

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 1 of 79

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

[1-FB Playoff on GDILIVE.COM](#)

[2- Northwestern sweeps Groton Area in three sets](#)

[3- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)

[4- Weather Pages](#)

[7- Daily Devotional](#)

[8- 2021 Community Events](#)

[9- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Upcoming Events

### Wednesday, Oct. 20

Senior Scholarship Info Night at GHS Library Conference Room, 6 p.m.

### Thursday, Oct. 21

First Round Football Playoffs: Wagner at Groton, 7 p.m.

### Friday, Oct. 22

End of First Quarter

Volleyball at Aberdeen Roncalli. (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.)

### Saturday, Oct. 23

State Cross Country at Yankton Trail Park in Sioux Falls.

Oral Interp at NSU Invitational

ACT Testing at GHS, 8 a.m. to Noon

Starting 10/24/21, you must dial the area code for all calls. This change supports 988 as the new 3-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Ice skating opportunity on Sunday, Oct 24 in Watertown -- one of our guest skaters at the carnival for the past few years, Kathryn Pfaff, would like to invite our ice skaters to their Come Skate with Us

First Round  
Football Playoffs  
on  
GDILIVE.COM

WAGNER AT GROTON AREA  
THURSDAY, OCT. 21  
7 P.M.

event on Sunday, Oct 24 in Watertown. It will be held at the Maas Ice Arena in Watertown from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. with some mini classes available.

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

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

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## **Northwestern sweeps Groton Area in three sets**

Groton Area's volleyball team was defeated by Northwestern Area Tuesday night in Groton, 3-0. Game scores were 25-13, 25-16 and 25-11.

Sydney Liecht had 12 kills, Anna Fjeldheim four kills, Madeline Flihs five kills, Aspen Johnson four kills and a block and Elizabeth Flihs had an ace serve.

Ella Haven led Northwestern with 16 kills, two blocks and an ace serve, aKenzie Stoltenberg had nine kills, Emma Grandpre seven kills, a block and three ace serves, Haiden Grandpree had five kills and a block, Ashley Haven had four kills and an ace serve, Teryn Sparling had three ace serves and Payton Grandpree had two ace serves and a kill.

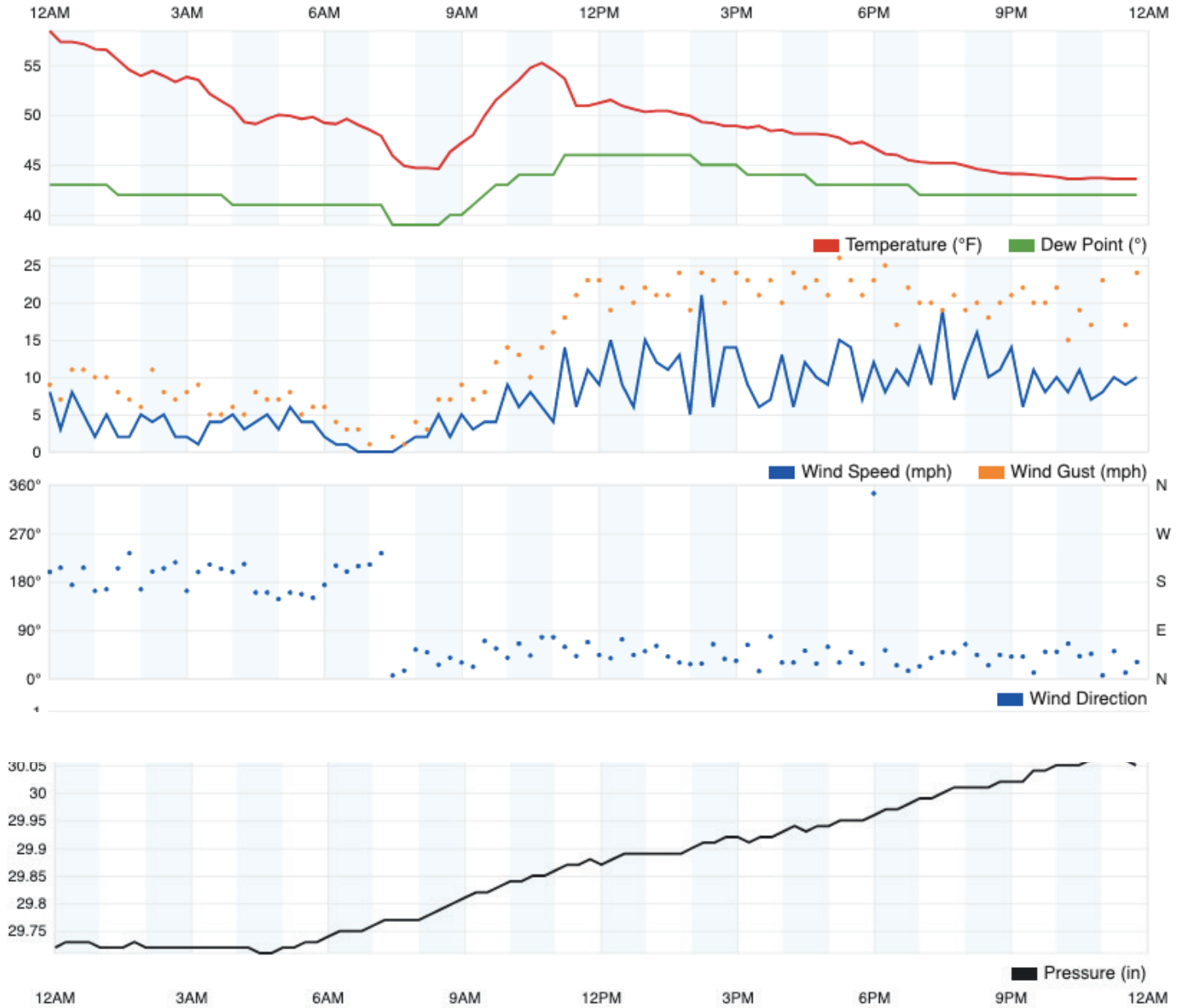
Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 19-25, 25-21 and 15-12. Emma Schinkel had seven kills and two ace serves, Faith Traphagen and Laila Roberts each had three ace serves and a kill, Lydia Meier and Marlee Tollifson each had three kills, and Carly Guthmiller and Shallyn Foertsch each had two ace serves.

Groton Area won the C match, 25-23 and 25-19.

# Groton Daily Independent






Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 3 of 79

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 4 of 79

Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Shows and Breezy	Shows Likely then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 43 °F ↓	Low: 26 °F	High: 46 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 50 °F



### Today

Highs in the 40s  
Shows & Isolated Thunderstorms in Eastern SD, Western MN.  
Shows, mixing with snow west of the Missouri River

### Tonight

Lows in the 20s  
Shows in Eastern SD and Western MN this evening.  
Some clearing overnight.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD  
weather.gov/abr

A storm system will cross the region today, bringing widespread showers and perhaps some thunderstorms to eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Showers along and west of the Missouri River will transition over to snow, with a dusting to maybe an inch or two of snow possible. The system will depart the area tonight, leaving behind cold temperatures with lows dropping into the 20s.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 5 of 79

## Today in Weather History

October 20, 1936: Heavy snow across the region brought snowfall totals upwards of 5 inches in New-castle and Sundance with 5.5 inches reported in Dupree and 10 inches in Faith. Aberdeen saw 2 inches, while Moberly had three inches from this event.

1770: An exceedingly great storm struck eastern New England causing extensive coastal damage from Massachusetts to Maine, and the highest tide in 47 years.

1956: While not a record, Esperanza Base in Antarctic warmed to 57.2 degrees on this date. The all-time warmest day at this base occurred on March 24, 2015, when the temperature reached 63.5 degrees. As of now, the 63.5 degrees has not been verified to be the warmest temperature recorded on the continent of Antarctica.

1983: Remnants of Pacific Hurricane Tico caused extensive flooding in central and south central Oklahoma. Oklahoma City set daily rainfall records with 1.45 inch on the 19th, and 6.28 inches on the 20th.

2004: Typhoon Tokage blasting across Japan triggers flash floods that wash away entire hillsides, killing 55 people and leaving at least 24 people missing.

1770 - An exceedingly great storm struck eastern New England causing extensive coastal damage from Massachusetts to Maine, and the highest tide in 47 years. (David Ludlum)

1983 - Remnants of Pacific Hurricane Tico caused extensive flooding in central and south central Oklahoma. Oklahoma City set daily rainfall records with 1.45 inch on the 19th, and 6.28 inches on the 20th. (17th-21st) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Cold arctic air invaded the Upper Midwest, and squalls in the Lake Superior snowbelt produced heavy snow in eastern Ashland County and northern Iron County of Wisconsin. Totals ranged up to 18 inches at Mellen. In the western U.S., the record high of 69 degrees at Seattle WA was their twenty-fifth of the year, their highest number of record highs for any given year. Bakersfield CA reported a record 146 days in a row with daily highs 80 degrees or above. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather continued in the western U.S. In California, afternoon highs of 96 degrees at Redding and Red Bluff were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Forty-nine cities reported record low temperatures for the date as readings dipped into the 20s and 30s across much of the south central and southeastern U.S. Lows of 32 degrees at Lake Charles LA and 42 degrees at Lakeland FL were records for October, and Little Rock AR reported their earliest freeze of record. Snow blanketed the higher elevations of Georgia and the Carolinas. Melbourne FL dipped to 47 degrees shortly before midnight to surpass the record low established that morning. Showers and thunderstorms brought heavy rain to parts of the northeastern U.S. Autumn leaves on the ground clogged drains and ditches causing flooding. Up to 4.10 inches of rain soaked southern Vermont in three days. Flood waters washed 600 feet of railroad track, resulting in a train derailment. (The National Weather Summary)(Storm Data)

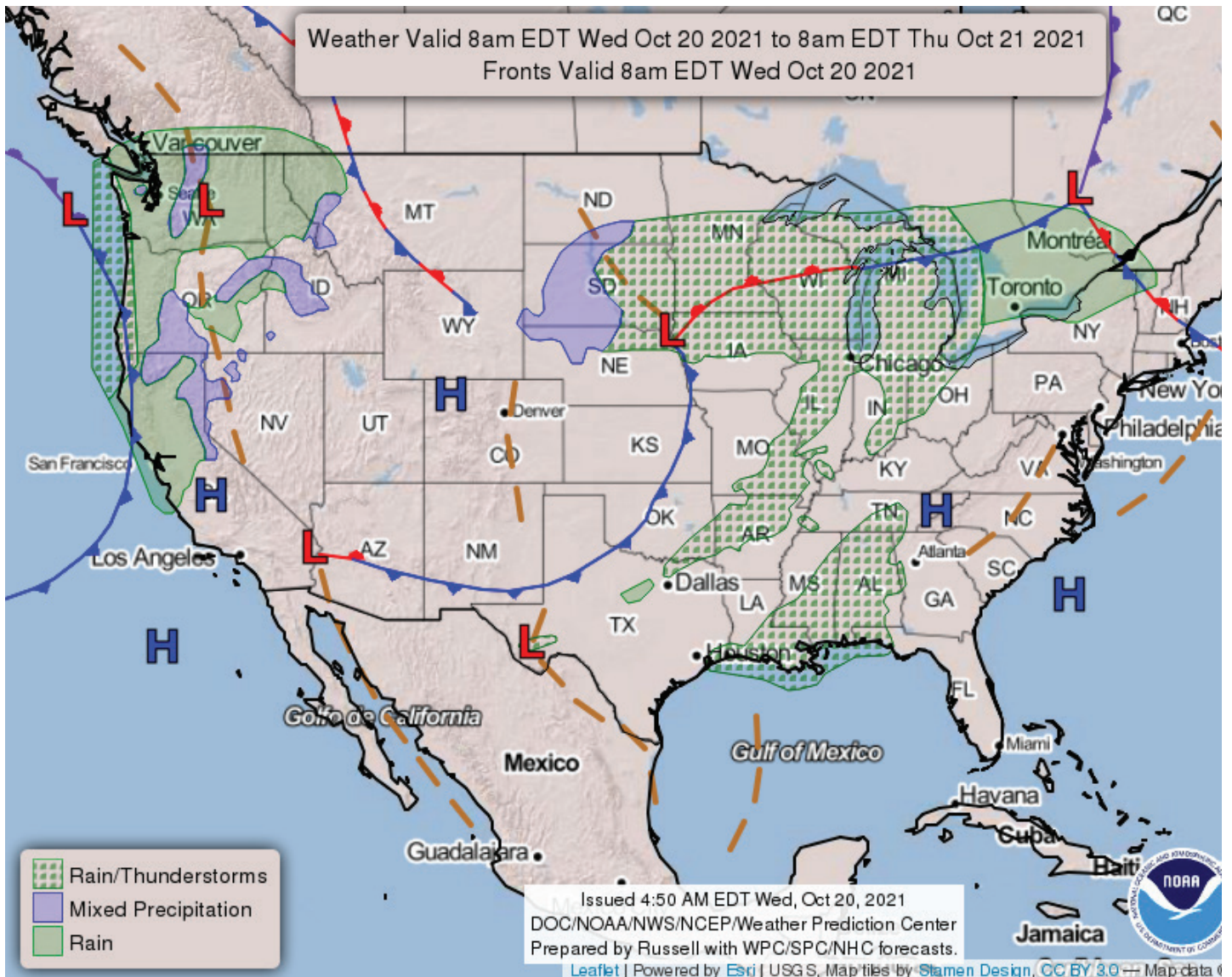
# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 6 of 79

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 58 °F at 12:02 AM**  
**Low Temp: 44 °F at 11:23 PM**  
**Wind: 26 mph at 4:47 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 87° in 1947**  
**Record Low: 12° in 1930**  
**Average High: 57°F**  
**Average Low: 31°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 1.51**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 1.94**  
**Average Precip to date: 19.84**  
**Precip Year to Date: 17.36**  
**Sunset Tonight: 6:39:41 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:55:51 AM**



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 7 of 79



## HOW MUCH MERCY IS ENOUGH?

Albert came home from school with bruises, a torn shirt, and tears. "Fighting again?" sighed his mother. "I thought it was clear that you were to be a good Christian, not get angry and stop getting into fights. Did you count to a hundred like I told you to?" she asked.

"Well, I tried," he said with resentment in his voice. "But John's mother told him to only count to fifty, and that's when he knocked me to the ground and jumped on me."

Many of us get angry quickly. But not the Lord. In Psalm 103:8 we read that "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

Imagine what life would be like with an angry God - one who was quick to punish us for any and every sin. Imagine, if you can, living life in fear of being "hammered" for breaking a commandment. And, if He were not compassionate and merciful, there would be no provision or pardon for our wrongdoings. Or again, if we were suffering and brokenhearted and filled with grief and guilt for betraying Him, we would never hear Him say, "My grace is sufficient." In the Lord, we find mercy for our sins and comfort for our sorrows.

If God were not gracious, there would be no grace - no matter how wonderful and needed it is. But it only has significance when we understand that it means God, at no cost to us, will unconditionally and willingly forgive us of all our sins. The Lord erases the ugliness of the past and provides us with clean, blank pages to fill with the potential of a new life committed to Him. Amazing grace!

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your love, combined with Your mercy that is freely ours because of Your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. Psalm 103:8

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 8 of 79

## 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  
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.  
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament  
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon  
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament  
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament  
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  
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament  
**Cancelled** Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)  
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  
10/29/2021 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)  
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes  
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 9 of 79

News from the  Associated Press

## Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Mitchell, 19-25, 25-8, 25-19, 25-27, 15-11  
Alcester-Hudson def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-13, 25-11, 25-19  
Arlington def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-19, 21-25, 25-20, 25-15  
Baltic def. Howard, 25-23, 25-18, 25-17  
Belle Fourche def. St. Thomas More, 20-25, 25-18, 25-14, 16-25, 15-13  
Beresford def. Vermillion, 23-25, 25-18, 25-20, 25-20  
Bison def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-12, 25-7, 25-14  
Bowman County, N.D. def. Lemmon, 25-16, 25-23, 25-20  
Britton-Hecla def. Langford, 25-19, 25-21, 25-21  
Burke def. Gayville-Volin, 25-22, 21-25, 25-20, 25-12  
Chester def. Sioux Valley, 25-21, 25-18, 25-22  
Colman-Egan def. Deubrook, 25-19, 25-18, 25-19  
Corsica/Stickney def. Avon, 32-30, 25-23, 25-21  
DeSmet def. Castlewood, 25-22, 25-23, 25-14  
Douglas def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-14, 25-23, 20-25, 25-20  
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-11, 25-17, 25-23  
Estelline/Hendricks def. Lake Preston, 25-20, 25-23, 25-14  
Faulkton def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 25-20, 25-17, 25-21  
Flandreau def. Parker, 25-20, 25-10, 15-25, 25-20  
Florence/Henry def. Deuel, 25-27, 25-8, 25-20, 25-14  
Freeman def. Hanson, 25-19, 25-23, 25-17  
Garretson def. West Central, 25-9, 25-15, 25-19  
Great Plains Lutheran def. Waubay/Summit, 25-15, 25-10, 25-10  
Herreid/Selby Area def. Sully Buttes, 26-24, 27-25, 16-25, 25-14  
Highmore-Harrold def. Lyman, 25-11, 25-6, 25-9  
Hill City def. Custer, 25-18, 25-13, 25-10  
Hot Springs def. Spearfish, 21-25, 27-25, 25-14, 25-17  
Huron def. Pierre, 25-23, 19-25, 25-14, 25-19  
Irene-Wakonda def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-21, 25-22, 28-26  
Lakota Tech def. Edgemont, 25-14, 25-21, 25-20  
Linton/HMB, N.D. def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-13, 25-15, 25-10  
Madison def. Dell Rapids, 26-24, 25-21, 16-25, 25-21  
McCook Central/Montrose def. Tea Area, 25-19, 25-23, 20-25, 25-14  
Milbank def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-15, 25-10, 25-7  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Tri-Valley, 25-12, 25-21, 30-28  
Northwestern def. Groton Area, 25-13, 25-16, 25-11  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Marty Indian, 12-25, 25-9, 18-25, 25-23  
Parkston def. Bon Homme, 26-28, 25-12, 25-19, 25-15  
Philip def. Bennett County, 25-15, 25-12, 25-14  
Pine Ridge def. Red Cloud, 19-25, 25-19, 25-16, 25-10  
Platte-Geddes def. Kimball/White Lake, 25-13, 25-23, 25-13  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-23, 25-13, 25-15  
Sioux Falls Christian def. Harrisburg, 25-18, 25-18, 25-20

# Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 10 of 79

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Watertown, 25-14, 24-26, 25-14, 25-10  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 23-25, 25-12, 25-21, 28-26  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Brookings, 25-18, 25-22, 25-16  
Sioux Falls Washington def. Brandon Valley, 26-28, 25-18, 22-25, 25-13, 15-9  
Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. def. Potter County, 25-23, 25-22, 25-16  
Timber Lake def. Faith, 18-25, 25-22, 25-23, 25-13  
Tiospa Zina Tribal def. Clark/Willow Lake, 22-25, 22-25, 25-19, 25-16, 15-10  
Wagner def. Winner, 25-12, 25-16, 25-21  
Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, Minn. def. Sisseton, 25-21, 25-22, 25-20  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-13, 25-12, 25-10  
Chamberlain Triangular=  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Chamberlain, 25-9, 25-18, 17-25, 25-23  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. McLaughlin, 22-25, 23-25, 25-13, 25-22, 15-12  
Kadoka Triangular=  
Kadoka Area def. Stanley County, 17-25, 25-15, 25-17, 25-13  
New Underwood def. Kadoka Area, 25-20, 25-20, 25-10  
New Underwood def. Stanley County, 25-19, 25-18, 19-25, 26-24

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

Information from: ScoreStream Inc., <http://ScoreStream.com>

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

03-12-13-19-52, Mega Ball: 1, Megaplier: 3

(three, twelve, thirteen, nineteen, fifty-two; Mega Ball: one; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$94 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$73 million

## South Dakota lawmakers craft proposal for recreational pot

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers on Tuesday advanced a proposal to legalize recreational marijuana use for adults while repealing much of the state's new medical marijuana law.

The Adult-Use Marijuana Study Subcommittee, which has been studying the issue since June, voted to recommend a bill that would allow people over 21 to purchase up to 1 ounce (28 grams) of cannabis for recreational use. It would repeal most aspects of the medical marijuana law that voters passed last year, but still contain provisions for people under 21 to use marijuana for medical purposes.

The bill would still need to be cleared by a pair of legislative committees, the full Legislature next year and the governor's desk to become law. But lawmakers' willingness to advance the issue showed a growing acknowledgment in the Republican-controlled Statehouse that recreational marijuana legalization has popular support.

"Do we want to step forward and regulate it and put forward a good plan," Republican Rep. Tim Goodwin told the committee. "Or do we want to go against the will of the people who voted in the last election?"

The bill would ban public pot consumption and eliminate criminal charges for possessing any amount up to 4 ounces (113 grams).

Voters last year approved a constitutional amendment to legalize recreational pot for adults, but Repub-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 11 of 79

lican Gov. Kristi Noem sued to challenge the measure for violating the state constitution. A circuit court judge struck the marijuana law down, but the state Supreme Court is weighing an appeal to that ruling. Advocates have also launched an effort to place a marijuana legalization proposal on the ballot next year.

As lawmakers crafted the bill a significant split emerged over whether it would allow people to cultivate cannabis plants in their homes. A pair of Republican senators who have pushed for recreational pot legalization tried to convince the subcommittee to allow cannabis plants to be grown in homes, but that provision was struck from the proposal.

Republican Sen. Michael Rohl said he opposed the bill as it stands, but voted to recommend it to keep the proposal debate alive.

"I think there (are) very few in the Senate that haven't known for awhile the direction the voters indicated," he said. "This is an attempt to bridge the House of Representatives closer with their own constituents."

House lawmakers on the subcommittee opposed the provision to allow home-grown cannabis, with some arguing that it would fuel an underground pot market.

"The homegrown is a really big bite and I don't think we quite have our arms around how it will work," said Republican Rep. Mark Willadsen. "I would rather that we take baby steps."

A committee studying both recreational and medical pot will consider the bill next week.

## Group seeks to convert old railroad line to recreation trail

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Advocates of a new outdoor recreational project in southeast South Dakota are asking state regulators for permission to convert an old railroad line into a trail for cyclists, hikers and horseback riders.

The Friends of the Tabor to Platte Rail to Trail nonprofit say the project would improve recreational opportunities, public health and the economy in the region.

"Cyclists continuously look for new trails to ride," said Robert Foley, the nonprofit's secretary. "Would this help diversify this area into more ecotourism?"

A 75-mile portion of the old Napa-to-Platte line built in the early 1900s and operated by Milwaukee Road would be converted. South Dakota purchased the line in 1980 after the company went bankrupt.

"It goes through the western Prairie Coteau area along the east bank of the Missouri River in Bon Homme and Charles Mix counties. So it's rolling countryside," Foley said.

The trail would cross waterways and trestle bridges as it passes through agricultural land and small towns. Users could stop at the trailheads in Platte, Ravinia, Lake Andes and Geddes, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

The nonprofit group would be responsible for building, funding, insuring and maintaining the trail. It's already raising money and hopes to apply for a \$2 million federal grant.

The South Dakota State Railroad Board and Railroad Authority will get an update on the project during a public meeting Wednesday.

## Bus bombs kill 14 in Syria capital; shells elsewhere kill 10

By ALBERT AJI and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Two bombs attached to a bus carrying Syrian troops exploded in Damascus during the morning rush hour Wednesday, a military official said. Fourteen people were killed in the attack, one of the deadliest in the capital in years.

While the Syrian government's decade-long conflict with insurgents continues in parts of the country including the rebel-held northwest, bombings in Damascus have become exceedingly rare since President Bashar Assad's troops pushed opposition fighters from the capital's suburbs in 2018.

The explosions, which also left several wounded, happened at a busy intersection, near a main bus transfer point where commuters and schoolchildren typically converge. After the blasts, Syrian state TV showed footage of smoke rising from a charred bus as soldiers hosed down the vehicle and onlookers flocked to a nearby bridge to watch.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 12 of 79

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but several insurgent and jihadist groups that seek to overthrow Assad are active in Syria.

Separately, rescue workers reported 10 people were killed, including four children and a woman, in government shelling of a town in the last rebel enclave in the country's northwest. The U.N. Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator Mark Cutts described as "shocking" the reports of the shelling that hit a market and roads near schools as students were heading to classes.

In addition to the four children killed, their teacher also died, according to UNICEF, the U.N. children's agency.

"Today's violence is yet another reminder that the war in Syria has not come to an end. Civilians, among them many children, keep bearing the brunt of a brutal decade-long conflict," the agency said. "Attacks on civilians including children are a violation of international humanitarian law."

The attack was one of the most violent in the area since a March 2020 truce in the northwest negotiated by Turkey and Russia — allies of the opposition and Syrian government, respectively. The truce has been repeatedly violated, and government forces often vow to take territories still out of their control.

In the central city of Hama, meanwhile, an explosion at an arms depot left six pro-government fighters dead, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor. The pro-government Sham FM radio station also reported that six fighters were killed in a depot explosion but did not give a location.

While fighting still rages in the northwest, Assad's forces now control much of Syria after military support from his allies Russia and Iran helped tip the balance of power in his favor. U.S. and Turkish troops, meanwhile, are deployed in part's of the country's north.

In recent years, attacks such as Wednesday's have been rare in Damascus. One of the last major explosions to take place there was in 2017 — when suicide bombers hit a judicial office building and a restaurant, killing nearly 60 people. The attacks were claimed by Islamic State group militants. The extremist organization has not held territory in Syria since 2019, but it continues to represent a threat with sleeper cells, mostly hiding in Syria's expansive desert.

State media initially described the Damascus attack as a roadside bombing. But they later quoted an unnamed Syrian military official as saying that bombs were attached to the vehicle's exterior. A third bomb fell from the bus and was dismantled by troops after the two initial explosions, the official said. It is typical for the government to release information using anonymous sources in state media.

"It is a cowardly act," Damascus police commander Maj. Gen. Hussein Jumaa told state TV, adding that a police force had cordoned off the area immediately and made sure there were no more bombs.

Jumaa said 14 people were killed, including one person who was initially listed as wounded but later died.

It was not immediately clear if all the dead were bus passengers. The military official said the bombs went off shortly before 7 a.m. Over an hour later, workers had cleared the scene, and the burnt-out bus was removed.

Wednesday's shelling in the northwest hit the town of Ariha, in Idlib province, which is mostly controlled by rebel groups, including the dominant Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, once affiliated with al-Qaida.

The Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmets, said aside from the 10 killed, 20 more were wounded when dozens of shells landed in the town. The rescuers said they were still searching through the wreckage for survivors.

Syria's conflict began in March 2011 and has left between 350,000 and 450,000 people dead and displaced half the country's population, including five million who are refugees abroad.

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Mroue reported from Beirut. Associated Press writer Sarah El Deeb in Beirut also contributed.

## **1,028 more COVID deaths in Russia as non-workweek considered**

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's coronavirus deaths surged to another daily record Wednesday as soaring

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 13 of 79

infections prompted the Cabinet to suggest declaring a nonworking week to stem contagion.

The government task force reported 1,028 coronavirus deaths over the past 24 hours, the highest number since the start of the pandemic. That brought the total death toll to 226,353 — by far the highest in Europe.

Amid a spike in infections and deaths, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova suggested introducing a nonworking period starting Oct. 30 and extending through the following week, when four of seven days already are state holidays. The proposal is yet to be authorized by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The daily coronavirus mortality numbers have been surging for weeks and topped 1,000 for the first time over the weekend amid sluggish vaccination rates, lax public attitude toward taking precautions and the government's reluctance to toughen restrictions. About 45 million Russians, or 32% of the country's nearly 146 million people, are fully vaccinated.

Even though Russia in August 2020 became the first country of the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine and vaccines are plentiful, Russians have shown hesitancy about getting the shots, a skepticism blamed on conflicting signals sent by authorities.

While extolling Sputnik V and three other domestic vaccines, state-controlled media were often critical of Western-made shots, a controversial message that many saw as feeding public doubts about vaccines in general.

Until now, the Kremlin has ruled out a new nationwide lockdown like the one early on in the pandemic that dealt a heavy blow to the economy and sapped Putin's popularity, empowering regional authorities across the country's 11 time zones to decide on local restrictions, depending on their situation.

Many of Russia's 85 regions already have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other venues. Some have made vaccinations compulsory for certain public servants and people over 60.

In some regions, mounting infections forced authorities to suspend medical assistance to the population as health care facilities were forced to focus on treating coronavirus patients.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov admitted that the situation is "very sad," noting that the level of vaccination in those regions was particularly low.

In Moscow, however, life has continued as usual, with restaurants and movie theaters brimming with people, crowds swarming nightclubs and karaoke bars and commuters widely ignoring mask mandates on public transportation even as ICUs have filled in recent weeks.

On Tuesday, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said unvaccinated people over 60 will be required to stay home. He also told businesses to keep at least a third of their employees working remotely for three months starting Oct. 25.

The government task force has registered a total of more than 8 million infections and its official COVID-19 toll ranks Russia as having the fifth-most pandemic deaths in the world behind the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico.

