

Groton Daily Independent

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NOW HIRING

MJ's Sinclair of Groton is looking for someone to work weekends and nights. Stop out and see Jeff for an application.



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

FREE DATE CHANGES ON 2021 TOURS*

 <p>FROM \$1,449 \$1,199</p>	 <p>FROM \$2,599 \$2,349</p>
ALASKA NORTHERN LIGHTS 7 days, departs Feb - Mar 2022 Anchorage • Talkeetna • Healy (Denali) • Fairbanks — Travel deep into the rugged Alaskan wilderness in pursuit of nature's most spectacular nighttime display. Chase after the vibrant lights of the aurora borealis while you enjoy Alaska's culture, nature, and wildlife.	BEST OF HAWAII FOUR-ISLAND TOUR 12 days, departs year-round Oahu • Hawaii Island • Kauai • Maui — Enjoy a fully guided 4-island Hawaiian vacation with centrally located lodging in Waikiki on Oahu, and beachfront lodging on the "Big Island" of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui. Guided throughout by our friendly Tour Directors—your local experts. Includes 3 inter-island flights.
 promo code N7017	CALL 1-844-962-4142

* Free date changes anytime up to 45 days prior to departure for land tours, up to 95 days prior to departure for cruise tours. Deposits and final payments remain non-refundable. Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus \$29 in taxes & fees. Single supplement and seasonal surcharges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 6/30/21. Other terms & conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda
April 6, 2021 – 7:00pm
120 N Main Street
(NOTICE ADDRESS)

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

1. Bid opening for 2021 Street Resurfacing
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. Surplus mowers
6. City Wide Clean up April 23rd to April 30th
7. Department Reports
8. 2021-2022 Malt Beverage License Renewals:
Ken's Food Fair
Olde Bank N Café
MJ's Sinclair
Dollar General
9. 2021 Twins Fields for Kids matching grant award of \$5,000 for dugouts
10. 1st Reading of Cable Franchise Ordinance with Midcontinent Communications and Northern Valley Communications
11. Water Tower Replacement: Change Order Number 2 – Maguire Iron
Application for Payment Number 7 – Maguire Iron
Change Order Number 1 – AB Contracting
Application for Payment Number 3 – AB Contracting
12. Library Board: 1 Council Member & 5 Citizens
13. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
14. Hire Summer Employees
15. Cemetery Caretaker Wage
16. Adjournment

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Seeing is believing. Get 2 security cameras installed FREE*.

ADT's 24/7 monitoring plus top of the line security cameras help ensure your loved ones are safe - whether you're out and about or in the next room.



2 cameras installed FREE*

*Requires a 36-month monitoring contract. Minimum purchase of \$599 and upgrade required. Early term, and installation fees apply. For full terms and pricing see reverse.

\$200 value
FREE*
ADT Video Doorbell
Camera installed free



\$200 value
FREE*
ADT HD Outdoor Camera
installed free



Call today to speak with a home security expert
1-605-824-1118 • Offer expires: 7/15/2021



*ADT Video Doorbell AND Outdoor Camera Professionally Installed Free: Requires 36-month monitoring contract starting at \$56.99/mo. with GSP (24-month monitoring contract in California, total fees from \$1,367.76), and enrollment in ADT EasyPay. Offer includes installation of one (1) video doorbell camera AND one (1) outdoor camera with minimum purchase price of \$599 after promo is applied depending on geographic location. Applicable taxes extra. Upon early termination by Customer, ADT may charge 75% of the monthly service charges due for the balance of the initial contract term. Quality Service Plan (QSP) is ADT's Extended Limited Warranty. Service and installation charges vary depending on system configuration, equipment, and services selected. Expires 7/15/2021.
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 from \$45.99-\$59.99/mo. with GSP (24-month monitoring contract in California, total fees ranging \$1,103.76-\$1,439.76), enrollment in ADT EasyPay, 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.
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Call AT&T sales rep for details. For trade-in instructions visit tradein.att.com/offer-details. Limited time offer. All products and services are offered, supplied and performed by AT&T Services, Inc. ("AT&T"). AT&T is not an affiliate of or endorsed by Sam's Club. AT&T is solely responsible for the products and services advertised. Sam's Club has no obligation to perform any responsibilities of AT&T, and Sam's Club does not guarantee the performance of AT&T's obligations.

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Introducing the INOGEN ONE
It's oxygen therapy on your terms

No more tanks to refill. No more deliveries. No more hassles with travel. The INOGEN ONE portable oxygen concentrator is designed to provide unparalleled freedom for oxygen therapy users. It's small, lightweight, clinically proven for stationary and portable use, during the day and at night, and can go **virtually anywhere** — even on most airlines. Inogen accepts Medicare and many private insurances!

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CHOICE* ALL INCLUDED PACKAGE
\$59.99 /mo
for 11 mos. system and fees

W/24 mos. agmt. after qualifying AT&T req. (mns. \$50/mo. + taxes and fees). Antennas & supports bill req'd. Fees highest in 2nd year. Regional Service Fee up to \$5.99/mo. in some \$tates.



Access 80,000+ shows and movies On Demand
Requires subscription to top tier PREMIER® programming package. Movies Extra Pack, EPG, HitMix, Movie Zone, Lifetime Movie Club and Postpay. Other packages will have fewer shows and movies. Additional fees apply for new releases and library titles available through DIRECTV ONEMAX.



Watch your favorite live sports, news and entertainment anywhere!



HBO Max™ included for a year
Subject to change. HBO Max auto-renews after 12 months at then prevailing rate (currently \$14.99/mo.), and Cinemax®, SHOWTIME®, STARZ®, and EPIX® are included for 3 months and auto-renew thereafter at their prevailing rate (currently \$38.99/mo.), unless you call to change or cancel. Help us to select offers. Access HBO Max only through HBO Max app or through service. HBO Max also includes HBO channels and HBO On Demand on DIRECTV. Online account registration required. Data rates may apply for app download/cusage. See back for details.

\$19.95 ACTIVATION, EARLY TERMINATION FEE OF \$20.00. FOR EACH MONTH REMAINING ON AGMT., EQUIPMENT NON-RETURN & ADD'L FEES APPLY. Price incl. CHOICE Pkg., monthly service and equip. fees for 1 HD DVR & 6 after \$5/mo. antenpa. BbB RATING A+ and \$10/mo. bundle discounts for up to 12 mos. each. Pay \$74.99/mo. + taxes until discount starts w/ 3 mths. New approved residential customers only (equipment lease req'd). Credit card req'd (except MA & RI). Rest's apply. See back for details.

Don't settle for cable. Call now!

iv Support Holdings LLC
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Track Schedule

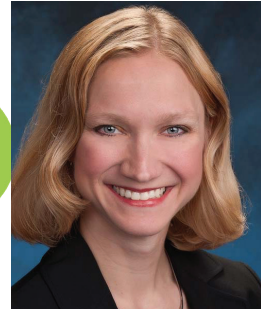
Tuesday, Apr 6, 2021 Varsity Meet	12:30PM	at Ipswich High School	
Tuesday, Apr 13, 2021 Varsity Invitational	11:30AM	Rob Luecke Invitational at Groton Area High School	
Thursday, Apr 15, 2021 7th/8th Invitational	3:45PM	at Milbank High School	
Friday, Apr 16, 2021 Varsity Meet	3:00PM	at Milbank High School	
Tuesday, Apr 20, 2021 Varsity Meet	3:00PM	at Deuel High School	
Thursday, Apr 22, 2021 7th/8th Invitational	3:30PM	Groton Area High School	
Monday, Apr 26, 2021 7th/8th Invitational	2:00PM	at Redfield Jr-Sr High School	
Tuesday, Apr 27, 2021 Varsity Invitational	11:30AM	Groton Invitational Track Meet	
Friday, Apr 30, 2021 Varsity Meet	2:00PM	at Webster Area High	
Monday, May 3, 2021 7th/8th Invitational	4:00PM	at Webster Area High	
Tuesday, May 4, 2021 Varsity Invitational	1:00PM	at Milbank High School	
Friday, May 7, 2021 Varsity Meet	3:00PM	at Sisseton High School	
Monday, May 10, 2021 7th/8th Invitational	4:00PM	Away vs. Aberdeen Roncalli	Aberdeen Central High School
Thursday, May 13, 2021 Varsity Northeast Conf.	11:00AM	at Groton Area High School	
Monday, May 17, 2021 7th/8th Northeast Conf.	10:00PM	Away vs. Aberdeen Roncalli	Aberdeen Central High School
Thursday, May 20, 2021 Varsity Region 1A	12:00PM	at Sisseton High School	
Friday, May 28, 2021 Varsity State		Lyle Hare Stadium on the campus of Black Hills State Univ. in Spearfish	
Saturday, May 29, 2021 Varsity State		Lyle Hare Stadium on the campus of Black Hills State Univ. in Spearfish	

Girls Golf Schedule

Monday, Apr 19, 2021 Meet	10:00AM	at Whetstone Creek GC in Milbank	
Thursday, Apr 29, 2021 Meet	10:00AM	at Redfield Golf Course	
Monday, May 10, 2021 Meet	10:00AM	Groton Invite at Olive Grove Golf Course	
Monday, May 17, 2021 Northeast Conference	10:00AM	at Moccasin Creek Country Club, Aberdeen	

The Window to Your Health

Eyes are often called the “window to the soul”, but they can also be the “window to your health”. Most people know that it is essential to visit your primary physician for an annual check-up, but an annual eye exam is an important part of staying healthy as well.



By Jill Kruse, DO ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

The eye is the only area of the body where doctors can see small blood vessels with such clarity. So, during your annual physical exam, your physician will examine your eyes briefly with a handheld tool called an ophthalmoscope. This device gives your physician a great view of those blood vessels located on the back wall of your eye.

However, for a much more thorough understanding of your eye health, you need a dedicated eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. These health care providers have an arsenal of tools and techniques at their disposal for examining the eye and screening for eye disease.

For example, when your optometrist or ophthalmologist looks at the back wall of your eye, they lower the lights in the room and use drops to dilate your eyes. This enhanced exam is more effective in detecting changes in or damage to those blood vessels which can be caused by high blood pressure or diabetes. As a result, eye doctors frequently refer patients to their primary care physicians in the early stages of these diseases.

When diabetes is diagnosed, medical doctors and eye specialists work hand in hand monitoring patients for complications from the disease. One such complication, diabetic retinopathy, damages the blood vessels of the retina and is the most common cause of blindness in American adults. This too can be detected during a dilated eye exam.

An eye specialist can also screen for glaucoma, a condition where fluid builds up in the eye causing increased pressure that can damage the optic nerve. If left untreated, it can lead to blindness.

Macular degeneration is another disease that your optometrist or ophthalmologist is trained to detect. This is an eye disorder associated with aging and results in damage to the central vision which at its worst can result in the permanent impairment of vision needed for reading and close-up sight.

It takes a team of providers to monitor and maintain your health. When scheduling your annual exams, do not ignore your eyes, as they can be the “window” we need to see what is going on in the rest of your body.

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

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#406 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

There was little reporting today, given the holiday, so these numbers are depressed. I would expect a make-up day tomorrow or Tuesday. Despite that, we're still showing all the signs we're going the wrong direction. Five days this week were over 60,000 new cases. We are now at 30,730,100 cases in the US, 0.1% more than yesterday. There were 36,700 new case reports today. Hospitalizations have been ticking up, but are down just a bit today at 41,300 people hospitalized with this virus today, still higher than last week.

We're up to 13 from 10 (and only six just two weeks ago) states and territories in the red zone, at 27 in orange, and have 15 in yellow. *One-week increase in total cases was up at 439,400 last week and is up again to 448,400 this week, so we're continuing to see growth. Two-week increase was up to 820,800 last week and is up again to 887,800 this week. I have us at a one-week daily average new-case number of 64,057.1, which above last week. All the numbers are worse than last week, and we have more states in trouble now than last week. I feel like this is getting away from us.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and we now have two over 10 percent increase in two weeks, Vermont at 12.20 percent and Michigan at 11.17 percent. We're up to nine states above five percent from eight and from four two weeks ago. Highest per capita rates of increase are in Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, same ones as last week.

There have been 554,558 deaths in the US in this pandemic, 0.04% more than we had yesterday. There were 271 deaths reported today; we were above 1000 only two days this week. The number of weekly deaths is down again to 818.4, over 150 below last week. States with the most per capita deaths this week were Kentucky, West Virginia, New York, Georgia, and Delaware.

On April 4, 2020, one year ago today, the US continued its exponential growth, up to 311,158 cases and 8467 deaths. New York now had more deaths than mainland China where this whole thing started. Reports were turning up of cardiac injury in recovered patients in China, a significant concern. This was also the night I implored people to stop scrubbing their groceries with soap. There was this crazy video out from a guy purporting to be a physician (no idea whether he is, but if so, he didn't have a good grasp of sterile technique), merrily loading his fruits and veggies into a sink full of soap bubbles and scrubbing them down with a brush. What an absolutely terrible idea! The CDC formalized its guidance which recommends we all wear a mask whenever we're outside our homes. Some hospitals were resorting to garbage bags and rain ponchos as personal protective equipment (PPE) as staff tended to patients. Worldwide infection numbers were over 1.1 million, and deaths were over 60,000.

Being Easter and all, it's a slow news day, so let's take a little time to sort out these blood clots we're hearing about in Europe with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. We haven't talked about this issue in a while, and there are more data to work with now than there were a couple of weeks ago. Apparently, we're not seeing an overall increase in abnormal blood clotting, something that as a general category, is not a rare medical event. Instead, what we're seeing is an increase in a specific and quite rare kind of abnormal blood clotting, something called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST). What happens here is that clots form in the spaces from which blood drains away from the brain. What's more and also unusual, is that clotting is accompanied by something called thrombocytopenia, a deficiency of thrombocytes, or platelets, cell fragments in your blood that participate in clotting. Now it's weird that these things that cause clots are deficient at the same time as you're forming abnormal clots; it's generally the other way around—fewer platelets and fewer clots/more platelets and more clots occurring together. The thing is that, while the abnormal clots themselves can mean trouble, so can the platelet deficiency; that's because not having enough platelets makes it more likely you'll hemorrhage, or bleed uncontrollably, because you don't have enough platelets to stop bleeding when it occurs. The formation of abnormal clots (bad) accompanied by the inability to form normal clots when you need them (also bad) is sort of a one-two punch.

Turns out this looks a lot like something we see in people with a known blood disorder called heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT). Heparin is a clotting inhibitor, which you may know as a "blood thinner,"

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typically given in situations when your blood wants to clot abnormally; heparin prevents that abnormal clotting by binding to a protein on platelets called platelet factor 4 (PF4). What happens in people with HIT is they make an antibody to the heparin-PF4 complex, which binds to the complex, resulting in two outcomes: (1) activating the platelets, which initiates a cascade of abnormal clotting, and (2) reducing platelet numbers by using them up in the clotting cascade and marking them for destruction by gigantic white blood cells called macrophages. Giving heparin to someone with HIT is what sets this whole thing off, so you want to avoid that.

A group of experts who have been studying this CVST problem in vaccine recipients think it could be a reaction to the vaccine similar to HIT. These folks are apparently seeing an anti-PF4 antibody in some of these patients which, just as it would in a person with HIT, could drive both the deficiency and the clotting. They're tentatively calling it vaccine induced prothrombotic immune thrombocytopenia (VIPIT). We can break down that name so it will make sense: "Vaccine-induced" refers to something caused by vaccine; "prothrombic" means something that causes abnormal clots (thrombi); "immune" is something caused by the immune system; and "thrombocytopenia" is a deficiency of thrombocytes, or platelets; so this is vaccine-caused abnormal clotting and platelet deficiency mediated by antibodies. While they're not sure how this all plays out, they are suggesting that, at least until we get things sorted out, it would be a bad plan to treat the clots we're seeing in these people with heparin (which is something you'd otherwise consider doing for sure) because they think heparin could make things worse instead of better, just as it does in HIT. Keep in mind this is still conjecture, but it is an educated guess from some pretty expert guessers who've been consulting on these patients in several countries. I will note there is disagreement or at least some doubt in the research community that the vaccine triggers clotting issues at all and that the anti-PF4 antibodies explain the thrombocytopenia or the thrombosis. There is clearly work yet to be done on this.

The incidence of this CVST is a little tough to nail down; it seems to vary quite a lot from place to place—or maybe it's just because of different definitions and record-keeping systems or who's being vaccinated. It's pretty early yet, so there's going to be a fair amount we're just not sure of. In the UK, where more than 18 million doses of the vaccine have been given, there have been at least 30 cases of blood clotting, 22 of these CVST and 4 of whom had died. The Netherlands had 5 cases from 400,000 vaccine doses administered. Germany had 31 cases out of at least 2.7 million doses, 9 of whom died. Norway's reported 3 deaths out of 134,000 doses given. There were 2 cases, 1 fatal, in Denmark.

There are two approaches to determining whether a complication is due to a vaccine. One is to assess the incidence of the complication in vaccinated people, comparing to the incidence of the same condition in the general (unvaccinated) population. The other is to attempt to discover a mechanism by which the vaccine could be causing the complication. The first part of this, incidence, is difficult because we're not at all sure what the population rate of CVST is, probably because it is so rare—also because the incidence of CVST in vaccinated people varies so much among the various countries. In the UK, the estimated incidence of CVST in the population is somewhere between 5 and 15 per million per year while the incidence of CVST in vaccinated persons is running around 1.89 per million, with a somewhat higher incidence in other countries. The second part is at least partly explicated by the clotting studies described above. Jury's still out, but it appears a link to the vaccine is at least possible, maybe even probable.

There is one more feature of this CVST seen after vaccination; it is that young women (20 to 60) represent nearly all of the cases. That means you really should be comparing the incidence of CVST in young women to that seen in young women following vaccination; lumping them in with the rest of the population might mask an effect we should be noticing. Or this age and gender prevalence might simply be a reflection of the population vaccinated so far: Most countries started with health care workers and teachers, a group in which young women are overrepresented, whereas the UK started with elderly.

It should be mentioned that the same clotting experts who weighed in on a possible mechanism for the clotting have recommended a way to test for and treat the problem. There are both tests and treatments available; if the disorder is diagnosed early on, such treatment—immunoglobulins and non-heparin anticoagulants—can be beneficial. In at least one patient, the recommended treatment was followed by

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recovery. Whether rapid diagnosis and treatment is possible or feasible in low- and middle-income countries which were relying on this vaccine is another question.

So where do they go from here? Some countries have suspended vaccination with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine entirely. Others have suspended use except in people over 65. Another option might be to withhold it just from women under 65. Some, like the UK, are still or have resumed giving it to all comers. They've done the risk-benefit analysis and concluded it would be worse to suspend vaccinations. There's a pretty compelling argument to be made here: One model shows a delay in vaccinating 500,000 people would yield around 85 hospitalizations and 5 deaths. If you look at the UK's 1.89 per million incidence of CVST, that's a pretty easy call; but if we factor in a risk concentrated in young women, the calculus could change, particularly when you consider their risk of bad outcomes for Covid-19 is considerably smaller than you see when you include the entire population—all those over-60s with an elevated risk of dying from Covid-19. Remember that, if we suspend use of a vaccine, there are not sufficient doses of any other vaccine on hand to replace them; suspend one, and a bunch of folks will end up exposed to Covid-19 risk while waiting even longer for vaccine. Another consideration is that the infection seems to be moving into a younger demographic and causing more severe illness in them than it previously did. No one's sure at the moment whether this is because B.1.1.7 and P.1 are more lethal in young people or perhaps risk-taking behavior is sufficient to explain the shift.

See how complicated this is? I'm glad I'm not in charge of sorting this all out. I hope this helps you to understand what all the fuss is about.

I'm going to leave you tonight with a simple Easter wish for peace and harmony in your life. Spring is coming, and with it, we have a real shot at getting our lives back to something we can recognize as normal, maybe sooner, maybe later—but it's coming. Let's all lean into that together.

Stay well. We'll talk again.

Medicare has changed. Find out how it can affect you.

Important changes to the federal Medicare program became effective at the beginning of the year. As a result, retirees in your state may be eligible for coverage with new options.

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We are not connected with, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Federal Medicare Program. I understand I have no obligation. This is a solicitation of insurance. A licensed agent/producer may contact you. Policy form number L030, L035, L036, L037, L038, F001, F002 (OK: L0300K, L0350K, L0360K, L0370K, L0380K; TN: L030TN, L035TN, L036TN, L037TN, L038TN, F001TN, F002TN)
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We've covered plenty of Minnesota Vikings' free agency news, so this week I want to expand our coverage to encompass the NFC North. As always though, we start with any Vikings' news and notes that you may have missed this past week.

There wasn't much news coming out of Minnesota this past week. The good news is that the Vikings signed a free agent offensive lineman! The bad news? That player was in-house free agent Dakota Dozier, who was the worst starting offensive lineman in the NFL last season. We have to hope the Vikings simply brought him in for depth because if they plan to start him again this season, we're all in for a long season.

The Vikings haven't made many needle-moving changes this offseason, although with many players coming back from injury the team should still be better than they were last season. The first goal of any team is to win the division, which is why we will take a look at what moves the Chicago Bears, Detroit Lions, and Green Bay Packers have made since the end of last season.



By Jordan Wright

Chicago Bears

The biggest question mark surrounding the Chicago Bears is the quarterback position. After years of trying to get quality play out of Mitch Trubiski, the Bears finally decided to go in a different direction this offseason. While there were plenty of rumors swirling around about the Bears making a huge splash and trading for Russell Wilson, what actually happened was far less exciting. The Bears ended up signing Andy Dalton to a one-year deal, meaning there will be at least one more season of average-at-best quarterback play in the windy city.

