appropriate, constitutional role for the President."

Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

Portraits of US voters, assessing this moment in history

By The Associated Press undefined

After more than 1,400 days of Donald Trump's presidency -- after two bitter elections, two impeachments, more than 26,000 presidential tweets and four years of near-constant upheaval -- it is left to American voters to tally it all up.

Where they are. How they got here. Regrets and rage, trepidation and hope.

The Associated Press talked with Americans of all political stripes and asked them to assess this astonishing moment in their country's history. They do not necessarily fall into neat categories: There are two Air Force veterans, one a Black investor who admires Trump, the other a white retired major who bemoans what has become of the Republican party.

While some expressed confidence that the days ahead will find their country in a better place, others said they were fearful of the future, whether because of the violence displayed at the Capitol in recent

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 73 of 81

days or because of concerns about the incoming Biden administration.

They offered broad smiles for these portraits, posing in or near their homes in the East, the South, the Midwest. But all, to some degree, bemoaned the discord that has beset the United States.

"We have become more Democrats and Republicans than we are Americans," said Trump supporter Bobby Mitchell.

JEFF BUTCHER considered himself a non-political centrist before he came to admire Trump, who would "run the country like it was a business." He praises Trump for fighting to protect jobs and industries from foreign competition. The 51-year-old welder at a forklift factory in Celina, Ohio, feels the election was rigged and leftists were behind the attack on the Capitol, though there is no evidence that either is true. And while he hopes "everything goes smooth" with Joe Biden, he fears what Democrats will do -- and he wants Trump to run again in 2024.

CYNTHIA MORRAZ, a 26-year-old student at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis, volunteered to help with early voting there. She feels the incoming administration will be more inclusive, and hopes it will find a permanent solution for young immigrants who arrived as children and are in the country illegally. And Morraz says the background of the new vice president, Kamala Harris, will be beneficial: "To see a woman of color in such a leadership position, and someone who embodies the immigrant experience and is a product of that is so uplifting for so many of our communities."

FRANK AYLLON does not regret voting for Trump twice. Ayllon, a 37-year-old food services consultant in Miami, credits Trump with dispelling political correctness, with bringing jobs back from overseas and regaining international respect for America. But he decries the violence committed by Trump supporters -- "The rioting, the looting, the antifa methods. We are doing the same thing." -- and says he thinks Biden's respectful personality will serve the country well. Ayllon says he will support the elected president, regardless of whether he voted for that candidate: "I am an American at the end of the day."

JASON PRATS tried to argue with fellow Latinos who supported Donald Trump, pointing out that he had curtailed immigration and restricted asylum. He thinks the reason he was unsuccessful was the influence of disinformation in social media and on the Internet. Prats, 30, works in accounting and finance in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; he thinks Biden will be a "great model" who will restore America's character, and that Republicans will work with him. "It's not going to be perfect. Politics is never perfect, but at least never as bad as it has been."

BOBBY MITCHELL feels authorities should have ordered a recount he says was needed to restore confidence in the electoral process. While the 39-year-old investor and Air Force veteran from Columbus, Ohio, does not condone the violence at the Capitol -- "any patriot should not support that type of behavior" -- Mitchell, who is Black, thinks Black Lives Matter demonstrators do not receive the same scrutiny. He praises Trump for "taking care of Americans first in every trade deal," though "I don't think there's any Republican that I know that agrees with everything" the president has done.

SUE-ANN DIVITO has never been as politically active as she has been for the past four years. A 58-year-old real estate agent from Solebury, Pennsylvania, she helped start a local pro-immigrant organization and went to the Mexican border to protest the Trump administration policy that separated immigrant children from their parents. She deplores the nation's divisions, and the "toxic mentality" of some Trump supporters she knows. And she hopes that this is the beginning of an era of political involvement, that "people stay engaged and not think 'Hey, everything is going to be fine.'"