However, state statistics agency Rosstat, which also counts deaths in which the virus wasn't considered the main cause, has reported a much higher pandemic death toll — about 418,000 people with COVID-19 as of August. Based on that number, Russia would be the fourth hardest-hit nation, ahead of Mexico.

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

## Jan. 6 panel votes to hold Steve Bannon in contempt

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection voted unanimously to hold former White House aide Steve Bannon in contempt of Congress after the longtime ally of former President Donald Trump defied a subpoena for documents and testimony.

Still defending his supporters who broke into the Capitol that day, Trump has aggressively tried to block the committee's work by directing Bannon and others not to answer questions in the probe. Trump has also filed a lawsuit to try to prevent Congress from obtaining former White House documents.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 14 of 79

But lawmakers have made clear they will not back down as they gather facts and testimony about the attack involving Trump's supporters that left dozens of police officers injured, sent lawmakers running for their lives and interrupted the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election victory.

The committee's chairman, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said Tuesday that Bannon "stands alone in his complete defiance of our subpoena" and the panel will not take no for an answer.

He said that while Bannon may be "willing to be a martyr to the disgraceful cause of whitewashing what happened on January 6th — of demonstrating his complete loyalty to the former president," the contempt vote is a warning to other witnesses.

"We won't be deterred. We won't be distracted. And we won't be delayed," Thompson said.

The Tuesday evening vote sends the contempt resolution to the full House, which is expected to vote on the measure Thursday. House approval would send the matter to the Justice Department, which would then decide whether to pursue criminal charges against Bannon.

The contempt resolution asserts that the former Trump aide and podcast host has no legal standing to rebuff the committee — even as Trump's lawyer has argued that Bannon should not disclose information because it is protected by the privilege of the former president's office. The committee noted that Bannon, fired from his White House job in 2017, was a private citizen when he spoke to Trump ahead of the attack. And Trump has not asserted any such executive privilege claims to the panel itself, lawmakers said.

Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney — one of just two Republicans on the committee, and a rare GOP critic of Trump — said Bannon and Trump's privilege arguments suggest the former president was "personally involved" in the planning and execution of the day's events.

"We will get to the bottom of that," Cheney said.

The committee says it is pursuing Bannon's testimony because of his reported communications with Trump ahead of the siege, his efforts to get the former president to focus on the congressional certification of the vote Jan. 6 and his comments on Jan. 5 that "all hell is going to break loose" the next day.

Bannon "appears to have had multiple roles relevant to this investigation, including his role in constructing and participating in the 'stop the steal' public relations effort that motivated the attack" and "his efforts to plan political and other activity in advance of January 6th," the committee wrote in the resolution recommending contempt.

The Biden White House has also rejected Bannon's claims, with Deputy Counsel Jonathan Su writing Bannon's lawyer this week to say that "at this point we are not aware of any basis for your client's refusal to appear for a deposition." Biden's judgment that executive privilege is not justified, Su wrote, "applies to your client's deposition testimony and to any documents your client may possess."

Asked last week if the Justice Department should prosecute those who refuse to testify, Biden said yes. But the Justice Department quickly pushed back, with a spokesman saying the department would make its own decisions.

While Bannon has said he needs a court order before complying with his subpoena, former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and former White House and Pentagon aide Kashyap Patel have been negotiating with the committee. The panel has also subpoenaed more than a dozen people who helped plan Trump rallies ahead of the siege, and some of them are already turning over documents and giving testimony.

Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin said all the other witnesses who were subpoenaed are "either complying or acting in good faith as opposed to just blowing us off," as Bannon has.

The committee is also conducting voluntary closed-door interviews with other witnesses who have come forward or immediately complied with their requests.

For some of the witnesses, Raskin said, "it's a privilege and really an opportunity for them to begin to make amends, if they were involved in these events." Some of them "feel terrible about the role they played," he said.

Still, there could be more contempt votes to come.

"I won't go into details in terms of the back and forth, but I'll just say our patience is not infinite," said Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, the panel's other Republican, about some of the witness negotiations.

The vote came a day after Trump sued the committee and the National Archives to fight the release of

documents the committee has requested. Trump's lawsuit, filed after Biden said he'd allow the documents' release, claims that the panel's August request was overly broad and a "vexatious, illegal fishing expedition."

Trump's suit seeks to invalidate the entirety of the congressional request, calling it overly broad, unduly burdensome and a challenge to separation of powers. It requests a court injunction to bar the archivist from producing the documents.

The Biden administration, in clearing the documents for release, said the violent siege of the Capitol more than nine months ago was such an extraordinary circumstance that it merited waiving the privilege that usually protects White House communications.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Colleen Long, Zeke Miller, Nomaan Merchant and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

## Queen accepts medical advice to rest, cancels N Ireland trip

By DÁNICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II has reluctantly accepted medical advice to rest for a few days and has canceled a trip to Northern Ireland, Buckingham Palace said Wednesday.

The palace didn't offer specifics on the decision, but says the 95-year-old monarch is "in good spirits," and disappointed that she will no longer be able to visit Northern Ireland for engagements Wednesday and Thursday.

"The Queen sends her warmest good wishes to the people of Northern Ireland, and looks forward to visiting in the future," the palace said.

She is resting at Windsor Castle, where she has stayed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year. The decision to cancel the trip was understood to not be COVID related.

The decision comes just days after Elizabeth was seen using a walking stick at a major public event when attending a Westminster Abbey service marking the centenary of the Royal British Legion, an armed forces charity.

She had previously been photographed using a cane in 2003, but that was after she underwent knee surgery.

Britain's longest-lived and longest-reigning monarch, Elizabeth is due to celebrate her Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — next year.

The queen, who was widowed this year when Prince Philip died at age 99 in April, still keeps a busy schedule of royal duties. On Tuesday, she held audiences with diplomats and hosted a reception at Windsor Castle for global business leaders.

Despite her great age, the monarch has politely declined the honor of being named "Oldie of the Year" by a British magazine. The Oldie magazine on Tuesday published the queen's response to its suggestion that she follow in the footsteps of former recipients, such as actor Olivia de Havilland and artist David Hockney.

"Her Majesty believes you are as old as you feel, as such The Queen does not believe she meets the relevant criteria to be able to accept, and hopes you will find a more worthy recipient," said a letter from her assistant private secretary, Tom Laing-Baker. He ended the letter "with Her Majesty's warmest best wishes."

## Tiny wrists in cuffs: How police use force against children

By HELEN WIEFFERING, COLLEEN LONG and CAMILLE FASSETT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Royal Smart remembers every detail: the feeling of the handcuffs on his wrists. The panic as he was led outside into the cold March darkness, arms raised, to face a wall of police officers pointing their guns.

He was 8 years old.

Neither he nor anyone else at his family's home on Chicago's South Side was arrested on that night two years ago, and police wielding a warrant to look for illegal weapons found none. But even now, in

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 16 of 79

nightmares and in waking moments, he is tormented by visions of officers bursting through houses and tearing rooms apart, ordering people to lie down on the floor.

"I can't go to sleep," he said. "I keep thinking about the police coming."

Children like Royal were not the focus after George Floyd died at the hands of police in 2020, prompting a raging debate on the disproportionate use of force by law enforcement, especially on adults of color. Kids are still an afterthought in reforms championed by lawmakers and pushed by police departments. But in case after case, an Associated Press investigation has found that children as young as 6 have been treated harshly — even brutally — by officers of the law.

They've been handcuffed, felled by stun guns, taken down and pinned to the ground by officers often far larger than they were. Departments nationwide have few or no guardrails to prevent such incidents.

The AP analyzed data on approximately 3,000 instances of police use of force against children under 16 over the past 11 years. The data, provided to the AP by Accountable Now, a project of The Leadership Conference Education Fund aiming to create a comprehensive use-of-force database, includes incidents from 25 police departments in 17 states.

It's a small representation of the 18,000 overall police agencies nationwide and the millions of daily encounters police have with the public.

But the information gleaned is troubling.

Black children made up more than 50% of those who were handled forcibly, though they are only 15% of the U.S. child population. They and other minority kids are often perceived by police as being older than they are. The most common types of force were takedowns, strikes and muscling, followed by firearms pointed at or used on children. Less often, children faced other tactics, like the use of pepper spray or police K-9s.

In Minneapolis, officers pinned children with their bodyweight at least 190 times. In Indianapolis, more than 160 kids were handcuffed; in Wichita, Kansas, police officers drew or used their Tasers on kids at least 45 times. Most children in the dataset are teenagers, but the data included dozens of cases of children ages 10 or younger who were also subject to police force.

Force is occasionally necessary to subdue children, some of whom are accused of serious crimes.

Police reports obtained for a sample of incidents show that some kids who were stunned or restrained were armed; others were undergoing mental health crises and were at risk of harming themselves. Still other reports showed police force escalating after kids fled from police questioning. In St. Petersburg, Florida, for instance, officers chased a Black boy on suspicion of attempted car theft after he pulled the handle of a car door. He was 13 years old and 80 pounds (36 kilograms), and his flight ended with his thigh caught in a police K-9's jaw.

The AP contacted every police department detailed in this story. Some did not respond; others said they could not comment because of pending litigation. Those responding defended the conduct of their officers or noted changes to the departments after the incidents took place.

There are no laws that specifically prohibit police force against children. Some departments have policies that govern how old a child must be to be handcuffed, but very few mention age in their use-of-force policies. While some offer guidance on how to manage juveniles accused of crime or how to handle people in mental distress, the AP could find no policy that addresses these issues together.

That's by design, policing experts said, in part so that officers can make critical decisions in the moment. But that means police don't receive the training they need to deal with kids.

"Adolescents are just so fundamentally different in so many respects, and the techniques that officers are accustomed to using ... it just doesn't lend itself to the interaction going well with youth," said Dylan Jackson, a criminologist at Johns Hopkins University, who is working with the Baltimore Police Department on juvenile encounters.

The trauma lasts. Kids can't sleep. They withdraw, act out. Their brains are still developing, and the encounters can have long-term impact, psychologists said.

"I think that when officers understand the basic core components of development and youth development — their social, emotional, physical, psychological development — it can really help them understand



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 17 of 79

why they might need to take a different approach," Jackson said.

Training offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers includes sessions on the adolescent brain to help officers understand why kids react and respond the way they do, executive director Mo Canady said. But not every department makes use of the training.

Canady and other policing experts cautioned against blanket policies that would bar force against younger children.

"You can't say just because a student is 12 that we're not going to use force," Canady said. "Most 12-year-olds you wouldn't. But you don't know the circumstances of everything. You could have a 12-year-old who is bigger, stronger and assaulting a teacher, and you may very well have to use some level of force."

Royal, the boy in Chicago, was handcuffed for nearly 30 minutes in the cold, alongside his mother and other adults in the house. Then a police sergeant released him, and an aunt came to look after the children.

Royal's brother Roy, older by one year, stood by watching, not knowing what to say or do. According to a lawsuit filed by the family, police didn't handcuff him because "officers simply ran out of handcuffs." Roy thought his brother was cuffed first because he looked "intimidating": He was wearing a blue hoodie.

That spring, in another pocket of the South Side, Krystal Archie's three children were there when police — on two occasions just 11 weeks apart — kicked open her front door and tore apart the cabinets and dressers searching for drug suspects. She'd never heard of the people they were hunting.

Her oldest child, Savannah, was 14, Telia was 11 and her youngest, Jhaimarion, was 7. They were ordered to get down on the floor. Telia said the scariest moment was seeing an officer press his foot into Savannah's back.

Archie said her children "were told, demanded, to get down on the ground as if they were criminals."

"They were questioned as if they were adults," she said.

Now Savannah's hands shake when she sees a police car coming. "I get stuck. I get scared," she said.

Both families have sued Chicago police, alleging false arrest, wanton conduct and emotional distress. Chicago police did not comment on their specific cases but said revised policies passed in May require extra planning for vulnerable people like children before search warrants are served.

But the attorney for the two families, Al Hofeld Jr., said the incidents are part of a pattern and represent a specific brand of force that falls disproportionately on poor families of color.

"The number of cases that we have is just the tip of the iceberg," he said.

About 165 miles (265 kilometers) due south, in the rural hamlet of Paris, Illinois, 15-year-old Skyler Davis was riding his bike near his house when he ran afoul of a local ordinance that prohibited biking and skateboarding in the business district — a law that was rarely enforced, if ever.

But on that day, according to Skyler's father, Aaron Davis, police officers followed his mentally disabled son in their squad car and chased his bike up over a curb and across the grass.

Officers pursued Skyler into his house and threw him to the floor, handcuffing him and slamming him against a wall, his father said. Davis arrived to see police pulling Skyler — 5 feet (1.5 meters) tall and barely 80 pounds (36 kilograms), with a "pure look of terror" on his face — toward the squad car.

"He's just a happy kid, riding his bike down the road," Davis said, "And 30 to 45 seconds later, you see him basically pedaling for his life."

Video of the pursuit was captured by surveillance cameras outside the police department, and the family has filed a federal lawsuit against the police officers. Two officers received written warnings, according to attorney Jude Redwood. The Paris Police Department declined to comment.

"What they done to him was brutal," Davis said.

Kristin Henning, director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic at Georgetown University's law school, has represented children accused of delinquency for more than 20 years and said many encounters escalate "from zero to 100" in seconds — often because police interpret impulsive adolescent behavior as a threat.

"When you are close to the kids, you work with the kids every day, you see that they are just kids, and

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 18 of 79

they're doing what every other kid does," she said. "Talking back, being themselves, experimenting, expressing their discomfort, expressing their displeasure about something — that's what kids do."

Meanwhile, attorneys like Na'Shaun Neal say police who use force on minors often depend on the perception that kids lie. Against an officer's word, Neal said, "no one typically believes the children."

Neal represents two boys — identified as R.R. and P.S. in court papers — who were involved in an altercation with police on July 4, 2019.

It was a few hours before midnight when a San Fernando, California, police officer stopped to ask if they were lighting fireworks, according to a complaint filed in federal court. The boys had been walking through a park, accompanied by an older brother and his dog.

According to the complaint, the officers followed the group and told them it was past curfew; they needed to take the boys into custody.

Police said the boys were responsible for the fracas that followed, and they charged them with assaulting an officer and resisting arrest.

But then a cellphone video, taken by R.R.'s brother Jonathan Valdivia, materialized. And as was the case in the death of Floyd — who was blamed for his own death until a video showed Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin pinning him to the ground with his knee to Floyd's neck as Floyd cried out for help — Valdivia's video told a very different story.

The video shows an officer forcing his 14-year-old brother to the ground and handcuffing him behind his back. His 13-year-old friend struggles next to him, his neck and shoulders pinned by the officer's knees for 20 seconds.

"Get off of my neck! That's too hard!" the 13-year-old screams.

A judge found the boys not guilty at a bench trial. Neal is suing the city and the police officer on their behalf.

The city of San Fernando has denied that officers used excessive force, maintaining that the boys physically resisted arrest.

"They were very confrontational and aggressive verbally," the city's attorney Dan Alderman said. "Unfortunately, the escalation occurred because of the conduct of the minors, not because of anything the officer did."

It is worth noting that R.R. and P.S. are Latinos. Authorities say there are reasons why police officers are more likely to use force against minorities than against white children.

A 2014 study published by the American Psychological Association found that Black boys as young as 10 may not be viewed with the same "childhood innocence" as their white peers and are more likely to be perceived as guilty and face police violence. Other studies have found a similar bias against Black girls.

Tamika Harrell's 13-year-old daughter went to a skating rink with a friend in their mostly white town outside Akron, Ohio, last summer; she was one of only a few Black teens at the crowded, mostly white rink. After a fight broke out, the girl — who was in the bathroom when the brawl began — was grabbed by an officer, roughly handcuffed and thrown into the back of a police car.

Harrell wondered why her kid — the Black kid — was singled out. Before, they had a good relationship with the police. But that's all changed. The incident is still raw. Her daughter won't go out anymore and is having trouble concentrating. The family has filed a lawsuit; the police chief there said he can't comment on pending litigation.

Dr. Richard Dudley, a child psychiatrist in New York, said many officers have implicit bias that would prompt them to see Black children as older, and therefore more threatening, than they are. For instance, police are more likely to think that a Black child's phone is a gun, he said.

It all becomes a vicious cycle, Dudley said. Police react badly to these kids, and to the people they know, so kids react badly to police, leading them to react badly to kids.

Minority children have negative everyday dealings with police and are traumatized by them. "Whatever they've seen police officers do in the past," Dudley said, "all of that is the backdrop for their encounter with a police officer."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 19 of 79

So when that encounter occurs, they may be overreactive and hypervigilant, and it may appear that they're not complying with police commands when, really, they're just very scared.

The police are not thinking, "I have this panicked, frightened kid that I need to calm down," Dudley said.

To Dudley and to Jackson, the Johns Hopkins criminologist, de-escalation training for police isn't enough. It must include elements of implicit bias and of mental health, and it must be integrated into an officer's everyday work.

Jackson said he's been working very closely with Black kids in Baltimore, and the first thing he hears often is that they can't go talk to an officer unless that officer is in plainclothes.

"There is a visceral reaction," he said. "And that's trauma. And some of these kids, even if they haven't been stopped over and over again, it's embedded in the fabric of what America has been for a really long time, and they know what that uniform represents in their community."

Some of the cases have prompted changes. In the District of Columbia, for example, police officers now do not handcuff children under 13, except when the children are a danger to themselves or others.

The policy was revamped in 2020 after incidents in which two children were arrested: When a 10-year-old was held in a suspected robbery, authorities said that police had correctly followed protocol in handcuffing the child, but then a few weeks later police handcuffed a 9-year-old who had committed no crime.

Age-specific force policies are rare, according to Lisa Thurau, who founded the group Strategies for Youth to train police departments to more safely interact with kids. She said at least 20 states have no policies setting the minimum age of arrest.

Without explicit policies, "the default assumption of an officer is, quite reasonably, that they should treat all youth like adults," Thurau said.

The Cincinnati Police Department also changed its use-of-force policy after an officer zapped an 11-year-old Black girl with a stun gun for shoplifting. The department's policy allowed police to shock kids as young as 7 but changed in 2019 to discourage the use of such weapons on young children.

Attorney Al Gerhardstein, who represented the girl and helped petition for policy change, said the pattern of force he found against kids of color in the city raised alarm bells for him. Records he obtained and shared with the AP show that Cincinnati police used stun guns against 48 kids age 15 or younger from 2013 to 2018. All but two of those children were Black.

But in most departments, there is little discussion around children and policing and few options available to parents aside from a lawsuit. If a settlement is reached, it's often paid by the city instead of by the officers involved.

In Aurora, Colorado, for example, a video of police handcuffing Black children went viral. The video showed the girls, ages 6, 12, 14 and 17, face down in a parking lot. The youngest wore a pink crown and sobbed for her mother. Another begged the police, "Can I hug my sister next to me?"

Police said they couldn't get cuffs on the youngest because her hands were too small.

Their mother, Brittney Gilliam, was taking them to the nail salon. She was stopped by police because they believed she was driving a stolen car. She was not; she had Colorado plates and a blue SUV. The stolen car had Montana plates.

Officials said the officers had made mistakes, but they remained on duty. The officers did not face any criminal charges, and there have been no significant changes to their policies when it comes to children.

The family has since filed a lawsuit.

The family of X'Zane Watts also filed a lawsuit in Charleston, West Virginia, after a 2017 incident that began when police mistakenly suspected the eighth grader of a burglary.

X'Zane said he was playing in an alley near his home with his 2-year-old cousin when three white men in plainclothes got out of their car and started running toward them with weapons drawn, shouting obscenities. They chased him into his house and put a gun to his head, slamming him to the ground.

His mother, Charissa Watts, saw it happen from the kitchen. She didn't know they were police. Neither did X'Zane.

"The wrong flinch, they could have shot him," she said. "The wrong words out of my mouth, they could have shot me."

In the years since, Charleston ushered in a new mayor and a new police chief. They pointed to changes they've made: banning some weapons and chokeholds, requiring body cameras and offering more mental health and de-escalation training.

"Since I became chief of police, we have worked to review policies and provide our officers with the tools they need to keep all our residents and visitors safe — but together we can always do more," Chief Tyke Hunt said.

The Watts family sued, charging that officers profiled X'Zane. They reached a settlement in 2019.

The year after the incident was difficult, X'Zane said. His elbow, injured in the altercation, kept him from playing football; he was angry and distracted. The family moved across town to escape the memories of that day.

Today, X'Zane is doing much better. He hopes to join the U.S. Air Force. And he's been able to put the incident behind him — to a point.

"It has put a longtime fear in me," he said.

Email AP's Global Investigations Team at [investigative@ap.org](mailto:investigative@ap.org) or <https://www.ap.org/tips/>. See other work at <https://www.apnews.com/hub/ap-investigations>.

Wieffering is a Roy W. Howard Investigative Fellow.

## New airstrikes hit capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — New airstrikes have hit the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region, residents said Wednesday, as video showed injured people with bloodied faces being helped into ambulances and thick black smoke rising into the sky. Ethiopia's government said it was targeting facilities to make and repair weapons, which a spokesman for the rival Tigray forces denied.

Meanwhile, the United Nations told The Associated Press it is slashing by more than half its Tigray presence as an Ethiopian government blockade halts humanitarian aid efforts and people die from lack of food.

The war in Africa's second-most populous country has ground on for nearly a year between Ethiopian and allied forces and the Tigray ones who long dominated the national government before a falling-out with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

There were no immediate details of deaths from the new airstrikes in Mekele, reported by Kindeya Gebrehiwot of the Tigray external affairs office and confirmed by a resident and a humanitarian worker.

"Indeed there have been airstrikes in Mekele today," Ethiopian government spokesperson Legesse Tulu told the AP, saying they targeted facilities at the Mesfin Industrial Engineering site that Tigray forces use to make and repair heavy weapons. Legesse said the airstrikes had "no intended harm to civilians."

"Not at all," Kindeya with the Tigray forces told the AP, calling the site a garage "with many old tires. That is why it is still blazing."

The attack came two days after Ethiopia's air force confirmed airstrikes in Mekele that a witness said killed three children. The air force said communications towers and equipment were attacked. Mekele hadn't seen fighting since June, when Tigray forces retook much of the region in a dramatic turn in the war.

The airstrikes have caused fresh panic in a city under siege, where doctors and others have described running out of medicines and other basic needs.

Despite pleas from the U.N. and others to allow basic services and humanitarian aid to Tigray's 6 million people, Ethiopia's government this week called those expectations "absurd" while the Tigray forces now fight in the neighboring regions of Amhara and Afar. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced there, widening the deadly crisis.

"Although not all movements have yet taken place, there will probably be a reduction from nearly 530

to around 220 U.N. staff on the ground in Tigray," U.N. humanitarian spokesman Saviano Abreu told the AP. The decision is "directly linked to the operation constraints we have been faced with over the last months" along with the volatile security situation, he said.

The lack of fuel and cash because of the government's blockade on Tigray "has made it extremely challenging for humanitarians to sustain life-saving activities" at the time they're needed most, Abreu added. Some 1,200 humanitarian workers including the reduced U.N. presence will remain in Tigray, he said. The AP in recent weeks has confirmed the first starvation deaths in Tigray under the government blockade.

## Study: Fossil fuel plans would far overshoot climate goals

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The world needs to cut by more than half its production of coal, oil and gas in the coming decade to maintain a chance of keeping global warming from reaching dangerous levels, according to a U.N.-backed study released Wednesday.

The report published by the U.N. Environment Program found that while governments have made ambitious pledges to curb greenhouse gas emissions, they are still planning to extract double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than what would be consistent with the 2015 Paris climate accord's goal of keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

Even the less ambitious goal of capping global warming at 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century compared to pre-industrial times would be overshoot, it said.

Climate experts say the world must stop adding to the total amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere by 2050, and that can only be done by drastically reducing the burning of fossil fuels as soon as possible, among other measures.

The report, which was released days before a U.N. climate summit begins Oct. 31 in Glasgow, found most major oil and gas producers — and even some major coal producers — are planning on increasing production until 2030 or even beyond.

It also concluded that the group of 20 major industrialized and emerging economies have invested more into new fossil fuel projects than into clean energy since the start of 2020.

The disparity between climate goals and fossil fuel extraction plans — termed the "production gap" — will widen until at least 2040, the report found.

This would require increasingly steep and extreme measures to meet the Paris emissions goal, UNEP said. "There is still time to limit long term warming to 1.5°C, but this window of opportunity is rapidly closing," said the agency's executive director, Inger Andersen, adding that governments should commit to closing the gap at the Glasgow climate summit.

The report, which had more than 40 researchers contributing, examine 15 major fossil fuel-producing countries.

For the United States, they found that government projections show oil and gas production increasing to 17% and 12%, respectively, by 2030 compared to 2019 levels. Much of that would be exported, meaning the emissions from burning those fossil fuels would not show up in the U.S. inventory although they would add to the global total.

U.S. coal production is projected to decline by 30% over the coming decade compared to 2019.

Costa Rica's environment and energy minister said the report shows the need to stop extracting fossil fuels to meet the Paris goals.

"We must cut with both hands of the scissors, addressing demand and supply of fossil fuels simultaneously," Andrea Meza said.

Costa Rica and Denmark are planning to launch a new group at the Glasgow summit, the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, to promote that effort.

## NZ police answer 4-year-old's call, confirm toys are cool

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — An emergency call made by a 4-year-old New Zealand boy asking for police to come over and check out his toys prompted a real-life callout and confirmation from an officer that the toys were, indeed, pretty cool.

Police shared audio of the call on social media this week along with a photo of the smiling boy sitting on the hood of a patrol cruiser, noting that while they don't encourage children to call the emergency number, the incident was "too cute not to share."

The call begins all business: "This is police, where is the emergency?"

There's a pause as the unidentified boy hesitantly says, "Hi," and then "Police lady?"

"Yes," the dispatcher says, switching to a friendlier, singsong tone. "What's going on?"

"Um, can I tell you something?" the boy asks, and after being told he can, says "I've got some toys for you."

"You've got some toys for me?" says the dispatcher.

"Yep. Come over and see them," the boy replies.

A man then gets on the phone confirming the call was a mistake, saying the 4-year-old had been helping out while his mother was sick.

A police dispatch call then goes out, giving the address: "There is a 4-year-old there who is wanting to show police his toys, over."

"Yeah, I'm one-up, I'll attend to," responds an officer.

Police said the officer, who they identified only as Constable Kurt, was shown an array of toys at the boy's house in the South Island city of Invercargill.

They said the officer was also able to have a "good, educational chat" about the proper use of the emergency number, which is 111 in New Zealand.

"He did have cool toys," Constable Kurt reported back after attending the callout, according to police. They added that: "The lucky kid also got to see the patrol car and the officer put the lights on for him, too."

## Beirut clash fires up sectarian anger in echo of civil war

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — He was only a year old when his panicked father picked him up and they fled with his mother from the gunfire rattling their neighborhood. It was the day Lebanon's civil war started 46 years ago. His family's apartment building in Beirut was on the frontline.

Now 47, Bahij Dana did the same thing last week. He evacuated his wife and two of his kids as gun battles raged for hours outside the same building. Civil defense rescuers came to help his father and mother, stuck in the lower floors.

"History is repeating itself," Dana said.

The battle Thursday went on for five hours between supporters of Lebanon's two powerful Shiite factions and gunmen believed to be supporters of a Christian party. It took place on the line between Beirut's Chiyah and Ain el-Rumaneh neighborhoods, the same notorious frontline that bisected the capital into warring sections during the country's dark civil war era.

It was not just memories of the war that were triggered by the scenes of gunmen in streets and school-children ducking under desks. The battles, which left seven dead, also fired up the sectarian passions from that violent past, which Lebanese had learned to brush aside without ever dealing with the causes.

Add to that a bankrupt government, hyperinflation and mounting poverty, and the country of six million is turning into a powder keg on the Mediterranean.

The clashes erupted over the probe into last year's massive port blast, as the political elite closed ranks in their efforts to block it.

Despite calls for calm, leaders of Shiite Hezbollah and the rival right-wing Christian Lebanese Forces kept up their heated rhetoric. They brought back civil war jargon, talking about "frontlines" and "neighborhood

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 23 of 79

defenses," deepening the sense that the pact that kept the social peace since the war has come undone. "We made up, and now they want to pit us against one another again," said Camille Hobeika, a 51-year-old mechanic and Christian resident of Ain el-Rumaneh.

Since the war, the sectarian-based warlords who fought it have divvied up political power, signing a pact in 1989 and issuing an amnesty for themselves. Though rivals, they have had a common interest in maintaining the system, rife with patronage and corruption, and so generally keep a shaky peace.

The new fighting highlighted a generational divide that stands at the heart of how Lebanese deal with that legacy.

For those who lived through the atrocities of the communal fighting between 1975 and 1990, the country is fated to that system, even with occasional bouts of violence whenever the entrenched political leadership looks to recalibrate the balance of power.

Dana sees the burst of violence as a tried tactic by the leaders: When they face trouble, they stoke fear of civil war, so each sect's followers rally around their chief, seeing him as their only protection.

For him, this is how things work, rooted in the "zaim," Arabic for leader, who provides his community with jobs and services in return for his supporters' unquestioning loyalty.

"We are used to it. We were brought up in a war environment," Dana said. "We are not accepting war. But I accept my country, my cedar tree, my family and friends. Where else can I find that?"

But many in the younger generation say they refuse to be pawns of the political elite. They tried protesting, with nationwide rallies in 2019, but hardly shook the foundations of the ruling class.