Besides Dalton, the Bears elected to bring back defensive lineman Mario Edwards and offensive lineman Germain Ifedi. Both of those players are decent starters, yet neither will exactly strike fear into the hearts of opponents. When you factor in the team releasing Pro-Bowl cornerback Kyle Fuller, defensive lineman/wrecking ball Akeim Hicks wanting out, and rising superstar Allen Robinson refusing to sign his franchise tag, the Bears appear to have taken a step or two back this offseason.

Detroit Lions

The Lions are in the middle of a rebuild. The team chose to honor Matthew Stafford's wishes and trade him to a contending team, sending him to the Rams in exchange for Jared Goff. The team also traded for Rams' defensive lineman Michael Brockers, who should help the Lions create pressure on the quarterback. Wanting to revamp the receiving corps, the Lions signed Tyrell Williams and Breshad Perriman.

Perhaps the most important signing Detroit made this offseason was betting on an in-house free agent. Defensive end Romeo Okwara started to show flashes last season, leading to Detroit signing him to a three-year, \$37 million deal. If Okwara continues to ascend, this move will give the Lions a formidable defensive line. If he regresses, the team could be paying for this gamble for the next three seasons.

Green Bay Packers

The Packers have been close to reaching a Super Bowl the last two seasons, and the front office is hoping the third time is a charm, and that the same roster will be able to get over the hump. The biggest storyline surrounding Green Bay is the quarterback position. Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers has been a stalwart in Green Bay since replacing Brett Favre, but the team drafted his replacement last year. Rodgers had a significant roster bonus come due on March 19, and the team elected to simply pay it instead of restructuring his contract to pay that bonus over the course of the next few seasons – leading many to believe the team will let Rodgers play out his contract before letting him go and rebuilding around Jordan Love next season.

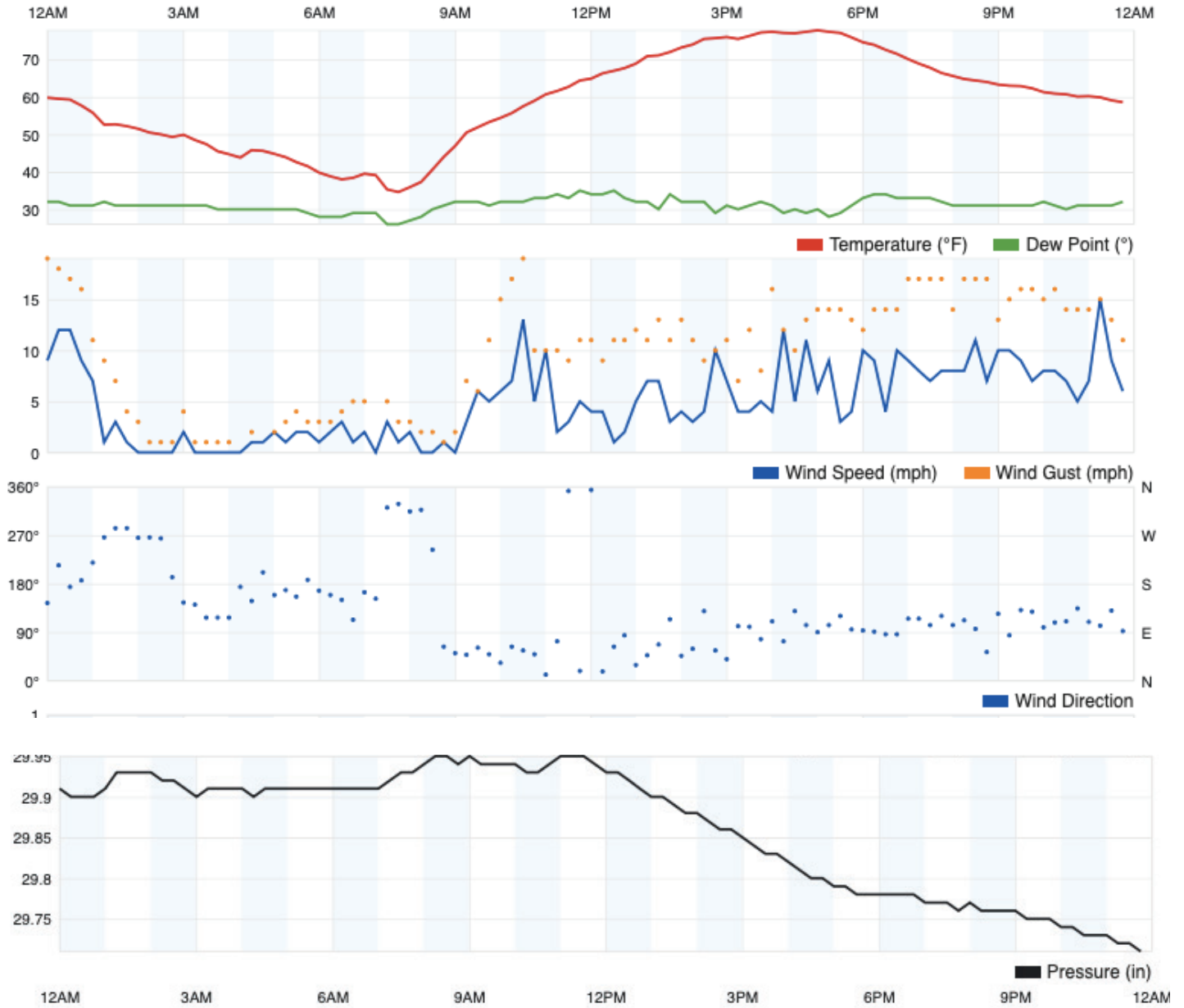
The other move to note was the team deciding to bring back Aaron Jones to the tune of a four-year, \$48 million contract. While Jones is a good running back, the team just drafted A.J. Dillon in the second round of the draft last season to be his eventual replacement.

Did the Vikings do enough this offseason to challenge Green Bay for the NFC North crown in 2021? Reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL) and let me know. Skol!

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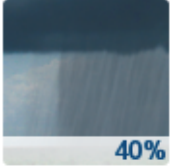


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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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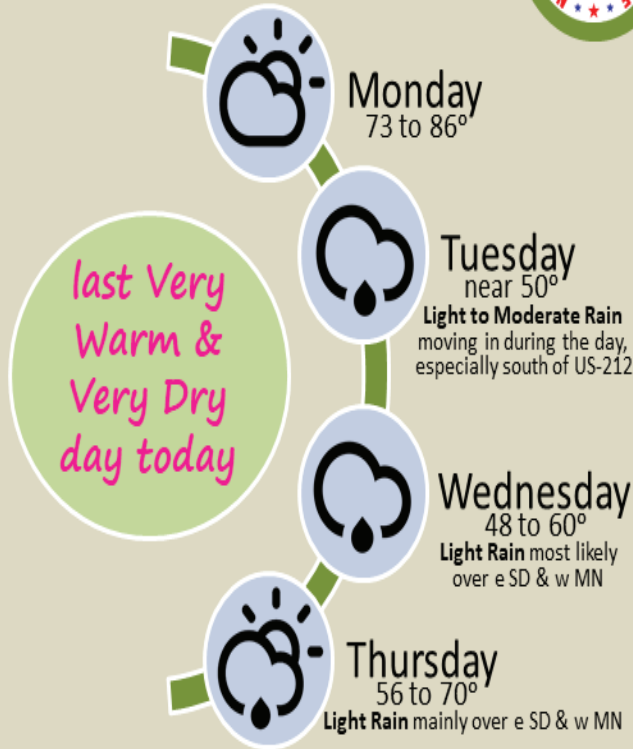
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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
				
Mostly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Chance Showers and Breezy	Chance Showers	Chance Showers and Breezy
High: 78 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 52 °F

NWS ABERDEEN



APRIL 5, 2021



Still Very Warm & Dry this Afternoon
 Relative humidity values in the teens
Winds shifting, and increasing **out of the north**
 15 to 25 mph with gusts 30 to around 40 mph.

Red Flag Warning today

Fire weather remains critical this afternoon over portions of central South Dakota where shifting winds out of the north 15 to 25 mph with gusts of 30 to around 40 mph will occur at the same time when relative humidity values plummet into the teens. Much needed precipitation will return Tuesday! Light to moderate rain will be moving in from the south during the day Tuesday, especially south of US-212. Off and on light rain will continue into Wednesday, and slide over mainly eastern SD and western MN on Thursday.

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Today in Weather History

April 5, 2000: High winds of 35 to 50 mph gusting to around 70 mph blew across central and north central South Dakota from the late morning to the late afternoon hours. As a result, several trees and many tree branches were downed, many structures, roofs, billboards, and road signs were damaged, a few mobile homes were overturned, and some power outages occurred. Not only did the high winds make driving challenging, but at some locations, they stirred up dirt causing visibilities to drop to near zero at times. Some detours and traffic collisions resulted due to the low visibility in blowing dirt. Airborne objects broke some windows across the area. One house had all of the windows on the front porch blown out. Also, a few semi tractor-trailers were tipped over by the high winds. Wind gusts included 60 mph at Pierre, 63 mph at Kennebec, 64 mph at Mobridge, 65 mph at Pollock, and 71 mph at McLaughlin. The high winds and extremely dry conditions combined with downed and arcing electrical lines, out of control burns, and smoldering embers from previous fires resulted in several grassfires across central and north central South Dakota. Several thousand acres of grassland, hundreds of hay bales and haystacks, along with some trees and fences were burned. Also, the smoke from some of these fires created low visibilities and difficult driving conditions on some roads.

1815: The Tambora Volcano in Java began erupting on this day. A few days later on the 10, Tambora produced the largest eruption known on the planet in the last 10,000 years. Ash from the volcano would circle the globe, blocking sunlight and leading to the unusually cold summer in 1816. On 6/6/1816, snow would fall as far south of Connecticut with some places in New England picking up 10 inches. On July 4th, 1816, the temperature at Savannah GA plunged to 46 degrees. Eastern North America and Europe had freezing nighttime temperatures in August.

1936: Approximately 454 people were killed in the second-deadliest tornado outbreak ever in U.S. More than 12 twisters struck Arkansas to South Carolina. An estimated F5 tornado cut a path 400 yards wide through the residential section of Tupelo, Mississippi. At least 216 people were killed, and 700 were injured. The tornado had a 15-mile long path and did \$3 million in damage. One of the survivors in Tupelo was a baby of an economically strapped family who had an infant they'd recently named Elvis Aaron Presley. Gainesville, Georgia had at least 203 fatalities and 934 injuries from an estimated F4 tornado that occurred early the following morning.

1972: An F3 tornado, touched down at a marina on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, and then tore through Vancouver, Washington. The tornado killed six people, injuring 300 others, and causing more than five million dollars damage. It was the deadliest tornado of the year and the worst on record for Washington.

1945 - The temperature at Eagles Nest, NM, plunged to 45 degrees below zero to establish an April record for the United States. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1955 - The Northern Rockies and the Northern High Plains were in the midst of a four day storm which produced 52 inches of snow at Lead, located in the Black Hills of western South Dakota. (David Ludlum)

1982 - An unprecedented April blizzard began in the northeastern U.S. One to two feet of snow fell across Massachusetts and Connecticut, and up to 26 inches was reported in Maine. New York City received a foot of snow. Winds reached 70 to 80 mph during the storm, and the storm also produced numerous thunderstorms, which contributed to the heavy snow. (Storm Data)

1987 - A storm produced unprecedented April snows in the central Appalachians. Mount Mitchell NC received 35 inches of snow, and up to 60 inches (six feet) of snow was reported in the mountains along the border of North Carolina and Tennessee. The total of 25 inches at Charleston WV easily surpassed their previous record for the entire month of April of 5.9 inches. The 20.6 inch total at Akron OH established an all-time record for that location. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thirty-nine cities across the eastern half of the country reported record high temperatures for the date, including Saint Louis MO with a reading of 91 degrees. Laredo TX was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

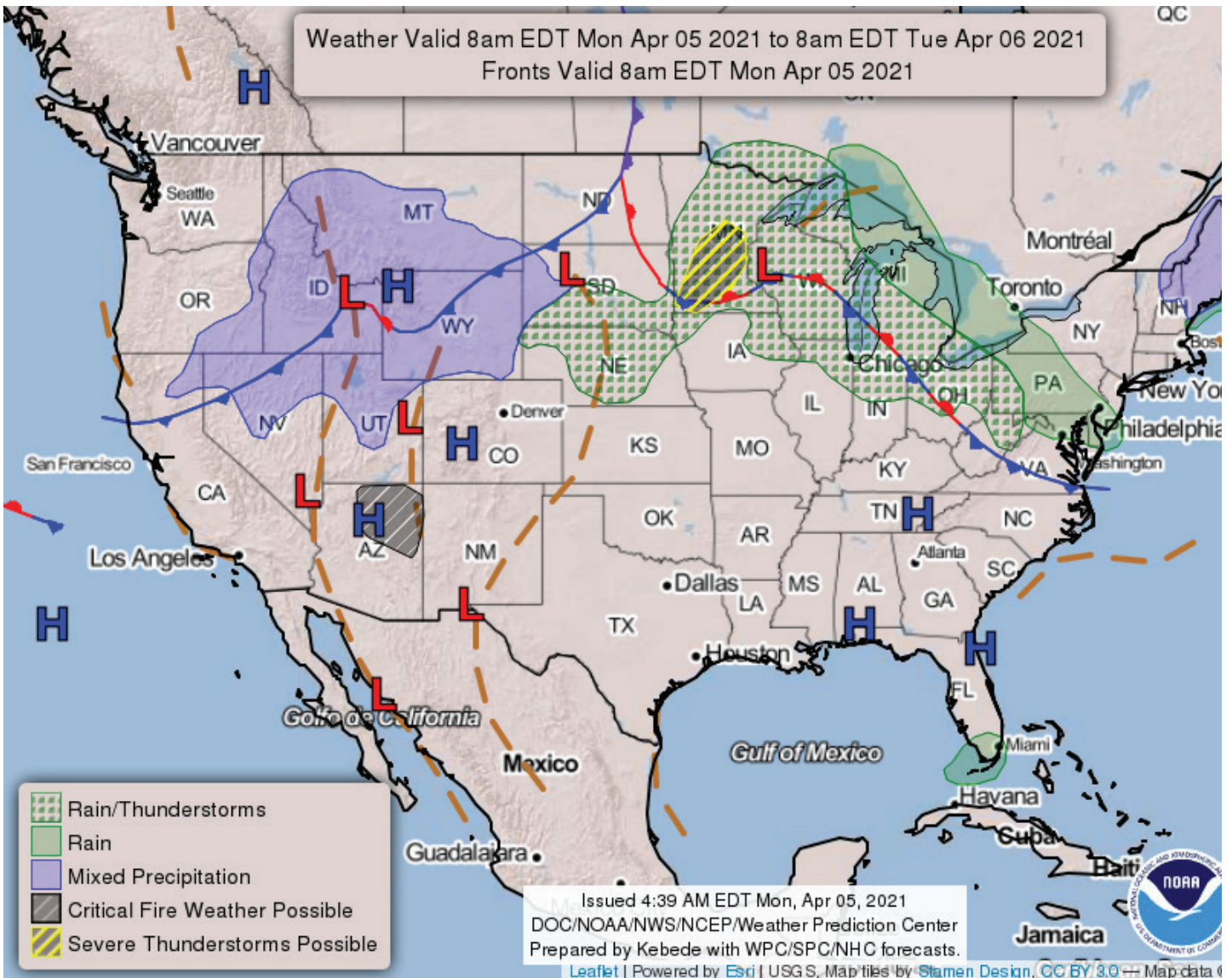
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 78 °F at 5:02 PM
Low Temp: 34 °F at 7:38 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 10:22 AM
Precip: .00

Record High: 86° in 1991
Record Low: 6° in 1926, 2008
Average High: 51°F
Average Low: 28°F
Average Precip in Mar.: 1.34
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.36
Average Precip to date: 2.36
Precip Year to Date: 0.54
Sunset Tonight: 8:07 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:04 a.m.



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UNCEASING PRAISE

Sunday evenings were always a special time in our small church in Lorain, Ohio. After singing a few hymns, Pastor Stanley would walk to the pulpit and ask, "Who would like to stand up tonight and thank the Lord publicly for His goodness and blessings during the last week?" We would all wait anxiously to hear what God had "been doing" since last Sunday evening. It was a time of sharing and rejoicing. We were always happy when someone was healed or helped. God got all the credit but we all rejoiced with the one whom He had honored. We believed that when we asked, God would answer. And when He answered, we all enjoyed the results and gave thanks together.

God always heard and answered David's prayer. But the nature of his prayers or the problems he was facing is not always defined. However, in his concluding remarks, he writes of God being "delighted in the well-being of His servant." Well-being includes everything and anything that concerns us. Big or little, large or small. Whatever concerns us concerned God first because His goodness and grace have no limit. They exceed our imagination, and unfortunately, in most instances, our faith.

For David, when God answered his prayers, it was the beginning of an important event in his life. He did not go quietly to his room and thank God by himself. No! He insisted on sharing his joy with others and said, "Come and join me. Let those who are happy with God's blessings on me rejoice with me – all day!" What a way to grow.

After God answers our prayers, let's get in a group and give Him a "shout!" Amen?

Prayer: Help us, Father, to sing and shout when we see Your goodness and grace at work in our lives. May we praise You loudly and publicly! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But give great joy to those who came to my defense. Let them continually say, "Great is the Lord, who delights in blessing his servant with peace!" Psalm 35:27

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
- 06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 06/19/2021 Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
- 07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

News from the Associated Press

Pipeline protest plot stretches from North Dakota to Mexico

By BLAKE NICHOLSON The Bismarck Tribune

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A former U.S. Marine and Baltimore police officer who raised nearly \$1.2 million to bring hundreds of military veterans to a Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp in North Dakota more than four years ago is suing for alleged civil rights violations.

Michael Wood Jr.'s lawsuit targets the city of Bismarck, its police department, the Hertz vehicle rental company and Bismarck franchisee Overland West Inc.

The saga began in December 2016 when a Suburban that Wood had rented in Bismarck became snowbound in a blizzard that hit the protest camp. It culminated with Wood and his wife being detained at the U.S. border in California when returning from a Mexican vacation in August 2019.

Wood, 41, of Glendale, Arizona, alleges that in between, rental company officials falsely accused him of stealing the Suburban, in retaliation for his social media criticism of the company or his support of the pipeline protest that drew thousands of people to southern North Dakota over a six-month span of 2016-17.

He claims Bismarck police issued a warrant for his arrest on a felony theft charge without properly trying to find and notify him, for the same retaliatory reason, and that the "malicious" warrant made it impossible for him to find work in the law enforcement and security fields, The Bismarck Tribune reported.

The warrant also led to Wood and his wife, Jessica, being detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials upon returning from a Mexican vacation in early August 2019, resulting in Michael Wood being handcuffed for hours and his wife suffering a panic and anxiety attack, according to the complaint filed in U.S. District Court in North Dakota. They eventually were released because the warrant indicated only "regional extradition," the suit states.

The couple seek unspecified money damages, citing "severe emotional distress and mental anguish" along with economic damages due to "past and future lost time and wages."

"There was never any probable cause to support the issuance of criminal process against (Wood), which is made clear by the fact that on March 20, 2020, the charge against (Wood) was dismissed voluntarily by the Burleigh County State Attorney's Office," the lawsuit states.

City Attorney Jannelle Combs declined comment, saying she had not yet been served with the lawsuit.

Hertz in a statement to the Tribune said the company also had just become aware of the lawsuit.

"However, based even on a cursory review of it, there appears to be a serious misrepresentation of the facts. Overland West Inc., and Hertz will vigorously defend against these allegations," the company said.

What happened to the Suburban after it became snowbound is anything but clear, and could influence the outcome of the lawsuit.

Wood was charged on Jan. 26, 2017, with a felony theft count that carried a maximum punishment of five years in prison. An accompanying affidavit by Bismarck police officer Brad Jerome said "Hertz policy requires the renter to physically return the vehicle to the rental site," and that "the vehicle has not been returned." He estimated the value at \$43,000.

Wood states in the lawsuit that he was told at one point by a rental company official that a vehicle could be reported stolen if it isn't returned in 30 days. But Wood maintains that Hertz franchisee Overland West charged his card about \$4,700 for the rental fee and an insurance fee to cover any vehicle damages, and that when he left the state on Dec. 8, he had made arrangements to extend the rental and insurance "until such time as Overland could recover the vehicle." He does acknowledge that he returned the wrong set of keys for the Suburban, calling it a mistake.

Hertz said the Suburban was found abandoned in Bismarck, not where Wood had indicated it was, and that it was extensively damaged.

Jerome in his affidavit said "numerous attempts" were made to contact Wood, but that his cellphone had been disconnected and his debit card declined. Hertz said that because Wood hadn't returned the

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vehicle, Overland West continued to charge his card until it was declined, and that the company alerted authorities as a last resort because it could not reach him.

Wood maintains he wasn't that hard to find -- that he "was a public figure with active social media accounts, and such accounts allow for easy communication."

Court documents show that Burleigh County Assistant State's Attorney Justin Schwarz on March 19, 2020, moved to dismiss the theft charge, which a judge did the next day.

Schwarz told the Tribune that he had received information that Hertz had been reimbursed for the value of the vehicle. He said he didn't recall where the reimbursement came from but that it did not come from Wood. The prosecutor also said the Suburban apparently was at some point auctioned off, and that there were questions about who had used the vehicle, and what county it was in.

A police incident report filed in January 2017 also indicates there were questions about who had the vehicle after Wood left the state. It says Overland West's owner had reported seeing the Suburban being driven at one point by someone else.

