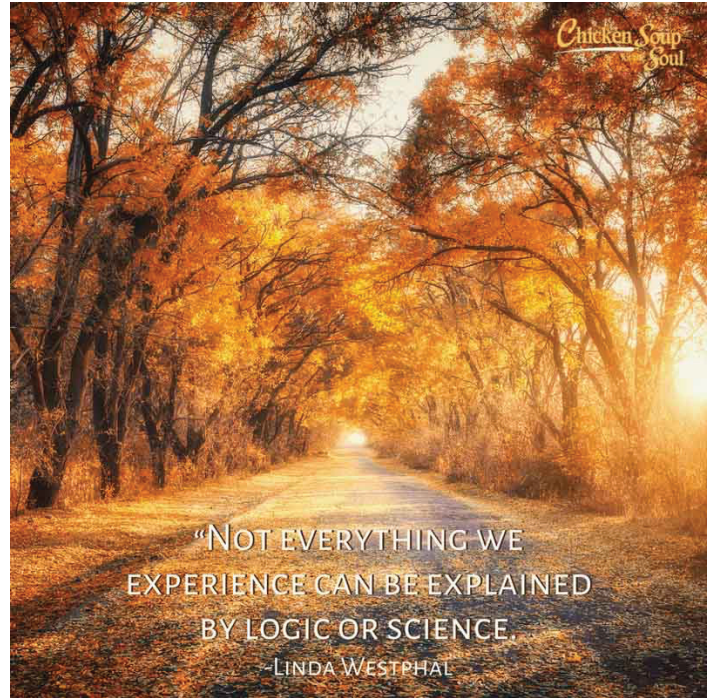


Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 1 of 88

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Netters lose close sets to Roncalli](#)
- [6- Thursday Sunset Colorful](#)
- [6- Groton Garden Club](#)
- [7- Wagner FB Game Photos](#)
- [8- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [9- Weather Pages](#)
- [12- Daily Devotional](#)
- [13- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [14- News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming Events

Saturday, Oct. 23

State Cross Country at Yankton Trail Park, Sioux Falls
NSU Invitational Oral Interp
ACT Testing at GHS, 8 a.m. to noon

Monday, Oct. 25

Oral Interp at Brookings Invitational
Volleyball hosts Deuel (C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity)

Tuesday, Oct. 26

ASVAB Testing at GHS, 8:30 a.m. to Noon
Volleyball at Redfield (JV at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity)

Thursday, Oct. 28

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center

Friday, Oct. 29

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center
Downtown Trick or Treat, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Methodist Church Trunk or Treat, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 30

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center
Pumpkinstakes Oral Interp at Watertown

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2021 Groton Daily Independent



Alyssa Thaler gets the ball. The Groton student section is featured in the background. (Photo

by Jeslyn Kosel)

Netters lose close sets to Roncalli

Groton Area's volleyball team played well against Roncalli as it took late surges to stop the Tigers in action played Friday in Aberdeen, 3-0.

In the first first set, Groton area had a 2-0 lead and the match was tied twice before the Cavaliers took the lead, 8-7. The Tigers struggled to get their footing in the first set and the Cavaliers went on to win, 25-16. Anna Fjeldheim, Sydney Leicht, Madeline Flihs, Aspen Johnson and Maddie Bjerke each had one kill in that set. Ella Hanson led the Cavaliers with six kills while Jeci Ewart had three kills, Ava Hanson two kills, Jaidyn Feickert had a kill and an ace serve and Hayley Schmidt had an ace serve.

The Tiger offensive got charged in the second set. The set was tied seven times with three lead changes early in the set before the Cavaliers got a slight upper hand. Groton Area came back to tie the set at 22 and 24 and Roncalli won the set, 26-24. Sydney Leicht had four kills, Madeline Flihs had two kills and a block, Aspen Johnson had a kill, two solo and one assisted block, Elizabeth Flihs had an assisted block and Anna Fjeldheim had a kill and an ace serve. Roncalli cooled down in its attack with Ava Hanson having two kills, Olivia Hanson an ace serve, Ella Hanson a block, Jeci Ewart a block and a kill, Jaidyn Feickert had two kills and Hayley Schmidt had two ace serves.

Roncalli jumped out to a 6-0 lead in the third set, but Groton battled back to tie the set at 15, 16 and 17 before taking a 19-17 lead. The Cavaliers tied the set at 19 and Groton held a 20-19 lead before Roncalli

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 3 of 88

scored the last six points for the 25-20 win.

Madeline Flihs had three kills and an ace serve in that set while Anna Fjeldheim and Sydney Liecht each had two kills, Alyssa Thaler had an ace serve, Maddie Bjerke a kill and Aspen Johnson had a kill and a block.

For the match, Elizabeth Flihs had 11 assists while Sydney Liecht had 15 digs followed by Trista Keith with 10 and Allyssa Locke had nine.

The match was broadcast live on GDLIVE.COM, sponsored by Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls, Bary Keith at Harr Motors and Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.

Roncalli won the junior varsity match, 25-20 and 25-17. Faith Traphagen had four kills, Hollie Fost had two kills and two blocks, Emma Schinkel had two kills, Laila Roberts had a kill and an ace serve, Carly Guthmiller two ace serves and Lydia Meier a kill.

The junior varsity match was also broadcast on GDILIVE.COM.

- Paul Kosel



Sydney Liecht and Trista Keith
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Aspen Johnson
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



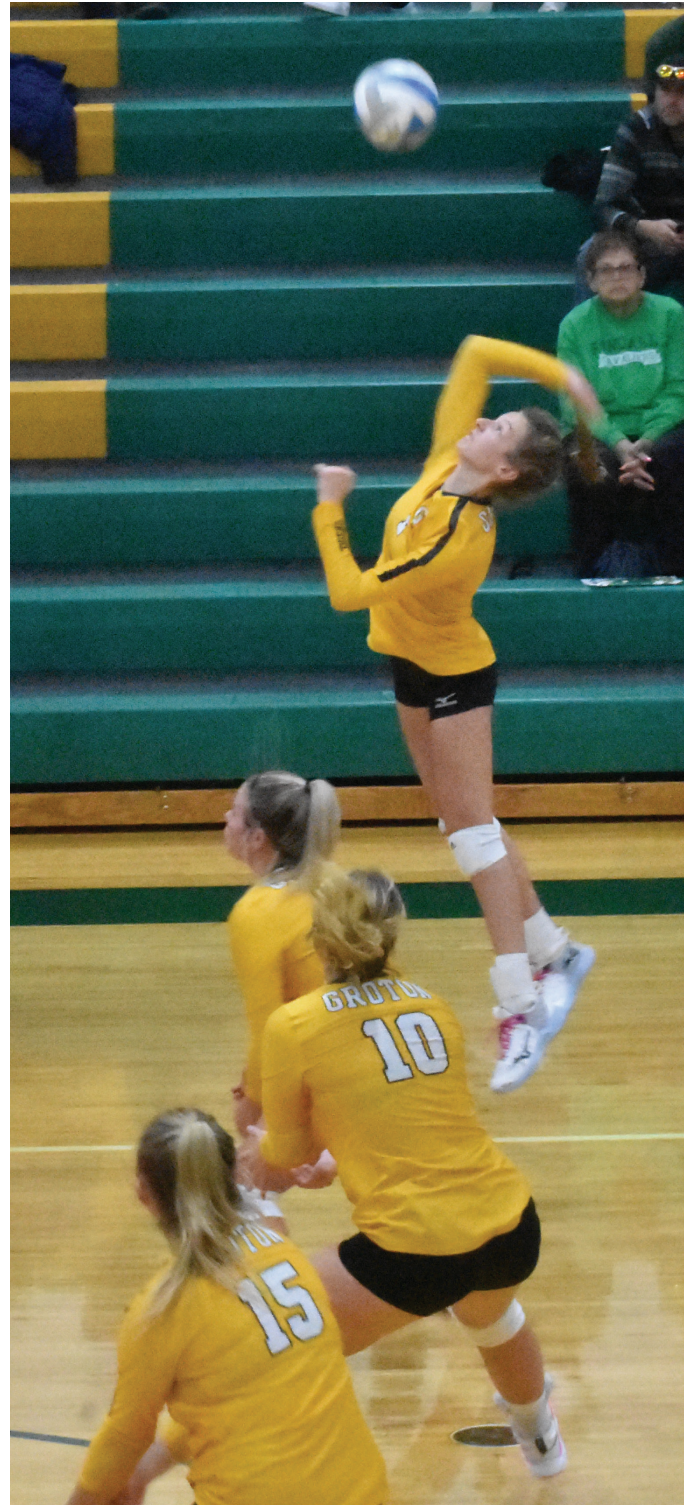
Elizabeth Flihs sets for Anna Fjeldheim.
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 4 of 88



Sydney Liecht
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Anna Fjeldheim gets ready to attack with Elizabeth Flihs, Madeline Flihs (10), and Maddie Bjerke (15). (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Allyssa Locke
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 5 of 88



Maddie Bjerke
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Madeline Flihs
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Elizabeth Flihs
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 6 of 88



It was another colorful sunset during the football game Thursday night in Groton. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Garden Club

The Groton Garden club met at the home of Laurie Mitchell on October 18. Co president Pam Rix opened the meeting with the pledge recited in unison. Twelve members answered roll call with a plant in their home when they were young. A portion of "the messenger" was read as it included information about the sign to be installed in the Groton Park. The final "yard of the week" was Jodi Bull. Ardella Theinssen sent several Thanksgiving cactus slips for anyone that wants one. Next meeting will be with Eunice McColister and Elda Stange at the Community center, November 15, at 6:30pm. Laurie Mitchell will have the program. Following the meeting Linda Gengerke gave the program "Of Roses and Rosavans, and Laurie served a delicious Pumpkin dessert.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 7 of 88



Andrew Marzahn had a big punt return in the Wagner game. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Favian Sanchez gains a few yards on this run. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Favian Sanchez gets excited as Ethan Gengerke made a catch near the endzone.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



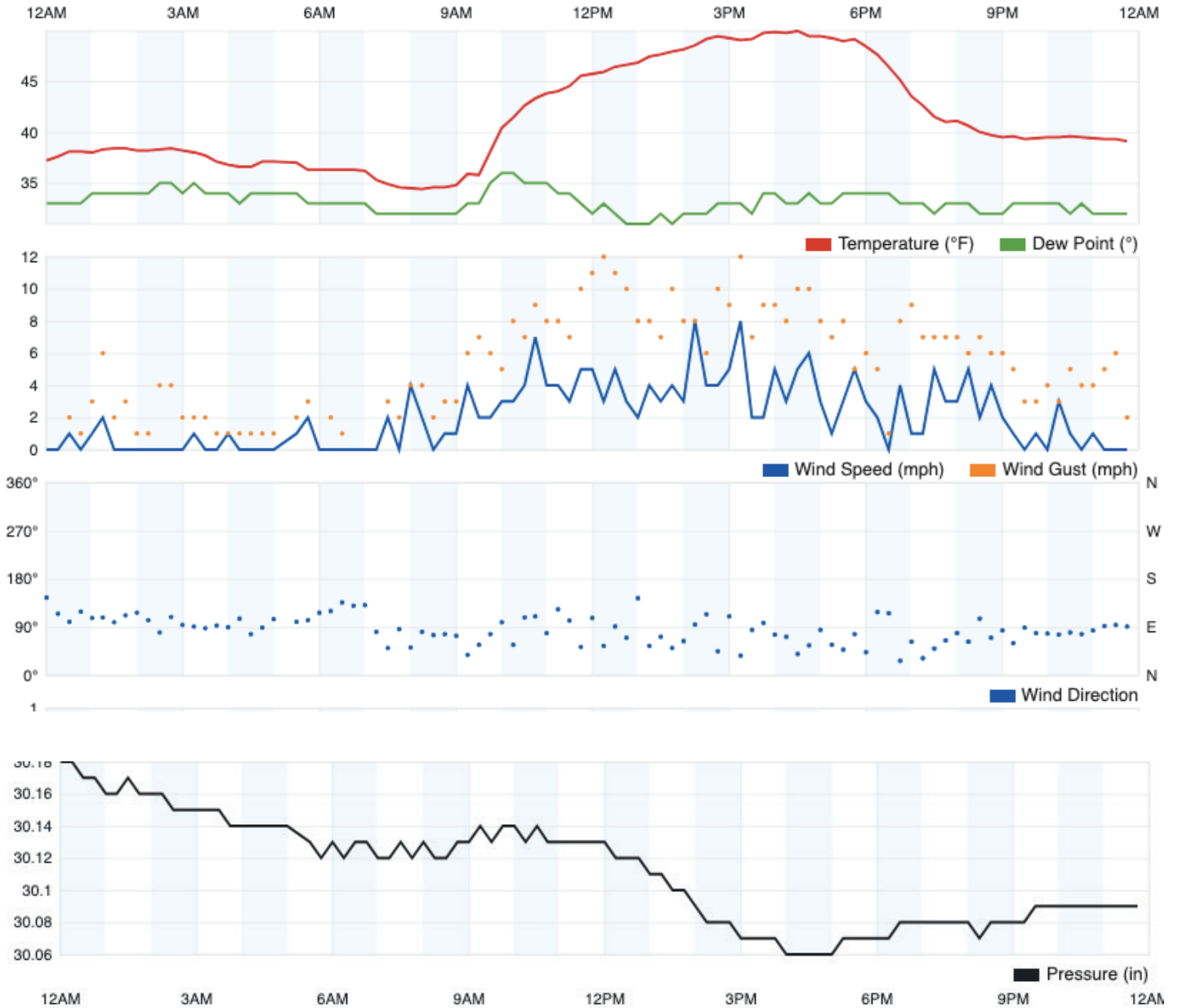
Kaden Kurtz gets ready to throw the ball.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 8 of 88

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 9 of 88

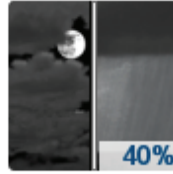
Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 51 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers

Low: 37 °F

Sunday



Showers
Likely

High: 43 °F

Sunday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 33 °F

Monday



Mostly Sunny
then Mostly
Sunny and
Breezy

High: 51 °F

The graphic is split into two vertical panels. The left panel features a photograph of a large tree with vibrant orange and yellow autumn leaves against a blue sky with light clouds. The right panel features a close-up photograph of a blue umbrella with a wooden handle, with a single water droplet falling from the tip. The background of the right panel is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Today
Breezy
Highs 45-55°F

Sunday
Cooler with Showers
Highs in the 40s

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 10/23/2021 5:25 AM Central

Today will feature dry conditions with breezy southeasterly winds. Highs today will range from the mid-40s to the mid-50s. A storm system will bring light showers and cooler temperatures on Sunday, with highs in the 40s.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 10 of 88

Today in Weather History

October 23, 1995: A major fall storm hit Central and Northeast South Dakota and dropped from four inches to one foot of wet snow. The heavy wet snow combined with high winds gusting up to 50 mph snapped several thousand power poles and downed hundreds of miles of line in the counties of Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Roberts and Grant. In Day and Lyman Counties, a few poles were downed with some short lived power outages. Marshall County had no reports of damage or power outages. Several thousand people were left without power for several hours up to several days. Power was not restored to some people until the fourth of November. Portions of Interstate 90 and Interstate 29 were closed from the evening of the 23rd until the morning of the 24th leaving hundreds of motorists stranded. There were also numerous school delays and closings. Many trees and some crops were also damaged as a result of the weight of the snow and high winds. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches near Reliance, at Doland, and near Victor, 5 inches southeast of Stephan and at Sisseton, 6 inches south of Ree Heights and at Eden, eight inches at Waubay and Grenville, 9 inches at Clear Lake, 10 inches at Watertown, and 12 inches at Summit and Milbank. This storm was the third damaging storm to the rural electric cooperatives this year and has been called the worst natural disaster in the history of the rural electrics. The total damage estimated for the rural state electrics was \$9.5 million.

1091: The earliest known tornado in Britain, possibly the most severe on record, hit central London. The church at St. Mary le Bow was severely damaged. Four rafters, each 26 feet long were driven into the ground with such force that only four feet protruded above the surface. Other churches in the area were also demolished along with over 600 houses.

1878: One of the most severe hurricanes to affect eastern Virginia in the latter half of the 19th century struck on October 23, 1878. This storm moved rapidly northward from the Bahamas on October 22nd and hit the North Carolina coast late that same day moving at a forward speed of 40 to 50 mph. The storm continued northward passing through east central Virginia, Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania. The barometric pressure fell to 28.78". The five minute sustained wind reached 84 mph at Cape Henry. During the heaviest part of the gale, the wind at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina registered 100 mph. The instrument itself has finally blown away and therefore no further record was made.

1920: Famed research meteorologist Theodore Fujita, was born on this date in Kitakyushu City, Japan. Fujita, known as "Mr. Tornado" after developing the international standard for measuring tornado severity, also discovered microbursts.

1947: Fish fell from the sky in Marksville, LA. Thousands of fish fell from the sky in an area 1,000 feet long by 80 feet wide possibly due to a waterspout.

2015: On this day, Hurricane Patricia became the most powerful tropical cyclone ever measured in the Western Hemisphere as its maximum sustained winds reached an unprecedented 200 mph (320 kph) and its central pressure fell to 879 millibars (25.96 inches of mercury). Hurricane Patricia became the strongest Pacific hurricane on record shortly after midnight CDT early on Oct. 23. Air Force Hurricane Hunters had flown through the eye of Patricia and reported a sea-level pressure of 894 millibars as measured by a dropsonde inside the eye itself. Wind measurements suggested that the pressure measurement was not in the exact center of the eye and was probably not the absolute lowest pressure, prompting NHC to estimate the minimum central pressure at 892 millibars in its special 12:30 a.m. CDT advisory. Tropical cyclone strength comparisons are typically based on minimum central pressure. At 892 millibars, Patricia shattered the Eastern Pacific basin's previous record of 902 millibars set by Hurricane Linda in 1997. While a number of typhoons in the western North Pacific have been stronger, Patricia is now by far the strongest hurricane on record in any basin where the term "hurricane" applies to tropical cyclones – namely, the central and eastern North Pacific basins and the North Atlantic basin, which includes the North Atlantic Ocean itself plus the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

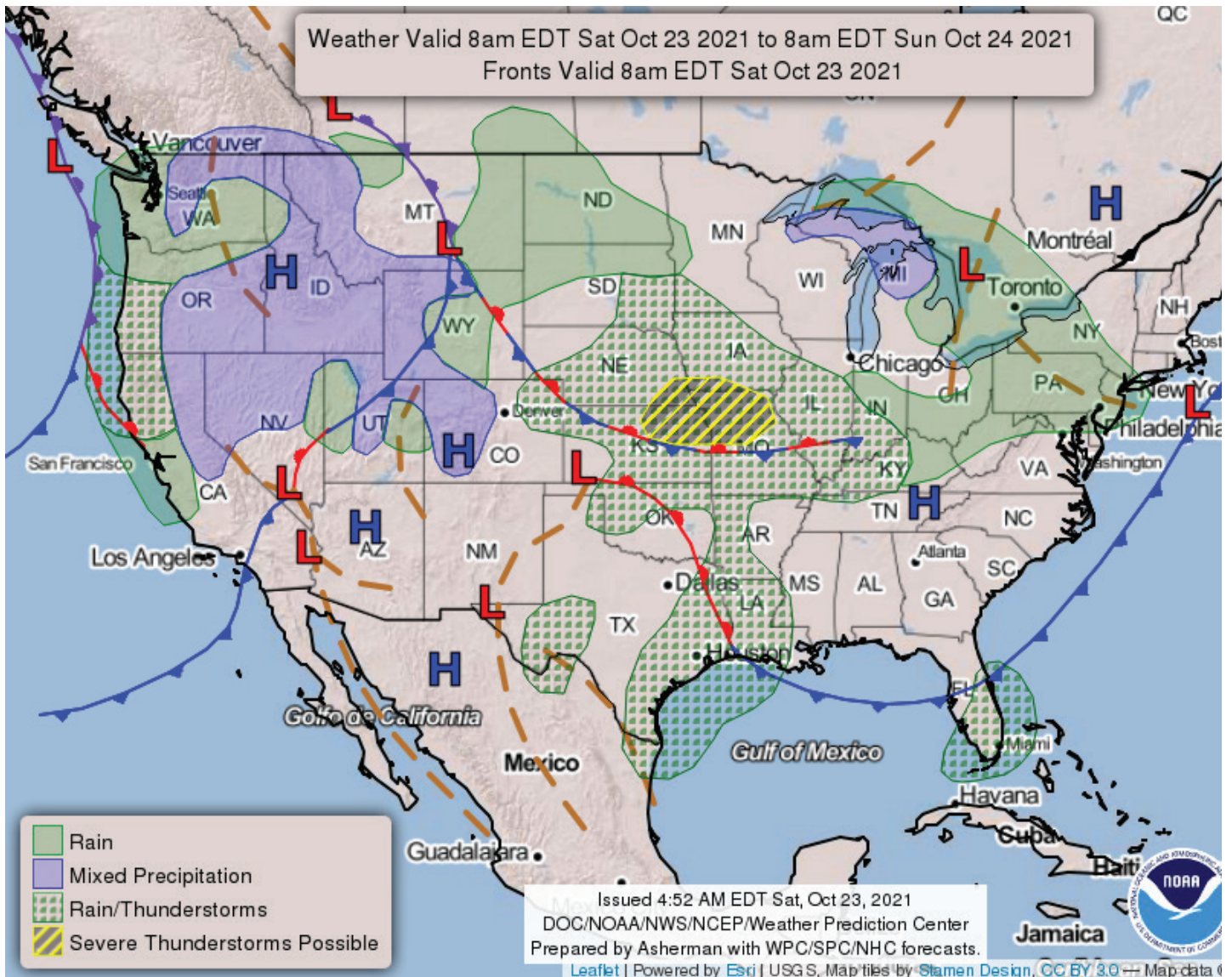
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 11 of 88

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 50 °F at 3:51 PM
Low Temp: 34 °F at 8:08 AM
Wind: 12 mph at 12:13 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 80° in 1963
Record Low: 5° in 1895
Average High: 55°F
Average Low: 30°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.71
Precip to date in Oct.: 2.81
Average Precip to date: 20.04
Precip Year to Date: 18.23
Sunset Tonight: 6:34:43 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:59:56 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 12 of 88



HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

While watching a large oceangoing cargo ship slip quietly into the Atlantic, I noticed a mark on the side of the ship. Having been in the Navy for several years, I was rather embarrassed to ask my friend what it meant.