SANDY ATKINS is 59, but she never voted for president -- until 2020, when the self-described Christian from Syracuse, Indiana, cast her ballot for Trump. "I like that he won't back down," she says. She hoped

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 74 of 81

until Jan. 6 that God would intervene and keep Trump in office; if Biden had won fairly, "I think everyone, even Donald Trump, would have accepted that." Now, she says, there is too much hatred, and a lack of trust that will lead people not to vote. Will she vote again? "If Donald Trump runs again, yes."

COLE SHEPHERD left the Air Force just two years ago, and 2020 was a jarring return to civilian life. After so many years "in a rather ordered society, where everybody has a single agreed upon set of facts and way the world works, to confront the messiness of the last year was surprising," says Shepherd, 60, a retired major who lives in Gallatin, Tennessee. A centrist Democrat, he voted for Biden, believing that the former vice president might repair relations with U.S. allies. "The Republican Party has moved so far to the right."

KENNETH EATON, a 63-year-old Nashville businessman, was proud to serve as a Trump delegate at the Republican National Convention in 2016. Trump has been a great president, he says, but should have conceded: "It's like when you're 6 inches short of the touchdown you need to win the Super Bowl. It happened, you lost, and you have to move on." Biden, he says, is "a nice guy," and he hopes his administration will succeed. "I don't believe we'll have as much turmoil," he says, "but at the same time I don't believe we'll get as much done."

LATRICIA ROBINSON never liked Donald Trump: "I see him as the Antichrist. I'm sorry. I do. He's evil. Pure evil." Robinson, a 48-year-old Black woman who works in health care in St. Petersburg, Florida, was incensed when Trump challenged votes in states like Georgia -- part and parcel, she says, of efforts to silence Black voices. The election of Biden and Harris has made her hopeful, as have the results of the Georgia runoff election. "The African American women did get out to vote. It's always been the African American women, the queens," she says.

AP reporters Adriana Gomez Licon, Tamara Lush and Nicholas Riccardi contributed to this story.

UK aims to give 1st COVID-19 shot to all adults by September

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. government plans to offer a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to every adult by September as the nation's health care system battles the worst crisis in its 72-year-history.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Sunday that the government will soon begin a trial of round the clock injections at some locations as it continues to add more vaccination sites to increase the pace of delivery. The National Health Service opened a mass vaccination center on Saturday at the historic Salisbury Cathedral, where injections were accompanied by organ music.

"Our target is by September to have offered all the adult population a first dose," he told Sky News. "If we can do it faster than that, great, but that's the road map."

Britain has more than 51 million adults in its population of 67.5 million people.

The ambitious vaccination program comes amid crushing pressures on the National Health Service. Already beleaguered hospitals are admitting another COVID-19 patient every 30 seconds, putting the service in its most precarious situation ever, said Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England.

"The facts are very clear and I'm not going to sugarcoat them, hospitals are under extreme pressure and staff are under extreme pressure," he told the BBC. "Since Christmas Day we've seen another 15,000 increase in the in-patients in hospitals across England. That's the equivalent of filling 30 hospitals full of coronavirus patients."

Britain's health care system is staggering as doctors and nurses battle a more contagious variant of the coronavirus coupled with cold, wet winter weather that drives people inside, where infections spread more easily.

The surge in infections has pushed the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 to a record 37,475,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 75 of 81

more than 73% higher than during the first peak of the pandemic in April. Britain has reported 88,747 coronavirus-related deaths, more than any other country in Europe and the fifth-highest number worldwide.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Jan. 2 ordered England into its third national lockdown in an effort to slow the spread of the virus and protect the NHS, which Stevens said now has some 50,000 employees off work due to COVID-19 infections and exposure quarantines.

The government says it won't review the lockdown measures until mid-February, by which time it plans to offer at least one dose of vaccine to everyone over 70, as well as to frontline health care workers and others who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

Once that goal has been reached, the U.K. will offer the vaccine to everyone over 50 before finally moving on to everyone over 18.

Unlike other nations, Britain has chosen to stretch out the time between vaccine doses from 21 days to up to 12 weeks — a decision that means more people will get at least one dose more quickly.

Britain has approved three vaccines — ones by Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna. The first two are already being used, while the Moderna doses are not expected until spring.