"I factored all of this in to my assessment of whether there was proof beyond a reasonable doubt of a theft having occurred that could be proved at trial," Schwarz said.

Wood claims that authorities didn't even bother to tell him that the charge was dismissed -- that he found out only after contacting a defense attorney in North Dakota about returning to the state to fight the charge.

The Woods maintain in the lawsuit they filed themselves that their constitutional rights including free speech and due process were violated in retaliation for their support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which fears pollution from the pipeline and has fought it in and outside of court. The Woods seek a jury trial.

Court documents do not list lawyers for any of the defendants.

The "Veterans Standing for Standing Rock" effort that Woods helped organize was itself controversial. The North Dakota Veterans Coordinating Council -- composed of the American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Vietnam Veterans of America -- at the time publicly said it did not support the action and remained neutral on the pipeline dispute.

Many people later questioned what happened to the money raised from 26,000 donors for the effort. Wood has said the money was not misused but spent on supplies, hotel rooms and transportation. He told the High Country News in April 2018 that auditing the donations would have cost too much and would not have been a good use of the money.

But Wood also acknowledges in the lawsuit that he wasn't prepared to handle the windfall, saying "the fundraiser took off unexpectedly," and that "suddenly, what had been intended as a small effort became a great logistical challenge."

Small protest camp waits out removal of Keystone XL pipeline

By ARIELLE ZIONTS Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A small protest camp on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation plans to remain in place until the criminal cases against two of its members are finished and all infrastructure related to the Keystone XL Pipeline is removed.

"The camp will remain until we confirm all KXL construction sites have been shut down and the pipes removed," Oscar High Elk, founder of Roots Camp, told the Journal.

High Elk and camp member Jasilyn Charger are facing criminal charges, some directly related to protests and acts of civil disobedience against pipeline infrastructure being built near the reservation on land promised to the Lakota people in treaties that were seized by settlers and the federal government.

The pair are both members of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and veterans of the months-long protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota. Now they're spending time at Roots Camp, located on the north side of Four Corners Bridge which is about an hour north of Philip and marks the boundary between the reservation and Haakon County.

Charger had a traumatic childhood — the Department of Social Services separated her and her sister

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from their mother and each other — but later healed through embracing Lakota traditions and forming multiple Indigenous youth groups, according to a 2017 New York Times profile.

She was just 19 when she and her friends began demonstrating against the Keystone XL Pipeline in 2015 and then become some of the first people to begin a prayer camp in protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North Dakota.

High Elk was also at Standing Rock and runs the 2KC Media Facebook page where he posts photos, videos and livestreams of actions taken by Roots Camp and other Indigenous groups.

Up to 35 people spent time at the camp since it opened in late November but only three to five people take turns staying there now, High Elk said. The camp members are Indigenous South Dakotans as well as white people from other states, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Roots Camp is supported through online donations and its work has been highlighted by the Lakota Law Project. It has also used the internet to gather more than 4,000 signatures from people across the globe asking for High Elk and Charger's criminal charges to be dropped.

The group says the pipeline is being built on unceded treaty land and will damage Unci Maka, or Mother Earth. Opponents want to move toward renewable energy sources and are concerned oil spills would damage land and drinking water. There are also worries about an influx of mostly male workers bringing crime to nearby small towns and reservations, something that happened with the Bakken region of North Dakota and Montana.

"We are here to bring awareness to the rape of Mother Earth, to the rape of our women and children," High Elk said.

Roots Camp members say they have been harassed and surveilled multiple times by private security and law enforcement.

Keystone XL installed a trailer and other facilities staffed by security guards from a private Montana-based company the day after the camp began advertising for a small awareness concert, High Elk said. He said the concert was going to be held in a public right-of-way area off a road in Haakon County near the bridge.

"The next day we went there and they were setting stuff up and they had it set up really, really fast," High Elk said.

He said the facilities were taken down on Dec. 22, the day before the Big Foot Memorial Ride was coming through the area.

"Everything completely cleared out," he said. "They had a whole command center there and all of a sudden, poof, it was gone."

Harold Frazier, chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, sent a letter to Ziebach County Sheriff Gary Cudmore accusing him of stealing flags from Roots Camp earlier in December. A video shows Cudmore, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and former tribal officer, and a deputy taking down flags on the Four Corners Bridge.

Cudmore declined to comment on the incident after the hearing but said the boundary between the reservation and Haakon County is halfway between the bridge.

The 2KC Media page also posted a document showing High Elk was pulled over and given warnings by a Highway Patrol trooper on the way to his first court appearance for driving one to five miles over the speed limit, displaying his license plate in a "conspicuous" way and having a cracked windshield.

The windshield had small cracks from rock chips and the license plate and entire car was covered in mud from driving on dirt roads, photos show.

University of Minnesota to add 2nd Indigenous language house

By KATELYN VUE The Minnesota Daily

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A new University of Minnesota Living Learning Community (LLC) called the Dakota Language House will launch next fall to advance and support students' learning of the Dakota language.

Radius Apartments in Dinkytown will house the LLC for students to live and learn Dakota together. An LLC is housing assigned for students to live together in a community dedicated to similar interests, academic

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goals and personal direction.

The American Indian studies department and the Dakota Language Program collaborated to develop the Dakota Language House to create LLCs based on languages taught in the department, focusing on language revitalization.

"To speak the language is to literally breathe life into the language because you're using the air to speak language, and so, in a metaphorical but in the literal way. So by speaking the language, we're breathing life into it and that's actually a phrase in our language," said Šišóka Dúta, a University Dakota language instructor. Dúta is an enrolled member of the Lake Traverse Reservation and he is Sisithunwan Wahpet-hunwan Dakhota.

As an undergraduate student, Dúta said he would have loved the opportunity to be in an environment where people speak the Dakota language daily.

"If you could find a place to do that, then you create like a little pocket or language bubble where the English language is either not spoken or severely reduced, and if you do that, you're going to progress faster in the target language, which would be Dakota," Dúta said.

In the late 1800s, the U.S. government forced Indigenous children to attend boarding schools to erase their culture, language and traditions. The boarding schools forced students to only speak English, dress in American-style clothing and convert to Christianity, The Minnesota Daily reported.

By the 1970s, most of the boarding schools closed, but Dúta said Indigenous parents and grandparents decided not to pass down the language for various reasons, including the trauma from these boarding schools.

"A lot of my people knew how to speak (Dakota) but refused to speak it because of the treatment by these schools. Other people refuse to speak it because they wanted to assimilate, so it's kind of like a variety," Dúta said. "But because many people decided 'No, I'm not going to pass it on to the next generation'... then you have like Gen X and the millennial generation who didn't grow up with their heritage language."

Recently, more people from the younger generation who did not grow up speaking Dakota, including Dúta, are learning it as adults to maintain the heritage culture, he added.

"I think a lot of people my age and even younger ... are really showing interest because we want to keep it alive for the next generations coming," Dúta said.

Dustin Morrow, a citizen of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and a third-year University student, said his grandmother was the last Ojibwe speaker in his family. Because she passed away when he was three, Morrow did not have the opportunity to learn the language in his early life.

"You feel that absence, even though you don't really know it. You still feel the absence because of just everything that's put on you," Morrow said. "I just wanted it back. I guess that's why I decided language is where I want to be."

Morrow was one of the first students living in the Ojibwe Immersion House, an LLC launched by the Ojibwe Language Program last year, where students are fully immersed in the Ojibwe language. The Ojibwe Immersion House LLC influenced the vision behind the Dakota Learning House. Both language programs — Ojibwe and Dakota — are situated within the American Indian Studies Department.

Most of the students' heritage is Ojibwe, so they are learning the language of their heritage, said Brendan Kishketon, a citizen of Kickapoo and Ojibwe tribes, an associate professor and the director of the Ojibwe Language Program.

The two houses are a part of efforts to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages.

"That's the end goal here. Not just for (students) to get exposure, not just for them to learn it, not just for them to be highly proficient," Kishketon said. "But that they become so highly proficient that when they graduate and start having a family... that they can speak to their own kids in the language thereby perpetuating the language, saving the language, keeping the language alive, so that it doesn't go extinct."

At the Ojibwe Immersion House, there is a no English-speaking rule which students need to follow while living in the house. But because most Dakota language students are enrolled at the beginner or intermediate level, the Dakota Language House is not an immersion house yet, Dúta said. He added that students

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who live in the Dakota Language House are highly encouraged to speak the language.

Morrow joined the University's Ojibwe Language Program after watching a nine-minute video of University students and faculty members speaking Ojibwe and sharing their personal experiences in the program and the importance of preserving the language.

Immediately after watching the video, he said he felt a strong motivation to apply to the Ojibwe Language Program but also a slight hesitation because it had been four years since he had last been in school.

However, he still decided to apply. Now, almost three years later, he will be graduating this spring with a double-major in linguistics and Ojibwe.

"When you come from a reservation, or even just a rural setting and come into the city, it's difficult to adjust. But when you're just surrounded by people that come from the same background as you and know exactly what you're going through with that kind of thing, it really makes the transition easier," Morrow said.

Next fall, Morrow will live in the Ojibwe Immersion House again because the University's linguistics graduate program accepted him.

Kishketon said he introduced a plan three years ago to establish three initiatives in the program to attract more students to enroll. Last year, he accomplished the plan, which included creating an Ojibwe language major, establishing a summer institute for American Indian high school students to learn more about the University and forming the Ojibwe Immersion House.

"Why we started it was to give the students an opportunity to learn in an environment that's not a classroom. But personally, I wanted life to be their classroom," Kishketon said.

Custer State Park sees first bison calf of season

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — The first bison calf of the season has been born in Custer State Park.

The calf was born Wednesday, KELO-TV reported. It's the first of 475 calves expected to be born at the park this year.

The park saw about 450 bison births last year. The average number of births in the past five years has been about 425.

This year's calves will grow the park's herd to about 1,450 bison. The oldest bison in herd this year was 22 years old, said Kobee Stalder, the park's visitor services program manager.

The prime calving season runs from mid-April through mid-May.

FFA state convention makes first Rapid City stop in 90 years

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Future Farmers of America's annual state convention is headed to Rapid City for the first time in 90 years.

The Rapid City Journal reported Friday that the convention will be held April 11-13 at the Central State Fairgrounds. The convention will look different than in years past due to COVID-19 protocols, however.

The livestock show will be broken up into groups and people will be staggered throughout the convention. Some events have been cancelled, including workshops and a meal reception to recognize participants, and the number of teams competing has been cut from the typical 65 to 70 squads to 35.

"Our priority is providing young people to receive hands-on experience even when limiting access," said Gerri Edie of with the South Dakota FFA Foundation.

Man killed in fertilizer truck crash

GOODWIN, S.D. (AP) — A fertilizer truck driver is dead after he apparently lost control of the vehicle and rolled it, authorities say.

South Dakota Department of Public Safety spokesman Tony Mangan told the Sioux Falls Argus Leader that the 33-year-old man failed to negotiate a curve north of Goodwin on Friday afternoon. The truck left the road and rolled. The driver was wearing a seat belt but was pronounced dead at the scene.

Authorities have not released his name pending notification of family.

.The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the incident.

Stores in Greece open amid virus surge to help save economy

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and COSTAS KANTOURIS undefined

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Retail stores across most of Greece were allowed to reopen Monday despite an ongoing surge in COVID-19 infections, as the country battles to emerge from deep recession.

Stores in greater Athens opened for pickup services only but remain closed in Greece's second- and third-largest cities, Thessaloniki and Patras, because of fears of a more serious spike in infections.

Lockdown measures have been in force since early November, although shops opened briefly around the Christmas holiday season. The prolonged closures piled pressure on the economy.

Greek economic output shrank by 8.2% in 2020 while the national debt as a percentage of gross domestic product shot over 200%.

About 16% of the country's residents have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccination but infection rates continue to rise.

"Opening retail businesses ... will provide a decompression valve for our society and will help improve the implementation of (restrictive) measures," government spokeswoman Aristotelia Peloni said.

The center-right government has pinned its reopening policy on the mass distribution of test kits that will be provided for free on a weekly basis to help reopen schools, expected later this month, and the country's vital tourism industry in mid-May.

In Thessaloniki, in northern Greece, protesting store owners hung black banners outside business entrances, angry that they weren't allowed to reopen. Others opened their stores but didn't serve customers, in an act of defiance. The head of the city's chamber of commerce, Michalis Zorpidis, told the AP that it was taking the government to the country's highest administrative court.

"We feel that the decision is unfair and illegal. That's why we took legal actions against the government to reverse the decision," Zorpidis said.

The daily number of confirmed infections nationwide — a statistic affected by testing levels — reached the highest rate since the start of the pandemic in Greece at 28.5 per 100,000 residents as a seven-day rolling average. The death rate is currently above the European Union average with the cumulative total at more than 8,300.

AP-NORC poll: Border woes dent Biden approval on immigration

By WILL WEISSERT and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Americans disapprove than approve of how President Joe Biden is handling waves of unaccompanied migrant children arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, and approval of his efforts on larger immigration policy falls short of other top issues — suggesting it could be a weak point for the new administration.

A new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research also shows that solving the problem of young people at the border is among Americans' highest immigration priorities: 59% say providing safe treatment of unaccompanied children when they are apprehended should be a high priority, and 65% say the same about reuniting families separated at the border.

Former President Donald Trump built his presidency around hard-line policies that expanded and fortified border walls, made it tougher for people fleeing drug violence and other desperate circumstances in Mexico and Central America to seek U.S. asylum and separated immigrant families.

Biden has tried to seize political momentum on the issue by promising a more humane and orderly system, but his administration has struggled to cope with rising numbers of migrants coming to the border, especially unaccompanied children.

Overall, 40% of Americans disapprove of Biden's handling of children reaching the nation's southern border without their parents, compared with just 24% who approve. Thirty-five percent don't have an opinion either way.

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"I don't know how to politically correctly say this: I do feel that, because there's this new administration, that people feel that they can come to the country," said Mindy Kiehl, a 40-year-old real estate agent in Erie, Pennsylvania, who otherwise approves of Biden's handling of the presidency so far.

"I get it. They're seeking refuge," Kiehl added. "But bringing these children, it's not good for the children, it's not good for the families. I don't know how that's going to solve the problem."

Biden said at a recent news conference that "we're sending back the vast majority of the families that are coming." But his struggles on the issue go beyond unaccompanied minors.

Just 42% of Americans say they approve of how the president is handling immigration in general, and a similar share, 44%, say they approve of how he's handling border security. Both are significantly lower than the 61% of Americans who say they approve of how Biden is handling his job overall and fall short of the president's rating on some other issues, including his response to the coronavirus pandemic and managing of the economy.

That gap comes despite the White House endorsing the most ambitious overhaul of the nation's immigration system in a generation on Biden's first day in office. It has stalled in Congress, though, and Republicans and even some top Democrats say passage will be difficult.

The plan would provide an eight-year path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million people in the U.S. illegally, but the poll shows doing so isn't high on the public's priority list. Only 29% of Americans overall, including 42% of Democrats and 14% of Republicans, called legal status for people in the country illegally a high priority.

Additionally, only a third of Americans each say that allowing refugees to come to the U.S. or expanding "guest worker" programs should be high priorities.

The gap between Biden's overall approval rating and his handling of immigration crosses party lines. Seventy-four percent of Democrats and 10% of Republicans approve of Biden's handling of immigration, compared with 96% of Democrats and 22% of Republicans who approve overall.

The difference also comes across racial and ethnic groups. Overall, 92% of Black Americans, 67% of Hispanics and 52% of white Americans say they approve of how Biden is handling his job. On immigration, 74% of Black Americans but only 50% of Hispanics and 34% of white Americans say they approve.

Jack Henes, a retiree in Sebastian, Florida, said Biden hasn't handled immigration as well as some other hot-button issues while calling what's happening on the U.S. southern border an "administrative nightmare."

While awaiting the larger legislative package, the Democratic-controlled House has passed smaller-scale reforms that face uncertain futures in a Senate split 50-50. Biden also has used executive actions to attempt to roll back many Trump administration immigration policies but has been criticized for failing to do enough fast enough.

Others feel he's already gone too far.

"My concern is that President Biden has allowed the world to feel it's OK to just come on in," said Matthew Behrs, a Trump supporter in Wisconsin.

The poll shows many Americans rank some of the major goals of the Democratic proposal as moderate priorities instead of high ones, suggesting Biden lacks a clear mandate for how best to proceed on the issue, potentially hurting his leverage with Congress.

And many want to see efforts to step up enforcement be part of the conversation: For 53%, increasing security at the border is a high priority. Some 47% of Americans also say the federal government should make strengthening policies to prevent immigrants from overstaying their visas a high priority.

Fewer, roughly a third, say penalizing companies that hire immigrants living in the U.S. illegally and deporting immigrants living in the U.S. illegally should be high priorities.

The poll also finds Americans are more likely to favor than oppose providing a way for immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children to stay legally, 53% to 24%, with 22% saying they are neither in favor nor opposed. Still, just 41% call extending legal protections to so-called Dreamers a high priority. A plan approved by the House but awaiting Senate action seeks to do just that.

Biden has now assigned Vice President Kamala Harris to work with Central American countries to try

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to address the root causes of illegal immigration. Henes, the retiree, suggested that Biden has given the problem to Harris as a way of buying himself some time — but that it hasn't helped.

"They're still in the huddle," Henes said. "They're not ready to call a play."

Latest attack pushes US Capitol Police further toward crisis

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Capitol Police are struggling.

One officer was killed and another injured when a driver slammed into them at a barricade Friday afternoon. The attack comes after officers were overrun and injured when a violent mob of Trump supporters overran the Capitol on Jan. 6, breaking through insufficient barriers and pushing their way to within steps of lawmakers. One officer died and another killed himself.

Scores of officers are considering early retirement, top leaders have resigned and those in office face increasing criticism. Security concerns over the events of the past four months may alter not only how the department operates, but also whether the historically public grounds can remain open.

The head of the Capitol Police union said officers are "reeling" following the death on Friday of Officer Billy Evans, who was on the force for 18 years. He was struck at a Capitol entrance by a man who, according to investigators, suffered from delusions and suicidal thoughts.

Evans' death comes after Officer Brian Sicknick, who was among hundreds of officers trying to fight off rioters without the necessary equipment or planning, died following the Jan. 6 riot. Officer Howard Liebengood died by suicide shortly afterward.

Hundreds of officers are considering retirement or finding jobs elsewhere, union chair Gus Papathanasiou said in a statement. "They continue to work even as we rapidly approach a crisis in morale and force numbers," he said, noting that officers are dealing with "massive amounts of forced overtime."

Dozens of officers were injured on Jan. 6 and others have been held out of work during an internal investigation into the department's response, including the officer who fatally shot a 35-year-old woman attempting to climb through a broken window as she and others massed at a barricaded doorway. That's further depleted a force that has more than 200 vacant positions, roughly 10% of its authorized force level.

In the months since the insurrection, many officers have routinely worked 12-hour days or longer to protect the building during Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration and impeachment proceedings against former President Donald Trump.

"This rips the scab off and continues to provide a level of uncertainty and worry about the workplace and what's happening there," said Rep. Tim Ryan, an Ohio Democrat who chairs a subcommittee overseeing Capitol Police funding. "And I think this is very personal for so many of us who have come to really love and respect the Capitol Police even more than we already had, because of what they did on Jan. 6, and then immediately turning it around to make sure that the inauguration was safe."

Acting Chief Yogananda Pittman received a vote of no confidence from the union in February, reflecting widespread distrust among the rank and file. Pittman was assistant chief in charge of intelligence during the riot and has admitted she did not see an FBI assessment the day before warning of "war" at the Capitol.

Steven Sund, who resigned in January as the agency's chief amid scrutiny over whether the police force was adequately prepared for the riot, told The Associated Press that officers he had spoken to were "on edge."

The grief and crises that have engulfed the Capitol Police are also part of broader social forces that have tested the country, Sund said.

"There's the impact of the pandemic on the American psyche," Sund said. "There's a lot of stuff in social media and a lot of action in reference to the actions of law enforcement. Law enforcement have been attacked in cities around the country. So there's just a lot of things gearing up that make 2020, 2021 a little unique."

The Capitol Police are not a typical law enforcement agency. The roughly 2,000 officers are responsible solely for protecting Congress — its members, visitors and facilities, an area of about 16 acres.

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The department dates back to the early 1800s, after President John Quincy Adams asked that a police force be established to help protect the building following incidents there. Now they have an operating budget of \$460 million.

The driver in Friday's incident, 25-year-old Noah Green, was shot by officers shortly after emerging from the vehicle wielding a knife, authorities said. Green died later at a hospital. There is no known connection between the insurrection and Green, who described himself in online posts as being under government thought control and being watched.

New concrete barriers are in place around the checkpoint where Evans and a colleague were standing guard north of the Capitol. But the attack underscores that the Capitol will always be a target, said retired Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, who chaired a task force that made several security recommendations following the insurrection.

"It is the most important building in America, because it's the seat of our democracy," Honoré told ABC's "This Week" on Sunday. "If that building and the people in it don't function, we no longer have democracy. And whatever price we have to pay to protect it, we need to do it."

The task force called for a renewed push to fill the 233 open positions on the force and for Congress to fund 350 new jobs and new fencing systems and other infrastructure. The task force also wants Congress to give the Capitol Police chief new authority to seek National Guard support in a crisis. Sund has alleged that leaders on the three-member Capitol Police Board delayed his calls for Guard help on Jan. 6, which former members of the board have denied.

Papathanasiou, the union chair, said he supported Honoré's recommendations and had met with him and his team Thursday, the day before Evans' death.

"As I explained to him, these improvements are critical, but our first priority has to be retaining our existing officers," Papathanasiou said. "There are immediate steps Congress can take to address this."