"It's a Plimsoll Mark," he said with authority. It was not an answer that helped at all, so I asked, "What's a Plimsoll Mark?"

"It's a load-line on the ship that shows how much cargo the ship can carry safely under different conditions. For example, the closer the line is to the water, the more 'at-risk' the ship would be in a storm."

The Lord has a "load-line" marking on each of us. As we read in Psalm 103:14, "for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust." The Psalmist assures us that God knows our limitations - what we can safely and securely "carry."

None of us are immune to trials - nor are any of us excused from being tempted. All of us, in one way or another and at one time or another, face similar types of trials and temptations. None are new. None are different. They come at different times in different situations from different directions appealing to our different weaknesses.

As Paul wrote, "No temptation has seized you that is not common to others, And God is faithful! He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide you a way out."

He knows our "load-lines" and will not let us sink. However, we must be careful not to put ourselves at risk.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to realize that You created us, that You know us and that You will protect us if we allow You to. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust. Psalm 103:14

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 13 of 88

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

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 14 of 88

News from the Associated Press

North Dakota AG investigating failed photography company

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The North Dakota Attorney General's office has subpoenaed a Bismarck photography firm that suddenly closed, leaving customers with no way to get their money back.

Parrell Grossman, the director of the consumer protection division, says investigators are seeking relevant documents from Glasser Images and owner Jack Glasser. When Glasser Images closed in early October, the company apologized and said refunds would not be provided.

KVRR-TV reports the attorney general's office also intends to schedule a hearing in which Glasser would be required to answer questions under oath.

Grossman says more than 500 complaints have been received from customers in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Colorado and other states.

Glasser Images attorney Tim O'Keeffe has said the company developed a plan to get wedding photos and videos that have been already shot into the hands of customers and to have subcontractors ready to cover future reservations. But O'Keeffe says the process will take some time because there have been thousands of requests for assistance.

Grossman says he does not believe Glasser intends to make any refunds.

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP FOOTBALL=

Allen Co.-Scottsville 37, Russell Co. 7

Ashland Blazer 14, Greenup Co. 7

Ballard Memorial 8, Fort Campbell 6

Bardstown 44, Lou. Fairdale 7

Beechwood 54, Newport 0

Belfry 58, Pike Co. Central 8

Bell Co. 20, Estill Co. 14

Bethlehem 56, Fort Knox 0

Betsy Layne 43, Fairview 7

Bishop Brossart 24, Pendleton Co. 14

Bowling Green 37, Christian Co. 0

Boyle Co. 49, Bourbon Co. 12

Breathitt Co. 56, Leslie Co. 12

Breckinridge Co. 47, Ohio Co. 27

Bullitt Central def. IHS, forfeit

Butler Co. 63, Clinton Co. 24

Carroll Co. 48, Gallatin Co. 16

Caverna 36, Jackson Co. 14

Central Hardin 26, North Hardin 21

Clay Co. 24, Magoffin Co. 12

Collins 35, West Jessamine 34

Corbin 42, Wayne Co. 0

Cov. Catholic 27, Conner 7

Daviess Co. 43, Apollo 21

Dixie Heights 41, Campbell Co. 21

East Carter 42, Russell 29

Elizabethtown 47, LaRue Co. 27

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 15 of 88

Fleming Co. 39, Lewis Co. 6
Frankfort 40, Berea 8
Franklin Co. 35, Lou. Central 6
Franklin-Simpson 41, Warren East 14
Frederick Douglass 54, Montgomery Co. 7
Garrard Co. 14, Rockcastle Co. 13
Glasgow 28, Casey Co. 13
Graves Co. 45, Muhlenberg County 14
Great Crossing 48, Grant Co. 14
Henderson Co. 43, McCracken County 19
Highlands 35, Cooper 7
Hopkinsville 35, Hopkins Co. Central 7
Johnson Central 48, Letcher County Central 18
Lake County, Tenn. 52, Fulton Co. 12
Lawrence Co. 47, Floyd Central 7
Lex. Bryan Station 21, Madison Central 13
Lex. Christian 56, Danville 14
Lex. Henry Clay 34, Lex. Tates Creek 33, OT
Lex. Paul Dunbar 34, Lex. Lafayette 14
Lex. Sayre 41, Phelps 8
Lexington Catholic 50, Anderson Co. 0
Lincoln Co. 36, Knox Central 26
Lloyd Memorial 40, Cov. Holy Cross 7
Logan Co. 47, Calloway Co. 0
Lou. Atherton 27, North Bullitt 25
Lou. Ballard 24, Scott Co. 21
Lou. Christian Academy 45, Western Hills 0
Lou. Doss 44, Lou. Western 14
Lou. DuPont Manual 46, Lou. Butler 8
Lou. Holy Cross 42, Campbellsville 7
Lou. Ky. Country Day 58, Eminence 27
Lou. Male 55, Bullitt East 15
Lou. Moore 38, Marion Co. 14
Lou. Southern 27, Lou. Fern Creek 19
Lou. St. Xavier 49, Lou. Pleasure Ridge Park 22
Lou. Trinity 56, Lou. Eastern 21
Ludlow 49, Dayton 6
Marshall Co. 27, Warren Central 26
Martin County 48, Prestonsburg 20
Mason Co. 39, Powell Co. 8
Meade Co. 30, Barren Co. 20
Mercer Co. 41, Lou. DeSales 14
Metcalf Co. 28, Green Co. 26
Middlesboro 38, Knott Co. Central 6
Monroe Co. 39, Edmonson Co. 6
Murray 25, Mayfield 21
Newport Central Catholic 55, Bellevue 14
Nicholas Co. 38, Bracken Co. 6
Oldham County 45, George Rogers Clark 22
Owensboro 58, Grayson Co. 7

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 16 of 88

Owensboro Catholic 46, McLean Co. 0
Paducah Tilghman 70, Webster Co. 0
Perry Co. Central 36, Harlan Co. 28
Pikeville 17, Hazard 0
Pineville 59, Harlan 20
Raceland 36, Paintsville 19
Rowan Co. 38, Boyd Co. 22
Russellville 27, Crittenden Co. 0
Shelby Co. 28, Lou. Waggener 22
Shelby Valley 70, Bath Co. 22
Somerset 56, Washington Co. 20
South Warren 42, Greenwood 14
Southwestern 42, Pulaski Co. 14
Spencer Co. 35, John Hardin 7
Taylor Co. 40, Adair Co. 25
Thomas Nelson 35, Nelson Co. 13
Todd Co. Central 20, Hancock Co. 14
Twin Springs, Va. def. Jenkins, forfeit
Union Co. 46, Trigg Co. 27
Walton-Verona 54, Trimble Co. 20
West Carter 52, East Ridge 12
Whitley Co. 64, South Laurel 20
Williamsburg def. Lynn Camp, forfeit
Woodford Co. 54, East Jessamine 7

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

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

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Christian def. Florence/Henry, 25-17, 25-16, 25-14
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Groton Area, 25-16, 26-24, 25-20
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Mitchell Christian, 25-5, 25-21, 25-10
Avon def. Menno, 25-15, 25-22, 26-24
Baltic def. Lennox, 20-25, 25-20, 25-12, 25-11
Belle Fourche def. Spearfish, 25-16, 25-18, 25-8
Bridgewater-Emery def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-17, 25-8, 25-12
Colome def. Centerville, 16-25, 25-17, 20-25, 25-17, 15-13
Corsica/Stickney def. Scotland, 22-25, 29-27, 25-19, 25-21
Custer def. Red Cloud, 20-25, 26-28, 25-23, 25-13, 15-8
DeSmet def. Iroquois, 25-21, 25-14, 25-20
Flandreau def. Deuel, 26-24, 25-15, 27-29, 25-21
Garretson def. Colman-Egan, 25-15, 25-8, 25-17
Hamlin def. Britton-Hecla, 25-15, 25-13, 25-6
Hanson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-14, 16-25, 25-19, 29-27
Highmore-Harrold def. Stanley County, 25-13, 21-25, 21-25, 25-21, 15-10
Huron def. Rapid City Central, 25-19, 25-12, 25-23

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 17 of 88

Kimball/White Lake def. Wessington Springs, 25-18, 27-25, 18-25, 25-22
Leola/Frederick def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-18, 25-21, 25-17
Madison def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 17-25, 25-22, 25-18, 26-24
McCook Central/Montrose def. Canistota, 25-14, 25-16, 25-15
Miller def. Ethan, 25-23, 25-21, 25-17
Mitchell def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-15, 22-25, 25-18, 25-18
Parker def. Beresford, 25-18, 25-22, 25-16
Pierre def. Douglas, 25-8, 25-14, 25-11
Potter County def. Faith, 25-15, 25-15, 25-17
Rapid City Christian def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-6, 25-10, 25-9
Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-18, 25-10, 25-9
Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Brookings, 25-7, 25-8, 25-17
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Watertown, 22-25, 25-12, 20-25, 25-13, 15-13
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-21, 23-25, 25-19, 18-25, 15-12
Sisseton def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-16, 22-25, 25-19, 25-20
Tea Area def. Tri-Valley, 25-16, 25-21, 25-17
Warner def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-17, 25-12, 25-9
Waubay/Summit def. Waverly-South Shore, 27-25, 25-15, 25-21
Webster def. Redfield, 22-25, 25-21, 11-25, 25-18, 15-11
White River def. Bennett County, 28-26, 25-20, 25-14
New Underwood Triangular=
Edgemont def. New Underwood, 15-25, 25-20, 25-23, 21-25, 15-8
Edgemont def. Wall, 25-22, 25-22, 12-25, 25-21

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

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

Dakotas researchers look to take the steam out of streams

By WENDY PITLICK Black Hills Pioneer

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — A study that focuses on ways to cool South Dakota's streams during the hottest times of the year in an effort to preserve the trout population is yielding positive results, officials from the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks say.

Jeremy Kientz, a fisheries biologist with the agency has been working to discover ways to cool the waters, in a study that specifically focuses on French Creek in Custer State Park. French Creek, he said, is one of a few trout streams in the Black Hills that can reach temperatures up to 80 degrees for several hours a day, increasing the chances of trout mortality.

"We've had a couple instances here in the Black Hills where we've had trout fish kills because of temperatures that are too high in the summertime," Kientz said. "When the water temperature hits 80 degrees and it stays there for a little while, the trout will die. Even at 75 degrees, trout shut down and they don't eat. So now, you not only have a survival issue, but a growth issue."

But working on ways to cool the streams is not easy, Kientz said. Building shade takes time, and dams have become socially and culturally unpopular, not to mention expensive. So, Kientz said he has been working with mechanical engineers from North Dakota State University to build small pockets of cooled water, where trout can seek refuge when temperatures rise, the Black Hills Pioneer reported.

"Essentially the prototype that we're using is a water tank and the water is getting pumped out of that water tank into a chilling unit. Then it goes through the chilling unit down to a box in the stream," Kientz said. "The fish can swim in and out of the box in the stream where the cooler water is. We're not actually cooling the stream itself, but small pockets contained within these boxes that are supposed to act as a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 18 of 88

refuge. So, when the water temps get high fish will sense where colder water is and move to it.”

The boxes, he said, can cool the water to as much as 5 degrees less than the rest of the stream, which can be beneficial during those hot periods in such streams as French Creek and Spring Creek, where temperatures can get up to 75 or 80 degrees.

Though Kientz said the Black Hills has not suffered major trout losses due to stream temperatures, the French Creek study will help biologists to become proactive if the current drought continues. During times of drought when water levels decrease, fish have less opportunities to find deep water with lower temperatures, and mortality rates could increase. Additionally, he said the science could preserve populations in Arizona and New Mexico, where biologists are seeing threatened trout species.

“We’re probably not in dire straits yet,” he said. “If our streams are only hitting 80 degrees for a couple of hours typically the fish aren’t going to die off. If the trends continue and we see these rising stream temperatures over the years, then 10 years from now this may be something we are glad that we did and we may actually start to implement it on a permanent basis at that point.

“In Arizona and New Mexico, trout species are threatened to the point of losing populations,” Kientz continued. “If you look at it from a cultural standpoint for Native Americans or just the general population, losing a species would be much more detrimental than us losing a few trout in French Creek. Something where there is a little more dire situation would be where this would be implemented at this point. We’re trying to look down the road and say ‘we see something concerning, let’s get started on it now before things get to a place where we need it. We’re trying to take a proactive approach before we need to be reactive.”

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

09-14-26-29-66, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 3

(nine, fourteen, twenty-six, twenty-nine, sixty-six; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$108 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$86 million

Two killed in South Dakota crash were from Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says two people who died in a traffic crash last weekend near Rapid City were local residents.

Mark Cook Jr., 31, and Kayla Hamer, 30, were killed when their compact SUV Kia Niro collided with a GMC Yukon at an intersection Sunday afternoon. Cook and Hamer were pronounced dead at the scene. Their 5-year-old boy in the backseat was airlifted to a Rapid City hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Department officials say the Kia Niro had stopped at a stop sign at the intersection of Upper Spring Creek Road and Highway 79. The Kia drove into the intersection where it collided with a 2012 GMC Yukon which was southbound on Highway 79, authorities said.

The Yukon’s 16-year-old driver suffered minor injuries and was transported to a Rapid City hospital. A 14-year-old female passenger was not injured.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash.

Baldwin was told gun was ‘cold’ before movie set shooting

By MORGAN LEE, SUSAN MONTÓYA BRYAN and CEDAR ATTANASIO The Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — As a film crew and actors in Western garb prepared to rehearse a scene inside a wooden, chapel-like building on a desert movie ranch outside Santa Fe, assistant director Dave Halls

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 19 of 88

stepped outside and grabbed a prop gun off a cart.

He walked back in and handed it to the film's star, Alec Baldwin, assuring him it was safe to use because it didn't have live ammo.

"Cold gun," Halls yelled.

It wasn't, according to court records made public Friday. Instead, when Baldwin pulled the trigger Thursday, he killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and wounded director Joel Souza, who was standing behind her.

The tragedy came nearly three decades after Brandon Lee, the son of martial arts legend Bruce Lee, died in a similar case, and it prompted horrified questions about how it could have happened again. The executive producer of ABC's police drama "The Rookie" announced Friday the show would no longer use "live" weapons because the "safety of our cast and crew is too important."

Details of the shooting at the ranch on Bonanza Creek Road were included in a search warrant application filed by the Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office. Investigators were seeking to examine Baldwin's blood-stained costume for the film "Rust," as well as the weapon that was fired, other prop guns and ammunition, and any footage that might exist.

The gun was one of three that the film's armorer, Hannah Gutierrez, had set on a cart outside the building where a scene was being acted, according to the records. Halls grabbed the gun from the cart and brought it inside to Baldwin, unaware that it was loaded with live rounds, a detective wrote in the search warrant application.

It was unclear how many rounds were fired. Gutierrez removed a shell casing from the gun after the shooting, and she turned the weapon over to police when they arrived, the court records say.

Halls did not immediately return phone and email messages seeking comment. The Associated Press was unable to contact Gutierrez, and several messages sent to production companies affiliated with the film were not immediately returned Friday.

The film's script supervisor, Mamie Mitchell, said she was standing next to Hutchins when she was shot.

"I ran out and called 911 and said 'Bring everybody, send everybody,'" Mitchell told The Associated Press. "This woman is gone at the beginning of her career. She was an extraordinary, rare, very rare woman."

Mitchell said she and other crew members were attending a private memorial service Friday night in Santa Fe.

Baldwin described the killing as a "tragic accident."

"There are no words to convey my shock and sadness regarding the tragic accident that took the life of Halyna Hutchins, a wife, mother and deeply admired colleague of ours. I'm fully cooperating with the police investigation," Baldwin wrote on Twitter. "My heart is broken for her husband, their son, and all who knew and loved Halyna."

No immediate charges were filed, and sheriff's spokesman Juan Rios said Baldwin was permitted to travel.

"He's a free man," Rios said.

Images of the 63-year-old actor — known for his roles in "30 Rock" and "The Hunt for Red October" and his impression of former President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live" — showed him distraught outside the sheriff's office on Thursday.

Guns used in making movies are sometimes real weapons that can fire either bullets or blanks, which are gunpowder charges that produce a flash and a bang but no deadly projectile. Even blanks can eject hot gases and paper or plastic wadding from the barrel that can be lethal at close range. That proved to be the case in the death of an actor in 1984.

In another on-set accident in 1993, Lee was killed after a bullet was left in a prop gun, and similar shootings have occurred involving stage weapons that were loaded with live rounds during historical re-enactments.

Gun-safety protocol on sets in the United States has improved since then, said Steven Hall, a veteran director of photography in Britain. But he said one of the riskiest positions to be in is behind the camera because that person is in the line of fire in scenes where an actor appears to point a gun at the audience.

Sheriff's deputies responded about 2 p.m. to the movie set at the Bonanza Creek Ranch after 911 calls described a person being shot there, Rios said. The ranch has been used in dozens of films, including the

recent Tom Hanks Western "News of the World."

Gutierrez, the film's armorer, gave an interview in September to Arizona-based podcast Voices of the West in which she said she had just finished her first movie while working as the head armorer, a project in Montana starring Nicholas Cage titled "The Old Way."

