

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 1 of 80

- [2- Groton Area Staff Spotlight: Thorson](#)
- [3- Upcoming Schedule](#)
- [4- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [8- February 2nd COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [15- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [16- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- American Standard Shower Ad](#)
- [21- News from the Associated Press](#)
- [80- ADT AD](#)



## Game Scores from Last Night

**Boys Varsity: Groton 45, Langford 37**

**Boys JV: Groton 40, Langford 30**

**Boys 8th: Groton 58, Langford 16**

**Girls Varsity: Roncalli 45, Groton 41**

**Girls JV: Roncalli 29, Groton 18**

**Girls C: Groton 27, Roncalli 14**



### **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## Groton Area Staff Spotlight!

Name: Scott Thorson

Occupation: Social Studies Teacher

Length of Teaching Career: 1990-Present



Scott Thorson has been employed as one of Groton Area High School's resident Social Studies teachers for a total of twenty-one non-consecutive years. He teaches students from 6th Grade, 8th Grade, Sophomore, and Senior classes. Mr. Thorson covers a variety of topics including government functions, how to be a good American citizen, and geography.

Scott Thorson started his career in education by teaching in Waubay for four years, teaching at Groton for twelve years after that, and afterwards began moving his focus from teaching to reporting. He was a reporter for the local Keloland news station for five years before returning to his teaching career. When Mr. Thorson left journalism behind to return to teaching, he taught in Conde for four years before returning to Groton, where he has been teaching consecutively for the last 9 years.

Scott Thorson has been involved in South Dakota communities for 30 years in total, spanning two careers and several districts of South Dakota. Along the way, he has seen multiple generations of students come and go. Throughout the years, his conversation-based teaching style has endured, even in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic. Thorson said that the teachers of Groton have had to adapt to the new challenges the pandemic has brought, including preparing work for students both in and out of the classroom and following sanitation procedures. However, Thorson has remained optimistic that the community of Groton will endure these trials together and come out stronger than before.

- Benjamin Higgins

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 3 of 80

## Upcoming Schedule

### Thursday, Feb. 4

Doubleheader Basketball hosting Faulkton. Girls JV (Agtegra) at 4 p.m., Boys JV (Marilyn and Jerry Hearnen) at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by Boys Varsity.

### Friday, Feb. 5

Wrestling at Lyman High School, 5 p.m.

### Saturday, Feb. 6

Girls Basketball at DAK12-NEC Clash in Madison. Boys Basketball at Tiospa Zina (C game (Charla Imrie) at 1 p.m., JV (Jim and Shirley VanDenHemel) at 2:30 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Monday, Feb. 8

Junior High Basketball hosts Webster. 5:30 p.m. School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 9

Girls Basketball hosts Tiospa Zina. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Wednesday, Feb. 10

LifeTouch Pictures in GHS Gym, 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### Thursday, Feb. 11

Parent-Teacher Conference, 1:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Basketball Doubleheader with Milbank in Groton. JV girls at 4 p.m. followed by JV boys, Varsity Girls and Varsity Boys.

### Saturday, Feb. 12

Basketball Doubleheader at Mobridge. JV girls (Rich and Tami Zimney) at 1 p.m., JV boys at 2 p.m., Varsity Girls at 3 p.m. followed by Varsity Boys.

### Monday, Feb. 15

Junior High Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli Elementary School (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.) Boys Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli (C game at 5 p.m., JV at 6:15 and Varsity at 7:30).

### Thursday, Feb. 18

Junior High Basketball hosts Mobridge-Pollock in the Arena. 7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.

### Friday, Feb. 19

Basketball Doubleheader with Deuel in Groton. JV girls at 4 p.m., JV boys at 5 p.m. followed by Varsity Girls and Varsity Boys.

### Saturday, Feb. 20

Regional Wrestling Tournament in Groton, 10 a.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 23: GBB Region

### Thursday, Feb. 25: GBB Region

### Friday, Feb. 26

Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian. JV at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity.

### Tuesday, March 2: BBB Region

### Thursday, March 4: GBB SoDAK 16

### Friday, March 5: BBB Region

### Tuesday, March 9: BBB SoDAK 16

March 11-13: State Girls Basketball Tournament in Watertown

March 18-20: State Boys Basketball Tournament in Sioux Falls

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 4 of 80

**#345 in a series**

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

Alas, I understand Punxsutawney Phil did, indeed, see his shadow in the bright Pennsylvania sunshine this morning. I guess I'll hunker down for a few more weeks of what we've been having, at least as regards the weather. I am hoping for things on the Covid-19 front to change quite a lot—for the better—in that same time frame. If we're lucky and smart. Please.

Today gives us some of that. We are up to 26,469,000 total cases reported so far in this pandemic in the US, a 0.5% increase from yesterday. There were 122,900 new cases reported today. Our seven-day average for new cases is down to 146,486, which is nearly 30 percent lower than two weeks ago. I do like that. Hospitalizations are still declining as well. We're now at 93,536, almost 40,000 off the record. This is our third day below 100,000 after nearly nine weeks above that mark.

Some good news is coming out of California: Today they reported their lowest number of new cases since Thanksgiving, less than one-third the count just two weeks ago. Hospitalizations have been dropping and are expected to decline by half again over the next month. ICU capacity is opening up, including in the devastated southern portion of the state, to the point that some restrictions will be relaxed. There are concerns with the upcoming Super Bowl weekend and the Lunar New Year, a major celebration for the state's large Asian-American population, and there are other concerns due to the large number of cases seen that are caused by variants. Even so, this is a big step for those residents.

Deaths ticked upward today after the weekend reporting. I do expect these numbers to horrify for a while yet. There were 3395 deaths reported today. That brings us to 446,561 deaths so far in this pandemic, which is 0.8% more than yesterday. I've said it before, but I'll remind you the deaths figure was baked in probably three weeks ago. Any decreases happen about that long after new case numbers drop, which means we should start declining in the next week or two.

The CDC reported today that 26,440,836 people have now received at least one dose of vaccine. This is almost as many as we have reported cases in this pandemic. We should note that over six million of those are now fully vaccinated. We can expect those numbers of vaccinated to continue to rapidly rise, and before midday tomorrow, we should have more vaccine doses in arms than cases. I'll add as a side note that New York City has had to cancel vaccination clinics for the past two days due to a snowstorm. That won't make things easier as they try to reschedule a whole lot of appointments, but there's not a whole lot you can do about the weather. The overall vaccination numbers have been improving steadily for over a week now.

And if I'm reading the announcement correctly, I believe we will see a 20 to 30 percent increase in vaccine production capacity plus an additional million doses in the US over coming weeks for the currently-authorized vaccines. This was from Jeff Zients, White House Covid-19 response coordinator, who also said at a briefing today that the increase "is consistent with Moderna and Pfizer scaling their operations. We're doing all we can to monitor and help the manufacturers produce as much vaccine as possible." This fits with Pfizer's announcement, also today, that they expect to deliver the 200 million doses they've contracted to deliver by July 31 as soon as the end of May instead. This is outstanding. Zients also noted that vaccine will begin to ship directly to pharmacies in order to increase the reach and speed of vaccination programs, noting there will be particular efforts made to ship to locations accessible to underserved communities, which is a really important wrinkle.

I see the American Academy of Pediatrics is advocating for pediatricians to be included in the vaccination effort in the US. Their guidance released today suggests pediatricians can be administering vaccine to "parents and other adults within the pediatric office" and also offering "pediatric offices as vaccination sites for the general public," adding, "[a]ppropriate resources should be provided to those offices that assist in this process." Sounds good to me. I would have thought someone would have already been on this one.

I think this qualifies as good news: An Axios-Ipsos poll conducted between January 29 and February 1 and published today found 83 percent of Americans sampled say they are at least "somewhat concerned" that the new viral variants may be more transmissible or dangerous and 56 percent are at least "very

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 5 of 80

concerned.” Further, only 26 percent expect life to return to “normal” by July. It appears the partisan gap in beliefs about the pandemic that have plagued us for a long while are closing somewhat as well. All of this tells me perhaps the public is starting to understand the situation in which we find ourselves and may be prepared to hang in there long enough to get us through this, also that we’re starting to get on the same page about the dangers. Fifteen percent report wearing two masks all or some of the time when in public; I think that will be the next message we’re going to want to reach people. That step—consistent double-masking—could render these new variants far less able to give us trouble before we can get our population protected.

Some other tidbits from the poll: 97 percent of vaccinated people report they are still wearing a mask when they go out, and they are not reporting more social activity than the general population. It looks like the warnings about continuing precautions reached these folks. Sixty-one percent of people indicate they are likely to get vaccine, which is up one point from last week—progress. Forty-nine percent say they plan to receive it as soon as possible, which is up from 43 percent last week and 33 percent in December. I suspect a good share of the reason for these increases is that 68 percent reported they personally know someone who has received the vaccine.

Four in five report they know someone who has tested positive, and over a third know someone who has died from the virus, which is five points higher than in December. This might explain the more serious approach to this whole situation that is developing recently.

I read an interesting study in preprint (not yet peer-reviewed) from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Researchers evaluated antibody levels after the first and second dose of mRNA vaccine in individuals who have previously been infected with SARS-CoV-2. The clinical trials for these vaccines found that people generally had the worst side effects after the second dose of vaccine; but there have been reports that people who were previously infected were having those worse kinds of side effects after the first dose. This study involving a fairly small group of participants—only 231 of them, 83 of whom had previously been infected—had findings consistent with those reports. They also looked at a smaller group—109 people, 41 of whom had previously been infected—in terms of their antibody production. Here’s what the scientists said about those folks: “[W]e are providing evidence that the antibody response to the first vaccine dose in individuals with pre-existing immunity is equal to or even exceeds the titers found in naïve individuals after the second dose.” They go on to conclude that stopping at just one dose in those individuals “would not negatively impact on their antibody titers . . . and free up many urgently needed vaccine doses.” I don’t think we’ll be rushing off to make that policy change at this time; it’s a bit too soon. First, we should probably have data showing these are neutralizing antibodies. Second, this was a very small study. We’re going to need more research to confirm these findings. Still, it’s an interesting proposition.

There’s something new that’s worrisome in the viral variant news today. To review, the variant which is dominant in the US today is not the original wild-type virus that first surfaced in Wuhan; that one’s been pretty well drowned out by the current variant called D614G, quite likely because D614G is more highly transmissible than the original virus. The vaccines currently in use or in testing were designed to deal with and were primarily tested against D614G.

There has been a number of newer variants popping up around the world—US too—recently. Pretty much all of these are, or at least appear to be, more highly transmissible than D614G. The ones we’ve spent most of our time talking about are B.1.1.7 which first surfaced in the UK, B.1.351 from South Africa, and B.1.1.28.1 in Brazil. While the US is woefully behind many other developed countries in genomic tracking, a recent survey showed that, of 471 variant cases tested, 467 of them are B.1.1.7.

All of these variants are problematic in terms of rapid spread, but only one has had us worried about the potential for what’s called immune escape, where a virus is sufficiently mutated that the immune response produced against more dominant variants would be ineffective against the escaping variant. While we have not seen immune escape, we have seen plenty of evidence our immune responses are somewhat weaker against B.1.351. The reason for this is a particular mutation seen in this variant called E484K. Well, the worrisome news is that E484K has been showing up in B.1.1.7 variants isolated in the UK lately too. Now the fact that this mutation makes it more difficult for our antibodies to block B.1.351 doesn’t necessarily

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 6 of 80

mean it will work in exactly the same way in the different constellation of mutations that comprise B.1.1.7, but some preliminary lab work indicates it may mean just this. There's much more work to be done to confirm this, but I find the possibility troubling. It's not unusual for the same mutation to arise in widely separated populations, and that's likely what happened here. The key is whether a new mutation conveys a fitness advantage in populations where there is some existing immunity, as we see where there are a lot of people who have already been sick with Covid-19. The fact that it is surfacing now indicates there is, indeed, a fitness advantage under the right circumstances. Like what we have here and now.

What do we do about this? For now, prevent transmission. I simply cannot emphasize enough how much more likely mutations are to arise when there is unchecked transmission of a virus. Every single replication is an opportunity for a mutation to arise; more transmissions means more replications which means more mutations. And the more mutations we see, the more likely it is that one pops up which confers some advantage to the virus that we're going to wish the virus didn't have. The smart money is on reducing those odds. More precautions. More vaccinations. Less transmission. Less viral replication. Speed is going to matter.

The new federal mandate for mask-wearing on most modes of transportation and in hubs and terminals takes effect Monday night. It applies to all passengers over the age of 2, although it should be noted that TSA officials will ask each traveler to briefly lower their masks so your photo ID can be checked against your appearance. If you cannot tolerate a mask or if you are traveling with someone who cannot tolerate a mask, then you need to rethink your travel plans.

If we needed another reason to get this pandemic under control, we're identifying a new sequela of severe Covid-19: diabetes, both Type 1 (where you make insufficient insulin to regulate your blood sugar) and Type 2 (where your cells don't respond well to the insulin you make). We're not sure whether the infection simply accelerates the development of a problem which was developing anyhow or it actually causes the problem—maybe some of each. Many of the people who do develop diabetes had risk factors—diabetes or a family history; some of them were taking dexamethasone, which commonly causes elevated blood sugar levels. But some of the patients had no known risk factors, and sometimes the disease develops months after infection. We don't know whether the condition will be permanent or will slowly resolve.

Something like 14 percent of people hospitalized with Covid-19 develop diabetes according to an analysis of studies published in *Diabetes, Obesity, and Metabolism*. One reason to think that the virus is directly causing diabetes to develop is the effect it has on known diabetic patients, many of whom require exceptionally large doses of insulin to control their blood sugar while they are infected. This implies there may be some sort of causal relationship going on here. Researchers are building a huge data base of patients in an attempt to get a handle on what's happening in these cases; one concerning element is that many of these cases don't appear to be clear-cut Type 1 or Type 2, but with characteristics crossing both types, some sort of hybrid. Additionally, there have also been reports of diabetes diagnoses after mild infections as well.

According to the *New York Times*, "Diabetes already is increasing at an alarming rate in the United States." The new question is whether, given the tens of millions of Covid-19 cases we've had, we're in for a wave of new diabetics at risk for all of the serious complications of the disease and burdening the health care system when it is already under significant stresses. There is presently a great deal of work going on in an attempt to sort all of this out.

Last night, we discussed the Covid-19 diagnosis and hospitalization of Sir Tom Moore, the British man who raised money for the National Health Service in celebration of his one-hundredth birthday last spring. Sadly, his daughters announced this morning that Moore has died with family at his side. They also said, "The last year of our father's life was nothing short of remarkable. He was rejuvenated and experienced things he'd only ever dreamed of." Captain Tom certainly had a good run. I hope that brings his family comfort.

Rhiannon Menn lives in San Diego. Her situation as the pandemic began was not desperate, but she was feeling helpless—like she wanted to help people, but she didn't know where to start with all the bad things that were going on. She said that volunteer opportunities had dried up with the lockdown. One day she received a large grocery delivery and decided she had all this food and she loves to cook, so she was

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 7 of 80

going to make extra food. She told TODAY on NBC, "Around April, I started feeling just super helpless. There were so many moms that I knew who had lost childcare, who had lost jobs. They were just feeling stressed out. And so literally one day, I was just like, I'm gonna make extra meals."

So she did, and then she posted in some mom's groups on social media that anyone who was struggling—not just with money, but with stress or time or trying to work from home or whatever—could get in touch and she'd deliver a homemade lasagna to their doorstep. It was a hit; all the extra food she'd made disappeared. One family who accepted a lasagna told Kelly Clarkson that they were sure there was some sort of catch: They'd get leaflets or have to listen to a sales pitch or something. But nope. Just food. Delivered when they really needed a lift.

But something else happened too. Some of the people who got in touch with Menn didn't want lasagna; they wanted to help. "I've got people responding saying 'Oh my gosh, like, I've been feeling helpless too. Can I join you tonight? Can I make lasagnas?' And I thought, 'Okay, why not?'" As she told it, before she knew it there were 10, then there were 50, and then there were 100 people cooking meals for someone who is struggling. She emphasized that struggling is whatever it is to you: You don't have to meet some criterion to get a meal; you just have to ask. Her effort, now called Lasagna Love, has extended into 36 states. Her team has grown to over 1500 people preparing a lasagna a month with another thousand waiting to be matched with someone in need. Over 300 cities. They've provided thousands of lasagnas to families who need a boost, and each lasagna has an encouraging note attached.

The organization has a website ([www.lasagnalove.org](http://www.lasagnalove.org)) where you can sign up to cook, sign on to sponsor a cook either just once or on an ongoing basis, or sign up to receive a meal. Menn told TODAY, "Your actions don't have to be big to have a big impact." They do not. Look for a place to have an impact; you'll be surprised how that ripples out—and bounces back to you.

Take care. We'll talk again.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 8 of 80

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	451	424	820	16	Moderate	5.00%
Beadle	2610	2516	5532	39	Moderate	4.64%
Bennett	377	363	1128	9	Minimal	0.93%
Bon Homme	1500	1471	1990	25	Minimal	1.56%
Brookings	3430	3270	10974	34	Substantial	3.32%
Brown	4952	4711	11935	80	Substantial	11.35%
Brule	680	661	1791	8	Moderate	7.50%
Buffalo	420	402	866	13	Minimal	16.00%
Butte	957	920	3042	20	Moderate	6.60%
Campbell	125	117	243	4	Moderate	13.64%
Charles Mix	1230	1166	3751	18	Substantial	10.00%
Clark	339	325	910	4	Moderate	0.00%
Clay	1756	1714	4914	16	Substantial	3.20%
Codington	3755	3589	9188	74	Substantial	9.29%
Corson	461	445	969	11	Minimal	13.04%
Custer	727	701	2567	11	Moderate	8.45%
Davison	2902	2796	6147	59	Substantial	4.35%
Day	612	560	1653	27	Substantial	10.53%
Deuel	458	444	1068	8	Moderate	11.63%
Dewey	1389	1356	3690	20	Substantial	6.45%
Douglas	413	395	859	9	Minimal	6.67%
Edmunds	460	435	968	9	Substantial	6.67%
Fall River	505	481	2467	14	Moderate	9.52%
Faulk	337	315	657	13	Moderate	6.67%
Grant	922	843	2091	37	Substantial	18.75%
Gregory	500	464	1173	27	Moderate	0.00%
Haakon	241	230	506	9	Minimal	0.00%
Hamlin	669	615	1663	38	Moderate	8.06%
Hand	319	309	756	5	Minimal	4.55%
Hanson	337	325	666	4	Moderate	22.58%
Harding	90	89	173	1	None	0.00%
Hughes	2210	2121	6146	33	Substantial	2.01%
Hutchinson	758	712	2213	23	Moderate	8.33%



# Groton Daily Independent

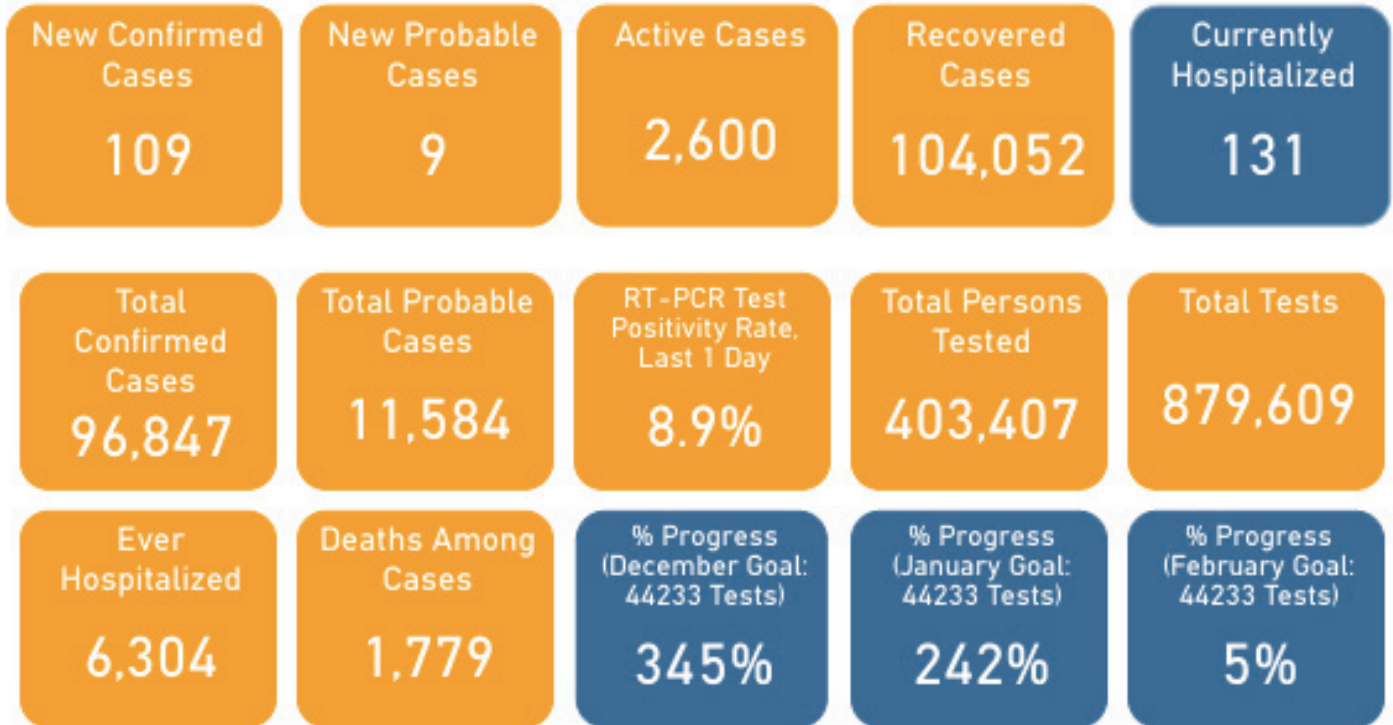
Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 9 of 80

Hyde	134	133	388	1	None	0.00%
Jackson	268	252	885	13	None	0.00%
Jerauld	267	246	533	16	Minimal	8.33%
Jones	82	79	207	0	Minimal	7.14%
Kingsbury	608	577	1530	13	Moderate	6.00%
Lake	1141	1086	3055	17	Substantial	5.88%
Lawrence	2754	2673	8107	42	Moderate	7.19%
Lincoln	7466	7212	18911	74	Substantial	10.27%
Lyman	590	570	1812	10	Moderate	7.69%
Marshall	287	273	1100	5	Moderate	4.84%
McCook	718	688	1517	23	Moderate	13.95%
McPherson	236	216	528	4	Moderate	2.52%
Meade	2480	2387	7212	30	Substantial	10.38%
Mellette	240	234	707	2	Minimal	8.70%
Miner	269	240	532	7	Moderate	28.57%
Minnehaha	27059	26100	73027	311	Substantial	8.64%
Moody	603	568	1668	16	Substantial	6.67%
Oglala Lakota	2038	1951	6431	43	Substantial	10.78%
Pennington	12395	11932	37008	171	Substantial	8.97%
Perkins	338	305	742	12	Substantial	27.50%
Potter	347	335	786	3	Moderate	8.70%
Roberts	1111	1055	3927	35	Substantial	9.63%
Sanborn	324	315	652	3	Minimal	3.39%
Spink	764	717	2009	25	Substantial	12.36%
Stanley	317	305	862	2	Moderate	0.00%
Sully	135	128	285	3	Minimal	0.00%
Todd	1212	1168	4021	25	Substantial	4.27%
Tripp	657	635	1415	15	Moderate	6.98%
Turner	1042	973	2543	50	Moderate	2.74%
Union	1872	1760	5793	38	Substantial	9.91%
Walworth	703	667	1746	15	Moderate	3.75%
Yankton	2747	2664	8792	28	Substantial	4.37%
Ziebach	335	323	842	9	Minimal	0.00%
Unassigned	0	0	1887	0		

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 10 of 80

## South Dakota



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

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	4207	0
10-19 years	12096	0
20-29 years	19483	4
30-39 years	17846	15
40-49 years	15468	35
50-59 years	15266	100
60-69 years	12403	231
70-79 years	6632	404
80+ years	5030	990

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	56596	843
Male	51835	936

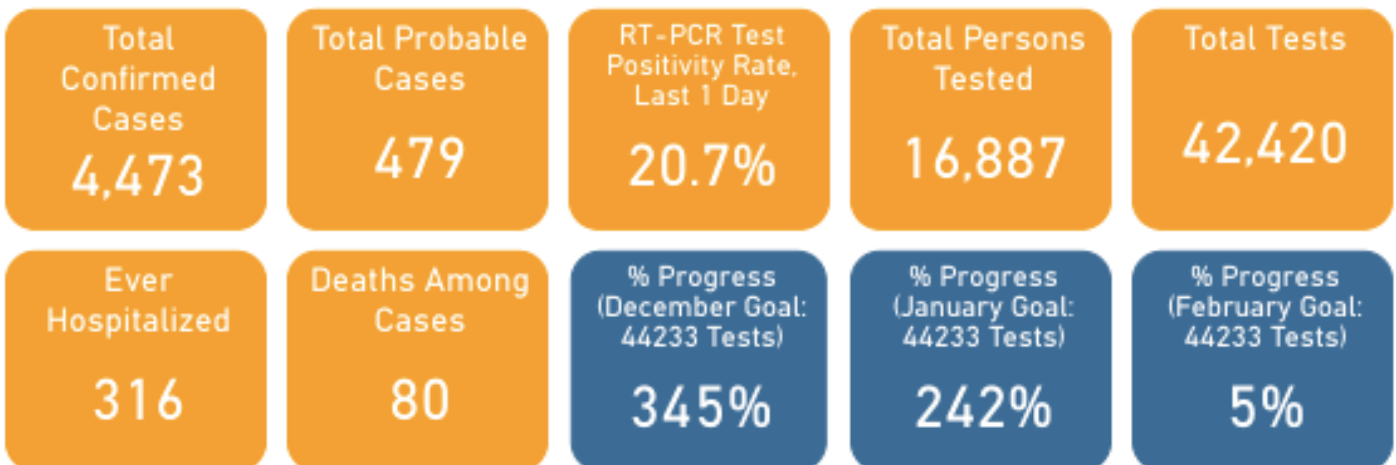
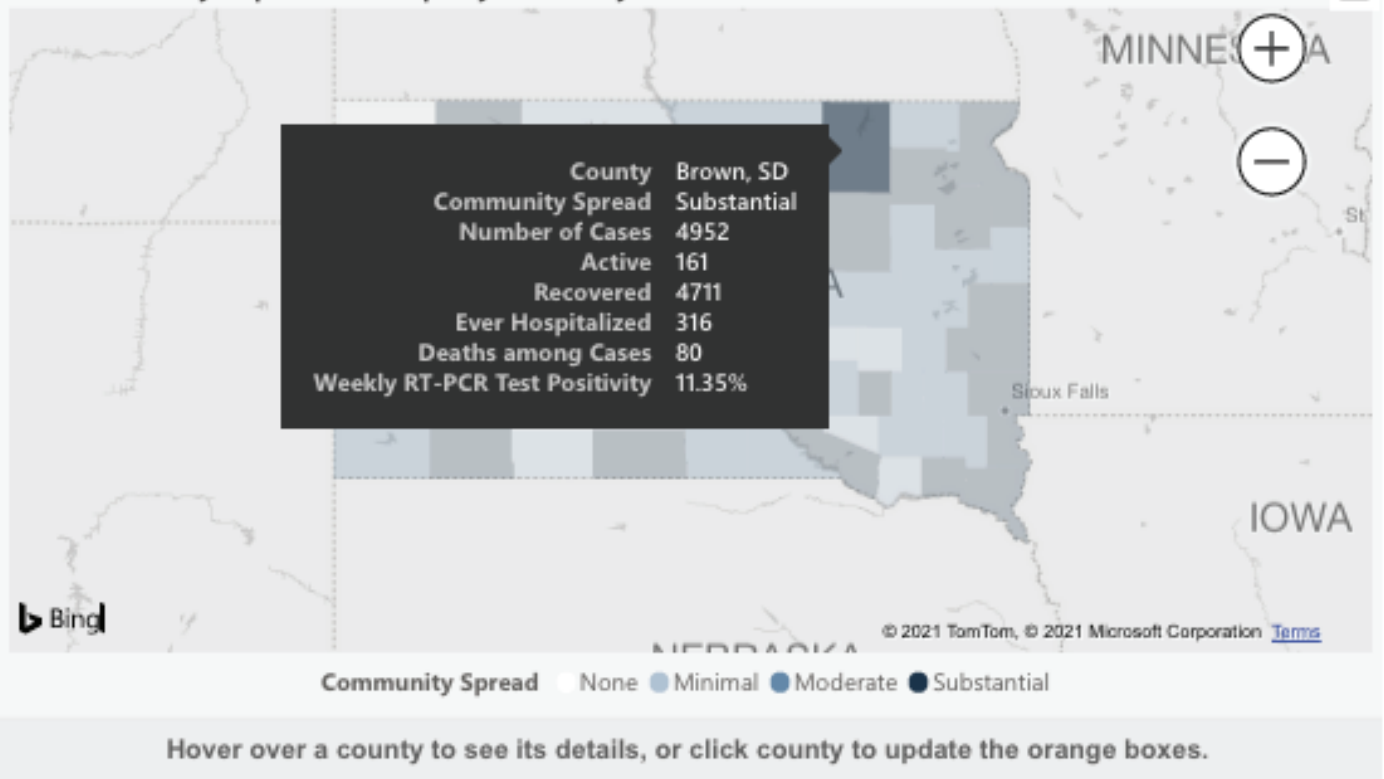
# Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 11 of 80

## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



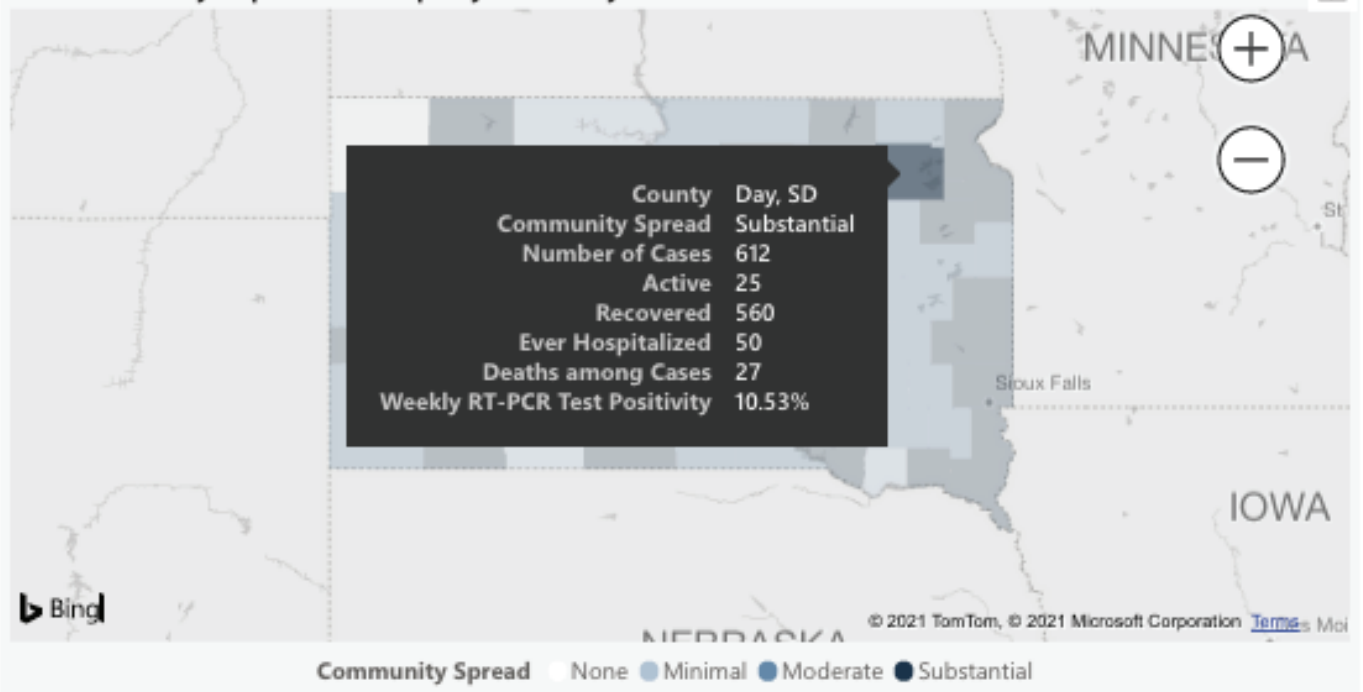
# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 12 of 80

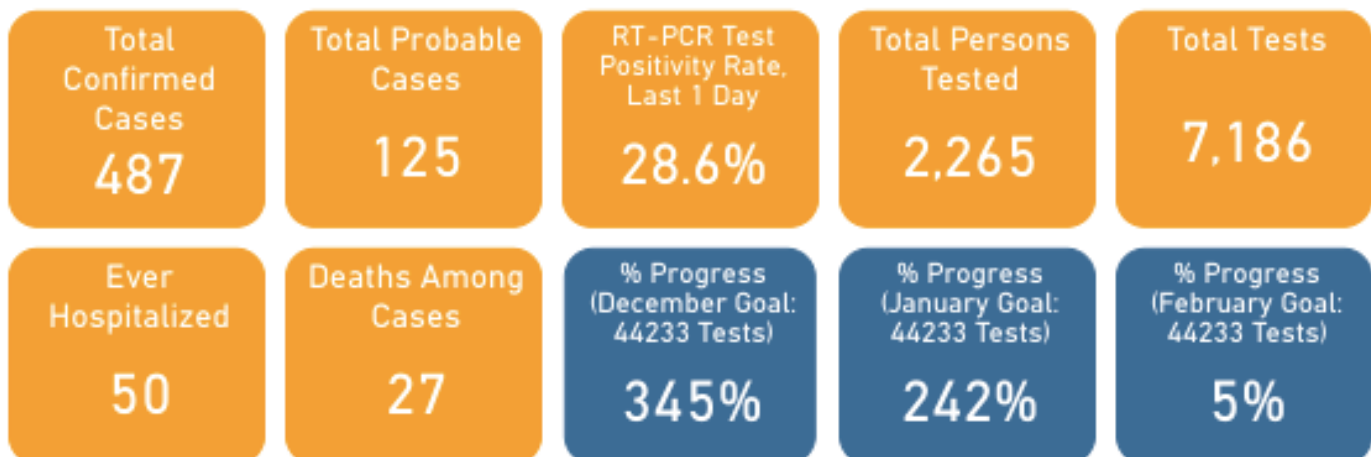
## Day County



### 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

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 13 of 80

## Vaccinations

### Total Doses Administered

101,489

### Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

71,522

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	53,769
Pfizer	47,720

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	26,409
Moderna - Series Complete	13,680
Pfizer - 1 dose	15,146
Pfizer - Series Complete	16,287

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	203	105	49	154
Beadle	2042	850	596	1,446
Bennett*	180	124	28	152
Bon Homme*	957	373	292	665
Brookings	2777	1,001	888	1,889
Brown	4838	1,956	1,441	3,397
Brule*	591	303	144	447
Buffalo*	43	37	3	40
Butte	500	340	80	420
Campbell	438	80	179	259
Charles Mix*	805	259	273	532
Clark	369	199	85	284
Clay	1648	874	387	1,261
Codington*	3512	1,574	969	2,543
Corson*	67	49	9	58
Custer*	734	478	128	606
Davison	2812	766	1,023	1,789
Day*	815	375	220	595
Deuel	482	226	128	354
Dewey*	170	86	42	128
Douglas*	424	162	131	293
Edmunds	379	173	103	276
Fall River*	773	517	128	645
Faulk	237	187	25	212
Grant*	739	239	250	489
Gregory*	538	194	172	366
Haakon*	200	82	59	141

# Groton Daily Independent

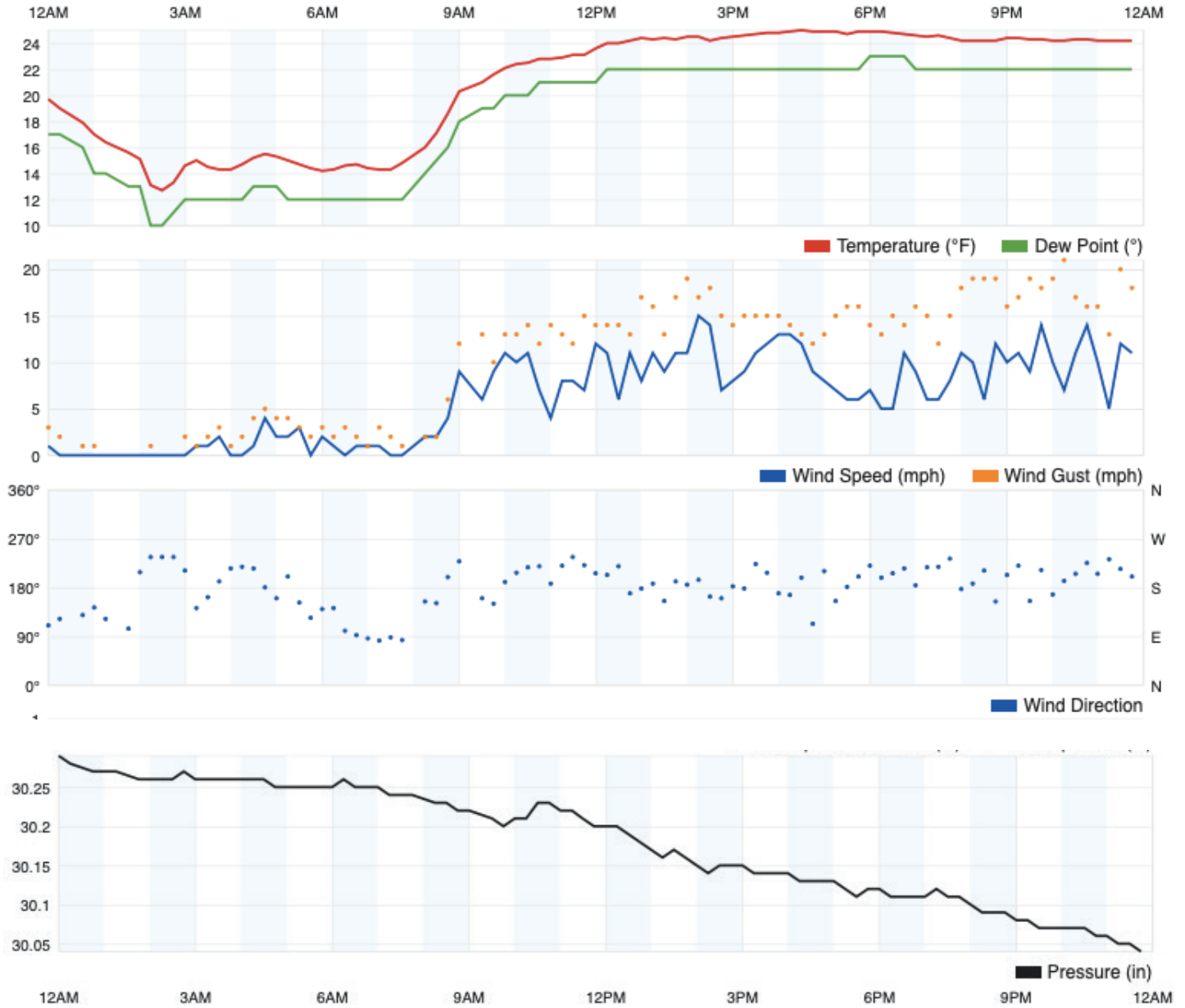
Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 14 of 80

Hamlin	551	233	159	392
Hand	426	160	133	293
Hanson	147	37	55	92
Harding	12	8	2	10
Hughes*	2450	1,284	583	1,867
Hutchinson*	1201	297	452	749
Hyde*	220	42	89	131
Jackson*	130	80	25	105
Jerauld	195	61	67	128
Jones*	183	125	29	154
Kingsbury	672	214	229	443
Lake	1222	476	373	849
Lawrence	2120	1,512	304	1,816
Lincoln	10094	2,740	3,677	6,417
Lyman*	204	124	40	164
Marshall*	443	209	117	326
McCook	754	322	216	538
McPherson	65	27	19	46
Meade*	1499	921	289	1,210
Mellette*	13	7	3	10
Miner	291	145	73	218
Minnehaha	27632	8,616	9,508	18,124
Moody*	458	176	141	317
Oglala Lakota*	42	28	7	35
Pennington*	10572	6,338	2,117	8,455
Perkins*	139	95	22	117
Potter	215	65	75	140
Roberts*	1054	834	110	944
Sanborn	312	160	76	236
Spink	913	415	249	664
Stanley*	347	177	85	262
Sully	93	55	19	74
Todd*	50	36	7	43
Tripp*	636	392	122	514
Turner	1342	534	404	938
Union	603	311	146	457
Walworth*	720	336	192	528
Yankton	3568	1,384	1,092	2,476
Ziebach*	27	15	6	21
Other	2601	955	823	1,778

# Groton Daily Independent






Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 15 of 80

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs




# Graton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 16 of 80

Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Areas Dense Freezing Fog and Areas Fog	Blustery. Slight Chance Wintry Mix then Slight Chance Snow 20% 20%	Partly Sunny and Blustery	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 35 °F	Low: 9 °F	High: 13 °F	Low: 2 °F	High: 16 °F



 **Today** 32 to 48°  
Morning fog.


 **Tonight** 7 to 17°  
Light wintry mix of precipitation. Little to no accumulation.

 **Thursday** 16 to 30°  
Breezy winds.

**A Look Ahead...**  
Cold Arctic air moves in, and lingers into early next week. Bitterly cold wind chills possible Friday night through Monday morning, coldest over ne SD & w MN.

Visit [www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr) for a detailed local forecast

Updated: 2/3/2021 4:52 AM CT

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Fog and freezing fog will slowly improve today. Highs will be mainly in the 30s, with 40s possible along and west of the Missouri River. Behind a cold front moving across the area, a light wintry mix of precipitation will be possible tonight. Precipitation may start out as very light rain or freezing rain before changing over to light snow. Little to no accumulation is expected. Much colder, arctic air will sink in Thursday and remain through early next week. Bitterly cold wind chills are possible from Friday night through Monday morning, coldest over northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 17 of 80

## Today in Weather History

February 3, 1997: A winter storm dropped from 6 to 15 inches of snow across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west-central Minnesota deepening the already expansive snowpack. The wind came up from the north at 20 to 30 mph during the morning of the 4th, causing blowing and drifting snow blocking some roads and making travel hazardous if not impossible. Several vehicles got stuck or went off the road. Due to the massive snowfall, a roof collapsed in Aberdeen, damaging a car. Many schools started late or were canceled, adding to the number of days missed for the season. Some snowfall amounts included 5 inches at Wheaton, 6 inches at Britton, Summit, Webster, Browns Valley, Artichoke Lake, and Ortonville, 7 inches at Aberdeen, 6 SE McIntosh, Pollock, Timber Lake, 8 inches at Leola, Ipswich, Eagle Butte, and Gettysburg, 9 inches at Miller and Mellette, 10 inches at Mobridge, Watertown, Clear Lake, Pierre, Kennebec, and Onida, and 11 inches at Clark and Blunt. Snowfall amounts of a foot or more included, 12 inches at Highmore, Bryant, and Gann Valley, 13 inches at Faulkton, 14 inches 23 N Highmore and Murdo, and 15 inches at 1 SE Stephan.

1844: Boston Harbor was so thick with ice on this date that a channel had to be cut through the ice for the "Britannia" ship to leave with 30,000 letters for England.

1947: The record-low temperature for continental North America was recorded in Snag in the Yukon Territory, Canada. The temperature was 81.4 degrees below zero.

1988: Arctic air continued to invade the central U.S. The temperature at Midland, Texas, plunged from a record high of 80 degrees to 37 degrees in just three hours. Morning lows in the higher elevations of Wyoming were as cold as 38 degrees below zero. Heavy snow blanketed southwestern Colorado, with 16 inches reported at Steamboat Springs.

1917 - Downtown Miami, FL, reported an all-time record low of 27 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1947 - The temperature at Tanacross, AK, plunged to a record 75 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Wintry weather was confined to freezing drizzle and light snow in the northeastern U.S., and light rain and snow in the western U.S. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Arctic air continued to invade the central U.S. The temperature at Midland TX plunged from a record high of 80 degrees to 37 degrees in just three hours. Morning lows in the higher elevations of Wyoming were as cold as 38 degrees below zero. Heavy snow blanketed southwestern Colorado, with 16 inches reported at Steamboat Springs. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A winter storm brought heavy snow and high winds to the western U.S. Up to three feet of snow blanketed the Sierra Nevada of California, and buried parts of northeastern Washington State under three feet of snow in five days. High winds across Washington State reached 75 mph, with gusts to 105 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Severe cold gripped the north central U.S. The morning low of 29 degrees below zero at Casper WY was a record for the month of February. Wisdom MT hit 53 degrees below zero. Missoula MT reported a wind chill reading of 85 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather over the central Gulf coast states during the afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes in Alabama, including one which touched down north of Birmingham injuring fifteen people and causing nearly three million dollars damage. A tornado at Margaret injured eleven persons and caused a million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

# Groton Daily Independent

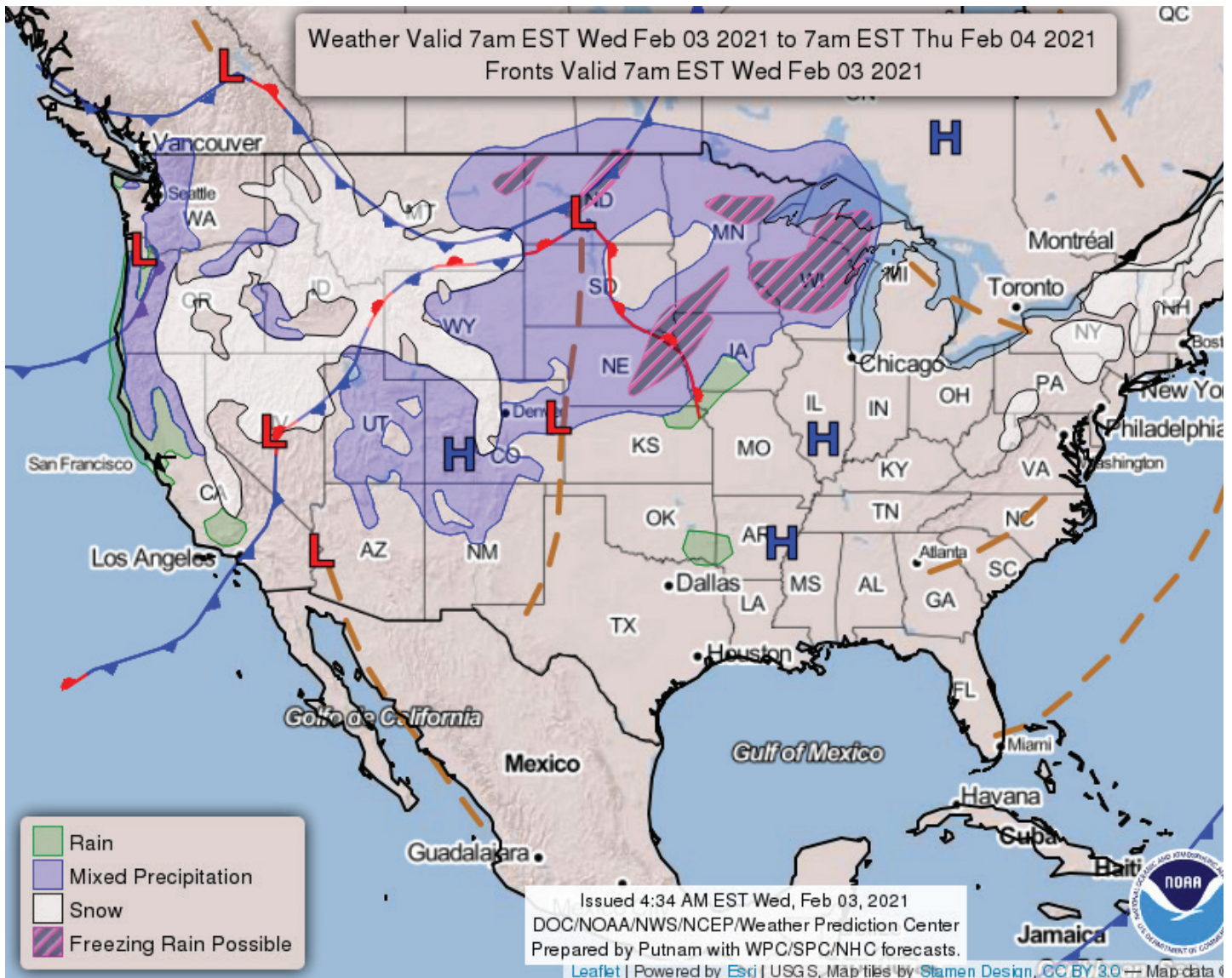
Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 18 of 80

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 25 °F at 4:23 PM**  
**Low Temp: 13 °F at 2:22 AM**  
**Wind: 21 mph at 10:08 PM**  
**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 58° in 1991**  
**Record Low: -38° in 1893**  
**Average High: 25°F**  
**Average Low: 3°F**  
**Average Precip in Feb.: 0.03**  
**Precip to date in Feb.: 0.14**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.50**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.14**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:44 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:50 a.m.**



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 19 of 80



## TRIUMPH OVER TRIALS

Once, while I was reading a newspaper, my young son was trying to get my attention. He had an urgent need for me to recognize his presence and respond to his request. But, I was absorbed in the news.

"Dad," he said, "I'm talking to you!"

"Yes, son, I'm listening," I replied.

"I know you are listening, Dad, but can you hear me?" It was an embarrassing question. There is an obvious difference between listening and hearing. It is easy to listen without recognizing the presence of the person trying to get our attention. When we listen and hear someone, the message goes to our mind and then our heart and we can sense their feelings and do something about their needs.

David said, "Turn and answer me, O Lord, my God!" He feared that God had abandoned him, turned His face in the opposite direction, was abandoned and on his own. He was so discouraged that he felt the light of God had left his eyes, and he would die. But he realized that was a temporary, fleeting feeling, and he refused to give up. Finally, he recalled God's presence and protection in the past and knew that God had not left him.

So, after a time of loneliness, he was able to declare, "I trust in your unfailing love!" and turned his worry into worship.

Notice what he said: "I will rejoice" and "I will sing" – two central themes of true worship. David did not wait for his problems to pass. In the middle of his difficulties, he chose not to worry and began to worship. Why? "Because He has been so good to me!"

Prayer: Help us, Father, to form our faith on the facts in Your Word, not our fleeting feelings. When problems come, may we know You are with us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But I trust in your unfailing love. I will rejoice because you have rescued me. I will sing to the Lord because he is good to me. Psalm 13:5-6

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 20 of 80

*American Standard*  
150 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



**NEW  
SHOWER DESIGN**

**ENJOYING A  
NEW SHOWER  
IS EASIER THAN  
YOU THINK**



**FREE IN-HOME  
DESIGN CONSULTATION  
CALL TODAY**

[newshowerdeal.com/gdi](http://newshowerdeal.com/gdi) | 877-312-3234

\*Offer valid only while supplies last. Limit one per household. Must be first time purchase. Minimum spend amount applies. Financing subject to third party credit approval. Some financing options cannot be combined with other offers and may require minimum monthly payments. All offers subject to change prior to purchase. See [AmericanStandardShowers.com](http://AmericanStandardShowers.com) for other restrictions and for licensing, warranty, and company information. CSLB B982796; Suffolk NY: 55431H; NYC:HIC 2022748-DCA. Safety Tubs Co. LLC does not sell in Nassau NY, Westchester NY, Putnam NY, Rockland NY.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 21 of 80

News from the  Associated Press

## Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL=

Alcester-Hudson 34, Centerville 26  
Castlewood 62, Waubay/Summit 52  
Chamberlain 61, Platte-Geddes 50  
Elkton-Lake Benton 52, Deuel 42  
Ethan 73, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 50  
Flandreau 79, Dell Rapids 67  
Freeman Academy/Marion 62, Marty Indian 48  
Garretson 53, Baltic 40  
Groton Area 45, Langford 37  
Hamlin 47, Arlington 45  
Hanson 45, Wagner 37  
Harrisburg 56, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 46  
Hitchcock-Tulare 53, James Valley Christian 49  
Howard 63, Irene-Wakonda 18  
Kadoka Area 56, Bennett County 42  
Kimball/White Lake 64, Colome 49  
Lake Preston 61, Great Plains Lutheran 54  
Lennox 55, Elk Point-Jefferson 41  
Lyman 65, Gregory 56  
McCook Central/Montrose 60, Parkston 45  
Menno 61, Avon 50  
Milbank 58, Ortonville, Minn. 38  
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 55, Mitchell Christian 47  
Parker 56, Chester 35  
Philip 49, New Underwood 37  
Pierre 46, Mitchell 44  
Potter County 73, Redfield 52  
Sioux Falls Christian 94, Canton 50  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 54, Brookings 45  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 65, Watertown 41  
Sisseton 51, Britton-Hecla 31  
Spearfish 69, Lead-Deadwood 43  
St. Thomas More 55, Sturgis Brown 29  
Sully Buttes 71, Jones County 49  
Tea Area 61, Western Christian, Iowa 46  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 48, Gayville-Volin 44  
Viborg-Hurley 80, Canistota 58  
Warner 47, Faulkton 19  
Webster 51, Wilmot 45  
Wessington Springs 68, Iroquois 30  
West Central 71, Tri-Valley 62  
Winner 76, Miller 31  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 22 of 80

Stanley County vs. Lakota Tech, ppd.

GIRLS BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli 45, Groton Area 41  
Alcester-Hudson 56, Centerville 45  
Brandon Valley 73, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 72, OT  
Castlewood 53, Waubay/Summit 32  
Chamberlain 54, Platte-Geddes 46  
Colman-Egan 52, Bridgewater-Emery 51  
Corsica/Stickney 56, Burke 21  
Deubrook 45, Madison 39  
Deuel 35, Elkton-Lake Benton 30  
Dupree 72, Timber Lake 62  
Ethan 45, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 32  
Faulkton 53, Warner 47  
Flandreau 67, Dell Rapids 46  
Florence/Henry 56, Waverly-South Shore 27  
Hamlin 57, Arlington 36  
Hitchcock-Tulare 53, James Valley Christian 48  
Howard 58, Irene-Wakonda 35  
Ipswich 51, Leola/Frederick 33  
Jones County 47, Sully Buttes 32  
Kimball/White Lake 56, Wolsey-Wessington 34  
Lemmon 37, Harding County 35  
Lennox 43, Elk Point-Jefferson 16  
Linton-HMB, N.D. 52, Herreid/Selby Area 42  
Marty Indian 57, Freeman Academy/Marion 51  
McCook Central/Montrose 60, Parkston 45  
Menno 52, Avon 51  
Milbank 54, Ortonville, Minn. 18  
Mitchell 50, Pierre 45  
Parker 55, Chester 41  
Rapid City Stevens 79, Douglas 28  
Redfield 55, Potter County 40  
Scotland 54, Freeman 43  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 49, Brookings 47  
Sioux Falls Washington 78, Huron 38  
Sisseton 65, Britton-Hecla 28  
Spearfish 59, Lead-Deadwood 38  
St. Thomas More 62, Belle Fourche 14  
Tea Area 62, Western Christian, Iowa 48  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 34, Gayville-Volin 28  
Wagner 52, Hanson 48  
Wall 52, Hot Springs 29  
Watertown 37, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 30  
Webster 50, Wilmot 49  
West Central 67, Tri-Valley 51  
White River 66, Lower Brule 34  
Winner 53, Miller 20  
WKLL Tournament=  
Quarterfinal=

# Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 23 of 80

Tri-State, N.D. 60, Great Plains Lutheran 47  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Stanley County vs. Lakota Tech, ppd.

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

13-37-38-40-67, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 2

(thirteen, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, forty, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: ten; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$42 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

## Judge-turned-lawmaker takes on South Dakota's death penalty

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A judge-turned-lawmaker urged colleagues in the South Dakota Senate Tuesday to abolish the state's death penalty for almost all crimes, recalling that one of the most difficult actions he took during his career on the bench was sentencing a man to die.

Republican Arthur Rusch presented his case for a bill that would allow the death penalty only for people convicted of killing a law enforcement officer or firefighter.

The South Dakota Catholic Conference and some conservative lawmakers are supporting the bill, but their fellow Republicans, prosecutors and a murder victim's family are actively opposing it.

The debate before a Senate committee rifled through the state's history of grisly murders and executions. There was Jack McCall, who shot Wild Bill Hickock in the back of the head; Chief Two Sticks, who was executed in 1894 for instigating the killing of four men; and Charles Russell Rhines, who was put to death in 2019, the most recent prisoner in the state to be executed.

Ed Schaeffer, whose son Donnivan was murdered by Rhines in 1992, testified against the bill, telling lawmakers it took "over 27 years to have Charles Rhines put down."

But it was the 1997 death sentence of Donald Moeller that Rusch said he had "a very close and personal relationship with" and left him wanting to abolish the death penalty. Moeller was executed in 2012 for raping and murdering 9-year-old Becky O'Connell.

When Rusch sentenced Moeller to death in a retrial of the case, he called the crime "horrendous" but said he had hoped he would never have to issue such an order. In previous years, he has brought proposals to exempt people with mental illness from being executed, but those have failed to gain traction in the Republican-dominated Legislature.

Rusch said that presiding over Moeller's case convinced him that the death penalty is not a deterrent to murders and that the cost, both financially to the state and psychologically to jurors, could not be justified.

"Death is different," he said. "Anybody who has been involved with a death penalty case will tell you that."

But South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, whose office warded off legal challenges by Rhines to win a stay of execution two years ago, argued against the bill. He invoked the names of victims from the state's most violent crimes, saying that most would not have seen their perpetrators put to death under Rusch's proposal.

He also cast the bill as a step toward allowing the most violent criminals to one day be released from prison.

"I don't think that's what society's looking for, to have these people walk out," he said.

A Senate committee of seven Republicans will decide Thursday whether the bill will get a vote in the full

chamber, but it has already revealed a range of positions on the issue among conservatives.

To prove his Republican loyalties, Ron Keine, who works with a group opposed to the death penalty called Witness to Innocence, flashed a Donald Trump ring on his finger as he testified on a video call.

"A lot of people say it's a liberal movement, but in many states Republicans have supported it," he told lawmakers.

The South Dakota Catholic Conference, an influential lobbying group, argued that opposition to the death penalty is to be "strong on the dignity of life."