Dana's 22-year-old daughter, Vanda, a university student, sees nothing to gain from the leadership and no point in staying in Lebanon.

In the last three years, Lebanon has lost its status as a middle-income country, with over 70% of the population sinking into poverty, and many skilled professionals leaving. Her father's 25-year-old printing business has gone to ruins and the family money is locked in the bank, inaccessible because of restrictions imposed during the financial meltdown.

Now, her bedroom windows are riddled with bullets.

"We learned and attended the best universities, only to experience this! Why? Why do I now have to be terrified when a door slams? Why do I have to run to my father crying when there is any sound? I don't have to live this life," she said, sobbing.

"My parents say they still have hope. But there is nothing left," the younger Dana said. "Why should I plan a family here and make them go through this? In 10 or 20 years, the same thing will happen. It will always stay this way."

Some pin hopes on next spring's parliamentary elections as a way out of the leadership's grip. But Lebanon's politics are mostly sectarian. Parties' supporters are predominantly from the same sect, and election districts are gerrymandered to fit sectarian lines.

Days after the clashes, many residents of the area have yet to return home. Apartment buildings freshly pockmarked by bullets line the streets.

Army vehicles and barbed wire separate predominantly Christian Ain el-Rumaneh and mainly Shiite Muslim Chiyah — bringing back the image of a West Beirut and an East Beirut, a split Lebanese have shunned since the war.

In Chiyah, the neighborhood is in mourning. All those killed were supporters of the Shiite groups Hezbollah and Amal. Posters for a mother of five killed on her balcony from flying bullets hang between buildings.

"Hezbollah has always been targeted," said Chiyah resident Ali Haidar, 23.

With the sectarian violence, each sect brings out its stored-up resentments against the other, imagined or real.

Haidar said Hezbollah defended Lebanon against Israel and terrorism only to be met with hostility from internal foes like the Lebanese Forces. When Israel was bombing his neighborhood and other Hezbollah areas in 2006, he said, "life was normal on the other side."

On the other side in Ain el-Rumaneh, electronics store owner Sami Nakkad blamed the Shiites for Thurs-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 24 of 79

day's violence. Bullets from Chiyah landed in his apartment above the store. He insisted Ain el-Rumaneh residents, defending their area, carried only sticks.

Asked how he explained the deaths on the other side, Nakkad said: "They killed themselves because they want to twist things around."

During Thursday's gunbattles, Nakkad, who is in his 70s, hid with his wife and daughter for hours in a stairwell.

His employee, 45-year-old Shadi Nicola, left when the bullets started flying, seeing no use in the fight. He called the clashes "theatrics" by leaders losing popularity amid a crushing economic crisis.

"Elections will bring them back. Those people... came through blood. They will only go with blood," he said.

Elie, a 28-year-old trainer, has slept at friends' homes away from the neighborhood since the clashes. He has an upcoming interview for a job abroad and is ready to leave Lebanon.

"This (fighting) is not our decision," he said. The country is slipping into trouble, and the leaders "are not even making a 1% effort to fix things. They are taking us deeper."

## WHO: Europe the only region with rise in COVID-19 last week

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization said there was a 7% rise in new coronavirus cases across Europe last week, the only region in the world where cases increased.

In its weekly assessment of the pandemic released late Tuesday, the U.N. health agency said there were about 2.7 million new COVID-19 cases and more than 46,000 deaths last week, similar to the numbers reported the previous week. Britain, Russia and Turkey accounted for the most cases.

The biggest drop in COVID-19 cases were seen in Africa and the Western Pacific, where infections fell by about 18% and 16%, respectively. The number of deaths in Africa also declined by about a quarter, despite the dire shortage of vaccines on the continent. Other regions including the Americas and the Middle East, reported similar numbers to the previous week, WHO said.

But for the third consecutive week, coronavirus cases have jumped in Europe, with about 1.3 million new cases. More than half of countries in the region reported a rise in their COVID-19 numbers, WHO said.

In the past week, Russia has repeatedly broken new daily records for COVID-19 cases and the number of infections in the U.K. has surged to levels not seen since mid-July.

Although the head of Britain's National Health Service has urged the government to introduce stricter COVID-19 protocols including mask-wearing and the faster vaccination of children, politicians have so far demurred.

In Russia, officials have struggled to vaccinate its population and only about 32% of people have been immunized despite the availability of its Sputnik V vaccine. It has by far the largest death toll in Europe, with more than 225,000 deaths.

## 46 dead after heavy rains, landslides in northern India

By BISWAJEET BANERJEE Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — At least 46 people have died and several are missing after floods triggered by heavy rains hit the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand, officials said Wednesday.

Rescuers worked through the night to retrieve bodies stuck in debris and to evacuate those in vulnerable areas, said S A Murugesan, secretary of the state's disaster management. On Tuesday, officials said 22 people were killed by the rains.

The mountainous state has seen incessant rains for the past three days, flooding roads, destroying bridges and causing landslides in which several homes were washed away. The situation has prompted help from more than 2,000 members of the paramilitary and civil police.

The Indian Meteorological Department said the rains were likely to recede in Uttarakhand on Wednesday, but warned of more heavy downpours in the country's northeastern and southern regions.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 25 of 79

The majority of the deaths in Uttarakhand were reported in the picturesque town of Nainital, where 28 people were killed on Tuesday, said Murugesan. Most of the deaths were caused by homes and buildings collapsing in the torrential rains, he added.

In Mukteshwar, a popular hill station in the state, five laborers died when a wall collapsed on their shanty. In another hilly town, Ramgarh, nine members of a family died as the rains washed away their home, the official said.

Videos shared on social media showed the Ganges River bursting its banks at Rishikesh, and the scenic Nainital Lake overflowing with floodwaters.

Experts say the magnitude of the rains has been staggering. Uttarakhand saw 17.8 centimeters (7 inches) of rain in the first few weeks this month, but recorded nearly 58 centimeters (22.8 inches) within just 22 hours on Tuesday, said Bikram Singh, the director of the Meteorological Center in Dehradun, the state's capital city.

He said climate change has not only increased the frequency of the rains, but also their intensity.

India has seen worrisome rains across several regions this week. Flooding and landslides caused by downpours over the week have killed at least 39 people in the southern Kerala state, which is on high alert for more rains in the coming days.

Landslides and floods are common in India's Himalayan north. Scientists say they are becoming more frequent as global warming contributes to the melting of glaciers there.

In February, flash floods killed nearly 200 people and washed away houses in Uttarakhand. In 2013, thousands of people were killed in floods there.

## **Flooding in Venice worsens off-season amid climate change**

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — After Venice suffered the second-worst flood in its history in November 2019, it was inundated with four more exceptional tides within six weeks, shocking Venetians and triggering fears about the worsening impact of climate change.

The repeated invasion of brackish lagoon water into St. Mark's Basilica this summer is a quiet reminder that the threat hasn't receded.

"I can only say that in August, a month when this never used to happen, we had tides over a meter five times. I am talking about the month of August, when we are quiet," St. Mark's chief caretaker, Carlo Alberto Tesserin, told The Associated Press.

Venice's unique topography, built on log piles among canals, has made it particularly vulnerable to climate change. Rising sea levels are increasing the frequency of high tides that inundate the 1,600-year-old Italian lagoon city, which is also gradually sinking.

It is the fate of coastal cities like Venice that will be on the minds of climate scientists and global leaders meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, at a U.N. climate conference that begins Oct. 31.

Venice's worse-case scenario for sea level rise by the end of the century is a startling 120 centimeters (3 feet, 11 inches), according to a new study published by the European Geosciences Union. That is 50% higher than the worse-case global sea-rise average of 80 centimeters (2 feet, 7 1/2 inches) forecast by the U.N. science panel.

The city's interplay of canals and architecture, of natural habitat and human ingenuity, also has earned it recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its outstanding universal value, a designation put at risk of late because of the impact of over-tourism and cruise ship traffic. It escaped the endangered list after Italy banned cruise ships from passing through St. Mark's Basin, but alarm bells are still ringing.

Sitting at Venice's lowest spot, St. Mark's Basilica offers a unique position to monitor the impact of rising seas on the city. The piazza outside floods at 80 centimeters (around 30 inches), and water passes the narthex into the church at 88 centimeters (34.5 inches), which has been reinforced up from a previous 65 centimeters (25.5 inches).

"Conditions are continuing to worsen since the flooding of November 2019. We therefore have the certainty

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 26 of 79

that in these months, flooding is no longer an occasional phenomenon. It is an everyday occurrence," said Tesserin, whose honorific, First Procurator of St. Mark's, dates back to the ninth century.

In the last two decades, there have been nearly as many inundations in Venice over 1.1 meters — the official level for "acqua alta," or "high water," provoked by tides, winds and lunar cycles — as during the previous 100 years: 163 vs. 166, according to city data.

Exceptional floods over 140 centimeters (4 feet, 7 inches) also are accelerating. That mark has been hit 25 times since Venice started keeping such records in 1872. Two-thirds of those have been registered in the last 20 years, with five, or one-fifth of the total, from Nov. 12-Dec. 23, 2019.

"What is happening now is on the continuum for Venetians, who have always lived with periodic flooding," said Jane Da Mosto, executive director of We Are Here Venice. "We are living with flooding that has become increasingly frequent, so my concern is that people haven't really realized we are in a climate crisis. We are already living it now. It is not a question of plans to deal with it in the future. We need to have solutions ready for today."

Venice's defense has been entrusted to the Moses system of moveable underwater barriers, a project costing around 6 billion euros (nearly \$7 billion) and which, after decades of cost overruns, delays and a bribery scandal, is still officially in the testing phase.

Following the devastation of the 2019 floods, the Rome government put the project under ministry control to speed its completion, and last year started activating the barriers when floods of 1.3 meters (4 feet, 3 inches) are imminent.

The barriers have been raised 20 times since October 2020, sparing the city a season of serious flooding but not from the lower-level tides that are becoming more frequent.

The extraordinary commissioner, Elisabetta Spitz, stands by the soundness of the undersea barriers, despite concerns by scientists and experts that their usefulness may be outstripped within decades because of climate change. The project has been delayed yet again, until 2023, with another 500 million euros (\$580 million) in spending, for "improvements" that Spitz said will ensure its long-term efficiency.

"We can say that the effective life of the Moses is 100 years, taking into account the necessary maintenance and interventions that will be implemented," Spitz said.

Paolo Vielmo, an engineer who has written expert reports on the project, points out that the sea level rise was projected at 22 centimeters (8 1/2 inches) when the Moses was first proposed more than 30 years ago, far below the U.N. scientists' current worst-case scenario of 80 centimeters.

"That puts the Moses out of contention," he said.

According to current plans, the Moses barriers won't be raised for floods of 1.1 meters (3 feet, 7 inches) until the project receives final approval. That leaves St. Mark's exposed.

Tesserin is overseeing work to protect the Basilica by installing a glass wall around its base, which eventually will protect marshy lagoon water from seeping inside, where it deposits salt that eats away at marble columns, wall cladding and stone mosaics. The project, which continues to be interrupted by high tides, was supposed to be finished by Christmas. Now Tesserin says they will be lucky to have it finished by Easter.

Regular high tides elicit a blasé response from Venetians, who are accustomed to lugging around rubber boots at every flood warning, and delight from tourists, fascinated by the sight of St. Mark's golden mosaics and domes reflected in rising waters. But businesses along St. Mark's Square increasingly see themselves at ground zero of the climate crisis.

"We need to help this city. It was a light for the world, but now it needs the whole world to understand it," said Annapaola Lavena, speaking from behind metal barriers that kept waters reaching 1.05 meters (3 feet, 5 inches) from invading her marble-floored cafe.

"The acqua alta is getting worse, and it completely blocks business. Venice lives thanks to its artisans and tourism. If there is no more tourism, Venice dies," she explained. "We have a great responsibility in trying to save it, but we are suffering a lot."

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Follow all AP stories on climate change at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-change>.

## They survived Paris terror attack to face agony, doubt

By LORI HINNANT Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — They were animals, many of them say. Prey that had lost all sense of time. Targets who were no longer human to either their hunters or themselves.

For more than two weeks, dozens of survivors from the Bataclan concert hall in Paris have testified in a specially designed courtroom about the Islamic State group's attacks on Nov. 13, 2015. They stand just a few steps away from 14 men accused in the bloodshed — the deadliest in modern France.

The testimony marks the first time many survivors are describing — and learning — what exactly happened that night at the Bataclan, filling in the pieces of a puzzle that is taking shape as they speak. For most, it is their first public reckoning with a night they describe, one after another, day after day, in haunting words that are startlingly similar.

In all, 130 people died that night at the Bataclan, at France's national stadium and in neighborhood restaurants and bars. Hundreds more were injured in body and soul, 90 of them at the Bataclan, in the three-hour series of attacks.

Holding a laser pointer in trembling hands, witness after witness faces a courtroom screen with the Bataclan's floorplan — a floorplan that the technical director handed to police the moment they arrived to locate the doors and windows. The shaking dot of light finds where they were when the attack started, and sometimes where they ended up.

Some of the survivors were in the concert hall for just a few minutes after the shooting started before fleeing outside into the streets. Others remained behind for hours, beneath dead bodies on the dance floor, nested in fiberglass in the ceiling, crammed into a janitor's closet with only a broom to bar the door. Silent, praying that the three men bent on killing them wouldn't find them.

All nine attackers died that night or in the days that followed. The lone survivor of the IS cell, who fled the city after his suicide vest malfunctioned, is among those on trial. The others are accused of helping with logistics or transport.

On the night of Nov. 13, 2015, the American rock group Eagles of Death Metal was playing to a full house in the storied concert hall in central Paris. It was unseasonably warm, and temperatures rose in the dance pit as the second set swung into action.

Clarisse, then 24, was in the coatroom with a friend, getting ready to run out to a nearby convenience store for beers in the time-honored subterfuge of the young and broke. When the shooting started at the entrance at 9:47 p.m., there was only one place to go: Back inside, into the dance pit.

But the gunmen followed close behind.

"And I'm ready," Clarisse says. "I'm expecting to get shot in the back. And I think, will it hurt? Will I lose consciousness? Die immediately?"

Edith was at the bar near steps leading down toward the pit. She, like nearly every other survivor, told the judge she didn't want her last name to be publicly released.

The laser dot swings wildly on the screen as her shaking hands point to a stairwell she took on an instinct she describes as "something animal, almost reptilian." In the balcony, she dived beneath a folding chair. A giant of a man lay next to her, both of them breathing as quietly as their panicked bodies would allow.

At first the firing came in long bursts.

"Then one at a time it begins. A cry. A shot. A phone ringing. A shot. Someone pleading. A shot. There is no way out," Edith tells the judges, her hands twisting as she pulls rings off her fingers and replaces them one by one.

Jérôme, at the concert with six friends, was just below, close to the sound console. They were trapped, lying on the ground during what he described as the "calm cleanup."

He heard the shooter's steady breaths behind him as he fired on one of Jérôme's friends. And then a pause. They were out of bullets.

"As soon as they stopped to reload, there was no sound. It was like being in a cathedral, absolute silence," Jérôme says. By then, the smell of blood and powder was rising, an odor engraved in the memory

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 28 of 79

of all who made it out that night.

Thibault and his wife were near the stage, on the ground. He peeked behind him and saw one of the gunmen. "His face is uncovered and I understand that he's not going to flee," he says. "He's going to end this with the police. And it's at that moment that I understand that I'm going to die."

His cold comfort: "At least I'm not going to leave an orphan."

By now, about five minutes after the three gunmen burst into the Bataclan, the floor was wet with blood. The gunmen seemed to move away, and people surged toward the stage.

Clarisse was among dozens to take a back staircase up as far as they could go. They ended up in a dead-end room with a toilet in the corner. She stood on the toilet and smashed the ceiling, breaking through to a snarl of electric wires and fiberglass.

Thibault and his wife, Anne-Laure, joined the crowd but lost sight of each other running upstairs. The pipes broke and water started flooding the room. Still, person after person climbed on the toilet and then reached down from the crawlspace for someone below.

Anne-Laure did not. "I fled for a hiding space like an animal," she testified. "I was so angry with myself about that afterward."

Thibault eventually found her nested in the fiberglass and curled around her to wait. "It's going to end this way, either the terrorists will find us or the police will, but I'll be with my wife."

Dozens of wounded and dead still lay in the pit. Among them were Pierre-Sylvain and his girlfriend, in the middle of the room. He felt a flash at the first burst of gunfire and knew he was hit, and so was she.

When the attackers went upstairs, he shook the people on the ground next to him. None moved. He lifted his bleeding girlfriend, who seemed to weigh nothing, and looked around.

The first thing he saw was the blinding light of the stage spots, turned in every direction. Then the horror struck.

"The entire pit was covered in bodies, and you couldn't distinguish the living from the dead. I was in a concert hall but what I had in front of me was a mass grave." He stepped over the bodies, on the bodies, to get out.

Pierre-Sylvain realized only then that he'd been shot through the face. The bullet exited beneath his eye. His girlfriend was hit in the head and then the projectile splintered. Both survived. Between them, they've undergone more than 20 operations.

"I didn't understand why I stayed conscious. I was later told the body sends out endorphins to dull the pain and adrenaline to flee," he tells the judge, his face expressionless.

Sandrine was just next to the stage and fell to the ground at the first mass exit. She was trampled, her lungs crushed, and blacked out.

When she regained consciousness, she pushed herself up, uncomprehending when the floor gave way. "It wasn't the floor I was pushing on, but bodies, lifeless bodies."

She hardly remembers her feet touching the ground as she left the building. She felt something hard in her boot and reached into the toe, hoping it was the necklace that had fallen off in the chaos. "But it's not a necklace, it's a bullet."

Amandine, whose leg and arm were shattered, waited still longer, wishing for unconsciousness. She was on the floor when the first two officers arrived at 9:56 p.m., armed only with handguns.

One of them hit an attacker just before he executed a hostage on stage. His suicide vest detonated.

"Pieces of flesh fell on me were that were our tormentor's, and feathers, I imagine, from his jacket." The officers asked anyone who could walk to exit, but she couldn't move. "And so there I stayed, with the gravely injured and the dead."

Finally, after two hours, an officer dragged her out by her good arm. When she made it to the hospital "everyone looked at me for what I didn't realize I was, which is a survivor." Despite repeated surgeries, she still leans on a crutch around her forearm and grips the sides of the podium with her good hand.

Edith, hidden beneath a balcony seat, was evacuated around 11:30 p.m. Those in the balcony walked down single-file, past the pit and the bar, led by a police officer who told them, don't look. It was impos-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 29 of 79

sible not to.

"The sheer volume of all these bodies that two hours ago were dancing," she says, trying fruitlessly to stop the shaking of her hands. "It's narrow and we try to step around them but we can't always ... All those who saw it, understand."

Upstairs, the two remaining attackers rounded up 11 men and women into a narrow hallway. One gunman fired out a window into the alley below. "Got him," he exulted.

They ordered a hostage to sit with his back to the door leading to the balcony and describe the victims outside moaning in pain. Another captive stood watch out the windows.

The gunmen started negotiations with police using one of the hostage's phones. Suddenly, the doorway started to cave. A gunshot whistled between the heads of two hostages.

An enormous 90-kilogram (200-pound) black shield impervious to Kalashnikov bullets rolled through the entry, pushed by police, as big as the door itself. The shield teetered on the steps and fell on a female hostage. Two concussion grenades filled the room with gunpowder and dust.

One of the attackers emptied his clip, and the other blew himself up in the back staircase. The entire building shook. Both attackers were dead; and all 11 hostages were alive, stunned, but not one struck by a bullet. It was 12:18 a.m.

One by one, the former captives were led away through the pit downstairs. As they walked through the bodies, David wondered in anguish "did I collaborate? Did I participate?" The same thought flashed through the mind of Sébastien, who testifies in the same flannel shirt he wore that night.

"I changed my job, I changed my life. I changed my girlfriend, without wanting to obviously. My new companion is herself a survivor," he says.

It took more than an hour for police to find the survivors hidden in closets, on the roof. Those in the ceiling were the last to come out.

The judge asks Clarisse if she realized she had saved many lives that night.

"So I'm told. But I truly don't realize it. For me, it was out of the question to die without doing everything I could to get out."

But, she discovered, getting out was just the beginning. She turns to the defendants.

"You stole from me the pleasure of carefree evenings, the pleasure of walking down the street without panicking, the pleasure of going to the movies, the pleasure of living at ease and without anguish."

Thibault, who credits her with saving him, describes returning to his humanity as he exited the building. But, he adds, "The sense of guilt is extremely strong. Why did I survive when so many didn't?"

He and his wife have been unable to have children. A small woman with a pixie haircut that frames her fragile cheekbones, she weeps as she says that night left her too fragile emotionally and physically. Then she apologizes because others have suffered more.

Edith also says her testimony feels almost illegitimate for leaving the Bataclan alive and physically unharmed. But that night left her a shell of the woman she once was. Among the many tattoos that enlance her limbs is one of the Bataclan, on her left forearm.

"We are still trapped in Nov. 13," she says.

Pierre-Sylvain, whose face will be forever scarred, is hopeful that the trial will help.

"That this is happening in a sanctified space, it allows victims to speak," he says. "It can ease the burden on each of us. ... Many people saw this as an end. I see it as a beginning."

## Olympic flame arrives in Beijing amid boycott calls

BEIJING (AP) — The Olympic flame arrived in Beijing on Wednesday amid calls from overseas critics for a boycott of the Feb. 4-20 Winter Games.

Beijing's Communist Party Secretary Cai Qi, the top official in the Chinese capital, received the flame at a closely-guarded airport ceremony.

Beijing successfully hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008, although the event failed to produce the more open political and social environment in China that many had hoped for.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 30 of 79

Activist groups disrupted the flame lighting ceremony in southern Greece on Monday, accusing the International Olympic Committee of granting legitimacy to rights abuses in China. IOC officials have said they are committed to seeing the competition go ahead and that rights issues are not part of their remit.

Speaking in the ancient stadium of Olympia, IOC President Thomas Bach said the Games must be "respected as politically neutral ground."

Activists on Tuesday said human rights in China have deteriorated since 2008, claiming that the Summer Games "emboldened" China. Over those years, Communist Party leader Xi Jinping has consolidated power over virtually all aspects of Chinese society.

Beijing is the first city to be awarded hosting rights to both the Summer and Winter Games, largely as a result of the reluctance of European and North American cities to bid for the 2022 edition.

Human rights activists, meanwhile, say China's oppression of political critics, along with minority groups including Tibetan Buddhists and Muslim Uyghurs and a crackdown in Hong Kong should prompt athletes and politicians to shun the games.

China says spectators from outside China won't be allowed to attend the Winter Games because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and athletes must remain in a bubble to guard against the spread of coronavirus. China has largely stamped-out domestic transmission of the disease, the first cases of which were detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019.

At Wednesday's flame handover ceremony, Deputy Beijing Mayor Zhang Jiandong said the city was committed to holding a "simple, safe and excellent Games."

China and the IOC have collaborated to design a truncated torch relay that reduces the number of routes and personnel involved, Zhang said.

"We insist on prioritizing public health and safety, and coordinate the torch relay with pandemic control and prevention requirements," Zhang said.

The flame will be placed on display over the next few months, with a three-day relay scheduled to start Feb. 2, involving around 1,200 torchbearers in Beijing, suburban Yanqing and Zhangjiakou in neighboring Hebei province where ski jumping and other outdoor events will be held.

More AP Olympics: <https://apnews.com/hub/olympic-games> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Astros awaken for 7 in 9th, beat Boston 9-2 to tie ALCS 2-2

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Six outs from falling behind 3-1 in the AL Championship Series and facing elimination in Game 5 in Boston — where the Red Sox had yet to lose this postseason — the Houston Astros offense awakened.

After tying it in the eighth inning on Jose Altuve's solo homer, the Astros bullied the Boston bullpen for seven runs in the ninth to win 9-2 on Tuesday night and even the best-of-seven playoff at two games apiece.

"This is one of the great things about baseball," said the Astros' 72-year-old manager, Dusty Baker. "When you're dead in the water and things aren't going good, and then all of a sudden, boom, boom, boom, and you got seven runs.

"That's what they've been doing to us this whole series," he said. "And we're capable of doing that as well."

Jason Castro looked off a potential third strike from Nathan Eovaldi before driving in watch-tapping Carlos Correa with the go-ahead run in the ninth, then the AL West champions kept on scoring to guarantee themselves at least one more game back home.

Game 5 is Wednesday in Boston, with Games 6 and 7 back in Houston on Friday and, if necessary, Saturday.

The Red Sox are 5-0 after playoff losses under manager Alex Cora.

"We're feeling pretty confident," said Eovaldi, the Game 2 winner who made his first relief appearance since 2019. "That's been one of our strengths is being able to turn the page and come in tomorrow."

In a series that had been dominated by offense — especially Boston's, which has hit 10 homers in the

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 31 of 79

series, including a record-setting three grand slams to turn Games 2 and 3 into routs — the teams traded first-inning home runs.

Alex Bregman hit a solo shot into the Green Monster seats, then Xander Bogaerts topped it with a towering, two-run drive onto Lansdowne Street in the bottom half to give the Red Sox a 2-1 lead.

Then, the pitchers took over.

It was still 2-1 when Altuve homered against Garrett Whitlock to tie it in the eighth. It was his 21st career postseason home run, breaking a tie with Derek Jeter for third-most in baseball history and trailing only Manny Ramirez (29) and Bernie Williams (22).

Eovaldi, making his first relief appearance since he was coming back from an injury two years ago, came on for the ninth and gave up Correa's leadoff double.

The Red Sox thought they were out of the inning when Eovaldi's 1-2 breaking ball appeared to catch the plate for strike three on Castro. Still alive, Castro singled in Correa to give Houston the lead.

"Yeah, a lot of people thought it was a strike," Cora said. "It was a good game until the end, right? We were one pitch away from ending that inning, and it didn't happen, and then they scored seven."

Michael Brantley hit a three-run double off Martín Pérez. Yordan Alvarez added an RBI single. Pérez's throwing error on Correa's infield single allowed a run to score, and Kyle Tucker singled in another run.

Houston has scored 36 runs with two outs in the postseason, including 18 of its 22 in this series.

"We knew with this team that we're playing we wanted to pad the lead," Baker said. "And pad the lead we did, you know what I mean? That one run might not have stood up, especially in this ballpark."

The Red Sox, who were the first team in major league history to have double-digit hits six straight times in a single postseason, had just five on Tuesday — two of them when already trailing by seven in the ninth.

Nick Pivetta allowed just one more hit after Bregman's homer before leaving with a 2-1 lead through five innings. Eovaldi took the loss, allowing four runs while getting just two outs.

Kendall Graveman, the fifth Houston pitcher, threw two scoreless innings for the win. The Astros had special praise for Cristian Javier, who pitched three scoreless innings to get them through five as Houston's bullpen delivered 7 2/3 shutout innings.

"What the relievers did today was amazing," Altuve said.

It was the third straight game the Red Sox got five or more innings from a starter, and the third straight that the Houston starter didn't make it out of the second inning; Zack Greinke got just four outs on Tuesday.

## TRAINER'S ROOM

Astros: CF Jake Meyers, who injured his left shoulder crashing into the wall in the Division Series clincher, was originally listed in the starting lineup but "wasn't quite ready yet," Baker said. Chas McCormick started in center instead.

Red Sox: Schwarber appeared to tweak his left hamstring on a swing in the fourth inning. He limped out a groundout and remained in the game.

## UP NEXT

Game 5 is Wednesday at 5:08 p.m. Chris Sale will start for the Red Sox after allowing one run over 2 2/3 innings in Game 1. Framber Valdez goes for Houston. He gave up two earned runs in 2 2/3 innings during the series opener.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Nikolas Cruz set to plead guilty to Parkland massacre

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Nikolas Cruz is scheduled to plead guilty to 17 counts of first-degree murder Wednesday for the 2018 shooting massacre at a Florida high school, as his attorneys turn their focus to saving him from a death sentence.

Cruz, 23, will appear before Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer, who will ask him a lengthy list of questions to gauge his mental competency. Scherer will then ask him one by one how he pleads to each killing at

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 32 of 79

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and to the 17 counts of attempted first-degree murder for those who were wounded.

His attorneys announced his intention to plead guilty during a hearing last week.

Fred Guttenberg, whose 14-year-old daughter Jaime died in the shooting, said he visited her grave this week to ask her for the strength to get through Wednesday's hearing.

"She was the toughest, wisest person I ever knew," he said. "My daughter always fought for what was right. My daughter despised bullies and would put herself in the middle of someone being bullied to make it stop."

The guilty pleas will set the stage for a penalty trial in which 12 jurors will determine whether Cruz should be sentenced to death or life in prison without parole. Given the case's notoriety, Scherer plans to screen thousands of prospective jurors. Hearings are scheduled throughout November and December, with a goal to start testimony in January.

Cruz killed the 14 students and three staff members on Valentine's Day 2018 during a seven-minute rampage through a three-story building at Stoneman Douglas, investigators said. They said he shot victims in the hallways and in classrooms with an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle. Cruz had been expelled from Stoneman Douglas a year earlier after a history of threatening, frightening, unusual and sometimes violent behavior that dated back to preschool.

The shootings caused some Stoneman Douglas students to launch the March for Our Lives movement, which pushes for stronger gun restrictions nationally.