"I was really nervous about it at first and I almost didn't take the job because I wasn't sure if I was ready but doing it, like, it went really smoothly," she said.

Gutierrez is the daughter of Thell Reed, a quick-draw exhibition shooter and gun coach for stars who worked on films such as Tombstone and The Quick and the Dead, according to his IMDB profile. Gutierrez said she had grown up around guns and her father had been teaching her a little bit about firearms since she was a teenager.

Hutchins, 42, worked as director of photography on the 2020 action film "Archenemy" starring Joe Manganiello. She was a 2015 graduate of the American Film Institute and was named a "rising star" by American Cinematographer in 2019.

"I'm so sad about losing Halyna. And so infuriated that this could happen on a set," said "Archenemy" director Adam Egypt Mortimer on Twitter. "She was a brilliant talent who was absolutely committed to art and to film."

Manganiello called Hutchins "an incredible talent" and "a great person" on his Instagram account. He said he was lucky to have worked with her.

After the shooting, production was halted on "Rust." The movie is about a 13-year-old boy who is left to fend for himself and his younger brother following the death of their parents in 1880s Kansas, according to the Internet Movie Database website. The teen goes on the run with his long-estranged grandfather (played by Baldwin) after the boy is sentenced to hang for the accidental killing of a local rancher.

Associated Press writers Jake Coyle, Michelle L. Price and Jocelyn Noveck in New York; Lizzie Knight in London; Yuras Karmanau in Kyiv, Ukraine; Ryan Pearson in Los Angeles; Walter Berry in Phoenix; and Gene Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

Vaccine mandates create conflict with defiant workers

By DAVID SHARP, MIKE CATALINI and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

BATH, Maine (AP) — Josh "Chevy" Chevalier is a third-generation shipbuilder who hasn't missed a day of work during the pandemic in his job as a welder constructing Navy warships on the Maine coast.

But he's ready to walk away from his job because of an impending mandate from President Joe Biden that federal contractors and all U.S. businesses with 100 or more workers be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

"People are fighting for their constitutional rights — the way they think their life should be," said Chevalier, one of hundreds of employees at Bath Iron Works threatening to leave.

Chevalier is among a small but significant number of American workers deciding whether to quit their jobs and careers in defiance of what they consider intrusive edicts that affect their freedoms.

The Biden administration, public health officials and many business leaders agree that vaccine requirements are legal, prudent actions necessary to help the world emerge from a pandemic that has killed more than 700,000 Americans and nearly 5 million people worldwide.

The defiant workers make up a small fraction of the overall workforce, with many cities, states and businesses reporting that more than 9 out of 10 of their workers are complying with mandates.

But they have the potential to create disruptions in a tight labor market and have become the latest roadblock in overcoming the vaccine hesitancy that allowed the COVID-19 crisis to take a devastating turn over the summer. In many cases, the reasons for the objections are rooted in misinformation.

The refusers come from all types of occupations — defense industry workers, police officers, firefighters, educators and health care workers. In Seattle, a group of city firefighters turned in their boots at City Hall on Tuesday to protest a vaccination requirement.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 21 of 88

Thousands of people have sought religious or medical exemptions that were rejected; others won't stand to be told what to do and have quit or been fired.

Nick Rolovich, the football coach at Washington State University, was let go from his \$3.2 million-a-year job on Monday, along with four assistants. Rolovich, the first major college coach to lose his job over vaccination status, claimed a religious exemption but has declined to elaborate. He is suing.

The conflict over mandates is likely to grow in the coming weeks. The Biden administration is expected to move forward any day with the mandate that employers with 100 or more workers require all employees be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing, though enforcement likely won't start for several weeks. The rule for federal contractors goes into effect in December, with no testing option, but many businesses, governments and schools are already implementing mandates.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups that represent large employers have warned workers might simply migrate to jobs at smaller businesses where they don't face vaccination requirements. That could create challenges for large retailers going into the holiday season, among other disruptions, the chamber warned.

Individuals who've left their jobs and are seeking work that doesn't require vaccinations are sharing information on social media. Small employers looking for workers are turning to online job boards such as RedBalloon, where employers sign a pledge that they won't make vaccines a condition for hiring.

Andrew Crapuchettes, RedBalloon's founder and chief executive, said he started the online job board more than two months ago for people "who just want to work and don't want to get into politics in the office." More than 800 companies have posted, and more than 250,000 people have visited the site, he said.

Some states, including Texas, Montana and Florida, are gearing up to fight or undercut the Biden mandates. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order Monday barring any entity from requiring vaccines.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Thursday he will call a special session to pass legislation to combat vaccine mandates, saying that, "in Florida, your right to earn a living is not contingent upon whatever choices you're making in terms of these injections."

Melissa Alfieri-Collins, a 44-year-old mother of two, said she resigned from her job as a nurse at Jersey Shore Medical Center in Neptune, New Jersey, rather than undergo regular COVID-19 testing.

She said the hospital recognized her request for a medical exemption, but she objected to the requirement that only unvaccinated people get tested, arguing that even vaccinated people can spread disease.

"My family and I, we had a long talk, and I basically don't want to compromise my values any more," said Alfieri-Collins, who hopes to become a nurse practitioner and pursue her own holistic practice.

"I am very sad because I am the type of nurse that loves my patients and my patients love me," she said.

Anthony Polenski, director of strategic partnerships for tech recruiting company Jobfuture.ai, said he's seeing candidates who want to know, "Will this company force me to take a job?" Polenski said they are often leaving previous employers because of a vaccine mandate.

"They don't want their vaccination status attached to their employment," he said.

At the shipyard in Maine, frustration is rising among union members.

On Friday, some 100 shipbuilders gathered outside the shipyard during their lunch break to protest being forced to get vaccinated. They marched down the street, holding signs decrying the mandate and using choice four-letter words that made clear what they think of the president and his vaccine mandates.

The union fears it could lose more than 1,000 workers, or 30% of its membership, over the federal contractor mandate.

Dean Grazioso, a 33-year Bath Iron Works employee, said he's not anti-vaccine but that he knows vaccinated coworkers, friends and family members who've contracted breakthrough COVID-19 infections. Such infections are rare and vaccinated people who get COVID-19 usually have mild symptoms and are far less likely to be hospitalized or die.

The 53-year-old is still deciding whether to get the shot.

"I'm still up in the air," he said. "But I've got a huge decision to make."

writer Anthony Izaguirre in Tallahassee, Florida, contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: How wildfires impact wildlife, their habitat

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The porcupines were walking slow and funny, more so than they usually do.

Their stride concerned some residents in a South Lake Tahoe neighborhood who called a rehabilitation center. Turns out, the porcupines had extensive burns to their paws, fur, quills and faces after a wildfire burned through the area.

Wildlife centers in the U.S. West are caring for animals that weren't able to flee the flames or are looking for food in burned-over places.

An emaciated turkey vulture recently found on the Lake Tahoe shore couldn't fly, likely because food isn't as plentiful in burned areas, said Denise Upton, the animal care director at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

"That's what we're seeing in the aftermath of the fires — just animals that are having a hard time and being pushed into areas they are not traditionally in," she said.

IS FIRE GOOD OR BAD FOR WILDLIFE?

Not necessarily either, says Brian Wolfer, the game program manager for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"It's a disturbance on the landscape that changes habitat," he said.

Some species benefit from wildfire, such as raptors that hunt rodents running from the flames, beetles that move into dead wood and lay eggs, and woodpeckers that feed on them and nest in hollow trees.

Fire exposes new grass, shrubs and vegetation in the flowering stage that feed elk and deer. When food sources are plentiful, female deer produce more milk and fawns grow faster, Wolfer said.

On the flip side, animals that depend on old growth forests can struggle for decades trying to find suitable habitat if trees fall victim to fire, Wolfer said. If sagebrush burns, sage grouse won't have food in winter or a place to hide from predators and raise their young, he said.

"In the years that follow, you see reduced survival and, over time, that population starts to decline," he said.

Some wildfires burn in a mosaic, preserving some habitat. But the hotter and faster they burn, the harder it is for less mobile animals to find suitable habitat, he said.

HOW ANIMALS RESPOND TO WILDFIRE

Mice, squirrels and other burrowing animals dig into cooler ground, bears climb trees, deer and bobcats run, small animals take cover in logs and birds fly to escape the flames, heat and smoke.

"They almost seem to have a sixth sense to it," said Julia Camp, a resources manager for the Coconino National Forest in northern Arizona. "A lot of times their response is quicker than ours."

Firefighters have spotted tortoises with singed feet at the edge of wildfires, snakes slithering out from the woods and frail red-tailed hawks on the ground.

Biologists can take precautionary measures, like moving introductory pens for Mexican gray wolves or scooping up threatened or endangered fish if they know a fire is approaching, Camp said.

In 2012, a team of biologists went in after a massive lightning-sparked wildfire in the Gila Wilderness in southwestern New Mexico to save Gila trout from potential floods of ash, soil and charred debris that would come with heavy rainfall. The fish were sent to hatcheries that replicated their habitat until they could be returned.

Some animals don't survive wildfires, but their deaths don't greatly affect the overall population, wildlife officials say.

HOW WILDLIFE FACTORS INTO FIRE MANAGEMENT

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 23 of 88

When wildfires break out in northern Arizona, Camp pulls out her maps. She can see where Mexican spotted owls live, which fish live in which waterways, and where bald and golden eagles nest.

"If we're going to put a dozer line in, it won't be in the middle of their nesting area," she said. "But if something is barreling toward Flagstaff, we're going to have to put out the fire regardless."

Some of those decisions are driven by the federal Endangered Species Act.

In 2015, a wildfire was threatening the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge on the North Carolina coast. Firefighters cut low-lying branches from old pine trees where the red-cockaded woodpecker nests and burned other potential fuel.

"What ended up happening is the fire did approach that area, but because of these measures, it did not affect the nesting areas of the woodpecker," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokeswoman Kari Cobb.

Firefighters also can starve wildfires of fuel using backburns so flames burn at the base of trees rather than more intensely in the crowns and threatening wildlife habitat.

Other considerations are in play when dropping fire retardant so chemicals don't affect water sources or suffocate sensitive plants.

Wildfire managers also try to avoid transferring mussels, fungi or non-native plants that might hitchhike in helicopter buckets by carefully choosing water sources or disinfecting buckets, Camp said.

HOW TO SPOT AN INJURED ANIMAL

Injured animals will move slowly or not at all. Experts say the best action for humans is to keep their distance, don't feed the animals and call wildlife officials or a rescue group.

"Sometimes you're not necessarily doing them the favor you think they are if that care is going to result in them becoming habituated, losing their fear for people," Wolfer said. "We have to think by helping it, 'Am I going to reduce its long-term survival potential?' Animals are tough, much tougher than we give them credit for."

The Wildlife Disaster Network based at the University of California, Davis, took in animals from several fires in California last year and from others that burned this year in the Sierra Nevada. Those include a baby flying squirrel, a baby fox and bear cubs.

The staff scans animals for visible wounds and does blood work, X-rays and ultrasounds to develop a rehabilitation plan, said veterinarian Jamie Peyton, who helps lead the network.

"I really think you can't just look at a single being and think 'It's not worth it, it's not worth trying,'" Peyton said.

ARE ALL ANIMALS RETURNED TO THE WILD?

Whether an animal can survive in the wild depends on the severity of the burns and the animal's age.

Treating burned adult bears is difficult because they tear off traditional bandages, and if they eat them, it can plug their intestines forcing euthanasia, Peyton said.

A bear she treated in 2017 named Lucy forced her to think differently.

"I really was stuck trying to control the pain, and she wouldn't take the medication, despite my pleas and some doughnuts," Peyton said.

Peyton developed a tilapia skin bandage that's now used on 15 different species, including a porcupine at the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care whose paws were burned. Another porcupines at the center won't be released until its quills grow back so it can defend itself, Upton said.

Adult bears and mountain lions typically are released within eight weeks so they don't get used to humans as caretakers, Peyton said.

Sometimes, animals leave rehabilitation centers on their own terms. A bear cub that was found walking on its elbows was rescued from the Tamarack Fire that's still burning south of Carson City, Nevada, and treated at the Lake Tahoe center. The cub pushed through a malfunctioning door in an outdoor enclosure this summer and left.

"He had really healed quite a bit before he decided he didn't want to be here anymore," Upton said. "I'm pretty confident he's doing OK. He was a wild little bear."

No 'blank slate' jurors in county shaken by Arbery slaying

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — No. 218 joined a bike ride supporting Ahmaud Arbery's family after the young Black man was chased down and shot dead. No. 236 was a longtime co-worker of one of the white men charged in the killing.

Identified in court only by numbers, both people were summoned to jury duty in the trial over Arbery's slaying. And after attorneys questioned them extensively about the case, the judge deemed both to be fair-minded enough to remain in the pool from which a final jury will be picked.

An outcry over the February 2020 slaying of 25-year-old Arbery echoed across the U.S. after graphic cellphone video of the shooting leaked online two months later. With jury selection underway in the Georgia community of 85,000 where the killing took place, it seems increasingly likely that some of the jurors who are ultimately chosen will have preconceived opinions and personal ties to the case.

The judge, prosecutors and defense attorneys have questioned 71 pool members since jury selection began Monday. After dismissing those with personal hardships or unshakable biases, 23 were deemed qualified to advance. Dozens more will be needed before a final jury of 12 plus four alternates can be seated.

While questioning potential jurors, prosecutor Linda Dunikoski often told them the ideal juror would be a "blank slate." In the trial over Arbery's killing, she noted, that is probably impossible.

"We can't get that because it's been all over the place," Dunikoski remarked in court Thursday.

The result has been a number of potential jurors kept in the pool despite coming to the courthouse already knowing a lot about what happened and the people involved. That's because they said they can decide the case fairly, based only on the trial evidence.

Georgia law allows someone to serve on a jury even if they come to court with an opinion about the case, as long as that person expresses a willingness to keep an open mind, said Donnie Dixon, a Savannah defense attorney and former federal prosecutor.

"The operative question is: Is your opinion so fixed that you couldn't get a fair trial?" said Dixon, who's not involved in the case. "The reality is, who knows? But if they say those magic words, the judge may not disqualify them."

Greg and Travis McMichael, a father and grown son, armed themselves and pursued Arbery in a pickup truck after spotting him running in their neighborhood. A neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, joined the chase and took cellphone video of Travis McMichael shooting Arbery three times at close range with a shotgun.

Greg McMichael, who had recently retired after a long career as an investigator for the area district attorney, told police Arbery had previously been recorded by security cameras inside a neighboring house under construction and they suspected he had been stealing. He said Travis McMichael shot Arbery in self-defense after Arbery attacked him.

Until now, the case has been driven by outsiders. The McMichaels and Bryan were not charged until the Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case from local police. Greg McMichael's ties to the district attorney resulted in the appointment of outside prosecutors from metro Atlanta. Likewise, Superior Court Judge Timothy Walmsley from Savannah was assigned to preside.

If a jury gets seated in Glynn County, where 1,000 jury duty notices were mailed, the case will ultimately be decided by people for whom the slaying hit much closer to home.

Jury pool member No. 218, a retail worker who identified herself in court as a Black woman, wrote on her juror questionnaire that "a young man was shot due to his color and the three men that committed the act almost got away."

She said in court Thursday that she had taken part in a bike ride to raise money for Arbery's family after the shooting. And while telling attorneys she could be a fair juror, she also said that based on what she knows now: "I feel like they are guilty."

Not everyone called to jury duty has been preoccupied by Arbery's killing. A self-employed woman said she refused to listen when her husband tried to discuss the case and said she goes "out of my way not

to read news or politics.”

She remains in the jury pool.

Others have been disqualified for seeming too engaged. The judge dismissed a woman who said she believes she saw Arbery running near her home not long before he was killed. She described feeling emotionally connected to him, and followed pretrial court proceedings closely.

No. 236 was kept in the jury pool even though she’s known Greg McMichael for 30 years. She still works a clerical job for the Brunswick Judicial Circuit district attorney. Though she and Greg McMichael were not close friends, she said the two had “always just been around each other.”

The woman said she also got a close look at Greg McMichael’s personnel file because she was tasked with redacting private information from it after news organizations requested copies.

She told the judge and attorneys she did not have a strong opinion about the case. What little opinion she offered was not sympathetic.

“I don’t understand why they took it into their own hands,” No. 236 said. “That’s the only thing that disturbs me about that day. I would have called 911 and let the police handle it.”

If enough people summoned to the court house keep expressing strong opinions, defense attorneys could ask the judge to halt jury selection and move the case to a different Georgia county.

“It’s the easiest time to get a change of venue,” said Don Samuel, an Atlanta defense attorney who is not involved in the case. “If half the people who are randomly picked are so biased they can’t even sit as jurors, you’re talking about a community that’s saturated by pretrial publicity.”

New Jersey governor race tests Murphy’s progressive politics

By MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Paid sick leave. Taxpayer-funded community college. A phased-in \$15 minimum wage.

New Jersey has taken a decidedly liberal shift under first-term Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy, increasing income taxes on the wealthy, expanding voting rights and tightening the state’s already restrictive gun laws. It’s a notable change from his predecessor, Republican Chris Christie, who spent two terms pushing more moderate policies.

Murphy’s agenda will be on the ballot on Nov. 2, when voters will decide whether to give him a second term or steer the state in another direction by electing Republican Jack Ciattarelli. History isn’t necessarily on Murphy’s side: New Jersey hasn’t reelected a Democrat as governor in four decades and hasn’t elected a governor from the same party as the president in three decades.

“It’s one of the big, animating reasons why we’re running like we’re 10 points behind,” Murphy said in an interview. “We’re taking nothing for granted. I mean, history has proven that this can be a very fickle year in terms of politics.”

But Murphy does have some sizable advantages. He is leading in public polls and has raised more money than Ciattarelli, and New Jersey has 1 million more registered Democratic voters than Republicans. He’s also welcoming some Democratic heavy-hitters to the state: Former President Barack Obama is due on Saturday, and President Joe Biden is visiting on Monday to promote his spending plan.

The race has national implications, though it has gotten less attention than Virginia’s high-profile governor’s contest. A loss for Murphy would be shocking in a state that Biden won over Republican Donald Trump by nearly 16 points last year. It would also raise questions about whether moderate voters repelled by Trump were returning to the Republican Party now that the former president is no longer in office.

New Jersey’s left turn has been years in the making: The state has voted Democratic in every presidential contest since 1992. It hasn’t elected a Republican to the U.S. Senate since Clifford Case in 1972. But governor’s races have been continually in play for the GOP. The last three Republicans elected governor have won two consecutive terms.

“My focus is solely New Jersey,” Ciattarelli said in an interview. “To win as a Republican, you’ve got to be focused on what it is that’s bothering the people of New Jersey, and that’s exactly what I’ve done for

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 26 of 88

the past 22 months.”

Public polls show that Murphy has gotten high grades from voters for his response to COVID-19, even though New Jersey was one of the hardest-hit states at the beginning of the pandemic. About 35% of the state’s nearly 25,000 deaths came from nursing and veterans homes. Murphy held daily news conferences about the pandemic at the beginning and is now holding two a week. He ordered most nonessential businesses to shut down early in the pandemic, including restaurants, theaters, gyms and most retail stores. Masks were required and social distancing was encouraged. Schools shuttered and then went mostly remote.

“Many people are very happy with the way he handled the COVID-19 era. The numbers are very clear,” Republican state Sen. Michael Testa acknowledged.

Some Republicans are also concerned that Trump’s unpopularity could be dragging down Ciattarelli’s approval numbers. Since a bruising June primary with rivals who claimed Trump’s mantle, Ciattarelli has sounded more like the moderate he was while in the Legislature, speaking about his support for the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion and for immigrants without legal status to get driver’s licenses, for instance.