Ravnsborg countered, saying that his "pro-life" positions have prompted him to seek out the maximum punishment for people who take life by committing murder.

For Rusch, his argument centered on the toll that the death penalty takes a toll on everyone else, from costly extended trials to furthering violence in culture. He still knows what it took from him over 20 years after presiding over a capital trial.

"It took a year out of my life," he said.

## Bill limits time that young violators can be detained

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A bill making its way through the South Dakota Legislature would limit the time that children in need of supervision and who break court orders can be detained.

Children in need of supervision are those who commit an offense that wouldn't be criminal if they were an adult, such as underage drinking.

A bill that was sent to the full House Monday says a child who is detained for violating supervision cannot be kept for more than seven days even if a revocation hearing is scheduled.

The current law says a child may not be kept in detention for 72 hours if a revocation hearing has not been set.

Current law also says a child cannot be kept for more than 90 days if they've violated a court order. The bill would lower that to seven days, the Argus Leader reported.

The bill has already made it through the Senate.

## UK says new study vindicates delaying 2nd virus vaccine shot

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's health chief said Wednesday that a new study suggesting that a single dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine provides a high level of protection for 12 weeks supports the government's strategy of delaying the second shot so it can protect more people quickly with a first dose.

Britain's decision has been criticized as risky by other European countries, but Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the study "backs the strategy that we've taken and it shows the world that the Oxford vaccine works effectively."

Hancock's comments came after Oxford University released a study showing the vaccine cut transmission of the virus by two-thirds and prevented severe disease.

Mene Pangalos, executive vice president of biopharmaceuticals research and development at AstraZeneca, said no patients experienced severe disease or hospitalization three weeks after receiving a first dose, and that efficacy appeared to increase up to 12 weeks after the initial shot.

"Our data suggest you want to be as close to the 12 weeks as you can" for the second dose, he told a news conference.

The study has not been peer-reviewed yet and does not address the efficacy of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the other one currently in use in the U.K. Pfizer recommends that its shots be given 21 days apart and has not endorsed the U.K. government's decision to lengthen the time between doses.

But the Oxford research was greeted with excitement by U.K. officials under pressure to justify their decision to delay the second dose.

"That reduction in transmission, as well as the fact there is no hospitalizations, the combination of that is very good news. And it categorically supports the strategy we've been taking on having a 12-week gap



between the doses," Hancock told Sky News.

Some countries, including France, have authorized the AstraZeneca vaccine only for use in people under 65, saying there is not enough evidence to say whether it works in older adults. Belgium has authorized it only for people 55 and under.

Yet one of the lead researchers on the Oxford vaccine project, Dr. Andrew Pollard, said "we expect it to be highly effective in older adults" and said more data should be available in the next few weeks.

Britain has Europe's deadliest coronavirus outbreak, with more than 108,000 deaths, and is in its third national lockdown as authorities try to contain a new, more transmissible virus variant first identified in southeast England.

Other variants are also a concern. Public health officials in England are going door to door, trying to test all adults in eight targeted communities in an attempt to stop a new strain first identified in South Africa from spreading further.

So far 105 cases of the variant have been identified in the U.K., 11 of them in people with no links to overseas travel. Scientists say there's no evidence the South African variant is more serious than the original virus but it may be more contagious. There are also concerns that current vaccines may be less effective against that variant because it contains a mutation of the virus' characteristic spike protein that existing vaccines target.

That is a worry as the U.K. races to vaccinate its own population against the virus. Almost 10 million people have received the first of their two shots, including the bulk of people over 80 and those in nursing homes.

Pollard said Oxford scientists believe the AstraZeneca vaccine will continue to offer protection against new variants of COVID-19, although they are still waiting for data on that.

He said even if the virus adapts "that doesn't mean that we won't still have protection against severe disease."

"If we do need to update the vaccines, then it is actually a relatively straightforward process. It only takes a matter of months, rather than the huge efforts that everyone went through last year to get the very large-scale trials run," he told the BBC.

---

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>

## The Latest: German medical workers help hard-hit Portugal

By The Associated Press undefined

BERLIN — A German military medical team is heading to Portugal to help that country deal with a spike in coronavirus cases.

The team of 26 doctors and nurses was flying to Portugal Wednesday from Wunstorf, in northern Germany. Dr. Ulrich Baumgaertner, the head of the military's medical service, said the team will help at a civilian hospital in Lisbon.

Baumgaertner told reporters before the team's departure: "It's clear that significantly more capacity is probably needed there, but we can only give small, but we hope important, help from the limited resources we have." He said the team is also taking material such as ventilators.

Portuguese hospitals are under intense pressure because of a surge that has given the small country one of Europe's highest infection rates. The country has seen over 13,000 deaths in the pandemic.

---

### THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

— Elated British officials say Oxford study backs up their decision to delay second vaccine shot for up to 12 weeks.

— World Health Organization investigators visit Chinese virus lab that has been the subject of speculation about coronavirus origins

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 26 of 80

— U.S. President Joe Biden and his treasury chief Yellen says Republican alternative to his virus aid plan is too small

— Czech Republic hits 1 million virus cases, smallest nation to do so

— Italy sees best snow season in year but the pandemic has shut down ski resorts to all but elite racers

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:

**PRAGUE** — The Czech Republic has surpassed a milestone of 1 million confirmed coronavirus infections since the pandemic began.

The Health Ministry said Wednesday that the day-to-day increase in new infections was 9,057 cases for a total of more than 1 million. The country of 10.7 million people has registered 16,683 virus-related deaths.

The number of new infections has fallen since they reached a record high of almost 18,000 in early January, but they have stagnated in recent days at still dangerously high levels despite a strict lockdown.

Currently 93,043 people are ill with COVID-19 in the Czech Republic, with 1,002 of them in intensive care. The numbers are putting the health system of the Central European nation under heavy pressure.

**LONDON** — Britain's health chief said Wednesday that a new study suggesting that a single dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine provides a high level of protection for 12 weeks supports the government's strategy of delaying the second shot so more people can quickly be protected by the first dose.

Britain's decision has been criticized as risky by other European countries, but Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the study "backs the strategy that we've taken and it shows the world that the Oxford vaccine works effectively."

Hancock's comments came after Oxford University released a study showing the vaccine cut the transmission of the virus by two-thirds and prevented severe disease.

The study has not been peer-reviewed yet and does not address the efficacy of the other vaccine currently in use in the U.K., made by Pfizer. Pfizer recommends that its shots be given 21 days apart and has not endorsed the U.K. government's decision to lengthen the time between doses.

The U.K. has already given at least one vaccine shot to 10 million people, far quicker than the European Union's vaccine rollout.

**LISBON, Portugal** -- Portugal has launched the second stage of its national vaccination plan as it struggles to get on top of a pandemic surge that has made it the world's worst-hit country by size of population.

Health services began Wednesday inoculating some 900,000 people over 80 years of age, or over 50 with underlying health problems, during the next two months.

Prime Minister António Costa said in the first phase during January more than 400,000 people were vaccinated, mainly residents and staff of nursing homes, frontline health workers and security forces.

"We are now making a big leap forward," Costa said of the second phase.

He said the challenge of the third phase of the plan, when the rest of the population is due to be inoculated, depends on how quickly manufacturers can provide vaccines.

**JERUSALEM** — Israel's Health Ministry says it is widening its COVID-19 vaccination campaign to all of its citizens over the age of 16 starting on Thursday.

Israel is leading the world in vaccinations per capita, and as of Wednesday's announcement has given 3.2 million people their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. More than 1.8 million people have received two doses of the vaccine.

At the same time that Israel has vaccinated around a third of its population, the country is under a nationwide lockdown to help stop the spread of the coronavirus, and new cases continue to mount at a troubling rate. Government statistics have also pointed to a drop in the number of daily vaccinations in

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 27 of 80

recent weeks.

The Health Ministry has reported over 664,000 cases of the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic, and at least 4,890 deaths from the disease. More than a quarter of those deaths — 1,423 — were in January alone.

**BERLIN** — Germany-based ticketing firm CTS Eventim says concert organizers should be able to require that customers show they've been vaccinated in order to attend events.

Chairman Klaus-Peter Schulenberg told German business weekly WirtschaftsWoche that "once enough vaccine is available and everyone can get vaccinated, then private event organizers should have the possibility to make vaccination a precondition for entry to events."

In an interview published Wednesday, Schulenberg said CTS Eventim, which has numerous subsidiaries across Europe, said its systems have been modified so they can read vaccine records. The company is itself in charge of organizing the vaccine drive in Germany's northern state of Schleswig-Holstein.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said every adult will be offered a vaccine by Sept. 21.

Germany's disease control agency said there were 9,705 newly confirmed cases and 975 deaths in the past day.

**COPENHAGEN** — Denmark's government said Wednesday it is joining forces with businesses to develop a digital passport that would show whether people have been vaccinated against the coronavirus, allowing them to travel and help ease restrictions on public life.

Finance Minister Morten Boedskov told a news conference that "in three, four months, a digital corona passport will be ready for use in, for example, business travel."

"It is absolutely crucial for us to be able to restart Danish society so that companies can get back on track. Many Danish companies are global companies with the whole world as a market," he added.

Before the end of February, citizens in Denmark would be able to see on a Danish health website the official confirmation of whether they have been vaccinated.

"It will be the extra passport that you will be able to have on your mobile phone that documents that you have been vaccinated," Boedskov said.

The coronavirus pandemic has seen a severe reduction in international travel as countries try to contain the spread of the virus.

**ISLAMABAD** — Pakistani authorities have started vaccinating frontline health workers against the coronavirus amid a steady decline in confirmed cases and fatalities.

Wednesday's start of the vaccine campaign comes days after Pakistan received half a million doses of the Sinopharm vaccine donated by China.

At a ceremony in Islamabad, Pakistan's minister for planning and development paid tribute to the health workers, saying they were "real heroes" as they put their lives at risk in the fight against COVID-19.

Pakistan has said it plans to vaccinate 70% of the country's high-risk population by the end of the year.

Also Wednesday, Pakistan reported 1,384 additional virus infection in the past 24 hours and 56 deaths. Pakistan has reported 11,802 deaths since the pandemic began.

**SEOUL**, South Korea — South Korean health officials say they have detected the first local transmissions of what are feared to be more contagious forms of the coronavirus first identified in Britain and South Africa.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said Wednesday said it found four local cases of the British variant and one local case of the South African variant.

Since October, health workers have found 39 cases of new variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, also including a form that was first identified in Brazil. The previous cases were found in people arriving from abroad.

In all five of the locally transmitted cases, the virus carriers had been infected from relatives who recently

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 28 of 80

arrived from abroad, the agency said.

The KDCA said it is expanding contact tracing to determine whether the new variants could have circulated further. It also called for administrative officials to strengthen monitoring of passengers arriving from abroad so that they minimize their contact with other people during their two-week quarantine, which in most cases can be done at home.

**BEIJING** — China on Wednesday announced a plan to provide 10 million coronavirus vaccine doses to developing nations through the global COVAX initiative.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China is responding to a request from the World Health Organization as developing countries seek to fill shortages predicted to run through March. He did not offer details on which vaccine China was providing to COVAX, or whether it was a donation.

COVAX, coordinated by the World Health Organization and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, seeks to ensure low- and middle-income countries have enough shots as wealthy nations have snapped up a large part of the billions of upcoming doses from mostly Western vaccine makers.

WHO is in the process of approving Chinese vaccines for emergency use, he added. COVAX has secured only a fraction of the 2 billion doses it hopes to buy in 2021.

China has already shipped large numbers of its own vaccine to mainly developing countries, and it has pursued bilateral deals or donations with at least 27 countries. Two Chinese companies, state-owned Sinopharm and Sinovac, have been behind a large part of the effort to take Chinese vaccines abroad.

**SEOUL**, South Korea — South Korean officials are moving to limit travel and gatherings during next week's Lunar New Year's holidays by allowing train operators to sell only window seats and passenger vessels to operate at half capacity.

The Health Ministry announced the steps Wednesday while repeating a plea for people to stay home amid a steady rise in coronavirus infections.

Officials also plan to strengthen sanitization and install more thermal cameras at train stations, bus terminals and airports. Travelers will be required to be masked at all times and will be prohibited from eating food at highway rest areas.

Officials have also extended a clampdown on private social gatherings of five or more people, which they enforce by fining restaurants and other businesses if they accept large groups.

**CANBERRA**, Australia — Australian regulators have decided to place no upper age limit on use of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine despite reports of dozens of deaths among the elderly in Norway.

Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration said in a statement Tuesday that it received reports on Jan. 14 of about 30 deaths in more than 40,000 elderly people vaccinated with Pfizer. But it added that "no causal link between vaccination and deaths could be established."

The agency says that "elderly patients can receive this vaccine and there is no cap on the upper age limit."

The regulator last month gave provisional approval for the use of the Pfizer vaccine in Australia and the first doses are due to be administered to people aged 16 and older in late February.

**WELLINGTON**, N.Z. — New Zealand's medical regulator has approved its first coronavirus vaccine, and officials hope to begin giving shots to border workers by the end of March.

New Zealand has no community transmission of the virus, and border workers are considered the most vulnerable to catching and spreading the disease because they deal with arriving travelers, some of whom are infected.

Regulators on Wednesday gave provisional approval for the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for people aged 16 and over.

However, New Zealand's success in stamping out the virus also means it will need to wait longer than many other countries to get vaccine doses for the general population. Officials say they hope to begin general inoculations by midyear.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 29 of 80

**RICHMOND, Va.** — Virginia's state Senate has passed a bill that would require every local school division to make both virtual and in-person learning available to students. The chamber passed the bill Tuesday on a 26-13 bipartisan vote.

The measure's chances in the state House are less certain. At least one similar but more narrow bill aimed at students without adequate internet access failed during last year's special legislative session.

Virginia currently has a patchwork approach to schooling, with some public and private schools offering in-person learning while others offer only virtual school. Supporters of the bill say that is arming children whose parents don't have the resources to pay for costly tuition.

A spokeswoman for Gov. Ralph Northam says he will review the measure if it reaches his desk.

**KENSINGTON, Md.** — A new study finds that cleaner air from the pandemic lockdown warmed the planet a bit in 2020, especially in places such as the eastern United States, Russia and China.

Tuesday's study found the pandemic lockdown reduced soot and sulfate air pollution, but those particles also reflect the sun's heat and help cool areas briefly.

The end result is that some places warmed temporarily as much as two-thirds of a degree last year and the planet as a whole warmed by about .05 degrees. The study's lead author said that loss of cooling outweighed any reduction in 2020 of heat-trapping carbon pollution.

**TOPEKA, Kan.** — Republican lawmakers in Kansas are moving toward formally condemning Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly's decision to give prison inmates COVID-19 vaccinations ahead of others.

The state Senate's health committee agreed Tuesday to sponsor a resolution from its GOP chair, Sen. Richard Hilderbrand, that calls on Kelly to reverse her policy on inoculating inmates.

The full Senate could debate it later this week.

**LANSING, Mich.** — An athletic advocacy group, hockey league and parents of athletes have sued Michigan's health director, seeking a reversal of 2 1/2-month state ban on contact sports that was issued to curb the coronavirus.

Let Them Play Michigan, a group of student-athletes, parents, coaches and school administrators, is among plaintiffs that sued in the Court of Claims Tuesday.

The complaint contends that the order, which was recently extended through Feb. 21, arbitrarily and irrationally singles out and deprives athletes of their constitutional rights and freedoms.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has said she's optimistic that the state can move toward reengagement in sports.

## WHO team visits Wuhan virus lab at center of speculation

By EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA Associated Press

**WUHAN, China (AP)** — World Health Organization investigators on Wednesday visited a research center in the Chinese city of Wuhan that has been the subject of speculation about the origins of the coronavirus, with one member saying they'd intended to meet key staff and press them on critical issues.

The WHO team's visit to the Wuhan Institute of Virology was a highlight of their mission to gather data and search for clues as to where the virus originated and how it spread.

"We're looking forward to meeting with all the key people here and asking all the important questions that need to be asked," zoologist and team member Peter Daszak said, according to footage run by Japanese broadcaster TBS.

Reporters followed the team to the high security facility, but as with past visits, there was little direct access to team members, who have given scant details of their discussions and visits thus far. Uniformed and plainclothes security guards stood watch along the facility's gated front entrance, but there was no sign of the protective suits team members had donned Tuesday during a visit to an animal disease research

center. It wasn't clear what protective gear was worn inside the institute.

The team left after around three hours without speaking to waiting journalists.

At a daily briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the experts also held talks Wednesday with experts from Huazhong Agricultural University.

"It should be noted that virus traceability is a complex scientific issue, and we need to provide sufficient space for experts to conduct scientific research," Wang said. "China will continue to cooperate with WHO in an open, transparent and responsible manner, and make its contribution to better prevent future risks and protect the lives and health of people in all countries."

Following two weeks in quarantine, the WHO team that includes experts in veterinary medicine, virology, food safety and epidemiology from 10 nations has over the past six days visited hospitals, research institutes and a traditional wet market linked to many of the first cases. Their visit followed months of negotiations as China seeks to retain tight control over information about the outbreak and the investigation into its origins, in what some have seen as an attempt to avoid blame for any missteps in its early response.

One of China's top virus research labs, the Wuhan Institute of Virology built an archive of genetic information about bat coronaviruses after the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. That has led to unproven allegations that it may have a link to the original outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan in late 2019.

China has strongly denied that possibility and has promoted also unproven theories that the virus may have originated elsewhere or even been brought into the country from overseas with imports of frozen seafood tainted with the virus, a notion roundly rejected by international scientists and agencies.

The institute's deputy director is Shi Zhengli, a virologist who worked with Daszak to track down the origins of SARS that originated in China and led to the 2003 outbreak. She has published widely in academic journals and worked to debunk theories espoused by the former Trump administration and other American officials that the virus is either a bioweapon or a "lab leak" from the institute.

Confirmation of the origins of the virus is likely to take years. Pinning down an outbreak's animal reservoir typically requires exhaustive research, including taking animal samples, genetic analysis and epidemiological studies. One possibility is that a wildlife poacher might have passed the virus to traders who carried it to Wuhan.

The first clusters of COVID-19 were detected in Wuhan in late 2019, eventually prompting the government to put the city of 11 million under a strict 76-day lockdown. China has since reported more than 89,000 cases and 4,600 deaths, with new cases largely concentrated in its northeast and local lockdowns and travel restrictions being imposed to contain the outbreaks.

New cases of local transmission continue to fall with just 15 reported on Wednesday as Chinese heed government calls not to travel for the Lunar New Year holiday later this month.

## Political storms swirl around California's Newsom amid virus

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — In the year since California saw its first coronavirus case, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has gone from a governor in command to one lurching from one political crisis to the next.

Just in recent weeks, he drew surprise and pushback for abruptly lifting stay-at-home orders; he overhauled the state's vaccine system as California lags behind smaller states in getting shots out; his effort to reopen schools foundered; and state audits revealed missteps that contributed to at least \$10 billion in unemployment fraud.

It all provided fresh fodder for a recall petition that's circulating — started by Republicans before the pandemic — and on Monday former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, a Republican, launched a bid against Newsom. Some Democrats are now starting to whisper about the need for a backup plan should voters decide the first-term governor needs to go.

Newsom's slide from the early days of the pandemic points to the pain facing leaders, particularly Democrats who avoided early political backlash, as virus fatigue takes hold, vaccines remain elusive and voters stop blaming the Trump administration for their trouble.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 31 of 80

A poll released Tuesday by the Public Policy Institute of California found just over half of Californians — 54% — approve of how Newsom is handling the job, suggesting the recall effort still has an uphill climb. But that's down from 65% in May, at the height of his approval. Among Democrats, he's dropped from 86% support in May to 71% now. About half of independents support him and just 16% of Republicans approve. The poll didn't ask about the recall.

Bill Burton, a Democratic communications strategist and former spokesman for President Barack Obama who lives in Southern California, said Democrats nationally have hammered a "follow the science" message when many Americans are more immediately worried about getting their kids back in school and reopening their businesses.

"There's some disconnect between public policy and what regular people are experiencing in their lives," he said.

For Newsom, the trouble started in November when he was caught dining out at the posh French Laundry restaurant for a lobbyist's birthday as he told Californians to avoid gatherings, reinforcing perceptions that he is out of touch with people.

California's messy vaccine rollout and a fresh round of business closures just before Christmas sparked further criticism. In the new year, Newsom drew fire for initially refusing to release the data he was using to determine which regions of the state should be locked down, then abruptly reversed course last week and lifted stay-at-home orders statewide.

Editorial boards for the Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle, two of the state's major newspapers, sharply criticized his decision and questioned his motives.

The decision "raised questions about whether the governor was truly 'following the science' as he so often says, or was influenced by growing public discontent about the pandemic restrictions," the Los Angeles Times editorial board wrote.

Even some of Newsom's traditional allies criticized him.

Assemblywoman Laura Friedman, a Democrat from the Los Angeles area, was among those who took to Twitter to express surprise and frustration at Newsom's sudden turnaround. She and others said they'd been given no heads-up by the administration, making it impossible to explain the new rules to confused community members and business leaders.

"If we don't know in advance, we can't help with that messaging," Friedman said. "And then we all look dysfunctional."

Still, she said she supports Newsom and doesn't want to see him recalled.

Among voters, there is evidence of frustration. Recall organizers say they've collected 1.3 million of the 1.5 million signatures needed by mid-March to put the recall on the ballot. State officials had verified 410,000 as of early January.

Meanwhile, law enforcement officials are investigating threats of death and violence against the governor, his family and his businesses, the Sacramento Bee reported.

Mike Trujillo, a Los Angeles strategist who worked for one of Newsom's Democratic opponents in the 2018 governor's race, said Newsom can't afford to take hits from Democrats with a potential recall looming. The governor's decision to reverse the stay-at-home orders could alienate members of his own party who have been taking the pandemic extremely seriously, Trujillo said.

"If you're Team Gavin, your political operation has to be 'make every Democrat happy,' and that's not been his operation style since Day One as governor," Trujillo said.

He added: "If the lawmakers are willing to speak out, imagine how the base feels."

Sonja Diaz, founder of the Latino Politics & Policy Initiative at UCLA, said that young workers and people of color are bearing the brunt of the state's coronavirus surges. She said the Trump administration deserves much of the blame for the disjointed response, but that Democrats need to stay focused on the priorities of vaccinating people and providing economic help rather than bending to critics on the right.

"This isn't really just on one governor," she said.

Newsom last week called the idea that he's making decisions based on politics "nonsense," but he's

otherwise sidestepped commenting on the recall. Beyond Faulconer, several other Republicans and a tech billionaire are considering bids if the recall happens, though none are particularly well-known to voters. Most of California's Republican mega-donors remain on the sidelines.

For now, many Democrats doubt whether the recall will make the ballot. Still, they are looking back to 2003, when voters recalled Gov. Gray Davis, for lessons as they debate whether its worth standing behind Newsom or finding an alternative. In that election, the Democratic lieutenant governor ran, a move that some Democrats say helped Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger win. But others say the party can't take the chance of not having a credible alternative.

Dan Newman, Newsom's political strategist, said he's not worried about the party turning on Newsom and that facing the ire of voters is part of the job.

"People are frustrated and upset, understandably. The pandemic has caused suffering and disruption and it makes it a challenging time to be a public official," Newman said. "It's part of what you sign up for — fires and pandemics and vaccine development are not all under your control, but you're held responsible and that's part of the deal, fair or not."

## **Biden, Yellen say GOP virus aid too small, Democrats push on**

By LISA MASCARO and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden panned a Republican alternative to his \$1.9 trillion COVID rescue plan as insufficient as Senate Democrats pushed ahead, voting to launch a process that could approve his sweeping rescue package on their own, if Republicans refuse to support it.

Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen joined the Democratic senators for a private virtual meeting Tuesday, both declaring the Republicans' \$618 billion offer was too small. They urged big fast action to stem the coronavirus pandemic crisis and its economic fallout.

As the White House reaches for a bipartisan bill, Democrats marshaled their ever-slim Senate majority, voting 50-49, to start a lengthy process for approving Biden's bill with or without GOP support. The goal is to have COVID-19 relief approved by March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires.

"President Biden spoke about the need for Congress to respond boldly and quickly," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said after the lunch meeting. "If we did a package that small, we'd be mired in the COVID crisis for years."

The swift action from Democrats on Capitol Hill underscores the urgency of delivering Biden's top legislative priority even as talks are progressing privately between Republicans and the White House, as well as with centrist Democrats, on potential changes to the package to win over broader bipartisan support.

Biden framed his views during the virtual lunch meeting with Democrats by talking about the need not to forget working and middle-class families — even those like nurses and pipefitters making \$150,000 for a family of four — who are straining during the crisis, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private call.

The night before, Biden met with 10 Republican senators pitching their \$618 billion alternative, and let them know it was insufficient to meet the country's needs. The president made it clear that he won't delay aid in hopes of winning GOP support.

While no compromise was reached during the late Monday session, White House talks with Republicans are privately underway.

The outcome will test the new president striving to unify the country but confronting a rising COVID-19 death toll and stubbornly high jobless numbers, with political risks for all sides. Vaccine distributions, direct \$1,400 payments to households, school reopenings and business aid are all on the line.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell criticized the Democrats for pressing ahead on their own. He said he had spoken to Biden ahead of his meeting with the 10 GOP senators.

"They've chosen a totally partisan path," McConnell said. "That's unfortunate."

The two sides are far apart, with the Republican group of 10 senators focused primarily on the health



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 33 of 80

care crisis and smaller \$1,000 direct aid to Americans than the \$1,400 payments Biden proposed, while the president is leading Democrats toward a more sweeping rescue plan to shore up households, local governments and a partly shuttered economy.

At the White House, press secretary Jen Psaki reiterated Biden's view that the risk is not in crafting too large a package, but in providing too little aid. She said the president was hopeful GOP ideas will be brought forward, and said nothing precludes Republicans from participating in the process.

"We need to make sure people get the relief they need," she said.

White House officials have previously cited the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as evidence of broad support for their plan, but the nation's most prominent business group issued a letter Tuesday that urged a bipartisan compromise.

"There ought to be common ground for a bipartisan proposal that can become law," Neil Bradley, executive vice president and chief policy officer, said in an interview.

The cornerstone of the GOP plan is \$160 billion for the health care response — vaccine distribution, a "massive expansion" of testing, protective gear and funds for rural hospitals, similar to what Biden has proposed.

But from there, the two plans drastically diverge. Biden proposes \$170 billion for schools, compared to \$20 billion in the Republican plan. Republicans also would give nothing to states, money that Democrats argue is just as important, with \$350 billion in Biden's plan to keep police, fire and other workers on the job.

The GOP's \$1,000 direct payments would go to fewer households, individuals earning up to \$40,000 a year, or \$80,000 for couples. That's less than Biden's proposal of \$1,400 direct payments at higher income levels, up to \$300,000 for some households.

The Republicans offer \$40 billion for Paycheck Protection Program business aid. But gone are Democratic priorities such as a gradual lifting of the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

According to Schumer, Biden told Democratic senators he had let the Republicans know "he's willing to make some modifications."

But both Biden and Yellen recalled the lessons of the government response to the 2009 financial crisis, which some have since said was inadequate as conditions worsened. Biden said he told the Republicans their offer was "way too small," Schumer said.

Winning the support of 10 Republicans would be significant, potentially giving Biden the votes needed in the 50-50 Senate to the 60-vote threshold typically required to advance legislation. Vice President Kamala Harris is the tie-breaker.

Wary Democrats pushed ahead with Tuesday's vote, unwilling to take too much time in courting GOP support that may not materialize or may lead to too meager a package.

The procedural steps are groundwork for eventual approval under the budget reconciliation process that would allow the bill to pass with a 51-vote majority in the Senate, rather than the 60 votes typically needed.

The vote Tuesday opens 50 hours of debate on a budget resolution, with amendment votes expected later this week. The House is poised to launch a similar process.

---

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Jonathan Lemire, Alexandra Jaffe, Darlene Superville and Amer Madhani contributed to this report.

## Mountain heartbreak: Italy has deep snow, closed ski resorts

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

CORTINA, Italy (AP) — The granite peaks that majestically encircle the northern Italian town of Cortina d'Ampezzo glimmer with one of the most prolific snowfalls in years, a cruel joke of nature while the COVID-19 pandemic silences Italy's winter resorts.

Cortina will flash across TV sports channels for two weeks this month as the past and future Olympic host city holds the 2021 World Ski Championships, sending downhill skiers flying down precipitous slopes. But the event will occupy just a fraction of the available hotel rooms, and it is unlikely to bring much busi-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 34 of 80

ness to the town's luxury boutiques. No spectators are allowed.

In fact, the spasm of activity looks to be a mere flicker in a ski season that seems destined to never take off, as the Italian government delays reopening lifts to leisure skiers. The world championships will provide good optics in view of the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, but scant economic relief for local businesses and workers who live off the winter sports economy, which has been shut down for almost a year.

"Absurdly, we made snow in November, because we couldn't know there would be so much and the slopes had to be prepared," said Marco Zardini, the chief executive of Cortina Skiworld, which normally operates 35 ski lifts across four areas but only has four lifts going now for use by local clubs and aspiring world-class athletes who must keep in shape for future seasons.

Italy's 2019-2020 ski season closed unexpectedly early last March, when the country became the first Western country pummeled by the pandemic. A new season has yet to launch, unlike in neighboring Switzerland, which in December allowed lifts to open with restrictions, or in Austria, where residents still can ski. France's ski lifts remain closed at least through February.