Meanwhile, vaccination centers are being opened in England at some of the country's great cathedrals. Salisbury Cathedral, which also houses a copy of the Magna Carta, opened its great nave to the public. Others will follow as the rollout continues.

Organ music played as the jabs were delivered at Salisbury. Requests were taken.

"I doubt that anyone is having a jab in surroundings that are more beautiful than this, so I hope it will ease people as they come into the building," said the Very Rev. Nicholas Papadopoulos, Dean of Salisbury.

Follow AP coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at:

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

<https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

The Latest: Springsteen, Miranda set for inaugural gala

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on President Donald Trump's impeachment, President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration and the fallout from the Jan. 6 attack of the Capitol by pro-Trump loyalists (all times local): 9:05 a.m.

Actor-playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda and rockers Jon Bon Jovi and Bruce Springsteen are among the stars who will highlight a prime-time virtual celebration televised Wednesday night after Joe Biden is inaugurated as the 46th president.

Biden's inaugural committee announced the lineup Sunday for "Celebrating America," a multinetwide broadcast that the committee bills as a mix of stars and everyday citizens.

Miranda, who wrote and starred in Broadway's "Hamilton," will appear for a classical recitation. Musicians John Legend, Demi Lovato and Justin Timberlake, among others, will join Springsteen and Bon Jovi. Actresses Kerry Washington and Eva Longoria will act as hostesses, with former NBA star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar also scheduled to appear.

The segments will include tributes to a UPS driver, a kindergarten teacher and Sandra Lindsey, the first American to receive the COVID-19 vaccine outside a clinical trial.

The broadcast is in lieu of traditional inaugural balls. Biden plans still to be sworn in on the Capitol's West Front, but with a scaled-down ceremony because of the coronavirus and tight security after the Jan. 6 violent insurrection on the Capitol as Congress convened to certify his victory.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IMPEACHMENT, THE INAUGURATION AND THE FALLOUT FROM THE JAN. 6 RIOTING AT THE CAPITOL:

Across the country, some statehouses are closed, fences are up and extra police are in place as authorities brace for potentially violent demonstrations over the coming days. The safeguards will remain in place

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 76 of 81

leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Wednesday. Biden plans to roll back some of President Donald Trump's most controversial policies and take steps to address the coronavirus pandemic hours after taking office.

Read more:

- Deceptions in the time of the 'alternative facts' president
- Biden outlines 'Day One' agenda of executive actions
- Gen. Milley key to military continuity as Biden takes office
- Guard troops pour into Washington as states answer the call
- Harris to be sworn in by Justice Sotomayor at inauguration
- Biden to prioritize legal status for millions of immigrants
- Will Trump's mishandling of records leave a hole in history?
- Biden says his advisers will lead with 'science and truth'
- More backlash for GOP's Hawley as Loews Hotel cancels event

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON:

8 a.m.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will resign her Senate seat on Monday, two days before she and President-elect Joe Biden are inaugurated.

Aides to the California Democrat confirm the timing and say Gov. Gavin Newsom is aware of her decision. That clears the way for Newsom to appoint fellow Democrat Alex Padilla, now California's secretary of state, to serve the final two years of Harris' term.

Padilla will be the first Latino senator from California, where about 40% of residents are Hispanic.

Harris will give no farewell Senate floor speech. The Senate isn't scheduled to reconvene until Tuesday, the eve of Inauguration Day.

3 a.m.

The threat of extremist groups descending on state capitals in a series of demonstrations Sunday prompted governors to roll out a massive show of force and implement tight security measures at statehouses across the country.

Fencing, boarded-up windows and lines of police and National Guard troops have transformed statehouse grounds ahead of expected demonstrations leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Wednesday.

The stepped-up security measures were intended to safeguard seats of government from the type of violence that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, when a mob supporting President Donald Trump overran the building while Congress was certifying the Electoral College vote.

The FBI has warned of the potential for armed protests in the nation's capital and all 50 state capitals. Some social media messages had targeted Sunday for demonstrations, though it remained unclear how many people might show up.