He’s been playing up his credentials as an accountant and the founder of a small business while campaigning in Democratic-leaning cities as well as GOP strongholds.

Ciattarelli has also had to balance the more traditional GOP wing with the Trump faction. That’s meant calling for lower property taxes, a perennial issue in New Jersey, and decrying COVID-19 restrictions. But it has also meant confronting questions about his appearance at a rally centered on “Stop the Steal,” a reference to Trump’s false claims that the 2020 election was stolen. Ciattarelli said he didn’t know the rally was focused on the former president’s false claims.

Asked whether he would welcome Trump campaigning for him, Ciattarelli said he does his own campaigning and isn’t “into endorsements.” He has also said he accepts that Biden was legitimately elected.

The state’s political environment shifted decidedly to the left during the Trump administration, with Democrats picking up all but one House seat in the state in 2018. They lost a second one when Jeff Van Drew left the Democratic Party over Trump’s first impeachment. Murphy himself won election in the first year of Trump’s presidency running on a self-styled progressive platform. His win was helped by the unpopularity of Christie, whose top lieutenant ran against Murphy in the 2017 race.

“When you look which way the wind is blowing, it is very tough for a candidate to be a good candidate if the wind is not blowing at your back,” said Assembly Republican leader Jon Bramnick. “And in New Jersey, the wind is blowing definitely more Democratic.”

Shavonda Sumter, a Democratic Assembly member and chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, said the push for more progressive policies like early in-person voting and expanded vote by mail began at least a decade ago. Those policies, vetoed by Christie, became law after Murphy became governor.

Sumter sees the real turning point coming in 2020 during the national reckoning on racial injustice followed the killing of George Floyd by police. She said white people’s increased consciousness of the role race can play in politics has helped Democrats politically.

“Folks woke up and realized this fight is not done,” she said.

For Toby Sanders, a Trenton resident who attended a recent Murphy gun control rally in Bloomfield, this year’s governor’s contest is more than just a state race.

“It’s a bellwether for the nation. It’s a foundation to build on,” said Sanders, who considers himself a progressive.

For other voters, state and local issues are more important.

Mike Gardner, a municipal party official and retired attorney who worked at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, said his top issue is getting rid of the high property taxes. He backs Ciattarelli.

Jim Arakelian, a real estate agent and retired law enforcement official, said he doesn’t think police officers have been respected by the Murphy administration, citing the decision to release certain police disciplinary records as a big concern. He’s also skeptical about the media and the polling in the race, citing 2016

and Trump's surprise victory.

"Polls can be skewed anyway the press wants," said Arakelian, who attended a Ciattarelli campaign stop at a New Milford pizzeria.

In their own way, some Democratic voters are also skeptical about polls, not wanting to take them for granted.

"America is contested space right now. There is a battle quietly and loudly going on," Sanders said.

Saudi Arabia pledges 2060 target of net-zero emissions

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — One of the world's largest oil producers, Saudi Arabia, announced Saturday it aims to reach "net zero" greenhouse gas emissions by 2060, joining more than 100 countries in a global effort to try and curb man-made climate change.

Although the kingdom will aim to reduce emissions within its own borders, there is no indication Saudi Arabia will slow down investments in oil and gas or relinquish sway over energy markets by moving away from the production of fossil fuels. Energy exports form the backbone of Saudi Arabia's economy, despite efforts to diversify revenue as the world increasingly looks to transition away from reliance on fossil fuels. The country is forecast to make \$150 billion in revenue this year from oil alone.

The announcement, made by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in scripted remarks at the start of the kingdom's first-ever Saudi Green Initiative Forum, was timed to make a splash before the start of the global COP26 climate conference being held in Glasgow, Scotland. The prince vowed Saudi Arabia will plant 450 million trees and rehabilitate huge swaths of land by 2030, reducing more than 270 million tons of carbon emissions a year and attempting to turn the landlocked city of Riyadh into a more sustainable capital.

The kingdom joins the ranks of Russia and China on their stated net-zero target date of 2060. The United States and the European Union have aimed for 2050.

In making the announcement, analysts say the kingdom ensures its continued seat at the table in global climate change talks. Saudi Arabia has pushed back against those who say fossil fuels must be urgently phased out, warning that a premature switch could lead to price volatility and shortages. Recently leaked documents show how the kingdom and other nations are lobbying behind the scenes ahead of the COP26 summit to change language around emissions.

In transitioning domestically, the kingdom could also take the oil and gas that it subsidizes locally and allocate it as a more lucrative export to China and India, where demand is expected to grow in the coming years.

"The kingdom's economic growth is driven by export of its energy sources. It's no state secret," Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said at the forum in Riyadh.

Saudi Arabia says it will reach net-zero through a so-called "Carbon Circular Economy" approach, which advocates "reduce, reuse, recycle and remove." It is an unpopular strategy among climate change activists because it touts still unreliable carbon capture and storage technologies rather than honing in on the phasing out of fossil fuels.

The announcement provided few details on how the kingdom will cut its emissions in the short- and medium term, including when it will peak its emissions. Experts say sharp cuts are needed worldwide as soon as possible to ensure the world has a chance of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) as agreed in the 2015 Paris accord.

The kingdom — home to roughly 17% of proven petroleum reserves — supplies some 10% of global oil demand. As OPEC's heavyweight, Saudi Arabia holds tremendous influence over energy markets and can pressure other producers to fall in line, as seen last year when the kingdom triggered a price war that successfully got Russia to curb its production amid a slowdown in demand from the pandemic.

Saudi Arabia said the transition to net zero carbon emissions "will be delivered in a manner that preserves the kingdom's leading role in enhancing the security and stability of global energy markets."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 28 of 88

Gulf oil producers argue against the rapid phasing out of fossil fuels by saying that a hurried shift would hurt low-income nations and populations that lack access to basic energy. Saudi Arabia also advocates for language that refers to greenhouse gases, a basket that includes more than just fossil fuels.

"We believe that carbon capture, utilization and storage, direct air capture, hydrogen and low carbon fuel are the things that will develop the necessary ingredients to really make sure this effort will be inclusive," Prince Abdulaziz said of the global energy transition.

Earlier this month, the United Arab Emirates — another major Gulf Arab energy producer — announced it too would join the "net zero" club of nations by 2050. The UAE, home to the region's first nuclear power plant, did not announce specifics on how it will reach this target.

Leaked documents, first reported by the BBC, show how Saudi Arabia and other countries, including Australia, Brazil and Japan, are apparently trying to water down an upcoming U.N. science panel report on global warming before the COP26 summit. Greenpeace, which obtained the leaked documents, said Saudi Arabia is enabling nations to continue burning fossil fuels by pushing carbon capture technology. The group says these "as-yet unproven technologies" would allow nations to emit more greenhouse gases on the optimistic assumption that they could draw them out of the atmosphere later.

Fossil fuels, such as crude oil, natural gas and coal, currently make the bulk of global energy consumption. Just 10% of electricity is generated by solar power and wind.

On Saturday, Prince Abdulaziz said every nation's approach to cut emissions will look different.

"No one should be too facetious about what tool in the kit that everybody would have," he said. "But if your tools in your kit and mine delivers emissions reductions, that's the ask and that's the objective," he said.

Britain's Prince Charles was among those participating in the Riyadh forum. In virtual remarks, he pointed to how the Middle East's temperatures are also rising, threatening the region's habitability.

President Joe Biden's climate envoy, John Kerry, is expected in Riyadh on Sunday and Monday, where he will meet with officials and take part in the three-day forum.

Associated Press writer Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

Follow Aya Batrawy on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

After 'Rust' shooting, a look at other notable set accidents

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The shooting death of a cinematographer on the set of the set of the Alec Baldwin movie "Rust" is a reminder of the dangers that can exist on film and television sets. As authorities investigate why a crew member handed Baldwin a loaded gun instead of one safe to use, industry leaders will look for ways to avoid similar tragedies.

On-set fatalities have led to safety reforms in the past. Here are some of the productions that experienced industry-altering accidents:

"TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE"

A 1982 helicopter crash that killed actor Vic Morrow and two child actors on the set of "Twilight Zone" shook the film industry and led to new safety standards for the use of choppers during filming. Morrow and the children were killed while filming a scene set in Vietnam for a film based on the popular television series. The helicopter came down after debris from explosions staged during the scene rose 100 feet in the air and damaged the aircraft's rotor. Director John Landis and four others were acquitted of involuntary manslaughter charges in a rare case of prosecutors targeting a film production for on-set deaths. The families of the child actors killed settled civil lawsuits years later, and federal agencies enacted new rules for filming with helicopters.

"THE CROW"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 29 of 88

Actor Brandon Lee died in March 1993 after he was shot in the abdomen while filming a scene for "The Crow." Money and safety issues, including severe burns suffered by a construction worker, already had plagued the production. A makeshift bullet was mistakenly left in a gun from a previous scene and struck Lee during a scene that called for using blank rounds. OSHA fined the production \$84,000 for violations found after Lee's death, but the fine was later reduced to \$55,000. After the fatal "Rust" shooting on Thursday, an account run by Lee's sister Shannon tweeted: "No one should ever be killed by a gun on a film set. Period."

"MIDNIGHT RIDER"

Camera operator Sarah Jones was run over by a train in February 2014 during the filming of a Gregg Allman biopic in rural Georgia. The death of Jones, 27, and the injuries of other crew members hit by pieces of a metal bed frame that was on the train tracks as part of the production, put a heightened industry focus on film set safety. The crew filming "Midnight Rider" did not have permission to be on the tracks but were not expecting a train while filming the bed scene. Prosecutors filed criminal charges against the film's director, who pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and criminal trespassing charges. He was sentenced to two years in jail but released after a year and fined \$74,900 by OSHA. Jones' parents created a foundation dedicated to improving safety on film and television shoots.

"COPS"

An audio technician recording a police shootout for the long-running TV reality series "Cops" was struck and killed in Omaha, Nebraska in August 2014. The death of Boston native Bryce Dion prompted the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration to recommend additional training and safety instruction for the show's crew members, including on how to film shootings from farther away. OSHA also recommended removing bonus incentives that encourage workers to take risks to capture more action-packed stories. Dion was the first person killed in the history of "Cops," which premiered in 1989 and follows on-duty American police officers performing their jobs. The show was canceled last year but has been recently revived for the Fox Nation streaming service.

"UNTITLED MILITARY PROJECT"

An early morning helicopter crash in a remote river valley north of Los Angeles killed three people filming a planned reality TV series for the Discovery Channel. The February 2013 filming took place on a moonless night, and the pilot wasn't wearing night vision goggles at the time of the crash. Federal investigators later determined that a light used to illuminate an actor's face in the cockpit hampered the pilot's ability to fly. But the National Transportation Safety Board faulted the pilot, who was among those killed, for flying in unsafe conditions. The agency later rescinded its determination that a Federal Aviation Administration inspector failed to recognize the risks involved when he approved plans for the shoot.

A moving 'reunion' for descendants of Holocaust survivors

By BOBBY ROSS Jr. Associated Press

WESTLAKE, Texas (AP) — Anna Salton Eisen found the old pictures — wallet-size, black-and-white images of Jewish prisoners who survived the Holocaust — in a folder her late father, George Lucius Salton, kept most of his life.

The Texas woman recognized the names of some of the teens and young men from stories her father told. For three years, the baby-faced captives lived among the dead and dying in barracks and boxcars as Nazi captors moved them from Poland to France to Germany. The skeletal friends said a tearful Kaddish — a Jewish prayer of mourning — after learning their parents had died in the gas chambers.

But suddenly, the familiar names had faces.

"Seeing the faces of all of them really brought the story to life," said Eisen, who discovered the photos while moving her mother, Ruth Salton, 99, from Florida to the Dallas area this past summer.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 30 of 88

Eisen, 62, said she felt compelled to learn more about the confidants who had meant so much to her father, who died at age 88 in 2016.

George Salton was 17 when the U.S. Army liberated the Wobbelin concentration camp in Germany on May 2, 1945. Over the next few years, the survivors scattered around the world. Most lost touch with each other.

But 76 years after American soldiers cut down the barbed wire and fulfilled the prisoners' impossible dream of freedom, Eisen set out to bring together the survivors' loved ones.

As Eisen began her research, she relied on names written in pencil on the picture backs or mentioned repeatedly in Salton's 2002 book, "The 23rd Psalm: A Holocaust Memorial."

As she combed through Nazi-era data, official documents, concentration camp lists and postwar records stored online through the Arolsen Archives at the International Center on Nazi Persecution in Germany, Eisen verified survivors' names and dates of birth.

Through Ancestry.com, she explored passenger lists of ships that took Holocaust survivors to other countries, Social Security cards documenting name changes, and obituaries and family trees.

Some assumed new identities as they made fresh starts after the war. Eisen's father was born as Lucek Salzman in the town of Tyczyn, Poland. But after the dangers he had faced, he chose a less Jewish-sounding name upon arrival in New York in 1947.

Google and Facebook searches led Eisen to the children and grandchildren of her father's friends, most of whom never knew — until now — the full story of what their loved ones experienced.

Todd Nussen, a high school history teacher in Oceanside, New York, reacted with shock — and excitement — when Eisen texted him in late July to ask about his namesake grandfather, Tobias Nussen, who died at age 52 in 1973.

"Now I have details. Now I have facts," the 40-year-old educator said.

As a result of Eisen's research, family members of eight Holocaust survivors met for the first time on a recent Sunday.

Some exchanged hugs and tears in person at a New Jersey hotel suite.

Others connected via Zoom from Israel, Sweden and Texas.

"It just gave me the chills," Bobbie Ziff, 67, a resident of Jackson, New Jersey, said of the emotional gathering, which came together less than four months after the photos' discovery.

Ziff is the daughter of Tobias Nussen and the aunt of Todd Nussen.

Her father built a new life in America and owned a luncheonette in Brooklyn, New York, Ziff said. He never talked about the Holocaust, but he often had nightmares and screamed in his sleep.

Eisen sent Ziff a copy of Tobias Nussen's photo as well as his name in a tiny diary that belonged to Salton.

"It was just crazy, crazy," Ziff said. "My only regret is that this didn't happen while her father (Salton) was alive. I would have wished to speak to him."

Pictured in another of the photos that Eisen found: Motek Hoffstetter.

His daughter Aviva Findler, a retired high school teacher who lives in Tel Aviv, Israel, said her father, like many other survivors, refused to talk about the Holocaust.

"During the meeting, I found out he was very respected by his friends, which made me really proud and sad," Findler said. "Seeing all of us on Zoom made me wonder once more about the power of life that enabled our fathers to start families and life after all the losses they suffered and what they witnessed."

Likewise, Anna Schlachet, 69, a doctor in Stockholm, said her father, Moses Ziment, spoke little about his Holocaust experience.

However, he did tell her that "the rest of the family was gassed to death."

"Sitting in a Zoom meeting with people I did not even know existed before, and at the same time understanding that we largely shared the same history, was a very strange and unreal experience," Schlachet said.

Another of the survivors, Emil Ringel, also moved to the United States. Ringel and his wife, Clara, introduced Salton — Eisen's father — to his future wife, Ruth, whose own Jewish family had fled Poland and labored in work camps in Siberia during World War II. Ringel died at age 52 in 1979.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 31 of 88

Daughter Barbara Ringel, of Queens, New York, relished meeting the children and grandchildren of her father's friends.

"That strength of spirit, that courage, that resilience, that ability to really try to push each other to survive — that was what characterized all of our dads," Barbara Ringel said.

For much of his life, Eisen's own father believed in keeping the past in the past. He preferred to focus on living the American dream.

Fellow survivors did the same, not wanting to dwell on their rotten teeth or explain why they refused to waste even a single piece of bread.

"It's a wound," Ruth Salton said of what she and her husband of 63 years experienced growing up. "We didn't want any of our kids to carry the stuff that we lived through. We thought, 'It will hurt them. We want them to be happy.'"

George Salton proudly served in the same U.S. Army that had rescued him. He earned degrees in physics and electrical engineering. He worked in a high-level role at the Pentagon and held an executive position in the aerospace industry.

But eventually, his three children — especially Eisen, named after a grandmother she never knew — demanded answers about his childhood.

That led to George, Ruth and the three adult children traveling to Poland in 1998 to visit old concentration camps and ghettos, the remnants of synagogues and cemeteries throughout the central European country.

With Eisen's help, Salton recounted the details of his family's Holocaust experience in his 2002 memoir. "Every day blended with the next, filled with hunger, sleepless nights, hard labor and the constant threat of beatings, selections, and executions," he wrote.

The book — and the New Jersey gathering — helped Miriam Kershner, daughter of Holocaust survivor Moses Tuchman, understand her father in a way she never had, she said.

"We all felt so connected by our parents, and we all knew that our parents survived because of each other," said the retired teacher, 65, who lives in Marlboro, New Jersey.

"I felt like I knew her all my life," Kershner said of meeting Eisen. "We're sisters from another mother. Matter of fact, we're going to get together again."

For her part, Eisen is writing a book of her own, "Pillar of Salt: A Daughter's Life in the Shadow of the Holocaust," which is due out next April. She is cooperating with a filmmaker, Jacob Wise, on a documentary based on her father's experience and its impact on the second generation.

Eisen, a member of Congregation Beth Israel, a Reform Jewish community in Colleyville, Texas, said the book title reflects her faith.

"I felt compelled to look back even though I was warned not to," she said, referencing the biblical account of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt. "I knew I risked being changed, but I had to face the past for the sake of my father.

"It was not easy for me to bring these other families the truth. It was painful. But it was their story, and it belonged to them."

It's important, she believes, for the younger generations to keep the reality of the Holocaust alive.

Aaron Eisen, Anna's 30-year-old son and co-author of "Pillar of Salt," voiced pride in his mother's efforts.

"My grandfather, when he would give speeches, would say that the Holocaust was incomprehensible, that we can't comprehend how this happened," said Aaron Eisen, who attended the New Jersey gathering. "But I think over time we are beginning to comprehend, and what my mother is talking about, is that there's still so much to learn. With the technology and the archives, there's still so many more lessons."

As Ruth Salton approaches her 100th birthday, even she now understands the importance of telling the story, she said.

"That is the only way to carry on," she said. "I'm so happy that the children are interested. The children want to tell the story, and the children can now live and feel what we did feel all our lives."

Not all of Anna Eisen's research had a happy ending.

One of the pictures showed a young man named Izok Rypp.

Izok — Yiddish for "Isaac" — survived 10 concentration camps with George Salton and the others, apparently the only member of his family to escape the gas chambers as Nazi Germany systematically killed 6 million European Jews.

But he never made it out of a displaced persons camp in Germany after the prisoners' liberation. He died at age 19 in July 1947, according to a death certificate. No cause of death was given.

He was the same age as Eisen's father.

"He never had a chance to have a life or a family," Eisen said. "But his picture and his story in my father's book have preserved his memory and his story."

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Disruptions to schooling fall hardest on vulnerable students

By ANNIE MA Associated Press

Even as schools have returned in full swing across the country, complications wrought by the pandemic persist, often falling hardest on those least able to weather them: families without transportation, people with limited income or other financial hardship, people who don't speak English, children with special needs.

Coronavirus outbreaks in school and individual quarantine orders when students get exposed to the virus make it a gamble on whether they can attend classes in person on any given day. Many families don't know where to turn for information, or sometimes can't be reached.

And sometimes, because of driver shortages, it's as simple as the school bus not showing up.

Keiona Morris, who lives without a car in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, outside Pittsburgh, has had no choice but to keep her boys at home on days when the bus didn't arrive. Her two sons have missed about two weeks' worth of classes because of such disruptions, she said.

Taking her older son to school on the civic bus system those days would mean not making it home in time to get her youngest to elementary school, she said.

"I feel like they're leaving my kid behind," Morris said. "Sometimes, he feels like he's not important enough to get picked up."