Rep. Jennifer Wexton, a Virginia Democrat, has been in touch with Liebengood's family since his death. She called for a program to encourage "peer-to-peer" discussions between officers about the trauma they had incurred separate from mental health professionals called in to meet with officers.

"I just want to make sure we're taking care of the Capitol Police officers, because that's the one constant in all of this," she said. "Whatever we do, the first order of business is not some physical structure, it's making sure we're taking care of the officers."

UK eyes mass testing as it takes next steps out of lockdown

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — All adults and children in England will be able to have routine coronavirus tests twice a week as a way to stamp out new outbreaks, the British government said Monday as it prepared to announce the next steps in lifting the nation's months-long lockdown.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said regularly testing people who don't have COVID-19 symptoms would help "stop outbreaks in their tracks, so we can get back to seeing the people we love and doing the things we enjoy."

The government said free lateral flow tests will be available free starting Friday by mail, from pharmacies and in workplaces. Lateral flow tests give results in minutes but are less accurate than the PCR swab tests used to officially confirm cases of COVID-19.

The government insists they are reliable. Health Minister Edward Argar said the tests produced a false positive rate — showing someone has the virus when they don't — in less than 1 in every 1,000 tests.

"So that is still a highly accurate test which can play a really important part in reopening our country and our businesses, because it is so simple to take," Argar told Sky News.

Johnson is scheduled later Monday to announce the next steps on the country's road map out of its three-month lockdown. He is expected to confirm at a news conference that hairdressers, non-essential shops and pub and restaurant patios will reopen as planned in England on April 12. Scotland, Wales and

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Northern Ireland are following slightly different timescales.

Britain has recorded almost 127,000 coronavirus deaths, the highest toll in Europe. But infections and deaths both have fallen sharply during the lockdown and since the start of a vaccination campaign that so far has given a first dose to more than 31 million people, or six in 10 adults.

Johnson is unlikely to tell Britons when or where they will be able to go abroad on vacation, something that is currently banned by law. The government has said it will not lift the travel ban before May 17. British officials are considering a traffic-light system ranking countries as green, yellow or red based on their level of infections. People returning from green countries would not have to self-isolate.

The government also is considering a system of certificates, or "vaccine passports," that would allow people seeking to travel or attend events to show they either have received a coronavirus vaccine, recently tested negative for the virus, or recently had COVID-19 and therefore have some immunity.

The issue of vaccine passports has been hotly debated around the world, raising questions about how much governments, employers, venues and other places have a right to know about a person's virus status. The idea is opposed by a wide swath of British lawmakers, from left-of-center opposition politicians to members of Johnson's Conservative Party.

Conservative legislator Graham Brady said vaccine passports would be "intrusive, costly and unnecessary." The leader of the opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, called the idea "un-British."

The government plans a series of trial mass events in April and May, including soccer matches, comedy shows and marathon runs, to see whether large crowds can return to sports and entertainment venues. Those attending will be tested for the virus both before and after, but the government has said the events won't initially involve vaccine passports.

Corporations gave over \$50M to voting restriction backers

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When executives from Coca-Cola and Delta Air Lines spoke out against Georgia's new voting law as unduly restrictive last week, it seemed to signal a new activism springing from corporate America.

But if leaders of the nation's most prominent companies are going to reject lawmakers who support restrictive voting measures, they will have to abruptly reverse course.

State legislators across the country who have pushed for new voting restrictions, and also seized on former President Donald Trump's baseless claims of election fraud, have reaped more than \$50 million in corporate donations in recent years, according to a new report by Public Citizen, a Washington-based government watchdog group.

Telecom giant AT&T was the most prolific, donating over \$800,000 since 2015 to authors of proposed restrictions, cosponsors of such measures, or those who voted in favor of the bills, the report found. Other top donors during the same period include Comcast, Philip Morris, United Health, Walmart, Verizon, General Motors and Pfizer.

The money may not have been given with voting laws in mind, but it nonetheless helped cement Republican control in statehouses where many of the prohibitive measures are now moving forward.

Whether companies continue to give to these lawmakers will test how far risk-adverse corporate leaders are willing to go in their increasingly forceful criticism of the restrictive efforts, which voting rights groups have excoriated as an attack on democracy.

"It really is corporate America, as a whole, that is funding these politicians," said Mike Tanglis, one of the authors of the report. "It seems many are trying to hide under a rock and hope that this issue passes."

More than 120 companies detailed in the report previously said they would rethink their donations to members of Congress who, acting on the same falsehoods as the state lawmakers, objected to the certification of President Joe Biden's win following the deadly attack on the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters.

The tension is most evident now in Georgia, where a far-reaching new voting law has drawn an intense national scrutiny, prompting the criticism from Delta and Coca-Cola. On Friday, MLB announced it would

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no longer host the 2021 All-Star Game in Atlanta.

Yet it's unclear whether this aggressive new posture will extend to corporate campaign donation practices. And early indicators show there is risk.

Georgia's Republican-controlled House voted to strip Delta of a tax break worth tens of millions of dollars annually for their criticism of the new law, though the action was rendered moot after the GOP Senate failed to take it up before the legislative session adjourned.

What is certain, though, is that withholding corporate donations to state-level candidates, like many companies did at the federal level, would have a far greater impact in statehouses.

"A contribution of \$5,000 to a U.S. senator who is raising \$30 million is a drop in a bucket. But in some of these state races, a few thousand dollars can buy a lot of ad time," said Tanglis. "If corporate America is going to say that (Trump's) lie is unacceptable on the federal level, what about on the state level?"

Public Citizen analyzed about 245 voting restriction bills proposed before March 1. They culled a list of sponsors and cosponsors, while also analyzing vote roll calls. Then they cross-referenced the data with state-level donation records dating back to 2015, which included money from company-sponsored political action committees, as well as direct contributions from corporate treasuries.

Among their findings:

—Companies donated at least \$50 million to lawmakers who supported voting restrictions, including \$22 million in the 2020 campaign cycle.

—At least 81 Fortune 100 companies have given a combined total of \$7.7 million to supporters of the restrictions.

—Nearly half of all Fortune 500 companies donated a combined total of \$12.8 million to supporters of the restrictions.

—About three-quarters of the companies that changed their donation policies after the U.S. Capitol attack have also given to lawmakers who supported voting rights restrictions.

—More than 60 companies have given at least \$100,000 to lawmakers who supported the restrictions.

—Separately, industry groups and trade associations contributed an additional \$36 million to the lawmakers, \$16 million of which was given during the 2020 cycle.

In response, AT&T said "the right to vote is sacred" but declined to say whether the company would withhold donations to state lawmakers as they did for members of Congress who objected to Biden's win.

"We understand that election laws are complicated, not our company's expertise and ultimately the responsibility of elected officials. But, as a company, we have a responsibility to engage," AT&T CEO John Stankey said in a statement.

Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg said in a statement, "We strongly oppose the passage of any legislation or the adoption of any measure that would make it harder" to vote. But he stopped short of pledging any specific action.

Comcast said in a statement that "efforts to limit or impede access to this vital constitutional right for any citizen are not consistent with our values." The company would not comment on whether it would evaluate its giving to lawmakers who support the measures.

Altria, the parent company of Philip Morris, said in a statement that "every eligible voter should be able to exercise their right to vote" and pledged to monitor lawmakers' "alignment with our political contribution guiding principles when making future contribution decisions."

Other companies listed in the report declined to comment, or did not respond to inquiries from The Associated Press.

Pressure has been particularly intense in Georgia, where Republican Gov. Brian Kemp recently signed a sweeping new law that bans people from handing out food or water to voters waiting in line and allows the Republican-controlled State Election Board to remove and replace county election officials, among many other provisions.

Two of the top corporate contribution recipients detailed in Public Citizen's report were among the sponsors of the measure.

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Since 2015, Republican state Sen. Jeff Mullis has collected more than \$869,000 in donation from corporate PACs. Among his top corporate donors were AT&T (\$15,900) and United Health Group (\$12,900), according to the report. Mullis is chairman of the Georgia Senate's Rules Committee, which plays a key role in determining which bills make it to the floor for a vote.

Republican state Sen. Butch Miller, another sponsor of the bill, has received at least \$729,000 in corporate donations since 2015. Among his top corporate givers are United Health Group (\$15,700) and AT&T (\$13,600), the report states.

Miller and Mullis did not respond to requests for comment.

Israeli PM back in court as parties weigh in on his fate

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was back in court for his corruption trial on Monday as the country's political parties were set to weigh in on whether he should form the next government after a closely divided election or step down to focus on his legal woes.

Between witness testimony in a Jerusalem courtroom and the consultations at the president's office across town, it promised to be a day of extraordinary political drama, bringing into sharp focus Netanyahu's increasingly desperate efforts to stay in power.

He is Israel's longest-serving prime minister and has clung to power through four hard-fought elections in less than two years, even as he has faced allegations of bribery, fraud and breach of trust. The March 23 election was largely a referendum on his leadership but produced no clear verdict.

Israel's political parties, meanwhile, began meeting with President Reuven Rivlin to recommend which candidate should be tasked with forming the next government.

After each election, Israel's president is responsible for designating a party leader to try to put together a governing majority. That decision is usually clear cut, but Rivlin faces a difficult choice given the fragmented election results that left the Knesset, Israel's parliament, divided between 13 parties with broad ideological differences.

Neither Netanyahu's allies nor his foes secured a governing majority. So his fate could come down to Naftali Bennett, a right-wing former ally with whom he has strained ties, and Mansour Abbas, the leader of a small Arab Islamist party who also has yet to commit to either the pro- or anti-Netanyahu blocs.

Later on Monday, Bennett recommended himself as the next prime minister, deepening Israel's political deadlock. His right-wing Yamina party had been in a position to serve as a kingmaker but it declined to take sides.

Yamina has just seven seats in parliament, making it a long shot to be able to form a governing coalition. Bennett is hoping he can become a consensus candidate who can bridge the deep divides between the rival factions.

Rivlin was earlier quoted by Israeli media as saying he did not see how any ruling coalition could be formed and expressing concern Israel would go into a fifth round of elections.

At the Jerusalem District Court, Netanyahu sat with his lawyers as lead prosecutor Liat Ben-Ari read out the charges against him.

"The relationship between Netanyahu and the defendants became currency, something that could be traded," she said. "The currency could distort a public servant's judgment."

Netanyahu's lawyers sought to make a rebuttal but were cut off by Judge Rivka Friedman-Feldman, who said they had already responded to the charges earlier in the trial. The judge then ordered a brief recess, during which Netanyahu left the courthouse.

Outside the courtroom, dozens of supporters and opponents of the prime minister gathered to protest on opposite sides of the building amid heavy police presence, highlighting Israel's deep divisions. Anti-Netanyahu protesters have held weekly demonstrations for months, calling on him to resign.

Just a few kilometers (miles) away, a delegation from Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party formally recommended him as prime minister in a meeting with Rivlin.

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Netanyahu is charged with accepting bribes, fraud and breach of trust in three cases.

The first involves Netanyahu allegedly receiving gifts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from wealthy friends, including Hollywood film producer Arnon Milchan and Australian billionaire James Packer. In the second case, Netanyahu is accused of trying to orchestrate positive coverage in a major Israeli paper in exchange for curbing distribution of a free pro-Netanyahu tabloid.

The third, dubbed Case 4000, which will be the focus of Monday's first witness testimony, alleges that Netanyahu backed legislation worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the owner of Israeli telecom giant Bezeq in return for positive coverage on its news site Walla.

Netanyahu has denied any wrongdoing, dismissing the charges against him as part of a media and law enforcement "witch hunt" to unseat him. His trial began last year and could last for another two years.

In January, prosecutors alleged 315 instances of Walla being requested to amend its coverage so it was more favorable to Netanyahu and his family. They said 150 of them involved Netanyahu himself.

According to the charges, Shaul Elovitch, CEO of Bezeq, "exerted heavy and continuous pressure" on Ilan Yeshua, the former chief editor of Walla, to change articles on the website to meet the demands of Netanyahu and his family.

Yeshua, who took the stand after Netanyahu left, said he regularly received requests from Elovitch and aides to the prime minister, asking him to smear the prime minister's political opponents, including Bennett. He then passed along the requests to the site's top editors.

Bennett was referred to as the "naughty religious one" in the internal messages, Yeshua said.

Israeli law does not require prime ministers to resign while under indictment, and Netanyahu has refused to do so. That has left the country deeply divided. An emergency unity government formed last year to address the coronavirus crisis was mired in political bickering and fell apart in less than a year over its inability to approve a budget.

Netanyahu passed Israel's founding father David Ben Gurion in 2019 as the country's longest-serving prime minister, having held the office continuously since 2009 and for several years in the 1990s.

Polish hospitals struggle with surge of virus patients

By RAFAL NIEDZIELSKI Associated Press

BOCHNIA, Poland (AP) — Polish hospitals struggled over the Easter weekend with a massive number of people infected with COVID-19 following a huge surge in infections across Central and Eastern Europe in recent weeks.

Tougher new pandemic restrictions were ordered in Poland for a two-week period surrounding Easter in order to slow down the infection rate. The country hit new records of over 35,000 daily infections on two recent days, and deaths have been in the hundreds each day.

The aim of the new restrictions was to prevent large gatherings over the long weekend culminating with Easter Monday. Meanwhile, the government is also trying to speed up the country's vaccine rollout, but the pressure on the country's hospitals is still relentless.

On Easter Sunday, coronavirus patients filled almost all of the 120 beds at the County Hospital of Bochnia, 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of the southern city of Krakow.

"It is a difficult situation, because there are a lot of patients," said Bozena Gicala, a nurse treating COVID-19 patients who spoke to Associated Press reporters visiting the hospital.

She said the support of her colleagues was critical in managing the unprecedented situation.

Another nurse, Ewa Ptak, said she had COVID-19 herself and is on a mission to help those who are suffering more than she did.

"Thank God I went without a hospital and I was fine. But I know what it is and I just want to help people," Ptak said.

One patient, 82-year-old Edward Szumanski, voiced concerns about how some people still refuse to see the virus that has killed over 2.8 million people worldwide as a threat. Poland has seen about 55,000 of those deaths.

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"The disease is certainly there and it is very serious. Those who have not been through it, those who do not have it in their family, may be deluding themselves, but the reality is different," he said.

Szumanski said he is also worried that ICU spaces in hospitals could soon run out and that more people will die. There have been warnings and reports in Polish media about how the nation's health care system is reaching a breaking point.

The hospital's medical director, Jaroslaw Gucwa, said the pandemic has been made worse by those who believe it is all a hoax and have shunned masks or ignored restrictions.

The hospital is so stressed that it is discharging patients who still need more treatment "in order to make room for the next ones in a serious condition. This is not a normal situation," he added.

Poland registered 204 new COVID-19 deaths on Easter Sunday, but the numbers in recent days have been much higher, mostly around 500 per day. On Wednesday, they hit a high for this year of 653.

"The hardest part is when you intubate your friends and leave them in intensive care," Gucwa said.

For 7 New Yorkers, a pandemic year's fight for the future

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — It was the eve of the deadliest day of the coronavirus spike that brought New York City to a trembling standstill. They were a handful of people doing what they could in the city's fight for survival, and their own.

A year ago, The Associated Press told the story of a day in the life of a stricken city through the eyes of New Yorkers on the front lines and in quarantine as they faced fear, tragedy, isolation and upheaval.

As the United States' most populous city turned into its most lethal coronavirus hot spot, some of these New Yorkers saw the virus' toll up close in an emergency room, an ambulance and a funeral home.

Others were suddenly looking from what felt like far away at the city and the lives they knew — a Broadway actor wondering when the curtain would go up again, a rabbi no longer able to hold the hands of dying people. A taxi driver and a woman running a local meals-on-wheels program who contended with the risks and challenges of jobs that were suddenly recognized as essential.

The AP recently returned to these New Yorkers to look at a full year of living through the pandemic in a city that has regrouped but not fully recovered.

Like New York itself, they've endured 12 months framed by grief and fortitude, trauma and new direction, economic and social loss, exhaustion and cautious reawakening — and both worry and hope about the future.

THE PARAMEDIC

Travis Kessel has begun making plans again: a 30th birthday trip to Walt Disney World, tickets for a rescheduled concert that he hopes will happen this time.

Yet the excitement that something like normal life is returning is tempered by worries about how quickly it could be taken away again. The Fire Department paramedic knows something else could always be lurking.

"For years it was: 'What's the next terrorist attack going to be?' After 9/11, that became the prevailing fear of people, especially Americans, New Yorkers," Kessel said. "And now, going through something like this — what's the next virus around the corner? What's the next pandemic?"

The deluge of 911 calls for medical aid has subsided since peaking in late March 2020 at more than 6,000 a day, compared to 4,000 or fewer normally, and filling Kessel's days with a stunning volume of critically ill and dead patients. He still starts to choke up when he recalls telling a man that his wife was dead, and the tearful husband saying, "I lost my best friend."

Now there's less stress, though not enough less to relax. It haunts Kessel that it's still not fully understood why the virus spiked as abruptly and severely as it did in New York City, where the daily death toll went from zero to more than 800 in just over three weeks. In all, the city counts more than 30,000 coronavirus deaths.

He lost colleagues including Idris Bey, a fellow EMS instructor who was a rescuer at the World Trade Center and died last April at 60. The FDNY hasn't been able to gather fully to honor those lost with line-

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of-duty funerals.

Without diversions such as travel, Kessel said it's felt like virtually all work for more than a year.

His break is finally coming. He and his wife, Meghan, a nurse, will celebrate his birthday at Disney World, where they got engaged.

"It seems to be we're heading in the right direction," Kessel said. "There's going to be hiccups, but at this point, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Whether it's real or not is yet to be determined."

— By Brian Mahoney

THE TAXI DRIVER

Nicolae Hent put it bluntly when he brought his taxi in for service recently.

"I have to make a living," Hent recalled telling the shop. "If you keep my car two weeks, I'll go bankrupt."

Hent grossed \$73,000 through the meter last year, \$30,000 less than in 2019. With so much of New York City's workforce staying home and tourists staying away, he could drive for long stretches without finding a fare.

Hent realized by early last April that his best hope was to look for health care workers near hospitals. He has some success now in midtown Manhattan but still not downtown in the financial district.

"You can drive an hour, you may not be able to find a passenger around downtown," Hent said.

Two years from his planned retirement, Hent, 64, has now lengthened his workday, leaving his Queens home around 6 a.m. instead of coming into Manhattan in late morning. That still won't get him back to his pre-pandemic earnings, but he said he's been able to make all his mortgage payments since May after not paying in March and April.

The ride he longs to take is to Boston to see his daughter and granddaughters for the first time since February 2020. Now fully vaccinated, he's looking forward to his wife's second shot in mid-April, so they can go.

They saw their other daughter briefly last summer. She and her boyfriend dropped by for a few minutes, but remained outside, on her parents' 40th anniversary.

"So it was tough," Hent said. "Not an easy year to go through in 2020. Hopefully, this one will be better, but God knows."

— By Brian Mahoney

THE MEALS-ON-WHEELS DIRECTOR

A little before 7:30 a.m. on a recent morning, delivery workers wove around Carla Brown with insulated bags in hand, readying for another day of distributing hundreds of hot meals to homebound older adults.

Brown ducked into her office, stacked with so many cartons of disposable masks and gloves that she's given up working inside. It's one more reminder, she said, that what passes for normal now remains anything but.

"It's been the longest year of my life," said Brown, whose meals-on-wheels program was swamped last spring when New York's lockdown stranded many of the city's elderly.

"I think that's been the struggle for us, is our new normal," she said, as the Charles A. Walburg Multi-Service Organization tries to plan for what's to come without knowing quite what that will be.

When the virus struck, the organization scrambled to feed 1,000 older adults in upper Manhattan, up from 700 to 800 usually.

Once the caseload began easing in June, the organization was well over budget. Meanwhile, the staff shrank because of virus fears, family responsibilities and enhanced unemployment checks.

College students and some church and service group members volunteered to help. But as the city revived, many returned to work and school. Recently, a bus company has provided two vans and drivers at no charge. But Brown's organization is still short-handed.

Brown, 54, subbed in to drive delivery routes, her workdays stretching to 13 or 14 hours. She's stepped away from deliveries this spring but still works six-day weeks, and she worries that next year could bring city budget cuts.

The virus has frozen her plans for new initiatives and kept her worried about her parents, both 78. For

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months, she stood outside their home during visits, before venturing inside with a mask. Both stayed healthy, but Brown hasn't hugged them in a year.

Brown found a release when New York let gyms reopen and she resumed workouts. But she longs for pandemic pressures to ease.

"I'm busy cheerleading and trying to get my staff up and keep them up, and then I say to myself, 'When is this thing going to be over?'"

— By Adam Geller

THE UNDERTAKER

Seething through an N95 face mask, Jesus Pujols railed last April about the indignities forced upon New York's dead.

An overnight undertaker, Pujols hardly slept last spring. When he did, it was often in the van he used to transport the deceased. The 24-year-old works for a Brooklyn funeral home that at one point had nearly 500 people in its care, a backlog unresolved until June.

His work weeks stretched past 80 hours, but he struggled most after-hours.

"Sitting in silence, that's when the hallucinations would come around," he said. "It got pretty bad."

Doctors told Pujols he was experiencing hypnagogic hallucinations — a term for imagined perceptions that occur as sleep sets in — and said they were caused by sleep deprivation and trauma.

"No sleeping, working until you're exhausted, and seeing a lot of nasty, very deplorable things," he said. "Really, that's what ended up causing it."

Therapy helped, and so did religion. Pujols now carries a notepad to combat forgetfulness and wears a watch to aid time management.