Beetle keeps rivals off scent of food buried for offspring

By MARION RENAULT Associated Press

Some beetles go to great — and disgusting — lengths for their children.

They scout for a dead mouse or bird, dig a hole and bury it, pluck its fur or feathers, roll its flesh into a ball and cover it in goop — all to feed their future offspring.

Now scientists think that goo might do more than just slow decay. It also appears to hide the scent of the decomposing bounty and boosts another odor that repels competitors.

"It helps them to hide their resource from others," said Stephen Trumbo, who studies animal behavior at the University of Connecticut and led the new research, published Thursday in *The American Naturalist*. "They try to keep everyone away."

The beetles — called burying beetles — aren't the only creatures who try to deceive their competitors or

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 77 of 81

prey with subtle, sneaky tactics. Large blue butterflies, for example, will imitate certain sounds to manipulate ants. Corpse flowers produce rotting odors to attract insect pollinators that feed on decomposing matter.

The importance of these interactions are being recognized more and more, said Alexandre Figueiredo, a biologist at University of Zurich, who was not involved in the new study.

Burying beetles and other things that feed on dead animals — including vultures, opossums and maggots — race each other to track down carcasses. Competition is stiff even among burying beetles, which use special antennae to detect the remains from afar.

Burying beetles are relatively large, about an inch long, and black with orange markings. The gut secretions they spread on a carcass are antibacterial, and slow down decomposition. Trumbo and his colleagues wondered whether they also prevented rivals from picking up the scent.

To find out, they collected the gases wafting off dead hairless mice preserved by a kind of burying beetle that is found in forests across North America. The researchers then compared the gases to those from untouched carcasses.

The beetle-prepped ones gave off much less of an onion-smelling compound that usually attracts burying beetles to fresh remains. They also discovered an increase in another gas from decay that's known to deter other insects that feed on dead animals.

Next, they dropped off the dead mice in a Connecticut forest. They found the beetle's rivals were less likely to discover the ones covered in goop.

"If you can deter other scavengers, even for a little bit of time, it can buy you a lot," said Daniel Rozen, a biologist at Leiden University in the Netherlands who was not involved in the new study.

Follow at @MarionRenault on Twitter

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Deceptions in the time of the 'alternative facts' president

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Truth caught up with Donald Trump after years of giving chase.

The twice-impeached president painted a fantasy world in office, starring himself. In this world, he did things bigger, better, more boldly than all who came before him while facing enemies more pernicious than any in creation.

In service of his ego, his nature and his reelection prospects, he said things that were not only wrong, but the precise opposite of right. He said them over and over, in leaps and bounds, and no less so when the deceptions were exposed.

We're rounding the corner on the virus, he said repeatedly, when the obvious reality was that the most lethal stage of the pandemic was just picking up. On the cusp of this danger, he spread the suspicion that masks make you more vulnerable to COVID-19, not less.

Then came his election defeat and a menacing twist in his life history of assaulting the facts.

That's when Trump, primed for months to declare the election stolen from him, spun a web of deception and denialism in an effort to overturn the will of voters, pairing his words with furious action in the courts and intimidation of election officials. This all exploded in violent insurrection at the Capitol by followers inflamed by his sustained and flamboyant lie.

The United States, that self-described beacon of democracy, that supposed shining city on a hill, came under the flickering shadow of his gaslight.

"Who's the banana republic now?" asked newspaper headlines an ocean apart in Kenya and Colombia.

Trump leaves Joe Biden with repair work to do on the government's credibility in a country where millions went along with their president's fantastical ride — believing his persistent falsehoods about masks, election fraud, socialists in the halls of power, antifa rampant in the streets, his tormenters at every turn.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 78 of 81

It's a legacy of "magical thinking," said Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland. "They have a full-blown independent reality, totally cut apart from the world of facts." He said that is the road to fascism. Wherever that road goes, it's up to Biden to try to lead the way back.

THE BULWARK

Two of Trump's legacies collided with each other while he was still in power.

One was his success in reshaping federal courts and the Supreme Court along conservative lines, an achievement bound to affect the direction of the country for years. The other was his signature capacity for disinformation, also for the history books.