In Italy, the pandemic-related closures are a hit to an industry that generates 1.2 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in annual revenues and employs 5,000 permanent and 10,000 seasonal workers, according to the association of ski lift operators, ANEF.

The association said last year's early end to the season led to a 20% revenue decline and called the current season a total loss. Factoring in hotels, restaurants and other services, the ski industry generates 11 billion euros (\$13.2 billion) in annual revenues, but travel restrictions have kept activity near zero on top of the stilled lifts.

"Mountains, you cannot leave abandoned to themselves. They need to be taken care of," ANEF President Valeria Ghezzi said.

The paradox is that 2020-21 would have been a season for the record books in Cortina, and elsewhere across Italy's Alps, where snow has been in abundance, Zardini said.

In any season, Cortina's tony Corso d'Italia shopping street can compete with Milan's Montenapoleone Golden Triangle for its concentration of luxury brands, including Dior, Fendi and Moncler. But shops are empty of customers and most hotels are shuttered. Many hotels have several feet of snow piled on rooftops and terraces.

In a normal year, Italians account for just over half of Cortina's nearly 1 million annual visitors, and Americans are the top foreign visitors, ahead of Germans and Britons.

While global fashion brands can hope to balance the precipitous drop in business with booming sales in China, that's not the case for local businesses. Bruno Pompanin Dimai, the owner of a sports store, called the season "a disaster" for Cortina. He has sold just a few pairs of boots and one ski jacket all winter. His only comfort is that ski brands have promised not to update their offerings next season so he will be able to sell his leftover inventory.

"With all this snow, I would have worked double," Dimai said.

Ingrid Siorpaes, who runs a local handicrafts shop, said sales are down 90%. The only people walking down the snowy main street are locals and people riding out the pandemic in their second homes.

"We stay open, even if I had to lay off a salesperson," Siorpaes said. "This store is missing foreign tourists."

It's not so different in other ski areas across the Alps and along the Apennines where instead of generating cash, many lift operators are racking up costs for a season that may never arrive.

While ski resorts generate cash over four months of the year, maintenance and upkeep are year-round costs — something ski resort operators say the government in Rome has been slow to understand.

No aid package has been forthcoming for the ski industry, and the situation is grim for workers. Permanent workers can be put on short-term layoffs, but such programs are not available to seasonal workers, who make up a great share of the industry's lift operators, ski instructors, mountain guides, rental shop employees and hotel and restaurant workers.

Ghezzi, the ski lift association president, is doubtful that lifts will open on Feb. 15 as currently planned.

"Unfortunately, I have to say that the season is irremediably compromised," she said. "We can say the season is a total loss. If we can open in March, maybe it becomes 90% or 95%. I cannot rule out that

some companies might fail.”

A March opening would give at most a month of teaching time for Giulio De Luca, who runs the ski school in San Vito, which is part of Cortina SkiWorld. He has only seen two 600-euro (\$722) payments from the government since last spring — which was quickly followed by a tax bill of 950 euros (\$1,143).

“In November, December and January, instructors received not one penny,” from the government, De Luca said. Nor has the ski school been eligible for aid so far, while rent, utility, phone and tax bills continue to arrive.

“I have the money to pay taxes now, but not next month,” he said.

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>

## Coup a further complication for tricky Myanmar-China ties

By ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Before Monday’s coup in Myanmar, the country’s relations with China already were complicated by Chinese investments in its infrastructure and the Myanmar military’s campaigns along their shared border.

The coup deposed national leader Aung San Suu Kyi a little over a year after Chinese President Xi Jinping made a show of support to her with the first visit by a head of state from Beijing to Myanmar since 2001 and 33 agreements on a wide range of issues.

The military’s commander in chief, Min Aung Hliang, has taken charge of the new government under a one-year state of emergency.

Even if China played no role at all in ousting Suu Kyi, Beijing is likely to gain still greater sway over the country, analysts say. That’s especially likely if the U.S. and other Western governments impose sanctions to try to punish the regime.

At a briefing on the situation at the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday, the U.N. envoy for Myanmar condemned the coup and urged the council to support democracy in the country. But it was unclear if the council would issue a statement calling for restoration of democracy and release of all those detained by the military because the U.N. missions of China and Russia said they had to send it to their capitals for review.

Beijing’s initial reaction to the coup was measured.

On Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said China was studying the situation, describing Myanmar as a “friendly neighbor.” He urged Myanmar to properly handle the situation according to its laws and constitution and “maintain political and social stability.”

China has invested billions of dollars in Myanmar mines, oil and gas pipelines and other infrastructure and is its biggest trading partner. But while China’s ruling Communist Party tends to favor fellow authoritarian regimes, it has had a fractious history with Myanmar’s military, sometimes related to its campaigns against ethnic Chinese minority groups and the drug trade along their long, mountainous border.

It was partly a backlash against China’s growing dominance of Myanmar’s economy a decade ago that led the previous junta to shift toward democratic reforms and the civilian government that enabled Suu Kyi to join Parliament and become the nation’s de facto leader, even as the military retained ultimate power.

Suu Kyi has shifted closer to Beijing in the past few years as she defended the military against condemnation of atrocities against Myanmar’s Rohingya minority. That may have deepened military leaders’ distrust, especially after their party suffered a resounding loss in recent elections.

“It was always a risk that the military would step in to try and shore up their power,” Champa Patel, director of the Asia-Pacific Program at Chatham House in London said in an emailed statement. “Their insecurity has deepened as (Suu Kyi) consolidated her power within the country and deepened ties with countries such as China.”

The coup came just three weeks after a visit by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who met with Suu

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 36 of 80

Kyi and also military officials in the capital, Naypyitaw. The visit was seen in part as an endorsement of the victory of Suu Kyi's party in the November election and partly as a signal Beijing would like to see faster progress on projects agreed to a year earlier.

Some have speculated that Beijing might have given a covert nod to the generals.

But while the coup may lead Myanmar's leaders to lean more heavily on support from China, supplier of most of their weapons and one of the country's biggest sources of foreign investment, researcher Zhao Gancheng at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, says it was an unwelcome disruption.

"As a neighboring country, I can't see anything good for China, given that all of China's investments and infrastructure construction need a stable environment," Zhao said. "China is concerned about this development," he said.

Regardless of what internal politics, antagonisms and personal ambitions might have driven Min Aung Hliang and other military leaders to seize power, China is bound to continue to expand its influence in Myanmar given the huge projects already under construction and the depth of Chinese involvement in businesses ranging from casinos, factories and property development to pipelines and ports.

Last week, the Chinese consortium leading a deep-water port project in Kyaukphyu, on the northwestern coast, began seeking bids for environmental assessments of the project. An anchor of Beijing's "Belt and Road Initiative" to build infrastructure across much of Asia linking its economy to the rest of the world, it will give China coveted overland access to the Bay of Bengal.

China has massive commitments to projects in mining, hydropower and other construction, part of the \$21.5 billion it has pledged in investment in Myanmar. Suu Kyi's government had been slowly moving ahead on such projects, some of which face strong local opposition.

"China has strategic, vested interests in keeping Myanmar as stable as they possibly can," said Chris Ankersen, a professor at the NYU School of Professional Studies Center for Global Affairs. "It works to China's advantage to be seen as someone who has to be consulted."

After nearly a decade of reforms and gradual opening of Myanmar's long-isolated economy, U.S. and other Western businesses have made only tentative investments, usually with local or other Asian partners.

Western governments that already have imposed sanctions against Min Aung Hliang and other top military leaders and businesses over human rights abuses therefore have relatively scant leverage in persuading Myanmar's leaders to restore civilian rule.

The military may have decided, ultimately, that the cost of defying Western public opinion by staging a coup was outweighed by its own domestic considerations — namely a determination to push Suu Kyi aside, Ankersen said.

In the past, the military has at times sought to counter growing Chinese influence over the economy, showing "a more independent streak that sought to balance against Chinese influence," said Patel of Chatham House.

But the generals control big chunks of Myanmar's economy and will likely maneuver to maximize what they can gain through dealings with their Chinese partners.

Min Aung Hliang is a major investor in Myanma Economic Holdings PLC, a conglomerate set up by the military in 1990 that has major joint projects with Chinese corporations, including the Letpadaung copper mine.

"China will have greater leverage to pull Myanmar further into the orbit of its own plans for economic development," said John G. Dale, a professor at George Mason University in Virginia.

And Japan, Singapore and other countries that are more heavily invested in Myanmar are likely to balk at harsh measures against the newly established military regime, say Gregory B. Poling and Simon Tran Hudes of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"And the largest foreign player in Myanmar's economy, China, will be all too happy to recalibrate its engagement to recognize the new facts on the ground. That will likely soften the blow of any U.S. sanctions, which Min Aung Hliang has doubtless already anticipated and dismissed," they said in a report.

Associated Press researcher Yu Bing in Beijing and Associated Press writers Grant Peck in Bangkok and Victoria Milko in Jakarta, Indonesia, contributed to this report.

This story corrects that the election was in November, not October.

## Malawi setting up field hospitals to cope with virus surge

By GREGORY GONDWE Associated Press

BLANTYRE, Malawi (AP) — Malawi faces a resurgence of COVID-19 that is overwhelming the southern African country where a presidential residence and a national stadium have been turned into field hospitals in efforts to save lives.

President Lazarus Chakwera, just six months in office, lost two Cabinet ministers to COVID-19 in January amid a surge that led him to declare a state of national disaster in all of Malawi's 28 districts.

Chakwera declared three days of national mourning over the deaths of the ministers of transport and local government, which shocked the nation and inspired a raft of new measures aimed at stemming the spread of the virus in a country with a poor health system. A more contagious strain of the coronavirus first reported in South Africa has since been confirmed in Malawi.

"Our medical facilities are terribly understaffed, and our medical personnel are outnumbered," Chakwera said in a recent address.

Malawi has seen its number of confirmed cases of the disease go above 23,000, including a total of 702 deaths as of Monday, according to Dr. John Phuka, co-chair of the presidential task force on COVID-19.

The numbers appear relatively small in a country of 18 million, but the 14,000 active cases are many times more than the number of established hospital beds. Officials are setting up makeshift facilities to increase the number of treatment units from 400 to at least 1,500, sometimes erecting tents on the lawns of hospitals.

The presidential residence State House in the southern city of Zomba soon will be turned into a 100-bed treatment facility, according to officials.

A 300-bed field hospital at Bingu National Stadium has begun admitting patients. Another 300-bed field hospital has been opened at a youth center in Blantyre, the country's largest city. And a 200-bed facility for emergency care has been set up in the northern city of Mzuzu.

The government also has recruited 1,128 medical professionals, just short of 1,380 that health authorities have said are needed.

The government of Chakwera — a retired pastor who was a relative political newcomer when he was elected in June — has already spent more than \$38 million in tackling the pandemic. Last month he ordered the finance minister to release another \$22.6 million as soon as possible to meet the demands of the crisis.

Among the measures imposed by Chakwera, who began broadcasting a virus-related address to the nation every Sunday night following the deaths of his ministers, is the closure of schools for at least 15 days until Feb. 8. A nighttime curfew is being enforced and all gatherings are restricted to no more than 50 people.

"The situation is quite desperate," Chakwera said in a recent address, referring to the shortage of health infrastructure. "Although in my six months in office we set up 400 national treatment units, the current wave of infections has completely overwhelmed these facilities."

Malawi has secured enough doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to vaccinate 20% of its people, with the first consignment set to arrive at the end of February, he said. Front-line workers, the elderly, and those with underlying conditions will be prioritized, Chakwera told the nation, appealing for outside help to combat the pandemic.

The international aid group Doctors Without Borders has also responded to the crisis, opening a 40-bed COVID-19 ward entirely staffed and managed by its employees. The group noted, however, that setting up more hospital beds may not be enough.

"Malawi urgently needs access to vaccination — which unfortunately is unlikely to happen before April 2021, and even then, only for a portion of its people," the organization said in a statement. "By that time,

the pandemic might have already peaked, and killed many who could have been protected by vaccination.”

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>

## **Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos may step down without stepping away**

By JOSEPH PISANI and MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Business Writers

Even after stepping aside as CEO, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos appears likely to keep identifying new frontiers for the world’s dominant e-commerce company. His successor, meanwhile, gets to deal with escalating efforts to curtail its power.

Tuesday’s announcement that Bezos will hand off the CEO job this summer came as a surprise. But it doesn’t mean Amazon is losing the visionary who turned an online bookstore founded in 1995 into a behemoth worth \$1.7 trillion that sometimes seems to do a little bit of everything.

Bezos, 57, has never let Amazon rest on its laurels. In the last year alone, it bought a company developing self-driving taxis; launched an online pharmacy selling inhalers and insulin; and won government approval to put more than 3,200 satellites into space to beam internet service to Earth.

Long-time Amazon executive Andy Jassy will be the new CEO, but Bezos will be the company’s executive chairman — corporatespeak for board leaders who, unlike most, stay involved in key operational decisions. Think Robert Iger at Disney, Howard Schultz at Starbucks, or Eric Schmidt at Google after handing off the reins a decade ago.

“Jeff Bezos has held a firm grip on the company for a long time, ” said Ken Perkins, president of Retail-Metrics LLC, a retail research firm. “I have to believe he will have a say in what is going on and have a big hand in big picture decisions.”

Amazon’s chief financial officer, Brian Olsavsky, made the move sound like a mere shuffling of chairs. “It’s more of a restructuring of who’s doing what,” he said during a Tuesday call with reporters.

Investors didn’t bail after hearing about Amazon’s forthcoming change in command, and instead focused on the company’s blockbuster earnings, which it also announced Tuesday. Amazon’s stock edged up slightly in Tuesday’s extended trading — not something that tends to happen when Wall Street is worried about a management shake-up.

“I don’t think he’s going to be completely hands off,” CFRA analyst Tuna Amobi said of Bezos.

In a blog post, Bezos said the CEO job had pulled him away from exploring new ideas and initiatives that could yield growth opportunities. He now intends to focus more on such innovation, along with other ventures such as his rocket ship company Blue Origin and his newspaper, The Washington Post.

“Being the CEO of Amazon is a deep responsibility, and it’s consuming,” Bezos wrote. “When you have a responsibility like that, it’s hard to put attention on anything else.”

The shift will saddle Jassy with some of the responsibilities that Bezos clearly didn’t enjoy. Perhaps the most daunting is the increasing scrutiny of Amazon’s clout in an online shopping market that has become even more essential to consumers during the past year’s pandemic.

The U.S. government already has slapped two other technology powerhouses, Google and Facebook, with antitrust lawsuits. Both regulators and lawmakers have left little doubt that they are taking a hard look at whether similar action is warranted against Amazon and Apple.

Jassy will likely have to ward off the antitrust threat while also trying to forge his own legacy. A revered company founder can cast a long shadow.

“Amazon’s size makes some industries uncomfortable, some governments uncomfortable and Andy Jassy will have to deal with the consequences,” Gartner analyst Ed Anderson said. “That will be some of the new era of his leadership.”

Jassy also may face pressure from critics who believe Amazon’s success has been built in part by mistreating many of its 1.3 million employees, especially those in the distribution warehouses and delivery trucks who are paid far less than the tech engineers while also facing more hazardous conditions.

"Jeff Bezos' departure as CEO is a chance for Amazon to turn over a new leaf," said Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen, an activist group that in Washington. "It should start by paying all its workers a living wage and ensuring they have safe and healthy working conditions."

Analysts said Bezos appears to have picked a successor who's up for the challenge. Jassy is highly respected for building up Amazon's web services division, which runs many of the world's biggest websites. Earnings from that cloud-computing service also helped subsidize the company's online shopping operations as it cut prices so low that it lost money for many years.

"He's proven himself in building the most profitable part of the company," Amobi said. "His challenge is translating that to the broader e-commerce platform."

Pisani reported from New York and Liedtke reported from San Ramon, California. Associated Press writers Mae Anderson and Anne D'Innocenzio in New York, Marcy Gordon in Washington and Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, contributed to this story.

## **Biden pays respects to Capitol officer as he lies in honor**

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Slain U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick lay in honor in the building he died defending, allowing colleagues and the lawmakers he protected to pay their respects and to remember the violent attack on Congress that took his life.

Sicknick died after defending the Capitol on Jan. 6 against the mob that stormed the building and interrupted the electoral count after then-President Donald Trump urged supporters on the National Mall to "fight like hell" to overturn his defeat. The U.S. Capitol Police said in a statement that Sicknick, who died the next day, was injured "while physically engaging with protesters," though a final cause of death has not yet been determined.

President Joe Biden traveled to the Capitol to pay tribute to Sicknick shortly after the ceremony began Tuesday night, briefly placing his hand on the urn in the center of the Capitol Rotunda, saying a prayer and sadly shaking his head as he observed a memorial wreath nearby. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and a handful of other congressional leaders also paid their respects.

The arrival of Sicknick's remains at 9:30 p.m. was solemn, with dozens of Capitol Police standing at attention as his urn was carried up the Capitol steps. There was a viewing period for his Capitol Police colleagues overnight, and lawmakers were to pay tribute at a ceremony Wednesday morning. A ceremonial departure for Arlington National Cemetery was planned later in the day.

Members of Congress remain shaken by the riots and are grappling with what it means not only for the future of the country, but for their own security as elected representatives. While lawmakers were united in denouncing the riots, and Trump's role in them, the parties are now largely split on how to move forward.

The attack led to uncertainty, fear and political turmoil in Congress as Biden began his presidency. House Democrats impeached Trump a week after the attack, sending a charge of "incitement of insurrection" to the Senate, where Republicans are unlikely to provide the votes necessary to convict him. At the same time, the building has been cut off from the public, surrounded by large metal fences and defended by the National Guard.

Sicknick, 42, of South River, New Jersey, enlisted in the National Guard six months after graduating high school in 1997, then deployed to Saudi Arabia and later Kyrgyzstan. He joined the Capitol Police in 2008. Like many of his fellow officers, he often worked security in the Capitol itself and was known to lawmakers, staff and others who passed through the building's doors each morning.

There are still questions about his death, which was one of five as a result of the rioting. As the mob forced its way in, Sicknick was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher, two law enforcement officials said. He collapsed later on, was hospitalized and died. The officials could not discuss the ongoing investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Investigators are also examining whether he may have ingested a chemical substance during the riot

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 40 of 80

that may have contributed to his death, the officials said.

Biden's tribute Tuesday evening stood in stark contrast to Trump, who never made a public expression of sorrow over the officer's death or took any responsibility for the attack.

Pelosi and Schumer announced last week that Sicknick would lie in honor, saying his heroism "helped save lives, defend the temple of our democracy and ensure that the Congress was not diverted from our duty to the Constitution."

His sacrifice, they said, "reminds us every day of our obligation to our country and to the people we serve."

Pelosi said in a letter to colleagues on Tuesday that the Capitol Police "demonstrated extraordinary valor" on Jan. 6 and urged members to pay their respects to Sicknick. She has also encouraged members to take advantage of trauma resources available to congressional employees.

She said protecting the Capitol and the lawmakers who work there is a "highest priority" and that there will be a need for extra money to do so. During the assault, many of the insurrectionists called out for members, including Pelosi. They also targeted Vice President Mike Pence, who was in the building to preside over the electoral count.

"The insurrectionist attack on January 6 was not only an attack on the Capitol, but was a traumatic assault targeting Members," she said.

Sicknick is only the fifth person to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda, a designation for those who are not elected officials, judges or military leaders. The others who have lain in honor were John Gibson and Jacob Chestnut, Jr., two officers who were killed in a 1998 shooting at the Capitol; civil rights leader Rosa Parks, who died in 2005; and the Rev. Billy Graham, who died in 2018.

---

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo, Colleen Long and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

## **Tarnished by its Gaza rule, Hamas may struggle in elections**

By FARES AKRAM Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh famously pledged to live on "zeit wa zaatar"— olive oil and dried herbs — after he led the Islamic militant group to victory on a message of armed struggle and austerity during 2006 Palestinian elections.

But he has since left the impoverished Gaza Strip and, along with some other Hamas leaders, is living in luxury as he splits his time between Turkey and Qatar. With new elections planned this spring, Hamas will struggle to campaign as a scrappy underdog that is above trading its principles for material comforts.

It remains to be seen whether the elections decreed by President Mahmoud Abbas will actually be held. Much depends on whether his secular Fatah party and Hamas can reach some kind of agreement overcoming the bitter divisions that have prevented previous attempts to hold a vote.

But it's clear that Hamas' image among many Palestinians, even onetime supporters, has suffered since 2007, when the group seized Gaza from Abbas' forces in a week of bloody street battles.

Since then, Hamas has established its own quasi-state with its own civil service and security forces. But it has struggled to provide even basic services with Gaza's economy devastated by three wars with Israel and a crippling Israeli-Egyptian blockade that has confined the territory's 2 million people to what Palestinians often refer to as the world's largest open-air prison.

That some of its leaders have left Gaza has not helped. Hamas leaders who ascended the ranks when it was an underground militant group have traded their street clothes and motorbikes for business suits and shiny SUVs. Some, like Haniyeh, have decamped to luxury hotels in Turkey and Qatar, leaving lower-ranking officials and ordinary Palestinians to deal with the consequences of their policies.

"Every year, the situation is getting from bad to worse," said Youssef Ahmed, who works in a food stall in an east Gaza City market. "People don't have money to buy the basic things."

Still, while Gazans grumble privately, they rarely speak out against Hamas, which has a history of locking up critics.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 41 of 80

Ahmed said he blames “everyone” — Hamas, Israel and Abbas’ Palestinian Authority. But he said, as the ruling power, Hamas has a special responsibility.

Haniyeh, who became Palestinian prime minister after the 2006 election and is now the overall leader of Hamas, left Gaza in 2019 for what Hamas said was a temporary foreign tour. He has yet to return.

A recent video that surfaced on social media showed Haniyeh playing soccer on a well-groomed field beneath the glass skyscrapers of gas-rich Qatar — worlds away from the Beach Refugee Camp in Gaza City, where he was born and still maintains a family home. Another video from Monday showed him in a tailored suit surrounded by bodyguards and being welcomed by Qatari dignitaries at a red-carpet event.

In Gaza, meanwhile, Palestinians grapple with 50% unemployment, frequent power outages and polluted tap water.

That’s largely because of the blockade, which Israel says is necessary to keep Hamas from importing arms. Israel and most Western countries consider Hamas a terrorist group because it has carried out scores of attacks over the years, including suicide bombings, that killed hundreds of Israeli civilians. A long-running dispute between Hamas and Abbas’ Palestinian Authority over the provision of aid and services to Gaza has made matters worse.

Hamas blames Gaza’s suffering on the PA, Israel and the international community.

“There is a popular awareness that it’s not Hamas’ fault, and that external sides want to undermine the democratic experience,” said Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem. He said Hamas still has “massive” popular support and would win a majority in any future election.

He added that Hamas members in Gaza had also suffered from the wars, isolation and economic collapse. Still, the suffering is not shared equally.

Qatar has sent hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Gaza in recent years to shore up an informal cease-fire. That money has allowed the Hamas-run government to pay its civil servants — while imposing taxes on imports, exports, businesses and tobacco that many ordinary Palestinians have resented as compounding their suffering. Hamas security forces have violently cracked down on protests against those measures.

In another example of the inequality in Gaza, a “fast track” through the Rafah crossing with Egypt — the only way most Gazans can travel into and out of the territory — is available for those who can pay high fees or have connections to Egyptian officials. In recent months, three of Haniyeh’s sons have appeared on the list, which is made public by the Hamas-run Interior Ministry. Other travelers must go through a lengthy permit process.

Ahmed Yousef, a former adviser to Haniyeh who himself has relocated to Istanbul, acknowledges the group has fallen short of its professed ideals.

“We presented ourselves as a popular movement, not an elite or factional one, so this should have obliged us to better address the people’s needs and problems,” he said.

Akram Atallah, a longtime columnist for the West Bank-based Al-Ayyam newspaper who moved from Gaza to London in 2019, said Hamas has tried to use the “duality” of being a government and a militant group to its advantage. When faulted for not providing basic services, it claims to be a resistance group; when criticized for imposing taxes, it says it’s a legitimate government, he said.

Hamas may still do well in any elections, if only because its main competitor, Fatah, has an even longer record of failure. Fatah’s upper ranks are widely seen as being filled with corrupt individuals who are more interested in enjoying the perks of VIP status with Israel than in advancing the struggle for statehood.

A December poll carried out by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research found support for the parties was close — 38% for Hamas, compared to 34% for Fatah — but predicted that Haniyeh would handily defeat Abbas in a presidential race. The group surveyed 1,270 Palestinians across the West Bank and Gaza, with a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

Assuming elections are held, “it looks like (Fatah and Hamas) will dominate the next parliament, but neither one will have a majority,” said Khalil Shikaki, the head of the center. He said independent candidates and smaller factions will win the remaining seats.

Atallah, the journalist, says Hamas is still able to appeal to “the people’s emotions,” but that the hold it

once had on many has faded.

" Hamas as an authority has been exposed," he said. "The people found out that its leaders live much better than they do."

Associated Press writer Joseph Krauss in Ramallah, West Bank, contributed to this report.

## **In a Baghdad bar, a Syrian serves cocktails to fix war woes**

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — From the outside, the building seems just one of the many in central Baghdad that are decaying from years of misuse — silent, windows shut.

After 6 p.m., one knock on its steel-plated doors and a portal is opened to a different world rarely found in Iraq's capital.

Bodyguards check bags for weapons. Names are checked against a list. Faint sounds of club beats resound, growing louder every level up a cascading staircase. At the top floor, a bartender works skillfully behind an illuminated counter. Above him, shelves of liquor glow like jewels under a neon sign with the name of the bar.

Ask for a menu, and he responds, coolly: "I am the menu," and produces a cocktail with the confidence of a magician.

The bar's manager Alaa, a Syrian national scarcely in Iraq one year, has a vision for the place: A clandestine establishment that can serve as a refuge for his hand-picked clientele wishing to evade the stigma of drinking alcohol in a conservative Muslim-majority society. But being a barman is a dangerous trade in Iraq, where alcohol shops are frequently targeted by disapproving militias.

"This place is not for everyone," he said. "We are living in fear, especially in this place... but I have to tolerate it. It's my job. The workers here, I have to protect them. My clients too."

Posters from the British crime series *Peaky Blinders* are framed on the walls. The show, which follows the exploits of a gang in Birmingham, was Alaa's main inspiration for the bar's decor. "It's a lot like this place (Baghdad), unfortunately," he said.

Open for only a few weeks, Alaa could not have picked a worse time to inaugurate a bar. Bombings of shops selling alcohol are on the rise in the Iraqi capital. Alaa's supplier was among those hit. On Tuesday alone, two roadside bombs exploded near two different shops, causing material damage. It was the fourth such attack in the span of a week.

Baghdad's bar scene is muted and limited to a handful of restaurants that also serve alcohol. Even these have uncertain futures and are periodically closed down. Their mistake, Alaa said, was to be open to the broader public. Absurdly, the survival of Alaa's bar depends on keeping clients to a minimum.

The bar's opening also comes as crude-exporting Iraq grapples with the coronavirus pandemic and a crippling economic crisis brought on by low oil prices last year. In response to the severe liquidity crisis, the Finance Ministry recently devalued the Iraqi dinar, which is pegged to the dollar, by over 20%.

"These things have effects on business, but I am still finding clients. There are a lot of people here who have money. Legal, illegal doesn't matter. Doesn't make a difference for me," Alaa said.

Gripped by fear, he watches the comings and goings on surveillance cameras day and night. He asked that The Associated Press refer to him only by his first name and withhold the name and location of the bar to avoid reprisals from armed groups.

He has other rules, too: Word-of-mouth is the only form of advertising he accepts, every would-be patron must text him directly for a reservation, they must not be too loud indoors. Alaa knows each and every customer by name.

Those who break the rules or "make problems" are put on an ever-growing blacklist.

It's not the most scared he has ever been.

Being witness to Iraq's faltering rule of law is just the latest chapter in his life's odyssey, which began with the war that ravaged his native Syria in 2011. He recalls the bomber planes flying overhead while

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 43 of 80

completing exams in Damascus University. At one point, his village in southern Syria was surrounded by militants from both the Islamic State group and al-Qaida-affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra. Next came Lebanon, where he spent years bracing for one crisis after another.

"I have been through all the crises in the region — Syria, Lebanon, Iraq," he said. From those he learned just one lesson: "Earn, before you spend."

At every stage, he sought work doing the one thing he knows best. Nightlife, he said, is in his blood.

His resume reads like a Beirut weekend rager. His mixing talents have graced many bars along Beirut's famed party streets Gemmayze and Mar Mikhael. In 2017, he was unable to return to Lebanon from a trip to Syria after the authorities refused to renew his residency, a policy impacting many Syrian workers at the time.

He returned to his native Sweida, a predominately Druze village in Syria's south, where he tried — and failed — to launch a car trading business. A cousin told him money was to be made in Baghdad, where many Syrians have found work in hospitality.

It was late 2019 and Alaa had a choice: Earn a living in Baghdad, where security is precarious, or risk a perilous sea journey to seek asylum in Europe. "I could never accept being a refugee and live a life without dignity and freedom," he said.

Creating the bar was a stroke of luck.

The Iraqi owner was about to sell the building when Alaa stepped in and offered to revamp the place and split the profits. Bringing in \$5,000 a week and almost always at capacity on weekends, the bar is showing early signs of success. News of its opening spread like wildfire on social media, including closed Facebook groups run by Iraq's lawyers, doctors and engineers — the type of patron Alaa is seeking out.