For some families, it's a matter of not having the private resources to deal with breakdowns in the public education system. For others, language barriers or other communication issues leave them uninformed about things like programs that let students return to school despite virus exposures, as long as they test negative for infection.

And while some students can keep up with school remotely during quarantines, others receive little to no instruction, or they lack internet or devices to connect.

As districts seek solutions, they have to consider that disproportionate burden, said Bree Dusseault, principal at the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington.

"If you're going to be using a test as a tool to shorten quarantine, then all students have equal and free and easy access to that test," she said.

The first day the shortages affected her son's route, Morris did not see an early morning email notification that her son's bus would be canceled, and the two of them waited at the stop for a ride that never came.

Staying at home has taken a toll on her kids, who are both more engaged when learning in person. On the days their bus was canceled and they had no access to the day's lesson, the makeup work built up, putting them behind in class, she said.

For her older son, she said, the transition to middle school and missing social aspects of being with peers have been especially hard.

The effects of unpredictable stretches at home can mirror those of chronic absenteeism and lead to long-term harm to learning, said Robert Balfanz, a research professor at the Johns Hopkins University

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 33 of 88

School of Education.

"The irregularity of your attendance is as important as the total amount you miss," Balfanz said. "It lingers with you because you miss key moments of learning that everything else builds upon, and that can even lead to later frustrations."

Some families have had more guidance than others in navigating unexpected, unstructured periods of learning at home.

In Seattle, Sarah Niebuhr Rubin's son was sent home for two weeks when he was identified as a possible virus exposure. Because the exposure counted as an excused absence, Rubin said her son received no live instruction and no consistent services for his reading disability, except for two sessions with specialists who went out of their way to meet with him.

Without those services, she said, he struggles to complete work without constant supervision, which she could not provide while working from home.

"There really was nothing," Rubin said. When her son returned to the classroom, she said it felt like the school year was "starting all over again."

To minimize days out of school, some districts have implemented a "test to stay" option, where children can remain in school despite exposures to infected people as long as they continue to test negative for COVID-19.

In Georgia's Marietta City Schools, students who are being tested go to a central location, where they are given a rapid antigen test in the parking lot. A negative test means they can go to school that day, while those who test positive are directed to quarantine.

Roughly 30% to 40% of eligible students participate, Superintendent Grant Rivera said, and the district has begun to identify some barriers to access for families. Some cited transportation hurdles or time constraints, such as work schedules.

About a quarter of families said they weren't aware of the program, Rivera said. Parents are notified of the testing program when they learn their child is a close contact, and the district follows up with an email.

"When we make this initial phone call, there's kind of like input overload and shock of, 'What am I going to do about my kid and childcare and work?'" Rivera said. "We're following up with an email, but in a district with a high ESL immigrant population, the email may not be understood by everybody in the family, or they may not be getting it."

Rivera said he hoped to expand messaging through community partners, as well as through other methods like texting.

The possibility of further disruptions keeps some parents on edge.

For a while, firefighters in McKeesport were volunteering to drive children to and from school. Recently, Morris' children's bus has been on time. But she worries she and her son will be left waiting again.

"I have that worry in the back of my mind that it's going to happen again," Morris said. "And if it does, I'm just going to be ready to pull my kids out of school and homeschool them, even though it'll be more tough for me."

Ma covers education and equity for AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/anniema15>

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A magical trove of Ricky Jay ephemera hits auction block

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Conjurers, cheats, hustlers, hoaxsters, pranksters, jokesters, posturers, pretenders, sideshow showmen, armless calligraphers, mechanical marvels and popular entertainments.

Those were the things that interested the grizzled Ricky Jay, the sleight-of-hand artist, card shark, au-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 34 of 88

thor, actor and scholar extraordinaire on all of the above who died in 2018 at age 72. When he passed, he left behind a vast trove of rare books, posters, broadsides and other artifacts that honored many who came before him.

Now, nearly 2,000 of more than 10,000 pieces that stuffed his Beverly Hill's house will make their way into the hands of those who care to bid during an unusual upcoming Sotheby's auction after Jay's widow, the Emmy-winning producer Chrisann Verges, turned them over.

Selby Kiffer, Sotheby's international senior specialist for books and manuscripts, was one of two experts from the auction house to visit Verges at home in California and select what they wanted for the Ricky Jay Collection.

"It's really a collection of collections," Kiffer said ahead of the two-day live auction starting Wednesday. "The challenge was to find an institution that was interested not only in magic but also in circus, not only in books but also in posters and apparatus, and all of the elements of popular entertainment."

Divided into 634 lots, Sotheby's estimates the collection at \$2.2 million to \$3.2 million, hoping for bidders from those inside Jay's world, magic admirers from afar and art enthusiasts on the hunt to decorate their walls. There's more than enough to choose from.

Harry Houdini is ever present, an obligation of sorts to any collector like Jay. Closer to Jay's heart was the magician Max Malini of the early 20th century. A poster advertises Malini's appearance at King's Theatre in New York with a rounded portrait, medals on one lapel and touting performances before six heads of state. Dating to around 1916, it's one of only two known copies and estimated to fetch \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Jay was so enamored of Malini that he devoted an entire chapter of his book, "Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women," to the man he described as the "last of the mountebanks."

Malini, Jay wrote, was rarely featured on music hall or theater stages. Rather, he was the "embodiment of what a magician should be. Not a performer who requires a fully equipped stage, elaborate apparatus, elephants or handcuffs to accomplish his mysteries, but one who can stand a few inches from you and with a borrowed coin, a lemon, a knife, a tumbler or a pack of cards convince you he performed miracles."

A rare Houdini poster from around 1913 depicts the escape artist upside down in his water torture cell, a look of dire concern on his face that told the story in the color lithograph valued at \$40,000 to \$60,000.

An entire room on display at Sotheby's spacious Manhattan headquarters is dedicated to another who drew Jay's attention: Matthias Buchinger. He was a German artist, magician and calligrapher born without hands or lower legs and measuring just 29 inches tall. Buchinger, who died in 1740 and lived most of his life in the UK, was married four times and had at least 14 children.

Much of Buchinger's living was made in calligraphy, including his inking of family trees for money. One of Kiffer's favorite pieces up for auction is the tree Buchinger created for his own family, demonstrating his unlikely skill with a pen but also knife or scissors for intricate paper overlays. Done in 1734, the tree is marked for sale at \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Jay, Kiffer said, was not just a collector who wanted all the things.

"He was doing serious research. And I think in part because he was curious about his predecessors, he wondered what illusions and tricks they did and how they accomplished them. But he lectured and published widely. He was not a trophy hunter who just said, 'Well, I want to get the most expensive book on conjuring and the rarest, most expensive Houdini poster.' He was looking for things that other people might not recognize the significance of," Kiffer explained.

Jay was Brooklyn born as Richard Jay Potash and grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He rarely spoke publicly about his parents but was introduced to magic by a grandfather, an amateur enthusiast who encouraged Jay to take to the stage and screen as a boy wonder. His first TV appearance was at age 7. By his 20s, a long-haired Jay was on his way to stardom, opening for rock bands and appearing on talk shows.

Friend and admirer Steve Martin once described Jay thusly: "The swindler who never swindled, the con man who never conned, the cheat who never cheated, and mostly, the eccentric collector of all that is eccentric."

Jay was a frequent presence in the films of David Mamet, including "House of Games." He also had a recurring role in HBO's "Deadwood," playing card shark Eddie Sawyer, and was a go-to consultant in

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 35 of 88

Hollywood on all things magic, gambling and cards. Paul Thomas Anderson put him in the films "Boogie Nights" and Magnolia."

Among Jay's talents was card throwing. He once held the Guinness World Record for a distance of 190 feet at 90 mph. He often turned a lowly playing deck into weaponry. He could throw a single card so it would penetrate a watermelon and shear a wooden pencil in two.

The mechanical objects up for auction include "Neppy," Jay's smartly dressed automaton and veteran of hundreds of performances around the world in his stage show, "Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants." Named for the Viennese card artist Dr. Johan Nepomuk Hofzinger, Neppy performed a silent routine with his human partner. A card would be torn, handed to audience members, collected and restored by the bespoke Neppy, who stands on a small, red velvet stage.

Sotheby's priced Neppy at \$10,000 to \$15,000.

In all, Jay published 11 books that reflect his web of passions, from cards and curious characters to mysteries unraveled and the admired Buchinger. Jay lent the bulk of his Buchinger treasures to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for an exhibition in 2016 and wrote the catalog himself.

Perhaps just as telling of the collector as the collected, Kiffer pinpointed Jay's Buchinger fascination this way: "What he liked about figures like Buchinger wasn't how different they were but really how similar they were to other people."

Follow Leanne Italie on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/litalie>

Salvini on trial in Italy over 2019 migrant ship

PALERMO, Italy (AP) — Italy's right-wing former interior minister, Matteo Salvini, went on trial Saturday charged with kidnapping for refusing in 2019 to allow a Spanish migrant rescue ship to dock in Sicily, keeping the people onboard at sea for days.

It is the first trial to go ahead against Salvini for his actions preventing migrant landings while he served as interior minister from 2018-2019 in an uneasy coalition between the populist 5-Star Movement and his right-wing League.

Salvini was present for the opening day of the trial in Palermo, Sicily, which included procedural requests like witness lists. Among those being summoned is American actor Richard Gere, who visited the migrants aboard the Open Arms after seeing their plight while on a family vacation in Italy.

"It is surreal undergoing a trial because I did my job. I feel sorry because, I mean, tell me how serious can be a trial where Richard Gere will come from Hollywood to testify about my career," Salvini said.

Salvini was present for the opening day of the trial in Palermo, Sicily, which was expected to deal mostly with procedural requests. He has insisted he was fulfilling his duty by refusing entry to the Open Arms rescue ship, and the 147 people it had saved in the Mediterranean Sea off Libya.

Salvini took a hard line on migrant arrivals, blocking ships and pushing for Europe to take some of the burden off Italy.

Prosecutors accuse Salvini of dereliction of duty and kidnapping for refusing to allow the ship into port for days in August 2019. During the nearly three-week standoff, some migrants threw themselves overboard in desperation and the captain pleaded for a safe, nearby port. Some migrants were taken to land for humanitarian or health reasons, while the remaining 83 were eventually allowed to disembark in Lampedusa.

"We expect justice for the unnecessary suffering that all the people had in those 20 days," said the head of the Spanish NGO Open Arms, Oscar Camps.

A court in Catania, Sicily, earlier this year decided not to try Salvini in a similar case, for keeping 116 migrants on board an Italian coast guard ship at sea for five days, also in 2019.

Secrecy shrouds Afghan refugees sent by US to base in Kosovo

By BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. is welcoming tens of thousands of Afghans airlifted out of Kabul but has

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 36 of 88

disclosed little publicly about a small group who remain overseas: dozens who triggered potential security issues during security vetting and have been sent to an American base in the Balkan nation of Kosovo.

Human rights advocates have raised concerns about the Afghans diverted to Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo over the past six weeks, citing a lack of transparency about their status and the reasons for holding them back. It's unclear what might become of any who cannot be cleared to come to the United States.

"We are obviously concerned," said Jelena Sesar, a researcher for Amnesty International who specializes in the Balkans. "What really happens with these people, especially the people who don't pass security vetting? Are they going to be detained? Are they going to have any access to legal assistance? And what is the plan for them? Is there any risk of them ultimately being returned to Afghanistan?"

The Biden administration says it's too soon to answer some of these questions, at least publicly, as it works feverishly to resettle the Afghans who were evacuated following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August.

The lack of public information has made it a challenge for those who closely track the fate of refugees. "There's not a lot of transparency in terms of how the security check regime works," said Sunil Varghese, policy director for the International Refugee Assistance Project. "We don't know why people are being sent to Kosovo for additional screening, what that additional screening is, how long it will take."

So far, more than 66,000 Afghans have arrived in the U.S since Aug. 17, undergoing what the government portrays as a rigorous security vetting process to screen out national security threats from among a population that includes people who worked as interpreters for the American military as well as their own country's armed forces.

Of those, about 55,000 are at U.S. military bases around the country, where they complete immigration processing and medical evaluations and quarantine before settling in the United States. There are still 5,000 people from the evacuation at transit points in the Middle East and Europe, according to the Department of Homeland Security, which is managing the effort known as Operation Allies Welcome.

The resettlement effort is under intense scrutiny following waves of criticism of President Joe Biden for the frantic evacuation U.S. forces and allies as part of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was put in motion when President Donald Trump's administration signed a peace deal with the Taliban to end America's longest war.

Trump and other Republicans claim the Biden administration has allowed Afghan refugees into the United States without sufficient background checks. Homeland Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has defended the screening and said there have been only minimal threats detected among the arriving refugees.

The exact number at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, a small nation in southeastern Europe that gained independence from Serbia with U.S. support in 2008, fluctuates as new people arrive and others leave when security issues, such as missing documents, are resolved, according to U.S. officials.

The government of Kosovo, a close U.S. ally, has agreed to let the refugees stay in its territory for a year. The country also hosts a separate group at site adjacent to Bondsteel known as Camp Bechtel, where Afghans who worked for NATO nations during the war are staying temporarily until they are resettled in Europe.

For several weeks, there were about 30 Afghan evacuees, along with approximately 170 family members, at Camp Bondsteel because of red flags, according to one U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss information not publicly released.

They are in a kind of limbo because they aren't detained but they aren't necessarily free to leave either at this point.

They volunteered to be evacuated from Afghanistan but were flagged at one of the transit points in Europe or the Middle East and told they had to go to Kosovo. Some chose to bring their families with them while authorities work with analysts and other experts from the FBI, DHS and other agencies to resolve questions about their identity or past associations, said a senior administration official.

They are free to move about the the base but can't leave under conditions set by the government of Kosovo, said the senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss security and diplomatic issues.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 37 of 88

Those sent to Bondsteel are people who require "significant further consideration," involving analysis and interviews, before authorities feel comfortable allowing them to move on to the U.S., the senior administration official said.

In some cases, the analysis has led to a determination that they are "suitable for onward travel to the United States," while in others the "work remains ongoing" and their cases remain unresolved, said the senior administration official, without giving a precise breakdown on the numbers involved.

The U.S. has not sent anyone back to Afghanistan and will decide the fate of anyone who can't make it through the vetting process on an "individualized" basis, which in some cases might mean resettling them in another country, this official said.

In the meantime, though, Bondsteel remains off-limits to outsiders, including lawyers who might potentially represent people there if they aren't ultimately allowed to enter the U.S., a situation that doesn't sit right with advocates like Sesar. "There is not real access to the camp," she said. "There's no public or independent scrutiny of what happens in there."

Associated Press writer Lolita C. Baldor contributed.

Is there a constitutional right to food? Mainers to decide

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Depending on whom you ask, Maine's proposed "right to food" constitutional amendment would simply put people in charge of how and what they eat — or would endanger animals and food supplies, and turn urban neighborhoods into cattle pastures.

For supporters, the language is short and to the point, ensuring the right to grow vegetables and raise livestock in an era when corporatization threatens local ownership of the food supply, a constitutional experiment that has never been tried in any state.

For opponents and skeptics, it's deceptively vague, representing a threat to food safety and animal welfare, and could embolden residents to raise cows in their backyards in cities like Portland and Bangor.

In the Nov. 2 election, voters will be asked if they favor an amendment to the Maine Constitution "to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being."

The proposal is essentially "the 2nd Amendment of food," said Republican Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham, who proposed the amendment, likening it to the U.S. constitutional amendment that assures the right to bear arms.

He says it's a common-sense amendment that would make sure the government can't stop people from doing things like saving and exchanging seeds, as long as they don't violate public or property rights.

"There's a lot of disturbing trends in the food category, with the power and control that corporations are taking over our food," said Faulkingham, who is also a commercial lobster fisherman. "We want to protect people's ability to grow gardens, grow and raise their own food."

Faulkingham and others said the amendment is a response to growing corporate ownership of the food supply. They see the amendment as a way to wrest control of food from big landowners and giant retailers.

But Julie Ann Smith, executive director of the Maine Farm Bureau, the largest farmers advocacy organization in the state, argued the language of the amendment is so broad that it could make the food supply less safe.

That's a problem in a state where potatoes, blueberries, maple syrup and dairy products are all key pieces of the economy, she said. The amendment could empower residents to buy and consume food that isn't subject to inspections, proper refrigeration and other safety checks, Smith worried.

"We think it's very dangerous to have the words 'to consume the food of your own choosing.' That is so broad and dangerous," Smith said. "It has the potential to cause serious problems in food safety, animal welfare."

Smith said the farm bureau is also concerned that the amendment could override local ordinances that

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 38 of 88

prevent residents from raising livestock anywhere they choose.

Supporters of the proposal, including Faulkingham, said that local rules would still be enforced, and that the amendment would not mean you could do things like raise chickens anywhere you want or fish commercially without a license.

The amendment proposal is an outgrowth of the right-to-food movement, sometimes called the food sovereignty movement, which has expanded in recent years in Maine and states around the U.S. and Canada.

The movement comprises a patchwork of small farmers, raw milk enthusiasts, libertarians, back-to-the-land advocates, anti-corporatists and others who want to ensure local control of food systems.

Maine enacted a food sovereignty law, the nation's first of its kind, in 2017. The law allows local governments to OK small food producers selling directly to customers on site. The law was especially popular with sellers of raw milk, which can be legally sold in Maine but is more restricted in many other states.

The nationwide food sovereignty movement has yielded similar laws in states including Wyoming, Colorado, Montana and North Dakota, and pushes for the same elsewhere.

The amendment is likely to find support among Maine's self-sufficient, practical Yankee set, said Mark Brewer, a political scientist with the University of Maine.

However, Brewer agreed with criticism that the amendment is so vague that it's unclear what it would actually do.

"I'd be more interested in how it could play out in the courts," Brewer said. "If you want to raise cattle within the city limits when city laws say you can't, but the Constitution says you can. Then what happens?"

For Heather Retberg, a farmer in the small town of Penobscot, the concerns about cows turning up in cities are a silly distraction from the real goal of the proposal.

Retberg, who has a 100-acre farm with cows, pigs, chicken and goats, said the proposal is "an antidote to corporate control of our food supply" and a chance for rural communities to become self-sufficient when it comes to what food they grow and eat.

It's also a chance to tackle the problem of the state's "food deserts," where residents don't have enough access to healthy food, Retberg said.

"This shifts the power to the individuals in a rights framework, instead of the corporations," Retberg said. "It gives us more voice in how we want our food systems to be, and how we want our communities to look."

GOP uses voters to push election reforms in unlikely states

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Republicans have succeeded this year in passing a range of voting restrictions in states they control politically, from Georgia to Iowa to Texas. They're not stopping there.

Republicans in at least four states where Democrats control the governor's office, the legislature or both — California, Massachusetts, Michigan and Pennsylvania — are pursuing statewide ballot initiatives or veto-proof proposals to enact voter ID restrictions and other changes to election law.

In another state, Nebraska, Republicans control the governor's office and have a majority in the single-house legislature, but are pushing a voter ID ballot measure because they have been unable to get enough lawmakers on board.

Republicans say they are pursuing the changes in the name of "election integrity," and repeat similar slogans — "easier to vote, harder to cheat." Democrats dismiss it as the GOP following former President Donald Trump's false claims that widespread fraud cost him the election. They say Republicans have tried to whip up distrust in elections for political gain and are passing restrictions designed to keep Democratic-leaning voters from registering or casting a ballot.

"It's depressing that this is the way that (the Trump) wing of the Republican Party thinks they have to win, instead of trying to win on issues or beliefs," said Gus Bickford, the Democratic Party chairman in Massachusetts. "They just want to suppress the vote."