Since days after the shooting, Cruz's attorneys had offered to have him plead guilty in exchange for a life sentence, saying that would spare the community the emotional turmoil of reliving the attack at trial. But longtime Broward State Attorney Mike Satz rejected the offer, saying Cruz deserved a death sentence, and appointed himself lead prosecutor. Satz, 79, stepped down as state attorney in January after 44 years, but remains Cruz's chief prosecutor.

His successor, Harold Pryor, is opposed to the death penalty but has said he will follow the law. Like Satz, he never accepted the defense offer — as an elected official, that would have been difficult, even in liberal Broward County, where Democrats outnumber Republicans by more than 2 to 1.

By having Cruz plead guilty, his attorneys will be able to argue during the penalty hearing that he took responsibility for his actions.

Associated Press reporter Will Weissert in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

## Biden focuses on climate, families in trimmed \$2T plan

By LISA MASCARO, ALAN FRAM and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scaling down his "build back better" plans, President Joe Biden has described a more limited vision to Democratic lawmakers of a \$2 trillion government-overhaul package with at least \$500 billion to tackle climate change and money for middle-class priorities — child tax credits, paid family leave, health care and free pre-kindergarten.

And he expects negotiations to wrap up as soon as this week.

The president met privately into the evening Tuesday with nearly 20 centrist and progressive lawmakers in separate groups as Democrats appeared ready to abandon what had been a loftier \$3.5 trillion package for a smaller, more workable proposal that can unite the party and win passage in the closely divided Congress.

Likely to be eliminated or seriously shaved back: plans for tuition-free community colleges, a path to legal status for immigrants who are in the U.S. without documentation, and a specific clean energy plan that was the centerpiece of Biden's strategy for fighting climate change.

The details were shared by those familiar with the conversation and granted anonymity to discuss the private meetings.

Biden felt "more confident" after the day of meetings, said press secretary Jen Psaki. "There was broad agreement that there is urgency in moving forward over the next several days and that the window for



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 33 of 79

finalizing a package is closing," she said.

After months of fits and starts, Democrats are growing anxious they have little to show voters despite their campaign promises. Biden's ideas are all to be funded by tax hikes on corporations and the wealthiest individuals, those earning more than \$400,000 a year.

The president especially wants to advance his signature domestic package to bolster federal social services and address climate change by the time he departs for a global climate summit next week.

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., a progressive caucus member, said Biden urged the lawmakers to "get something done now" to show U.S. leadership on climate change on the global stage.

"He really believes American leadership, American prestige is on the line," Khanna said.

A key holdout on Biden's proposals, conservative Sen. Joe Manchin from coal-state West Virginia, has made clear he opposes the president's initial Clean Energy Performance Plan, which would have the government impose penalties on electric utilities that fail to meet clean energy benchmarks and provide financial rewards to those that do — in line with Biden's goal of achieving 80% "clean electricity" by 2030.

Instead, Biden focused in his Tuesday meetings on providing at least \$500 billion in tax credits, grants and loans to fight climate change, much of it likely coming from a package compiled by Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., the chairman of the the Finance Committee. Those include the tax breaks for energy producers that reach emission-reduction goals.

That clean energy approach could better align with Manchin's stated goal of keeping a "fuel neutral" approach to federal policy that does not favor renewable energy sources over coal and natural gas that are dominant in his state.

Other climate-change-fighting proposals being considered are a tax on carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels such as oil and coal or a methane emissions fee — though Manchin told reporters earlier in the day that a carbon tax was not in the mix.

Failure to act on climate change would have far-reaching consequences in the U.S. and abroad. Inaction, proponents of big efforts say, could cost the U.S. billions of dollars in weather-related disasters and threaten to uproot millions of Americans in hurricanes, wildfires, droughts and floods.

Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., another progressive caucus member, called the opposition from Manchin on climate issues "one of the biggest challenges" threatening to stop a final bill.

On other fronts, Biden and the Democrats appeared to be more readily coalescing around a slimmed-down package.

Biden wants to extend the \$300 monthly child tax credit that was put in place during the COVID-19 crisis for another year, rather than allow it to expire in December.

The policy has been praised for sending cash to families most in need. Democrats want to extend the credit for additional years, but limiting the duration would help shave the costs. It's now to be phased out for single-parent households earning more than \$75,000 a year, or \$150,000 for couples, but those income thresholds could be lowered to meet demands of Manchin and more conservative Democrats.

What had been envisioned as a months-long federal paid family leave program could be shrunk to as few as four weeks.

Biden also wants to ensure funding for health care programs, including new money for home- and community-based health care services, supporting a move away from widespread nursing home care.

And a new program to provide dental, vision and hearing aid benefits to seniors on Medicare proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent from Vermont, is likely to remain in some fashion, said Khanna, a longtime Sanders ally.

Expected to still be included in the package are new subsidies to help families afford child care as well as increased subsidies put in place during the pandemic for people who buy their own health insurance.

Biden told lawmakers that after his top priorities there would be \$300 billion remaining, which some suggested could be used for housing aid and racial justice issues. Biden also mentioned money could go for retrofitting homes of low-income people.

But Biden's vision for free community college for all is falling by the wayside.

"It's not the robust vision the president wants or that we wanted," Khanna said.

At a lengthy and "lively" lunch of Democratic senators earlier in the day, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said there was "universal agreement in that room that we have to come to an agreement and we got to get it done."

Schumer said he, Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are talking daily.

Biden met at the White House for nearly two hours with the first group of lawmakers, progressives, who emerged confident a deal was within reach. Moderate lawmakers met for about 90 minutes into the evening. "Everybody's talking," said Manchin, who had his own meeting Tuesday with the president.

For months, Manchin and Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona have objected to the scope and scale of Biden's package, testing the patience of colleagues who see a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape government programs. Sinema missed the senators lunch, but had a separate meeting with Biden.

With Republicans fully opposed to Biden's plans, the president needs all Democrats in the 50-50 split Senate for passage and can only spare a few votes in the House.

Congress has set an Oct. 31 deadline for passage.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking, Darlene Superville, Alexandra Jaffe and Farnoush Amiri contributed to this report.

## Negotiations drag on over 17 missionaries kidnapped in Haiti

By DÁNICA COTO and PIERRE-RICHARD LUXAMA Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Negotiations stretched into a fourth day seeking the return of 17 members of a U.S.-based missionary group kidnapped over the weekend by a violent gang that is demanding \$1 million ransom per person.

The group includes five children whose ages range from 8 months to 15 years, although authorities were not clear whether the ransom amount included them, a top Haitian official said Tuesday. Sixteen of the abductees are Americans and one Canadian.

The abduction is one of at least 119 kidnappings recorded in Haiti for the first half of October, according to the Center of Analysis and Research of Human Rights, a local nonprofit group. It said a Haitian driver was abducted along with the missionaries, bringing the total to 18 people taken by the gang.

The Haitian official, who was not authorized to speak to the press, told The Associated Press that someone from the 400 Mawozo gang made the ransom demand Saturday in a call to a leader of the Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries shortly after the abduction.

"This group of workers has been committed to minister throughout poverty-stricken Haiti," the Ohio group said, adding that the missionaries worked most recently on a project to help rebuild homes lost in a magnitude-7.2 earthquake that struck southwestern Haiti on Aug. 14.

The group was returning from visiting an orphanage when it was abducted, the organization said.

Responding to the recent wave of kidnappings, workers staged a protest strike that shuttered businesses, schools and public transportation starting Monday. The work stoppage was a new blow to Haiti's anemic economy. Unions and other groups vowed to continue the shutdown indefinitely.

In a peaceful demonstration Tuesday north of Port-au-Prince, dozens of people walked through the streets of Titanyen demanding the release of the missionaries. Some carried signs that read "Free the Americans" and "No to Kidnapping!" and explained that the missionaries helped pay bills and build roads and schools.

"They do a lot for us," said Beatrice Jean.

Meanwhile, the country's fuel shortage worsened, with businesses blaming gangs for blocking roads and gas distribution terminals.

Hundreds of motorcycles zoomed through the streets of Port-au-Prince on Tuesday as the drivers yelled, "If there's no fuel, we're going to burn it all down!"

One protest took place near the prime minister's residence, where police fired tear gas to disperse a crowd demanding fuel.

In Washington, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday that the FBI was "part of a coordi-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 35 of 79

nated U.S. government effort" to free the missionaries. The U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince was coordinating with local officials and the hostages' families.

"We know these groups target U.S. citizens who they assume have the resources and finances to pay ransoms, even if that is not the case," Psaki said, noting that the government has urged U.S. citizens not to visit Haiti.

It is longstanding U.S. policy not to negotiate with hostage takers, and Psaki declined to discuss details of the operation.

The kidnapping was the largest of its kind reported in recent years. Haitian gangs have grown more brazen as the country tries to recover from the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and the earthquake that killed more than 2,200 people.

Christian Aid Ministries said the kidnapped group included six women, six men and five children. A sign on the door at the organization's headquarters in Berlin, Ohio, said it was closed due to the kidnapping situation.

News of the kidnappings spread swiftly in and around Holmes County, Ohio, hub of one of the largest populations of Amish and conservative Mennonites in the United States, said Marcus Yoder, executive director of the Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center in nearby Millersburg, Ohio.

Christian Aid Ministries is supported by conservative Mennonite, Amish and related groups that are part of the Anabaptist tradition.

The organization was founded in the early 1980s and began working in Haiti later that decade, said Steven Nolt, professor of history and Anabaptist studies at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania. The group has year-round mission staff in Haiti and several countries, he said, and it ships religious, school and medical supplies throughout the world.

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Coto reported from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Associated Press journalists Matías Delacroix in Port-au-Prince, Matthew Lee in Washington, Pete Smith in Pittsburgh, John Seewer in Toledo, Ohio, and Julie Carr Smyth in Berlin, Ohio, contributed to this report.

## Two Montanas? New maps highlight state's split personality

By IRIS SAMUELS Associated Press/Report for America

CASCADE, Mont. (AP) — For the first time in 30 years, the Census has awarded Montana a second seat in Congress. On paper, that leaves the state's redistricting commission with the easiest task of all its counterparts across the country: Divide the expansive state in half.

If only.

Nothing is ever that simple in redistricting battles, as political parties jostle for control over maps that will give their candidates an advantage and the simple act of drawing a line becomes a fraught battle over the identity of the state.

In Montana, Republicans are pushing to separate the two booming college towns of Bozeman and Missoula in the western half of the state. Putting the two Democratic-leaning communities in different districts would make it hard for Democrats to win either seat. Democrats want to consolidate their strongholds in one district that would give them a fighting chance to win a House seat. They argue the towns — filled with craft brew drinkers, liberal academics, remote workers and California transplants — share more in common with each other than the vast expanse of rural ranches and farms between them.

The bipartisan commission is set to select the district boundaries on Thursday. With little common ground between the commission's two Republican and two Democratic members, much of the decision may fall on the nonpartisan chairperson, Maylinn Smith, who was appointed to the commission by the state's Supreme Court.

She has a history of giving small donations to Democratic political candidates in the state, but has said her experience working as a judge in several tribal court systems has given her the ability to act impartially.

To Republicans, there's a simple solution — a neat line splitting the state into eastern and western dis-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 36 of 79

tricts that puts Bozeman in the eastern one and Missoula in the western one. They contrast that with the more tortured route Democrats propose to lump the two cities together.

"When you have a shape that isn't even a shape, it's looks like the C from the Cookie Monster, that is not a reasonable district," said Jennifer Carlson, a Republican state lawmaker from a town 20 minutes outside Bozeman.

But Democrats say it's not that simple. Terry Cunningham, deputy mayor of Bozeman, notes that his city along with Missoula and the state capital of Helena are the only three in the state that have voted for carbon reduction goals while much of the rest of the state depends on the fossil fuel industry.

"I believe it is immoral to add new fossil fuel burning resources to the mix," Cunningham said. "Other communities in Montana would vehemently object (to our goals) because fossil fuel extraction is part of their lifeblood. So those make us incompatible politically with what could be described as the number one issue facing the entire planet."

Part of the reason Montana gets a second congressional district is the population growth fueled by Bozeman, a city of 50,000 that has become a hotbed for startups and pandemic-era remote workers. Home to Montana State University, Bozeman grew a whopping 33% in the last decade, growth that dwarfs that seen anywhere else in the state.

Its downtown is packed with pedestrians wearing the latest moisture-repelling microfibers, boutique bakeries and upscale restaurants. Housing prices have skyrocketed, as has homelessness. Missoula, home to the University of Montana, has similar headaches.

Democrats in the two cities argue that their common situation cries out for them being in the same district, which would likely lean only slightly Republican and therefore be competitive in a state where the beet-red hue of its rural swathes has tilted it solidly toward the GOP.

"In order for democracy to function well in the United States, you need to have a political system that is responsive to the electorate's desires," said Jeremy Johnson, a political scientist at Carroll College in Helena. In safe districts, "there is less incentive for legislators to listen to constituents."

Republicans argue that the way they slice up the state would still preserve competition. Still, both seats would lean GOP, in part because of the changes since the last time Montana had two congressional seats.

In the 1990 census, Montana's population growth slowed so much that it lost its second seat and began electing a single representative for the entire state. That seat has been held by Republicans for the past 24 years as rural areas that once voted Democratic became more conservative, leaving the blue islands of Bozeman and Missoula surrounded by vast expanses of red.

"You don't have to go far from city lines when you're really in ruby red Republican territory across most of the state," Johnson said.

But not all towns fit neatly into the redistricting arguments laid out by Republicans and Democrats. The town of Cascade 115 miles north of Bozeman falls alternately in eastern and western districts proposed by both Democrats and Republicans. Home to around 700 people, Cascade is sandwiched between an interstate highway on one side and the Missouri River on the other and surrounded by farms and ranches.

In contrast to Bozeman, its sparse main street holds only a handful of businesses, including a couple restaurants, a market, a gas station, a fly fishing shop and a bank. Incorporated 110 years ago, Cascade has changed little since then -- aside from a recent upgrade of the town's water and sewage pipes.

The contrast with Bozeman is obvious to the town's residents.

"There are two Montanas -- socially, economically, culturally -- we are two states," said Ken Speidel, who owns a horse boarding business with his wife, Kelly, in the rural town and works as a river guide in the summer and a hockey referee in the winter.

Like many in Cascade, Speidel favors the Republican proposals. But he acknowledges the power of counterarguments.

"There is no solution that is going to make everybody happy," he said.

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Iris Samuels is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative.

Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## Report to urge charges against Brazil's leader over pandemic

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES and DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazilians will turn their focus on Wednesday to the Senate, where a report six months in the making will recommend President Jair Bolsonaro be indicted on criminal charges for allegedly bungling the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and pushing the country's death toll to second-highest in the world.

A draft of the report arising from a Senate committee's investigation, a copy of which was reviewed by The Associated Press on Tuesday, recommended the president be indicted on 11 charges, from charlatanism and inciting crime all the way up to homicide and genocide.

In the committee's so-called "G7" group of senators who aren't from Bolsonaro's base, three opposed inclusion of homicide and genocide charges, said five committee members who agreed to discuss details of the sensitive talks only if not quoted by name.

Analysts said it was unclear such recommendations would lead to charges against the president. That would be a decision for Brazil's prosecutor-general, who was appointed by the president.

Bolsonaro has denied any wrongdoing, and repeatedly accused the investigation of being a political instrument aimed at sabotaging him.

Critics have denounced Bolsonaro for downplaying the coronavirus' severity, ignoring international health guidelines on masks and restrictions on activity designed to prevent the virus' spread, touting unproven treatments and delaying the acquisition of vaccines.

Anger over the president's stance prompted creation of the Senate committee in April, which has investigated allegations that Bolsonaro's management of the pandemic caused many of Brazil's more than 600,000 deaths from COVID-19.

The draft report of nearly 1,200 pages was written by Sen. Renan Calheiros, who was scheduled to present his final version Wednesday to the 11-person committee.

The document has to be approved by the committee before being sent to the office of the prosecutor-general, who would decide whether to carry forward the investigation and perhaps pursue charges. In Brazil, members of congressional committees can investigate, but don't have the power to indict.

Regardless of the exact content of the report's final version or whether the prosecutor-general moves forward, its allegations are expected to fuel criticism of the far-right leader, whose approval ratings have slumped ahead of his 2022 reelection campaign.

"The major impact of the investigation is political, because it generated tons of news that certainly will be used by campaign strategists next year," said Thiago de Aragão, director of strategy at political consultancy Arko Advice.

In its current shape, the draft report concludes that the government "deliberately exposed the population to a concrete risk of mass infection," influenced by a group of unofficial advisers who advocated for pursuing herd immunity even after many experts said that wasn't a viable option.

Even during the worst throes of the pandemic, Bolsonaro steadfastly opposed social distancing measures, claiming the poor would suffer worse hardship if the economy ground to a halt. He continues to argue that the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine is effective in treating COVID-19, though scientists have dismissed it as ineffective.

During six months of investigation, senators obtained thousands of documents and heard testimony from over 60 people.

"This committee collected evidence that abundantly demonstrated that the federal government was silent and chose to act in a non-technical and reckless manner," the draft report reads.

A particularly thorny issue was Sen. Calheiros' insistence on including a recommendation that the International Criminal Court investigate Bolsonaro for possible genocide of Indigenous peoples, said the sena-

tors who spoke with AP. They said that angered committee members, including critics of the government, who called genocide an exaggeration that could threaten the entire report's credibility.

While there was less opposition among senators to recommending indictment for homicide, they had similar concerns about doing so, the senators said.

"The prosecutor-general's office will look with a magnifying glass for errors, failures and inconsistencies in order to wash their hands of it," said political analyst Carlos Melo, who teaches at Insper University in Sao Paulo. "If you have 10 accusations that are very strong, and one that has inconsistencies, that's what the government will latch on to, to try and discredit the whole report."

In addition to Bolsonaro, the draft report recommended charges for dozens of allies and current and former members of his administration.

## **N Korea confirms missile test designed for submarine launch**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Wednesday that it had test-fired a newly developed ballistic missile from a submarine, in its first such underwater test-launch in two years and one it says will bolster its military's undersea capabilities.

The test Tuesday was the fifth round of missile launches since September and came as North Korea steps up pressure on Washington and Seoul to abandon what Pyongyang sees as hostile policies such as joint U.S.-South Korea military drills and international sanctions on the North.

North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency said the latest test "will greatly contribute to putting the defense technology of the country on a high level and to enhancing the underwater operational capability of our navy." It said the new missile has introduced advanced control guidance technologies including flank mobility and gliding skip mobility.

The North's neighbors said Tuesday that they detected the North's missile firing and said the weapon landed in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. South Korea's military described the missile as a short-range, submarine-launched ballistic missile and said the launch was made from waters near the eastern port of Sinpo, where North Korea has a major shipyard building submarines.

KCNA said Tuesday's launch was made from "the same 8.24 Yongung ship," a submarine that North Korea said it used to conduct its first submarine-launched strategic ballistic missile test in 2016. Photos published by North Korea show a missile rising and spewing bright flames above a cloud of smoke from the sea. One image shows the upper parts of what looks like a submarine on the surface of the sea.

North Korea last performed a SLBM test in October 2019. Foreign experts said the North used a submersible barge, rather than a submarine, for the launch at the time.

Tuesday's launch was the highest-profile weapons test by North Korea since President Joe Biden took office in January. The Biden administration has repeatedly said it's open to resuming nuclear diplomacy with North Korea "anywhere and at any time" without preconditions. The North has so far rebuffed such overtures, saying U.S. hostility remains unchanged.

The launch came days before Sung Kim, Biden's special envoy on North Korea, was to travel to Seoul to discuss with allies the possibility of reviving diplomacy with Pyongyang.

At a meeting in Washington with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts, Kim emphasized U.S. condemnation of the launch, which violates multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions, and urged Pyongyang to refrain from further provocations and "engage in sustained and substantive dialogue," the State Department said.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled emergency closed consultations on North Korea on Wednesday afternoon at the request of the United States and United Kingdom.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said the North Korean weapon tested Tuesday was likely derived from its land-based, nuclear-capable KN-23 missile whose highly maneuverable and lower-trajectory flight provides it with greater chances of evading missile defense systems.

Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi had said Tuesday that the North Korean missile flew on "an ir-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 39 of 79

regular trajectory" while traveling as far as 600 kilometers (360 miles).

"A SLBM is the most intimidating nuclear weapon because we don't know where it can be fired," said Moon Keun-sik, a submarine expert who teaches at Kyonggi University in South Korea. "North Korea's goal is building more powerful SLBMs that can be fired from big submarines like the U.S. does."

North Korea has been pushing hard for years to acquire the ability to fire nuclear-armed missiles from submarines, the next key piece in an arsenal that includes a variety of weapons including ones with the potential range to reach American soil.

Still, experts say it would take years, large amounts of resources and major technological improvements for the heavily sanctioned nation to build at least several submarines that could travel quietly in seas and reliably execute strikes.

North Korea has an estimated about 70-90 diesel-powered submarines in one of the world's largest submarine fleets. But they are mostly aging ones capable of launching only torpedoes and mines, not missiles. The vessel North Korea used during the 2016 SLBM test is the North's only submarine capable of firing a missile, but it has a single launch tube and some experts call it a test platform, rather than an operational weapons system in active service, Moon said.

In 2019, North Korea unveiled a 2,000-ton-class submarine with several missile launch tubes but there has been no official confirmation that it's been deployed for operational use. North Korea is pushing to build bigger submarines including a nuclear-powered one.

Kim, the analyst, said the new missile tested Tuesday was likely a small-sized weapon displayed during a defense exhibition last week. The professor said North Korea likely plans to load this missile on the submarine it disclosed in 2019 while placing bigger SLBMs on larger submarines under development.

In a report this month on North Korea's military capabilities, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said the North's pursuit of submarine-launched ballistic missile capabilities along with its steady development of land-based mobile long-range weapons highlight Pyongyang's intentions to "build a survivable, reliable nuclear delivery capability."

Some experts say North Korea might continue its weapons tests for a couple of more months until it halts them in consideration of the Winter Olympics slated for February in China, its last major ally and economic pipeline. They say the North may even test-launch long-range missiles directly threatening the U.S. mainland in a breach of a 2018 self-imposed moratorium on such weapons tests to maximize its pressure campaign.

Nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and North Korea have been stalled for more than two years because of disagreements over an easing of crippling U.S.-led sanctions against North Korea in exchange for denuclearization steps by the North.

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Associated Press writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Brazil senators readying call for Bolsonaro criminal charges**

By DÉBORA ÁLVARES and DIANE JEANTÉT Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazilian senators met into Tuesday night discussing a report that will recommend President Jair Bolsonaro be indicted on criminal charges for allegedly bungling the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and pushing the country's death toll to second-highest in the world.

The latest draft of the report arising from a Senate committee's investigation, a copy of which was reviewed by The Associated Press, recommends the president be indicted on 11 charges, from charlatanism and inciting crime all the way up to homicide and genocide.

In the committee's so-called "G7" group of senators who aren't from Bolsonaro's base, three opposed inclusion of homicide and genocide charges, said five committee members who agreed to discuss details of the sensitive talks only if not quoted by name. The three were trying to persuade their four peers to join in opposing the two charges, the senators said.

Whether they remain or not, analysts said it was unclear such recommendations would lead to charges

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 40 of 79

against the president.

Bolsonaro has denied any wrongdoing, and repeatedly accused the investigation of being a political instrument aimed at sabotaging him.

Critics have denounced Bolsonaro for insistently downplaying the coronavirus' severity, ignoring international health guidelines on masks and restrictions on activity designed to prevent the virus' spread, touting unproven treatments and delaying acquisition of vaccines.

Anger over the president's stance prompted creation of the Senate committee in April, which has investigated allegations that Bolsonaro's management of the pandemic caused many of Brazil's more than 600,000 deaths from COVID-19.

The draft report of nearly 1,200 pages was written by Sen. Renan Calheiros, who was scheduled to present his much-anticipated final version Wednesday to the 11-person committee.

The document has to be approved by the committee before being sent to the office of the prosecutor-general, a Bolsonaro appointee who would decide whether to carry forward the investigation and perhaps pursue charges. In Brazil, members of congressional committees can investigate, but don't have the power to indict.

Regardless of the exact content of the report's final version or whether the prosecutor-general moves forward, its allegations are expected to fuel criticism of the far-right leader, whose approval ratings have slumped ahead of his 2022 reelection campaign.

"The major impact of the investigation is political, because it generated tons of news that certainly will be used by campaign strategists next year," said Thiago de Aragão, director of strategy at political consultancy Arko Advice.

In its current shape, the draft report concludes that the government "deliberately exposed the population to a concrete risk of mass infection," influenced by a group of unofficial advisers who advocated for pursuing herd immunity even after many experts said that wasn't a viable option.

Even during the worst throes of the pandemic, Bolsonaro steadfastly opposed social distancing measures, claiming the poor would suffer worse hardship if the economy ground to a halt. He continues to argue that the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine is effective in treating COVID-19, though scientists have dismissed it as ineffective.

Throughout six months of investigation, senators have obtained thousands of documents and taken testimony from over 60 people.

"This committee collected evidence that abundantly demonstrated that the federal government was silent and chose to act in a non-technical and reckless manner," the draft report reads.

A particularly thorny issue has been Sen. Calheiros' insistence on including a recommendation that the International Criminal Court investigate Bolsonaro for possible genocide of Indigenous peoples, said the senators who spoke with AP. This has angered committee members, including critics of the government, who say genocide is an exaggeration that could threaten the entire report's credibility, they said.

While there is less opposition among senators to recommending indictment for homicide, they have similar concerns about doing so, the senators said.

"The prosecutor-general's office will look with a magnifying glass for errors, failures and inconsistencies in order to wash their hands of it," said political analyst Carlos Melo, who teaches at Insper University in Sao Paulo. "If you have 10 accusations that are very strong, and one that has inconsistencies, that's what the government will latch on to, to try and discredit the whole report."

In addition to Bolsonaro, the draft report recommends charges for dozens of allies and current and former members of his administration. The three senators opposed to recommending homicide and genocide charges for Bolsonaro also reject indicting Bolsonaro's lawmaker son, Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, senators said.

Senators on the committee have also been wary of calling for charges against members of the military.

## **Bellinger, Betts rally Dodgers, cut Braves' NLCS lead to 2-1**

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 41 of 79

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Cody Bellinger keeps erasing a forgettable regular season, with his latest big swing putting the Los Angeles Dodgers right back in the NL Championship Series.

Bellinger hit a tying, three-run homer and Mookie Betts then lined an RBI double in the Dodgers' eighth-inning rally, storming back to beat Atlanta 6-5 Tuesday and cutting the Braves' lead in the series to 2-1.

"It's hard to remember a bigger hit, with what was at stake," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "I'm kind of exhausted now."

Some of the 51,307 fans had already left when the Dodgers were down to their final five outs and facing the daunting prospect of a 3-0 deficit in the series. Bellinger swung and missed two pitches down the middle for strikes, going to his knees in the dirt.

"Ball's coming in hard, some shadows you're dealing with, so I saw it well and I just tried to barrel it up," Bellinger said. "Just continue to barrel up the ball and pass the baton."

Bellinger drove a shoulder-high, 95.6-mph fastball from Luke Jackson into the right-field pavilion, igniting the blue towel-waving crowd and reviving the hopes of the defending World Series champions.

"Sad thing is I would do the same thing again," Jackson said. "I was trying to throw a fastball up and away. I actually threw it better than I thought I threw it. Out of my hand, I was like, 'Oh, that's a ball. It's too high.' And no, it wasn't too high. Good player, put a good swing on it and pretty remarkable."

Chris Taylor singled, stole second and moved to third on pinch-hitter Matt Beaty's groundout. Betts followed with the double off Jesse Chavez to right-center.

"One of our strong suits is not worrying about what happened yesterday, focusing on right now," Betts said.

Game 4 is Wednesday at Dodger Stadium.

"We can do it, we're confident," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "There is going to be no residual effects after this game."

The Dodgers had lost all 83 previous postseason games — in both Los Angeles and Brooklyn — in which they trailed by three or more runs in the eighth inning or later.

But that's history now. And so are Bellinger's recent struggles.

The 2019 NL MVP, Bellinger batted a miserable .165 this year with a paltry .240 on-base percentage and 94 strikeouts in 315 at-bats. He helped redeem himself last week with a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning of the decisive Game 5 of the NL Division Series against the rival Giants at San Francisco.

"Fresh start," Bellinger said of the postseason. "At least for me this year it's a fresh start. You know, a tough regular season but you know, I felt good towards the end of the season, and just try to continue that feel all the way through."

"Just you know, staying simple," he said. "Crazy things are happening."

Bellinger's done this before, too. After the Dodgers overcame a 3-1 deficit against Atlanta in the NLCS last year, his tiebreaking home run in the seventh inning won Game 7.

With the cheering, chanting crowd on its feet in the ninth, Kenley Jansen struck out the side to earn the save, the ninth pitcher used by the Dodgers. They ran through a combined 15 in the first two games.

Staggered with back-to-back walk-off losses in Atlanta, the Dodgers returned home, where they've dominated the Braves in recent years and were an MLB-best 58-23 during the regular season.

The Braves haven't won at Dodger Stadium since June 8, 2018. Going back to the 2013 NLDS, the Braves have dropped 20 of their last 23 in LA — they've lost 10 straight in Los Angeles overall.