The success of his business is linked inextricably to the well-being of his family back home.

His mother and sister still live in Sweida, where most residents bring home a mere \$30 a month in wages. The bar serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it meets the growing demands of Iraq's underground drinking scene.

"The other is to put food on the table back home," he said.

## Biden signs immigration orders as Congress awaits more

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden signed a second spate of orders to undo his predecessor's immigration policies, demonstrating the powers of the White House and its limitations without support from Congress.

His orders on family separation, border security and legal immigration bring to nine the number of executive actions on immigration during his first two weeks in office.

With proposed legislation to give legal status and a path to citizenship to all of the estimated 11 million people in the country who don't have it, Biden has quickly taken aim at many of former President Donald Trump's sweeping changes to deter immigration, both legal and illegal, and established a vision that is likely to far outlast his tenure if he's able to muster enough support in a deeply divided Congress.

Biden rescinded some Trump actions and laid a foundation for more far-reaching repeals depending on the outcome of policy reviews over the next few months.

"I'm not making new law. I'm eliminating bad policy," he said during a signing ceremony Tuesday.

Alejandro Mayorkas, who was sworn in as Homeland Security secretary after his nomination was confirmed Tuesday by the Senate, will lead a task force on family separation, focused largely on reuniting parents and children who remain apart. It is unclear exactly how many, but about 5,500 children have been identified in court documents as having been separated during Trump's presidency, including about 600 whose parents have yet to be found by a court-appointed committee.

"We're going to work to undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration," Biden said.

The review will address the possibility of legal status in the United States for separated families and providing mental health services.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 44 of 80

The American Civil Liberties Union, which sued to reunite families, has asked the administration for legal status in the United States for all of the thousands of families that have been separated, as well as financial compensation for those families and attorneys at government expense.

A review of border security will include a policy that makes asylum-seekers wait in Mexican border cities for hearings in U.S. immigration court. It is a step toward fulfilling a campaign pledge to end the "Remain in Mexico" policy, known officially as Migrant Protection Protocols, which enrolled nearly 70,000 asylum-seekers since it began in January 2019. Biden asked for "a phased strategy for the safe and orderly entry into the United States" of those already enrolled who are waiting in Mexico for a judge to decide their cases.

Biden ended a policy that held asylum-seekers in Customs and Border Protection custody with virtually no access to attorneys while their claims were quickly decided. He ordered reviews of a nationwide expansion of fast-track deportation authority and of agreements with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras for the U.S. to reject asylum applicants and instead send them to those Central American countries with an opportunity to seek protection there.

His order on legal immigration seeks ways to reduce backlogs and barriers to citizenship and considers scrapping Trump's "public charge rule," which makes it more difficult for people who receive government benefits to obtain green cards.

Biden didn't address a freeze on many temporary work visas and green cards while the economy recovers from a pandemic, as some expected.

"That's a pretty big gap for them not to take action on those visa bans because the impact is so dramatic and significant," said Greg Chen, director of government relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

While immediate changes were limited, the impact of executive orders that Trump issued his first week in office didn't start to become apparent until a month later when Homeland Security issued detailed enforcement priorities. Those orders laid a foundation for many other of his administration's hundreds of immigration moves that followed.

Many changes will have to come from agencies like Homeland Security, not the White House, such as rescinding the public-charge rule, Chen said.

The announcements come as Biden aides warn that Trump's border policies that put asylum increasingly out of reach may take months to unwind — a position that has caused grumbling among some pro-immigration advocates.

Roberta Jacobson, a top Biden aide on border issues, asked Spanish-language media on Friday to discourage audiences from coming to the U.S. border. "It is not the moment," she said in Spanish, adding that the journey was "very dangerous, and we are in the middle of creating a new system."

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki reinforced that message from the White House podium on Tuesday, saying it "remains a dangerous trip" and, "This is not the time to come to the United States."

The orders demonstrate that, just as Trump remade immigration policies from the White House, Biden can undo them with the stroke of a pen — some more easily than others. More lasting changes would have to pass Congress, a daunting job that Trump and his predecessors Barack Obama and George W. Bush failed to achieve.

In an echo of failed legislative pushes in 2007 and 2013, familiar lines of division have formed with overheated rhetoric. Stephen Miller, a top architect of Trump's policies, said Sunday on Fox News Channel that Biden's actions amount to the "end of all immigration enforcement in the United States of America."

Pro-immigration groups largely applauded Biden's latest moves, though they were more muted than the almost-giddy reception to the president's first-day actions.

"The positive steps the administration is taking must be the beginning, not an end unto themselves," Ali Noorani, president of the National Immigration Forum, said Tuesday. "Congress should build on these first steps to find permanent solutions to improve our immigration system."

Kelli Garcia, federal policy counsel of the Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund, said the orders were encouraging but "will not immediately benefit immigrant communities in dire need of concrete action."

Spagat reported from San Diego.

## Activists wary of broader law enforcement after Capitol riot

By NOREEN NASIR and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — As federal officials grapple with how to confront the national security threat from domestic extremists after the deadly siege of the U.S. Capitol, civil rights groups and communities of color are watching warily for any moves to expand law enforcement power or authority.

They say their communities have felt the brunt of security scrutiny over the last two decades and fear new tools meant to target right-wing extremism or white nationalists risk harming Muslims, Black Americans and other groups, even if unintentionally.

Their position underscores the complexity of the national debate surrounding how to balance First Amendment expression protections with law enforcement's need to prevent extremist violence before it occurs. In particular, many Muslim advocates oppose the creation of any new domestic terror statute modeled after existing laws that criminalize support for foreign terror organizations.

"The answer ought to be to sort of pause. Because the instinct to do something is something I'm really quite afraid of," said Maya Berry, executive director of the Arab American Institute, one of more than 130 civil and human rights organizations that say the FBI already has the tools it needs.

"There's an entire federal code in place that allows you to successfully go after this violence before you need to sort of say, 'Oh, wait, you know, there's this existing gap and we need more power,'" she added.

The debate over how to prevent extremist violence, and whether new domestic terrorism laws are required, has surfaced before, including after rampages that targeted Jews in a Pittsburgh synagogue and Latinos in a Texas Walmart.

The Jan. 6 attack, when an overwhelmingly white mob of Donald Trump supporters and members of far-right groups violently breached the Capitol, has refocused attention on white extremism and prompted questions about whether a racial double standard exists in investigating and countering violence.

President Joe Biden moved swiftly to declare domestic extremism an urgent national security concern, tasking the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to create a threat assessment. The Department of Homeland Security issued a terrorism bulletin warning of the prospect of additional violence. Even before the riot, FBI Director Chris Wray said domestic extremism was responsible for the deadliest violence over the last year and had been elevated as a priority to the same level as international terrorism.

The debate now is how to address the rise of white supremacist violence while not targeting the same people white supremacists seek to harm. Not only that, law enforcement officials pressured to crack down more on domestic extremists have to do so while staying mindful of broad First Amendment protections that prevent the arrests of people for abhorrent or hateful speech short of threatening violence.

"White violence is consistently perpetuated and then used as justification for increased surveillance or increased state power against communities of color," said 26-year-old Iranian American activist Hoda Katebi, who is Muslim, wears a headscarf and grew up defending herself against harassment and being called a terrorist in the years after Sept. 11, 2001.

The Justice Department has not said publicly if it intends to seek any additional powers, or whether it even needs new ones to deal with domestic extremism. Though there is no federal law that explicitly charges crimes as domestic terrorism, prosecutors have successfully used other statutes to cover conduct that might reasonably be seen as terrorism, including at the Capitol.

There are, however, additional legal tools available for countering international terrorism. Federal law makes it a crime to give support to designated foreign terror groups, giving law enforcement greater flexibility to arrest people who donate money or otherwise aid such an organization, even if they haven't harmed anyone or threatened violence themselves.

No comparable law exists for people aligned with U.S.-based extremist groups, which enjoy expansive free speech protections.

The current concern from civil rights groups stems from the way communities of color, notably Black Americans and Muslims, have been affected over the decades by law enforcement scrutiny, though the

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 46 of 80

FBI has significantly tightened its policies in ways that require a credible basis for suspicion to launch an investigation or apply for surveillance of a particular individual.

In a statement, the FBI said it has a dual, but not contradictory, mission of protecting the American people and upholding the Constitution and that it will defer to Congress to work with the Justice Department on assessing whether any additional authorities are needed. It says it will continue to use all the tools it has.

"The FBI investigates and responds to incidents only when an individual's activity crosses the line from ideas and constitutionally protected activity to violence," the statement said.

Still, in the early years of the bureau's history, it targeted "movements that sought to liberate Black people from the continued oppression that they suffered post-slavery and post-Reconstruction," said Janai Nelson, NAACP Legal Defense Fund associate director-counsel.

FBI surveillance of civil rights leaders and infiltration of Black organizations continued into the 1950s and 1960s, most infamously through the COINTELPRO program created to disrupt activities of the Communist Party. Martin Luther King Jr. was monitored by the FBI beginning in 1955 during his involvement with the Montgomery bus boycott.

In the last decade, as protests swept the U.S. after the police killings of Black people, Black Lives Matter grew in prominence as a slogan and an organization. The FBI at one point created a domestic threat category called "Black Identity Extremists," though Wray has said the bureau no longer uses the term.

"Surveillance tactics and the eye of our law enforcement have always been trained on communities of color. Particularly Black communities," Nelson said.

Muslim Americans believe they've felt particular scrutiny since 9/11, including after the Patriot Act, legislation that afforded law enforcement new counterterrorism authority, as well as less intrusive initiatives like the Obama-era program designed to counter violent extremism across different movements. Counterterrorism experts defend the Patriot Act and similar investigative tools, including sting operations, as having prevented an untold number of attacks. Yet many Muslims still regard those actions as having unfairly infringed upon the privacy of many Americans.

All the while, the threat of white nationalism continued to grow inside the U.S., prompting debate over a perceived double standard when it comes to the terrorism label, and tough questions for law enforcement about whether it has been sufficiently attuned to a domestic extremism surge that has been recently responsible for greater casualties in the U.S. than international terrorism.

Mindful of the complexity of the debate, one legislative proposal would create not additional law enforcement tools or even a new definition of domestic terrorism, but simply mandate that the FBI and Department of Homeland Security make periodic reports to Congress about the extremist threat.

"Anytime you shine a light on an issue, on an action, you get more accountability and better outcomes," said Rep. Brad Schneider, an Illinois Democrat and a co-sponsor of the measure.

---

Nasir reported from Chicago and Tucker from Washington.

---

Nasir is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow Nasir on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/noreensnasir>.

## Golden Globes nominations could belong to Netflix

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Whether anyone will attend the Golden Globes in person remains uncertain and improbable. But nominations to the 78th Globes will be announced Wednesday, nevertheless.

Hollywood's strange and largely virtual awards season lacks the usual kind of buzz and red-carpet glamour that the Hollywood Foreign Press Association annually feasts on. More than perhaps any other award show, the Globes depend on a cavalcade of stars — something that won't materialize when the awards are handed out Feb. 28 in a ceremony hosted by Tina Fey and Amy Poehler.

On Tuesday, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association said the Globes — typically a bubbly dinner gath-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 47 of 80

ering with flowing drinks — will be held bi-coastally for the first time. Fey will host live from New York's Rainbow Room and Poehler will host from the awards' normal home, the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. It's expected that nominees will appear from locations around the world.

Nominations will be announced virtually at 8:35 a.m. ET Wednesday by presenters Sarah Jessica Parker and Taraji P. Henson. They will reveal 12 categories on NBC's "Today" show, with full nominees announced live on E! digital channels and the Golden Globes' website.

Without any in-person screenings or photo ops with stars, little is known about how the roughly 90 member press association — a notoriously unpredictable group, in normal times — is swaying this year. But one thing may be a lock: Netflix will land a whole lot of nominations.

Several of the streaming service's films — including Spike Lee's "Da 5 Bloods," David Fincher's "Mank" and Aaron Sorkin's "The Trial of the Chicago 7" — are considered frontrunners, as are Netflix TV series "The Crown" and "Ozark." At last year's Globes, Netflix also led all studios with 34 nominations.

Also widely expected to be nominated Wednesday are Chloe Zhao's "Nomadland," with Frances McDormand; Regina King's directorial debut "One Night in Miami"; and George C. Wolfe's August Wilson adaptation "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," with Viola Davis and the late Chadwick Boseman all but assured of nods.

The Globes' splitting of nominees between drama and comedy/musical could also mean one wildcard of the season — "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm" — may emerge. The film could be nominated for best feature, comedy or musical, along with acting nods for Sacha Baron Cohen (also a contender for his supporting performance in "The Trial of the Chicago 7") and Maria Bakalova. Also of note in the category: the "Hamilton" film, ineligible for the Academy Awards, is a likely nominee at the Globes.

In the television categories, expect "The Mandalorian," "The Queen's Gambit," "The Flight Attendant," "Ted Lasso" and the final season of "Schitt's Creek" to be in the mix.

In August, Hollywood Foreign Press Association's president, Lorenzo Soria, died at age 68. He was replaced by Ali Sar.

This year's Globes were postponed nearly two months because of the pandemic and to adjust to the delayed Oscars. Those are set for April 25. Last year's Golden Globes culminated in awards for "1917" and "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood." The telecast, hosted by Ricky Gervais, couldn't buck the overall ratings trend for awards shows, drawing an average of 18.3 million viewers, down 2% from the previous year.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

## Dozen state police charged in the massacre of 19 in Mexico

CIUDAD VICTORIA, Mexico (AP) — A dozen state police officers have been arrested for allegedly killing 19 people, including Guatemalan migrants, whose bodies were found shot and burned near the U.S. border late in January, Mexican authorities announced Tuesday.

Tamaulipas state Attorney General Irving Barrios Mojica said all 12 officers were in custody and face charges of homicide, abuse of authority and making false statements.

The killings revived memories of the gruesome 2010 massacre of 72 migrants near the town of San Fernando in the same gang-ridden state. But those killings were done by a drug cartel, while it is likely many people will find it more shocking that the Jan. 22 slayings allegedly were carried out by law enforcement.

"In the aforementioned acts of Jan. 22, at least 12 state police officers participated," Barrios Mojica said.

The attorney general did not say what motive the officers might have had, though corrupt local and state police in Mexico are often in the pay of drug cartels.

Cartels in Mexico often charge migrant smugglers for crossing their territory, and kidnap or kill migrants whose smugglers have not paid or paid a rival gang.

The bodies were found piled in a charred pickup truck in Camargo, across the Rio Grande from Texas, in an area that has been bloodied for years by turf battles between the remnants of the Gulf cartel and the old Zetas cartel.

Authorities have said four of the dead have been identified so far — two Guatemalans and two Mexi-

cans. Their names have not been released by officials, but relatives of one of the dead Mexicans said he worked as an immigrant trafficker.

Of the 19 bodies examined by experts, 16 were found to be males, one was confirmed as female and the two others were so badly burned their gender had not yet been determined.

The forensic results confirmed the fears of families in a rural Indigenous farming community in Guatemala who have said they lost contact with 13 migrants as they travelled toward the United States.

The truck holding the bodies had 113 bullet impacts, but authorities were confused by the fact that almost no spent shell casings were found at the scene.

Initially, that led investigators to speculate the shootings may have taken place elsewhere, and the truck driven to the spot where it was set on fire.

But Barrios Mojica said the state police officers charged in the killings knew their shell casing might give them away, so probably picked them up.

"There is growing force behind the hypothesis that the crime scene was altered, due to the absence of casings," he said.

In describing the hours that led up to the killings, Barrios Mojica said the truck carrying the victims was apparently part of a larger convoy of vehicles transporting migrants from Guatemala and El Salvador to smuggle them across the U.S. border. He said the trucks also carried armed men to provide protection.

Barrios Mojica did not rule out that the reason for the killings may have been a dispute between drug gangs, which fight over territory and the right to charge migrant smugglers for passing through "their" territory.

The massacre is the latest chapter in Tamaulipas' history of police corruption. Most towns and cities in the state saw their municipal police forces dissolved years ago, because officers were often in the pay of the cartels. A more professional state police force was supposed to be the answer, a belief that came crashing down with the arrests announced Tuesday.

A repeat of the 2010 massacre has long been one of the Mexican government's worst nightmares.

In August 2010, Zetas cartel members stopped two tractor-trailers carrying dozens of mostly Central American migrants and took them to a ranch in the Tamaulipas town of San Fernando. After the migrants refused to work for the cartel, they were blindfolded, tied up on the floor and shot dead.

In 2019, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said, "We do not want a repeat of horrendous, regrettable acts like San Fernando."

Relatives of migrants from Guatemala's province of San Marcos are so convinced that 13 of the 19 charred corpses were their loved ones that some of the families already erected traditional altars to the dead, with flowers and photographs.

Some of the relatives in Guatemala told of receiving calls from the migrant smuggler who took the group of 10 males and three female north, telling them their family members were dead. Relatives said they lost contact with them around around Jan. 21.

## Capitol Police officer who died after riot lies in honor

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Slain U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick lay in honor in the building he died defending, allowing colleagues and the lawmakers he protected to pay their respects and to remember the violent attack on Congress that took his life.

Sicknick died after defending the Capitol on Jan. 6 against the mob that stormed the building and interrupted the electoral count after then-President Donald Trump urged supporters on the National Mall to "fight like hell" to overturn his defeat. The U.S. Capitol Police said in a statement that Sicknick, who died the next day, was injured "while physically engaging with protesters," though a final cause of death has not yet been determined.

President Joe Biden traveled to the Capitol to pay tribute to Sicknick shortly after the ceremony began Tuesday night, briefly placing his hand on the urn in the center of the Capitol Rotunda, saying a prayer



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 49 of 80

and sadly shaking his head as he observed a memorial wreath nearby. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and a handful of other congressional leaders also paid their respects.

The arrival of Sicknick's remains at 9:30 p.m. was solemn, with dozens of Capitol Police standing at attention as his urn was carried up the Capitol steps. There was a viewing period for his Capitol Police colleagues overnight, and lawmakers were to pay tribute at a ceremony Wednesday morning. A ceremonial departure for Arlington National Cemetery was planned later in the day.

Members of Congress remain shaken by the riots and are grappling with what it means not only for the future of the country, but for their own security as elected representatives. While lawmakers were united in denouncing the riots, and Trump's role in them, the parties are now largely split on how to move forward.

The attack led to uncertainty, fear and political turmoil in Congress as Biden began his presidency. House Democrats impeached Trump a week after the attack, sending a charge of "incitement of insurrection" to the Senate, where Republicans are unlikely to provide the votes necessary to convict him. At the same time, the building has been cut off from the public, surrounded by large metal fences and defended by the National Guard.

Sicknick, 42, of South River, New Jersey, enlisted in the National Guard six months after graduating high school in 1997, then deployed to Saudi Arabia and later Kyrgyzstan. He joined the Capitol Police in 2008. Like many of his fellow officers, he often worked security in the Capitol itself and was known to lawmakers, staff and others who passed through the building's doors each morning.

There are still questions about his death, which was one of five as a result of the rioting. As the mob forced its way in, Sicknick was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher, two law enforcement officials said. He collapsed later on, was hospitalized and died. The officials could not discuss the ongoing investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Investigators are also examining whether he may have ingested a chemical substance during the riot that may have contributed to his death, the officials said.

Biden's tribute Tuesday evening stood in stark contrast to Trump, who never made a public expression of sorrow over the officer's death or took any responsibility for the attack.

Pelosi and Schumer announced last week that Sicknick would lie in honor, saying his heroism "helped save lives, defend the temple of our democracy and ensure that the Congress was not diverted from our duty to the Constitution."

His sacrifice, they said, "reminds us every day of our obligation to our country and to the people we serve."

Pelosi said in a letter to colleagues on Tuesday that the Capitol Police "demonstrated extraordinary valor" on Jan. 6 and urged members to pay their respects to Sicknick. She has also encouraged members to take advantage of trauma resources available to congressional employees.

She said protecting the Capitol and the lawmakers who work there is a "highest priority" and that there will be a need for extra money to do so. During the assault, many of the insurrectionists called out for members, including Pelosi. They also targeted Vice President Mike Pence, who was in the building to preside over the electoral count.

"The insurrectionist attack on January 6 was not only an attack on the Capitol, but was a traumatic assault targeting Members," she said.

Sicknick is only the fifth person to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda, a designation for those who are not elected officials, judges or military leaders. The others who have lain in honor were John Gibson and Jacob Chestnut, Jr., two officers who were killed in a 1998 shooting at the Capitol; civil rights leader Rosa Parks, who died in 2005; and the Rev. Billy Graham, who died in 2018.

---

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo, Colleen Long and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

## **EXPLAINER: Myanmar, Burma and why the different names matter**

KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

This week, the military upended years of quasi-democratic rule in Myanmar, with soldiers taking control

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 50 of 80

of the country in a carefully orchestrated coup. The military said the seizure of power was necessary because the government had failed to act on its unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud in November elections, which the party of the country's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, won in a landslide. It claims the takeover was constitutional.

But where exactly did the coup happen? Was it in Myanmar, as the the country is officially called? Or was it in Burma, the name Washington continues to use?

The answer is complicated. Because when it comes to Myanmar, pretty much everything is political. Including language.

## WHY ARE THERE TWO NAMES FOR ONE COUNTRY?

For generations, the country was called Burma, after the dominant Burman ethnic group. But in 1989, one year after the ruling junta brutally suppressed a pro-democracy uprising, military leaders suddenly changed its name to Myanmar.

By then, Burma was an international pariah, desperate for any way to improve its image. Hoping for a sliver of international legitimacy, it said it was discarding a name handed down from its colonial past and to foster ethnic unity. The old name, officials said, excluded the country's many ethnic minorities.

At home, though, it changed nothing. In the Burmese language, "Myanmar" is simply the more formal version of "Burma." The country's name was changed only in English.

It was linguistic sleight-of-hand. But few people were fooled. Much of the world showed defiance of the junta by refusing to use the new name.

## WHEN DID THINGS CHANGE?

A little over a decade ago, the country began a stumbling semi-democratic transition. The military retained extensive political power, but opposition leaders were freed from prison and house arrest, and elections were allowed. Longtime pro-democracy activist Suu Kyi became the country's civilian leader.

Over the years, many countries and news outlets, including The Associated Press, had begun using the country's official name. As repression eased and international opposition to the military became less vocal, "Myanmar" became increasingly common. Inside the country, opposition leaders made clear it didn't matter much anymore.

Unlike most of the world, the U.S. government still officially uses "Burma." But even Washington has mellowed its stance.

In 2012, during a visit to the country, then-President Barack Obama used both "Burma" and "Myanmar." An adviser to Myanmar's president called that "very positive" and said it was an "acknowledgement of Myanmar's government."

## WHAT NOW?

Washington's response to the coup seemed designed to highlight old criticisms, with both Secretary of State Antony Blinken and President Joe Biden pointedly avoiding the country's legal name.

"The United States removed sanctions on Burma over the past decade based on progress toward democracy," Biden said in a statement. "The reversal of that progress will necessitate an immediate review of our sanction laws."

Most other countries, though, continued to call it Myanmar.

## McCarthy meets with Rep. Greene; GOP faces Cheney decision

By ALAN FRAM, STEVE PEOPLES and BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy met late Tuesday with hard-right Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene as Republicans wrestled over how to handle a bipartisan outcry over her endorsement of outlandish conspiracy theories and of violent, racist views.

Aides to McCarthy and Greene offered no immediate comment after the two spent around 90 minutes together in his Capitol office. Their session came as the GOP faced unrest from opposing ends of the party's spectrum over Greene and Rep. Liz Cheney, whom far-right lawmakers want to oust from her leadership post after she voted to impeach former President Donald Trump.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 51 of 80

The strife underscores Republican fissures as the party seeks a path forward two weeks after Trump left office as the only twice-impeached president. House Republicans are effectively deciding whether to prioritize the former president's norm-shattering behavior and conspiracy theories and retain the loyalty of his voters over more establishment conservative values.

"At the very moment that Joe Biden is lurching to the left is the moment that the Republican Party is lurching out of existence," GOP pollster Frank Luntz said of the new Democratic president, who is preparing to try muscling a mammoth COVID-19 relief package through the narrowly divided Congress.

But pro-Trump forces remain powerful.

"We've got millions and millions of woke, motivated, America-first Trump voters that believe in the movement," said John Fredericks, who led Trump's Virginia campaigns in 2016 and 2020. "If you're going to keep Liz Cheney in leadership, there's no party."

Without action by Republicans, Democrats were threatening to force an embarrassing House vote Wednesday on removing Greene, R-Ga., from her assigned committees.

Republicans appointed Greene to the education committee, a decision that drew harsh criticism because of her suggestions that school shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, and Parkland, Florida, could be hoaxes. A House vote on removing her from the committee could be politically difficult for some Republicans.

The House GOP Steering Committee, a leadership-dominated body that makes committee assignments for the party, also met late Tuesday but no decision was announced.

On social media, Greene has voiced support for racist views, unfounded QAnon pro-Trump conspiracy theories and calls for violence against Democratic politicians, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

McCarthy, R-Calif., has stopped short of criticizing the first-term congresswoman, who was dubbed a "future Republican Star" by Trump last summer and has remained a firm Trump supporter.

McCarthy has long been close to Trump. But he's been criticized by some Republicans, mostly quietly, for relentlessly supporting Trump's fallacious claims of a fraudulent election last November and for not forcefully criticizing Trump for helping provoke the deadly Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol by his supporters.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and others have boosted pressure this week on McCarthy and the House GOP to act.

In a statement that didn't use Greene's name, the usually circumspect McConnell called her "loony lies" a "cancer" on the GOP. It was the latest indication of his concerns about letting the GOP's most pro-Trump, hardest-right factions gain too much sway in the party.

In addition, Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., who's been trying to combat the GOP's pro-Trump wing, said he favored removing Greene from her committees, saying Republicans must "take a stand to disavow" her.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, a Trump critic and the GOP 2012 presidential nominee, said Tuesday that Republicans must "separate ourselves from the people that are the wacky weeds."

On the GOP's furthest right wing, lawmakers were itching to oust Cheney, R-Wyo., a traditional conservative and daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, from her post as the No. 3 House Republican. McConnell praised Cheney, R-Wyo., as "a leader with deep convictions and courage," but House GOP lawmakers planned to meet privately Wednesday to decide her political fate.

The looming decisions over Cheney and Greene represent a moment of reckoning for a party struggling with its future.

"We can either become a fringe party that never wins elections or rebuild the big tent party of Reagan," Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, one of the few elected Republicans who routinely rebuked Trump, said in a written statement. Without mentioning Cheney or Greene, he added, "I urge congressional Republicans to make the right choice."

But Rep. Matt Rosendale, R-Mont., a leader of the effort to oust Cheney, says he has enough support to succeed.

"She's brought this on herself," Rosendale said. He said Cheney, who was joined by only nine other Republicans in backing impeachment, was wrong to not forewarn colleagues about her decision.

Republicans have said that GOP members would unite against a Democratic move to remove Greene

from her committee assignments and that such an effort would help Greene cast herself as a victim of partisan Democrats.

As if to illustrate that point, Greene herself tweeted fundraising appeals Tuesday that said, "With your support, the Democrat mob can't cancel me," beneath a picture of herself standing with Trump.

But Democrats said they think some Republicans will support ousting Green from committees and that a House vote will make McCarthy look weak and further erode GOP support among moderate suburban voters.

The handling of Greene and Cheney presented a tricky balancing act for McCarthy.

Penalizing Cheney for what McConnell called a "vote of conscience" on impeachment would be awkward without also punishing Greene. Action against either risked angering the GOP's numerous Trump supporters or its more traditional conservative backers.

"You can't do the normal political song and dance and appease this side slightly and appease that side slightly," said former Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., who lost a 2018 party primary after clashing with Trump. "The whole nature of the Trump phenomenon is there is no appeasement."

McCarthy has said he supports Cheney but also has "concerns," leaving his stance on her unclear.

Peoples reported from New York. AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report from Washington.

## Asian shares mostly higher, China markets fall back

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

Asian shares opened mostly higher on Wednesday although markets in Shanghai and Hong Kong were lower. The advance followed a broad rally on Wall Street, with solid contributions from Big Tech companies, banks and other sectors.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 rose 0.7% to 28,552.31 and the Kospi in South Korea edged 0.1% higher to 3,100.35. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 surged 0.9% to 6,098.59. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong declined 0.7% to 29,052.90 while the Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.3% to 3,524.34.

Overnight, Big Tech companies and banks helped power a broad rally on Wall Street Tuesday, though shares in GameStop and other recent high-flying stocks hyped by online traders plunged.

The S&P 500 rose 1.4%, extending gains from a day earlier, as investors sized up the latest batch of company earnings reports. Rising crude oil prices and solid earnings results helped lift energy companies, including Exxon Mobil and Marathon Petroleum. Treasury yields rose and the VIX, a measure of fear in the market, fell sharply, a sign volatility was easing.

The wave of buying coincided with a skid in GameStop and AMC Entertainment, stocks that have been caught up in a speculative frenzy by traders in online forums and on social media who seek to inflict damage on Wall Street hedge funds that have bet these stocks would fall. The price of silver, which spiked 9% Monday, fueling speculation the precious metal was also being hyped up by online traders, sank by more than 10%.

"Certainly, there's been some profit-taking in these names," said Ross Mayfield, investment strategist at Baird. "You saw with silver, there was an attempt to try a similar cornering of the market, and that didn't even last two days."