Family was an outlet, but the pandemic was there, too. When his grandfather died of COVID-19, Pujols insisted on handling the embalming himself.

"I felt like I had to," he said.

Last April, Pujols said he wanted to quit. A year later, he's glad he didn't. He was able to support relatives pushed out of work by the pandemic, and he's found purpose as one of New York's last responders.

"I feel more proud," he said, pausing. "And different."

The change is apparent. A year ago, Pujols was bleary-eyed and boiling with rage. Now that he's rested, he's calmer, if not entirely at peace.

"I get recognition from the people that I help, but not appreciation from the public, I feel," he said. "We get left out often in the regular news when it comes to, 'Oh, thank you for all the essential workers,' and all they show are, like, hospital people."

"It breaks my heart."

— By Jake Seiner

THE E.R. DOCTOR

Dr. Joseph Habboushe headed into a New York emergency room on a February afternoon to care for coronavirus patients, work that had become all too familiar after nearly a year on the front lines. Yet it also felt new.

It was Habboushe's first shift in the coronavirus section of the E.R. at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, after years at another Manhattan hospital where he worked through the deadliest days last spring.

On this day, the emergency medicine specialist would see 20-plus patients, some of them critically ill. But now, Habboushe was going in vaccinated and equipped with a year's worth of medicine's collective knowledge about the virus.

"There was a level of fear and anxiety that I knew I had before," said Habboushe, 44. He's still worried, given emerging virus variants and other uncertainties, but "it's not constantly eating at me."

The NewYork-Presbyterian hospital system's coronavirus patient count is down about 70% from the city's peak last spring, but still numbers around 750 people, including 150 in intensive care: "We're still not over this pandemic," CEO Steven Corwin cautioned.

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At the peak, Habboushe's qualms were matched by a battlefield-like focus and the belief he could contribute to the fight. For him and many other health care workers, it was after the first surge subsided that its mental impact really sank in.

"There were a few months that were pretty hard for me," Habboushe said. He thought about patients who'd been saved in the E.R. but died later. He sometimes felt the best efforts hadn't mattered.

But the last year also brought Habboushe professional and personal growth.

Besides his new hospital job, he's been busy at his other work as co-founder of MDCalc, a medical reference app that has been adding coronavirus-specific tools.

Meanwhile, he and girlfriend Samantha Smalley — a pharmacist at the hospital where he formerly worked — drew closer while living through quarantine and working on the front lines together, sometimes at the same patient's bedside.

A lot closer: They got engaged in December.

"This year has changed my life," Habboushe said. "To be forced to pause and to focus on being alive. and family and friends and seeing what's important — there's a silver lining to that."

— By Jennifer Peltz

THE ACTOR

At moments, E. Clayton Cornelious wondered whether his 20-plus years on Broadway were over.

"There were times I was depressed and I couldn't get out of bed for a week, thinking, 'Am I really going to have to change careers here?'" said Cornelious, who had been performing in "Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations" before the pandemic darkened the Great White Way.

But "then I would snap out of it, and I would say no," said Cornelious, 44. "I know that theater and this entertainment industry is the soul of New York — nothing really can happen without it."

Cornelious' determination to stay positive has been part of his efforts to cope since New Yorkers were first told to stay home last year.

It hasn't been easy. Tired of the isolation of his Bronx apartment, he went to stay with his mother in another state, only to run right into the coronavirus after she was exposed.

He stayed to help her get through it, then returned to New York and dealt with his own, relatively mild case of COVID-19.

In the months since, Cornelious has adapted as best he can, getting lights and other equipment to audition for TV and film spots from home, teaching a class on the business side of an entertainment career and getting his website running.

He's looking forward to seeing Broadway reopen. The city is preparing for that to happen this fall.

"You can't take away that live theater feeling," Cornelious said. "I'm pretty sure that theater is going to survive and people are going to come."

— By Deepti Hajela

THE RABBI

For Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, funerals have been among the most arduous parts of the past year.

For many months, only a handful of mourners were allowed at cemeteries; others sometimes resorted to watching funerals via Zoom. Cemeteries were so overloaded last spring that burials were allotted 10-minute slots.

"It had to be quick and not with a lot of talking," said Kleinbaum, senior rabbi at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, considered the largest LGBTQ synagogue in the nation.

Yet grieving has been offset by creative efforts to maintain solidarity without in-person worship.

Early on, Kleinbaum started a Monday-through-Thursday online class about the Psalms. It has had nearly 100 regular participants.

"Many people in our synagogue live alone," Kleinbaum said. "Some have written me saying the class was the foundation for them getting out of bed in the morning."

The congregation also started offering online Hebrew lessons; more than 100 people have signed up. And every Monday, there's a communal dinner on Zoom, providing mealtime conversation for those who live alone.

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Personally, Kleinbaum found it tough to endure limited in-person contact with her family. She made one trip each to Boston and Los Angeles to see her daughters and granddaughters.

It's been a comfort to share the challenges with her wife, Randi Weingarten, who as president of the American Federation of Teachers has wrestled with virus safety at schools.

The pandemic has reminded Kleinbaum how her congregation weathered the early years of her tenure in the 1990s, when AIDS was killing thousands of gay New Yorkers annually.

"You don't have the magic wand to make everything better, but you can show up and help people get through the worst of it," she said.

— By David Crary

Stanford holds off Arizona 54-53 to win women's NCAA title

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Tara VanDerveer hugged each of her Stanford players as they climbed the ladder to cut down the nets, capping a taxing whirlwind journey and ending an exhausting championship drought for the Cardinal.

It took 29 years, that included 10 weeks on the road this season because of the coronavirus, for VanDerveer and the Cardinal to be crowned NCAA women's basketball champions again.

"We had some special karma going for us," VanDerveer said. "Had the comeback against Louisville, dodge a bullet against South Carolina, dodge bullet against Arizona. Sometimes you have to be lucky. I'll admit it, we were very fortunate to win."

Haley Jones scored 17 points and Stanford beat Arizona 54-53, giving the Cardinal and their Hall of Fame coach their first national championship since 1992 on Sunday night.

"Getting through all the things we got through, we're excited to win the COVID championship," VanDerveer said. "The other one was not quite as close, the last one. But we're really excited. No one knows the score, no one knows who scored, it's a national championship."

It wasn't a masterpiece by any stretch with both teams struggling to score and missing easy layups and shots, but Stanford did just enough to pull off the win — it's second straight by a point.

Stanford (31-2) built a nine-point lead in the fourth quarter before Arizona (21-6) cut it to 51-50 on star guard Aari McDonald's 3-pointer.

After a timeout, Jones answered with a three-point play with 2:24 left. That would be Stanford's last basket of the game. McDonald got the Wildcats with 54-53 with 36.6 seconds left converting three of four free throws.

"I just owe it all to my teammates, they have confidence in me when I don't have confidence in myself," said Jones, who was honored as the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. "I saw they needed me to come up big and I did."

The Cardinal, after another timeout couldn't even get a shot off, giving Arizona one last chance with 6.1 seconds left, but McDonald's contested shot from the top of the key at the buzzer bounced off the rim.

"I got denied hard. I tried to turn the corner, they sent three at me. I took a tough, contested shot and it didn't fall," said McDonald, who fell near midcourt, slumped in disbelief while the Cardinal celebrated.

It's been quite a journey for VanDerveer and the Cardinal this season. The team was forced on the road for nearly 10 weeks because of the coronavirus, spending 86 days in hotels during this nomadic season.

"It was a long, very difficult journey being on the road, sleeping in hotels, living out of your bag. It's just a lot. You're on the bus, you're on planes all the time and there's just never really an end in sight so it's difficult," Jones said.

"But I think from that experience and losing on the road and dropping one at home I think it just really kind of grew this extra like chip on our shoulder almost."

The team didn't complain and went about their business and now have another NCAA championship. Along the way the Hall of Fame coach earned her 1,099th career victory to pass Pat Summitt for the most all time in women's basketball history.

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Now the 67-year-old coach has a third national title to go along with the ones she won in 1990 and 1992. That moved her into a tie with Baylor's Kim Mulkey for third most all time behind Geno Auriemma and Summitt.

VanDerveer had many great teams between titles, including the ones led by Candice Wiggins and the Ogwumike sisters — Nneka and Chiney, but the Cardinal just couldn't end their season with that elusive win in the title game until Sunday night.

It was the first women's basketball championship for the Pac-12 since VanDerveer and Stanford won the title in 1992. The last time a team from the conference was in the title game was 2010 when the Cardinal lost to UConn. That game was also played in the Alamodome — the site of every game in this tournament from the Sweet 16 through Sunday's championship game.

The entire NCAA Tournament was played in the San Antonio area because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While Stanford had history on its side, Arizona has been building under coach Adia Barnes, who was the fourth Black woman to lead her team to the championship game, joining Carolyn Peck, Dawn Staley and C. Vivian Stringer. Peck and Staley won titles.

Barnes starred for the Wildcats as a player in the late 90s and came back to her alma mater five years ago. She guided the team to the WNIT title in 2019 and led them to their first NCAA title game ever. This was the team's first appearance in the NCAA Tournament since 2005 — although the Wildcats would have made the NCAAs last season had it not been canceled by the coronavirus.

McDonald, who followed her coach from Washington as a transfer, has been a huge reason for the team's success. The 5-foot-6 guard struggled against the Cardinal, finishing with 22 points while going 5-for-20 from the field.

The Wildcats were trying to be only the fourth team to trail by double digits and win a championship.

These teams met twice during the regular season and Stanford rolled past Arizona both times, winning by double digits in each game.

This one came down to a final chance for the Wildcats, but they fell just one-point short.

TIP-INS:

Sunday night's game was the first with two teams from west of the Mississippi playing for a title since 1986. ... No other Division I coach has gone more than 20 years between titles. In basketball, the longest gap is 17 years for both the women (Muffet McGraw, 2001 and 2018 at Notre Dame) and men (Rick Pitino, 1996 at Kentucky and 2013 at Louisville, although that title was later vacated)

STRUGGLING AGAINST STANFORD

Barnes has beaten VanDerveer just twice in her career as both a player and coach at Arizona. She lost seven of eight playing for the Wildcats in the late 90s. The lone victory came in her senior year on a last-second shot off a pass from Barnes to teammate Reshea Bristol, who hit a 20-footer for the win in 1998. As a coach she had lost 10 of the 11 previous matchups before Sunday with the only victory coming in overtime on Feb. 28, 2020.

Biden's big infrastructure plan hits McConnell, GOP blockade

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans in Congress are making the politically brazen bet that it's more advantageous to oppose President Joe Biden's ambitious rebuild America agenda than to lend support for the costly \$2.3 trillion undertaking for roads, bridges and other infrastructure investments.

Much the way Republicans provided no votes for the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill, they plan to sit on the sidelines for this next big lift by the White House, forcing Democrats to take full ownership of the massive package of spending and corporate tax hikes that Biden wants approved over the summer. The tension could mount this week as Biden shows no signs adjusting to satisfy Republican leaders, instead appealing directly to their constituents for support.

"I think the Republicans' voters are going to have a lot to say about whether we get a lot of this done," Biden told reporters at the White House.

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That leaves Biden and congressional Republicans on a collision course, the outcome of which could define the parties and his presidency. The GOP strategy is reminiscent of the Obama-era blockade that helped sour voters on the Democratic president more than a decade ago. Then and now Republicans are intent on saddling Democrats with responsibility for all the taxes and spending to come, much as they did the 2009 rescue after the economic crisis, framing it as government overreach that piles on debt.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell set the defining tone for his party when he flatly declared last week he will fight Biden's agenda "every step of the way."

But it's not at all certain the GOP playbook that worked more than a decade ago will produce the same political gains this time around. Voters appear tired of the partisan stalemate in Washington, live amid the country's run-down spots and signal they are initially supportive of Biden's approach to governing, at least on the virus aid package.

Recent polling by The Associated Press-NORC Public Research Center found Americans have responded favorably to the president's approach, with 73% approving of his handling of the pandemic. That includes about half of Republicans.

Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., a member of Senate GOP leadership, said Sunday a smaller package of about \$615 billion, or 30% of what Biden is proposing, could find bipartisan backing from Republicans if the White House found a way to pay for it without raising the corporate tax rate. He pointed to potential user fees on drivers and others.

"There's an easy win here," Blunt said on "Fox News Sunday."

Rather than shy from a new era of big government, Democratic leaders in Congress are embracing it, believing they can bypass the GOP blockade on Capitol Hill and make the case directly to Americans hungry for investments in homes, communities and livelihoods, especially as China and other rival countries make advancements.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi compared Biden's plan to the far-reaching aims of presidents before him — from Thomas Jefferson's efforts to build the Erie Canal to Teddy Roosevelt's designs on a national park system.

"Now, in this century, President Biden is undertaking something in the tradition of thinking big," Pelosi said at a news conference.

Progressives want Biden to go even bigger. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., said Sunday he expects more funding to combat climate change and is pushing to include his own proposal to expand Medicare with dental, vision and hearing aid care for seniors.

"Now is the time to begin addressing our physical infrastructure and our human infrastructure," Sanders said on CNN.

As Congress hunkers down to begin drafting the legislation for Biden's proposal, both parties will be put the test.

In the House, lawmakers will be invited to submit requests for projects in their home districts — roads and other infrastructure that could be "earmarks" eligible for federal funds. It's a way to entice bipartisan participation and ensure the funds are spent on agreed-upon needs.

Republicans will be forced to either participate or disengage, often with pressure from elected officials and other constituents clamoring for funds to upgrade sewers, airports and countless other infrastructure systems.

Peppered in Kentucky with questions about money that could be potentially flowing for home-state road, bridge and housing projects after the president unveiled his plan, McConnell batted them back one by one.

Biden's package "is not going to get support from our side," McConnell said.

Asked about the McConnell's comment, Biden smiled Friday while speaking to reporters at the White House and asked if the Republicans are arguing the country doesn't need the infrastructure — or if the Republicans "decide that we need it but they're not going to pay for it?"

Biden also pressed whether Republicans are opposed to cleaning up lead pipes in homes, schools and day care centers.

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"What do you think would happen if they found out all the lead pipes were up at the Capitol?" Biden asked. At the same time, Democrats and Republicans will be faced with the politically difficult vote of raising corporate taxes to pay for all the spending, bucking the business community that is largely against Biden's plan to permanently hike the rate corporations pay from 21% to 28%.

Both parties view it as an almost existential battle over competing political views: The Democrats who believe in the power of government to take the lead solving the nation's problems; the Republicans who put their faith in the private sector to drive solutions.

On Capitol Hill, it's also a battle over which party will control Congress.

After Barack Obama was elected in 2008, McConnell famously said his goal was to make him a one-term president. This time around the Republican leader appears to have a shorter-term goal at hand — he wants to win back the now evenly split 50-50 Senate.

"They're so close to the majority in 2022, they can taste it," said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist.

Democrats have Senate control because their party's vice president, Kamala Harris, can cast a tie-breaking vote. In the House, the Democratic majority is holding on with just a handful of seats.

"They really don't want to give Biden wins," Conant said.

Democrats, uncertain about their political prospects, are taking no chances, legislating as if they are on borrowed time.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has set in motion a potential process that would allow Biden's package to advance without the typical 60-vote threshold needed to overcome a filibuster by Republicans. Instead, it could be approved with a simple 51-vote majority.

Pelosi has set a July 4 goal for House votes, but acknowledges that ambitious timeline may slip.

"The sooner we can get the legislation done, the sooner we can allocate the resources," she said. The goal, she said, was "to get the job done as soon as possible."

New to DC, Buttigieg looks to build bridges with Biden plan

By HOPE YEN, JONATHAN LEMIRE and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pete Buttigieg was a few weeks into his job as transportation secretary, buried in meetings and preparing for the launch of President Joe Biden's \$2.3 trillion public works plan, when evening arrived along with a time to try something new in Washington.

Instead of climbing into the back seat of a black SUV like most Cabinet secretaries, he headed to a bike-share rack. Helmet on, and with a couple of Secret Service agents flanking him, he pedaled the mile-long trip to his home in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

It wasn't a one-time stunt. On Thursday, Buttigieg arrived at the White House for a Cabinet meeting on his two-wheeler. And that wasn't his only "regular guy" moment. Dog park devotees in the District of Columbia have also seen him there, chatting up anyone from children to members of Congress such as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.

Buttigieg first had his eye on the job of the man who is now his boss, Biden. Buttigieg's presidential campaign was surprisingly successful — he essentially tied for first with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders in the Iowa caucuses and finished a close second to him in the New Hampshire primary — and he made a strong impression as someone who represented the future of the Democratic Party.

Now the man known during his campaign as "Mayor Pete" — he was the mayor of South Bend, Indiana — faces the first test of that potential in his first job in Washington: leading a Cabinet department with a \$75 billion annual budget and a mandate to help spur an infrastructure program that Biden has likened to the building of the interstate highway system in the 1950s.

He will have to navigate the complicated politics of both an entrenched bureaucracy at the Transportation Department and the fraught politics of a bitterly divided Washington.

He may have found a way by just riding a bike, which has gained fans from even skeptics in Congress.

"You've got to keep your head up," Buttigieg told The Associated Press, explaining the path and potential dangers posed from unaccustomed drivers, but he said it can be a much quicker journey from point A to B.

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Biden on Thursday tasked Buttigieg and four other Cabinet members — the “Jobs Cabinet” — with selling the administration’s infrastructure and climate plan, a flood of money for roads, bridges, airports, broadband communications, water systems and electric cars.

But the plan has already hit a wall with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who objects to the corporate tax increases Biden says will pay for the plan and pledges to oppose it “every step of the way.” On the other side, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, says the package should be significantly larger.

Daunting as it may seem, the challenge of helping build consensus fits the ambition of the man who had the audacity to run for president from the perch of being mayor of a midsize town in Indiana. When Biden selected the smooth-talking Naval reserve veteran for the transportation post, he praised him as offering “a new voice with new ideas determined to move past old politics.”

In an interview, Buttigieg said he believes that bipartisan consensus is attainable.

Joining Buttigieg in selling the plan are Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

“I’ve had enough conversations, especially the one-on-one conversations away from the cameras with members from both sides of the aisle, to know there really is a sincere interest in getting this done,” Buttigieg told the AP. “Now politics can get in the way of that of course. But I think unlike a lot of other issues where there is just deep passionately felt profound disagreement about what to do, here there’s a really healthy overlap in terms of our ideas about what has to happen, even if there is a lot of difference on how to get there.”

Translation? Republicans like smooth roads and fast internet for their constituents, too. But so far, there is no indication Republicans share his position.

The proposal offers big stakes for Buttigieg at the department, where he pledges to promote public transit and other green alternatives to gas-guzzling cars and apply an “equity lens” to infrastructure projects.

“Black and brown neighborhoods have been disproportionately divided by highway projects or left isolated by the lack of adequate transit and transportation resources,” Buttigieg tweeted in December. Under Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, he said, “we will make righting these wrongs an imperative.”

Just two months into the job, Buttigieg has met with two dozen House members and 13 senators and in recent days has upped that pace, talking to lawmakers both parties every day.

Republicans describe the former McKinsey consultant as likable and open-minded, even if they wonder at times about his actual level of sway on legislation.

Illinois Rep. Rodney Davis, the top Republican on a key panel overseeing highways, said he’s talked with Buttigieg twice, once at a meeting with Biden and a bipartisan group of lawmakers at the White House. He called the conversations “really good.”

“I’m very excited to be able to work with him,” said Davis, a cyclist back home in his rural district, who thinks the former mayor can bring a valuable street-level perspective to filling potholes and easing congested streets.

“If he wants to go for a ride to discuss bike lanes and public transit, I’d welcome that,” he said.

Though the youngest Cabinet member at age 39, Buttigieg possesses a star power matched by few others in the group. He’s displayed an ability to command media attention and use those moments — including during a series of memorable Fox News hits around the election — to sway the public, including those not always apt to vote Democratic.

He’s spoken at the popular SXSW conference in Texas, joined Gov. Ralph Northam, D-Va., to promote expanded passenger rail, and tweets at a frequency to a wider public that comes close to rivaling Donald Trump when he was president. Buttigieg promotes transit policy both on his official and personal account, where he also expresses devotion to his husband, Chasten.

Buttigieg, who owns two dogs, has even been seen at a neighborhood park with Ocasio-Cortez. A chance meeting, he said.

The new transportation secretary had one recent stumble: He had to quickly walk back a plan to charge drivers per mile they drove. It’s a proposal that has some support among Republicans but could violate

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Biden's campaign pledge not to raise taxes on people earning less than \$400,000.

Buttigieg has impressed West Wing aides with his work ethic and willingness to learn, and he was quickly granted approval to pursue a robust engagement with the media.

The president's advisers also hold warm feelings toward the former mayor for his decision last spring to quickly endorse Biden after abandoning his own campaign, helping accelerate the end of the Democratic primary contest. And Biden has compared Buttigieg to his late son Beau, a powerful evocation that helped cement his importance to the president.

Now bound to Biden's agenda and performance, Buttigieg begins a phase likely to enhance his public service portfolio — and life experience.

This phase accomplishes what some allies have said Buttigieg needed, a next chapter, beyond the underdog story of the boy wonder from the small Midwestern city. Friends and advisers had long suggested that he get out of South Bend and see more of the world than his seven-month deployment to Afghanistan in 2014 allowed.

Buttigieg was also busy taking steps toward running for president when he got married in June 2018 and when his father died six months later. During the campaign, he said he and Chasten had hopes of becoming parents.

Asked about his desire to be a father, Buttigieg told the AP "we're still working at that," before adding with a smile, "Stay tuned."

As quickly as he rose, Buttigieg swiftly suspended his campaign in March 2020, before Biden's ascension in the primary was clear. He knew when to get out. He'll probably know when to get back in, too, if he does.