It sure looked like they'd end that skid after leading 5-2 in the fifth.

After Corey Seager's two-run shot gave them an early lead, the Dodgers' offense stalled out from the second to eighth innings, with only five hits.

"It's never going to just be easy and handed to us," Bellinger said. "We got to fight for it."

But the wild-card winner staged another improbable comeback late, just like the Dodgers have done so often this postseason.

They beat St. Louis in the NL wild-card game, then edged 107-win San Francisco in the NLDS.

Despite trailing the best-of-seven series, the Dodgers have grabbed the momentum. They're at home

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 42 of 79

for the next two games, knowing they overcame that 3-1 deficit against the Braves in last year's NLCS at a neutral site in Arlington, Texas.

The Braves built their lead with a bunch of singles, pounding out 12 hits, and a dropped flyball by novice center fielder Gavin Lux.

Freddie Freeman broke out of his slump, going 3 for 4 with a walk and a run scored after he struck out seven times in eight at-bats in the first two games.

Adam Duvall went 2 for 5, driving in two runs and scoring another for the Braves. Every Atlanta batter got on base at least once.

Tony Gonsolin got the victory, recording one out in relief.

Jackson took the loss after getting hammered in the eighth.

Eddie Rosario and Freeman jump-started the Braves with back-to-back singles off Walker Buehler to open the game.

The Braves quieted the crowd of 51,307 while knocking around Buehler and taking a 4-2 lead in the fourth.

Atlanta got RBI singles from Joc Pederson, Duvall and Dansby Swanson, and Buehler walked Rosario on four pitches with the bases loaded to force in another run.

Swanson's hit off his former Vanderbilt teammate went off the glove of shortstop Seager and rolled into left, allowing Pederson to score the go-ahead run as the Braves batted around.

Seager's wasn't the only miscue in the fourth. Lux chased Austin Riley's double to the warning track in right-center only to have the ball go off his glove to keep the inning going.

Buehler got yanked after walking Rosario. Working on two extra days' rest, Buehler allowed four runs and seven hits in 3 2/3 innings. The right-hander struck out three and walked three on 76 pitches.

Buehler pitched on short rest for the first time in his career in Game 4 of the NLDS. He didn't the win, but the Dodgers tied the series and forced a deciding fifth game.

Atlanta extended its lead to 5-2 in the fifth on Duvall's RBI single that scored Ozzie Albies, who walked and stole second.

The Dodgers had Charlie Morton on the ropes in the first, when he tied a postseason record with four walks on 34 pitches. The right-hander walked leadoff hitter Betts and Seager followed with a homer to center for a 2-0 lead.

Morton then loaded the bases on consecutive two-out walks to Justin Turner, Lux and Bellinger before Taylor lined out to short to end the inning.

Morton allowed two runs and three hits in five innings. The right-hander struck out five and walked six.

SOUND FROM SCULLY

Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully gave the traditional pregame call of "It's time for Dodger baseball!" via video from his Los Angeles-area home. He then tapped his fist on his heart, drawing cheers from the crowd. Scully, who turns 94 next month, retired in 2016 after 67 years calling games for the franchise in Brooklyn and LA.

UP NEXT

LHP Julio Urías starts for the Dodgers in Game 4 on Wednesday. The Braves were planning a bullpen game.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Jan. 6 panel votes to hold Steve Bannon in contempt

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection voted unanimously Tuesday to hold former White House aide Steve Bannon in contempt of Congress after the longtime ally of former President Donald Trump defied a subpoena for documents and testimony.

Still defending his supporters who broke into the Capitol that day, Trump has aggressively tried to block the committee's work by directing Bannon and others not to answer questions in the probe. Trump has

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 43 of 79

also filed a lawsuit to try to prevent Congress from obtaining former White House documents.

But lawmakers have made clear they will not back down as they gather facts and testimony about the attack involving Trump's supporters that left dozens of police officers injured, sent lawmakers running for their lives and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

The committee's chairman, Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said Tuesday that Bannon "stands alone in his complete defiance of our subpoena" and the panel will not take no for an answer.

He said that while Bannon may be "willing to be a martyr to the disgraceful cause of whitewashing what happened on January 6th — of demonstrating his complete loyalty to the former president," the contempt vote is a warning to other witnesses.

"We won't be deterred. We won't be distracted. And we won't be delayed," Thompson said.

The Tuesday evening vote sends the contempt resolution to the full House, which is expected to vote on the measure Thursday. House approval would send the matter to the Justice Department, which would then decide whether to pursue criminal charges against Bannon.

The contempt resolution asserts that the former Trump aide and podcast host has no legal standing to rebuff the committee — even as Trump's lawyer has argued that Bannon should not disclose information because it is protected by the privilege of the former president's office. The committee noted that Bannon, fired from his White House job in 2017, was a private citizen when he spoke to Trump ahead of the attack. And Trump has not asserted any such executive privilege claims to the panel itself, lawmakers said.

Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney — one of just two Republicans on the committee, and a rare GOP critic of Trump — said Bannon and Trump's privilege arguments suggest the former president was "personally involved" in the planning and execution of the day's events.

"We will get to the bottom of that," Cheney said.

The committee says it is pursuing Bannon's testimony because of his reported communications with Trump ahead of the siege, his efforts to get the former president to focus on the congressional certification of the vote Jan. 6 and his comments on Jan. 5 that "all hell is going to break loose" the next day.

Bannon "appears to have had multiple roles relevant to this investigation, including his role in constructing and participating in the 'stop the steal' public relations effort that motivated the attack" and "his efforts to plan political and other activity in advance of January 6th," the committee wrote in the resolution recommending contempt.

The Biden White House has also rejected Bannon's claims, with Deputy Counsel Jonathan Su writing Bannon's lawyer this week to say that "at this point we are not aware of any basis for your client's refusal to appear for a deposition." Biden's judgment that executive privilege is not justified, Su wrote, "applies to your client's deposition testimony and to any documents your client may possess."

Asked last week if the Justice Department should prosecute those who refuse to testify, Biden said yes. But the Justice Department quickly pushed back, with a spokesman saying the department would make its own decisions.

While Bannon has said he needs a court order before complying with his subpoena, former White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and former White House and Pentagon aide Kashyap Patel have been negotiating with the committee. The panel has also subpoenaed more than a dozen people who helped plan Trump rallies ahead of the siege, and some of them are already turning over documents and giving testimony.

Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin said all the other witnesses who were subpoenaed are "either complying or acting in good faith as opposed to just blowing us off," as Bannon has.

The committee is also conducting voluntary closed-door interviews with other witnesses who have come forward or immediately complied with their requests.

For some of the witnesses, Raskin said, "it's a privilege and really an opportunity for them to begin to make amends, if they were involved in these events." Some of them "feel terrible about the role they played," he said.

Still, there could be more contempt votes to come.

"I won't go into details in terms of the back and forth, but I'll just say our patience is not infinite," said

Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, the panel's other Republican, about some of the witness negotiations.

The vote came a day after Trump sued the committee and the National Archives to fight the release of documents the committee has requested. Trump's lawsuit, filed after Biden said he'd allow the documents' release, claims that the panel's August request was overly broad and a "vexatious, illegal fishing expedition."

Trump's suit seeks to invalidate the entirety of the congressional request, calling it overly broad, unduly burdensome and a challenge to separation of powers. It requests a court injunction to bar the archivist from producing the documents.

The Biden administration, in clearing the documents for release, said the violent siege of the Capitol more than nine months ago was such an extraordinary circumstance that it merited waiving the privilege that usually protects White House communications.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Colleen Long, Zeke Miller, Nomaan Merchant and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

## Biden focuses on climate, families in trimmed \$2T plan

By LISA MASCARO, ALAN FRAM and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scaling down his "build back better" plans, President Joe Biden on Tuesday described a more limited vision to Democratic lawmakers of a \$2 trillion government-overhaul package with at least \$500 billion to tackle climate change and money for middle-class priorities — child tax credits, paid family leave, health care and free pre-kindergarten.

And he expects negotiations to wrap up as soon as this week.

The president met privately into the evening with nearly 20 centrist and progressive lawmakers in separate groups as Democrats appeared ready to abandon what had been a loftier \$3.5 trillion package for a smaller, more workable proposal that can unite the party and win passage in the closely divided Congress.

Likely to be eliminated or seriously shaved back: plans for tuition-free community colleges, a path to legal status for immigrants who are in the U.S. without documentation, and a specific clean energy plan that was the centerpiece of Biden's strategy for fighting climate change.

The details were shared by those familiar with the conversation and granted anonymity to discuss the private meetings.

Biden felt "more confident" after the day of meetings, said press secretary Jen Psaki. "There was broad agreement that there is urgency in moving forward over the next several days and that the window for finalizing a package is closing," she said.

After months of fits and starts, Democrats are growing anxious they have little to show voters despite their campaign promises. Biden's ideas are all to be funded by tax hikes on corporations and the wealthiest individuals, those earning more than \$400,000 a year.

The president especially wants to advance his signature domestic package to bolster federal social services and address climate change by the time he departs for a global climate summit next week.

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., a progressive caucus member, said Biden urged the lawmakers to "get something done now" to show U.S. leadership on climate change on the global stage.

"He really believes American leadership, American prestige is on the line," Khanna said.

A key holdout on Biden's proposals, conservative Sen. Joe Manchin from coal-state West Virginia, has made clear he opposes the president's initial Clean Energy Performance Plan, which would have the government impose penalties on electric utilities that fail to meet clean energy benchmarks and provide financial rewards to those that do — in line with Biden's goal of achieving 80% "clean electricity" by 2030.

Instead, Biden focused in his Tuesday meetings on providing at least \$500 billion in tax credits, grants and loans to fight climate change, much of it likely coming from a package compiled by Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., the chairman of the the Finance Committee. Those include the tax breaks for energy producers that reach emission-reduction goals.

That clean energy approach could better align with Manchin's stated goal of keeping a "fuel neutral"

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 45 of 79

approach to federal policy that does not favor renewable energy sources over coal and natural gas that are dominant in his state.

Other climate-change-fighting proposals being considered are a tax on carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels such as oil and coal or a methane emissions fee — though Manchin told reporters earlier in the day that a carbon tax was not in the mix.

Failure to act on climate change would have far-reaching consequences in the U.S. and abroad. Inaction, proponents of big efforts say, could cost the U.S. billions of dollars in weather-related disasters and threaten to uproot millions of Americans in hurricanes, wildfires, droughts and floods.

Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., another progressive caucus member, called the opposition from Manchin on climate issues “one of the biggest challenges” threatening to stop a final bill.

On other fronts, Biden and the Democrats appeared to be more readily coalescing around a slimmed-down package.

Biden wants to extend the \$300 monthly child tax credit that was put in place during the COVID-19 crisis for another year, rather than allow it to expire in December.

The policy has been praised for sending cash to families most in need. Democrats want to extend the credit for additional years, but limiting the duration would help shave the costs. It’s now to be phased out for single-parent households earning more than \$75,000 a year, or \$150,000 for couples, but those income thresholds could be lowered to meet demands of Manchin and more conservative Democrats.

What had been envisioned as a months-long federal paid family leave program could be shrunk to as few as four weeks.

Biden also wants to ensure funding for health care programs, including new money for home- and community-based health care services, supporting a move away from widespread nursing home care.

And a new program to provide dental, vision and hearing aid benefits to seniors on Medicare proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent from Vermont, is likely to remain in some fashion, said Khanna, a longtime Sanders ally.

Expected to still be included in the package are new subsidies to help families afford child care as well as increased subsidies put in place during the pandemic for people who buy their own health insurance.

Biden told lawmakers that after his top priorities there would be \$300 billion remaining, which some suggested could be used for housing aid and racial justice issues. Biden also mentioned money could go for retrofitting homes of low-income people.

But Biden’s vision for free community college for all is falling by the wayside.

“It’s not the robust vision the president wants or that we wanted,” Khanna said.

At a lengthy and “lively” lunch of Democratic senators earlier in the day, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said there was “universal agreement in that room that we have to come to an agreement and we got to get it done.”

Schumer said he, Biden and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are talking daily.

Biden met at the White House for nearly two hours with the first group of lawmakers, progressives, who emerged confident a deal was within reach. Moderate lawmakers met for about 90 minutes into the evening.

“Everybody’s talking,” said Manchin, who had his own meeting Tuesday with the president.

For months, Manchin and Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona have objected to the scope and scale of Biden’s package, testing the patience of colleagues who see a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape government programs. Sinema missed the senators lunch, but had a separate meeting with Biden.

With Republicans fully opposed to Biden’s plans, the president needs all Democrats in the 50-50 split Senate for passage and can only spare a few votes in the House.

Time slipping, Congress has set an Oct. 31 deadline for passage.

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Associated Press writers Kevin Freking, Darlene Superville, Alexandra Jaffe and Farnoush Amiri contributed to this report.

**Pig-to-human transplants come a step closer with new test**

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 46 of 79

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Scientists temporarily attached a pig's kidney to a human body and watched it begin to work, a small step in the decades-long quest to one day use animal organs for life-saving transplants.

Pigs have been the most recent research focus to address the organ shortage, but among the hurdles: A sugar in pig cells, foreign to the human body, causes immediate organ rejection. The kidney for this experiment came from a gene-edited animal, engineered to eliminate that sugar and avoid an immune system attack.

Surgeons attached the pig kidney to a pair of large blood vessels outside the body of a deceased recipient so they could observe it for two days. The kidney did what it was supposed to do — filter waste and produce urine — and didn't trigger rejection.

"It had absolutely normal function," said Dr. Robert Montgomery, who led the surgical team last month at NYU Langone Health. "It didn't have this immediate rejection that we have worried about."

This research is "a significant step," said Dr. Andrew Adams of the University of Minnesota Medical School, who was not part of the work. It will reassure patients, researchers and regulators "that we're moving in the right direction."

The dream of animal-to-human transplants — or xenotransplantation — goes back to the 17th century with stumbling attempts to use animal blood for transfusions. By the 20th century, surgeons were attempting transplants of organs from baboons into humans, notably Baby Fae, a dying infant, who lived 21 days with a baboon heart.

With no lasting success and much public uproar, scientists turned from primates to pigs, tinkering with their genes to bridge the species gap.

Pigs have advantages over monkeys and apes. They are produced for food, so using them for organs raises fewer ethical concerns. Pigs have large litters, short gestation periods and organs comparable to humans.

Pig heart valves also have been used successfully for decades in humans. The blood thinner heparin is derived from pig intestines. Pig skin grafts are used on burns and Chinese surgeons have used pig corneas to restore sight.

In the NYU case, researchers kept a deceased woman's body going on a ventilator after her family agreed to the experiment. The woman had wished to donate her organs, but they weren't suitable for traditional donation.

The family felt "there was a possibility that some good could come from this gift," Montgomery said.

Montgomery himself received a transplant three years ago, a human heart from a donor with hepatitis C because he was willing to take any organ. "I was one of those people lying in an ICU waiting and not knowing whether an organ was going to come in time," he said.

Several biotech companies are in the running to develop suitable pig organs for transplant to help ease the human organ shortage. More than 90,000 people in the U.S. are in line for a kidney transplant. Every day, 12 die while waiting.

The advance is a win for Revivicor, a subsidiary of United Therapeutics, the company that engineered the pig and its cousins, a herd of 100 raised in tightly controlled conditions at a facility in Iowa.

The pigs lack a gene that produces alpha-gal, the sugar that provokes an immediate attack from the human immune system.

In December, the Food and Drug Administration approved the gene alteration in the Revivicor pigs as safe for human food consumption and medicine.

But the FDA said developers would need to submit more paperwork before pig organs could be transplanted into living humans.

"This is an important step forward in realizing the promise of xenotransplantation, which will save thousands of lives each year in the not-too-distant future," said United Therapeutics CEO Martine Rothblatt in a statement.

Experts say tests on nonhuman primates and last month's experiment with a human body pave the way

for the first experimental pig kidney or heart transplants in living people in the next several years.

Raising pigs to be organ donors feels wrong to some people, but it may grow more acceptable if concerns about animal welfare can be addressed, said Karen Maschke, a research scholar at the Hastings Center, who will help develop ethics and policy recommendations for the first clinical trials under a grant from the National Institutes of Health.

"The other issue is going to be: Should we be doing this just because we can?" Maschke said.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## **Navy probe finds major failures in fire that destroyed ship**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Navy report has concluded there were sweeping failures by commanders, crew members and others that fueled the July 2020 arson fire that destroyed the USS Bonhomme Richard, calling the massive five-day blaze in San Diego preventable and unacceptable.

While one sailor has been charged with setting the fire, the more than 400-page report, obtained by The Associated Press, lists three dozen officers and sailors whose failings either directly led to the ship's loss or contributed to it. The findings detailed widespread lapses in training, coordination, communication, fire preparedness, equipment maintenance and overall command and control.

"Although the fire was started by an act of arson, the ship was lost due to an inability to extinguish the fire," the report said, concluding that "repeated failures" by an "inadequately prepared crew" delivered "an ineffective fire response."

It slammed commanders of the amphibious assault ship for poor oversight, and said the main firefighting foam system wasn't used because it hadn't been maintained properly and the crew didn't know how to use it. The report is expected to be released Wednesday.

U.S. Navy officials on Tuesday said that while crews at sea consistently meet high firefighting standards, those skills drop off when ships move into maintenance periods. The Bonhomme Richard was undergoing maintenance at the time of the fire.

During maintenance there are more people and organizations involved with the ship, including contractors. And the repairs often involve equipment and chemicals that present different hazards and challenges.

The report describes a ship in disarray, with combustible materials scattered and stored improperly. It said maintenance reports were falsified, and that 87% of the fire stations on board had equipment problems or had not been inspected.

It also found that crew members didn't ring the bells to alert sailors of a fire until 10 minutes after it was discovered. Those crucial minutes, the report said, caused delays in crews donning fire gear, assembling hose teams and responding to the fire.

Sailors also failed to push the button and activate the firefighting foam system, even though it was accessible and could have slowed the fire's progress. "No member of the crew interviewed considered this action or had specific knowledge as to the location of the button or its function," the report said.

The report spreads blame across a wide range of ranks and responsibilities, from the now retired three-star admiral who headed Naval Surface Force Pacific Fleet — Vice Adm. Richard Brown — to senior commanders, lower ranking sailors and civilian program managers. Seventeen were cited for failures that "directly" led to the loss of the ship, while 17 others "contributed" to the loss of the ship. Two other sailors were faulted for not effectively helping the fire response. Of the 36, nine are civilians.

Adm. William Lescher, the vice chief of naval operations, has designated the commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet to handle any disciplinary actions for military members. The Navy officials said the disciplinary process is just beginning. One official said the key challenge in making improvements will be addressing the "human factor," including leadership skills and ensuring that everyone down to the lowest ranking sailors understands their responsibilities, and can recognize problems and correct them.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 48 of 79

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the report ahead of its public release.

Specifically, the report said failures of Vice Adm. Brown; Rear Adm. Scott Brown, the fleet maintenance officer for the Pacific Fleet; Rear Adm. William Greene, the fleet maintenance officer for U.S. Fleet Forces Command; Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage, commander of the regional maintenance center; Rear Adm. Bette Bolivar, commander of Navy Region Southwest; Capt. Mark Nieswiadomy, commander of Naval Base San Diego; and Capt. Tony Rodriguez, commander of Amphibious Squadron 5, all "contributed to the loss of the ship."

The report also directly faults the ship's three top officers — Capt. Gregory Thoroman, the commanding officer; Capt. Michael Ray, the executive officer; and Command Master Chief Jose Hernandez — for not effectively ensuring the readiness and condition of the ship.

"The execution of his duties created an environment of poor training, maintenance and operational standards that directly led to the loss of the ship," the report said of Thoroman. And it said Ray, Hernandez and Capt. David Hart, commander of the Southwest Regional Maintenance Center, also failed in their responsibilities, which directly led to the loss of the ship.

The report only provides names for senior naval officers. Others were described solely by their job or rank.

More broadly, the crew was slammed for "a pattern of failed drills, minimal crew participation, an absence of basic knowledge on firefighting" and an inability to coordinate with civilian firefighters.

"The loss of the USS Bonhomme Richard was a completely avoidable catastrophe," said U.S. Rep. John Garamendi, D-Calif., chairman of the House Armed Services readiness subcommittee. He said he read the report "with shock and anger," and will look into the matter carefully to "determine the full extent of the negligence and complacency that occurred."

The ship was undergoing a two-year, \$250 million upgrade pierside in San Diego when the fire broke out. About 115 sailors were on board, and nearly 60 were treated for heat exhaustion, smoke inhalation and minor injuries. The failure to extinguish or contain the fire led to temperatures exceeding 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas, melting sections of the ship into molten metal that flowed into other parts of the ship.

Due to the damage, the Navy decommissioned the ship in April. In August, Seaman Apprentice Ryan Mays was charged with aggravated arson and the willful hazarding of a vessel. He has denied setting the fire.

The blaze began in the lower storage area, which Mays' duty station had access to, according to a court document. Investigators found three of four fire stations on the ship had evidence of tampering, including disconnected firehoses, and highly flammable liquid was found near the ignition site.

Efforts to put out the fire were hampered because the ship's crew and other outside fire response departments and organizations were not coordinated, couldn't communicate effectively, hadn't exercised together and weren't well trained, the report said.

The report, written by Vice Adm. Scott Conn, included a number of recommended changes and improvements that have been endorsed by Lescher. The Navy set up a new fire safety assessment program that conducts random inspections, and has taken steps to increase training. Nearly 170 of those inspections have already been done, and officials said they are finding good results.

The Navy also conducted a historical study, looking closely at 15 shipyard fires over the last 12 years. It found recurring trends including failures to comply with fire prevention, detection and response policies.

As a result, Navy leaders are expanding the staffing and responsibilities of the Naval Safety Center, to perform audits and unannounced assessments of Navy units. The final costs are still being calculated.

## Businesses nervously await fine print of vax-or-test rule

By ZEKE MILLER and DAVID KOENIG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than six weeks after promising a new vaccination-or-testing rule covering the millions of Americans at companies with 100 or more workers, President Joe Biden's most aggressive move yet to combat the COVID-19 pandemic is almost ready to see the light of day.

An obscure White House office is expected to give the green light any day to the rule's fine print detailing



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 49 of 79

how and when companies will have to require their employees to be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing.

The full enforcement deadline, which could carry penalties of about \$14,000 per violation, may not take effect until after the new year. That's why Biden and his aides have for weeks encouraged businesses to act as though the rule was already in effect and start imposing vaccination requirements.

The regulation, to be published in the Federal Register, was drafted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration under emergency authorities to protect worker safety and will cover an estimated 80 million U.S. workers. The White House sees it as a potent tool to winnow down the ranks of roughly 65 million Americans who have thus far refused to get a shot.

Unlike healthcare providers or federal employees, who may not have a testing alternative to vaccination, private sector workers won't necessarily face termination if they don't get vaccinated. But some businesses may choose to impose their own more stringent vaccination mandate, and it's possible that businesses may be allowed to pass on the cost of weekly COVID-19 testing to their unvaccinated employees.

White House officials declined to discuss when the rule will be published or go into details on when businesses will have to comply.

For the last week, federal officials have hosted more than two dozen listening sessions with industry groups, businesses and advocacy organizations. Some have been supportive of the rule, others vehemently opposed, but all are eager to learn more about the fine print of the regulation.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups that represent large employers are worried that the proposal's threshold — applying to companies with 100 or more employees — could cause workers to migrate to jobs at smaller employers where they won't need to be vaccinated.

"We really stressed the concern about employers losing employees, and what that would mean in the context of current supply-chain challenges and the upcoming holiday season," said Marc Freedman, vice president for employment policy at the Chamber of Commerce. "You could start to see some very serious disruptions."

Freedman, who took part in the chamber's call with administration officials, said the 100-worker threshold would also hurt job creation by giving employers who have 90 or 95 employees a reason not to expand.

The experience of United Airlines and health-care providers that acted early to require vaccination suggests that very few employees will give up their jobs because of a vaccine mandate. United says about 200 of its 67,000 U.S. workers face termination for refusing to get vaccinated and another 2,000 are still seeking medical or religious exemptions.

State government vaccination mandate deadlines went into effect this week in Washington state, Massachusetts and New Jersey after a host of legal challenges by state employees and first responders' unions.

In Washington, the state patrol lost 127 employees, including 67 troopers, who left due to the COVID-19 vaccination mandate for state employees, about 6% of the agency's staff, officials said.

The Northwest state's mandate also led to the high-profile firing of Washington State football coach Nick Rolovich and his four assistants, who wouldn't get vaccinated.

In Massachusetts, nearly 1,600 state employees had not proved they were vaccinated or had sought a vaccine exemption by a Sunday deadline. Republican Gov. Charlie Baker announced in August that some 44,000 executive branch workers and contractors would be required to get vaccinated or face suspension and ultimately the loss of their jobs.

The National Association of Manufacturers is arguing that companies should get credit — perhaps an exemption from the rules — for taking early steps to get a high percentage of workers vaccinated. Manufacturers have expressed worry that they could see higher quit rates because many plants are located in rural areas where opposition to vaccination is stronger.

The manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce and other business groups are also pushing the administration to let employers make unvaccinated workers pay for their own weekly COVID-19 testing.

"A lot of our members feel strongly that the vaccine is widely available, it is free, and so if a person opts not to be vaccinated potentially the onus of the test can and should fall on the employee who has made a choice not to vaccinate," said Robyn Boerstling, a NAM vice president. She said employers should pay

for testing if an employee has a medical condition or a "proven and true" religious reason for seeking an exemption.

Business groups, however, are not optimistic on the test-cost issue, saying that OSHA has a history of making employers bear the cost of new regulations.

Retailers are worried about the timing of the new regulation taking effect as they prepare for the critical holiday season. They want to push the rule's effective date into next year.

Several people who took part in the discussions with the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, which is doing the final review of the proposal, said they got no hints whether their arguments would sway the administration. They described conference-call meetings -- virtual because of the pandemic -- in which White House staffers listened and did not respond to their arguments.

It is not clear how the business community will respond once the final rule is published.

Business officials said legal challenges are more likely to come from Republican-led states such as Texas. And Alfredo Ortiz, president and CEO of the conservative Job Creators Network, reiterated his pledge Tuesday after meeting with the White House officials to sue to block the rule's implementation. Two dozen attorneys general in GOP states vowed last month to use "every available legal option" to kill the mandate.

Koenig reported from Dallas. AP writer James Anderson in Denver contributed.

## **FBI at Russian oligarch's homes for 'law enforcement' action**

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal agents were carrying out "law enforcement activity" on Tuesday at a Washington mansion and New York City townhouse tied to Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

FBI officials would not provide any additional information about the circumstances surrounding their presence at either property or any information about potential investigations involving Deripaska.

A spokesperson for Deripaska told reporters that the searches were "connected to U.S. sanctions" and that the homes didn't belong to him but belonged to relatives.

The sanctions imposed on Deripaska in 2018 prevent him from doing business or owning property in the U.S.

In Washington, the agents were carrying out "court-authorized law enforcement activity" at the multi-million-dollar mansion, an agency spokesperson said. Yellow police tape blocked the driveway, and an FBI agent stood guard outside as fellow agents came and went from the home throughout the day. A vehicle was later seen being lifted onto a tow truck at the house.

In New York City, an FBI spokesman said agents were carrying out a "law enforcement operation related to an ongoing investigation" in searching a home connected to Deripaska on Gay Street, in Manhattan's Greenwich Village neighborhood.

Police blocked off the narrow, winding street in front of the three-story, brick 19th century townhouse, which was once the home of former New York City Mayor Jimmy Walker. Federal agents could be seen going in and out of the house with cameras, and more than a dozen agents in five vehicles brought out a van-load of evidence boxes.

In imposing the sanctions against Deripaska in 2018, the Treasury Department said he "has been investigated for money laundering, and has been accused of threatening the lives of business rivals, illegally wiretapping a government official, and taking part in extortion and racketeering."

He sued, unsuccessfully, to try to force the government to overturn those sanctions and his lawyers argued that the penalties cost him billions of dollars.

In the lawsuit, Deripaska's lawyers said that while the Washington home was owned by a limited liability company, which in turn was owned by a British Virgin Island trust established by Deripaska in 2006, he had never lived there.

The wealthy Russian who made his money in the aluminum business is a close ally of Putin and was

mentioned multiple times in special counsel Robert Mueller's report on interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Deripaska also had ties to Paul Manafort, former President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman, who was convicted of eight financial crimes as part Mueller's investigation. Manafort was later pardoned by Trump.

The Treasury Department, under the Trump administration, lifted financial sanctions on three companies connected to Deripaska. Officials said at the time they had done so because Derapaska's direct and indirect shareholding stake in the three companies had been reduced to the point that he no longer has control over them. The sanctions against Deripaska himself remain.

Associated Press writer Michael R. Sisak and Associated Press photographer John Minchillo in New York contributed to this report.

## 8 potential jurors advance in Ahmaud Arbery slaying trial

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — A judge found eight potential jurors qualified to advance Tuesday following intense questioning aimed at finding an impartial jury for the trial of three white men charged with chasing and killing Ahmaud Arbery, whose slaying last year sparked a national outcry.

Father and son Greg and Travis McMichael and a neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, are charged with murder and other crimes in the 25-year-old Black man's death after a cellphone video of the Feb. 23, 2020, killing was leaked online two months later.