A common thread among the Republican proposals is toughening voter identification requirements, both for in-person and mail voting.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 39 of 88

In Michigan and Pennsylvania, Republicans are trying to get around Democratic governors who wield the veto pen. Wisconsin Republicans say they also are considering such a strategy.

In California and Massachusetts, Republicans are a minority in both houses of the legislature. In Republican-controlled Nebraska, the hang-up is an officially nonpartisan legislature where more liberal lawmakers can derail legislation that enjoys broad conservative support.

The road to gain voter approval is uphill in California and Massachusetts, but there's a clearer path to success in the other states.

The leader of the California effort, Carl DeMaio of Reform California, said his organization is pursuing a ballot initiative because Democratic lawmakers will never take up his group's proposals.

"That would mean they're validating Donald Trump, and they have so much hatred for Donald Trump that they don't even want to acknowledge that there's even a problem here," DeMaio said.

Trump's baseless election fraud claims aside, DeMaio said Trump's message is resonating with people who have had doubts about the election system based on their own experience, such as getting duplicate ballots mailed to them at home.

Voter fraud is exceedingly rare, and when it's attempted is typically caught by local election offices.

In any case, Democrats say voter ID laws will do nothing to prevent the little fraud that exists. Rather, it will serve only to force the elderly, poor and disabled to go to unnecessary lengths to get proper government-issued identification cards they may not have, they say.

Despite Trump's false claims of a stolen election, his own Justice Department and scores of recounts have debunked them, and courts up to the U.S. Supreme Court have swept aside such assertions. The government's own cybersecurity agency declared the 2020 presidential election the most secure in U.S. history.

No state legislature has produced evidence of widespread election fraud. Even so, at least 10 Republican-controlled states have enacted laws so far this year that toughen voter ID or signature requirements or pare back opportunities to register to vote or cast a ballot.

Putting voter-related matters to a statewide vote is nothing new.

In recent years, for example, voters in California and Florida restored felons' right to vote. In 2018, Michigan voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing people to register on Election Day and request absentee ballots without having to give a reason.

The difference this year is Republicans using the process in an attempt to enact restrictions they couldn't pass otherwise.

In California, Massachusetts and Nebraska, Republicans are trying to gather enough signatures to get their proposals on ballots in next year's general election.

In Michigan, Republicans are using an unusual provision in the state constitution to gather enough petition signatures so the GOP-controlled Legislature can pass a veto-proof voter ID bill.

Among other things, the Michigan initiative would prohibit sending mail-in ballot applications to people who did not request them, with backers saying it sowed confusion and mistrust in 2020.

"Democratic leadership is out of step with their voters," said Jamie Roe, a Republican campaign consultant and strategist with the Secure MI Vote initiative.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, is preparing to veto similar legislation on her desk, telling reporters this month that there was not one "scintilla" of evidence of widespread voting fraud in last year's election and that Republicans are simply unhappy over Trump's loss.

"Our elections work. You don't like the outcome? Well, then you run in the next election and try to win and earn people's votes — not cut out a segment of people that cast their ballot as Americans and have a right to do that," Whitmer said.

In Pennsylvania, which allows no direct access to the ballot for citizen initiatives, the earliest the Republican-controlled Legislature could put its election changes on the ballot — through a proposed constitutional amendment — is 2023.

The Pennsylvania proposal is among several that would go beyond changes to voter ID.

As Trump allies go state to state, pushing partisan reviews of last year's presidential election, the mea-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 40 of 88

sure in Pennsylvania would require election results to be audited by the state's auditor general. It would require paper ballots to bear a watermark and be open to "public inspection" after an election is certified.

The measure is awaiting a vote in the state House, perhaps as early as next week, before it can go to the Senate. Its sponsor, Republican Rep. Jeff Wheeland, said it will "give back to the voters surety" that their elections are safe and secure. Another Republican, Rep. Eric Nelson, said it would let voters "address what many feel is a frenzy of mistrust in our current election system."

Democratic Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta, referring to Trump's loss in the battleground state, said the only reason the measure is coming up "is because some are disappointed in the result of the election."

Under the proposed initiative in California, counties would be required to do more to clean up voter registration rolls, evaluate wait times for in-person voting in every election and show how they will fix "unreasonably long" waits.

In Nebraska, groups including Black Votes Matter and the League of Women Voters have joined forces to oppose the Republican-backed ballot initiative.

John Cartier, director of voting rights for Civic Nebraska, said the initiative would violate Nebraska's constitutional protections for voting access. He said there has never been a single conviction for voter impersonation fraud in the state's history.

Besides, he said, states such as Arizona and Georgia already have tough voter ID laws "and people don't really trust the system there," Cartier said. "So passage of a voter ID law doesn't do anything for trust. If anything, it hurts it."

Associated Press writer David Eggert in Lansing, Mich., contributed to this report. Follow Marc Levy on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/timelywriter>.

Biden to meet Pope Francis amid some rifts with US bishops

By DAVID CRARY and HOLLY MEYER Associated Press

There's an intriguing subplot to President Joe Biden's upcoming meeting with Pope Francis. The world's two most prominent Roman Catholics will be celebrating a shared outlook on church teaching and vital social issues even as Biden faces unwavering opposition from many U.S. Catholic bishops over his stances on abortion and LGBTQ rights.

Less than three weeks after Biden's visit to the Vatican on Friday, the American bishops will convene in Baltimore, with one of the agenda items inspired in part by conservatives who contend that Biden's support for abortion rights should disqualify him from receiving Communion. Though any document that emerges is not expected to mention Biden by name, it's possible there could be a clear message of rebuke.

"This is way beyond embarrassing," said Massimo Faggioli, a professor of historical theology at Villanova University who recently authored a book about Biden and Catholicism.

"For some of the bishops, it's an act of intimidation" toward Biden, Faggioli said. "And they have a pope who is protecting a Catholic president's access to the sacraments — he's had to send a signal from the Vatican saying, 'We don't think this is wise.'"

The pope upholds Catholic doctrine opposing abortion and same-sex marriage, but he has irked some conservative Catholics in the U.S. and elsewhere by emphasizing other issues that mesh with Biden's priorities — protecting the environment, combating racial injustice and poverty, for example.

The pope and Biden "see eye to eye on many issues," Faggioli said. "But they both are really embattled, facing very strong headwinds ... fighting against different kinds of ideologues."

Biden is only the second Catholic president of the United States., after John F. Kennedy, and displays his faith openly, often wearing a rosary and attending Mass routinely. The devotion dates to childhood; he has expressed gratitude to the nuns who helped bolster his confidence while he struggled with stuttering as a schoolboy.

"Wherever there were nuns, there was home," he wrote in his 2007 memoir "Promises to Keep." "My idea of self, of family, of community, of the wider world comes straight from my religion."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 41 of 88

His faith was tested, but not weakened, after his wife and baby daughter were killed in a traffic accident in 1972.

"I never doubted that there was a God, but I was angry with God," he told The Christian Science Monitor in 2007.

In that same interview, Biden conveyed why he considers himself a faithful Catholic despite his views on abortion.

"My views are totally consistent with Catholic social doctrine," Biden said. "There are elements within the church who say that if you are at odds with any of the teachings of the church, you are at odds with the church. I think the church is bigger than that."

Francis already has made clear he won't shun U.S. political leaders who support abortion rights. On Oct. 9 he met at the Vatican with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, whose abortion stance has drawn the wrath of the top Catholic in her hometown of San Francisco, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.

Cordileone has been urging the U.S. bishops conference to send a message to Biden, Pelosi and others "that would move them in their conscience."

"They need to understand the scandal that is caused when they say they are faithfully Catholic and yet oppose the church on such a basic concept," he told The Associated Press in April.

Under Catholic policy, decisions regarding exclusion from Communion are left to individual bishops. While Cordileone has discouraged Pelosi from receiving Communion in his archdiocese, Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the archbishop of Washington, has made clear that Biden is welcome to receive Communion when he attends services there.

Francis, asked last month whether Biden and like-minded politicians should be denied Communion, avoided a "yes" or "no" answer, saying bishops must minister to such people with "compassion and tenderness." He warned that clerics shouldn't let politics influence decisions about receiving Communion.

Abortion is not the only issue placing Biden in opposition to the U.S. bishops. He is a strong supporter of the proposed Equality Act, which would extend federal civil rights protections to LGBTQ people nationwide. The bishops say the bill, currently stalled in the Senate, would violate the religious freedom of churches and individuals opposed to same-sex marriage and various transgender-rights policies.

The meeting this coming week will be Biden's first encounter with Francis since becoming president, but he has met him three times before: first when Francis was inaugurated as pope in 2013; later during the pontiff's 2015 visit to the U.S.; and in 2016, when Biden visited the Vatican for a conference on regenerative medicine, where he spoke on cancer prevention.

Francis repeatedly reaffirmed his opposition to abortion in recent weeks, calling the procedure "murder" and defending the right of conscientious objectors to refuse to participate in it. He has likened abortion to "hiring a hitman" to solve a problem.

Chad Pecknold, a professor of theology at The Catholic University of America, doubts that the pope will confront Biden over his support for abortion rights, but said many Catholics — bishops included — may wish that would happen.

"I think the Catholic faithful have a right to hope for this, and to express their concern for the soul of Mr. Biden," Pecknold said.

The Biden-Francis visit "could actually highlight the urgent need to unite around a clear and coherent view of how the bishops should respond to politicians who publicly hold the Church's teaching in contempt while presenting themselves for Holy Communion," Pecknold added via email.

Steven Millies, a professor of public theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, said the meeting will affect the debate over abortion and Communion "in a way that will produce a lot of heat and very little light." He doubts Francis will see a need to discuss abortion with Biden.

"It's not going to get anybody anywhere," Millies said. "On the other hand, there's a great deal to be accomplished by focusing on areas of aligned concerned and shared interest."

When Kennedy became the first Catholic president in 1960, abortion was not the divisive issue that it is today. Not until 1973 was there a nationwide right to abortion, and Kennedy felt no pressure to take a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 42 of 88

public stance.

Anti-Catholic prejudice was common as Kennedy campaigned. Some Protestant ministers questioned whether he could maintain independence from the Catholic Church.

Unlike Biden, Kennedy enjoyed overwhelming support from Catholic voters, winning about 80% of their votes in 1960, according to researchers at Georgetown University. Biden was backed by about half of Catholic voters in the 2020 election.

AP News Researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

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Deal on Biden's \$2T plan edges closer; Harris is 'confident'

By LISA MASCARO, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A deal within reach, President Joe Biden and Congress' top Democrats edged close to sealing their giant domestic legislation, though the informal deadline appeared to slip as they worked to scale back the measure and determine how to pay for it.

Negotiations were expected to continue into the weekend, all sides indicating just a few issues remained unsettled in the sweeping package of social services and climate change strategies.

Biden met at the White House on Friday with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer joined by video call from New York, trying to shore up details. The leaders have been working with party moderates and progressives to shrink the once-\$3.5 trillion, 10-year package to around \$2 trillion in child care, health care and clean energy programs.

Pelosi said a deal was "very possible."

She told reporters back at the Capitol that more than 90% of the package was agreed to: The climate change components of the bill "are resolved," but outstanding questions remained on health care provisions.

Vice President Kamala Harris sounded even more certain. On a visit to New York City, she said tensions often rise over final details but "I am confident, frankly -- not only optimistic, but I am confident that we will reach a deal."

No agreement was announced by Friday's self-imposed deadline to at least agree on a basic outline. Biden wants a deal before he leaves next week for global summits in Europe.

Pelosi hoped the House could start voting as soon as next week, but no schedule was set.

Sticking points appear to include proposed corporate tax hikes to help finance the plan and an effort to lower prescription drug costs that has raised concerns from the pharmaceutical industry. Democrats are in search of a broad compromise between the party's progressives and moderates on the measure's price tag, revenue sources and basic components.

At the White House, the president has "rolled up his sleeves and is deep in the details of spreadsheets and numbers," press secretary Jen Psaki said.

Biden was to spend the weekend at his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

Psaki compared the work to starting Social Security and other major federal programs decades ago, then building on them in following years.

"Progress here is a historic package that will put in place systems and programs that have never existed in our society before," she said, noting the effort to expand child care and provide free prekindergarten for all youngsters.

Negotiations are proceeding as Biden more forcefully appeals to the American public, including in a televised town hall, for what he says are the middle-class values at the heart of his proposal.

In a Senate that is evenly divided between the Democrats and firmly opposed Republicans, Biden can't afford to lose a single vote. He is navigating his own party's factions — progressives, who want major investments in social services, and centrists, who prefer to see the overall price tag go down.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 43 of 88

"When you're president of the United States, you have 50 Democrats — every one is a president. Every single one. So you gotta work things out," he said during a CNN town hall Thursday.

Still, he expressed optimism about the process. "It's all about compromise. Compromise has become a dirty word, but bipartisanship and compromise still has to be possible," he said.

On one issue — the taxes to pay for the package — the White House idea seemed to be making headway with a new strategy of abandoning plans for reversing Trump-era tax cuts in favor of an approach that would involve imposing a 15% corporate minimum tax and also taxing the investment incomes of billionaires to help finance the deal.

Biden has faced resistance from key holdouts, in particular Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., who has not been on board with her party's plan to undo President Donald Trump's tax breaks for big corporations and individuals earning more than \$400,000 a year.

The president was unusually forthcoming Thursday night about the sticking points in the negotiations with Sinema and another Democrat, conservative Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

While the president said Sinema opposed raising "a single penny in taxes" on the wealthy or corporations, a White House official later clarified that the president was referring to raising the top tax rates, not the range of tax proposals "which Sen. Sinema supports."

If so, that could unlock a key piece of a deal. With a better understanding of the revenues available, Democrats can then develop a topline amount of spending for the package, and adjust the duration and sums for various programs accordingly.

Biden said Manchin doesn't want to "rush" the transition to clean energy so quickly it will result in major job losses in his coal-producing state.

Even still, Biden acknowledged major reductions to his original vision.

He signaled the final plan would no longer provide free community college, but said he hoped to increase Pell Grants to compensate for the loss of the policy.

He also said that what had been envisioned as a federally paid, months-long family leave program would be just four weeks.

Another work in progress — the idea of expanding Medicare to include dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors, is a priority for Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent of Vermont.

Biden said he likes the idea, but with Manchin and Sinema objecting, the proposal is "a reach."

Instead, Democrats, he said are considering offering seniors an \$800 voucher to access dental care as well as another program for hearing aids that Sinema may support. However, the vision care component, Biden said, has been harder to resolve and there is no consensus yet.

Overall, Biden and his party are trying to shore up middle-class households, tackle climate change and have the most wealthy Americans and corporations pay what he calls their "fair share" for the nation.

In the mix are at least \$500 billion in clean energy tax credits and other efforts to battle climate change, \$350 billion for child care subsidies and free prekindergarten, an extension of the \$300 monthly child tax credit put in place during the COVID-19 crisis, and money for health care provided through the Affordable Care Act.

The newly proposed tax provisions, though, have rankled Democrats who have long campaigned on scrapping the Republican-backed tax cuts that many believe unduly reward the wealthy and cost the government untold sums in lost revenue at a time of gaping income inequality. Many are furious that perhaps a lone senator could stymie that goal.

Under the changes being floated the 21% corporate rate would not change, nor would the top individual rate of 39.6% on those earning \$400,000, or \$450,000 for couples.

However, the White House is reviving the idea of a corporate minimum tax rate that would hit even companies that say they had no taxable income — a frequent target of Biden, who complains they pay "zero" in taxes.

The new tax on the wealthiest individuals would be modeled on legislation from Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. He has proposed taxing stock gains of people with more

than \$1 billion in assets — fewer than 1,000 Americans.

Associated Press writers Alex Jaffe, Kevin Freking and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Ukraine sees new record high in virus deaths, infections

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's coronavirus infections and deaths reached all-time highs for a second straight day Friday, in a growing challenge for the country with one of Europe's lowest shares of vaccinated people.

Ukrainian health authorities reported 23,785 new confirmed infections and 614 deaths in the past 24 hours.

Authorities in the capital, Kyiv, shut schools for two weeks starting Friday, and similar measures were ordered in other areas with high contagion levels.

Authorities have blamed surging infections on a sluggish pace of vaccination in the nation of 41 million. Ukrainians can freely choose between Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Sinovac vaccines, but only about 15% of the population is fully vaccinated, Europe's lowest level after Armenia.

Overall, the country has registered over 2.7 million infections and about 63,000 deaths.

The steep rise in contagion has prompted the government to tighten restrictions. Starting Thursday, proof of vaccination or a negative test is required to board planes, trains and long-distance buses.

In Rivne, 300 kilometers (190 miles) west of Kyiv, the city hospital is swamped with COVID-19 patients and doctors say the situation is worse than during the wave of infections early in the pandemic that severely strained the health system.

"The ... course of the disease is certainly more severe and more aggressive than last year. The patients have become younger," said Valentyn Koroliuk, head of the hospital's intensive-care unit. "Unfortunately, those patients who are in our department are not vaccinated."

Lilia Serdiuk, 61, is fighting COVID-19 and regretting that she did heed calls to get vaccinated.

"I didn't believe it, I didn't even want to watch the news," she told The Associated Press as she lay on her back in a narrow bed. "This disease exists and it is very terrible. I wish all people would listen to the news and the recommendations of doctors."

The hospital is near capacity and doctors worry the wave of patients will grow.

"What if there are even more patients? What if we don't have enough oxygen? This is constant stress," said doctor Tetiana Pasichnyk.

A black market for counterfeit vaccination certificates has blossomed amid the restrictions, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy chaired a meeting earlier this week on ways of combating the illegal practice.

Interior Minister Denys Monastyrsky said police have opened 800 criminal cases concerning the use of such certificates, adding that the ministry deployed 100 mobile units to track down their holders, who would face severe punishment.

He said that a former lawmaker, Nadiya Savchenko, produced a fake proof of vaccination as she returned to Ukraine Friday.

Police said they suspect workers at 15 hospitals across the country of involvement in issuing false vaccination certificates.

To encourage vaccination, authorities have started offering shots in shopping malls. As infections soared, skeptical attitudes began to change and a record number of more than 270,000 people received vaccines over the past 24 hours.

Evgeny Maloletka in Rivne, Ukraine, contributed.

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García, Alvarez help Astros oust Red Sox, reach World Series

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 45 of 88

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Two of the youngest Houston Astros stars helped one of baseball's oldest managers get another shot at a most elusive title.

Rookie Luis García showed the poise of an October ace, MVP Yordan Alvarez did more damage at the plate and the Astros earned yet another trip to the World Series, beating the Boston Red Sox 5-0 Friday night in Game 6 of the AL Championship Series.

García and Alvarez, both 24 and ascending, and 72-year-old manager Dusty Baker will open the World Series on Tuesday night, either at Dodger Stadium or home against Atlanta. The Braves lead Los Angeles 3-2 in the NL Championship Series going into Game 6 Saturday night.

"There's four more wins on the board out there," Baker said. "There's four more wins you've got to get."

The Astros advanced to the World Series for the third time in five seasons. They won the championship in 2017, a crown tainted by the team's sign-stealing scandal, before losing to the Washington Nationals in seven games in 2019.

García pitched no-hit ball into the sixth inning, leaving to a huge ovation with two outs after a triple by Kiké Hernández. It was an impressive bounce-back performance for García, who started Game 2 and gave up a grand slam in the first inning before leaving with no outs in the second because of discomfort in his right knee.

"I know I'm a rookie but I know what I can do and that's what I did tonight," García said.

Alvarez continued his scorching streak, a year after watching at home after surgery to both knees as the Astros came one game shy of reaching the World Series. The slugging designated hitter went 4 for 4, including a triple and two doubles. He led a Game 5 win with three hits and three RBIs.

Alvarez hit an ALCS-record .522 (12 for 23) with one homer, three doubles, the triple and six RBIs in Houston's six-game victory. He got nine hits in his last 13 at-bats.