"He has incredible political talent and skill," said Mayor Nan Whaley of Dayton, Ohio, a longtime friend and 2020 campaign supporter. "But part of that talent and skill is having really great political timing."

On that front, she sees his work on infrastructure not as "part of this grand plan on his next move," but rather as a demonstration of his ability to focus on the task at hand.

Buttigieg and his husband have been spotted walking around their new neighborhood, Capitol Hill, where they live in a one-bedroom apartment, meandering the artisanal stalls at Eastern Market to smiles from residents. Last weekend, they wandered along the brick row houses and blooming magnolia cherry blossom trees, greeting neighbors with waves and allowing young children to pet their dogs. Their one-eyed puggle named "Buddy," adopted in late 2018, has become something of an Instagram star.

Buddy lingered as a blond-haired little girl ran up and sat to snuggle him while the other lab mix, Truman, stood nearby.

"He loves the attention," Chasten Buttigieg explained to the girl, a trait Buddy picked up during the campaign.

Pete Buttigieg smiled as the girl gave the dog a goodbye scratch on the head, and the couple slowly made the way back on a path toward the Capitol.

Trial in Floyd's death expected to turn to ex-cop's training

By AMY FORLITI, STEVE KARNOWSKI and TAMMY WEBBER undefined

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The trial of a former Minneapolis police officer in George Floyd's death is expected to turn toward the officer's training on Monday after a first week that was dominated by emotional testimony from eyewitnesses and devastating video of Floyd's arrest.

Derek Chauvin, 45, is charged with murder and manslaughter in the May 25 death of Floyd. Chauvin, who is white, is accused of pinning his knee on the 46-year-old Black man's neck for 9 minutes, 29 seconds as Floyd lay face-down in handcuffs outside of a corner market.

Prosecutors say Chauvin's knee killed Floyd. The defense argues that Chauvin did what he was trained to do and that Floyd's use of drugs and underlying health conditions caused his death.

Floyd's treatment by police was captured on widely seen bystander video that soon sparked protests that rocked Minneapolis and quickly spread to other U.S. cities and beyond. The video, plus officers' body-camera video and previously unseen bystander footage, was a heavy component of the first week of the

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trial, reawakening traumatic memories for viewers of the livestreamed trial.

Police Chief Medaria Arradondo is expected to testify during the trial's second week, perhaps as early as Monday. Arradondo, the city's first Black chief, fired Chauvin and three other officers the day after Floyd's death, and in June called it "murder."

"Mr. George Floyd's tragic death was not due to a lack of training — the training was there," Arradondo said then. "Chauvin knew what he was doing."

The city moved soon after Floyd's death to ban police chokeholds and neck restraints. Arradondo and Mayor Jacob Frey have also made several policy changes, including expanding requirements for reporting use-of-force incidents and documenting their attempts to de-escalate situations even when force isn't used.

Prosecutors have already called supervisory officers to build the case that Chauvin improperly restrained Floyd. A duty sergeant and a lieutenant who leads the homicide division both questioned Chauvin's actions in pinning Floyd after officers responded to a report that Floyd had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill.

"Totally unnecessary," Lt. Richard Zimmerman, the longest-tenured officer on the force, testified Friday. He said once Floyd was handcuffed, he saw "no reason for why the officers felt they were in danger, if that's what they felt, and that's what they would have to feel to be able to use that kind of force."

Zimmerman, who joined the department in 1985, said he has never been trained to kneel on someone's neck if their hands are cuffed behind their back and they are in the prone position. Officers are supposed to get a person out of the position as soon as possible because it restricts their breathing, he said.

Instead, officers continued to restrain Floyd until an ambulance arrived — even after he became unresponsive.

Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson peppered Zimmerman with questions about the threat a handcuffed suspect might still pose, as well as whether handcuffs might fail. Nelson has also suggested that bystanders shouting at police might have distracted them from Floyd and made them feel threatened.

Jurors heard several days of testimony from those bystanders, several choking up as they recalled feeling powerless to help Floyd and guilt over his death.

Genevieve Hansen, an off-duty firefighter who came on the scene as she was out for a walk, said she immediately recognized Floyd was in trouble and tried to offer help. Instead, Officer Tou Thao ordered her to stay on the sidewalk. Hansen, who was mostly stoic while testifying, was overcome as she recalled her frustration.

"There was a man being killed," she said. "I would have been able to provide medical attention to the best of my abilities. And this human was denied that right."

'Trial of the Chicago 7' takes top honors at SAG Awards

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

The starry cast of Aaron Sorkin's 1960s courtroom drama "The Trial of the Chicago 7" took the top prize Sunday at a virtual Screen Actors Guild Awards where actors of color, for the first time, swept the individual film awards.

The 27th SAG Awards, presented by the Hollywood actors' guild SAG-Aftra, were a muted affair — and not just because the red carpet-less ceremony was condensed to a pre-recorded, Zoom-heavy, one-hour broadcast on TBS and TNT. The perceived Academy Awards frontrunner — Chloé Zhao's "Nomadland" — wasn't nominated for best ensemble, making this year's postponed SAG Awards less of an Oscar preview than it is most years.

Still, the win for Netflix's "The Trial of the Chicago 7" marked the first time a film from any streaming service won the guild's ensemble award. Written and directed by Sorkin, "The Trial of the Chicago 7" had been set for theatrical release by Paramount Pictures before the pandemic hit, leading to its sale to Netflix. The streamer is still after its first best-picture win at the Oscars.

Frank Langella, who plays the judge who presided over the 1969 prosecution of activists arrested during the 1968 Democratic National Convention, drew parallels between that era's unrest and today's while accepting the award on behalf of the cast.

"God give us leaders," said the Rev. Martin Luther King before he was shot down in cold blood on this

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very date in 1968 — a profound injustice,” said Langella, citing events leading up to those dramatized in “The Trial of the Chicago 7.” “The Rev. King was right. We need leaders to guide us toward hating each other less.”

The win came over two other Netflix releases — “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” and “Da 5 Bloods” — as well as Amazon’s “One Night in Miami” and A24’s “Minari.” Had Lee Isaac Chung’s Korean-American family drama “Minari” won, it would have been the second straight year a film largely not in English won SAG’s top award. Last year, the cast of “Parasite” triumphed, becoming the first cast from a non-English language film to do so.

The SAG Awards are a closely watched Oscar harbinger. Actors make up the largest branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, and SAG winners often line up with Oscar ones. Last year, “Parasite” went on to win best picture at the Academy Awards, and all of the individual SAG winners — Renée Zellweger, Brad Pitt, Laura Dern, Joaquin Phoenix — won at the Oscars, too.

Those awards this year went to a group entirely of actors of color, potentially setting the stage for a historically diverse slate of Oscar winners: Chadwick Boseman, best male actor for “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom”; Viola Davis, best female actor for “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom”; Yuh-Jung Youn, best female supporting actor for “Minari”; and Daniel Kaluuya, best male supporting actor for “Judas and the Black Messiah.”

Of those, Davis’ win was the most surprising in a category that has often belonged to Carey Mulligan (“Promising Young Woman”) or Frances McDormand (“Nomadland”). It’s Davis’ fifth individual SAG award.

“Thank you, August, for leaving a legacy for actors of color that we can relish the rest of our lives,” said Davis, referring to playwright August Wilson.

As it has throughout the awards season, best male actor again belonged to Boseman for his final performance. Boseman, who died last August at age 43, had already set a record for most SAG film nominations — four — in a single year. He was also posthumously nominated for his supporting role in “Da 5 Bloods” and shared in the ensemble nominations for both Spike Lee’s film and “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.”

It was the SAG Awards where Boseman gave one of his most memorable speeches. At the guild’s 2019 awards, Boseman spoke on behalf of the “Black Panther” cast when the film won the top award. “We all know what it’s like to be told that there is not a place for you to be featured,” Boseman said then. “Yet you are young, gifted and Black.”

The Academy Awards frontrunner, “Nomadland” missed out on a best-ensemble nomination possibly because its cast is composed of largely non-professional actors. Zhao’s film previously won at the highly predictive Producers Guild Awards, as well as at the Golden Globes. “The Trial of the Chicago 7,” up for best picture at the Oscars and four other awards, could pose a challenge to the frontrunner.

In an interview following the pre-taping of the award for “The Trial of the Chicago 7,” Langella called the virtual experience much more civilized. “I’m in my bedroom slippers,” he said from New York’s Hudson Valley. “I have no pants on,” added his co-star Michael Keaton.

Eddie Redmayne, who plays Tom Hayden in the film, credited Sorkin and casting director Francine Maisler for assembling such a disparate group of actors — including Sacha Baron Cohen, Mark Rylance, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II and Jeremy Strong — into an ensemble.

“It was like a clash of different types of music, whether it was jazz or rock or classical -- but all of that coming together under Aaron. He was the conductor, almost,” said Redmayne. “It was a joy day and day out to watch these great and different and varied actors slugging it out.”

In television categories, the ensembles of “Schitt’s Creek” (for comedy series) and “The Crown” (for drama series) added to their string of awards. Other winners included Anya Taylor-Joy (“The Queen’s Gambit”), Gillian Anderson (“The Crown”), Jason Sudeikis (“Ted Lasso”), Jason Bateman (“Ozark”) and Mark Ruffalo (“I Know This Much Is True”).

The awards are typically the highest profile event for the Screen Actors Guild, though the union’s faceoff earlier this year with former President Donald Trump may have drawn more headlines. After the guild prepared to expel Trump (credits include “The Apprentice,” “Home Alone 2”) for his role in the Capitol riot, Trump resigned from SAG-Aftra.

Minorities in Myanmar borderlands face fresh fear since coup

By VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Before each rainy season Lu Lu Aung and other farmers living in a camp for internally displaced people in Myanmar's far northern Kachin state would return to the village they fled and plant crops that would help keep them fed for the coming year.

But this year in the wake of February's military coup, with the rains not far off, the farmers rarely step out of their makeshift homes and don't dare leave their camp. They say it is simply too dangerous to risk running into soldiers from Myanmar's army or their aligned militias.

"We can't go anywhere and can't do anything since the coup," Lu Lu Aung said. "Every night, we hear the sounds of jet fighters flying so close above our camp."

The military's lethal crackdown on protesters in large central cities such as Yangon and Mandalay has received much of the attention since the coup that toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government. But far away in Myanmar's borderlands, Lu Lu Aung and millions of others who hail from Myanmar's minority ethnic groups are facing increasing uncertainty and waning security as longstanding conflicts between the military and minority guerrilla armies flare anew.

It's a situation that was thrust to the forefront over the past week as the military launched deadly airstrikes against ethnic Karen guerrillas in their homeland on the eastern border, displacing thousands and sending civilians fleeing into neighboring Thailand.

Several of the rebel armies have threatened to join forces if the killing of civilians doesn't stop, while a group made up of members of the deposed government has floated the idea of creating a new army that includes rebel groups. The U.N. special envoy for Myanmar, meanwhile, has warned the country faces the possibility of civil war.

Ethnic minorities make up about 40% of Myanmar's 52 million people, but the central government and the military leadership have long been dominated by the country's Burman ethnic majority. Since independence from Britain in 1948, more than a dozen ethnic groups have been seeking greater autonomy, with some maintaining their own independent armies.

That has put them at odds with Myanmar's ultranationalist generals, who have long seen any ceding of territory — especially those in border areas that are often rich in natural resources — as tantamount to treason and have ruthlessly fought against the rebel armies with only occasional periods of ceasefire.

The violence has led to accusations of abuses against all sides, such as arbitrary taxes on civilians and forced recruitment, and according to the United Nations has displaced some 239,000 people since 2011 alone. That doesn't include the more than 800,000 minority Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh to escape a military campaign the U.N. has called ethnic cleansing.

Since February anti-coup protests have taken place in every border state, and security forces have responded much as they have elsewhere with tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. But residents and observers say the post-coup situation in geographically isolated borderlands has been made worse by increased skirmishes between the military and armed ethnic organizations jockeying for power and territory.

Lu Lu Aung, who hails from the Kachin ethnic group, said she participated in protests, but stopped as it was now too dangerous. She said Myanmar security forces and aligned militias recently occupied their old village where they planted crops and no one left the camp because they feared they would be forced into work for the army.

"Our students can no longer continue the schooling and for the adults it's so much difficult to find a job and make money," she said.

Humanitarian aid for civilians in the borderlands — already strained by the pandemic as well as the inherent difficulty outside groups face operating in many areas — has been hard it since the coup as well.

Communications have been crippled, banks have closed and security has become increasingly uncertain, said the director of a Myanmar-based organization supporting displaced persons who spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

"There is no more humanitarian help and support," she said.

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In eastern Karen State, where the airstrikes have displaced thousands, there are concerns that the arrival of rainy season could exacerbate a humanitarian situation already made difficult by reports that Thailand has sent back many of the civilians who fled. Thailand has said those who went back to Myanmar did so voluntarily.

Yet there are parts of the country's borderlands that have hardly been impacted by the coup.

In Wa State, a region bordering China and Thailand that has its own government, army and ceasefire agreements with the Myanmar military, videos being shared online show life going on as usual, including the rollout of a coronavirus vaccination campaign.

Near Bangladesh in coastal Rakhine State, where the Rohingya were driven from and where violent clashes with the Arakan Army group have been ongoing for years, the junta last month removed the group from its list of terrorist groups, raising hopes a lowering of hostilities. The Arakan Army, unlike a number of other armed groups, had not criticized the coup.

The group, however, since released a statement that declared its right to defend its territory and civilians against military attacks, leading some to fear a fresh escalation in fighting.

Other armed groups have issued similar statements. Some such as the Karen National Union have provided protection for civilians marching in anti-coup protests.

Such actions have contributed to the calls for a "federal army" bringing together armed ethnic groups from across the country. But analysts says such a vision would be hard to achieve due to logistical challenges and political disagreements among the groups.

"These groups are not in a position where they can provide the support against the Myanmar military needed in urban centers with large populations, or really too far outside their own regions," said Ronan Lee, a visiting scholar at Queen Mary University of London's International State Crime Initiative.

Despite the uncertainty of what's to come, some minority activists say they have been heartened since the coup by the increased focus on the role ethnic groups can take in Myanmar's future. They also say there appears to be greater understanding — at least among anti-coup protesters — of the struggle minorities have faced for so long.

"If there's any silver lining in all of this, that's it," said one activist, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears for their safety.

Florida works to avoid 'catastrophic' pond collapse

By CHRIS O'MEARA and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

PALMETTO, Fla. (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Sunday that crews are working to prevent the collapse of a large wastewater pond in the Tampa Bay area while evacuating the area to avoid a "catastrophic flood."

Manatee County officials say the latest models show that a breach at the old phosphate plant reservoir has the potential to gush out 340 million gallons of water in a matter of minutes, risking a 20-foot-high (about 6.1-meter-high) wall of water.

"What we are looking at now is trying to prevent and respond to, if need be, a real catastrophic flood situation," DeSantis said at a press conference after flying over the old Piney Point phosphate mine.

Authorities have closed off portions of the U.S. Highway 41 and ordered evacuations of 316 homes. Some families were placed in local hotels.

Manatee County Sheriff's officials began evacuating about 345 inmates from a local jail about 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) away from the 77-acre pond first floor on Sunday afternoon, the Tampa Bay Times reported. Manatee County Administrator Scott Hopes said models show the area could be covered with between 1 foot (30 centimeters) to 5 feet (1.5 meters) of water, and the second floor is 10 feet above ground.

Officials first announced that they would move people and staff to the second story and put sandbags on the ground floor, but Sheriff Rick Wells later said moving all the inmates to the second floor posed a security risk.

County officials say well water remains unaffected and there is no threat to Lake Manatee, the area's

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primary source of drinking water.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection says the water in the pond is primarily salt water mixed with wastewater and storm water. It has elevated levels of phosphorous and nitrogen and is acidic, but not expected to be toxic, the agency says.

Crews have been discharging water since the pond began leaking in March. On Friday, a significant leak that was detected escalated the response and prompted the first evacuations and a declaration of a state of emergency on Saturday. A portion of the containment wall in the reservoir shifted, leading officials to think a collapse could occur at any time.

Hopes, the county administrator, said Sunday that with new state resources, crews will be nearly doubling the amount of water being pumped out of the pond and taken to Port Manatee. Currently about 22,000 gallons of water are being discharged per minute, and Hopes said he expects the risk of collapse to decrease by Tuesday.

Early Sunday, officials saw an increase of water leaking out, but Hopes says it seems to have plateaued. The water running out on its own is going to Piney Point creek and into Cockroach Bay, an aquatic preserve in the Tampa Bay north of the facility.

"Looking at the water that has been removed and the somewhat stability of the current breach, I think the team is much more comfortable today than we were yesterday," he said. "We are not out of the critical area yet."

Hopes said he could not rule out that a full breach could destabilize the walls of the other ponds at the Piney Point site.

The Florida DEP Secretary Noah Valenstein said another pond has higher levels of metals.

"The radiologicals are still below surface water discharge standards. So, again this is not water we want to see leaving the site," he said.

Officials said the federal Environmental Protection Agency is sending a representative to be at the command center in Manatee County. The agency did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Calls to the owner of the site, HRK Holdings, for comments went unanswered Saturday and Sunday.

The ponds sit in stacks of phosphogypsum, a solid radioactive byproduct from manufacturing fertilizer. State authorities say the water in the breached pond is not radioactive.

But the EPA says too much nitrogen in the wastewater causes algae to grow faster, leading to fish kills. Some algal blooms can also harm humans who come into contact with polluted waters, or eat tainted fish.

Environmental groups urged the federal government this weekend to step in to halt sending more wastewater to the existing so-called gypsum stacks and halting the creation of more phosphogypsum, which is left behind when phosphate rock is mined to produce fertilizer.

"We hope the contamination is not as bad as we fear, but are preparing for significant damage to Tampa Bay and the communities that rely on this precious resource," Justin Bloom, founder of the Sarasota-based nonprofit organization Suncoast Waterkeeper, said in a statement.

Hymns through masks: Christians mark another pandemic Easter

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Christianity's most joyous feast day was celebrated worldwide with the faithful spaced apart in pews and singing choruses of "Hallelujah" through face coverings on a second Easter Sunday marked by pandemic precautions.

From vast Roman Catholic cathedrals to Protestant churches, worshippers followed regulations on the coronavirus. In some European countries, citizens lined up on Easter for their turn to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

In the Lombardy region of Italy, where the pandemic first erupted in the West, a hospital gave a traditional dove-shaped Easter cake symbolizing peace to each person waiting to get vaccinated. Many who came were in their 80s.

A soccer team in Lyon, France, opened its stadium as a vaccination center for the long holiday weekend.

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Some 9,000 people were expected to receive their shots there over three days as the French government tries to speed up vaccinations amid a fresh outbreak of infections.

In the Holy Land, travel restrictions and quarantine regulations prevented foreign pilgrims from flocking to religious sites in Jerusalem during Holy Week, which culminates in Easter celebrations. Pope Francis lamented that the pandemic has prevented some churchgoers from attending services.

At St. Peter's Basilica, the 200 or so faithful allowed to attend looked lost in the cavernous cathedral. Normally, thousands would be at the Mass celebrated by Francis, and more than 100,00 would sometimes assemble outside in St. Peter's Square to receive his Easter blessing afterward.

But this year, as in 2020, crowds are banned from gathering in Italy and at the Vatican. Francis delivered his noon Easter address on world affairs from inside the basilica, using the occasion to appeal anew that vaccines reach the poorest countries.

The pontiff sounded weary as he noted that pandemic measures have affected religious holiday traditions and kept some faithful from public worship.

"We pray that these restrictions, as well as all restrictions on freedom of worship and religion worldwide, may be lifted and everyone be allowed to pray and praise God freely," Francis said.

In Syria, where a national vaccination program has yet to begin, churchgoers in the Lady of Damascus Church prayed for a way out of the economic and political crisis, only worsened by the pandemic.

"We came to the church for Easter so we get rid of the pandemic that we are in," said Bassam Assaf. "Of course, we are not scared of coronavirus. It is the reality that we face, but it cannot stop us from coming and praying to God to take us out of this ordeal and help the world."

A service at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem was celebrated by the senior Roman Catholic cleric in the Holy Land. That is the site where many Christians believe Jesus was crucified, buried and rose from the dead. Israel's successful vaccination campaign has allowed reopening of many places, including religious sites.

The pandemic kept Seville's Brotherhood of the Holy Resurrection from sending its ornate Easter float, bearing a towering statue of Jesus, through the streets of the Spanish city. Instead, the Brotherhood posted videos and old photos from their last procession, two years ago.

Some Pentecostal Christians in South Africa canceled a three-day retreat starting on Good Friday. On the hills overlooking Soweto, a Johannesburg township, Apostolic Pentecostals gathered in small groups Sunday to mark Easter.

In South Korea, Yoido Full Gospel Church, the country's biggest Protestant church, allowed only about 2,000 people to attend Easter service, or about 17% of the capacity of the main building. Masked worshippers sang hymns and prayed as the service was broadcast online and by Christian TV channels.

Intent on tamping down weeks of surging infections, the Italian government ordered people to stay home for the three-day weekend except for essential errands. Premier Mario Draghi's government did allow one visit to family or friends per day in residents' home regions over the weekend, which includes the national holiday on Monday.

Italy permits religious services in the pandemic if capacity is limited and masks are worn. But early on, the predominantly Roman Catholic country's many churches were open only for individual prayer.

Hundreds of Catholics gathered in the mammoth Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul, Minnesota, for the Easter Vigil service Saturday evening. Every other pew was kept empty and masks were mandatory. Still, the solemn liturgy marked a new, hopeful beginning for the congregation after a turbulent year.