In psychology, gaslighting means manipulating people to question their own perceptions, memories or even sanity. It tends not to work so well on judges.

The courts proved to be the bulwark against Trump's machinations. The three justices he placed on the high court did nothing to help him when they had the chance. Dozens of federal judges — Trump nominees among them — blocked his course, finding no merit in his complaints of voting and counting fraud.

Yet he had waged the fight with the support of legions of his voters and more than 100 Republican members of Congress who supported his challenge of Biden's election certification on the same false pretenses peddled by Trump.

"It really matters that the president of the United States is an arsonist of radicalization," Kori Schake, a senior national security and State Department aide in the George W. Bush administration, told a postelection conference. She dared hope "it will really help when that's no longer the case."

By being so determinedly loose with the truth, Trump stayed true to character in the White House.

The arc of his life reveals insistent fabrication and exaggeration, as well as one vast understatement, attributed to him in his memoir and singular in its audacity: "A little hyperbole never hurts."

A little?

'THE VACCINE IS ME'

In his days as a publicity hungry real estate developer in New York, he would pretend to be a publicist named John Miller as he got on the phone with the press and planted flattering secrets about Donald Trump, such as "actresses just call to see if they can go out with him and things."

His deceptions would start to take on much larger dimensions with deeper consequences, as when he tried to perpetuate the lie that President Barack Obama was not born in the U.S. and thus was an illegitimate president. The lie so seeped into the public consciousness that Obama's White House felt compelled to issue a copy of his birth certificate to counter it.

Then in office, Trump used the extraordinary reach and power of the presidency to tell Americans not to believe what they could see with their own eyes.

Trump underplayed the threat the coronavirus posed while admitting he knew better. For weeks in the fall he spoke of the U.S. "rounding the corner" on the pandemic even as infections rose across the country. He further encouraged his believers to let down their guard by telling them that most people who wear masks get COVID-19, which is far from the truth.

Throughout his term, to go with Trump's flow was to suspend logic, to disdain arithmetic, to ignore that his latest statement contradicted what he said days before. It meant buying into "alternative facts" — a phrase that spurred sales of George Orwell's dystopian book "1984" when it was coined by a Trump aide.

He hailed make-believe economic numbers. He misrepresented his conversations with foreign leaders. He claimed to have saved Christmas from the anti-Christians, declared "the vaccine is me," and bookended his term with baseless claims that both elections were "rigged," even the one he won. (He was sore about losing the popular vote in 2016.)

"It's simply gotten to the point where Donald Trump has told so many lies in so many different ways ... it just makes you wonder if we're living in a post-truth world," said Richard Waterman, a University of Kentucky political science professor who studies the presidency.

Surveys consistently found that Trump's supporters believed him more than objective sources, even when he was clearly and demonstrably wrong. Huge numbers of Americans said they believed the election was fraudulent when Trump told them so, in the face of judges, state and federal election officials, Republican

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 79 of 81

governors and his own attorney general who said it wasn't.

FROM THE STAGE

Trump's fabrications were the racing heartbeat of his rallies. The counterfeit fed the charisma.

At a postelection rally in Georgia, Trump railed for nearly two hours in a speech where it was easier to suss out the true statements than the false ones because there were so few true ones.

The Democrats, he said, "want to rip down buildings and rebuild them with no windows. I like windows."

"They even want to take away your beautiful Christmas that we just got back," he went on, inexplicably.

"We know the Democrats will have dead people voting and you got to watch it — dead people. You wouldn't believe how many illegal aliens from out of the state and they'll be filing out and filling out ballots for people who don't even exist." No such behavior was uncovered in the dozens of courtrooms where Trump's postelection lawsuits went to die.

No matter. Whether his core supporters believed he was speaking the whole truth or not, they believed he was speaking their truth. Never more so than when he went after the elites.

"They beat you down, shut you up and make you retreat," he said in Georgia. "That's what they do."

Sitting atop a sophisticated information-gathering apparatus — the U.S. government — Trump was a sponge for fevered speculations on Twitter or from his favorite right-wing talk shows.