The S&P 500 index rose 52.45 points to 3,826.31. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 475.57 points, or 1.6%, to 30,687.48. The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite climbed 209.38 points, or 1.6%, to 13,612.78. The Russell 200 index of smaller companies also rose, adding 25.28 points, or 1.2%, to 2,151.44. The major indexes remain near their all-time highs set last month.

Treasury yields rose in another sign of investor confidence. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.10% from 1.06% late Monday.

GameStop plunged 60% to \$90 a share, and AMC Entertainment lost 41.2% to \$7.82 a share. Both companies have been in the spotlight for more than two weeks as an online community of investors pushed

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 53 of 80

the stocks to astronomical levels.

Trading in those and several other stocks have been restricted by the popular online trading platform Robinhood since last last week following the bouts of extreme volatility. Robinhood needed to secure funding in order to meet deposit thresholds required by organizations that handle the trading orders placed by investors on its platform.

Robinhood eased some of the trading limits on GameStop and select other stocks Tuesday. For example, it now allows users to buy up to 100 shares and options contracts in GameStop and 1,250 in AMC. On Monday, the brokerage was limiting users to 5 shares in GameStop and 75 in AMC.

An online army of traders using the online site Reddit banded together for the past two weeks to snap up shares of GameStop, AMC and other struggling chains, stocks that have been heavily shorted (bets that the stock will fall) by a number of hedge funds. In the process, they've done heavy damage to those hedge funds in a stunning reversal of financial power on Wall Street.

But it's not clear how much longer the Reddit traders can hold the line. Intense media and Wall Street interest pushed many traders into these stocks late last week, with GameStop going as high as \$483 last Thursday. They began trading this year at just over \$17 a share. The huge run-up in the stock price appears to have little to do with the future prospects of the mall-based retailer, which has been losing money consistently.

While a lot of people seem to be holding a line on some of these positions, the broader market is not showing many signs of strain because of it, said Darrell Cronk, chief investment officer of Wells Fargo Wealth and Investment Management.

"I hope the markets are moving away from some of the issues it dealt with last week and focusing on more of the true fundamentals," Cronk said.

Uber rose 7% after the company said it would buy liquor delivery service Drizly for \$1.1 billion in cash and stock. Solid earnings reports helped lift shares for several companies. Lab equipment maker Waters rose 8.4% for the biggest gain in the S&P 500 after easily beating analysts' fourth-quarter profit and revenue forecasts. Exxon rose 1.6% and Marathon Petroleum rose 3.9%.

Investors continue to focus on Washington. President Biden invited 10 moderate Republicans to the White House to discuss his proposed \$1.9 trillion economic aid plan. Republicans earlier countered with an offer of \$600 billion, or less than one-third of Biden's proposed amount.

Investors bid up stocks heading into 2021 in expectation the rollout of coronavirus vaccines would allow global business and travel to return to normal. That optimism has been dented by infection spikes and disruptions in vaccine deliveries.

In other trading, benchmark U.S. crude oil gained 27 cents to \$55.03 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, picked up 25 cents to \$57.71 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar slipped to 104.95 Japanese yen from 104.98 yen late Tuesday. The euro rose to \$1.2047 to \$1.2042.

## Jeff Bezos, Amazon's founder, will step down as CEO

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jeff Bezos, who founded Amazon as an online bookstore and built it into a shopping and entertainment behemoth, will step down later this year as CEO, a role he's had for nearly 30 years, to become executive chairman, the company announced Tuesday.

Bezos, 57, will be replaced in the summer by Andy Jassy, who runs Amazon's cloud-computing business.

In a blog post to employees, Bezos said he planned to focus on new products and early initiatives being developed at Amazon. He said he would have more time for side projects, including his space exploration company Blue Origin, his philanthropic initiatives and overseeing The Washington Post, which he owns.

Bezos, who is the company's biggest shareholder, will still have broad influence over Amazon.

"Jeff is really not going anywhere," Amazon's Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky said in a call with

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 54 of 80

reporters. "It's more of a restructuring of who's doing what."

Launched in 1995, Amazon was a pioneer of fast, free shipping that won over millions of shoppers who used the site to buy diapers, TVs and just about anything else. Under Bezos, Amazon also launched the first e-reader that gained mass acceptance, and its Echo listening device made voice assistants a common sight in living rooms.

As a child, Bezos was intrigued by computers and interested in building things, such as alarms he rigged in his parents' home. He got a degree in electrical engineering and computer science at Princeton University, and then worked at several Wall Street companies.

He quit his job at D.E. Shaw to start an online retail business — though at first he wasn't sure what to sell. Bezos quickly determined that an online bookstore would resonate with consumers. He and his now ex-wife, MacKenzie Scott, whom he met at D.E. Shaw and married in 1993, set out on a road trip to Seattle — a city chosen for its abundance of tech talent and proximity to a large book distributor in Roseburg, Oregon.

While Scott drove, Bezos wrote up the business plan for what would become Amazon.com. Bezos convinced his parents and some friends to invest in the idea, and Amazon began operating out of the Bezos' Seattle garage on July 16, 1995.

Amazon has gone far beyond selling paperbacks. It now produces movies, makes sofas, owns a grocery chain and even has plans to send satellites into space to beam internet service to earth. The company is one of the most valuable in the world, worth nearly \$1.7 trillion.

During the pandemic, Amazon was one of the few retailers to benefit as shoppers stayed clear of malls and shopped from their phones. On the same day Amazon announced Bezos would step down, the company reported making a record profit in the last three months of 2020, and its quarterly revenue shot past \$100 billion for the first time.

Bezos' riches have also swelled: His stake in Amazon is currently worth about \$180 billion. For years he stayed behind the scenes, running the company. More recently, he sometimes stepped into the spotlight, showing up at movie premieres and Hollywood parties.

In 2019, he announced he was divorcing Scott in a tweet, just before the National Enquirer published a cover story saying Bezos had an affair with a former TV host. Scott received a stake in Amazon after the divorce worth nearly \$40 billion at the time. She has pledged to give away half her fortune to charities.

As Amazon has grown, so has scrutiny. Amazon and other tech giants have enjoyed light-touch regulation and star status in Washington for decades, but calls for greater regulation are growing. A report by the House Judiciary Committee in October called for possibly breaking up Amazon and others, making it harder for them to acquire companies and imposing new rules to safeguard competition.

Bezos is one of the last founders of a big tech company to still be CEO. The founders of Google, Oracle and Microsoft have all stepped down from the top job of the companies they created. Facebook is still led by co-founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Jassy, Bezos' replacement, is a longtime Amazon executive, having worked at the company since 1997. The cloud-computing business he runs powers video-streaming site Netflix and many other companies, and it has become Amazon's most profitable business.

"He's deeply steeped in technology and a very seasoned executive in his own right," Gartner analyst Ed Anderson said.

But he will also face many challenges.

"Amazon's size makes some industries uncomfortable, some governments uncomfortable, and Andy Jassy will have to deal with the consequences," Anderson said. "That will be some of the new era of his leadership."

Associated Press writers Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, Mae Anderson in New York and Anne D'Innocenzio in New York contributed to this report. \_\_\_\_

This story has been updated to correct the transition period to summer, not fall.

## House Dems make case for conviction; Trump denies charges

By ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump endangered the lives of all members of Congress when he aimed a mob of supporters “like a loaded cannon” at the U.S. Capitol, House Democrats said Tuesday in making their most detailed case yet for why the former president should be convicted and permanently barred from office. Trump denied the allegations through his lawyers and called the trial unconstitutional.

The dueling filings offer the first public glimpse of the arguments that will be presented to the Senate beginning next week. The impeachment trial represents a remarkable reckoning with the violence in the Capitol last month, which the senators witnessed firsthand, and with Trump’s presidency overall. Held in the very chamber where the insurrectionists stood on Jan. 6, it will pit Democratic demands for a final measure of accountability against the desire of many Republicans to turn the page and move on.

The impeachment trial, Trump’s second, begins in earnest on Feb. 9.

The Democratic legal brief forcefully linked Trump’s baseless efforts to overturn the results of the presidential election to the deadly riot at the Capitol, saying he bears “unmistakable” blame for actions that threatened the underpinnings of American democracy. It argued that he must be found guilty on a charge of inciting the siege. And it used evocative language to conjure the day’s chaos, when “terrified members were trapped in the chamber” and called loved ones “for fear they would not survive.”

“His conduct endangered the life of every single member of Congress, jeopardized the peaceful transition of power and line of succession, and compromised our national security,” the Democratic managers of the impeachment case wrote. “This is precisely the sort of constitutional offense that warrants disqualification from federal office.”

The Democrats’ filing made clear their plan to associate Trump’s words with the resulting violence, tracing his efforts to subvert democracy to when he first said last summer that he would not accept the election results and then through the November contest and his many failed attempts to challenge the results in court. When those efforts failed, the Democrats wrote, “he turned to improper and abusive means of staying in power,” specifically by launching a pressure campaign aimed at state election officials, the Justice Department and Congress.

“The only honorable path at that point was for President Trump to accept the results and concede his electoral defeat. Instead, he summoned a mob to Washington, exhorted them into a frenzy, and aimed them like a loaded cannon down Pennsylvania Avenue,” the Democrats wrote in an 80-page document.

The Democrats cited his unsuccessful efforts to sway Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and former Attorney General William Barr. Trump then became “fixated” on Jan. 6, the managers wrote. They note that many of his supporters, including the Proud Boys — who Trump told to “stand back and stand by” at a September debate — were already primed for violence.

“Given all that, the crowd which assembled on January 6 unsurprisingly included many who were armed, angry, and dangerous—and poised on a hair trigger for President Trump to confirm that they indeed had to “fight” to save America from an imagined conspiracy,” the Democrats wrote.

The House brief is more than 5 times as long as the 14-page Trump filing and heavy on footnotes and citations, aiming to construct what Democrats hope will be a detailed roadmap for conviction. Trump’s legal team, by contrast, was more sparing in a filing that avoided dwelling on the drama and violence of the day.

Trump’s lawyers, David Schoen and Bruce Castor, denied that he had incited the riot by disputing the election results or by exhorting his followers to “fight like hell.” They said he was permitted by the First Amendment to challenge his loss to Democrat Joe Biden as “suspect” and that, in any event, the trial itself was unconstitutional now that Trump has left the White House.

The defense team denied that Trump had ever endangered national security and disputed the Democrats’ characterization of his remarks and his role in the riot. When he told his followers to fight like hell, they said, he was talking about “election security in general.”

Trump, they said, was not attempting to interfere with the counting of electoral votes, only encouraging members of Congress to engage in the customary process of challenging vote submissions “under a

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 56 of 80

process written into Congressional rules," as had been done in years past.

"The actions by the House make clear that in their opinion the 45th President does not enjoy the protections of liberty upon which this great Nation was founded, where free speech, and indeed, free political speech form the backbone of all American liberties," the defense lawyers wrote.

Trump's legal team also laid out a challenge to the constitutionality of the trial now that Trump is no longer president. Though that claim may not be resolved any time soon in the courts, it may nonetheless resonate politically.

Republicans have signaled that acquittal is likely, with many saying they think Congress should move on and questioning the constitutionality of an impeachment trial with Trump out of office. In a test vote in the Senate last week, 45 Republicans, including party leader Mitch McConnell, voted in favor of an effort to dismiss the trial over those constitutional concerns.

Still, the Constitution specifies that disqualification from office can be a punishment for an impeachment conviction, and Democrats made clear that they see that as a worthwhile objective in this case.

"This is not a case where elections alone are a sufficient safeguard against future abuse; it is the electoral process itself that President Trump attacked and that must be protected from him and anyone else who would seek to mimic his behavior," the Democrats wrote.

Though no president has been tried after departing the White House, Democrats say there is precedent, pointing to an 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who resigned his office in a last-ditch attempt to avoid an impeachment trial. The Senate held it anyway.

The Democrats wrote that the framers of the Constitution would not have wanted to leave the country defenseless against "a president's treachery in his final days, allowing him to misuse power, violate his Oath, and incite insurrection against Congress and our electoral institutions" simply because he is leaving office. Setting that precedent now would "horrify the Framers," the brief said.

"There is no 'January Exception' to impeachment or any other provision of the Constitution," the Democrats wrote. "A president must answer comprehensively for his conduct in office from his first day in office through his last."

---

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

## Wildfire in west Australia burns more homes in dry wind

PERTH, Australia (AP) — More than 70 homes have been lost in a wildfire outside Australia's western city of Perth that is expected to continue burning for days.

The fire had razed more than 9,000 hectares (22,200 acres) of farm and woodland in hills east of Perth by early Wednesday, authorities said.

Western Australia state's Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Darren Klemm said the number of houses destroyed had jumped to 71 overnight, and conditions would remain difficult for firefighters with no rain forecast until Sunday. The jump was from 59 houses late Tuesday.

"We're into day three of this fire today and it's going to continue to be a challenging fire for us for at least the next three or four or five days," Klemm said.

Mayor Kevin Bailey of Swan, one of the rural communities threatened by the blaze, said many residents remained on high alert.

"We've got strong easterly breezes predicted. That's of great concern for us, because there's still a lot of active fire, even in those areas that have burned over the last couple of days. So it's a great risk," Bailey told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

Perth and its surrounds had been in lockdown since Sunday as a pandemic precaution, but those threatened by the fire were exempted from the pandemic stay-at-home order so they could evacuate.

"A lot of people were at home — they weren't at school or work — so they were very fortunate to be able to react quickly," Bailey said.

Many people who had fled to evacuation centers were unsure whether their homes had survived, he said.



"We can't get accurate information yet because the fire ground is unsafe for crews to assess what's happened there," Bailey said.

## Biden signs immigration orders as Congress awaits more

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Tuesday signed a second spate of orders to undo his predecessor's immigration policies, demonstrating the powers of the White House and its limitations without support from Congress.

His orders on family separation, border security and legal immigration bring to nine the number of executive actions on immigration during his first two weeks in office. With proposed legislation to give legal status and a path to citizenship to all of the estimated 11 million people in the country who don't have it, Biden has quickly taken aim at many of former President Donald Trump's sweeping changes to deter immigration, both legal and illegal, and established a vision that is likely to far outlast his tenure if he's able to muster enough support in a deeply divided Congress.

Biden rescinded some Trump actions and laid a foundation for more far-reaching repeals depending on the outcome of policy reviews over the next few months.

"I'm not making new law. I'm eliminating bad policy," he said during a signing ceremony.

Alejandro Mayorkas, who was sworn in as Homeland Security secretary after his nomination was confirmed Tuesday by the Senate, will lead a task force on family separation, focused largely on reuniting parents and children who remain apart. It is unclear exactly how many, but about 5,500 children have been identified in court documents as having been separated during Trump's presidency, including about 600 whose parents have yet to be found by a court-appointed committee.

"We're going to work to undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration," Biden said.

The review will address the possibility of legal status in the United States for separated families and providing mental health services.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which sued to reunite families, has asked the administration for legal status in the United States for all of the thousands of families that have been separated, as well as financial compensation for those families and attorneys at government expense.

A review of border security will include a policy that makes asylum-seekers wait in Mexican border cities for hearings in U.S. immigration court. It is a step toward fulfilling a campaign pledge to end the "Remain in Mexico" policy, known officially as Migrant Protection Protocols, which enrolled nearly 70,000 asylum-seekers since it began in January 2019. Biden asked for "a phased strategy for the safe and orderly entry into the United States" of those already enrolled who are waiting in Mexico for a judge to decide their cases.

Biden ended a policy that held asylum-seekers in Customs and Border Protection custody with virtually no access to attorneys while their claims were quickly decided. He ordered reviews of a nationwide expansion of fast-track deportation authority and of agreements with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras for the U.S. to reject asylum applicants and instead send them to those Central American countries with an opportunity to seek protection there.

His order on legal immigration seeks ways to reduce backlogs and barriers to citizenship and considers scrapping Trump's "public charge rule," which makes it more difficult for people who receive government benefits to obtain green cards.

Biden didn't address a freeze on many temporary work visas and green cards while the economy recovers from a pandemic, as some expected.

"That's a pretty big gap for them not to take action on those visa bans because the impact is so dramatic and significant," said Greg Chen, director of government relations for the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

While immediate changes were limited, the impact of executive orders that Trump issued his first week in office didn't start to become apparent until a month later when Homeland Security issued detailed enforcement priorities. Those orders laid a foundation for many other of his administration's hundreds of immigration moves that followed.

Many changes will have to come from agencies like Homeland Security, not the White House, such as rescinding the public-charge rule, Chen said.

The announcements come as Biden aides warn that Trump's border policies that put asylum increasingly out of reach may take months to unwind — a position that has caused grumbling among some pro-immigration advocates.

Roberta Jacobson, a top Biden aide on border issues, asked Spanish-language media on Friday to discourage audiences from coming to the U.S. border. "It is not the moment," she said in Spanish, adding that the journey was "very dangerous, and we are in the middle of creating a new system."

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki reinforced that message from the White House podium on Tuesday, saying it "remains a dangerous trip" and, "This is not the time to come to the United States."

The orders demonstrate that, just as Trump remade immigration policies from the White House, Biden can undo them with the stroke of a pen — some more easily than others. More lasting changes would have to pass Congress, a daunting job that Trump and his predecessors Barack Obama and George W. Bush failed to achieve.

In an echo of failed legislative pushes in 2007 and 2013, familiar lines of division have formed with overheated rhetoric. Stephen Miller, a top architect of Trump's policies, said Sunday on Fox News Channel that Biden's actions amount to the "end of all immigration enforcement in the United States of America."

Pro-immigration groups largely applauded Biden's latest moves, though they were more muted than the almost-giddy reception to the president's first-day actions.

"The positive steps the administration is taking must be the beginning, not an end unto themselves," Ali Noorani, president of the National Immigration Forum, said Tuesday. "Congress should build on these first steps to find permanent solutions to improve our immigration system."

Kelli Garcia, federal policy counsel of the Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund, said the orders were encouraging but "will not immediately benefit immigrant communities in dire need of concrete action."

Spagat reported from San Diego.

## **Pentagon chief purges defense boards; Trump loyalists out**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered hundreds of Pentagon advisory board members to resign this month as part of a broad review of the panels, essentially purging several dozen who were appointed last-minute under the Trump administration.

During the last two months of his tenure, former acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller removed a number of longtime members from several defense policy, health, science and business boards and replaced many with loyalists of former President Donald Trump. More than 30 of those replacements will now be forced to resign, including former GOP House Speaker Newt Gingrich, retired Brig. Gen. Anthony Tata and former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski.

"I am directing the immediate suspension of all advisory committee operations until the review is completed unless otherwise directed by myself or the deputy secretary of defense," Austin said in a memo released Tuesday. And he ordered all committee members who were appointed by the defense secretary to resign no later than Feb. 16.

Austin said the review will assess whether each board provides value and make sure its focus aligns with "our most pressing strategic priorities and the National Defense Strategy."

Tata, a former Fox News commentator, failed to get through Senate confirmation for the top Pentagon policy job early last year because of offensive remarks he had made, including about Islam. In November, however, Trump appointed him to that same post, just days after firing then-Defense Secretary Mark Esper and putting Miller in the job.

Miller appointed Tata to the Defense Policy Board on Jan. 19, his last full day on the job. Gingrich was appointed to that same board. Lewandowski was appointed to the Defense Business Board.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 59 of 80

A senior defense official said Austin's decision was driven by the frenetic activity of Miller to remove dozens of board members and replace them in such a short amount of time between Trump's election loss and the inauguration of President Joe Biden.

Of the 42 advisory panels listed in Austin's memo, 31 will have their members removed, six will be part of the review but their members will be retained, and five others have either no members at this time or have concluded their business. Among the 31 are some of the department's most well known boards, including those with purview over defense policy, science, health, innovation, Arlington National Cemetery and women in the military.

All together there are more than 600 members on the 42 boards. Defense officials said they don't know exactly how many are being asked to resign, but it will be hundreds.

The boards of visitors for the Army, Navy and Air Force academies will keep their members, because those are presidential appointments that Austin does not have the authority to overturn. Among the Trump appointees who will remain on those boards are his former press secretary Sean Spicer and longtime adviser Kellyanne Conway. Those boards, however, will be subject to the review.

One new congressionally mandated commission is also being purged of the four members that Miller appointed in early January. The panel hasn't started its work yet, but will be responsible for figuring out how to go about renaming military bases and property that honor Confederate leaders. The panel is not subject to Austin's broader review, but he intends to appoint four new members.

In a letter to Austin this week, U.S. Reps. Anthony Brown, D-Md., and Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, called for the removal of the four Miller appointees on the renaming board. Trump had opposed the renaming of bases, and cited that as a reason for vetoing the defense bill, which included a provision setting up the panel to handle the process.

"Those who are called to serve their nation in this matter must have a deep understanding of and expertise in the history of Confederate monuments and their role in the white supremacist movement," Brown and Beatty wrote to Austin.

The defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said Austin believed that stopping the activity of all the boards and doing a more intensive review was the fairest and most consistent process.

Officials said the review will look at whether the boards have overlapping jurisdictions and whether they should be realigned or if money could be saved by trimming some of them. It also will make recommendations on the membership balance, size and mission of all the boards.

## **FBI: 2 agents killed, 3 wounded, suspect dead in Florida**

By TERRY SPENCER and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Two FBI agents were killed and three wounded in a shooting that erupted on Tuesday when they arrived to search an apartment in a child pornography case, a confrontation that marked one of the bloodiest days in FBI history. The suspect is believed to have killed himself.

The violence forced residents in the Fort Lauderdale suburb of Sunrise to huddle inside their homes as a SWAT team stormed the apartment building and police helicopters circled overhead.

FBI Director Christopher A. Wray identified the two slain agents as Daniel Alfin and Laura Schwartzenberger, both of whom specialized in investigating crimes against children.

Two of the wounded agents were taken to hospitals to be treated and were in stable condition, said Miami FBI Agent Michael D. Leverock. The third did not require hospitalization, Wray said.

The suspect opened fire on the agents when they arrived to serve a federal search warrant, George Piro, who leads the FBI's Miami field office, said at a news conference.

"Today this grim reality has taken two of our best from our family," Piro said. "They were valuable members of the FBI and will forever be heroes. We will always honor their ultimate sacrifice."

President Joe Biden offered his condolences during an immigration event at the White House.

"They put their lives on the line and that's a hell of a price to pay," he said of the agents. "My heart

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 60 of 80

aches for the families.”

Piro said the suspect would not be identified until his family has been notified. Based on a preliminary investigation, federal officials believe he fatally shot himself, according to a law enforcement official familiar with the matter. The person cautioned that an official cause of death has not yet been determined and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly.

The shooting happened around 6 a.m. in a middle-class neighborhood of single family homes, duplexes and apartment buildings located west of Fort Lauderdale, near the Everglades.

The gunfire erupted with about four shots — “Boom, boom, boom, boom!” said Julius McLymont, whose house borders the Water Terrace apartment complex where the suspect was barricaded.

At first McLymont thought the gunfire was a car backfiring, then two minutes later he heard about five more shots. He went outside and looked over his fence as police cars and ambulances rushed in. Then he saw officers working on someone lying on the ground before they loaded the person into an ambulance.

A SWAT team appeared next, with officers donning riot gear. Then they went around the building, yelling, “Go, go, go!” McLymont said. He said he couldn’t see the apartment where the shooting happened from his location.

Hours later, Sunrise Police urged residents of Water Terrace to remain inside their homes while law enforcement blocked the entrances to their community.

The FBI agents had come to the apartment complex to serve a federal search warrant in connection with a case involving child pornography and violent crimes against children, according to Leverock and FBI Agents Association President Brian O’Hare.

The shootings marked one of the bloodiest days in FBI history in South Florida and among the deadliest nationally as well, according to the FBI website.

Schwartzenberger, 43, had been an agent with the FBI since December 2005 and worked in the Miami field office on a squad of agents handling violent crimes against children, according to court records. Her work primarily focused on tracking offenders who sexually exploit children online and investigating other crimes against children. Schwartzenberger is survived by a husband and two children, Piro said.

Alfin, 36, who also investigated child exploitation cases, had previously worked at FBI headquarters handling major cases involving violent crimes against children, according to court records. He had a degree in information technology and went through the FBI’s specialized training programs for cybercrimes. He was involved in a major child exploitation investigation dubbed Playpen that resulted in arrests around the world. Alfin is survived by a wife and child, Piro said.

“Special Agent Alfin and Special Agent Schwartzenberger exemplified heroism today in defense of their country,” Wray said in a statement. “The FBI will always honor their ultimate sacrifice and will be forever grateful for their bravery.”

After the shootings Tuesday, police motorcycles with their lights flashing escorted a fire rescue truck as it brought the body of one of the agents to the medical examiner’s office in nearby Dania Beach. Law enforcement officials from numerous agencies lined up to pay their respects as a flag-covered body was removed from the vehicle and taken inside.

Alex Piquero, a University of Miami sociology professor who has specialized in criminology, said serving search warrants at a person’s home is incredibly hazardous for law enforcement officers.

“Serving warrants, next to domestic dispute calls and high speed chases, are among the most dangerous for law enforcement — they don’t know what awaits them on the inside,” Piquero said.

There have been several other shootings throughout the FBI’s history in which two agents have died, according to the bureau’s Wall of Honor.

In South Florida, the infamous “Miami Shootout” in 1986 claimed the lives of Agents Ben Grogan and Jerry Dove in a gunbattle with two heavily armed robbery suspects who were also killed. Five other FBI agents were wounded in that shooting, which led the bureau to upgrade the weapons that agents carry.

---

Balsamo reported from Washington. Associated Press reporters Freida Frisaro in Fort Lauderdale, Florida;

Curt Anderson in St. Petersburg, Florida; Marta Lavandier in Sunrise; and AP News Researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

## Pressure builds on schools to reopen during pandemic

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and HOLLY RAMER undefined

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Pressure is building on school systems around the U.S. to reopen classrooms to students who have been learning online for nearly a year, pitting politicians against teachers who have yet to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

In Chicago, the rancor is so great that teachers are on the brink of striking. In California, a frustrated Gov. Gavin Newsom implored schools to find a way to reopen. In Cincinnati, some students returned to classrooms Tuesday after a judge threw out a teachers union lawsuit over safety concerns.

While some communities maintain that online classes remain the safest option for everyone, some parents, with backing from politicians and administrators, have complained that their children's education is suffering from sitting at home in front of their computers and that the isolation is damaging them emotionally.

In Nashua, New Hampshire, the school board voted to stick with remote learning for most students until the city meets certain targets on infections, hospitalizations and tests coming back positive for the coronavirus.

Alicia Houston, whose sons are in sixth and 10th grade, said her biggest frustration is "not being able to help my children effectively," even though she has quit her job to attempt just that.

"Watching them become a little bit darker," she said last week. "Watching them fall apart. The emotional and mental health piece is one of the most important pieces. A trauma like this is not something they're necessarily going to recover from right away."

Some families and their supporters have argued, too, that reopening schools would enable parents to go back to work instead of staying home to oversee their children's education.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a recent study that there is little evidence of the virus spreading at schools when precautions are taken, such as masks, distancing and proper ventilation.

But many teachers have balked at returning without getting vaccinated first against the scourge that has killed over 440,000 Americans.

Kathryn Person, a high school teacher in Chicago, wants to continue teaching remotely so she doesn't risk the health of her 91-year-old grandmother and an aunt battling lung cancer. Person said she trusts the union will fight school officials if they try to punish teachers who won't go back.

"If they try to retaliate, when that happens we will go on strike," she said.

In California, with 6 million public school students, teachers unions say they won't send their members into an unsafe situation.

Newsom, a Democrat, has said he will not force schools to reopen but instead wants to give them an incentive and has proposed a \$2 billion plan that has met with criticism from superintendents, unions and lawmakers. It would give schools extra funding for COVID-19 testing and other safety measures if they resume in-person classes. Schools that reopen sooner would get more money.

Newsom told educators that he is willing to negotiate but that certain demands, including the call by unions to have all teachers vaccinated before school starts, are unrealistic given the shortage of shots.

"If everybody has to be vaccinated, we might as well just tell people the truth: There will be no in-person instruction in the state of California," he said.

The biggest districts, including Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco, say the plan sets unrealistic rules and timelines.

"The virus is in charge right now and it does not own a calendar," the 300,000-member California Teachers Association warned in a letter. "We cannot just pick an artificial calendar date and expect to flip a switch on reopening every school for in-person instruction."

President Joe Biden's administration and Republican senators have dueling proposals for stimulus packages that would distribute billions of dollars to help schools get children back into classrooms.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 62 of 80

About 10,000 Chicago teachers and staff and 62,000 students in kindergarten through eighth grade were supposed to return to school Monday for the first time since last March. But the Chicago school system extended remote learning for two more days and called for a cooling-off period in negotiations with the teachers union.

Districtwide efforts to vaccinate Chicago's teachers won't begin until the middle of February.

In several states, lawmakers are advancing legislation to require more in-person learning.

An Iowa law, signed on Friday by Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds, requires districts to offer full-time in-class instruction to parents who request it. Despite concerns that teachers still haven't been vaccinated, they are set to return this month.

In North Carolina, Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper faces pressure from GOP lawmakers to reopen more schools. In South Carolina, a bipartisan push to get students back in class five days a week is underway.

"After this pandemic is over, I hope to never do another Zoom call," said House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford, a Democrat. "I hate it. I can't stand them. I can't imagine being in third or fourth grade and having to stare at a screen in order to learn."