"We can't do this without you," Superior Court Judge Timothy Walmsley told the eight pool members, the first to advance after being questioned individually by attorneys on what they know about Arbery's death, how many times they watched the video and whether they think the shooting was motivated by racism.

Dozens more in the jury pool will need to be cleared before a final panel of 12 jurors and four alternates can be seated. Tuesday marked the second day of jury selection, which court officials say could take more than two weeks before the actual trial can begin.

Jury duty notices were mailed to 1,000 people in coastal Glynn County, with 600 ordered to report Monday and the remainder on deck for next week if needed.

The huge jury pool underscores how Arbery's slaying has dominated the news, social media feeds and workplace chatter in the coastal community of roughly 85,000 residents.

The eight people deemed qualified to serve won't necessarily be seated on the final jury. They just weren't among those found to have hardened opinions on the case, or with hardships that made jury service an unfair burden. Prosecutors and the defense will take turns striking qualified pool members in order to arrive at the final jury.

Two of those qualified Tuesday said they know some of the defendants. One said his father is a longtime prosecutor who worked with Greg McMichael before the defendant retired as an investigator for the local district attorney shortly before Arbery was killed.

"He's a friend of my father's and he's been over to our house multiple times," the man said.

The other said her husband and father-in-law know Bryan.

A woman who said she knows Arbery's father, Marcus Arbery Sr., was dismissed.

The judge expressed frustration over the slow pace. His initial schedule had called for attorneys to question two groups of potential jurors of 20 people each. But he sent the second group home Tuesday afternoon, with more than half of the morning panel still waiting to be questioned.

"I do not have the ability to just store people or keep them longer than planned," the judge said, adding later: "At the rate we're going, all these plans we have to move these panels through are not going to work."

The court has not identified the race of any of the prospective jurors.

Prosecutors say Arbery was merely jogging on the street 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from his home when the McMichaels grabbed guns and chased him in a pickup truck. Bryan joined the pursuit in his own truck

and recorded the now-infamous cellphone video of Travis McMichael shooting Arbery three times at close range with a shotgun.

Defense attorneys insist the three men committed no crimes. Greg McMichael told police they believed Arbery was a burglar after security cameras previously recorded him entering a nearby home under construction. He said Travis McMichael fired in self-defense after Arbery punched him and tried to grab his weapon.

Prosecutors say there is no evidence that Arbery, who was unarmed, committed any crime.

## To job or not to job? Vaccinations still hot topic in sports

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman let out a faint cough and assured those seated at least 6 feet away that it was allergies, not COVID-19. He had tested negative for the coronavirus three times in the previous week.

It allowed the fully vaccinated 69-year-old the opportunity to underscore the message that the virus is still part of the NHL and other professional sports leagues 19 months into the pandemic.

"It's no joke," Bettman said. "We're still dealing with COVID, although not in the same ways."

U.S. sports have successfully forced more athletes and staff to get vaccinated than many other industries, in part because the threat of losing pay is so severe. Yet, the outliers have and will continue to get more attention and generate outrage from fans who want to see stars play.

Basketball's Kyrie Irving and Bradley Beal, football's Kirk Cousins, Cole Beasley and Chase Young, baseball's Chris Sale and hockey's Tyler Bertuzzi have all held out, with varying degrees of outspoken skepticism. On Monday, the NHL suspended San Jose's Evander Kane 21 games for submitting a fake vaccination card and Washington State University fired football coach Nick Rolovich for failing to comply with a state government vaccine mandate, providing two more reminders of the impact the coronavirus is still having on professional and college sports.

They're in the shrinking minority.

Major League Baseball, in the middle of its postseason, reports 87.4% of players and key staff are fully vaccinated. The NFL through six weeks of its season is at 94%, with 133 active players who have not had at least one dose. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Monday his league is at 96% with the chance for that number to tick up. Bettman noted last week the NHL had only four unvaccinated players out of more than 700 — well over 99% fully vaccinated.

"If given grades, those are A-pluses," said former women's basketball player Iciss Tillis, who is now a labor and employment attorney at the law firm Hall Estill. "It's been really interesting to watch the transition over the past year and a half go from extreme skepticism to, I guess, people being able to see friends and family go ahead and get the vaccine first and sort of see how they react to it. I think that's playing a huge role in this shift that we're seeing towards people pretty much just giving in and just going ahead and taking the vaccine."

None of those leagues has a full mandate, but all imposed rules treating differently players who are fully vaccinated. In addition, some cities and states put further requirements on players and coaches, especially those at state universities such as Rolovich. Daily coronavirus testing, mask wearing and restrictions on movement made more players choose to be vaccinated — as did the threat of losing pay.

The NBA's Brooklyn Nets begin the season without Irving, who cannot play or practice at home because of a New York City vaccine mandate. The team told him he couldn't play — even in road games — until his status changes. Irving and other unvaccinated players around pro sports don't get paid for the games they miss.

"For athletes in particular, their livelihood is based on their ability to compete," said Dr. Wendy King of the University of Pittsburgh, who took part in a research project on vaccine hesitancy earlier this year. "Even if they thought, 'Oh, I'm pretty healthy and I wouldn't get that bad of a case,' it would still heavily impact their ability to go to work, to play in a game. It could affect their entire team — not just them —

so they might feel like they're letting other people down if they don't do everything they can to prevent the disease."

Dr. Panagis Galiatsatos of Johns Hopkins University said job security and the threat of losing pay likely led to such a high vaccine uptake among athletes. "I think that's a powerful thing," he said.

It convinced some to get jabbed.

Golden State Warriors forward Andrew Wiggins — who faced a potential absence similar to Irving's because of a local mandate — decided to get a COVID-19 vaccine to be eligible to play. The NHL's agreement to go to the Olympics requires all participants to be fully vaccinated, which could lead New Jersey Devils goaltender Mackenzie Blackwood to change his mind, as well.

Leagues have still endured COVID-19 cases involving fully vaccinated players, coaches and staff. Deep in baseball's playoffs, the Atlanta Braves opened the NL Championship Series without Jorge Soler, who tested positive, and the NHL's Pittsburgh Penguins started the season without winger Jake Guentzel.

Isolated absences are expected, Bettman said, because of the highly contagious delta variant.

"We've got to maintain our vigilance and be serious," Bettman said. "I'm really proud of our players. All of our officials are vaccinated. All of our personnel who come near our players are vaccinated, and that's what we've got to do. But we can't let up. It's a fact of life and it's not just us. It's what the world is still living with."

One of hockey's biggest stars, Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon, missed the first two games of the season after testing positive with a breakthrough case. Coach Jared Bednar hopes a combination of the entire team being vaccinated and many having already contracted COVID-19 allows the Avalanche and the league in general to stay on track this season.

MacKinnon was back on the ice Tuesday, thankful for his vaccination status and ready to play again.

"Nobody got sick, no teammates got sick, so that's lucky," he said. "Didn't feel anything, so the vaccine must work."

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AP Pro Football Writer Arnie Stapleton, Baseball Writer Ronald Blum, Pro Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds and College Football Writer Ralph D. Russo contributed to this report.

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

## Indictment accuses Nebraska congressman of lying to FBI

By GRANT SCHULTE Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A federal grand jury on Tuesday indicted U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska, accusing him of lying to the FBI and concealing information from federal agents who were investigating campaign contributions funneled to him from a Nigerian billionaire.

The U.S. attorney's office announced that the grand jury in Los Angeles had indicted the nine-term Republican on one charge of scheming to falsify and conceal material facts and two counts of making false statements to federal investigators. Fortenberry is expected to appear for an arraignment Wednesday afternoon in federal court in Los Angeles.

The indictment stems from an FBI investigation into \$180,000 in illegal campaign contributions from Gilbert Chagoury, a Nigerian billionaire of Lebanese descent.

The contributions were funneled through a group of Californians from 2012 through 2016 and went to four U.S. politicians, including \$30,200 to Fortenberry in 2016. Using an analysis of federal election records, Politico has identified the other three Republican recipients as former U.S. Rep. Lee Terry, of Nebraska, in 2014; Rep. Darrell Issa, of California, in 2014; and Mitt Romney during his 2012 presidential campaign.

Federal authorities haven't alleged that any of the other three campaigns or candidates were aware that the donations originated with Chagoury.

Chagoury, who lives in Paris, admitted to the crime in 2019, agreed to pay a \$1.8 million fine and is cooperating with federal authorities. Prosecutors have said Chagoury made some of the illegal contributions to politicians from smaller states because he thought the amounts would be more noticeable and give him

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 54 of 79

better access. He also drew attention years ago for giving more than \$1 million to the Clinton Foundation.

The indictment alleges that a cohort of the 2016 fundraiser in Los Angeles told Fortenberry that the donations probably did come from Chagoury, but Fortenberry never filed an amended campaign report with the Federal Election Commission as required. It says he later "made false and misleading statements" to federal investigators during a March 23, 2019 interview at his home in Lincoln.

According to the indictment, Fortenberry falsely told investigators he wasn't aware of an associate of Chagoury being involved in illegal contributions. He also allegedly said that his donors were publicly disclosed and he wasn't aware of any contributions from a foreign national, which is illegal.

In a second interview in Washington in July 2019, the indictment says Fortenberry denied that he was aware of any illicit donation made during the 2016 fundraiser.

In a YouTube video posted Monday night, Fortenberry said he was "shocked" and "stunned" by the allegations and asked his supporters to rally behind him. Knowingly making false statements to a federal agent is a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison.

"We will fight these charges," he said in the video, filmed inside a 1963 pickup truck with his wife, Celeste, and their dog, against a backdrop of corn. "I did not lie to them. I told them what I knew. But we need your help."

Fortenberry's campaign has insisted that he didn't know the donations, which the campaign received during a fundraiser in Los Angeles, originated with Chagoury.

Fortenberry, of Lincoln, said FBI agents from California came to his home after he had been out dealing with a major storm that had just hit Nebraska. He said they questioned him about the contributions then and in a follow-up interview.

"I told them what I knew and what I understood," he said.

Fortenberry represents the state's 1st Congressional District, a heavily Republican area that includes Lincoln and parts of several Omaha suburbs, as well as surrounding farmland and small towns in eastern Nebraska.

According to the Nebraska secretary of state's office, no other Nebraska congressman or U.S. senator has been indicted since at least 1901.

Fortenberry was first elected to the seat in 2004. He won his last election in 2020 with 60% of the vote and has generally defeated Democratic challengers by lopsided margins.

The Nebraska Democratic Party said the indictment shows that Fortenberry is only interested in money and power.

"Fortenberry's reported lies violate the trust of Nebraskans, only confirming that the swamp Trump promised to drain is actually the Republican Party," said Party Chairwoman Jane Kleeb. "Serving 16 years in Congress has tainted Fortenberry, who cares more about political donations than serving the people of our state."

His statement that he expected to be indicted was first reported by the Omaha World-Herald.

His wife, Celeste Fortenberry, said her husband spoke with the agents voluntarily, without a lawyer, because he was under the impression that the agents needed his help to get to the bottom of the case.

She said he later called his friend, attorney and former congressman Trey Gowdy, for legal representation. She said her husband sat for another interview with agents in Washington and was repeatedly assured that he was not a target of the investigation.

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Associated Press writer Josh Funk contributed to this report.

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Follow Grant Schulte on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GrantSchulte>

## As deaths rise, Russian doctors despair at low vaccine rate

By KOSTYA MANENKOV and VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Dr. Georgy Arbolishvili doesn't need to see government statistics or hear about the

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 55 of 79

records being broken every day for infections and deaths to know that Russia is struggling through a particularly alarming phase of the coronavirus pandemic.

He simply looks around his filled-to-capacity intensive care unit at Moscow's Hospital No. 52.

With only about a third of Russia's 146 million people vaccinated against COVID-19, the country has hovered near 1,000 reported deaths per day for weeks and surpassed it on Saturday — a situation that Arbolishvili says "causes despair."

"The majority of ICU patients in grave condition are unvaccinated," he told The Associated Press. These illnesses "could have been very easily avoided if a person had been vaccinated."

With a record 1,015 fatalities reported Tuesday, the country's death toll is now 225,325 — by far the highest in Europe, even though most experts agree even that figure is an undercount.

Those statistics "are directly linked to vaccinations," Arbolishvili said. "The countries with a high share of those vaccinated don't have such bad mortality numbers."

Even though vaccines are plentiful, Russians have shown hesitancy and skepticism when it comes to getting vaccinated, which has been blamed on conflicting signals sent by authorities since the pandemic began last year.

Even as ICUs have filled in recent weeks, life in Moscow has continued as usual, with restaurants and movie theaters brimming with people, crowds swarming nightclubs and karaoke bars and commuters widely ignoring mask mandates on public transportation.

That makes medical workers like Dr. Natavan Ibragimova shudder.

"I think about sleepless nights when we get a huge number of patients who didn't even bother to use banal protective means," the internist at Hospital No. 52 said.

Patients who have gotten the vaccine usually don't have serious symptoms, Ibragimova added, while the unvaccinated come to regret it.

"Patients who survive after a grave course of illness tell us when they are discharged, 'Doctor, you were right and I will tell everyone that it's necessary to get the vaccine,'" she said.

Until now, the Kremlin has ruled out a new nationwide lockdown like the one imposed early in the pandemic that dealt a heavy blow to the economy and sapped President Vladimir Putin's popularity. The surging infections have raised the pressure on Russia's health care system and prompted Cabinet officials to suggest that most public sector workers take a week off.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova, who heads the coronavirus task force, suggested Tuesday that such a nonworking period start Oct. 30 and last through the following week, when four of seven days already are state holidays. The Cabinet will ask Putin to authorize the move, which would still keep many businesses in the service sector open.

Authorities also have raised the pressure on medical workers, teachers and public servants to get vaccinated, but the pace has stayed sluggish. Putin has underlined the importance of vaccinations but has emphasized that it should be voluntary.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov admitted that while the government has done everything to make vaccinations easily available, it should have been more proactive in encouraging them.

"Obviously, more should have been done to explain the lack of alternative to vaccination," Peskov told reporters.

Authorities have set up vaccination sites in shopping malls and other facilities at clinics where shots are offered without any advance booking. They also have used lotteries, bonuses and other incentives to encourage people to get vaccinated, without much success.

Russia is the only place "where you can easily come and get the shot while passing by," said Dr. Irina Beloglazova, a pulmonary specialist at Hospital No. 52. "A vaccine offers a clear chance to survive. I wonder why people don't take that chance."

In August 2020, Russia boasted of being the first country in the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine even though it was only tested on a few dozen people at the time, proudly naming the shot Sputnik V in honor of its pioneering space program.

While extolling Sputnik V and three other domestic vaccines developed later, state-controlled media

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 56 of 79

derided Western-made vaccine shots, a controversial message that many saw as feeding public doubts about vaccines in general.

Asked if authorizing imports of foreign vaccines would help, Peskov said the skepticism isn't limited to domestic shots. So far, the World Health Organization and the European Union have not authorized the use of Sputnik V, and Peskov emphasized that the issue should be resolved on an equal basis.

While resisting a nationwide lockdown, the Kremlin empowered regional authorities across the country to decide on local restrictions, depending on their situation.

Many of Russia's 85 regions already have restricted attendance at large public events and limited access to theaters, restaurants and other venues. Some have made vaccinations compulsory for certain public servants and people over 60.

Golikova urged the regions to move quickly on using digital codes for access to public areas.

Russia's second-largest city of St. Petersburg joined others Monday in ordering digital codes so people can prove their vaccination or their recovery from infection to access conferences and sports events beginning Nov. 1. As of Nov. 15, those codes will also be required at movies, theaters, museums and gyms, and on Dec. 1, they will be mandatory at restaurants, cafes and some stores.

The city reported the second-largest number of new infections after Moscow, where authorities so far have refrained from tightening restrictions despite the mounting caseload. Moscow this week moved to tighten mask mandates on public transportation.

On Tuesday, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said unvaccinated people over 60 will be required to stay home. He also told businesses to keep at least a third of their employees working remotely for three months starting Oct. 25.

Michael Head, a senior research fellow in global health at Britain's University of Southampton, said the almost daily record-breaking virus numbers in Russia are hardly surprising, given the lack of restrictions and the highly contagious delta variant.

"We have seen time and again that if you let susceptible people mix, the delta variant is very, very adept at spreading in communities," he said.

Experts at the WHO and elsewhere estimate that might require more than 80% of a population to be immunized.

The government's task force has registered more than 8 million infections and ranks Russia as having the fifth-most COVID-19 deaths in the world after the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico.

However, state statistics agency Rosstat, which also counts deaths in which the virus wasn't considered the main cause, has reported a much higher death toll — about 418,000 as of August. Based on that number, Russia would be the fourth hardest-hit nation.

Martin McKee, a professor of European public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said the situation was extremely worrying for Russia and the rest of the world. Even high rates of vaccination elsewhere in Europe won't prevent the virus from being reimported from Russia, particularly if worrisome new variants emerge, he said.

"Until we have control of the virus everywhere, there's a risk of importation and the pandemic will not be under control," he said.

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AP Medical Writer Maria Cheng in London contributed.

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## **COVID-19 and pregnancy: Women regret not getting the vaccine**

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

PHENIX CITY, Ala. (AP) — Sometimes when she's feeding her infant daughter, Amanda Harrison is overcome with emotion and has to wipe away tears of gratitude. She is lucky to be here, holding her baby.

Harrison was 29 weeks pregnant and unvaccinated when she got sick with COVID-19 in August. Her



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 57 of 79

symptoms were mild at first, but she suddenly felt like she couldn't breathe. Living in Phenix City, Alabama, she was intubated and flown to a hospital in Birmingham, where doctors delivered baby Lake two months early and put Harrison on life support.

Kyndal Nipper, who hails from outside Columbus, Georgia, had only a brief bout with COVID-19 but a more tragic outcome. She was weeks away from giving birth in July when she lost her baby, a boy she and her husband planned to name Jack.

Now Harrison and Nipper are sharing their stories in an attempt to persuade pregnant women to get COVID-19 vaccinations to protect themselves and their babies. Their warnings come amid a sharp increase in the number of severely ill pregnant women that led to 22 pregnant women dying from COVID in August, a one-month record.

"We made a commitment that we would do anything in our power to educate and advocate for our boy, because no other family should have to go through this," Nipper said of herself and her husband.

Harrison said she will "nicely argue to the bitter end" that pregnant women get vaccinated "because it could literally save your life."

Since the pandemic began, health officials have reported more than 125,000 cases and at least 161 deaths of pregnant women from COVID-19 in the U.S., according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And over the past several months, hospitals and doctors in virus hot spots have reported a sharp increase in the number of severely ill pregnant women.

With just 31% of pregnant women nationwide vaccinated, the CDC issued an urgent advisory on Sept. 29 recommending that they get the shots. The agency cautioned that COVID-19 in pregnancy can cause preterm birth and other adverse outcomes, and that stillbirths have been reported.

Dr. Akila Subramaniam, an assistant professor in the maternal-fetal medicine division of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, said the hospital saw a marked rise in the number of critically ill pregnant women during July and August. She said a study there found the delta variant of COVID-19 is associated with increased rates of severe disease in pregnant women and increased rates of preterm birth.

"Is it because the delta variant is just more infectious or is it because delta is more severe? I don't think we know the answer to that," Subramaniam said.

When COVID-19 vaccines became available to pregnant women in their states this spring, both Harrison, 36, and Nipper, 29, decided to wait. The shots didn't have final approval from the Food and Drug Administration and pregnant women weren't included in studies that led to emergency authorization, so initial guidance stopped short of fully recommending vaccination for them. Pfizer shots received formal approval in August.

The women live on opposite sides of the Alabama-Georgia line, an area that was hit hard by the delta variant this summer.

While Harrison had to be put on life support, Nipper's symptoms were more subtle. When she was eight months pregnant, she lost her sense of smell and developed a fever. The symptoms went away quickly, but Jack didn't seem to be kicking as much as he had been. She tried drinking a caffeinated beverage: Nothing. She headed to the hospital in Columbus, Georgia, for fetal monitoring where medical staff delivered the news: Baby Jack was gone.

"He was supposed to come into the world in three weeks or less," Nipper said. "And for them to tell you there's no heartbeat and there is no movement ..."

Nipper's doctor, Timothy Villegas, said testing showed the placenta itself was infected with the virus and displayed patterns of inflammation similar to the lungs of people who died of COVID-19.

The infection likely caused the baby's death by affecting its ability to get oxygen and nutrients, Villegas said. The doctor said he has since learned of similar cases from other physicians.

"We're at that point where everybody is starting to raise some red flags," he said.

In west Alabama, Dr. Cheree Melton, a family medicine physician who specializes in obstetrics and teaches at the University of Alabama, said she and her colleagues have had about a half-dozen unvaccinated patients infected with COVID-19 lose unborn children to either miscarriages or stillbirth, a problem that worsened with delta's spread.

"It's absolutely heartbreaking to tell a mom that she will never get to hold her living child," she said. "We have had to do that very often, more so than I remember doing over the last couple of years."

Melton said she encourages every unvaccinated pregnant woman she treats to get the shots, but that many haven't. She said rumors and misinformation have been a problem.

"I get everything from, 'Well, somebody told me that it may cause me to be infertile in the future' to, 'It may harm my baby,'" she said.

Nipper said she wishes she had asked more questions about the vaccine. "Looking back, I know I did everything that I could have possibly done to give him a healthy life," she said. "The only thing I didn't do, and I'll have to carry with me, is I didn't get the vaccine."

Now home from the hospital with a healthy baby, Harrison says she feels profound gratitude — tempered with survivor's guilt.

"I cry all the time. Just little things. Feeding her or hugging my 4-year-old. Just the thought of them having to go through life without me and that's a lot of people's reality right now," Harrison said. "It was very scary and it all could have been prevented if I had gotten a vaccination."

Associated Press writer Jay Reeves in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, contributed to this report.

## Manatee deaths rise in Florida as pollutants kill seagrass

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Manatees have starved to death by the hundreds along Florida's east coast because algae blooms and contaminants are killing the seagrass the beloved sea mammals eat, a wildlife official told a House committee Tuesday.

Seagrass has been decimated in the 156-mile-long Indian River Lagoon and neighboring areas. The aquatic plant thrives in clear, sandy water, but murkier water because of the algae and pollutants has made it harder for seagrass to survive, said Melissa Tucker, director of the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

"Our statewide death count from all sources has been higher than it's ever been reported before," Tucker told the House State Affairs Committee. "This is a starvation issue. There's not enough seagrasses that are available to the manatees."

Officials noticed a sharp rise in manatee deaths from December through May, when the sea cows congregate in warm waters. During that period, 677 manatees died, when typically only 156 die, Tucker said.

While manatee mortality leveled out after May, when the mammals extend their range in summer and fall, the state has recorded 968 manatee deaths in 2021, with more than two months left in the year. The previous annual high was 830 deaths in 2013, Tucker said.

Big manatee die-offs in past years have been attributed to more transitory events like algae blooms and unusually cold weather, but the seagrass problem could take longer to reverse, Tucker said. Efforts are being made to replant seagrass and restore clam and oyster beds so the mollusks can help filter the water, she said.

"This is something that we're going to be trying to manage and improve over the course of years and maybe decades," she said.

Republican State Rep. Thad Altman, who represents Brevard County, where manatees typically thrive, said it will be difficult to regrow the seagrass unless the water gets cleared up. He said the manatees are now even eating seagrass roots, permanently killing the aquatic plants.

"We literally have a catastrophe on our hands," Altman said.

## SC attorney Alex Murdaugh denied bond on \$3M theft charges

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — A judge denied bond Tuesday for a prominent South Carolina attorney who has become embroiled in two multimillion-dollar insurance fraud cases months after he found his wife

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 59 of 79

and son dead in their home.

The judge said Alex Murdaugh's considerable financial resources and mental instability appear for now to make it too risky to allow him to await trial outside of jail on charges he stole \$3.4 million in insurance money meant for the sons of his housekeeper.

The ruling means weeks, if not months in jail for the 53-year-old man who inherited part of a legal empire in tiny Hampton County, South Carolina. Murdaugh's father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all elected prosecutors. The family's law firm, located in the most impressive building in town after the courthouse, has spent a century winning multimillion-dollar verdicts.

Still unsolved is what started the legal problems and at least six state investigations into Murdaugh and his family back in June: the deaths of his wife and son, who were found shot multiple times outside their home.

Defense attorneys asked Circuit Judge Clifton Newman to release Murdaugh on his own recognizance, as a different judge had in September on charges that he tried to arrange his own death to obtain a \$10 million insurance policy. Prosecutors asked for a \$200,000 bond and GPS monitoring for the latest charges, obtaining property by false pretenses.

"I'm not satisfied as to his mental condition," Newman said, adding that he needed more information. He said he would reconsider his decision after receiving it.

One of Murdaugh's attorneys, Dick Harpootlian, said after the hearing that therapists at the drug rehab centers in Georgia and Florida where Murdaugh spent the past six weeks will send their records to a local psychiatrist, who will prepare a report for the judge, hopefully within a week.

"We understand the judge's concerns about Alex's mental condition. We're more than happy to comply with his request," Harpootlian said, adding of Murdaugh, "He seemed much more clearheaded today than I've ever seen him."

Harpootlian and Murdaugh's other attorney, Jim Griffin have said he is dealing with crushing grief and guilt after finding his wife and son's bodies. Murdaugh has adamantly denied having anything to do with their deaths and no one has been charged.

The latest charges against Murdaugh involve insurance payments that were supposed to go to the sons of his longtime housekeeper Gloria Satterfield, who died in 2018 a few weeks after falling at the family's home, investigators said.

No autopsy was performed, and a coroner said her death was improperly described as "natural" on her death certificate. State police said Tuesday in court that they are still investigating the circumstances of her death. Murdaugh denies having anything to do with her death, Harpootlian said after the hearing.

Murdaugh told Satterfield's sons he would help them get insurance settlements for her death, recommending they hire attorney Cory Fleming without telling them Fleming was a family friend, according to a lawsuit filed by the sons.

Murdaugh negotiated more than \$4 million in payments, then had the checks — minus fees and attorney payments — sent to a fraudulent bank account, investigators said.

A lawyer for the sons said they haven't seen any money from the settlements.

"He stole. He is a liar and a cheat," attorney Eric Bland told the judge Tuesday.

South Carolina Assistant Attorney General Creighton Waters said Murdaugh quickly took the money and put it in his personal accounts.

"He had been carrying a \$100,000 credit card balance for months," Waters said. "That gets paid off. He writes 300 and some odd grand to his father. He writes a check for 610 grand to himself. He writes a check for 125 grand to himself. Not a dime goes to this family."

Waters asked for a \$200,000 bond and GPS monitoring, saying, "A man who is a danger to himself is a danger to others."

Harpootlian and Griffin said Murdaugh needs more treatment for an opioid addiction that has lasted for more than a decade.

"He's not going to run," Harpootlian said. "That's not where he is now."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 60 of 79

Griffin argued that “the Alex Murdaugh who is not hooked on drugs has lived a good, fruitful life — a law-abiding life.”

“Only when he got hooked on opioids did things turn south and he truly regrets his conduct,” Griffin said.

Murdaugh has been in jail since his arrest Thursday at a drug rehab center near Orlando, Florida.

The housekeeper’s insurance isn’t the only six-figure case being investigated by state police. Murdaugh’s former law firm — founded by his great-grandfather a century ago — has accused him of stealing possibly millions of dollars.

Prosecutors hinted at Tuesday’s hearing that Murdaugh has turned over all his affairs to his surviving son and in recent weeks sold a boat and property in Beaufort County in what they said might be an attempt to hide money from at least three ongoing lawsuits.

Each charge of obtaining property by false pretenses carries a sentence of up to 10 years. The three felony charges from the botched attempt to arrange his own death could bring up to 20 years in prison if he’s convicted.

Murdaugh continues to insist he had nothing to do with the June deaths of his wife, Maggie, 52, and their son Paul, 22. Murdaugh said he returned to their rural Colleton County home to find them shot to death. Tight-lipped state police have neither named any suspects nor ruled anyone out.

In addition to all of the other cases, state police are looking into whether Murdaugh has connections to a 2015 hit-and-run death and whether he or other family members tried to obstruct the investigation into a boat crash involving Paul Murdaugh that killed a 19-year-old woman in 2019. Murdaugh also denies any wrongdoing in these cases, Harpootlian said Tuesday.

The Murdaugh family has dominated the legal community in Hampton County for nearly the past century. Murdaugh’s father, grandfather and great-grandfather were elected prosecutors and their prestigious law firm became known for suing railroads.

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This story has been edited to correct the housekeeper’s name to Gloria and that she died in 2018.

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Follow Jeffrey Collins on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JSCollinsAP>.

## South Carolina, UConn, Stanford women top preseason Top 25

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Dawn Staley and South Carolina are back in a familiar spot: No. 1 in The Associated Press Top 25 women’s basketball poll.

It’s the second consecutive season that the Gamecocks are the preseason favorite.

“With who we brought back and who added for this season, we knew we would start out among the hunted, and it’s something that our program is getting used to,” said Staley, who is going into her 14th season as South Carolina coach. “Watching practice every day, I can see that we have the pieces and the competitive fire to reach all of our goals. We have a few more weeks to put those pieces together into a cohesive, successful team that can live up to this preseason ranking.”