Catcher Martín Maldonado made the defensive play of the game on a strikeout-throwout double play to end the seventh with Houston ahead 2-0.

It will be Baker's second trip to the Fall Classic as a manager and first since leading the San Francisco Giants to the NL pennant in 2002. As a player, he went three times with the Dodgers, winning it all in 1981.

"Hey, I'm going back to the World Series!" Baker told a cheering crowd at Minute Maid Park.

For Houston, it was a team victory featuring all facets of the game it used in taking the AL West title and beating the Chicago White Sox in the AL Division Series. The Astros won the clincher, too, without a hit from stars Jose Altuve and Carlos Correa — Alex Bregman got two hits and scored a run.

"We have a little bit of everything," Altuve said.

Boston's best shot to score came in the seventh. The wild-card Red Sox had runners at first and third with one out in after a single by Alex Verdugo. But Kendall Graveman struck out pinch-hitter Travis Shaw and Maldonado made a perfect throw to Correa, who was covering second, to beat Verdugo there and end the inning.

Maldonado beat his chest with glee as Graveman and Correa both pumped their fists in celebration to roars from the crowd of 42,718.

Kyle Tucker broke it open with a three-run homer with two outs in the eighth. Television cameras flashed to Houston's Hall of Fame duo of Craig Biggio and Jeff Bagwell, who stood together and cheered as Tucker rounded the bases.

Asked to describe these Astros, Biggio, who led the team to its first World Series said simply: "They're just good."

Ryan Pressly closed it out in the ninth. The Red Sox, who looked so formidable at the plate at the start of the season, were held to two hits in their final game.

"I think we're definitely disappointed right now," Red Sox starter Nathan Eovaldi said. "We obviously wanted to win this game and win the series and go on to the World Series. No one expected us to be here. We proved a lot of people wrong."

Bregman singled with two outs in the first before the double by Alvarez put the Astros up 1-0. Hernández

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 46 of 88

was in position to make the catch, but it hit off his arm below his glove and dropped in for the hit.

Consecutive romps by Boston and its bashers made it appear that the Red Sox were in complete control of the series after Game 3, but as the long fly by Alvarez proved, they didn't have a firm grip on things.

The Astros, buoyed by their young pitchers and rediscovered offense, won the next two games by a combined 18-3 to return home a win away from a World Series.

"It's a relentless team," Correa said. "We stick together. We're a family. We fight back and we never give up."

Framber Valdez pitched the Astros to a Game 5 win at Fenway Park, then their rising stars, García and Alvarez, did the rest.

Alvarez tripled with no outs in the sixth to chase Josh Taylor and Tanner Houck plunked Correa. Tucker then smacked a grounder right at first baseman Kyle Schwarber who tagged Correa for the unassisted double play as Alvarez slid safely into home to make it 2-0.

Eovaldi got the win in a solid Game 2 start but was charged with the loss in Game 4 after giving up the go-ahead runs after coming in with the game tied in the ninth.

On Friday, he permitted five hits and one run as the Red Sox lost a playoff game when started for the first time after entering the game 5-0 in his starts.

García was the first pitcher to take a no-hitter into sixth of a potential playoff clincher since the Mets' Noah Syndergaard got two outs in sixth against the Giants in 2016 NL wild-card game.

García allowed Schwarber to reach on a wild pitch after a strikeout to open the game and walked Verdugo with one out in the second. He settled in after that, sitting down the next 13 with five strikeouts, before Hernández got Boston's first hit on a triple with two outs in the sixth. García finished with seven strikeouts.

Phil Maton took over and retired Rafael Devers to end the inning.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Boston manager Alex Cora has heard the speculation that the Astros are relaying signs from the bases and said the Red Sox protect themselves against that.

"It's not about technology or other stuff," Cora said. "There's stuff that happens on the field that you have to be guarded. The same way that teams play defense against us, we play defense against other teams. Not only them we did it against the Yankees, we did it against the Rays. It's the nature of the game. We're prepared for that."

Cora knows better than most about Houston's sign-stealing history having been the team's bench coach during the 2017 season when they were found to have violated rules by using a television camera to steal catchers' signs.

UP NEXT

The Astros will make their fourth World Series appearance. They lost in their first try, swept by the White Sox in 2005.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/hub/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Child tax credit tussle reflects debate over work incentives

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — To supporters of the child tax credit, there has always been an "aha moment" — the recognition that as little as a few hundred dollars a month could be life-changing.

For Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet, it was several years ago when he was working as Denver's school superintendent. One high schooler kept falling asleep in morning classes. When Bennet asked why he was so exhausted, the student said he worked the midnight shift at McDonald's so that his family had enough money.

For Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro, it was the childhood memory of her parents being evicted and finding their furniture on the street.

Bennet and DeLauro are among the Democratic lawmakers who have pushed to make permanent an

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 47 of 88

expanded child tax credit, which President Joe Biden's coronavirus relief package transformed into a monthly payment that would be available to almost any child. But Biden could not convince even enough of his fellow Democrats that they should extend these payments through 2025, and in negotiations for his broader package of economic and social programs he appears to have settled for a one-year extension that runs through next year.

Despite the concession, the president is still fighting for a legacy-making policy that could become the equivalent of Social Security for children. Biden dubbed the start of payments in July as "historic," saying that the reduction to child poverty would be transformative and that he intended to make the credit permanent.

The steady evolution of the child tax credit reflects a fundamental split on how lawmakers think about human nature. Do payments from the government make people lazier or give them the resources to become more responsible? Established with bipartisan support in 1997, the credit has changed in ways that challenge many of the assumptions of political identities, as Democrats would be the ones calling on Republicans to cut taxes.

Republican critics and West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin — the decisive Democratic vote — worry that the payments could discourage parents from working, while supporters say the money would make it easier to afford the child care and transportation needed to find jobs.

"It's a flat-out tax cut for ordinary people," Biden said in a Wednesday speech in Scranton. "That's what it does. I make no apologies for it."

The continuation of the payments of at least \$300 a month per child is as much about a political transformation as an economic one.

For the purposes of the federal budget, it is a tax cut aimed squarely at the middle class as median family incomes are at \$86,372. The credit's evolution since being created in 1997 speaks to the power of using the tax code for social policy.

It allows Democrats to claim the mantle of middle-class tax cutters, while Republicans who oppose the idea could be criticized for favoring tax hikes on this key group of voters ahead of the 2022 elections. That is a sharp reversal from the Ronald Reagan-era identity of Republicans as committed to tax cuts for aiding growth.

"A lot of its initial success was that it did fit into the frame of tax relief," said Gene Sperling, a Biden aide who worked on economic policy in both the Clinton and Obama White Houses. "This is one place where progressives have over a period of 30 years kind of won the conceptual war."

The child tax credit was initially bipartisan, a unique policy overlap between former President Bill Clinton and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Republicans made it part of their 1994 "Contract with America," a list of policies that former Georgia Rep. Gingrich rode to the House speakership. Gingrich said in an interview that former Illinois Rep. Henry Hyde, a staunch abortion opponent, emphasized that the GOP needed to show that it cared about children after they were born, not just when they were in the womb. The tax credit was the chosen vehicle.

Clinton separately proposed it in December 1994 in his "middle class bill of rights" speech. The convergence ultimately led to the 1997 overhaul of welfare that established a \$500 tax credit for children. Future administrations expanded the credit. But until this year the credit was not "fully refundable" — which meant that parents with low incomes might not earn enough to receive the full payment.

What Biden and Democratic lawmakers did with their coronavirus relief package was remove that limit, effectively turning the tax credit into a monthly child allowance. Their planned extension would make this change permanent.

Gingrich and Republicans say people would quit their jobs because they would be able to receive payments without working, depriving children of working parents who can serve as role models.

He calls that "an enormously dangerous thing for our culture."

Backing that argument is a paper by University of Chicago economists that assumes the expanded tax credits would cause 1.5 million parents to ditch their jobs because the credits would no longer be tied to working.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 48 of 88

"It's a policy that's been transformed from one that encourages self reliance and work to one that doesn't," said Bruce Meyer, the University of Chicago professor who co-wrote the analysis.

However, real world economic data shows no correlation between the payments and people leaving work so far. Researchers at Columbia University have found that the expanded child tax credit payments that began in July had no impact on labor and that models claiming otherwise are overly simplified. Workers often need to spend money in order to get a job, they reason.

"You have to make an investment in order to be able to work," said Elizabeth Ananat, an economist at Barnard College who co-wrote the Columbia paper. "You do have to get your car fixed. You have to get your phone turned back on. You have to buy a month supply of diapers in order to secure your spot in the preschool."

Democratic lawmakers believe the payments reduce poverty and improve educational outcomes, making it more likely that the children will hold steady jobs as adults.

Colorado Sen. Bennet backed the idea of a child tax credit after he found as a school administrator that more resources were needed to ensure kids had the stability to succeed.

"Most of the parents are working incredibly hard, some of them working two and three jobs. And no matter what they do, they couldn't keep the kids out of poverty," Bennet said.

DeLauro says the breakthrough on expanding the credit came as a result of the coronavirus showing how economically fragile many families are and Biden's own choice as a presidential candidate to support the policy. She believes that beneficiaries will keep their jobs because work is part of who they are.

"People identify themselves by their work," she said.

What's in, and what's out, as Democrats reshape Biden bill

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After months of talks, Democrats are edging closer to an agreement on what programs and policies to include in President Joe Biden's massive plan to expand health and safety net programs and combat global warming.

The plan seems likely to include universal preschool, paid family leave and the continuation of a child tax credit that was increased earlier this year and applied to more families. Democrats are scaling back some investments or shortening the timeframe for when those programs would be up and running to fit within an approximately \$2 trillion budget over 10 years, rather than the \$3.5 trillion budget plan originally envisioned.

Still, Democrats are hoping the programs will prove so popular that future Congresses will continue to fund them in the years ahead. It seems unlikely that any Republican will support the measure.

Negotiations are fluid and the package is very much in flux. It also won't be possible to fully assess the details until legislative text is released. But here's where the bill stands so far, according to lawmakers and aides:

— A child tax credit increase would continue for another year. As part of a COVID relief bill, Democrats increased the tax credit to \$3,000 per child age 6-17 and \$3,600 per child age 5 and under. Limiting the program to one year would disappoint many of its backers, but they are hoping the program's popularity will move Congress to extend it in the years ahead. Budget hawks worry that a one-year extension is a budgetary tool that will lower the cost of the program on paper, but mask its true costs since lawmakers tend to continue programs rather than let them expire.

— Plans to expand Medicare to include dental, vision and hearing aids are being pared back. Biden said he likes the idea, but with Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona objecting, the proposal is "a reach." Instead, Democrats, he said are looking at offering seniors an \$800 voucher to access dental care as well as another program for hearing aids that Sinema may support. However, the vision care component, Biden said, has been harder to resolve and there is no consensus yet.

— Expanding Medicaid in about a dozen states and providing subsidies that reduce a participant's cost of "Obamacare" plans are also still part of the mix. The Congressional Budget Office estimates the health

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 49 of 88

insurance components in the bill would reduce the number of uninsured by about 3.9 million people over the next decade. Big boosts in Medicaid and Affordable Care Act plans would be partly offset by a 2.8 million decrease in employment-based coverage.

— The U.S. would join a long list of nations with a paid family leave program allowing workers to take time off for childbirth, to care for a new child or to deal with a serious health issue of a family member. But the 12 weeks of paid time off that Biden had proposed will likely be pared back four, he said.

— Universal prekindergarten for all 3- and 4-year-olds and child-care subsidies for poorer and middle-income Americans are still in. Biden's plan calls for parents earning up to 150% of the state's median income (about \$115,000 nationally) to pay no more than 7% of their income on child care, with the poorest families getting free child care. He has proposed a tax credit for as much as half of a family's spending on child care, up to \$4,000 for one child or \$8,000 for two or more children.

— Free community college is probably out, though Biden is looking to increase the size of Pell grants to help pay tuition costs.

— It's also looking like a program considered a cornerstone of Biden's plan to fight climate change is out, largely due to opposition from Manchin. That program would have offered grants to power companies that increase clean energy generation by 4% each year and fines for those that do not. Still, hundreds of billions of dollars are expected to be included for programs designed to help the U.S. meet Biden's goal of a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas pollution in 2030 from 2005 levels.

Amid the Capitol riot, Facebook faced its own insurrection

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As supporters of Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6th, battling police and forcing lawmakers into hiding, an insurrection of a different kind was taking place inside the world's largest social media company.

Thousands of miles away, in California, Facebook engineers were racing to tweak internal controls to slow the spread of misinformation and inciteful content. Emergency actions — some of which were rolled back after the 2020 election — included banning Trump, freezing comments in groups with a record for hate speech, filtering out the "Stop the Steal" rallying cry and empowering content moderators to act more assertively by labeling the U.S. a "Temporary High Risk Location" for political violence.

At the same time, frustration inside Facebook erupted over what some saw as the company's halting and inconsistent response to rising extremism in the U.S.

"Haven't we had enough time to figure out how to manage discourse without enabling violence?" one employee wrote on an internal message board at the height of the Jan. 6 turmoil. "We've been fueling this fire for a long time and we shouldn't be surprised it's now out of control."

It's a question that still hangs over the company today, as Congress and regulators investigate Facebook's part in the Jan. 6 riots.

New internal documents provided by former Facebook employee-turned-whistleblower Frances Haugen provide a rare glimpse into how the company appears to have simply stumbled into the Jan. 6 riot. It quickly became clear that even after years under the microscope for insufficiently policing its platform, the social network had missed how riot participants spent weeks vowing — on Facebook itself — to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's election victory.

The documents also appear to bolster Haugen's claim that Facebook put its growth and profits ahead of public safety, opening the clearest window yet into how Facebook's conflicting impulses — to safeguard its business and protect democracy — clashed in the days and weeks leading up to the attempted Jan. 6 coup.

This story is based in part on disclosures Haugen made to the Securities and Exchange Commission and provided to Congress in redacted form by Haugen's legal counsel. The redacted versions received by Congress were obtained by a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press.

What Facebook called "Break the Glass" emergency measures put in place on Jan. 6 were essentially a toolkit of options designed to stem the spread of dangerous or violent content that the social network had

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 50 of 88

first used in the run-up to the bitter 2020 election. As many as 22 of those measures were rolled back at some point after the election, according to an internal spreadsheet analyzing the company's response.

"As soon as the election was over, they turned them back off or they changed the settings back to what they were before, to prioritize growth over safety," Haugen said in an interview with "60 Minutes."

An internal Facebook report following Jan. 6, previously reported by BuzzFeed, faulted the company for having a "piecemeal" approach to the rapid growth of "Stop the Steal" pages, related misinformation sources, and violent and inciteful comments.

Facebook says the situation is more nuanced and that it carefully calibrates its controls to react quickly to spikes in hateful and violent content, as it did on Jan 6. The company said it's not responsible for the actions of the rioters and that having stricter controls in place prior to that day wouldn't have helped.

Facebook's decisions to phase certain safety measures in or out took into account signals from the Facebook platform as well as information from law enforcement, said spokeswoman Dani Lever. "When those signals changed, so did the measures."

Lever said some of the measures stayed in place well into February and others remain active today.

Some employees were unhappy with Facebook's managing of problematic content even before the Jan. 6 riots. One employee who departed the company in 2020 left a long note charging that promising new tools, backed by strong research, were being constrained by Facebook for "fears of public and policy stakeholder responses" (translation: concerns about negative reactions from Trump allies and investors).

"Similarly (though even more concerning), I've seen already built & functioning safeguards being rolled back for the same reasons," wrote the employee, whose name is blacked out.

Research conducted by Facebook well before the 2020 campaign left little doubt that its algorithm could pose a serious danger of spreading misinformation and potentially radicalizing users.

One 2019 study, entitled "Carol's Journey to QAnon—A Test User Study of Misinfo & Polarization Risks Encountered through Recommendation Systems," described results of an experiment conducted with a test account established to reflect the views of a prototypical "strong conservative" — but not extremist — 41-year North Carolina woman. This test account, using the fake name Carol Smith, indicated a preference for mainstream news sources like Fox News, followed humor groups that mocked liberals, embraced Christianity and was a fan of Melania Trump.

Within a single day, page recommendations for this account generated by Facebook itself had evolved to a "quite troubling, polarizing state," the study found. By day 2, the algorithm was recommending more extremist content, including a QAnon-linked group, which the fake user didn't join because she wasn't innately drawn to conspiracy theories.

A week later the test subject's feed featured "a barrage of extreme, conspiratorial and graphic content," including posts reviving the false Obama birther lie and linking the Clintons to the murder of a former Arkansas state senator. Much of the content was pushed by dubious groups run from abroad or by administrators with a track record for violating Facebook's rules on bot activity.

Those results led the researcher, whose name was redacted by the whistleblower, to recommend safety measures running from removing content with known conspiracy references and disabling "top contributor" badges for misinformation commenters to lowering the threshold number of followers required before Facebook verifies a page administrator's identity.

Among the other Facebook employees who read the research the response was almost universally supportive.

"Hey! This is such a thorough and well-outlined (and disturbing) study," one user wrote, their name blacked out by the whistleblower. "Do you know of any concrete changes that came out of this?"

Facebook said the study was an one of many examples of its commitment to continually studying and improving its platform.

Another study turned over to congressional investigators, titled "Understanding the Dangers of Harmful Topic Communities," discussed how like-minded individuals embracing a borderline topic or identity can form "echo chambers" for misinformation that normalizes harmful attitudes, spurs radicalization and can even provide a justification for violence.

Examples of such harmful communities include QAnon and, hate groups promoting theories of a race war.

"The risk of offline violence or harm becomes more likely when like-minded individuals come together and support one another to act," the study concludes.

Charging documents filed by federal prosecutors against those alleged to have stormed the Capitol have examples of such like-minded people coming together.

Prosecutors say a reputed leader in the Oath Keepers militia group used Facebook to discuss forming an "alliance" and coordinating plans with another extremist group, the Proud Boys, ahead of the riot at the Capitol.

"We have decided to work together and shut this s—t down," Kelly Meggs, described by authorities as the leader of the Florida chapter of the Oath Keepers, wrote on Facebook, according to court records.

FDA says Pfizer COVID vaccine looks effective for young kids

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

Federal health regulators said late Friday that kid-size doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine appear highly effective at preventing symptomatic infections in elementary school children and caused no unexpected safety issues, as the U.S. weighs beginning vaccinations in youngsters.

The Food and Drug Administration posted its analysis of Pfizer's data ahead of a public meeting next week to debate whether the shots are ready for the nation's roughly 28 million children ages 5 to 11. The agency will ask a panel of outside vaccine experts to vote on that question.

In their analysis, FDA scientists concluded that in almost every scenario the vaccine's benefit for preventing hospitalizations and death from COVID-19 would outweigh any serious potential side effects in children. But agency reviewers stopped short of calling for Pfizer's shot to be authorized.

The agency will put that question to its panel of independent advisers next Tuesday and weigh their advice before making its own decision.

If the FDA authorizes the shots, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will make additional recommendations on who should receive them the first week of November. Children could begin vaccinations early next month -- with the first youngsters in line fully protected by Christmas.

Full-strength Pfizer shots already are recommended for anyone 12 or older, but pediatricians and many parents are anxiously awaiting protection for younger children to stem infections from the extra-contagious delta variant and help keep kids in school.

The FDA review affirmed results from Pfizer posted earlier in the day showing the two-dose shot was nearly 91% effective at preventing symptomatic infection in young children. Researchers calculated the figure based on 16 COVID-19 cases in youngsters given dummy shots versus three cases among vaccinated children. There were no severe illnesses reported among any of the youngsters, but the vaccinated ones had much milder symptoms than their unvaccinated counterparts.

Most of the study data was collected in the U.S. during August and September, when the delta variant had become the dominant COVID-19 strain.