In Utah, the Salt Lake City school system announced plans to resume in-person learning for at least two days per week under pressure from lawmakers who threatened to cut funding.

The schools chief in Washington state is pushing for teachers to get vaccinated when it's their turn but also insisting they get back to classrooms immediately, shot or not.

"The bottom line is a vaccine is a tremendous safety net, but it is never the thing that is going to create the perfect scenario," said Chris Reykdal, superintendent of public instruction.

Emily VanDerhoff, a first-grade teacher in Fairfax County, Virginia, and a union official, was scheduled to be vaccinated last Friday. But she and others saw their appointments canceled when the vaccine supply ran low.

The Fairfax County superintendent has unveiled a tentative plan for students to start returning on Feb. 16, but the union says less than 10% of teachers feel it is safe to return.

"Even once we're all vaccinated, it's still going to take having lower community spread for people to feel safe and for it to be safer to have students in the schools," VanDerhoff said.

---

Kunzelman reported from College Park, Maryland. Associated Press reporters Bryan Anderson, David Pitt, Sophia Tareen, Don Babwin, Jeffrey Collins and Jocelyn Gecker contributed to this report.

## Moscow court orders Kremlin foe Navalny to prison

By DARIA LITVINOVA and VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Moscow court on Tuesday ordered Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny to prison for more than 2 1/2 years, finding that he violated the terms of his probation while recuperating in Germany from nerve-agent poisoning. The ruling ignited protests in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Navalny, who is the most prominent critic of President Vladimir Putin, had denounced the proceedings as a vain attempt by the Kremlin to scare millions of Russians into submission.

After the verdict that was announced about 8 p.m., protesters converged on areas of central Moscow and gathered on St. Petersburg's main avenue, Nevsky Prospekt.

Helmeted riot police grabbed demonstrators without obvious provocation and put them in police vehicles. The Meduza website showed video of police roughly pulling a passenger and driver out of a taxi.

The ruling came despite massive protests across Russia over the past two weekends and Western calls to free the 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner.

"We reiterate our call for the Russian government to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Navalny, as well as the hundreds of other Russian citizens wrongfully detained in recent weeks for exercising their rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said after the ruling.

The protests lasted until about 1 a.m. About 650 people were arrested, according to OVD-Info, a group

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 63 of 80

that monitors political arrests.

The prison sentence stems from a 2014 embezzlement conviction that Navalny has rejected as fabricated and politically motivated.

Navalny was arrested Jan. 17 upon returning from his five-month convalescence in Germany from the attack, which he has blamed on the Kremlin. Russian authorities deny any involvement. Despite tests by several European labs, Russian authorities said they have no proof he was poisoned.

As the order was read, Navalny smiled and pointed to his wife Yulia in the courtroom and traced the outline of a heart on the glass cage where he was being held. "Everything will be fine," he told her as guards led him away.

Earlier in the proceedings, Navalny attributed his arrest to Putin's "fear and hatred," saying the Russian leader will go down in history as a "poisoner."

"I have deeply offended him simply by surviving the assassination attempt that he ordered," he said.

"The aim of this hearing is to scare a great number of people," Navalny added. "You can't jail the entire country."

Russia's penitentiary service said Navalny violated the probation conditions of his suspended sentence from the 2014 conviction. It asked the court to turn his 3 1/2-year suspended sentence into one that he must serve in prison, although about a year he spent under house arrest will be counted as time served.

Navalny emphasized that the European Court of Human Rights ruled that his 2014 conviction was unlawful and Russia paid him compensation in line with the ruling.

Navalny and his lawyers have argued that while he was recovering in Germany from the poisoning, he couldn't register with Russian authorities in person as required by his probation. He also insisted that his due process rights were crudely violated during his arrest and described his jailing as a travesty of justice.

"I came back to Moscow after I completed the course of treatment," Navalny said during Tuesday's hearing. "What else could I have done?"

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets the past two weekends to demand Navalny's release and chant slogans against Putin. On Sunday, police detained more than 5,750 people nationwide, which was the biggest one-day total in Russia since Soviet times. Most were released after being handed a court summons, and they face fines or jail terms of seven to 15 days, although several face criminal charges of violence against police.

"I am fighting and will keep doing it even though I am now in the hands of people who love to put chemical weapons everywhere and no one would give three kopecks for my life," Navalny said.

Navalny's team called for a demonstration Tuesday outside the Moscow courthouse, but police were out in force, cordoning off nearby streets and making random arrests. More than 320 people were detained, according to OVD-Info.

Some Navalny supporters still managed to approach the building. A young woman climbed a pile of snow across the street and held up a poster saying "Freedom to Navalny." Less than a minute later, a police officer took her away.

Before the ruling, authorities also cordoned off Red Square and other parts of central Moscow, as well as Palace Square in St. Petersburg, anticipating protests. Police flooded the centers of both cities.

In court, Navalny thanked protesters for their courage and urged other Russians not to fear repression. "Millions can't be jailed," he said. "You have stolen people's future and you are now trying to scare them. I'm urging all not to be afraid."

Observers noted that authorities want Navalny in prison, fearing he could run an efficient campaign against the main Kremlin party, United Russia, in September's parliamentary election. "If Navalny remains free, he is absolutely capable of burying the Kremlin's plans regarding the outcome of the Duma election," said political analyst Abbas Gallyamov.

After his arrest, Navalny's team released a two-hour YouTube video about an opulent Black Sea residence allegedly built for Putin. It has been viewed over 100 million times, fueling discontent as ordinary Russians struggle with an economic downturn, the coronavirus and widespread corruption during Putin's

years in office.

Putin insisted that neither he nor his relatives own any of the properties mentioned in the video, and his longtime confidant, construction magnate Arkady Rotenberg, claimed that he owns it.

As part of efforts to squelch the protests, authorities have targeted Navalny's associates and activists across the country. His brother Oleg, top ally Lyubov Sobol and several others were put under house arrest for two months and face criminal charges of violating coronavirus restrictions.

The jailing of Navalny and the crackdown on protests have stoked international outrage.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said the "perverse ruling, targeting the victim of a poisoning rather than those responsible, shows Russia is failing to meet the most basic commitments expected of any responsible member of the international community."

Russia has dismissed the criticism as meddling in its domestic affairs and said Navalny's current situation is a procedural matter for the court, not an issue for the government.

"A Russian citizen sentenced by Russian court in accordance with Russian laws. Who gave US the right to judge if it was wrongful or not? Wouldn't you mind your own business, gentlemen? Recent events show that there are a lot of things for you to mend!" Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, said on Twitter.

More than a dozen Western diplomats attended the hearing. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said their presence was part of efforts by the West to contain Russia, adding that it could be an attempt to exert "psychological pressure" on the judge.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia is ready for dialogue about Navalny, but sternly warned it wouldn't take Western criticism into account.

"We are ready to patiently explain everything, but we aren't going to react to mentor-style statements or take them into account," Peskov told reporters.

---

Jim Heintz in Moscow and Jill Lawless in London contributed.

## Georgia Senate GOP introduce bills to limit mail voting

By BEN NADLER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Republicans in Georgia's state Senate are moving quickly to limit who can vote and how after Democrats won the presidential election and two U.S. Senate runoffs in the once reliably red state.

Democrats say the GOP's bills are unnecessary, politically motivated and will suppress legal votes.

Many of the proposals target absentee voting by mail after relentless false claims by former President Donald Trump and his allies, including some Republican state senators. State election officials have said unequivocally that there was no widespread fraud in voting by mail, or irregularities that could have changed November's results.

The bills introduced Monday would restrict who can vote absentee by mail, require a photo ID for those who do vote absentee by mail, ban ballot drop boxes and block outside groups from sending out absentee ballot applications. Other proposals would end automatic voter registration when obtaining a driver's license and ban new residents from voting in a runoff election.

Taken together, they represent a sweeping attempt by Republicans to tighten control over Georgia's voting system.

Senate Bill 67 would require that a voter provide either their driver's license number or personal ID card number or provide a photocopy of their ID when applying for an absentee ballot. That's slightly more forgiving than a proposal introduced in the Senate last week that would require a person to provide photocopies of their ID, both when they apply for an absentee ballot and when they return it.

Senate Bill 71 would limit who is allowed to vote absentee by mail, a method currently available to any Georgian without needing an excuse. The bill would only allow absentee voting under particular circumstances, including for voters who are 75 or older, have a physical disability or will be absent from their precinct on the date of the election. The bill doesn't mention global pandemics as a blanket excuse.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 65 of 80

Broad, no-excuse absentee voting was introduced in Georgia by a Republican-controlled legislature in 2005. But Democrats cast nearly twice as many absentee ballots as Republicans in November's election, with many voters avoiding the polls because of the risk of infection.

State Sen. Butch Miller, a Republican from Gainesville, is co-sponsoring the bills.

"I want every legal vote counted, and I want better access for all voters. Accusing our reform efforts of suppression is a political tactic, pure and simple," Miller said in a statement. "Even those of us who never claimed that the election was stolen recognize that the electorate has lost confidence in the legitimacy of the system."

Senate Republicans said in December that they would move to implement new voting legislation as soon as the 2021 session convened, responding to "the calls of millions of Georgians who have raised deep and heartfelt concerns" about November's election results.

Some of the bills unveiled this week go even further than what they called for then, and Democrats slammed the proposals.

Sen. Nikki Merritt, a Democrat from Grayson, called them a "slate of voter suppression bills" during a speech on the Senate floor Tuesday.

"I see a desperate attempt by a party clinging to waning power, so out of touch and too lazy to pivot messaging to speak to a broader electorate," Merritt said of Republicans.

Sen. Elena Parent, a Democrat from Atlanta, called the package of bills a "multi-headed monster" of voter suppression after President Joe Biden and U.S. Sens. Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock won in free and fair elections.

"There is no evidence of fraud in the recent Georgia elections," Parent tweeted. "Now, GA Senate Republicans introduced (a) bevy of bills to try to stop multi-racial, multi-age coalition that elected them from voting. Desperate & shameful."

While some of the proposals seem likely to pass in some form, others could face headwinds even among fellow Republicans. House Speaker David Ralston said in January that he was not convinced of the need to end no-excuse absentee voting, for one.

## SpaceX flight gives St. Jude hospital a cosmic funding boost

By GLENN GAMBOA AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — SpaceX's first all-civilian space flight set for late this year will provide an out-of-this-world fundraising opportunity for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which says it expects to generate \$200 million for cancer research and other causes.

It's off to a fast start: \$1 million in donations in the first day since the flight's announcement.

Jared Isaacman, the billionaire businessman who will finance and pilot the multi-day mission for himself and three others, will drive the publicity push, with the help of a Super Bowl commercial next weekend. Of the \$200 million that St. Jude hopes to raise this year, \$100 million is to come from Isaacman, with the rest from donations generated by raffling off one seat on the flight.

Richard C. Shadyac Jr., CEO of ALSAC, the fundraising organization for St. Jude, said the money raised will go toward the Memphis hospital's \$1 billion annual operating cost, as well as its global partnership with the World Health Organization. The overarching idea is to raise childhood cancer survival rates around the world from 20% to 60% by 2030.

"We have this, big audacious goal trying to help kids all around the globe," Shadyac said. "This big, audacious campaign is going to help fuel that."

Until the end of February, anyone 18 or older can go to St. Jude's website to enter for a chance to win a seat on the Inspiration4 and go into space later this year. There's no need to donate to enter the raffle. But those who do will receive special packages — from 100 entries for anyone giving \$10 to a flight in a MiG-29, an authentic flight suit and VIP passes to the launch, as well as 10,000 entries, for those who donate \$100,000. The winner will be chosen by random drawing March 1.

"He and SpaceX want space to be accessible — that's why we're going to do the sweepstakes," Shadyac said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 66 of 80

St. Jude's strategy of teaming up with Elon Musk's SpaceX and with Isaacman, the co-founder and CEO of Shift4Payments, a payment processor, is a shrewd way for a nonprofit to capitalize on a potential publicity bonanza, experts say.

Deborah Small, a professor of marketing and psychology at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, said the windfall for St. Jude's involvement with Inspiration4 would go well beyond the \$200 million fundraising goal itself. St. Jude, which specializes in researching and treating pediatric diseases, also stands to increase awareness of its mission. Her research on why people support charitable causes shows that donors generally favor causes that seem genuine and impactful.

What's more, she suggested, St. Jude's involvement helps cast Inspiration4's mission as a public-spirited one.

"It serves to benefit it by making this more of a societal, beneficial sort of mission," Small said. "It's not just a vanity trip for these millionaires or whoever. There's a bigger justification for it."

The idea of partnering with Isaacman came through Ross Martin, president of the marketing agency Known and a member of St. Jude's digital and innovation advisory council. Shadyac said he was struck by the similarity of their world views.

"He cares deeply about making a difference in the world, about helping sick kids," Shadyac said of Isaacman. "He was talking to me about inspiring and creating possibilities and I said, 'At St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, we take what seems like it's impossible and we try to make it possible.'"

The third slot on the flight will go to a business owner who uses Shift4 Payments. The fourth seat will go to a frontline healthcare worker at St. Jude's hospital to inspire hope about its mission.

Inspiration4 should live up to its name for children at St. Jude's hospital, Shadyac said.

"I want them to know that strangers from all around the world could potentially come together to help them," he said. "I'm confident that they're going to feel that hope and it'll inspire them on their journey to battle childhood cancer or other catastrophic diseases."

Shadyac pointed to his wall, with photos of four patients who lost their battles with their illnesses at the hospital.

"I'm hoping and praying that the money that's going to be raised around this and Jared's generous gift is going to generate research so that the kids like these beautiful kids stay on this planet and are able to go into space with Jared," he said. "I want kids all around the world to be inspired by this and ultimately realize their dreams."

---

The Associated Press receives support from the Lilly Endowment for coverage of philanthropy and nonprofits. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Vaccinations resume as not-quite-historic snowstorm fades

BOSTON (AP) — Coronavirus vaccination sites across the Northeast ramped back up Tuesday after a two-day snowstorm that also shut down public transport, closed schools and stranded travelers with canceled flights.

Some officials said that since vaccine supplies were thin to begin with, they didn't anticipate having big problems getting caught up on distribution after a day or two of cancelled appointments.

In New Jersey, travelers at Newark Liberty International Airport on Tuesday described being forced to endure widespread disruptions. Keno Walter-White said he got stranded at the airport after his flight was canceled and bus and tram services were suspended.

"I've been in the airport for three days, snowed in," said Walter-White, of Las Vegas. "No kind of accommodations."

Bands of snow continued through parts of the region Tuesday afternoon, but the worst was over, with more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) in parts of New Jersey and just a few inches in Boston.

Lara Pagano, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in College Park, Maryland, noted that while several areas in the mid-Atlantic saw measurable snowfall for a few consecutive days, that

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 67 of 80

hasn't shattered such records.

For example, she said, the most consecutive days with measured snowfall for Washington is four, while the mark is five for New York City and six for Philadelphia.

"While this storm has been a prolonged event, it's not a record-setter in that sense, but it does rank up there pretty high of course," she said.

The sprawling, lumbering storm had already walloped the eastern United States by Monday. More than 17 inches (43 centimeters) of snow dropped on Manhattan's Central Park, and as much as 30 inches (76 centimeters) was reported in northern New Jersey.

While New York City school kids had another day of all-remote learning because of the snow, above-ground subway and train service returned early Tuesday, and a ban on certain large trucks on state highways was lifted. Some vaccination sites in the city remained closed, but others, including those run by the public hospital system, were open Tuesday.

High tide caused flooding early Tuesday in coastal areas of Massachusetts, where the storm had already disrupted the second phase of the state's vaccine rollout as a Boston site that was supposed to open Monday for residents ages 75 and older did not; some other mass vaccination sites remained open.

Several areas of Massachusetts were hit with 18-plus inches (45 centimeters) of snow, including the central Massachusetts communities of Fitchburg, Lunenburg and Ashburnham.

Much of southern New Hampshire got about a foot of snow. Parts of northern New Hampshire, where the state's ski resorts and most of the snowmobile trails are, got 9 to 10 inches (22 to 25 centimeters).

"For the next couple of weeks, the conditions are going to be phenomenal," Gov. Chris Sununu said Tuesday during an interview on WZID-FM.

The storm raged offshore, making it inhospitable for mariners. Off the Maine coast, waves were approaching 30 feet (9 meters), and a 73-mph (117-kph) gust was recorded at an offshore buoy.

In Connecticut, the storm — which dumped up to 19 inches (48 centimeters) of snow in some areas — forced the cancellations of 10,000 vaccination appointments Monday, state officials said. Efforts are under way to provide vaccinations by the end of the week to people whose appointments were canceled.

A state of emergency imposed by New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy remained in effect Tuesday and the state's six megasites for COVID-19 vaccines were still closed as plow operators faced snow showers and blowing snow.

The New Jersey State Police reported that as of 7 p.m. Monday, troopers had responded to 661 crashes and come to the aid of 1,050 motorists since 6 p.m. Sunday.

There was also concern about coastal flooding in New Jersey. In a Facebook video posted by Union Beach Police, Keyport Police Chief Shannon Torres and Capt. Michael Ferm were shown rescuing a man who was showing signs of hypothermia in his car from floodwaters.

In Virginia, four firefighters were taken to hospitals with injuries that were not life threatening after their firetruck overturned Sunday on snow-covered roads in Henrico County, The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported.

Power outages appeared to be minimal. About 5,000 customers in Massachusetts and about 3,000 in New York were without power Tuesday morning.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf declared a disaster emergency after snowfall of up to 30 inches (76 centimeters) throughout central and eastern regions. The proclamation freed up millions of dollars for snow removal and authorized officials to request help from the National Guard.

Authorities said a 67-year-old woman with Alzheimer's disease who wandered away from her home was found dead of hypothermia on an Allentown street Monday morning.

About 60 miles (97 kilometers) north in Plains Township, a shooting after an argument over snow removal killed a married couple, and the suspect was later found dead at his nearby home of a wound believed to have been self-inflicted, officials in Luzerne County said.

## **Biden boosting vaccine allotments, financing for virus costs**

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's administration announced Tuesday that it is moving to expand access to COVID-19 vaccines, freeing up more doses for states and beginning to distribute them to retail pharmacies next week. The push comes amid new urgency to speed vaccinations to prevent the spread of potentially more serious strains of the virus that has killed more than 445,000 Americans.

Starting next week, 1 million doses will be distributed to some 6,500 pharmacies across the country, the White House said. The administration is also boosting by 500,000 the weekly allocation of vaccines sent directly to states and territories for the coming weeks, up to 10.5 million. It is allowing state and local governments to receive additional federal dollars to cover previously incurred expenses relating to the pandemic.

Coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients announced the moves on a call with the nation's governors Tuesday morning and then detailed them to the public in an afternoon news conference.

Drugstores have become a mainstay for flu shots and shingles vaccines, and the industry is capable of vaccinating tens of millions of people monthly. "This will provide more sites for people to get vaccinated in their communities," Zients said.

"This is a critical step to provide the public with convenient trusted places to get vaccinated in their communities," he added.

The number of participating pharmacies and the allocation of vaccines are expected to accelerate as drug makers increase production. The White House said the ultimate goal was to distribute the vaccines through more than 40,000 pharmacies nationwide. State and local guidelines will determine who is eligible to get a shot at their neighborhood pharmacy. Availability will be limited at first.

"Getting it into pharmacies is a viable approach," said Dan Mendelson, founder of the health care industry consulting firm Avalere Health. "The pharmacies know how to move people in and out."

Part of the reason the vaccination campaign got off to a slow start, he added, is that states lacked their own infrastructure for mass vaccinations.

The partnership with drugstores was originally announced by the Trump administration in November. At that time, no coronavirus vaccines had been approved. Participating are major chains like CVS, Walgreens and Rite Aid, big box stores such as Walmart and Costco, and supermarket pharmacies. CVS said it will receive 250,000 doses initially, to be distributed to pharmacies in 11 states.

The pharmacy doses will be distributed to states by population, but a priority will be to get the vaccine to minority communities that have suffered a disproportionately high toll of disease and deaths from the virus, Zients said.

He said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was "making sure that we are picking pharmacies in that first phase that are located in areas that are harder to reach to ensure that we have equitable distribution of the pharmacy doses." Walgreens said it was selected in part to "optimize vaccine access in medically underserved areas."

The 1 million doses being shipped to pharmacies will be on top of the increased allotments to states over the coming three weeks. The Biden administration has sought to increase certainty to state governments on their upcoming allocations to streamline deliveries and prevent stockpiling of second doses for the two-dose regimens.

The Tuesday announcement comes a day after Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert, called on Americans to get vaccinated as soon as they're eligible to prevent further mutations of the virus. The U.S. is tracking the spread of potentially more virulent and treatment-resistant variants.

"Viruses cannot mutate if they don't replicate," Fauci said. "And if you stop their replication by vaccinating widely and not giving the virus an open playing field to continue to respond to the pressures that you put on it, you will not get mutations."

The U.S. government has already starting working with vaccine manufacturers on potential booster shots to enhance protection against the variants.

Biden's move to allow for an additional \$3 billion to \$5 billion in retroactive funding to state and local

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 69 of 80

governments for reimbursement of pandemic-related spending was expected to free up more money for vaccine distribution.

"States will be fully repaid for things like masks, gloves and the mobilization of the National Guard, and they can use the additional resources for vaccination efforts and emergency supplies moving forward," Zients said.

That is on top of additional assistance to state and local governments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency already authorized by the Biden administration for them to stand up and support vaccination sites across the country.

## It's not just GameStop worrying Wall Street about a bubble

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Now, even the pros on Wall Street are asking if the stock market has shot too high. U.S. stocks have been on a nearly nonstop rip higher since March, up roughly 70% to record heights and causing outsiders to say the market had lost touch with the pandemic's reality. But Wall Street kept justifying the gains by pointing to massive support from the Federal Reserve, lifesaving deliverance from COVID-19 vaccines and efforts by Congress to pump more stimulus into the economy.

Recently, though, some of the market's action has become tougher to explain, and not just the maniacal moves for GameStop. Some investors are so hungry for huge payoffs that they're pouring into investments without knowing what their dollars will go toward. And by some measures, the broad stock market looks more expensive than it did before the 1929 crash.

All the fervor has Wall Street openly debating whether the market is in a dangerous bubble, after months of batting away the possibility.

A bubble is what happens when prices for something run much, much higher than they should rationally be: They've been a regular occurrence through history, going back to tulips in the 17th century and pets.com at the close of the 20th.

"It is a privilege as a market historian to experience a major stock bubble once again," the famed value investor Jeremy Grantham, who has correctly called several major market turning points, wrote in a recent paper. "Japan in 1989, the 2000 Tech bubble, the 2008 housing and mortgage crisis, and now the current bubble — these are the four most significant and gripping investment events of my life."

To be sure, most professional forecasters say the U.S. stock market is not headed for a crash, just slower returns than before. But those optimists are having to do more work convincing others.

"You might say a bubble occurs when people think that the market is going to go up but worry that it may drop," said Robert Shiller, a Yale professor who won a Nobel prize for his work on explaining stock price movements. "That is where we are."

He said the market looks vulnerable, but he cautioned that some hallmarks of a classic bubble aren't present today, such as investors talking about a "new era" for the economy. He also said that it's difficult to predict when the market will run out of momentum and turn lower.

"People often extrapolate trends, and they go on longer than you ever think," he said. "And then they disappear."

Here's a look at the causes for concern driving the bubble debate:

### DAY-TRADING FRENZY

— The most glaring example of excess sweeping Wall Street now is GameStop's stock, which soared 1,625% in January. Shares of the struggling video game retailer have since fallen, but they remain way beyond a price Wall Street analysts say is rational based on its profit prospects. Other money-losing companies have surged as well, showing how easily some investors are pushing up prices for an investment, despite its risks. And with smaller investors driving much of the action, experts are making comparisons to the shoeshine worker giving stock tips in 1929.

### NO DISCOUNTS TO BE FOUND

— Perhaps more worrisome is that prices have been soaring across the stock market at a much faster

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 70 of 80

pace than corporate profits. The two tend to track each other over the long term, so big dissociations give pause. One measure popularized by Yale's Shiller looks at the S&P 500's price against profits produced by companies in the prior 10 years, adjusted for inflation. Since 1881, only once has it been more expensive than it is now — during the dot-com bubble. It came close just before the crash that helped usher in the Great Depression.

IPWhoa

— Massive support from the Federal Reserve means dollars are sloshing around markets looking for investments, and young and money-losing companies are rushing to take advantage by selling their stock to the public for the first time. Companies raised more than \$60 billion last year through IPOs of their stock, the most since the dot-com bubble peaked in 2000, according to data compiled by Jay Ritter at the University of Florida. Within tech companies, only 19% of IPOs were for profitable companies last year, compared with the more typical 49% of the last two decades.

SPAC, CRACKLE, POP?

— The fervor to invest in the next hot young company is so voracious that some CEOs are skipping the IPO step altogether. Instead, they're selling themselves to companies armed with cash by investors and tasked to find young businesses that don't yet have shares trading in the public market. Such special purpose acquisition companies, or SPACs, have exploded in popularity. Last year, SPACs raised \$76 billion from investors, up from \$13 billion a year before. In the first three weeks of 2021, they raised another \$16 billion, according to Goldman Sachs.

For all the worries, much of Wall Street is still optimistic, forecasting more gains ahead.

COVID-19 vaccines have raised expectations that daily life will get closer to normal this year and return the economy to health. If earnings rise a lot and stock prices make only modest moves, prices would look more reasonable, and that's precisely what much of Wall Street expects to happen.

Back in early 2018, the market was in the midst of a long and powerful run, and the S&P 500 was nearly as expensive as it is now by some measures, prompting talk of a bubble. The bull market powered on, however, right up until the pandemic hit.

Then, there's the Fed. Past bubbles have popped after the Federal Reserve started raising interest rates in hopes of cooling off an overheated economy or markets. For now, the Fed seems to be years away from doing that. It's even said for the first time that it's willing to keep rates low for a while after inflation tops its 2% target.

With rates so low, investors don't have much choice for good returns outside of stocks.

Margie Patel, senior portfolio manager at Wells Fargo Asset Management, said the Fed has pretty much signaled to Wall Street that it won't allow for a big market downturn.

"As long as interest rates are this low," she said, "it's really hard for me to see how you could have much of a correction in stocks."

## UK tests house-to-house in hunt for new COVID-19 variant

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — England has begun house-by-house COVID-19 testing in some communities as authorities try to snuff out a new variant of the coronavirus before it spreads widely and undermines a nationwide vaccination program.

Authorities want to reach the 80,000 residents of eight areas where the variant, first identified in South Africa, is known to be spreading because a handful of cases have been detected among people who have had no contact with the country or anyone who traveled there.

Officials are dispatching home testing kits and mobile testing units in an effort to reach every resident of those communities. It is "critical" for everyone in these areas to stay at home unless travel is absolutely essential, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said.

"Our mission must be to stop its spread altogether and break those chains of transmission," Hancock told the House of Commons on Tuesday.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 71 of 80

Public health officials are concerned about the variant first identified in South Africa because it contains a mutation of the virus' characteristic spike protein that existing vaccines target. The mutation may mean the vaccines offer less protection against the variant.

As the door-to-door testing drive got underway, Public Health England also said scientists had discovered the same spike protein mutation in 11 cases involving another variant that is now the most prevalent form of the virus in England. The mutation had not previously been detected in the so-called Kent variant, named for the English county where it was first identified.

Britain's government announced in December that the country had to introduce tougher restrictions to control the rapid spread of the Kent variant, which first was discovered a few months earlier in southeast England. Authorities were alarmed by how fast it spread, saying it was more contagious than existing coronavirus variants.

No conclusive evidence has emerged to show the Kent variant causes more serious COVID-19 cases or deaths. Dozens of nations around the world imposed bans on travel from the U.K. as cases multiplied in England, but the variant nevertheless has turned up in numerous countries.

While viruses mutate constantly, most of the changes cause little concern. But scientists are closely tracking mutations in the virus that causes COVID-19 to make sure they quickly identify variants of concern.

Dr. Julian Tang, a clinical virologist at the University of Leicester, said recent discovery of the spike protein mutation in the Kent variant was a "worrying development, though not entirely unexpected."

"Closing borders/restricting travel may help a little with this, but there is now probably already a sufficient critical mass of virus-infected people within the endemic U.K. population to allow this natural selection/evolution to proceed — as this report suggests — so we really need to stick to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions as much as possible," Tang said in a written statement.

In recent weeks, scientists also identified new, more contagious variants in South Africa and Brazil, both of which contained the spike protein mutation.

In hopes of preventing those variants from becoming widespread in Britain, the government has barred travel from South Africa, South America and Portugal, a popular European transit point for travelers from South America.

The discovery that the variant from South Africa is spreading in the community has led to calls to shut the U.K.'s borders to all international travelers or to require a 14-day hotel quarantine for everyone entering the country.

But closing the borders isn't sustainable, said Professor Andrew Hayward, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at University College London.

"You can think about completely shutting the borders or having quarantine, (but) what's the end game in that?" Hayward told Sky News. "Is that something that you're going to do forever, because it looks like these strains may continue to arise in the long term? So we need some sort of sustainable strategy, and I think that's very difficult for politicians to think about that."

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>

## Dolly Parton on Super Bowl commercial and COVID-19 vaccine

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dolly Parton has been singing about everyday office employees working "9 to 5" for over 40 years, but now the country icon is singing about entrepreneurs working "5 to 9" to pursue their dreams after hours.