The Gamecocks received 14 of the 29 first-place votes from a national media panel in Tuesday’s poll. UConn was second, garnering 10 first-place ballots. It’s the 15th consecutive season that the Huskies were among the top five teams in the preseason.

Defending national champion Stanford was third, getting the other five first-place votes. Maryland and North Carolina State rounded out the top five.

It’s been a busy few days for Staley. The school announced a new, seven-year contract that will pay her \$2.9 million this season and grow to \$3.5 million in the final season. She also believes the \$22.4 million deal should make an impact on her sport and in the equality of what men and women’s coaches and athletes receive from their schools.

HOOSIER HYSTERIA

Indiana is No. 8, the school’s highest ranking ever in women’s basketball. There’s a lot of excitement

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 61 of 79

around Bloomington, with all five starters returning from a team that went to the Elite Eight last year and had its sixth straight 20-win season.

"It's great recognition for our program and a testament to our team and how they continued to get better throughout one of the most difficult and challenging seasons we had in the history of women's basketball," Indiana coach Teri Moren said. "We believe we have much to prove and are looking forward to what we know will be a challenging season in both non-conference as well as what we'll see in the Big Ten."

## RISING WOLVERINES

Michigan also tied its best ranking ever, coming in at No. 11. The Wolverines return three starters, including Naz Hillmon, from the squad that lost to Baylor in overtime in the Sweet 16 last season.

Michigan coach Kim Barnes Arico called the ranking an honor and said her team was eager to build on the momentum from last spring.

"We have been able to take steps forward and grow as a program the past few seasons, doing things that had never been done before," she said. "Showing that consistency year in and year out is the sign of a great program, not just a great team."

## HEARTLAND HOPES

There are high expectations in Iowa this year: The Hawkeyes are No. 9 and Iowa State is No. 12.

Iowa, led by star guard Caitlin Clark, has its highest preseason ranking since the team was sixth in 1996.

Iowa State coach Bill Fennelly has a bulk of his starting five back, including Ashley Joens and Lexi Donarski. It's the team's best ranking in the preseason since 2001, when the Cyclones were eighth.

## CONFERENCE WATCH

The Pac-12, Big Ten and ACC each have five ranked teams, tops in the nation:

Joining No. 4 Maryland, No. 8 Indiana, No. 9 Iowa and No. 11 Michigan is No. 17 Ohio State for the Big Ten.

In the Pac-12, No. 3 Stanford is joined by No. 10 Oregon, No. 14 Oregon State, No. 20 UCLA and No. 22 Arizona.

The ACC has No. 5 N.C. State, No. 6 Louisville, No. 16 Florida State, No. 17 Georgia Tech and No. 24 Virginia Tech.

The SEC has four teams with No. 13 Kentucky, No. 15 Tennessee and No. 23 Texas A&M joining top-ranked South Carolina. The Big 12 also has four programs ranked, led by No. 7 Baylor with new head coach Nicki Collen. The Bears are joined by the Cyclones, No. 19 West Virginia and No. 25 Texas.

The only non-Power Five team in the poll is No. 21 South Florida out of the American Athletic Conference.

## TIP-INS

Georgia Tech is ranked for the third time ever in the preseason (2009, 2012). ... Virginia Tech is in the preseason poll for only the second time ever, joining the 1999 squad that was ranked 17th.

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

## Jumping onto trucks to get to Britain: A migrant's day

By ARNO PEDRAM Associated Press

CALAIS, France (AP) — Mohammad and Jaber spend every day looking for the right truck, and this afternoon it feels like it could happen.

This truck seems right. They scream to their friend to jump. He runs, latches on to the moving rig between the cab and the cargo compartment, and squeezes in. The truck doesn't stop, meaning the driver hasn't noticed.

The truck and its stowaway then disappear down a French highway toward the English Channel tunnel, the man's friends hoping he makes it to his destination: Britain.

Mohammad and Jaber are young Sudanese refugees who escaped war in their country, endured kidnap-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 62 of 79

pings or beatings in Libya, and crossed the deadly Mediterranean to Italy. They are now in the northern French town of Calais, and like hundreds of other people mostly from East Africa and the Middle East, they are trying to get to Britain by hiding in trucks in what has proved to be a dangerous and potentially lethal method.

Politicians on both sides of the English Channel are arguing about how to make them stop, after thousands of people crossed into Britain by various means in recent months in a flow that has been met with heightened anti-immigrant rhetoric.

While those with some money can pay to go to Britain on flimsy, overcrowded boats in often dangerous waters, the ones who can't have to jump on one of the tens of thousands of commercial trucks that pass each week between France and Britain.

Many of the migrants in Calais want to reach the UK in search of economic opportunity or because of family and community ties. French authorities say another big draw is lax British rules toward migrants without residency papers.

Only young and fit migrants unencumbered by other family members dare attempt the truck-jumping. It's a team effort.

On a cold autumn day in Calais last week, five young men crouched by a roundabout at a muddy construction site, watching as trucks emerged from a warehouse. A sixth young man hid close to the road.

When a promising-looking truck came out, the other men screamed at him to jump on.

There's a code to tell jumpers which one of the exiting trucks they should grab onto.

"We tell them number one, no, number two, no, number three, yes!" Mohammad explained, giving only his first name for fear of arrest or expulsion for trying to cross borders illegally.

The truck drivers check to see that no one enters their rigs, or stop to tell would-be stowaways they're not going to Britain and that there's no point in climbing aboard. Police in patrol cars come by often, too, their sirens blaring, to deter the men.

Once aboard a rig, the jumpers pay close attention to the truck's route. Only one sequence of left and right turns will lead them to the promised land across the Channel. If the combination is the wrong one, they get off and start over again.

Mohammad twice managed to get on a truck unnoticed but had to jump off when he realized it was not going to the UK.

Some ride in the space between the cab and the cargo. Some climb into the cargo compartment if they can pry the doors open.

And even if the vehicle is going in the right direction, more challenges and danger await the stowaways. Police use technology at the Channel tunnel to scan trucks for body heat and moving shadows. If the stowaways are discovered, they are forced out of the vehicles by police. More than 18,000 were discovered in trucks last year, and 11,000 so far in 2021.

Refugee advocacy groups and human rights observers report receiving calls for help from migrants in refrigerated trucks who say they are suffocating or about to die from hypothermia. Some say they have been roughed up by police when caught.

Some suffer broken bones or worse from trying to jump onto moving trucks. In late September, 20-year-old Yasser Abdallah was crushed to death by a truck.

Abdallah, too, had fled Sudan. He dreamed of being a taxi driver in Britain. The Calais migrant community grieved for him, and a week later, more than 300 came out to march in his memory.

In a written appeal to truck drivers, the marchers asked: "When you notice a refugee in the truck, you shake the truck and brake again and again until we let go. Why can't we continue our travel?"

The truck jumpers have kept on trying.

At night, they sleep in the forest around Calais, in a tent if they're lucky, but usually under tree. Police raid the encampments every morning, arresting them, tear-gassing them and confiscating their belongings, according to human rights observers.

"Some people stay one day, some one week, some one month, me, four months and 15 days," Moham-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 63 of 79

mad said. He and others estimate two to three a day succeed in hopping a truck to Britain.

Ahmad, a 28-year-old, Sudanese truck jumper who left his country in 2018 because of the war, showed a reporter a TikTok video dated one day after Yasser died, from the account of someone who made it across.

On the video, a man runs by a white and blue truck and pulls himself up.

The video is overlaid with Arabic text, the Union Jack and two letters from the English alphabet: "UK."

Follow AP's global migration coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>

## The NBA at 75: From a very modest beginning, to a behemoth

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

It started in 1946 with 11 teams and 160 players. The shot clock was nearly a decade away, the 3-point line was a couple generations away. Buildings were smaller. So were the players. And it wasn't even called the National Basketball Association.

The NBA, 75 years ago, was different in almost every imaginable way.

Over the coming months, The Associated Press will look back at what the league was on and off the court, how it became what it is and where it'll be going over the next 25 years as it moves toward the century mark.

The series will recall those humble beginnings, with Ossie Schectman — who scored the first basket in league history — making \$60 a game. It'll show how what was happening in the country seemed to mirror what was happening in the league, from the league's path toward integrating in the 1950s, to its stance on social issues and race relations today.

In those earliest of years, teams lost plenty of money. Some of the inaugural franchises only had inaugural seasons, folding after Year 1. There was no robust following and the NBA had little to no impact on societal issues.

And all the players were white.

"None of us who were playing at that time knew what this would be," Schectman, who played for the original New York Knicks, said in a 2010 interview, three years before his death. "We didn't know if this was going to work out and become something."

Schectman scored the first basket in Basketball Association of America history; it wasn't called the NBA until three years later, but the NBA counts those years as part of its own. It was an underhand layup for the Knicks in a game at the Toronto Huskies on Nov. 1, 1946, the first two points of 13.7 million in league history and counting.

In time, Schectman got his answer: The NBA, indeed, would become something.

Today, the 30 NBA franchises are worth at least \$100 billion combined, possibly much more than that. The league has a fan base that stretches to each corner of the globe and a reputation of being a leader when it comes to social issues.

Richard Lapchick, the son of former New York Knicks coach Joe Lapchick and researcher on social and racial issues within sport, said the league's platform has always provided an opportunity to be a conduit for change — perhaps never more so than now.

"I genuinely believe that the NBA, with Adam Silver as its current leader, is in this for the right reasons and has the support of the largest integrated labor force in America in terms of percentage of the population," Lapchick said. "They're also very wealthy, so they can use their resources — and this is new — to invest in social justice campaigns in their communities."

There has been a major commitment by players to spark change in recent years, from additional and almost unprecedented levels of support for historically Black colleges and universities, to LeBron James leading a voting rights and registration push that wound up playing a significant role in the 2020 presidential election.

Los Angeles Clippers owner Steve Ballmer believes he knows why basketball tends to make such an impact on society.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 64 of 79

"I'll say something a little silly," Ballmer said. "How many sports can you really see the players? Football, you've got helmets on. Baseball players are quite remote, in center field. Even soccer, hockey, you have guys who are moving super-fast with helmets. People can relate to the players in basketball. You can see them. You can feel them.

"There's fewer players which means you get more interviews and get to know certain personalities more than you would in just about any other sport," he added. "Actually, that's a significantly important aspect of why basketball becomes much more at the forefront of societal change."

Like with many things, the early days were the toughest.

The Philadelphia Warriors — now the Golden State Warriors — won the league's first title in 1947, over the Chicago Stags. By the time the next season started, four of the 11 original teams had folded; the league added a team from Baltimore and played with eight franchises for the second season.

A 60-game schedule was pared down to 48 to save money on travel. Maurice Podoloff, a hockey executive who was the BAA's first president and ultimately the first NBA commissioner, was tasked with saving the league and winning a battle with the rival National Basketball League for players and attention.

In May 1948, the battle was won. Four teams left the NBL — Indianapolis, Rochester, Fort Wayne and Minneapolis, who had arguably the biggest name in basketball at the time with George Mikan — for the BAA.

"Maurice Podoloff charted the unknown for the NBA," the late David Stern, who was the NBA commissioner for 30 years, said when Podoloff died. "He took an idea and nurtured professional basketball through its formative years. It is through the efforts of sporting pioneers like Podoloff that the NBA has become an everyday part of the American sporting scene."

By 1949, the NBA had turned a corner. The league was up to 17 teams, more than doubling what it was. Teams were turning profits. The rebranding to the NBA was complete. And with the evolution in the boardrooms complete, it was time to evolve on the floor as well.

While the race barrier had been broken — Wat Misaka, a Japanese-American player, was drafted and played for the Knicks in 1947 — it was barely noticed, in part because he played only three games. The first Black players were three years away from joining the league, changing the face of the game for good.

As the country was changing, moving on from World War II and into the civil rights movement, the NBA was in lockstep. Change then led to unrest and division, just as it did in recent years across the U.S. But the NBA pressed on, then and now.

"That's what this country is all about and should be about," NBA great and Basketball Hall of Famer Jerry West said. "It's about fair play. And for years, there hasn't been a lot of fair play in this country. I think the NBA has been a front-liner in that, and it's great to see."

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More on the NBA At 75: <https://apnews.com/hub/nba-at-75>

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More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## **Anatomy of a kidnapping: Haitian woman recounts abduction**

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — When Doris Michel steps outside her home in Haiti, she packs her bulletproof vest and tries to use a bulletproof car.

Ever since her father was kidnapped last month in the capital of Port-au-Prince, the 34-year-old Haitian-American woman won't take any chances. She already travels with one bodyguard, and when she feels extra unsafe, she takes two.

"The insecurity in Haiti has been something that has been going on for years, but now it's taken a turn that's just unbearable," she said.

Her 85-year-old father, a Vietnam veteran, was abducted in late September, along with his driver and a friend who is the mother of a Haitian singer. They were traveling through Martissant, a gang-controlled territory that many try to avoid, but it was the only route that would take her father where he needed to go.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 65 of 79

The same kind of gang activity is being blamed for the kidnapping Saturday of 16 Americans and one Canadian — missionaries for a U.S. religious organization and their relatives. Their disappearance highlighted the worsening problem and prompted the U.S. government to mobilize to solve one of the biggest abductions in recent years.

By contrast, many other kidnappings go unnoticed — something that bothers people like Michel, who said the FBI provided her family with scant assistance.

Her father and the two other people were abducted by a gang run by Ti Lipli, a member of G9 Family and Allies — a federation considered one of the largest and most powerful in Haiti. They asked for a ransom of \$6 million.

Michel and her mother said they didn't have that kind of money. Two days later, the ransom increased to \$10 million.

"We kept saying, 'We don't have that kind of money,'" Michel recalled. "Then it switched to, 'What kind of money do you have?'"

As the negotiations dragged on, her father's health began declining. He didn't have his blood pressure medications, nor the pills for his prostate or the blood thinners he'd been taking ever since undergoing brain surgery in January. But the gang didn't relent.

"When they called, they would say very harsh, cruel (things): 'You don't want your husband anymore? We don't mind, we can kill him and you can pick him up from a pile of trash,'" Michel recalled.

The gang member never identified himself, but it was the same voice each time, with calls lasting no longer than two minutes.

During the ordeal, she subsisted on two boiled eggs and a few crackers a day. She and her mother each lost 8 pounds. At night, she took pills to help her sleep. During the day, she prayed.

Michel found out that her father and the two other hostages were given a single bowl of white rice each day and three small bags of water. They would ration what they had in case they didn't get anything the next day. The three were kept in a locked room with boarded-up windows, where they heard voices of other people they believed also had been abducted.

"My dad, because he fought in Vietnam and had a tough life and dealt with a lot of stuff, he had the mechanism to cope," she said. "But some days, he did crack."

Michel blamed the Haitian government for the spike in kidnappings and the overall rise in violence that has plunged the country into one of its most unstable periods in recent years.

"They created the gangs," she said. "Now they can't control the monster."

Experts say Haiti's gang phenomenon was created when former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide began arming people in slums in the early 2000s since he had an understaffed police department and no army. The private sector and political groups also are accused of arming gangs, according to a top international official who wasn't authorized to speak publicly about the topic.

Today, up to 40% of Port-au-Prince is under gang control, experts say, including the 400 Mawozo gang that police blame for the kidnapping of the missionaries on Saturday. That gang was born in a community east of the capital known as Canaan, which was established when people fled Port-au-Prince after a 2010 earthquake devastated the city.

Kidnapping is one way gangs make money, although abductions spike and wane depending on Haiti's political and economic situation and, at one time, the presence of U.N. peacekeepers.

Many worry the situation will worsen as Haiti prepares for presidential and legislative elections next year following the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

Michel called on the U.S. government to get involved, saying, "One of these days, there's going to be a tragedy that they will be partly responsible for, because they themselves dictate how this country operates. ... It's time for them to step in."

Haiti's National Police force is lean in resources, and officers find themselves overwhelmed by multiple, well-armed gangs who feed on poverty. More than 11 million people live in Haiti, and 60% of the population makes less than \$2 a day.

Michel said the gang member who called told her mother that he was educated and worked hard to get a degree but couldn't get a job so he got a gun. "That's how I make my money," he said.

Ransom demands can range from a couple of hundred dollars to several million dollars, according to authorities.

Michel said she dropped off the money at a specific location, only for the gang members to claim they didn't receive it. They demanded another payment.

She said the FBI did little to help and advised her to gather more money and restart negotiations. So Michel paid them again.

Haitian police did not get involved, she said, or bother to take a statement once the gang released her father by placing him on a motorcycle that took him to his family. He had been held captive for 11 days.

"Healthwise, he's fine, but psychologically, not so great," she said.

## Colin Powell had mixed legacy among some African Americans

By COREY WILLIAMS and AARON MORRISON Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — As an American leader, Colin Powell's credentials were impeccable: He was national security adviser, chairman of the Joint Chiefs and secretary of state. But his legacy as the first Black person in those roles is murkier, with some African Americans saying that his voice on their behalf could have been louder.

Powell, who died Monday of COVID-19 complications, spent 35 years in the Army and rose to political prominence under Republican presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. His stature fueled persistent speculation that he would one day run for president as a member of the GOP.

Through it all, Powell never seemed entirely comfortable talking about race, said Kevin Powell, a New York-based writer and rights activist who is not related to Colin Powell.

"I think that's why a lot of Black folks never saw him as a leader. There was never a sense that Colin Powell was one of us," said Kevin Powell, who met him in the 1990s, when he was often discussed as a potential presidential candidate.

When he did talk about race, his words were measured, as in a 1994 commencement speech at Howard University: "Racism is a disease that you can help cure by standing up for your rights, and by your commitment to excellence and to performance, by being ready to take advantage of your rights and the opportunities that will come from those rights."

In the years after George W. Bush left office, Powell "was largely invisible in a lot of things that happened — Trayvon Martin, Ferguson, George Floyd," said Kevin Powell, who also is Black. "It was clear that the party he was part of was moving right. I don't recall him ever saying this party has become nothing more than race mongers."

Powell eventually became disenchanted with the GOP and endorsed Democrats for president, starting with Barack Obama. He also called former President Donald Trump a national disgrace and said he no longer considered himself a Republican following the Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol.

Powell's dignity and composure should not be interpreted as any indication that he failed to understand the struggle of his people, according to Sam Riddle, an Army veteran and Detroit-based political activist.

"He personified a quiet inner strength that we knew he held on the battlefield for America and for Black Americans," said Riddle, who also hosts a Detroit talk radio show. "The bullhorns we can use can be simply quiet competency, integrity and perseverance."

Powell expressed concern over the U.S. rate of incarceration, which has consistently been the highest in the world. He favored policies designed to keep young adults, especially Black Americans, out of the criminal justice system.

Years before the 2020 murder of George Floyd renewed calls from the Black Lives Matter movement to "defund the police," Powell said he was not in favor of reducing law enforcement budgets to address police brutality. He suspected that many Black Americans agreed.

A June 2020 poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research around

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 67 of 79

the height of that summer's police protests showed that 43% of Black Americans strongly supported or somewhat supported reducing police funding, while 30% opposed the idea.

"You can't say, 'We should disinvest the criminal justice, police and courts,'" Powell said in a 2017 interview with the Mic news outlet. "They're there not just to protect white folks. They're there to protect Black folks as well."

He continued: "If you tell a Black community leader that the police are not going to be around, they may say, 'Whoa! Wait a minute!' What they want is fair and balanced justice treatment for all Americans."

A child of Jamaican immigrants who grew up in the Bronx borough of New York City, Powell said he was raised in a community where his neighbors were as invested in his safety and success as his own mother and father.

"I had adults who cared about me," Powell told Mic. "My two parents, all my Jamaican relatives in the South Bronx, they watched out for us kids. And if you ever did anything wrong, I mean, you were going to get it."

Powell graduated in 1958 from City College of New York, which later created the Colin Powell Center to develop student leadership and campus community engagement. The program was eventually renamed the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership.

In the wake of Floyd's slaying and the Black Lives Matter protests, the school launched a racial justice fellows program as a joint initiative between the Colin Powell School and CCNY's Black studies program.

Powell once said he wanted the next generation to have opportunities like he did, according to Andrew Rich, dean of the Colin Powell School.

Being a Black American "defined his experience," Rich said. "He was a trailblazer in every sense. I think he was very aware of the barriers he broke. One of the things he was so proud of was that he knocked open doors and did not close them behind him."

Former President Barack Obama said Monday that Powell helped "a generation of young people set their sights higher" and "never denied the role that race played in his own life and in our society more broadly."

"But he also refused to accept that race would limit his dreams, and through his steady and principled leadership, helped pave the way for so many who would follow," Obama said.

Obama recalled a time in 2008 when conspiracy theories swirled around his own faith and Powell addressed it head-on. He quoted Powell as saying: "The correct answer is, he is not a Muslim; he's a Christian. But the really right answer is, 'What if he is?' Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer's no, that's not America."

Many Black people look to high-achieving African Americans to act on their behalf, said Frederick Gooding, associate professor of humanities at Texas Christian University.

"Maybe they just disproportionately expect a Colin Powell to do more or be more than he needs to be. It might be one of those deals where he may not have spoken for every Black person, but at the same time it's OK that he does not," Gooding said.

Powell's career and his long record of public service show his excellence, Gooding added.

"When it comes to African Americans, often times, when you've been touched by the struggle so to speak, when you have a position of power and privilege, do you leverage it?" Gooding said. "He may not have been that front-line cheerleader, but that doesn't mean he wasn't affected by the struggle."

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Morrison reported from New York City. He and Williams are members of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow Morrison on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>. Follow Williams on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/coreyapreporter>.

## As Bitcoin goes mainstream, Wall Street looks to cash in

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Love cryptocurrencies or hate the very idea of them, they're becoming more mainstream by the day.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 68 of 79

Cryptocurrencies have surged so much that their total value has reached nearly \$2.5 trillion, rivaling the world's most valuable company, Apple, and have amassed more than 200 million users. At that size, it's simply too big for the financial establishment to ignore.

Firms that cater to the world's wealthiest families are increasingly putting some of their fortunes into crypto. Hedge funds are trading Bitcoin, which has big-name banks starting to offer them services around it. PayPal lets users buy crypto on its app, while Twitter helps people show appreciation for tweets by tipping their creators with Bitcoin.

And in the latest milestone for the industry, an easy-to-trade fund tied to Bitcoin began trading on Tuesday. Investors can buy the exchange-traded fund from ProShares through an old-school brokerage account, without having to learn what a hot or cold wallet is.

It's all part of a movement across big businesses that see a chance to profit on the fervor around the world of crypto, as a new ecosystem further builds up around it, whether they believe in it or not.

"The one thing you can say for certain is that the advent of the era of the Bitcoin ETF opens up the opportunity for Wall Street to make money on Bitcoin in a way that it hadn't been able to previously," said Ben Johnson, director of global ETF research at Morningstar. "The winners in all of this are the exchanges and the asset managers and the custodians. Whether investors win or not is a big, bold question mark."

Bitcoin has come a long way since someone or a group of someones under the name Satoshi Nakamoto wrote a paper in 2008 about how to harness computing power around the world to create a digital currency that can't be double-spent. The price has more than doubled this year alone to roughly \$62,000. It was at only \$635 five years ago.

Supporters of cryptocurrencies say they offer an ultra-important benefit for any investor: something whose price moves independently of the economy, rather than tracking it like so many other investments do. More high-minded fans say digital assets are simply the future of finance, allowing transactions to sidestep middlemen and fees with a currency that's not beholden to any government.

Critics, meanwhile, question whether crypto is just a fad, say it uses too much energy and point to all the stiff regulatory scrutiny shining on it. China last month declared Bitcoin transactions illegal, for example. The chair of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Gary Gensler, said in August that the world of crypto doesn't have enough investor protection and "it's more like the Wild West."

That hasn't been enough to halt the immense momentum for crypto, as it's gone from an online curiosity to a bigger part of the cultural and corporate landscape.

U.S. Bank earlier this month said it has begun offering a cryptocurrency custody service for big investment managers. That means it essentially holds their Bitcoin in safekeeping for them, and it expects to offer support for other coins soon.

Other name-brand banks have also announced intentions to offer custodial services for crypto.

"It's not just in the fringes and dark corners of the Web that it's happening," said Kashif Ahmed, president of American Private Wealth in Bedford, Massachusetts.

Ahmed doesn't recommend his clients invest in crypto. Before then, he said he'll need to be able to "go to my local supermarket and buy things for my family and offer crypto and not be laughed out of the store."

But others are more willing to try it.

In a survey by Citi Private Bank of family offices around the world that manage money for wealthy people, roughly 23% said they have made some investments in crypto. Another 25% said they are researching it.

The growing acceptance of crypto on Wall Street has created a new crop of darlings that help people buy it. Crypto trading platform Coinbase has a market value of roughly \$64 billion, for example, putting it on par with such established companies as Colgate-Palmolive, FedEx and Ford Motor.

At Robinhood Markets, meanwhile, the company that became famous for getting a new generation of investors into the stock market is increasingly becoming a place for crypto trading. This spring was the first time when new Robinhood customers were more likely to make their first trade in cryptocurrencies rather than in stocks.

In the end, what many on Wall Street see lasting may not be as much Bitcoin and other cryptocurren-

cies as the technology that underlies them.

Called the blockchain, it allows for a public ledger that everyone can check and trust, and many expect it to lead to a wealth of innovations. It's akin to today's Netflix, Facebook and other services that sprung out of the infrastructure built during the boom and bust of the dot-com bubble.

"The applications built on this new software architecture appear to be growing more quickly than past technologies," Bank of America strategists Alkesh Shah and Andrew Moss wrote in a recent research report positing digital assets are only in their first inning of growth. "New companies are likely to emerge and poorly positioned companies will exit, creating significant upside potential for some and downside for others."

JPMorgan Chase, for example, is already using blockchain technology to improve fund transfers between global banks. That's the same JPMorgan Chase run by CEO Jamie Dimon, who said in an interview with Axios this month that bitcoin has "got no intrinsic value."

## US expected to authorize mix-and-match COVID booster shots

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal regulators are expected to authorize the mixing and matching of COVID-19 booster doses this week in an effort to provide flexibility as the campaign for extra shots expands.

The upcoming announcement by the Food and Drug Administration is likely to come along with authorization for boosters of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson shots and follows the OK for a third dose for the Pfizer vaccine for many Americans last month. The move was previewed Tuesday by a U.S. health official familiar with the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly ahead of the announcement.

The FDA was expected to say that using the same brand for a booster was still preferable, especially for the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna that have proved most effective against the coronavirus. The agency was still finalizing guidance for the single-shot J&J vaccine.

Preliminary results from a government study of different booster combinations found an extra dose of any type revs up levels of virus-fighting antibodies regardless of the brand people first received. But recipients of the single-dose J&J vaccination had the most dramatic response -- a 76-fold and 35-fold jump in antibody levels, respectively, shortly after either a Moderna or Pfizer booster, compared to a four-fold rise after a second J&J shot.

One confusing decision is what Moderna dose to recommend in combination with other brands. Moderna has applied for its booster to be half the original dose, saying that's plenty for people who already received two full-strength shots. But the mix-and-match study used full-strength extra doses, and there's no way to know if a half-dose Moderna booster would trigger as strong a reaction in J&J recipients.

Allowing mixing and matching could make the task of getting a booster simpler for Americans and allow people who may have had adverse reactions to the initial dose to try a different shot.

Last week, the U.S. said it would recognize combinations of vaccines administered overseas for the purposes of entering the country. The practice was common in Canada and some European countries in the early months of the vaccination campaign..

AP Medical Writer Lauran Neergaard contributed.

## Energy crunch hits global recovery as winter approaches

By DAVID McHUGH, COLLEEN BARRY, JOE McDONALD and TATIANA POLLASTRI Associated Press

Power shortages are turning out streetlights and shutting down factories in China. The poor in Brazil are choosing between paying for food or electricity. German corn and wheat farmers can't find fertilizer, made using natural gas. And fears are rising that Europe will have to ration electricity if it's a cold winter.

The world is gripped by an energy crunch — a fierce squeeze on some of the key markets for natural gas, oil and other fuels that keep the global economy running and the lights and heat on in homes. Heading into winter, that has meant higher utility bills, more expensive products and growing concern about how

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 70 of 79

energy-consuming Europe and China will recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rising energy costs are another pressure point on businesses and consumers already feeling the pinch of higher prices from supply chain and labor constraints.

The biggest squeeze is on natural gas in Europe, which imports 90% of its supply — largely from Russia — and where prices have risen to five times what they were at the start of the year, to 95 euros from about 19 euros per megawatt hour.

It's hitting the Italian food chain hard, with methane prices expected to increase sixfold and push up the cost of drying grains. That could eventually raise the price of bread and pasta at supermarkets, but meat and dairy aisles are more vulnerable as beef and dairy farmers are forced to pay more for grain to feed their animals and pass the cost along to customers.

"From October we are starting to suffer a lot," said Valentino Miotto of the AIRES association that represents the grain sector.

Analysts blame a confluence of events for the gas crunch: Demand rose sharply as the economy rebounded from the pandemic. A cold winter depleted reserves, then the summer was less windy than usual, so wind turbines didn't generate as much energy as expected. Europe's chief supplier, Russia's Gazprom, held back extra summer supplies beyond its long-term contracts to fill reserves at home for winter. China's electricity demand has come roaring back, vacuuming up limited supplies of liquid natural gas, which moves by ship, not pipeline. There also are limited facilities to export natural gas from the United States.