After all-virtual Easter services last year, St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City was at half-capacity for Sunday's Mass. Worshippers spaced themselves out in the vaulted neo-Gothic cathedral, which can seat more than 2,000. The choir sang through masks.

In Detroit, Hartford Memorial Baptist Church opened for in-person Easter services for the first time in more than a year, with capacity limits and social distancing rules in place. The Rev. Charles Christian Adams told the Detroit Free Press that people need church, especially after the congregation lost at least 14 members to COVID-19.

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Tonee Carpio said physically being in St. Vincent de Paul Church in Austin, Texas, meant a lot to her after services last year were offered only online. She said being in church helps keep her Filipino culture alive in her city, since some prayers are offered in her native Tagalog.

"When you're inside a church, you become more solemn, you can focus on God," she said.

In Florida, Eastgate Christian Fellowship in Panama City Beach hosted its annual sunrise service on the beach. The church had to scrap the service last year because all beaches were closed. Pastor Janelle Green estimated that about 400 people participated.

Robin Fox of Palm Bay, planned to spend Sunday driving her mother to Orlando to get a second dose of vaccine at a Federal Emergency Management Agency walk-up site.

"She's getting that freedom on the same day that (people go to) church to celebrate Jesus being risen, so I said (to her), 'it's kind of like you're being risen also,'" Fox said.

Jordan's king sends tough message on dissent in royal family

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Jordanian authorities said Sunday they foiled a "malicious plot" by a former crown prince to destabilize the kingdom with foreign support, contradicting the senior royal's claims that he was being punished for speaking out against corruption and incompetence.

Faced with rival narratives, the United States and Arab governments quickly sided with Jordan's King Abdullah II, reflecting the country's strategic importance in a turbulent region.

Domestically, Prince Hamzah's unprecedented criticism of the ruling class — without naming the king — could lend support to growing complaints about poor governance and human rights abuses in Jordan.

At the same time, the king's tough reaction -- placing his popular half-brother under house arrest and accusing him of serious crimes -- illustrated the limits on public dissent he is willing to tolerate.

"The kingdom's stability and security transcend everything," said Ayman Safadi, Jordan's foreign minister and deputy prime minister, as he accused Hamzah and two senior Jordanian officials of conspiring with foreign elements to destabilize the kingdom. "The plot is totally contained."

Yet Safadi's news conference Sunday did little to address questions surrounding the weekend's dramatic events. In the night from Saturday to Sunday, Hamzah had announced in a secretly recorded video leaked to the media that he had been placed under house arrest.

Hamzah's mother, Noor, weighed in on Twitter, writing Sunday: "Praying that truth and justice will prevail for all the innocent victims of this wicked slander. God bless and keep them safe."

Abdullah and Hamzah are both sons of the late King Hussein, who remains a beloved figure two decades after his death. Upon ascending to the throne in 1999, Abdullah named Hamzah as crown prince, only to revoke the title five years later. While the two are said to have generally good relations, Hamzah has at times spoken out against government policies, and more recently had forged ties with powerful tribal leaders in a move seen as a threat to the king.

In his video, Hamzah, 41, accused Jordan's ruling class of corruption and stifling freedom of expression.

"I'm not part of any conspiracy or nefarious organization or foreign-backed group, as is always the claim here for anyone who speaks out," he said. He said his love for the country is seen as "a crime worthy of isolation, threats and now being cut off."

Hamzah is a popular figure in Jordan, widely seen as pious and modest. But in his televised address, Safadi painted a far different picture, accusing the prince of engaging in a secret plot that would have harmed national security had it not been foiled at the last minute.

"When they (security services) intercepted certain communications speaking about a zero hour, then it was clear that they (the alleged plotters) moved from designs and planning to action," Safadi said. "As a result, it was necessary for the security and intelligence apparatuses to move to throttle at birth this malicious plot."

Safadi did not provide specifics on the alleged plot or say what other countries were purported to have been involved. But he said that some 14 to 16 associates of Hamzah had been arrested, in addition to

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two former senior officials, Bassem Awadallah and Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a member of the royal family. Awadallah is a former Cabinet minister and one-time head of the royal court.

Safadi said Hamzah was warned Saturday by the country's military chief to halt his activities but rejected the request. He claimed the prince recorded the conversations, passed them to foreign sources and issued his video message "in an attempt to distort facts and to gain sympathy domestically and internationally." He said the prince's activities amounted to "incitement and efforts to mobilize citizens against the state."

Safadi accused Awadallah, now a prominent businessman in the Gulf, of handling the contacts with foreigners. He also claimed an individual with links to foreign intelligence services had offered services to Hamzah's wife on Saturday afternoon to try to get her out of the country.

The Jordanian news site Amoon identified the individual as an Israeli named Roy Shaposhnik. In a statement to the AP, Shaposhnik identified himself as a "former Israeli" businessman living in Europe, and a close friend of Hamzah's, but denied ever being an intelligence agent. He said he offered to host Hamzah's wife and children after hearing about the prince's predicament. The offer, he said, was based on the "strong personal friendship" between their families.

Safadi declined to say whether the prince would be charged with a crime, saying only there were attempts to resolve the matter amicably.

Such public clashes between the highest ranks of the long-ruling family are unheard of, and any signs of instability in Jordan could raise concerns throughout the region.

The United States swiftly announced its "full support" for Abdullah. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait all expressed solidarity with the king.

Labib Kamhawi, a Jordanian political analyst, said the strong support for Abdullah reflected his generally good relations across the region as well as a concern that similar troubles could strike other countries.

None of the leaders in the region "would like to see havoc hitting any regime," Kamhawi said. "It could be contagious."

The U.S. considers Jordan a major ally, granting it access to military equipment and assistance. U.S. special forces and other troops routinely train with the Jordanians. The kingdom hosts some 3,000 American troops.

Stability in Jordan and the status of the king have long been a concern throughout the region, particularly during the Trump administration, which gave unprecedented support to Israel and sought to isolate the Palestinians, including by slashing funding for Palestinian refugees.

That placed Jordan, which serves as the custodian of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem — and is home to a large Palestinian population — in a delicate position.

Jordan made peace with Israel in 1994. The countries maintain close security ties, but relations have otherwise been tense in recent years, largely due to differences linked to Israel's conflict with the Palestinians.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz called Jordan a "strategic ally" and dismissed the turmoil as an "internal Jordanian matter."

Jordan, a country of some 10 million people, has been shaken by a series of crises in recent years, from the rise of the Islamic State group in neighboring countries to an influx of Syrian refugees and an economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Bessma Momani, a professor of international relations at Ontario's Waterloo University, said the house arrest of Hamzah was "self-defeating" because it is likely to strengthen the prince's popularity.

Nonetheless, she said it sent a powerful message to the Jordanian public. "If a prince can be stymied, no Jordanian is immune from the heavy hand of the state," she said.

UK eyes testing COVID-19 passports at mass gatherings

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain is planning to test a series of measures including "coronavirus status certifications" over the coming weeks to see if they can allow people to safely return to mass gatherings at sports arenas, nightclubs and concerts.

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People attending a range of events this month and in May, including a club night and key FA Cup soccer matches, will need to be tested both before and after. The trials will also gather evidence on how ventilation and different approaches to social distancing could enable large events to go ahead.

Officials are also developing plans to test out COVID-19 passports that are expected to show if a person has received a vaccine, has recently tested negative for the virus, or has some immunity due to having had coronavirus in the previous six months.

The issue of vaccine passports has been a hotly debated topic around the world, including in the United States and Israel. The question is how much governments, employers, venues and other places have a right to know about a person's virus status. Many disagree over what the right balance is between a person's right to medical privacy and the collective right of people in groups not to be infected with a dangerous disease by others.

Some critics also say such vaccine passports will enable discrimination against poor people and impoverished nations that do not have ready access to vaccines.

Authorities in Britain have said the passes could involve the use of an app or paper certificates for those who don't have access to the digital option.

But U.K. Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston stressed to reporters that "the earliest pilots almost certainly won't involve any elements of certification" but will involve testing before and after the events. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to set out more details about the coronavirus passports on Monday.

"We are doing everything we can to enable the reopening of our country so people can return to the events, travel and other things they love as safely as possible, and these reviews will play an important role in allowing this to happen," Johnson said.

Dozens of British lawmakers, including some from Johnson's own Conservative Party, have opposed the plans.

Cabinet minister Michael Gove, who has led the task force responsible for drawing up the plans, acknowledged that vaccine passports raised "a host of practical and ethical questions" which needed to be resolved before any wider rollout.

Officials said the trial events include the FA Cup semi-final at London's Wembley Stadium later this month with a crowd of 4,000 in a stadium that seats 90,000, and the event's final on May 15, with a crowd of 21,000.

Other upcoming trial events include the World Snooker Championship in Sheffield, central England; a club night at a warehouse and a comedy club event in Liverpool; and three marathon races involving thousands of runners.

The news about the trials came as U.K. businesses including pubs, restaurants, nonessential shops and hairdressers prepared to welcome back customers as restrictions ease in England. Officials say 47% of the country's population has had a first vaccine dose and more than 5 million people in the U.K. have received their second shot.

Johnson's government is also expected to set out its approach to easing restrictions on international travel next week. Media reports say when Britain's current ban on foreign holidays is lifted, a risk-based traffic light system with ratings for countries around the world will be introduced and travellers will be required to quarantine accordingly.

More details are to be unveiled when a government task force on global travel reports on April 12. The government has said that international vacation travel cannot take place until mid-May at the earliest.

Last week the U.K. added four more nations to its red list of countries from which travel is banned except for U.K. citizens and those with residency rights. By April 9, the U.K. red list will be up to 39 countries. It aims to prevent more virus variants — especially ones first detected in Brazil and South Africa — from getting into the U.K.

Despite Britain's success on the vaccination front, it still has the highest reported COVID-19 death toll in Europe at around 127,000 deaths.

Infections have come down significantly in Britain. The government on Sunday reported only 2,297 con-

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firmed new daily cases and 10 additional deaths. That compares to nearly 70,000 daily new cases and up to 1,800 daily COVID-19 deaths in January.

The latest figures were likely lower than expected because of a lag in reporting over the Easter weekend.

EXPLAINER: Legion of Chauvin prosecutors, each with own role

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

Viewers watching the trial of a former Minneapolis officer charged with murder in George Floyd 's death may be struck by the array of prosecutors taking turns presenting their case. The choice of who does what is no accident.

While Derek Chauvin 's attorney, Eric Nelson, works alone, the prosecution is being handled by two assistant attorneys general, Matthew Frank and Erin Eldridge, and two outside lawyers, Jerry Blackwell and Steve Schleicher. Ten more are working behind the scenes, many for free.

Experts agree the roles played by prosecutors are based on the skill sets each brings, but appearances matter, too.

WHY DID BLACKWELL GIVE THE OPENING STATEMENT?

The undercurrent of racial tension — a white police officer accused of killing a Black man — can't be ignored. Blackwell is a prominent Black civil rights attorney and one of the founders of the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers. Last year, he won a posthumous pardon for a Black man wrongly convicted of rape before the infamous Duluth lynchings of 1920.

But law professors following the case said it's Blackwell's unique ability to translate complicated legal jargon into information jurors can understand that made him the obvious pick to lay out the prosecution's case.

"One of the things he's known for is his ability to speak English rather than 'legalese,'" said Joseph Daly, emeritus professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota. "It's extremely important in this case just to try to explain what the elements of the crimes are that Mr. Chauvin is charged with."

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIN ELDRIDGE QUESTIONED TWO OF THE YOUNGEST WITNESSES. WHY?

Eldridge joined the Minnesota attorney general's office in 2018. Before that, she served as a special assistant U.S. attorney in Nebraska and the Northern District of Iowa.

Jonathan Simon, a professor at University of California Berkeley School of Law, noted that our culture associates women with "being more caretaking toward children, toward juveniles."

Using Eldridge as the questioner may help to "ease the witnesses' experience and get their testimony as effectively as possible, but also to help the jury see this in the most sympathetic light," Simon said.

Daly said Eldridge "was particularly adept at showing empathy and kindness and a certain softness, which I think is really important when you're questioning children."

When an 18-year-old witness, Alyssa Funari, began to cry, Eldridge told her to take her time and offered a tissue.

"Is this difficult for you to talk about?" Eldridge asked. "Do you need a minute?"

IS THERE A DRAWBACK TO USING SO MANY DIFFERENT PROSECUTORS?

St. Louis University School of Law professor Sue McGraugh said she sought to make a personal connection with jurors when she was a prosecutor. She said she's rarely seen a case with so many prosecutors, and that it carries some risk.

"It's unusual because, as someone who has tried a lot of cases, you do want the jury to form some sort of attachment to someone on the legal team," McGraugh said.

SO, WHY SO MANY?

It's evidence of the stakes in the trial that Daly called "possibly one of the most important cases ever in the United States and possibly the world."

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz appointed Attorney General Keith Ellison to handle the prosecution just days after Floyd's death, and Ellison vowed to utilize whatever resources were necessary.

Frank and Schleicher have handled the lion's share of questioning since the trial began. Frank is a 21-year

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veteran of the attorney general's office and has led the criminal division for 14 years. Daly called Frank "the most experienced and skilled lawyer in the criminal division of the attorney general's office."

Schleicher is a veteran trial attorney and prosecutor who works for the law firm Maslon LLP. He spent 13 years in the U.S. attorney's office and was a prosecutor in the case of Danny Heinrich, who confessed in 2016 that he killed 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling in 1989, and led authorities to his body.

WHAT IS THE FULL DEPTH OF THE PROSECUTION TEAM?

The prosecution team has 13 lawyers, said John Stiles, Ellison's spokesman, and a 14th acted as a jury consultant.

Ellison, Frank and Eldridge are the only ones who work in the attorney general's office. The team also includes Assistant Hennepin County Attorney Joshua Larson and nine outside attorneys. Stiles said the outside attorneys are all working pro bono, or without pay.

The roster behind the scenes is deep. Perhaps the best-known player is Neal Katyal, former U.S. acting solicitor general who has argued dozens of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Katyal led a successful effort to get a third-degree murder charge reinstated against Chauvin after the judge initially ruled it didn't fit the circumstances.

Stiles said in an email that about half of the outside attorneys are working full-time on the case.

WHAT ABOUT THE DEFENSE?

Nelson is the lone defense attorney, aided in court by a legal assistant who is also an attorney but who hasn't taken part in the courtroom arguments. The defense is funded through the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association's legal defense fund. Though Chauvin was fired soon after Floyd's death, he has the right to representation through his years as a member of his local union.

Nelson is an attorney with the Minneapolis firm Halberg Criminal Defense and one of 12 attorneys for the MPPOA who take turn handling officer-involved cases. While Nelson is alone in court, he can consult with the other 11 attorneys, the association said.

Still, the in-court optics are hard to ignore.

Judge Peter Cahill has said Nelson "does not have the same level of support" as the prosecution.

Vast archives at JFK Library help bring 'Hemingway' to life

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A new documentary on Ernest Hemingway — powered by vast but little-known archives kept at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston — is shedding new light on the acclaimed novelist.

"Hemingway," by longtime collaborators Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, premiering on PBS on three consecutive nights starting April 5, takes a more nuanced look at the author and his longstanding reputation as an alcoholic, adventurer, outdoorsman and bullfight-loving misogynist who struggled with internal turmoil that eventually led to his death by suicide at age 61.

The truth about the man many consider America's greatest 20th-century novelist — whose concise writing style made him an outsized celebrity who became a symbol of unrepentant American masculinity — is much more complex, Novick said.

"We hope this film opens up opportunities to look at Hemingway in different ways," said Novick, who has co-created several other documentaries with Burns including "The Vietnam War" and "Prohibition." "There is a complexity beneath the surface."

That complexity would have been nearly impossible to detail without the largest-in-the-world Hemingway collection that ended up at the JFK Library, thanks to Hemingway's and Kennedy's widows.

Although the two men never met, they admired each other and corresponded briefly. Hemingway was even invited to Kennedy's inauguration but couldn't make it because of illness, said Hilary Justice, the Hemingway scholar in residence at the library.

When Hemingway's fourth wife, Mary Hemingway, was figuring out what to do with her late husband's effects, she asked Jackie Kennedy if they could be housed at the JFK Library.

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The archives contain Hemingway's manuscripts — including "The Sun Also Rises" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls" — personal correspondence and about 11,000 photographs.

Much of the material used in the documentary has not been widely seen in public, if at all, Novick said.

Burns had been to the JFK Library on multiple occasions for several functions, but had no idea about the extent of the Hemingway archives until they started researching the film, which has been in the works for years.

"The Hemingway collection was central to the process," Burns said. "It helped us understand just what a disciplined writer he was."

Much of the documentary deals with Hemingway's complicated relationship with the women in his life, from his mother and sisters to the nurse he fell love with while recovering from wounds suffered in World War I to his four wives.

"So much of what he did in life was about love: running to it, running from it and ruining it," Burns said.

While considered the archetype of American manhood, the truth about Hemingway's masculinity was more complex, the filmmakers found.

As a child, Hemingway's mother treated him and one of his sisters as twins, often dressing them in identical outfits, sometimes as boys, sometimes as girls. He explored gender fluidity both in his books and in life, letting his hair grow as his wives cropped theirs short.

"We wanted to push back against this idea that Hemingway didn't like women," Novick said.

Novick's favorite part of the collection were Hemingway's manuscripts, many handwritten on store-bought notebooks. They show in great detail his thinking process as he wrote, rewrote, amended and edited his works through cross-outs, scribbles and notes in the margins.

Hemingway, for example, wrote dozens of endings to "A Farewell to Arms" — as many as 47, according to one count.

"You can trace how each work developed, from first draft to final manuscript," she said.

For Burns, the most striking thing about the collection are the pieces of shrapnel dug from Hemingway's body after he was almost killed as a teenager driving a Red Cross ambulance in World War I. Burns can't help but think that such a profound near-death experience had a major impact on the rest of Hemingway's life, and contributed to his death.

Whether you're a Hemingway aficionado, or know virtually nothing about him, there is something in the series for you, Novick said.

"There's a huge amount to be learned and new interpretations of his work and life in here," she said.

Northern Ireland police appeal for calm after violent unrest

LONDON (AP) — Police in Northern Ireland have appealed for calm after officers were attacked with petrol bombs and cars were set on fire during a second night of unrest.

Three cars were hijacked and set on fire Saturday night in Newtownabbey, an area on the outskirts of Belfast, police said.

North Area Commander Chief Superintendent Davy Beck said 30 petrol bombs were thrown at officers in an "orchestrated attack on police."

A 47-year-old man was arrested and remained in police custody.

On Friday night, 27 police officers were injured and eight people were arrested during riots in Belfast and Londonderry. Police said they came under "sustained attack" from a large group of young people throwing stones, bottles and fireworks.

The Police Federation for Northern Ireland called for an end to the violence and said people destroying their own communities was "not the way to protest or vent."

Tensions have flared as some members of Northern Ireland's legislature sought to censure two dozen politicians from the Irish republican Sinn Fein party who attended the June funeral of Bobby Storey, a former head of intelligence for the Irish Republican Army. Officials recently said they would not prosecute the politicians for alleged breaches of coronavirus restrictions.

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All the main unionist parties have demanded the resignation of Northern Ireland's police chief over the controversy, claiming he has lost the confidence of their community.

Northern Ireland's first minister, Arlene Foster, has urged young people not to "get drawn into disorder" and refrain from attacking police.

Amid outcry, states push mental health training for police

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press/Report for America

The officer who Cassandra Quinto-Collins says knelt on her son's neck for over four minutes assured her it was standard protocol for sedating a person experiencing a mental breakdown.

"I was there watching it the whole time," Quinto-Collins told The Associated Press. "I just trusted that they knew what they were doing."

Angelo Quinto's sister had called 911 for help calming him down during an episode of paranoia on Dec. 23. His family says Quinto didn't resist the Antioch, California, officers — one who pushed his knee on the back of his neck, and another who restrained his legs — and the only noise he made was when he twice cried out, "Please don't kill me."

The officers replied, "We're not going to kill you," the family said. Police deny putting pressure on his neck. Three days later, the 30-year-old Navy veteran and Filipino immigrant died at a hospital.

It is the latest stark example of the perils of policing people with mental health issues. In response to several high-profile deaths of people with mental health issues in police custody, lawmakers in at least eight states are introducing legislation to change how law enforcement agencies respond to those in crisis.

The proposals lean heavily on additional training for officers on how to interact with people with mental health problems. It's a common response when lawmakers face widespread outcry over police brutality like the U.S. saw last year following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. But none of the proposals appear to address the root question: Should police be the ones responding when someone is mentally ill?

In California, lawmakers introduced legislation on Feb. 11 that, among other things, would require prospective officers to complete college courses that address mental health, social services and psychology, without requiring a degree.

In New York, lawmakers in January proposed an effort to require law enforcement to complete a minimum of 32 credit hours of training that would include techniques on de-escalation and interacting with people who have mental health issues.

The proposal came nearly a year after Rochester, New York, officers put a spit hood over Daniel Prude's head and pressed his naked body against the street until he stopped breathing. The victim's family, like Quinto's, said they had called 911 for help after Prude, who is Black, began having a mental health episode.

Similarly, in Utah, the mother of 13-year-old Linden Cameron called 911 in September because he was having a breakdown and she needed help from a crisis intervention officer. Salt Lake City police ended up shooting him multiple times as he ran away because they believed he made threats involving a weapon.

He was hospitalized, and no weapon was found. The officers were not crisis intervention specialists but had some mental health training.

Last month, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox signed legislation that will create a council to standardize training for police crisis intervention teams statewide.