ANATOMY OF A LIE

One day on Twitter, someone tweeted a screenshot of a streaming video of Biden's Thanksgiving address, showing the video was being watched at that one moment on one site by about 1,000 people. Someone on Instagram seized on the number, questioning in a popular video post how Biden could possibly get more than 80 million honest votes when only 1,000 people bothered to watch his holiday remarks.

It was amateur hour in the world of conspiracy theories.

Biden's remarks were watched by millions, as a check of just a sampling of other streaming sources by The Associated Press quickly made clear. But the theory wasn't too silly for the president to put in his quiver.

"I'm shocked to hear that," Trump told his crowd. "They say he had less than a thousand people. How do you have 80 million votes and you have a thousand people?"

The remark captured one of Trump's traits when he was saying something dishonest. He might attribute the claim to an unidentified someone else: "They say."

He would often speak of things he claimed to have seen or heard — somewhere. He saw Muslims in New Jersey dancing in the streets after the 2001 terrorist attacks, he said, citing TV footage no one found.

In October, Trump several times botched the findings of a federal study on masks and the virus. "Just the other day they came out with a statement that 85% of the people that wear masks catch it," he said in an NBC forum in Miami.

"They" didn't say that at all.

"Well that's what I heard and that's what I saw," he said when challenged by NBC's Savannah Guthrie.

He told his Georgia rally last month, as he's told many before, that someone in the Army confided to him, "Sir, we have no ammunition."

So he rushed into the breach, he said, giving soldiers not only bullets and a pay raise but missiles 17 times faster than anything the world had seen. Or four or seven times faster; the number varied by the telling.

"And we now have the greatest, most modern military in the history of our country," Trump told his Georgia crowd. "We have ... hypersonic missiles. We have hypersonic and hydrosonic. You know what hydrosonic is? Water. We have them all."

We don't. Hydrosonic isn't a missile. It's an expensive toothbrush.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

Trump's fraught relationship with the facts extended beyond his own words. Officials who fell under the umbrella of truth-telling or truth-finding ended up in tough spots in his presidency.

He fired or demoted nearly a half dozen inspectors general responsible for calling out waste and fraud in federal departments. The nonpartisan public health scientists who would not echo his rosy take about the pandemic with sufficient enthusiasm, or at all, earned his ire or were sidelined or both.

Among them, Dr. Anthony Fauci took on a security detail for his family because of threats. Some elec-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 80 of 81

tion and state officials did the same when Trump came hard after them with his tweets for refusing to validate his election falsehoods. Innocent, low-level election workers identified by Trump in public forums had to go into hiding.

Intelligence analysts who saw Russian meddling that Trump didn't want to see, disinterested public servants who witnessed and accurately described the pressure campaign on Ukraine that got Trump impeached the first time — these and more were subject to hair-trigger accusations of disloyalty, with consequences.

Mark K. Updegrove, presidential historian and CEO of the LBJ Foundation, said the presidents held highest in the pantheon have been the ones known for their integrity. The converse, he said, "will be a major part of the Trump presidency when we look back at it, his absolute inability to tell the truth consistently."

To be sure, volumes of books are filled with the varied ways presidents of the past disgraced themselves, fought secret wars, undermined their opponents with sketchy tactics, lied about sex, broke big promises or dodged inconvenient truths.

But the systematic deceptions of the "alternative facts" president were unlike anything before.

Attempting to explain her phrase, Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway said there are alternative ways of arriving at the truth. Two plus two equals four, she noted, but so does three plus one.

That's not, though, how Trump rolled. Two plus two would equal an astronomical number in his reckoning. Maybe the biggest number ever. At least that's what they say.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville and Michael Tackett contributed to this report.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Jan. 18, the 18th day of 2021. There are 347 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 18, 1911, the first landing of an aircraft on a ship took place as pilot Eugene B. Ely brought his Curtiss biplane in for a safe landing on the deck of the armored cruiser USS Pennsylvania in San Francisco Harbor.