Costlier natural gas has even pushed up oil prices because some power generators in Asia can switch from using gas to oil-based products. U.S. crude is over \$83 per barrel, the highest in seven years, while international benchmark Brent is around \$85, with oil cartel OPEC and allied countries cautious about restoring production cuts made during the pandemic.

The crunch is likely short term but it's difficult to say how long higher fossil fuel prices will last, said Claudia Kemfert, an energy economics expert at the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin.

But "the long-term answer that has to be taken out of this is to invest in renewables and energy saving," she said.

The European Union's executive commission urged member nations last week to speed up approvals for renewable energy projects like wind and solar, saying the "clean energy transition is the best insurance against price shocks in the future and needs to be accelerated."

In the meantime, some gas-dependent European industries are throttling back production. German chemical companies BASF and SKW Piesteritz have cut output of ammonia, a key ingredient in fertilizer.

That left Hermann Greif, a farmer in the village of Pinzberg in Germany's southern Bavaria region, unexpectedly emptyhanded when he tried to order fertilizer for next year.

"There's no product, no price, not even a contract," he said. "It's a situation we've never seen before." One thing is certain: "If I don't give the crops the food they need, they react with lower yields. It's as simple as that."

High energy prices already were hitting the region's farmers, who need diesel to operate machinery and heat to keep animals warm, said Greif, who grows corn to feed a bioenergy power facility that feeds emission-free energy into the power grid.

Likewise in Italy, the cost of energy to process wheat and corn is expected to go up more than 600% for the three months ending Dec. 31, according to the grain association. That includes turning wheat into flour, and corn into feed for cows and pigs.

Giampietro Scusato, an energy consultant who negotiates contracts for the AIRES association and others, expects the volatility and high prices to persist for the coming year.

High energy prices also seep into bread and pasta production through transport costs and electricity use, which could eventually affect store prices. Dairy and meat sections are especially exposed because prices are low now and farmers may be forced to pass along the higher cost of animal feed to shoppers.

People worldwide also are facing higher utility bills this winter, including in the U.S., where officials have warned home heating prices could jump as much as 54%. Governments in Spain, France, Italy and Greece

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 71 of 79

have announced measures to help low-income households, while the European Union has urged similar aid. Much depends on the weather. Europe's gas reserves, usually replenished in summer, are at unusually low levels.

"A cold winter in both Europe and Asia would risk European storage levels dropping to zero," says Massimo Di Odoardo at research firm Wood Mackenzie.

That would leave Europe dependent on additional natural gas from a just-completed Russian pipeline or on Russian willingness to send more through pipelines across Ukraine. But the new Nord Stream 2 pipeline has not passed regulatory approval in Europe and may not be contributing gas until next year.

Russian suppliers' decision to sell less gas on spot markets reflects "an intention to put pressure on the early certification of Nord Stream 2," said Kemfert, the energy economics expert.

In China, outages have followed high prices for coal and gas as electric companies power down amid limits in passing costs to customers or government orders to stay under emission thresholds.

Factories in Jiangsu province, northwest of Shanghai, and Zhejiang in the southeast shut down in mid-September, and dozens warned deliveries might be delayed ahead of the Christmas shopping season.

Chenchen Jewelry Factory in Dongyang, a city in Zhejiang, faced power cuts over 10 days, general manager Joanna Lan said. The factory makes hairbands, stationery and promotional gifts and exports 80% to 90% of its goods to the U.S., Europe and other markets.

Deliveries were delayed "by at least a week," Lan said. "We had to buy generators."

The biggest city in the northeast, Shenyang, shut down streetlights and elevators and cut power to restaurants and shops a few hours a day.

China's gas imports have jumped, but surging demand in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan also helped push up global prices, said Jenny Yang, research manager for the gas, power and energy futures team for China at IHS Markit.

In Brazil, higher gas and oil prices have been compounded by the worst drought in 91 years, which has left hydropower plants unable to supply electricity and more expensive bills.

Rosa Benta, a 67-year-old from a Sao Paulo working-class neighborhood, fears she will no longer be able to provide for her unemployed children and grandkids.

"Several times, (energy company) Enel called me saying I had debt. I told them: 'I'm not going to stop feeding my son to pay you,'" Benta said outside her concrete house on a steep, narrow street. "If they want to cut the electricity, they can come."

Benta lives on 1,400 reais (about \$250) a month and says she often has to choose between buying gas for cooking or rice and beans.

"I don't know what we are going to do with our lives," she said.

McHugh reported from Frankfurt, Germany, Barry from Milan, McDonald from Beijing and Pollastri from Sao Paulo.

## District attorneys refuse to prosecute some GOP-led laws

By JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — When Republican lawmakers in Tennessee blocked a policy to ease up on low-level marijuana cases, Nashville's top prosecutor decided on a workaround: He just didn't charge anyone with the crime.

Meanwhile, in Georgia, the Gwinnett County solicitor vowed not to punish anyone for the crime of distributing food or water to voters in line. Tampa's chief prosecutor says a law that allows law enforcement to detain protesters until their court date is "an assault on our democracy." And a district attorney in Douglas County, Kansas, promised not to enforce a new state law that makes it harder for nonpartisan groups and neighbors and candidates to collect and return absentee ballots for voters.

Progressive prosecutors around the country are increasingly declaring they just won't enforce some GOP-backed state laws, a strategy at work in response to some of the most controversial new changes in

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 72 of 79

recent years — near-total abortion bans, voting restrictions, limits on certain protest activity, laws aimed at LGBTQ people, and restrictions on mask requirements.

The elected law enforcement leaders say they're just doing what is right as support has grown for changing a system they believe has relied too heavily on locking people up, particularly for low-level, nonviolent offenses.

But politics is also at play here. These lawyers live in deep blue districts where their decisions are popular with voters, and they have to be reelected.

"The real limit on this is political," said William & Mary Law School professor Jeffrey Bellin. "These prosecutors have to stand for election almost everywhere in the country. Ultimately, the limit on this is popularity."

Prosecutors wield wide discretion over whom to charge with crimes, and they can hold off based on factors that include the strength of an individual case, the severity of the offense and, sometimes, the prosecutor's views on a law's constitutionality.

Last October, more than 70 prosecutors from blue districts around the country publicized that they won't bring charges under increasingly stringent laws that states have passed against abortion because they "should not and will not criminalize healthcare decisions," even if the landmark abortion rights case *Roe v. Wade* is eroded or overturned.

And in June, more than 70 elected prosecutors and law enforcement leaders signed a similar letter pledging not to charge doctors or parents who could face criminal penalties under state laws barring certain medical treatments for transgender youth.

"We know that our country has seen a past where some have sought to criminalize interracial marriage or individuals of different race who choose to sit at a lunch counter together, or ride a bus together, or use certain bathrooms and certain drinking fountains," said Miriam Krinsky, executive director of Fair and Just Prosecution, which published the statements. "Change often starts at the ground and moves its way on up."

In Nashville, Glenn Funk has made a habit of resisting GOP-passed laws, saying people in his city "really want a common sense approach to the criminal justice system that keeps us safe and does not incarcerate folks without good reason." The Democrat's stand comes as his 2022 Nashville reelection bid is approaching, in which he expects a challenge for another eight-year term.

Funk rebuffed Republican Gov. Bill Lee this summer, saying he would not prosecute teachers and school officials enforcing mask mandates in defiance of an executive order that let parents opt their students out of mask mandates.

Funk said he "will not prosecute school officials or teachers for keeping children safe."

He also refused to enforce a 2020 law requiring medical professionals to inform women undergoing medication-induced abortions that the procedure could be reversed, which medical experts say is not backed by science. He deemed the law "unconstitutional" and said "criminal law must not be used by the State to exercise control over a woman's body."

Tennessee passed a first-of-its-kind law this year that required a notice outside public bathrooms at businesses that effectively says transgender people could be inside. Funk made it known that he wouldn't be enforcing that, either, saying his office "will not promote hate."

Judges paused the policies about bathroom signs and abortion reversals statewide and blocked the school mask opt-outs in three big counties.

Funk said prosecutors need to use the "levers of power" to provide "a check and balance on overreaching" by other branches of government.

"It's also incumbent, I think, upon public officials who disagree to stand up and say so," Funk told The Associated Press. "Because if people who are elected officials just stay quiet in the face of unconstitutional laws being passed, in the face of a social debate that might actually be dehumanizing large sections of our population, then if nobody speaks up, then the impression is that there is a not another side to this argument, and that there really is no argument."

A Vermont state's attorney isn't prosecuting possession of addiction therapy drugs, including buprenorphine. Seattle's county prosecutor stopped filing charges for small personal drug possession, and a pros-



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 73 of 79

ecutor in Washtenaw County, Michigan, and multiple prosecutors in New York City have stopped charging prostitution crimes as long as it's consensual. In Philadelphia, before federal courts blocked the opening of overdose prevention sites, the district attorney said he would not charge people who open and run them.

In Florida, 13th Judicial Circuit State Attorney Andrew Warren, covering the Tampa area, called one new state law "an assault on our democracy." It stiffens penalties for crimes committed during a riot or violent protest and was passed after protests in the wake of George Floyd's death. It's on hold by a federal judge.

But prosecutorial discretion can cut both ways — especially on COVID-19 mandates. In Pennsylvania, York County District Attorney Dave Sunday, a Republican, told police not to issue criminal citations related to Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf's statewide schools masking order, saying his office would not prosecute violations.

Elsewhere in Tennessee, conservative district attorney Craig Northcott in Coffee County, about 65 miles southeast Nashville, has said gay people shouldn't receive domestic violence protections, arguing that such laws are designed to protect the "sanctity of marriage."

Republican lawmakers have aired plenty of grievances about Funk, though so far their efforts to rein him in have been unsuccessful. Rep. John Ragan, who sponsored the business bathroom signage law, asked the state attorney general for an opinion on whether Funk's refusal to enforce the business bathroom law was grounds to remove him from office. Republican Attorney General Herbert Slatery's office declined to weigh in, citing ongoing lawsuits on the law.

And the governor has maligned him on social media: "A district attorney purposefully disregarding current, duly enacted laws by the legislature is a grave matter that threatens our justice system and has serious consequences," he tweeted.

Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

## Grammys release inclusion requirement to ensure diverse show

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Grammys will stick to its word with the public release of the full inclusion rider to ensure equity and inclusion in hiring on all levels of production for next year's ceremony.

The Recording Academy released on Tuesday an eight-page document detailing the rider's purposes and objectives. The agreement requires producers to recruit and hire more diverse candidates backstage and in front of the camera for the 64th annual awards ceremony on Jan. 31.

Academy CEO Harvey Mason jr. said he's proud of the initiative and hopes the concept can "move the needle." The academy announced the adoption of the inclusion rider in August.

"The inclusion rider is something that will provide an opportunity for people that may not have had one before," he said in a recent interview. "That's really important to me. I wouldn't be here if someone didn't give me an opportunity. I'm trying to make pathways and make sure there's areas for people to work into a system and climb their way through."

The rider requires Grammy producers to audition, interview and hire onstage and offstage people from groups that have been historically and systematically excluded from the industry. Riders are addendums to contracts.

The academy's initiative was created in partnership with several groups including the Color of Change; inclusion rider co-authors Kalpana Kotagal and Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni; Ryan Butler, the founding director of Warner Music/Blavatnik Center for Music Business at Howard University; and Valeisha Butterfield Jones, co-president of the Recording Academy.

Kotagal, a civil rights attorney, said the rider includes four key elements that will drive improvement for representation and equity. She said there's a commitment to diversifying hiring pools, benchmarks and targets for hiring, collection and analysis of applicant and hiring data and strict accountability measures.

"By committing to use the inclusion rider for its 2022 production, the Grammy Awards is not only ensuring a more equitable and diverse hiring process, it is also setting an important standard for inclusivity and

representation at award shows moving forward," she said in a statement.

Mason echoed Kotagal's sentiments of holding people accountable and being committed to put in the "real work" to help create a pipeline for diverse talent. He wants to function under the idea of making sure the academy is "inclusive, diverse and equitable."

The term "inclusion rider" was brought into the spotlight in 2018 when Frances McDormand mentioned it during her best actress Oscar acceptance speech. Michael B. Jordan, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Paul Feig and Warner Bros. followed suit by pledging to use inclusion riders in their production projects.

"You're not going to find an organization that cares more about diversity and changing and heading in that direction than us," Mason said. "We are dedicated to that work. I hope we can kind of be a leader in that space and make sure we're doing it in a way that people look and say 'Oh, the academy got that right.'"

## Back to gravity: Russians talk about world's 1st space movie

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian actor and a film director who spent 12 days in orbit making the world's first movie in space said Tuesday they were so thrilled with their experience on the International Space Station that they felt sorry to leave.

Actor Yulia Peresild and director Klim Shipenko flew to the International Space Station in a Russian Soyuz spacecraft together with cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov. After a stint on the station, they returned to Earth on Sunday with another veteran Russian cosmonaut, Oleg Novitskiy.

Peresild and Klimenko filmed segments of a movie titled "Challenge," in which a surgeon played by Peresild rushes to the space station to save a crew member who needs an urgent operation in orbit. Novitskiy, who flew the film crew home, stars as the ailing cosmonaut in the movie.

Speaking to reporters via video link Tuesday, 37-year-old Peresild lamented that a busy filming schedule left little chance to enjoy the views.

"We realized only a day before the departure that we didn't spend enough time looking in the windows," she said. "I had a mixed feeling. On the one hand, it felt like an eternity but on the other hand it felt like we just arrived and immediately need to return."

Peresild and Shipenko said they were feeling fine but still were having some trouble adapting to the pull of gravity.

"We have to learn again how to walk," Peresild said, adding that she still instinctively tries to attach various items with Velcro to prevent them from floating away.

She said she slept very well in orbit and four hours of sleep were enough to have a good rest.

Shipenko, 38, who has made several commercially successful movies, said he filmed over 30 hours of movie material on board the space station.

"Of course, it posed both artistic and technical challenges," he said.

Shipenko, who will continue the shooting on Earth after filming the movie's space episodes, said the film's release date would be announced next year.

Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Russian state space corporation Roscosmos, was a key force behind the movie project, describing it as a chance to burnish the nation's space glory and rejecting criticism from some Russian media over the efforts spent on it.

Before Russia took the lead in feature filmmaking in space, NASA had talked to actor Tom Cruise about making a movie in orbit.

NASA confirmed last year that it was in talks with Cruise about filming on the International Space Station with SpaceX providing the lift. In May 2020, it was reported that Cruise was developing the project alongside director Doug Liman, Elon Musk and NASA.

## Colin Powell: A trailblazing legacy, blotted by Iraq war

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A child of working-class Jamaican immigrants in the Bronx, Colin Powell rose from

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 75 of 79

neighborhood store clerk to warehouse floor-mopper to the highest echelons of the U.S. government. It was a trailblazing American dream journey that won him international acclaim and trust.

It was that credibility he put on the line in 2003 when, appearing before the United Nations as secretary of state, he made the case for war against Iraq. When it turned out that the intelligence he cited was faulty and the Iraq War became a bloody, chaotic nightmare, Powell's stellar reputation was damaged.

Still, it wasn't destroyed. After leaving government, he became an elder statesman on the global stage and the founder of an organization aimed at helping young disadvantaged Americans. Republicans wanted him to run for president. After becoming disillusioned with his party, he ended up endorsing the last three Democratic presidential candidates, who welcomed his support.

For many Iraqis and others, Powell will forever be associated with that 2003 speech and the bloodshed that followed. But with Powell's death Monday at age 84 of COVID-19 complications, Republicans and Democrats remembered him as a historic figure, a groundbreaking soldier-turned-statesman, the first Black secretary of state and first Black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Powell rejected comparisons between himself and previous icons like George Marshall, the World War II general who became America's top diplomat. But he embraced a local-kid-does-good narrative that reflected his humble roots.

He was fond of recalling his youth in the Bronx, working first as a clerk in a neighborhood store and then as a sweeper in the massive Pepsi-Cola plant directly across the East River from the United Nations headquarters, a job he frequently referred to in meetings at the United Nations. A geology student at City College of New York, Powell made clear that he found his calling in the Reserve Officer Training Corps or ROTC, which would initiate his 35-year career in the Army.

Powell served two tours in Vietnam and rose through the ranks with various stints in Cold War-era Europe before President Ronald Reagan tapped him as his national security adviser. President George H.W. Bush then appointed him chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where he oversaw the ouster of Saddam Hussein's Iraq from Kuwait in 1991.

It was then that the "Powell Doctrine" emerged; it was a strategy for the use of American military power that relied on the deployment of overwhelming force and a clear and defined exit strategy from conflict.

Powell held the Joint Chiefs of Staff position into the Clinton administration, where he recalled arguments with Cabinet members over military intervention in the Balkans, which Powell believed was unwise.

"I thought I would have an aneurysm," Powell wrote in a memoir about a White House incident in which then-U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright asked what good the armed forces are if they were never used. Powell ended up succeeding Albright as secretary of state in 2001.

And while his military career had taken him from the minefields of Vietnam to West Germany's strategic Fulda Gap, it was his role as secretary of state in wartime that almost did him in.

Powell was the first of President George W. Bush's Cabinet members to publicly blame Osama bin Laden for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the first of Bush's top national security aides to visit Pakistan, just a month later, to make clear to the Pakistanis that they must join the U.S.-led coalition or be labelled an enemy.

Amid significant security concerns in the aftermath of 9/11, Powell flew to Islamabad, his plane blacked-out as it went into a corkscrew landing to avoid potential rocket strikes, to tell then-Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf that his support in the operation to avenge the attacks was non-negotiable. It worked, at least in the short-term.

Powell was personally skeptical of the 2003 Iraq invasion and cautioned against the war privately. But he dutifully presented the administration's case for invasion not only in diplomatic meetings with his counterparts but also in the now-infamous speech before the U.N. Security Council in February 2003.

Confronted with widespread doubts about the accuracy of the American and British assessment of Saddam's capabilities and intentions, many compared the stakes of Powell's speech to be similar to those of former United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson's electrifying 1962 presentation to the council about the Soviet Union's placement of missiles in Cuba.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 76 of 79

In Powell's speech — which he would later call a "blot" on his record — he brandished a vial that he said could have contained anthrax that intelligence agencies insisted Saddam was producing in mass quantities. "Less than a teaspoon of dry anthrax, a little bit — about this amount," he told the council, waving the vial. "This is just about the amount of a teaspoon. Less than a teaspoonful of dry anthrax in an envelope shut down the United States Senate in the fall of 2001."

Some, including several critics of the Bush administration, believed Powell had hit the mark, but unlike Stevenson 41 years earlier, whatever convincing he accomplished was quickly erased.

No anthrax or, in fact, any weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq after the end of the war, which led to a protracted U.S. military occupation of the country that many believe resulted in a broader destabilization of the Middle East, including the rise of the Islamic State, that persists to this day.

While he will always be associated with the Iraq War, Powell was not an unaccomplished diplomat. He oversaw the resolution of the Bush administration's first foreign policy crisis, China's force down of a Navy spy plane and the detention of its crew, and self-deprecatingly referred to successes in resolving a spat with Moscow over a Russian ban on U.S. chicken imports and an armed dispute between Morocco and Spain over a small Mediterranean island.

Powell was also critical in engineering an end to a standoff between Israel then Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who had been blockaded in his Ramallah headquarters by Israeli troops during the second "intifada" or Palestinian uprising. And he was the first senior U.S. official to visit Afghanistan after the Taliban were ousted, flying into Kabul on a military plane in Jan. 2002, to meet with then-President Hamid Karzai.

Nonetheless, Powell's biggest legacy at the State Department may be bureaucratic rather than diplomatic. A natural tinkerer who loved to collect and repair old Volvos and was a fan of the then-new Chrysler PT Cruiser, Powell pushed to bring the department's antiquated computer and communications systems into the age of email and interoperability.

He fought budget battles to increase diplomatic spending and hiring and also led a successful drive to prevent the newly established Department of Homeland Security from entirely taking over the process of issuing visas, something that had been recommended in the wake of 9/11.

Unlike his predecessors and several successors as secretary of state, Powell was not enamored of foreign travel and spent less time overseas than almost any of America's top diplomats since the dawn of the jet age, an aversion perhaps exacerbated by his unsuccessful behind-the-scenes attempts in Washington to blunt his Bush administration colleagues' push for war with Iraq.

Personable and often approachable, Powell sought to assure his new employees that he would not be a burden on them in some of his first remarks to the diplomatic corps.

"I will be around to see you in due course," he told his first town hall meeting. "I am an easy visitor. We are going to try to make it very easy for me to visit. Just to save a lot of cable traffic, I have no food preferences, no drink preferences. A cheeseburger will be fine. I like Holiday Inns, I have no illusions."

## **EXPLAINER: How lawmakers are investigating the Jan. 6 riot**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House committee tasked with investigating the deadly Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol has been ramping up its efforts in recent weeks, issuing subpoenas to nearly 20 individuals, including four of former President Donald Trump's advisers and associates.

Lawmakers on the committee have made clear that they want to move quickly to obtain testimony and documents related to the attack. One witness summoned to testify, former Trump White House adviser Steve Bannon, is facing a criminal contempt referral after defying the panel's subpoena.

Here's a deeper look at the committee, its mission and how it operates:

### **WHY IS CONGRESS INVESTIGATING?**

Unlike some previous investigations in the Trump era — including the Russia probes and the impeachment inquiry into Trump's interactions with Ukraine — the central facts of the Jan. 6 insurrection are known. A

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 77 of 79

group of Trump supporters, fueled by his false claims of a stolen election, brutally assaulted police and smashed their way into the Capitol to interrupt the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

But there are still unanswered questions about the attack on the Capitol, and lawmakers say they are committed to presenting a full accounting to make sure it never happens again.

The committee is looking into every aspect of the riot, including what Trump himself was doing while it unfolded and any connections between the White House and the rioters who broke into the building.

The panel is also investigating how the protests leading up to and during the insurrection were financed, including the rally at the Ellipse on Jan. 6 preceding the riot.

"The biggest black box though is what was the president's role? What was the role of people in the White House? What did the president know about who was coming to this rally?" House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, who sits on the panel, said in an interview on C-SPAN. "And what did he do when he found out?"

The Democrat from California added, "There are a lot of important unanswered questions."

Trump's claims of widespread election fraud were soundly rejected by a succession of judges, by state election officials and by Trump's own attorney general, William Barr. No case has ever established irregularities of a scale that would have changed the outcome.

## A BROAD INQUIRY

Another goal for the committee is looking into why U.S. Capitol Police — as well as federal, state and local law enforcement agencies — were so ill-prepared for the rally-turned-insurrection and whether their response, after it began, was inadequate. The factors that contributed to the attack, including the role of technology companies and online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, is also under review.

Last week, committee members expanded the scope of their investigation when they subpoenaed Jeffrey Clark, a former Justice Department lawyer who positioned himself as an ally of Donald Trump. The demands for documents and testimony from Clark, who aided Trump's efforts to challenge the results of the 2020 election, reflect the committee's interest in the chaos that ensued in the Justice Department as Trump and his allies leaned on government lawyers to advance his false election claims.

The committee's probe plans on building upon findings of other investigations being conducted, including the large-scale prosecution by the U.S. Department of Justice of the more than 600 rioters from nearly every state. But, ultimately, the final report the committee will produce will be separate from the DOJ effort.

## WHAT POWERS DOES THE PANEL HAVE?

For now, the panel is conducting closed-door interviews rather than open hearings, trying to build a comprehensive picture of everything that happened that day and who was behind it.

But that's not always easy to do — especially with aides and confidants of the former president, who learned during his presidency that there were few consequences for rebuffing Congress.

The committee chair has the power to issue subpoenas, and they can also pursue contempt charges against subpoenaed witnesses who refuse to comply. On Tuesday, the committee will start that process with a vote to recommend criminal contempt charges against Bannon, who defied a subpoena last week.

The full House would then vote to send that recommendation to the Justice Department, which would then decide whether to prosecute. Biden has said he would like the Justice Department to prosecute, but Attorney General Merrick Garland has not indicated what he would do.

## WHAT'S AHEAD?

The Jan. 6 panel so far has issued 19 subpoenas as thousands of pages of documents are flowing to the committee and its staff.

Besides Bannon, lawmakers have said they are "engaging" with two other Trump officials — former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and former Defense Department official Kashyap Patel. It remains unclear whether Dan Scavino, Trump's longtime social media director and one of his most loyal aides, will cooperate.

Of the subpoenas issued, 13 were to officials who helped plan rallies in support of Trump ahead of the attack, including the massive event on the day of the siege at which the president told his supporters to

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 78 of 79

“fight like hell.”

Those individuals have been ordered to appear at separate depositions the committee has scheduled from late October through the beginning of November.

In addition, the committee is receiving support from the Biden administration as it seeks information and documents. Biden rejected Trump's claim of executive privilege surrounding documents requested from Trump's time in the White House. The setup of their potential release to Congress is expected in mid-November.

It is unclear at this point when the committee will wrap up its investigation and release a final report.

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Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show the committee is scheduled to vote Tuesday, not Wednesday.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 20, the 293rd day of 2021. There are 72 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 20, 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee opened hearings into alleged Communist influence and infiltration in the U.S. motion picture industry.

On this date:

In 1714, the coronation of Britain's King George I took place in Westminster Abbey.

In 1803, the U.S. Senate ratified the Louisiana Purchase.

In 1936, Helen Keller's teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy, died in Forest Hills, N.Y., at age 70.

In 1967, a jury in Meridian, Mississippi, convicted seven men of violating the civil rights of slain civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner; the seven received prison terms ranging from 3 to 10 years.

In 1968, former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis.

In 1973, in the so-called "Saturday Night Massacre," special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox was dismissed and Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William B. Ruckelshaus resigned.

In 1976, 78 people were killed when the Norwegian tanker Frosta rammed the commuter ferry George Prince on the Mississippi River near New Orleans.

In 1977, three members of the rock group Lynyrd Skynyrd, including lead singer Ronnie Van Zant, were killed along with three others in the crash of a chartered plane near McComb, Mississippi.

In 1987, 10 people were killed when an Air Force jet crashed into a Ramada Inn hotel near Indianapolis International Airport after the pilot, who was trying to make an emergency landing, ejected safely.

In 1990, three members of the rap group 2 Live Crew were acquitted by a jury in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., of violating obscenity laws with an adults-only concert in nearby Hollywood the previous June.

In 1994, actor Burt Lancaster died in Los Angeles at age 80.

In 2018, Saudi Arabia announced that U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi (jah-MAHL' khahr-SHOHK'jee) had been killed in Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul; there was immediate international skepticism over the Saudi account that Khashoggi had died during a "fistfight." (A U.S. intelligence report later concluded that Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman had likely approved Khashoggi's killing by a team of Saudi security and intelligence officials.)

Ten years ago: Moammar Gadhafi, 69, Libya's dictator for 42 years, was killed as revolutionary fighters overwhelmed his hometown of Sirte (SURT) and captured the last major bastion of resistance two months after his regime fell.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama defended his health care program, long a target of Republicans

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 105 ~ 79 of 79

and recently criticized by some Democrats, saying millions of Americans “now know the financial security of health insurance” because of the Affordable Care Act. The Los Angeles Sparks defeated the defending champion Minnesota Lynx for their first title in 14 years in Game 5 of the WNBA Finals.

One year ago: Two weeks before Election Day, President Donald Trump called on Attorney General William Barr to immediately launch an investigation into unverified claims about Democrat Joe Biden and his son Hunter, effectively demanding that the Justice Department abandon its historic resistance to getting involved in elections. More than 75,000 people in Wisconsin cast ballots on the first day of early in-person voting in the presidential battleground state. (More than 1 million Wisconsin voters had already returned ballots by mail.) The Los Angeles Dodgers beat the Tampa Bay Rays 8-3 in the opening game of a World Series played before just 11,388 fans at a neutral site in Arlington, Texas because of the coronavirus pandemic. James Randi, a magician who later challenged spoon benders, mind readers and faith healers with such voracity that he became regarded as the country’s foremost skeptic, died at 92.

Today’s Birthdays: Japan’s Empress Michiko is 87. Rockabilly singer Wanda Jackson is 84. Former actor Rev. Mother Dolores Hart is 83. Actor William “Rusty” Russ is 71. Actor Melanie Mayron is 69. Retired MLB All-Star Keith Hernandez is 68. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., is 66. Movie director Danny Boyle is 65. Former Labor Secretary Hilda Solis is 64. Actor Viggo Mortensen is 63. Vice President Kamala Harris is 57. Rock musician Jim Sonefeld (Hootie & The Blowfish) is 57. Rock musician Doug Eldridge (Oleander) is 54. Journalist Sunny Hostin (TV: “The View”) is 53. Political commentator and blogger Michelle Malkin is 51. Actor Kenneth Choi is 50. Rapper Snoop Dogg is 50. Singer Dannii Minogue is 50. Singer Jimi Westbrook (country group Little Big Town) is 50. Country musician Jeff Loberg is 45. Actor/comedian Dan Fogler is 45. Rock musician Jon Natchez (The War on Drugs) is 45. Actor Sam Witwer is 44. Actor John Krasinski is 42. Rock musician Daniel Tichenor (Cage the Elephant) is 42. Actor Katie Featherston is 39. Actor Jennifer Nicole Freeman is 36.