At least 34 states already require officers to have training or other education on interacting with people who have physical or mental health conditions. But law enforcement experts say updated training is needed and agencies are far behind.

"The training that police have received for the past I'd say 25 years has not changed significantly, and it's out of date, and it doesn't meet today's realities," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington-based think tank. "I mean the last thing a mother wants when they call the police is for an officer to use force. Especially in a situation that didn't call for it because the officers weren't trained in how to recognize a crisis."

Some of the new legislation looks to strengthen or improve standards. But because mental health train-

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ing is a mandate in a majority of states, some advocates and experts believe it may never fully prepare officers on how to respond.

The Treatment Advocacy Center, a nonprofit dedicated to getting treatment for the mentally ill, concluded in a 2015 report those with untreated mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed during a police encounter than others.

"The solution that would have the most impact on the problem is to prevent people with mental illness from encountering law enforcement in the first place," said Elizabeth Sinclair Hancq, co-author of the report.

Since that is not always possible, she said, another solution is to create co-responder programs where a social worker or other mental health professional assists officers on such calls.

That is what Philadelphia introduced in October, weeks before officers fatally shot Walter Wallace Jr., a Black man, within a minute of arriving at his address for the third time in a day while he was having a mental health crisis. Police said Wallace ignored commands to drop a knife.

Other cities, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, have similar programs.

For families of victims, who now say they regret calling 911 for help, required training and legislative reform are long overdue.

"In retrospect, it wasn't the smartest idea to call the police," said Isabella Collins, the 18-year-old sister of Quinto, who died in California. "But I just wanted him to be able to calm down, and I thought that they could help with that."

Antioch police didn't release details of Quinto's death for more than a month. Police Chief Tammany Brooks has denied that officers used a knee or anything else to put pressure on Quinto's head, neck or throat. An investigation and autopsy are underway.

The department didn't respond to a request for comment.

Quinto's family filed a wrongful-death claim against the city in February, claiming he "died as a direct consequence of the unreasonable force used against him."

"I guess it was really naive of me to think that he wouldn't get hurt," Collins said.

Europe ramps up vaccinations as virus haunts Easter holidays

By ANGELA CHARLTON and OLEG CETINIC undefined

PARIS (AP) — The French city of Lyon's main stadium opened as a mass vaccination center during Easter weekend, and thousands spent the holiday lining up for injections at hippodromes, velodromes or other sites as France tried to speed up shots amid a new rush of coronavirus cases.

But as Europe celebrated its second Easter in a row under the cloud of the pandemic, some cities put vaccinations on hold over during the long holiday weekend — defying French President Emmanuel Macron's insistence that "there are no weekends or days off during vaccination."

Medical workers need "a little rest at last," said an official with the French city of Strasbourg, which shut down vaccination facilities from Good Friday through Easter Monday, a public holiday. To ensure that residents still had access to potentially life-saving vaccines, Strasbourg expanded vaccination hours and administered all of its weekly supply of doses between last Monday and Thursday, the official said.

Spain, Italy and Germany faced a similar holiday vaccination challenge.

Spaniards lined up for shots on Easter Sunday in Barcelona and other points around the country, but Madrid halted vaccinations at local health centers to give staff a break. The Spanish capital continued to give shots at a soccer stadium and a new hospital built to help handle pandemic cases.

With Spain fearing yet another surge of infections like the one now overwhelming French intensive care wards, Spanish Health Minister Carolina Darias had urged regional authorities to keep up vaccinations throughout Easter Week.

The French city of Sarcelles, north of Paris, was among those whose vaccination center stayed open Easter Sunday, amid mushrooming infections and demand. The center's organizers planned to inject 2,000 doses Sunday — twice their daily average.

Those waiting to get inside felt lucky and relieved. The surrounding Val d'Oise region now has the highest coronavirus infection rate in France, and the situation in Sarcelles symbolizes how the pandemic has

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worsened existing inequalities.

"The problem is with people who do not qualify yet and are in a hurry, which I understand as they want to get back to a normal life," said Dr. Majida El Mokhtari. "Unfortunately we are not able to vaccinate everybody with the doses that are distributed to us."

The city's working class residents have higher exposure to the virus because many can't work remotely. In the area's housing projects, many families have multiple generations living in close quarters. Language barriers make sorting out vaccination arrangements a challenge for many immigrants.

In Lyon, French first division soccer club Olympique Lyon opened its stadium and provided volunteer employees to help medical workers and firefighters with a mass vaccination drive that started Saturday. Authorities plan to administer 3,000 doses per day during the first three days.

Club President Jean Michel Aulas expressed hope that the effort would help create "social cohesion" at a time of strain and uncertainty, as France entered a third partial lockdown starting Sunday.

Meanwhile, the French military announced that it would open seven vaccination centers starting Tuesday to help inject civilians.

In Italy, those fortunate to get a vaccine in Milan on Sunday received an extra reward: an Easter cake in the shape of a dove and packages of pasta. Only one hospital in the city administered vaccines on Easter, according to Italian media. Among those administering the injections at Milan's Niguarda Hospital were retired hospital doctors volunteering their time.

"We're just making our contribution to this important battle" against COVID-19, Dr. Vincenzo Rapisarda told SkyTG24 TV.

German vaccination centers appeared to mostly stay open over the holiday, but numbers of injections are typically slower on weekends.

The accelerated Easter actions in some European Union countries stood in contrast to the slow beginning of Europe's vaccine rollout over Christmas and New Year's.

While France remains far behind Britain and the United States in terms of vaccinating its population, the pace is starting to pick up. France has administered 12 million vaccine doses overall, including nearly 1 million in the last three days.

Spanish authorities are speeding up vaccination efforts with the arrival of 2 million doses over the past week, its biggest lot yet. Spain had administered 8.5 million doses as of Friday.

Across the Channel, authorities in Britain were planning to test a series of measures including "coronavirus status certifications" over the coming weeks to see if they can allow people to safely return to mass gatherings at sports arenas, nightclubs and concerts.

People attending a range of events, including conferences and soccer's FA Cup, will need to be tested both before and after. The trials will also gather evidence on how ventilation and different approaches to social distancing could enable large events to go ahead.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to set out more details about the coronavirus passports on Monday.

In Easter speech, pope calls wars in pandemic 'scandalous'

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis in his traditional Easter Sunday address denounced as "scandalous" how armed conflicts continue to rage even as the coronavirus pandemic has triggered severe social and economic suffering and swollen the ranks of the poor.

Francis tempered his "Urbi et Orbi" address (Latin for "To the city and to the world") wishes of joy on the Christian feast day along with accounts of pain from the globe's many armed conflicts in Africa, the Mideast, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe.

Describing vaccines as an "essential tool" in the pandemic battle, Francis called for a "spirit of global responsibility" as he encouraged nations to overcome "delays in the distribution of vaccines" and ensure that the shots reach the poorest nations.

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"Everyone, especially the most vulnerable among us, requires assistance and has the right to have access to necessary care," the pontiff said.

He sounded a note of indignation at the start of his address, decrying that there has been no shortage of war and conflict during the world's worst health crisis in a century.

"The pandemic is still spreading, while the social and economic crisis remains severe, especially for the poor. Nevertheless — and this is scandalous — armed conflicts have not ended, and military arsenals are being strengthened," Francis said, sounding angry. "That is today's scandal."

The pontiff prayed that public authorities would see to it that those needing assistance have a "decent standard of living. Sadly, the pandemic has dramatically increased the number of the poor and the despair of thousands of people."

He lamented the plight of people afflicted by war and other conflicts, citing Haiti, one of the world's poorest countries and which has been wracked by violent protests and political strife including an alleged coup. Francis urged Haitians "not to be overwhelmed by difficulties, but to look to the future with confidence and hope."

Francis offered encouragement to young people in Myanmar who are "committed to supporting democracy and making their voices heard peacefully." Demonstrators in Myanmar took to the streets holding painted eggs in a reference to Easter. Myanmar's military has violently sought to quash those opposed to a Feb. 1 coup that ousted a democratically elected government.

Francis thanked Lebanon and Jordan for taking in refugees from war in Syria, praying that peace finally comes to "millions are living in inhumane conditions." He also prayed for ends to conflicts in Yemen and Libya.

Citing suffering of people in Africa, he decried "internal violence and international terrorism, especially in the Sahel and Nigeria." Other troubled areas he mentioned were Ethiopia's Tigray province and Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province, which has been blooded by days of fighting with rebels for control of a town.

Francis prayed for the safe return home of prisoners of long conflicts in Europe, in eastern Ukraine and in Nagorno-Karabkh.

Earlier in the day, Francis celebrated Easter Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, where the faithful in the pews barely numbered 200 in keeping with pandemic protocols, compared to the usual thousands.

Normally, Francis would give his Easter speech about world affairs is delivered from the central balcony of the basilica overlooking St. Peter's Square. Instead, for the second consecutive Easter, he read it indoors to discourage crowds from gathering.

"Dear brothers and sisters, once again this year, in various places, many Christians have celebrated Easter under severe restrictions and, at times, without being able to attend liturgical celebrations," Francis said, before offering a special Apostolic blessing to faithful worldwide.

"We pray that those restrictions, as well as all restrictions on freedom of worship and religion worldwide, may be lifted and everyone be allowed to pray and praise God freely," the pontiff said.

With new aid, schools seek solutions to problems new and old

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

With a massive infusion of federal aid coming their way, schools across the U.S. are weighing how to use the windfall to ease the harm of the pandemic — and to tackle problems that existed long before the coronavirus.

The assistance that was approved last month totals \$123 billion — a staggering sum that will offer some districts several times the amount of federal education funding they receive in a single year. The aid will help schools reopen and expand summer programs to help students catch up on learning. It also offers a chance to pursue programs that have long been seen as too expensive, such as intensive tutoring, mental health services and major curriculum upgrades.

"This feels like a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us to be able to make critical investments," said

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Nathan Kuder, chief financial officer of Boston Public Schools, which is expecting \$275 million.

But the spending decisions carry high stakes. If important needs are overlooked — or if the money does not bring tangible improvements — schools could face blowback from their communities and from politicians who influence their funding. At the same time, schools must be wary of dreaming too big and taking on long-term costs they cannot sustain.

Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said the assistance allows schools to “hit the reset button” and confront challenges that have long plagued the nation’s education system. He said schools can train teachers in social and emotional learning and work to close persistent racial disparities in education.

“With successful implementation, our students are going to have a better experience than they did before the pandemic,” Cardona said in an interview.

Districts with higher concentrations of poverty will get the largest sums. Public schools in some cities are expected to receive more than \$1 billion, including Los Angeles and Philadelphia. The new money joins more than \$67 billion made available to schools in other relief packages during the pandemic.

Schools must reserve 20% for summer programs and other efforts to address learning loss, but they expect to have wide flexibility in how to use most of the aid. With more than three years to spend the new money, school leaders are thinking big.

Officials in Boston say the aid will be used to reopen, recover and “reimagine what is possible for our students,” Kuder said. The money will help update aging buildings, but it could also be used to start new dual-language programs or revamp the curriculum, he said. Ultimately, officials plan to ask residents what changes they want to see.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, where 83% of students come from low-income families, the district expects to get \$120 million — nearly three times the amount it gets in federal education funding in a typical year. Along with building upgrades, the aid will help achieve a goal to provide summer programs and after-school care in every neighborhood, officials said.

“We plan to use this moment to consider how we can bring about lasting change for our school district,” Superintendent Deborah Gist said.

School officials in Hartford, Connecticut, say they have lined up a list of “must-win” spending areas. Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez said the district plans to “radically expand” learning options outside the school day, cultivate a pipeline of new teachers and expand the role of schools in their communities.

The district also hopes to buy new curriculum materials across all grades and subjects, a goal that was previously out of reach. “It is something that we’ve never been able to do,” Torres-Rodriguez said. “All that we’ve been able to afford is a little bit here and a little bit there.”

Even though the funding brings a bonanza for some districts, questions loom around other sources of financial support. Some states have already slashed education budgets as they face steep revenue losses, and other states are likely to follow, which could diminish the effect of the federal dollars.

To keep future costs in check, many schools are avoiding big hiring increases, and few are pursuing programs that carry heavy personnel costs. Instead, many will consider adding teachers under short-term agreements or hiring contractors to provide social and mental health services.

In Virginia Beach, officials are weighing whether to add teachers under one-year contracts, with a focus on recruiting retirees or others outside the teaching profession. The district is also exploring whether to train current teachers in high-demand subjects and to add mental health services through a telehealth provider.

“It’s a substantial increase, but it’s important to understand that these are not ongoing funds,” Superintendent Aaron Spence said.

The top goal is to get students back in the classroom. In Detroit schools, which expect to receive \$800 million, much of the aid will be used on ventilation systems and to pay the costs associated with smaller classes and social distancing. Some of it is expected to go toward hazard pay for teachers who return to the classroom.

And while the funding is largely intended to reverse the setbacks caused by a year of remote learning, there’s also a push to sustain virtual options. At Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, officials

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are expanding summer learning, but they also plan to start a virtual academy for students with health concerns and those who thrived under remote learning.

In Akron, Ohio, a large, urban district that expects to get \$96 million in new aid, Chief Financial Officer Ryan Pendleton said the money offers the potential to “forever change education for the better.”

“It is a wonderful, wonderful opportunity from a terrible pandemic.”

Myanmar anti-coup protesters launch ‘Easter egg strike’

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) — Anti-coup demonstrators in Myanmar, adept at finding themes to tie together protests nationwide, took to the streets holding painted eggs in a nod to the Easter holiday on Sunday.

In the biggest city of Yangon, one group marched through the Insein district chanting and singing protest songs and cradling eggs bearing the slogan “Spring Revolution.” Many of the eggs also bore a drawing of the three-fingered salute, a symbol of resistance to the Feb. 1 coup.

At dawn in Mandalay, the country’s second largest city, demonstrators gathered on motorbikes to shout protests against the power grab that overthrew the democratically elected government.

Myanmar’s military has violently cracked down on protesters and others in opposition, with the latest civilian death toll since the coup at 557, according to the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. More than 2,750 people have been detained or sentenced, the group said.

On Sunday, security forces opened fire on a crowd of protesters in Pyinmana in central Myanmar, killing at least one person, local news outlet Khit Thit Media reported.

Pope Francis, in his Easter Sunday address at St. Peter’s Basilica, prayed for the “young people of Myanmar committed to supporting democracy and making their voices heard peacefully, in the knowledge that hatred can be dispelled only by love.”

Sunday’s so-called “Easter Egg Strike” follows other themed days. They included a “Flower Strike,” in which protesters laid flowers in public places to honor those killed by security forces, and a “Silent Strike,” in which people across the country left the streets deserted.

Dr. Sasa, the Myanmar special envoy to the U.N. who goes by one name, posted an image of painted eggs on Twitter and wrote that Myanmar’s people have a “great future in federal democracy,” reflecting hopes for the military to step down and reinstate a democratic system.

Security forces have continued to spread fear among ordinary citizens. Overnight, a resident of Yangon recorded video of a group of soldiers and police using sling shots to fire stones at the windows of homes, breaking the night’s silence. At other times, soldiers and police keep up their intimidation at night with raids on neighborhoods, during which they shout abuse, shoot at random, make arrests and vandalize property.

On Saturday, police opened fire killing several protesters in Monywa in central Myanmar and elsewhere.

With most of the internet access cut or severely restricted by the junta, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people in Myanmar to get images of their plight to the outside world.

After weeks of overnight internet cutoffs, the military on Friday shut all links apart from those using fiber-optic cable, which was working at drastically reduced speeds. Access to mobile networks and all wireless — the less costly options used by most people in the developing country — remained blocked on Sunday.

Truck owner behind deadly Taiwan railway crash apologizes

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The owner of a construction truck that caused Taiwan’s worst rail accident in decades, killing 48 people, apologized in tears while being led away from his home by police on Sunday. The unmanned truck’s emergency brake was not properly engaged, according to the government’s disaster relief center.

An investigation is underway as to how exactly Lee Yi-Hsiang’s vehicle slid down onto the tracks Friday from a nearby construction site on the mountainous coast of eastern Hualien county. The truck was hit by a passenger train carrying 494 people, which derailed just before entering a tunnel, crushing many

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passengers inside the mangled train carriages.

The death toll was revised down to 48 on Sunday, after rescuers initially said 51, then 50 people were killed. The changes came after some body parts were found to belong to one individual, a spokesperson for the Central Emergency Operation Center said. At least 198 people were injured.

"I have caused a serious accident on the Taiwan Railway Administrations' Taroko train number 480 during this year's Tomb Sweeping Holidays, causing deaths and injuries, to this I express my remorse and my sincerest apologies," said Lee, who is also the construction site's manager, his words muffled by a face mask and by emotion. "I will cooperate with the authorities' investigation fully, and take responsibility."

Prosecutors in Hualien county previously said they were seeking an arrest warrant for the truck's owner, who was questioned along with several others.

The Hualien district court initially allowed Lee to post bail of 500,000 new Taiwan dollars (US\$17,516), but that decision was reversed Sunday when a higher court in Hualien rescinded the lower court's decision to allow bail, Taiwan's Central News Agency reported.

Train travel is popular during Taiwan's four-day Tomb Sweeping holiday, when families often return to their home towns to pay respects at the gravesites of their elders. It's also an opportunity to take a vacation.

Taiwan is a mountainous island, and most of its 24 million people live in the flatlands along the northern and western coasts that are home to most of the island's farmland, biggest cities and high-tech industries. The lightly populated east where the crash happened is popular as a tourist destination, and the railway line is known for its beautiful natural scenery.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, April 5, the 95th day of 2021. There are 270 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 5, 2010, an explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine near Charleston, West Virginia, killed 29 workers. In a televised rescue, 115 Chinese coal miners were freed after spending eight days trapped in a flooded mine, surviving an accident that had killed 38.

On this date:

In 1621, the Mayflower sailed from Plymouth Colony in present-day Massachusetts on a monthlong return trip to England.

In 1792, President George Washington cast his first veto, rejecting a congressional measure for apportioning representatives among the states.

In 1887, in Tuscumbia, Alabama, teacher Anne Sullivan achieved a breakthrough as her 6-year-old deaf-blind pupil, Helen Keller, learned the meaning of the word "water" as spelled out in the Manual Alphabet.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death following their conviction in New York on charges of conspiring to commit espionage for the Soviet Union.

In 1955, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill resigned his office for health reasons. Democrat Richard J. Daley was first elected mayor of Chicago, defeating Republican Robert E. Merriam.

In 1976, reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes died in Houston at age 70.

In 1986, two American servicemen and a Turkish woman were killed in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque, an incident that prompted a U.S. air raid on Libya more than a week later.

In 1987, Fox Broadcasting Co. made its prime-time TV debut by airing the situation comedy "Married with Children" followed by "The Tracey Ullman Show," then repeating both premiere episodes two more times in the same evening.

In 1991, former Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, his daughter Marian and 21 other people were killed in a commuter plane crash near Brunswick, Georgia.

In 1997, Allen Ginsberg, the counterculture guru who shattered conventions as poet laureate of the Beat Generation, died in New York City at age 70.

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In 2015, Rolling Stone magazine apologized and officially retracted its discredited article about an alleged gang rape at the University of Virginia.

In 2019, inspecting a refurbished section of fencing at the Mexican border in California, President Donald Trump declared that "our country is full," and that illegal crossings must be stopped.

Ten years ago: Ivory Coast's strongman leader, Laurent Gbagbo (loh-RAHN' BAHG'-boh), remained holed up in a bunker inside the presidential residence, defiantly maintaining he'd won an election four months earlier even as troops backing the internationally recognized winner encircled the home. (Gbagbo was arrested six days later.) Texas A&M won its first national women's basketball championship with a 76-70 victory over Notre Dame.

Five years ago: The leak of millions of records on offshore accounts claimed its first high-profile political casualty as Iceland's prime minister, Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, stepped aside. Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant signed a law allowing religious groups and private businesses to deny services to gay and transgender people. R&B singer-songwriter Leon Haywood, 74, died in Los Angeles. UConn won an unprecedented fourth straight women's national championship, capping another perfect season by routing Syracuse 82-51.

One year ago: Surgeon General Jerome Adams told CNN that the coming week would be "the hardest and saddest week of most Americans' lives" because of the increasing toll from the coronavirus; hours later, President Donald Trump took a more optimistic tone, saying, "We're starting to see light at the end of the tunnel." British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was admitted to a hospital for tests, as he continued to suffer symptoms 10 days after being diagnosed with COVID-19. Federal officials said a tiger at the Bronx Zoo in New York had tested positive for the coronavirus, in what was believed to be the first known infection in an animal in the U.S.; the tiger was believed to have been infected by a zoo employee.

Today's Birthdays: Movie producer Roger Corman is 95. Former U.S. Secretary of State and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell is 84. Country singer Tommy Cash is 81. Actor Michael Moriarty is 80. Pop singer Allan Clarke (The Hollies) is 79. Writer-director Peter Greenaway is 79. Actor Max Gail is 78. Actor Jane Asher is 75. Singer Agnetha (ag-NEE'-tah) Faltskog (ABBA) is 71. Actor Mitch Pileggi is 69. Singer-songwriter Peter Case is 67. Hip-hop artist/actor Christopher "Kid" Reid is 57. Rock musician Mike McCready (Pearl Jam) is 55. Singer Paula Cole is 53. Actor Krista Allen is 50. Actor Victoria Hamilton is 50. Country singer Pat Green is 49. Rapper-producer Pharrell (fa-REHL') Williams is 48. Rapper/producer Juicy J is 46. Actor Sterling K. Brown is 45. Country singer-musician Mike Eli (The Eli Young Band) is 40. Actor Hayley Atwell is 39. Actor Lily James is 32.