On this date:

In 1778, English navigator Captain James Cook reached the present-day Hawaiian Islands, which he named the "Sandwich Islands."

In 1782, lawyer and statesman Daniel Webster was born in Salisbury, New Hampshire.

In 1943, during World War II, Jewish insurgents in the Warsaw Ghetto launched their initial armed resistance against Nazi troops, who eventually succeeded in crushing the rebellion. The Soviets announced they'd broken through the long Nazi siege of Leningrad (it was another year before the siege was fully lifted). A U.S. ban on the sale of pre-sliced bread — aimed at reducing bakeries' demand for metal replacement parts — went into effect.

In 1952, Jerome "Curly" Howard of Three Stooges fame died in San Gabriel, Calif., at age 48.

In 1957, a trio of B-52's completed the first non-stop, round-the-world flight by jet planes, landing at March Air Force Base in California after more than 45 hours aloft.

In 1967, Albert DeSalvo, who claimed to be the "Boston Strangler," was convicted of armed robbery, assault and sex offenses. (Sentenced to life, DeSalvo was killed in prison in 1973.)

In 1990, a jury in Los Angeles acquitted former preschool operators Raymond Buckey and his mother, Peggy McMartin Buckey, of 52 child molestation charges.

In 1991, financially strapped Eastern Airlines shut down after more than six decades in business.

In 1993, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was observed in all 50 states for the first time.

In 1998, the motion picture "Titanic" won four Golden Globes, including best drama and best director for James Cameron; "Ally McBeal" beat out "Seinfeld" as the best TV comedy.

In 2005, the world's largest commercial jet, the Airbus A380 "superjumbo" capable of flying up to 800

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Jan. 18, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 198 ~ 81 of 81

passengers, was unveiled in Toulouse, France.

In 2019, Jason Van Dyke, the white Chicago police officer who gunned down Black teenager Laquan McDonald in 2014, was sentenced to nearly seven years in prison.

Ten years ago: Chinese President Hu Jintao arrived at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington for a four-day state visit; President Barack Obama welcomed him with a private dinner in the White House residence. The first director of the Peace Corps, R. Sargent Shriver, died in Bethesda, Maryland, at age 95.

Five years ago: For the first time in 17 years, civil rights leaders gathered at the South Carolina Statehouse to pay homage to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. without the Confederate flag present; it was one of many rallies throughout the country. Eagles co-founder Glenn Frey, 67, died in New York.

One year ago: Ahead of opening statements in the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump, House prosecutors wrote that Trump had "used his official powers to pressure a foreign government to interfere in a United States election for his personal political gain," while Trump's legal team denounced what it called a "brazen and unlawful attempt to overturn the results of the 2016 election." The National Archives said it had made a mistake when it blurred images of anti-Trump signs used in an exhibit on women's suffrage. The World War I film "1917" took top honors at the Producers Guild Awards in Los Angeles. Buckingham Palace said Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, would no longer use the title "royal highness" or receive public funds for their work under a deal allowing them to step aside as senior royals.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director John Boorman is 88. Former Sen. Paul Kirk, D-Mass., is 83. Singer-songwriter Bobby Goldsboro is 80. Comedian-singer-musician Brett Hudson is 68. Actor-director Kevin Costner is 66. Country singer-actor Mark Collie is 65. Actor Mark Rylance is 61. Actor Alison Arngrim (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") is 59. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley is 58. Actor Jane Horrocks is 57. Comedian Dave Attell (uh-TEHL') is 56. Actor Jesse L. Martin is 52. Rapper DJ Quik is 51. Rock singer Jonathan Davis (Korn) is 50. Former NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous is 48. Singer Christian Burns (BBMak) is 47. Actor Derek Richardson is 45. Actor Jason Segel is 41. Actor Samantha Mumba is 38. Country singer Kristy Lee Cook (TV: "American Idol") is 37. Actor Devin Kelley is 35. Actor Ashleigh Murray (TV: "Riverdale") is 33. Actor Zeeko Zaki is 31. Tennis player Angelique Kerber is 33. Actor Mateus Ward is 22.