The Grammy-winning legend's 1980s hit has been flipped by Squarespace — a company that helps users build and host their own websites — for a Super Bowl commercial debuting Tuesday. Oscar winner Damien Chazelle of "La La Land" fame directed the spot.

"A lot of people through the years have wanted to change the lyrics to fit certain things they're doing. I

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 72 of 80

really thought that was a wonderful thing, especially for Squarespace. They're so into people, new entrepreneurs working after hours to start their own businesses," Parton said. "5 to 9" seemed to be a perfect thing when they pitched it."

Parton is using Squarespace to create a website for her new perfume, DollyFragrance.com.

The singer, who is also an actor, producer, humanitarian and more, said she can relate to businesspeople working around the clock to fulfill their goals.

"Well I work 365 (days a year). I'm always working 5 to 9, 9 to 5. I work all hours of the night and day," she said. "Whatever you need to do, you gotta get it done, however many hours it takes."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Parton talked about flipping "9 to 5," being a part of this year's Super Bowl, donating \$1 million to coronavirus research and remembering her brother Randy Parton, who died last month. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

---

AP: Are you excited to be part of this year's Super Bowl?

Parton: I've been asked several times to be part of that. It's always such a big commitment. I've always kind of chickened out. I know it's just a big commitment. If you do good, you do great. If you do bad, you do bad in front of all those people. This seemed like the perfect kind of way to do it.

---

AP: What was it like writing "9 to 5" over 40 years ago?

Parton: That song just stays so true to people that get out — you get up in the morning, you wobble into the kitchen, you pour your coffee, you try to get your butt going, you try to get up and get to work knowing that you've got to do it. I'm really happy. This is the 40th anniversary of "9 to 5" since the movie came out. We're celebrating, so this could not have happened at a better time.

---

AP: You donated \$1 million to coronavirus research — what compelled you to do that?

Parton: Well, I follow my heart. I'm a person of faith and I pray all the time that God will lead me into the right direction and let me know what to do. When the pandemic first hit, that was my first thought, "I need to do something to try to help find a vaccination." I just did some research with the people at Vanderbilt (University) — they're wonderful people, they've been so good through the years to my people in times of illness and all that. I just asked if I could donate a million dollars to the research for a vaccine.

I get a lot more credit than I deserve I think, but I was just happy to be a part of any and all of that.

---

AP: Have you gotten your shot?

Parton: No. I'm not going to get mine until some more people get theirs. I don't want it to look like I'm jumping the line just because I donated money. I'm very funny about that. I'm going to get mine though, but I'm going to wait. I'm at the age where I could have gotten mine legally last week. I turned 75. I was going to do it on my birthday, and I thought, "Nah, don't do that." You'll look like you're just doing a show. None of my work is really like that. I wasn't doing it for a show. I'm going to get mine. I want it. I'm going to get it. When I get it, I'll probably do it on camera so people will know and I'll tell them the truth, if I have symptoms and all that. Hopefully it'll encourage people. I'm not going to jump the line just because I could.

---

AP: How does it feel to be 75?

Parton: Well I plan to be around a lot longer. I don't have no plans of slowing down because the number says I should. I don't pay attention to that. I wake up with new dreams every day. I try to make the most of every year that I've lived. I've been doing that since I was little. I'll be doing it until I keel over. Hopefully that won't be anytime soon.

---

AP: Your brother Randy recently died from cancer. How are you holding up?

Parton: Well, we're heartbroken. We loved him so much. He fought really hard for the last year. Randy



was a wonderful artist, entertainer. He was very dear to me. He was one of my younger brothers. I lost my baby brother last year, around the same time of the year. This was really a double whammy for all of us. There's a certain kind of peace that comes from knowing that he is at peace, and he was suffering, and we didn't like that. He is dearly loved. You just go around with a hole in your heart and a knot in your stomach. You just think of him, love him, try to keep your precious memories. You have to go on. We're a close family, so we're supporting each other.

## Senate confirms Pete Buttigieg as transportation secretary

By HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pete Buttigieg won Senate approval Tuesday as transportation secretary, the first openly gay person to be confirmed to a Cabinet post. He'll be tasked with advancing President Joe Biden's ambitious agenda of rebuilding the nation's infrastructure and fighting climate change.

Buttigieg, a 39-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and Biden's one-time rival during the Democratic presidential primaries, was approved on a 86-13 vote.

"I'm honored and humbled by today's vote in the Senate—and ready to get to work," Buttigieg tweeted shortly after he was confirmed.

Praised by Biden as bringing a "new voice" to the administration, Buttigieg takes over a Transportation Department with 55,000 employees and a budget of tens of billions dollars. He has pledged to quickly get to work promoting safety and restoring consumer trust in America's transportation networks as airlines, buses, city subway systems and Amtrak reel from plummeting ridership in the coronavirus pandemic.

He is expected to play an important role in promoting Biden's sweeping green initiatives, helping to oversee stronger automotive fuel economy standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the president's push later this year on a \$2 trillion climate and infrastructure plan. That plan will be focused on rebuilding roads and bridges and expanding zero-emission mass transit while boosting electric vehicle infrastructure, including building 500,000 charging stations over the next decade.

Speaking on the Senate floor before the vote, Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell, the incoming chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, praised Buttigieg's energy and fresh approach and said she looked forward to his leadership to address an aging infrastructure, including the "crumbling off of bridges, delayed trains, buses, congestion, railroads, or any of the many issues."

"We all know the nominee as Mayor Pete, a man who basically came onto the national stage as a Midwest mayor, who had lots of enthusiasm for making investments in America's future," she said. "He's a young, energetic mayor who is going to help us usher in a new era of transportation."

Before approval by the full Senate, Buttigieg had cleared the committee on a 21-3 vote. Some Republican senators during his hearing signaled likely fights ahead over the cost and scope of updating the nation's roads and bridges, rails and airports, questioning in particular the administration's interest in redirecting money for climate initiatives. But they said they would look forward to further discussions with Buttigieg, including on their desired local projects.

Biden hasn't indicated how he intends to pay for an infrastructure plan, coming on top of the administration's proposed \$1.9 trillion virus relief plan that has met some headwinds in Congress. Buttigieg's suggestion during his hearing that a gas tax hike might be needed was immediately walked back by his spokesman afterward.

"We need to build our economy back, better than ever, and the Department of Transportation can play a central role in this," Buttigieg told his confirmation hearing last week, noting that the transportation sector, particularly car emissions, is the single biggest contributor in the U.S. to global warming.

He stressed that creating jobs, tackling the climate crisis and addressing racial and economic inequality will drive funding decisions at the department.

The Afghanistan war veteran burst onto the national scene in 2019 after launching a longshot presidential bid, introducing himself to voters as "Mayor Pete" and drawing initial skepticism due to his youth and limited government experience. He outperformed expectations after zeroing in on a message of generational

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 74 of 80

change, finishing the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses in a virtual tie with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

But Buttigieg struggled to appeal to Black voters and dropped out of the race after a crushing loss to Biden in the South Carolina primary. Buttigieg chose to quickly endorse Biden, helping him solidify centrist support against Sanders' strong liberal challenge.

Buttigieg, a Harvard graduate and Rhodes scholar, now points to his experience as a mayor and on the campaign trail as valuable to his ground-level approach to improving transportation. He described initiating a "smart streets" program to make South Bend's downtown more pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly while spurring hundreds of millions of dollars in economic investment.

He's also expected to be a regular presence on TV, helping to sell the president's policies as he did during Biden's campaign. Since he was nominated, Buttigieg has appeared on "The View," "The Tonight Show," MSNBC's "Morning Joe," as well as Fox local affiliates, addressing topics from Donald Trump's impeachment and the treatment of veterans to his goals of promoting green-friendly travel.

Buttigieg brings diversity to the Cabinet. There hasn't been an openly gay Cabinet secretary before. Under President Donald Trump, Richard Grenell served as acting director of national intelligence and is openly gay, but did not have to face Senate confirmation as an acting director. In the late 1990s, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott blocked a confirmation vote on President Bill Clinton's pick for ambassador to Luxembourg, James Hormel, over his sexual orientation; Clinton ultimately installed Hormel with a recess appointment.

"Congratulations to Secretary Pete Buttigieg on his historic confirmation," Alphonso David, president of Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy group, said after the vote. "This confirmation breaks through a barrier that has existed for too long, where LGBTQ identity served as an impediment to nomination or confirmation at the highest level of government."

## **Capt. Tom Moore, WWII vet whose walk cheered UK, dies at 100**

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Capt. Tom Moore, the World War II veteran who walked into the hearts of a nation in lockdown as he shuffled up and down his garden to raise money for health care workers, has died after testing positive for COVID-19. He was 100.

His family announced his death on Twitter, posting a picture of him behind his walker in a happy moment, ready for an adventure.

"The last year of our father's life was nothing short of remarkable. He was rejuvenated and experienced things he'd only ever dreamed of," the family's statement said. "Whilst he'd been in so many hearts for just a short time, he was an incredible father and grandfather, and he will stay alive in our hearts forever."

Captain Tom, as he became known in newspaper headlines and TV interviews, set out to raise 1,000 pounds for Britain's National Health Service by walking 100 laps of his backyard. But his quest went viral and caught the imagination of millions stuck at home during the first wave of the pandemic. Donations poured in from across Britain and as far away as the United States and Japan, raising some 33 million pounds (\$40 million).

For three weeks in April, fans were greeted with daily videos of Captain Tom, stooped with age, doggedly pushing his walker in the garden. But it was his sunny attitude during a dark moment that inspired people to look beyond illness and loss.

"Please always remember, tomorrow will be a good day," Moore said in an interview during his walk, uttering the words that became his trademark.

When Captain Tom finished his 100th lap on April 16, a military honor guard lined the path. The celebration continued on his birthday a few days later, when two World War II-era fighter planes flew overhead in tribute. Moore, a plaid blanket over his shoulders, pumped a fist as they roared past.

In July, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in a socially distanced ceremony at Windsor Castle, west of London. The 94-year-old monarch used an impossibly long sword to confer the honor as Moore, wearing his wartime medals on his chest, leaned on his walker, beamed and became Sir Tom.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 75 of 80

"I have been overwhelmed by the many honors I have received over the past weeks, but there is simply nothing that can compare to this," he tweeted after the ceremony. "I am overwhelmed with pride and joy."

Queen Elizabeth II plans a private message of condolence to the family, Buckingham Palace said.

"Her Majesty very much enjoyed meeting Capt. Sir Tom and his family at Windsor last year," the palace said in a statement. "Her thoughts, and those of the Royal Family, are with them, recognizing the inspiration he provided for the whole nation and others across the world."

Flags were lowered at Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Downing Street office. The British leader described Moore as a "hero in the truest sense of the word."

Born in Keighley, West Yorkshire, on April 30, 1920, Moore completed an apprenticeship in civil engineering before being drafted into the army during the early months of World War II. After being selected for officer training, he rose to the rank of captain while serving in India, Burma and Sumatra.

After leaving the army in 1946, Moore went to work for the family construction firm. After that failed, he became a salesman and later a manager for building materials companies. When the concrete company he was working for was threatened with closure, Moore rounded up a group of investors and bought it, preserving 60 jobs.

Along the way, he divorced his first wife and fell in love with his employer's office manager, Pamela. The couple married, had two daughters and eventually retired to Spain, but returned to England after Pamela Moore became ill.

After his wife died in 2006, Moore moved to the village of Marston Moretaine in Bedfordshire to live with his younger daughter, Hannah, and her family.

The former motorcycle racer slowed down at age 98 after he fell and broke his hip in 2018. A walker replaced his Skoda Yeti, but he kept moving.

During a backyard barbecue in early April of last year, Moore's family challenged him to walk the entire length of the 25-meter (82-foot) driveway. After he made it to the end, his son-in-law encouraged him to keep going, offering to pay 1 pound for every lap and suggesting a goal of 100 laps by Moore's 100th birthday.

The challenge snowballed from there.

Moore thought he might be able to raise 1,000 pounds (\$1,363) for the doctors and nurses who took care of him after he broke his hip, and his family used social media to publicize "Captain Tom Moore's 100th birthday walk for the NHS." A local radio reporter called first, then national broadcasters. Soon, international media were waiting outside the garden gate.

As he pushed his walker up and down the garden's path, people facing the U.K.'s first lockdown of the pandemic watched online. Soon, #TomorrowWillBeAGoodDay was trending on Twitter.

"People told me that there was something about my little walk that captured the hearts of those still in shock at the crisis," Moore wrote in his autobiography. "With a rising number of deaths and the prospect of months of lockdown, everyone was desperate for good news. Apparently, a 99-year-old former Army captain who'd fought in Burma, was recovering from a broken hip, and doing his bit for the NHS was just what they needed."

Prince Harry, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and dozens of celebrities cheered for him.

But it was the public that embraced Captain Tom, flooding the village post office with some 6,000 gifts and 140,000 birthday cards. Moore marveled that anyone would spend 2 pounds (\$2.74) on a card for him, and then put on a mask to wait in line at a post office to mail it.

He was made an honorary member of the England cricket team, had a train named after him, and was recognized with the Freedom of the City of London award.

Moore enjoyed the accolades but remained focused on others.

He dedicated his autobiography, "Tomorrow Will Be a Good Day," to "all those who serve on the front line of any battle - be it military, psychological or medical."

In the end, Captain Tom urged the public to look after one another, and he thanked the country he inspired for inspiring him.

"I felt a little frustrated and disappointed after I broke my hip and it knocked my confidence," he said after completing his trek. "However, the past three weeks have put a spring back in my step. I have renewed purpose and have thoroughly enjoyed every second of this exciting adventure, but I can't keep walking forever."

## Study: Russia's Sputnik V vaccine appears safe, effective

By MARIA CHENG and DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian scientists say the country's Sputnik V vaccine appears safe and effective against COVID-19, according to early results of an advanced study published Tuesday in a British medical journal.

The news is a boost for the vaccine, which governments around the world increasingly are purchasing in the race to stop the devastation caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Researchers said that based on a fall trial involving about 20,000 people in Russia, the vaccine is about 91% effective and appears to prevent inoculated individuals from becoming severely ill with COVID-19. But it is unclear if Sputnik V can stop transmission. The study was published online Tuesday in *The Lancet*.

Scientists not linked to the research acknowledged that the speed at which the vaccine was made and rolled out had brought criticism of the Russian effort's "unseemly haste, corner cutting and an absence of transparency."

"But the outcome reported here is clear," British scientists Ian Jones and Polly Roy wrote in an accompanying commentary. "Another vaccine can now join the fight to reduce the incidence of COVID-19."

The vaccine was approved by the Russian government with much fanfare on Aug. 11. President Vladimir Putin personally broke the news on national television and said one of his daughters had already received it. At the time, the vaccine had only been tested in several dozen people, and the move elicited criticism from experts both at home and abroad.

Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund that bankrolled the development of the shot, called the study in *The Lancet* "check and mate to the critics of the Russian vaccine."

"Russia was right from the very beginning," he said.

Outside Russia, Sputnik V has received authorization in over a dozen countries, according to the fund — including the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Armenia and Turkmenistan; Latin American nations including Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela; African nations such as Algeria as well as Serbia, Iran, Palestine and UAE.

Batches of the vaccine have already been supplied to six countries. In all, more than 50 countries have submitted applications for 2.4 billion doses, an RDIF spokesman told *The Associated Press*.

The latest study is based on research involving about 20,000 people over 18 at 25 hospitals in Moscow between September and November, of whom three-quarters got two doses of the Russian vaccine 21 days apart and the remainder got placebo shots.

Serious side effects were reported rare in both groups and four deaths were reported, although none were considered to be the result of the vaccine.

The study included more than 2,100 people over age 60 and the vaccine appeared to be about 92% effective in them. The research is ongoing, but Russia's Health Ministry said in December it was cutting the size of the study from the planned 40,000 subjects to about 31,000 already enrolled volunteers, with developers citing ethical concerns about using placebo shots.

The Russian vaccine uses a modified version of the common cold-causing adenovirus to carry genes for the spike protein in the coronavirus as a way to prime the body to react if COVID-19 comes along. That's a similar technology to the vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University. But unlike AstraZeneca's two-dose vaccine, the Russians used a slightly different adenovirus for the second booster shot.

"This aims to drive higher immune responses to the target 'spike' by using two slightly different jabs," said Alexander Edwards, an associate professor in biomedical technology at Britain's University of Reading, who was not connected to the Russian research. He said if you have two identical shots, it's possible the immune system doesn't get as big a boost from the second injection.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 77 of 80

Roy, a professor of virology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said there should no longer be any doubts about the Russian vaccine. She said the high level of antibodies produced by Sputnik V suggest that it could also protect against some of the new COVID-19 variants that have been detected recently, but more studies are needed to verify that.

"Initially, I had some concerns about what they were saying and thought they were getting too much publicity, but the data are now very strong," Roy said.

Sputnik V was rolled out in a large-scale vaccination campaign in Russia in December, with doctors and teachers the first in line. Last month, Putin ordered mass immunizations to start.

In early January, the Russian Direct Investment Fund said over 1 million Russians had already been vaccinated. Some Russian media questioned the number, suggesting that the rollout had been much slower, with many Russian regions reporting small numbers of vaccinations.

The production of Sputnik V will span several countries, including India, South Korea, Brazil, China. "We will also manufacture vaccines in Kazakhstan, develop (production) in Belarus, in Turkey, and possibly even in Iran," Dmitriev said, adding that the production in China will start at the end of the month.

Algeria will begin producing the Sputnik V vaccine "within the coming weeks," Kamel Mansouri, the head of Algeria's national agency for pharmaceuticals, said Tuesday. The first batch of 50,000 doses arrived in Algeria last week.

The European Medicines Agency said the developers of Sputnik V recently asked for advice on what data they needed to submit for the vaccine to be licensed across the 27-nation European Union.

Hungary's first shipment of Sputnik V — 40,000 doses — arrived on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said on Facebook. Hungary expects to get enough Sputnik V vaccine to treat 1 million people in the next three months.

Hungarian health authorities were the first in the EU to approve the vaccine on Jan. 21, but the National Public Health Center must still give its final approval before shots are distributed to the public.

The minister took the opportunity to blast the EU's own vaccination rollout, which has been much slower than ones in Israel, Britain or the United States.

"Brussels' centralized vaccine procurement has been a failure, which has risked the lives of Europeans and the swiftest restarting of the European economy," Szijjarto said.

"We were the first, but we probably won't be the only ones" in the EU to consider using Russian and Chinese COVID-19 vaccines, he added.

Maria Cheng reported from Toronto. Associated Press writers Aomar Ouali in Algiers, Algeria, Lori Hinant in Paris and Justin Spike in Budapest, Hungary, contributed.

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>

## Trump lawyer: Impeachment case 'undemocratic,' ill-advised

By ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are using the upcoming Senate impeachment trial of Donald Trump as a political "weapon" to bar the former president from seeking office again and are pursuing a case that is "undemocratic" and unconstitutional, one of his lawyers says.

Trump faces trial next week on accusations that he incited a harrowing and deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, when loyalists in town for a rally supporting the president overran the police and violently stormed the building. The House passed a single article of impeachment against Trump one week before he left office, triggering a trial that Democrats say is necessary to hold Trump publicly accountable for the attack. If Trump is convicted, Congress could bar him from holding public office again.

Whether the Senate trial is constitutional is a point of contention because of the unique circumstances: never before has a president faced an impeachment trial after leaving office. Democrats say there is

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 78 of 80

precedent, pointing to an 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who resigned his office in a last-ditch attempt to avoid an impeachment trial. The Senate held it anyway.

On the eve of expected legal briefs from lawyers for both sides, Trump attorney David Schoen's appearance on Fox News Monday night previewed some of the arguments he plans to make at the trial. He called the case needlessly divisive.

"It's also the most ill-advised legislative action that I've seen in my lifetime," Schoen said.

Trump is the first president in American history to be impeached twice. He was acquitted at a Senate trial last year over his contacts with his Ukrainian counterpart, but was acquitted by the Senate. Impeachment, Schoen said, "is the weapon they've tried to use against him."

The new case was an effort to bar Trump from ever running for office again, Schoen said, "and that's about as undemocratic as you can get."

The Constitution specifies that disqualification from office can be a punishment for an impeachment conviction.

Schoen, a criminal defense and civil rights lawyer, and Bruce Castor, a former county prosecutor in Pennsylvania, were announced as Trump's legal team on Sunday evening, one day after it was revealed that the former president had parted ways with another set of attorneys in what one person described as a mutual decision.

In an interview with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Schoen said he did not plan to argue that Trump lost the election because of fraud, as Trump has repeatedly insisted, and would instead argue that the trial itself is unconstitutional. He also said he'll make the case that his words were protected by the First Amendment and did not incite a riot.

House Democrats plan to lay out what happened on Jan. 6 in graphic detail — an effort to get through to Senate Republicans who have largely avoided talking about the attack itself and Trump's role in it, instead focusing on the process of the impeachment trial. They are expected to play videos and verbally recount the violence of the day in hopes of stirring the Republicans, most of whom fled the Senate that day as the rioters broke in.

The nine House impeachment managers who will argue the case also are expected to lay out how they believe Trump's actions over the previous several months led up to it and eventually incited the insurrectionists to act.

Their arguments will include a look at Trump's "prolonged effort" to persuade his supporters to believe his false claims that the election was stolen — and describe how his pleas for them to come to Washington and his words immediately before the attack directly caused it.

The mob that broke into the Capitol as the House and the Senate tallied electoral votes not only ransacked the building but repeatedly called out for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and for Vice President Mike Pence, who was in the building to preside over the count.

---

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Feb. 3, the 34th day of 2021. There are 331 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 3, 1959, rock-and-roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson died in a small plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa.

On this date:

In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln and Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens held a ship-board peace conference off the Virginia coast; the talks deadlocked over the issue of Southern autonomy.

In 1913, the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing for a federal income tax, was ratified.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 214 ~ 79 of 80

In 1916, Canada's original Parliament Buildings, in Ottawa, burned down.

In 1917, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, the same day an American cargo ship, the SS Housatonic, was sunk by a U-boat off Britain after the crew was allowed to board lifeboats.

In 1930, the chief justice of the United States, William Howard Taft, resigned for health reasons. (He died just over a month later.)

In 1943, during World War II, the U.S. transport ship SS Dorchester, which was carrying troops to Greenland, sank after being hit by a German torpedo in the Labrador Sea; of the more than 900 men aboard, only some 230 survived. (Four Army chaplains on board gave away their life jackets to save others and went down with the ship.)

In 1966, the Soviet probe Luna 9 became the first manmade object to make a soft landing on the moon.

In 1988, the U.S. House of Representatives handed President Ronald Reagan a major defeat, rejecting his request for \$36.2 million in new aid to the Nicaraguan Contras by a vote of 219-211.

In 1994, the space shuttle Discovery lifted off, carrying Sergei Krikalev (SUR'-gay KREE'-kuh-lev), the first Russian cosmonaut to fly aboard a U.S. spacecraft.

In 1998, Texas executed Karla Faye Tucker, 38, for the pickax killings of two people in 1983; she was the first woman executed in the United States since 1984. A U.S. Marine plane sliced through the cable of a ski gondola in Italy, causing the car to plunge hundreds of feet, killing all 20 people inside.

In 2006, an Egyptian passenger ferry sank in the Red Sea during bad weather, killing more than 1,000 passengers.

In 2019, in the lowest-scoring Super Bowl ever, featuring just one touchdown, the New England Patriots beat the Los Angeles Rams, 13-3.

Ten years ago: Tens of thousands of protesters staged unprecedented demonstrations against Yemen's autocratic president, Ali Abdullah Saleh (AH'-lee ahb-DUH'-luh sah-LEH'), a key U.S. ally in battling Islamic militants, as unrest inspired by uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia spread further in the Arab world.

Five years ago: Rand Paul dropped his Republican campaign for president, opting to run for re-election to the Senate. Seeking to correct what he called a "hugely distorted impression" of Muslim-Americans, President Barack Obama visited a mosque in Catonsville, Maryland. Earth, Wind & Fire founder Maurice White, 74, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: In closing arguments at President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, Democratic prosecutors urged senators to stop a "runaway presidency" and recognize Trump's actions in Ukraine as part of a pattern of behavior that would allow him to "cheat" in the 2020 election; Trump's defenders accused Democrats of trying to undo the 2016 election and said voters should decide Trump's fate. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said a "handful" of flights would head to China to bring Americans home from the province at the center of the coronavirus outbreak. Iowa's Democratic caucuses were plagued by technical glitches that led to inconsistencies in the numbers and a delay in reporting the results. (The state Democratic Party would later award 14 delegates to Pete Buttigieg and 12 to Bernie Sanders.) Conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh told his listeners that he had been diagnosed with advanced lung cancer.

Today's Birthdays: Football Hall of Famer Fran Tarkenton is 81. Actor Bridget Hanley is 80. Actor Blythe Danner is 78. Football Hall of Famer Bob Griese is 76. Singer-guitarist Dave Davies (The Kinks) is 74. Singer Melanie is 74. Actor Morgan Fairchild is 71. Actor Pamela Franklin is 71. Actor Nathan Lane is 65. Rock musician Lee Ranaldo (Sonic Youth) is 65. Actor Thomas Calabro is 62. Rock musician/author Lol Tolhurst (The Cure) is 62. Actor-director Keith Gordon is 60. Actor Michele Greene is 59. Country singer Matraca (muh-TRAY'-suh) Berg is 57. Actor Maura Tierney is 56. Actor Warwick Davis is 51. Actor Elisa Donovan is 50. Reggaeton singer Daddy Yankee is 45. Actor Isla (EYE'-luh) Fisher is 45. Human rights activist Amal Clooney is 43. Singer-songwriter Jessica Harp is 39. Actor Matthew Moy is 37. Rapper Sean Kingston is 31. Actor Brandon Micheal Hall is 28.

## Call now to get your ADT security system starting at \$19.99/mo.\*



Plus get \$100 off installation† when you call today!

\*Requires 36-month monitoring contract for intrusion only with a minimum charge of \$28.99 after the 12 month term. Equipment shown requires ADT Secure or higher. Early term. and installation fees apply. Taxes add'l. For full terms and pricing see below.

†Requires minimum purchase of \$449.



### Cameras

Choose from indoor, outdoor & doorbell cams so you can keep watch even when you aren't there with upgrade to ADT Video.

### Life safety

Let us help you stay protected from fire, CO, floods & more!



**\$100 off installation**  
Upgrade to a touchscreen panel and smart home equipment or stick with basic home security. Either way, you'll save \$100!



## YOUR EXCLUSIVE SAVINGS COUPON

STARTING AT  
**\$19.99** /mo  
BONUS \$100 off installation



Call now to redeem your exclusive offer!

▶ **1-605-824-1118**

Redemption code:

DF-CD-NP-Q121

Reply by:

April 15, 2021

We're available 24/7. See if you qualify for same-day service!

**\*\$19.99/month + \$100 off Installation:** Requires 36-month monitoring contract with a minimum charge of \$28.99/mo. (before instant savings) (24-month monitoring contract in California, total fees from \$695.76 (before instant savings) and enrollment in Easy Pay. Service and installation charges vary depending on system configuration, equipment and services selected. Offer includes: (i) \$9.00 instant savings per month applicable only towards monthly monitoring charge for the first 12 months of initial contract term (total value of \$108.00) and (ii) \$100 instant savings on installation with minimum purchase of \$449 after promotion is applied. Traditional Service Level requires landline phone. Excludes ADT's Extended Limited Warranty. Upon early termination by Customer, ADT may charge 75% of the remaining monthly service charges for the balance of the initial contract term. Limit one offer per new ADT customer contract. Not valid on purchases from ADT Authorized Dealers. Expires 4/15/2021.

**Interactive Services:** ADT Command Interactive Solutions Services ("ADT Command") helps you manage your home environment and family lifestyle. Requires purchase of an ADT alarm system with 36 month monitoring contract ranging \$45.99-\$57.99/mo with QSP (24-month monitoring contract in California, total fees ranging \$1,103.76-\$1,391.76), enrollment in ADT Easy Pay, and a compatible device with Internet and email access. These interactive services do not cover the operation or maintenance of any household equipment/systems that are connected to the ADT Command equipment. All ADT Command services are not available with all interactive service levels. All ADT Command services may not be available in all geographic areas. You may be required to pay additional charges to purchase equipment required to utilize the interactive service features you desire.

**General:** Additional charges may apply in areas that require guard response service for municipal alarm verification. System remains property of ADT. Local permit fees may be required. Prices and offers subject to change and may vary by market. Additional taxes and fees may apply. Satisfactory credit required. A security deposit may be required. Simulated screen images and photos are for illustrative purposes only.

©2021 ADT LLC dba ADT Security Services. All rights reserved. ADT, the ADT logo, 800.ADT.ASAP and the product/service names listed in this document are marks and/or registered marks. Unauthorized use is strictly prohibited. Third-party marks are the property of their respective owners. License information available at www.ADT.com or by calling 800.ADT.ASAP. CA ACO7155, 974443, PPO120288; FL EF0001121; LA F1639, F1640, F1643, F1654, F1655; MA 172C; NC Licensed by the Alarm Systems Licensing Board of the State of North Carolina, 7535P2, 7561P2, 7562P10, 7563P7, 7565P1, 7566P9, 7564P4; NY 12000305615; PA 090797

DF-CD-NP-Q121