The FDA review found no new or unexpected side effects. Those that did occur mostly consisted of sore arms, fever or achiness.

However, FDA scientists noted that the study wasn't large enough to detect extremely rare side effects, including myocarditis, a type of heart inflammation that occasionally occurs after the second dose.

The agency used statistical modeling to try to predict how many hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 the vaccine would prevent versus the number of potential heart side effects it might cause. In four scenarios of the pandemic, the vaccine clearly prevented more hospitalizations than would be expected from the heart side effect. Only when virus cases were extremely low could the vaccine cause more hospitalizations than it would prevent. But overall, regulators concluded that the vaccine's protective benefits "would clearly outweigh" its risks.

While children run a lower risk of severe illness or death than older people, COVID-19 has killed more than 630 Americans 18 and under, according to the CDC. Nearly 6.2 million children have been infected with the coronavirus, more than 1.1 million in the last six weeks as the delta variant surged, the American

Academy of Pediatrics says.

The Biden administration has purchased enough kid-size doses — in special orange-capped vials to distinguish them from adult vaccine — for the nation's 5- to 11-year-olds. If the vaccine is cleared, millions of doses will be promptly shipped around the country, along with kid-size needles.

More than 25,000 pediatricians and primary care providers already have signed up to get the shots into little arms.

AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner contributed to this story.

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Warrant: Baldwin didn't know weapon contained live round

By MORGAN LEE, SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN and CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — An assistant director unwittingly handed Alec Baldwin a loaded weapon and told him it was safe to use in the moments before the actor fatally shot a cinematographer, court records released Friday show.

"Cold gun," the assistant director announced, according to a search warrant filed in a Santa Fe court.

Instead, the gun was loaded with live rounds, and when Baldwin pulled the trigger Thursday on the set of a Western, he killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins. Director Joel Souza, who was standing behind her, was wounded, the records said.

The Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office obtained the warrant Friday so investigators could document the scene at the ranch outside Santa Fe where the shooting took place. They sought to examine Baldwin's blood-stained costume for the film "Rust," as well as the weapon that was fired, other prop guns and ammunition, and any footage that might exist.

The gun was one of three that the film's armorer, Hannah Gutierrez, had set on a cart outside the wooden structure where a scene was being acted, according to the records. Assistant director Dave Halls grabbed the gun from the cart and brought it inside to Baldwin, unaware that it was loaded with live rounds, a detective wrote in the search warrant application.

It was unclear how many rounds were fired. Gutierrez removed a shell casing from the gun after the shooting, and she turned the weapon over to police when they arrived, the court records say.

Halls did not immediately return phone and email messages seeking comment. The Associated Press was unable to contact Gutierrez, and several messages sent to production companies affiliated with the film were not immediately returned Friday.

The film's script supervisor, Mamie Mitchell, said she was standing next to Hutchins when she was shot.

"I ran out and called 911 and said 'Bring everybody, send everybody,'" Mitchell told The Associated Press. "This woman is gone at the beginning of her career. She was an extraordinary, rare, very rare woman."

Mitchell said she and other crew members were attending a private memorial service Friday night in Santa Fe.

Baldwin described the killing as a "tragic accident."

"There are no words to convey my shock and sadness regarding the tragic accident that took the life of Halyna Hutchins, a wife, mother and deeply admired colleague of ours. I'm fully cooperating with the police investigation," Baldwin wrote on Twitter. "My heart is broken for her husband, their son, and all who knew and loved Halyna."

No immediate charges were filed, and sheriff's spokesman Juan Rios said Baldwin was permitted to travel.

"He's a free man," Rios said.

Images of the 63-year-old actor — known for his roles in "30 Rock" and "The Hunt for Red October" and his impression of former President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live" — showed him distraught outside the sheriff's office on Thursday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 53 of 88

Guns used in making movies are sometimes real weapons that can fire either bullets or blanks, which are gunpowder charges that produce a flash and a bang but no deadly projectile. Even blanks can eject hot gases and paper or plastic wadding from the barrel that can be lethal at close range. That proved to be the case in the death of an actor in 1984.

In another on-set accident in 1993, the actor Brandon Lee was killed after a bullet was left in a prop gun, and similar shootings have occurred involving stage weapons that were loaded with live rounds.

Gun-safety protocol on sets in the United States has improved since then, said Steven Hall, a veteran director of photography in Britain. But he said one of the riskiest positions to be in is behind the camera because that person is in the line of fire in scenes where an actor appears to point a gun at the audience.

Sheriff's deputies responded about 2 p.m. to the movie set at the Bonanza Creek Ranch after 911 calls described a person being shot there, Rios said. The ranch has been used in dozens of films, including the recent Tom Hanks Western "News of the World."

Hutchins, 42, worked as director of photography on the 2020 action film "Archenemy" starring Joe Manganiello. She was a 2015 graduate of the American Film Institute and was named a "rising star" by American Cinematographer in 2019.

"I'm so sad about losing Halyna. And so infuriated that this could happen on a set," said "Archenemy" director Adam Egypt Mortimer on Twitter. "She was a brilliant talent who was absolutely committed to art and to film."

Manganiello called Hutchins "an incredible talent" and "a great person" on his Instagram account. He said he was lucky to have worked with her.

After the shooting, production was halted on "Rust." The movie is about a 13-year-old boy who is left to fend for himself and his younger brother following the death of their parents in 1880s Kansas, according to the Internet Movie Database website. The teen goes on the run with his long-estranged grandfather (played by Baldwin) after the boy is sentenced to hang for the accidental killing of a local rancher.

Lee, son of martial arts star Bruce Lee, died in 1993 after being hit by a .44-caliber slug while filming a death scene for the movie "The Crow." The gun was supposed to have fired a blank, but an autopsy turned up a bullet lodged near his spine.

In 1984, actor Jon-Erik Hexum died after shooting himself in the head with a prop gun blank while pretending to play Russian roulette with a .44 Magnum on the set of the television series "Cover Up."

Such shootings have also happened during historical reenactments. In 2015, an actor staging a historical gunfight in Tombstone, Arizona, was shot and wounded with a live round during a show that was supposed to use blanks.

In Hill City, South Dakota, a tourist town that recreates an Old West experience, three spectators were wounded in 2011 when a re-enactor fired real bullets instead of blanks.

Associated Press writers Jake Coyle and Jocelyn Noveck in New York; Lizzie Knight in London; Yuras Karmanau in Kyiv, Ukraine; Ryan Pearson in Los Angeles; Walter Berry in Phoenix; and Gene Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

Deal seems near on \$2T Biden package, though deadline slips

By LISA MASCARO, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A deal within reach, President Joe Biden and Congress' top Democrats edged close to sealing their giant domestic legislation Friday, though the day's informal deadline appeared to slip as they worked to scale back the measure and determine how to pay for it.

Negotiations were expected to continue into the weekend, all sides indicating just a few issues remained unsettled in the sweeping package of social services and climate change strategies.

Biden met at the White House Friday with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer joined by video call from New York, trying to shore up details. The leaders have been working with party moderates and progressives to shrink the once-\$3.5 trillion, 10-year package to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 54 of 88

around \$2 trillion in child care, health care and clean energy programs.

Pelosi said a deal was "very possible."

She told reporters back at the Capitol that more than 90% of the package was agreed to: The climate change components of the bill "are resolved," but outstanding questions remained on health care provisions.

Vice President Kamala Harris sounded even more certain. On a visit to New York City, she said tensions often rise over final details but "I am confident, frankly -- not only optimistic, but I am confident that we will reach a deal."

No agreement was announced by Friday's self-imposed deadline to at least agree on a basic outline. Biden wants a deal before he leaves next week for global summits in Europe.

Pelosi hoped the House could start voting as soon as next week, but no schedule was set.

Sticking points appear to include proposed corporate tax hikes to help finance the plan and an effort to lower prescription drug costs that has raised concerns from the pharmaceutical industry. Democrats are in search of a broad compromise between the party's progressives and moderates on the measure's price tag, revenue sources and basic components.

At the White House, the president has "rolled up his sleeves and is deep in the details of spreadsheets and numbers," press secretary Jen Psaki said.

Biden was to spend the weekend at his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

Psaki compared the work to starting Social Security and other major federal programs decades ago, then building on them in following years.

"Progress here is a historic package that will put in place systems and programs that have never existed in our society before," she said, noting the effort to expand child care and provide free prekindergarten for all youngsters.

Negotiations are proceeding as Biden more forcefully appeals to the American public, including in a televised town hall, for what he says are the middle-class values at the heart of his proposal.

In a Senate that is evenly divided between the Democrats and firmly opposed Republicans, Biden can't afford to lose a single vote. He is navigating his own party's factions — progressives, who want major investments in social services, and centrists, who prefer to see the overall price tag go down.

"When you're president of the United States, you have 50 Democrats — every one is a president. Every single one. So you gotta work things out," he said during a CNN town hall Thursday.

Still, he expressed optimism about the process. "It's all about compromise. Compromise has become a dirty word, but bipartisanship and compromise still has to be possible," he said.

On one issue — the taxes to pay for the package — the White House idea seemed to be making headway with a new strategy of abandoning plans for reversing Trump-era tax cuts in favor of an approach that would involve imposing a 15% corporate minimum tax and also taxing the investment incomes of billionaires to help finance the deal.

Biden has faced resistance from key holdouts, in particular Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., who has not been on board with her party's plan to undo President Donald Trump's tax breaks for big corporations and individuals earning more than \$400,000 a year.

The president was unusually forthcoming Thursday night about the sticking points in the negotiations with Sinema and another Democrat, conservative Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

While the president said Sinema opposed raising "a single penny in taxes" on the wealthy or corporations, a White House official later clarified that the president was referring to raising the top tax rates, not the range of tax proposals "which Sen. Sinema supports."

If so, that could unlock a key piece of a deal. With a better understanding of the revenues available, Democrats can then develop a topline amount of spending for the package, and adjust the duration and sums for various programs accordingly.

Biden said Manchin doesn't want to "rush" the transition to clean energy so quickly it will result in major job losses in his coal-producing state.

Even still, Biden acknowledged major reductions to his original vision.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 55 of 88

He signaled the final plan would no longer provide free community college, but said he hoped to increase Pell Grants to compensate for the loss of the policy.

He also said that what had been envisioned as a federally paid, months-long family leave program would be just four weeks.

Another work in progress — the idea of expanding Medicare to include dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors, is a priority for Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent of Vermont.

Biden said he likes the idea, but with Manchin and Sinema objecting, the proposal is “a reach.”

Instead, Democrats, he said are considering offering seniors an \$800 voucher to access dental care as well as another program for hearing aids that Sinema may support. However, the vision care component, Biden said, has been harder to resolve and there is no consensus yet.

Overall, Biden and his party are trying to shore up middle-class households, tackle climate change and have the most wealthy Americans and corporations pay what he calls their “fair share” for the nation.

In the mix are at least \$500 billion in clean energy tax credits and other efforts to battle climate change, \$350 billion for child care subsidies and free prekindergarten, an extension of the \$300 monthly child tax credit put in place during the COVID-19 crisis, and money for health care provided through the Affordable Care Act.

The newly proposed tax provisions, though, have rankled Democrats who have long campaigned on scrapping the Republican-backed tax cuts that many believe unduly reward the wealthy and cost the government untold sums in lost revenue at a time of gaping income inequality. Many are furious that perhaps a lone senator could stymie that goal.

Under the changes being floated the 21% corporate rate would not change, nor would the top individual rate of 39.6% on those earning \$400,000, or \$450,000 for couples.

However, the White House is reviving the idea of a corporate minimum tax rate that would hit even companies that say they had no taxable income — a frequent target of Biden, who complains they pay “zero” in taxes.

The new tax on the wealthiest individuals would be modeled on legislation from Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. He has proposed taxing stock gains of people with more than \$1 billion in assets — fewer than 1,000 Americans.

Associated Press writers Alex Jaffe, Kevin Freking and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Amid the Capitol riot, Facebook faced its own insurrection

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As supporters of Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6th, battling police and forcing lawmakers into hiding, an insurrection of a different kind was taking place inside the world’s largest social media company.

Thousands of miles away, in California, Facebook engineers were racing to tweak internal controls to slow the spread of misinformation and inciteful content. Emergency actions — some of which were rolled back after the 2020 election — included banning Trump, freezing comments in groups with a record for hate speech, filtering out the “Stop the Steal” rallying cry and empowering content moderators to act more assertively by labeling the U.S. a “Temporary High Risk Location” for political violence.

At the same time, frustration inside Facebook erupted over what some saw as the company’s halting and often reversed response to rising extremism in the U.S.

“Haven’t we had enough time to figure out how to manage discourse without enabling violence?” one employee wrote on an internal message board at the height of the Jan. 6 turmoil. “We’ve been fueling this fire for a long time and we shouldn’t be surprised it’s now out of control.”

It’s a question that still hangs over the company today, as Congress and regulators investigate Facebook’s part in the Jan. 6 riots.

New internal documents provided by former Facebook employee-turned-whistleblower Frances Haugen

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 56 of 88

provide a rare glimpse into how the company appears to have simply stumbled into the Jan. 6 riot. It quickly became clear that even after years under the microscope for insufficiently policing its platform, the social network had missed how riot participants spent weeks vowing — on Facebook itself — to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's election victory.

The documents also appear to bolster Haugen's claim that Facebook put its growth and profits ahead of public safety, opening the clearest window yet into how Facebook's conflicting impulses — to safeguard its business and protect democracy — clashed in the days and weeks leading up to the attempted Jan. 6 coup.

This story is based in part on disclosures Haugen made to the Securities and Exchange Commission and provided to Congress in redacted form by Haugen's legal counsel. The redacted versions received by Congress were obtained by a consortium of news organizations, including The Associated Press.

What Facebook called "Break the Glass" emergency measures put in place on Jan. 6 were essentially a toolkit of options designed to stem the spread of dangerous or violent content that the social network had first used in the run-up to the bitter 2020 election. As many as 22 of those measures were rolled back at some point after the election, according to an internal spreadsheet analyzing the company's response.

"As soon as the election was over, they turned them back off or they changed the settings back to what they were before, to prioritize growth over safety," Haugen said in an interview with "60 Minutes."

An internal Facebook report following Jan. 6, previously reported by BuzzFeed, faulted the company for having a "piecemeal" approach to the rapid growth of "Stop the Steal" pages, related misinformation sources, and violent and inciteful comments.

Facebook says the situation is more nuanced and that it carefully calibrates its controls to react quickly to spikes in hateful and violent content, as it did on Jan 6. The company said it's not responsible for the actions of the rioters and that having stricter controls in place prior to that day wouldn't have helped.

Facebook's decisions to phase certain safety measures in or out took into account signals from the Facebook platform as well as information from law enforcement, said spokeswoman Dani Lever. "When those signals changed, so did the measures."

Lever said some of the measures stayed in place well into February and others remain active today.

Some employees were unhappy with Facebook's managing of problematic content even before the Jan. 6 riots. One employee who departed the company in 2020 left a long note charging that promising new tools, backed by strong research, were being constrained by Facebook for "fears of public and policy stakeholder responses" (translation: concerns about negative reactions from Trump allies and investors).

"Similarly (though even more concerning), I've seen already built & functioning safeguards being rolled back for the same reasons," wrote the employee, whose name is blacked out.

Research conducted by Facebook well before the 2020 campaign left little doubt that its algorithm could pose a serious danger of spreading misinformation and potentially radicalizing users.

One 2019 study, entitled "Carol's Journey to QAnon—A Test User Study of Misinfo & Polarization Risks Encountered through Recommendation Systems," described results of an experiment conducted with a test account established to reflect the views of a prototypical "strong conservative" — but not extremist — 41-year North Carolina woman. This test account, using the fake name Carol Smith, indicated a preference for mainstream news sources like Fox News, followed humor groups that mocked liberals, embraced Christianity and was a fan of Melania Trump.

Within a single day, page recommendations for this account generated by Facebook itself had evolved to a "quite troubling, polarizing state," the study found. By day 2, the algorithm was recommending more extremist content, including a QAnon-linked group, which the fake user didn't join because she wasn't innately drawn to conspiracy theories.

A week later the test subject's feed featured "a barrage of extreme, conspiratorial and graphic content," including posts reviving the false Obama birther lie and linking the Clintons to the murder of a former Arkansas state senator. Much of the content was pushed by dubious groups run from abroad or by administrators with a track record for violating Facebook's rules on bot activity.

Those results led the researcher, whose name was redacted by the whistleblower, to recommend safety measures running from removing content with known conspiracy references and disabling "top contribu-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 57 of 88

tor" badges for misinformation commenters to lowering the threshold number of followers required before Facebook verifies a page administrator's identity.

Among the other Facebook employees who read the research the response was almost universally supportive.

"Hey! This is such a thorough and well-outlined (and disturbing) study," one user wrote, their name blacked out by the whistleblower. "Do you know of any concrete changes that came out of this?"

Facebook said the study was an one of many examples of its commitment to continually studying and improving its platform.

Another study turned over to congressional investigators, titled "Understanding the Dangers of Harmful Topic Communities," discussed how like-minded individuals embracing a borderline topic or identity can form "echo chambers" for misinformation that normalizes harmful attitudes, spurs radicalization and can even provide a justification for violence.

Examples of such harmful communities include QAnon and, hate groups promoting theories of a race war. "The risk of offline violence or harm becomes more likely when like-minded individuals come together and support one another to act," the study concludes.

Charging documents filed by federal prosecutors against those alleged to have stormed the Capitol have examples of such like-minded people coming together.

Prosecutors say a reputed leader in the Oath Keepers militia group used Facebook to discuss forming an "alliance" and coordinating plans with another extremist group, the Proud Boys, ahead of the riot at the Capitol.

"We have decided to work together and shut this s—t down," Kelly Meggs, described by authorities as the leader of the Florida chapter of the Oath Keepers, wrote on Facebook, according to court records.

Suns respond to potential investigation, deny racism, sexism

By DAVID BRANDT AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The Phoenix Suns released a statement regarding a potential media investigation into the workplace culture of the franchise, denying that the organization or owner Robert Sarver have a history of racism or sexism.

The statement sent Friday said the organization is aware that ESPN is working on a story accusing the organization of misconduct on a "variety of topics." The Suns responded by saying they were "completely baseless claims" and "documentary evidence in our possession and eyewitness accounts directly contradict the reporter's accusations, and we are preparing our response to his questions."

Sarver — a Phoenix businessman — has owned the Suns since 2004.

Suns general manager James Jones, who is Black, said in the team's response: "None of what's been said describes the Robert Sarver I know, respect and like — it just doesn't."

The franchise is coming off one of the most successful seasons in its history, making the NBA Finals with stars Devin Booker, Chris Paul and Deandre Ayton before losing in six games to the Milwaukee Bucks. The Suns have made the Finals three times, in 1976, 1993 and 2021, but have never won a championship.

Suns coach Monty Williams addressed the media Friday before the team's game against the Lakers in Los Angeles, saying he was aware of the potential report but said he didn't want to "comment about it until I have time to process a lot of information and get everything I need to know about the situation."

He added that he didn't expect the situation would be a distraction for the team.

"Nothing will invade or erode our culture," Williams said. "That's something we've said from Day 1. Wins, losses, we get to play basketball, we get to hoop and that's not going to change."

The potential investigation came to light Friday when league analyst Jordan Schultz posted a message on social media that said the league was preparing for a "massive" story and that if there is "enough evidence to support such claims, there's a real chance the league would forcibly remove Sarver."

Sarver and the Suns responded with a lengthy statement. The 59-year-old Sarver also owns the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury.

"While I can't begin to know how to respond to some of the vague suggestions made by mostly anonymous voices, I can certainly tell you that some of the claims I find completely repugnant to my nature and to the character of the Suns/Mercury workplace and I can tell you they never, ever happened," Sarver said.

Not even a full week into the season, the NBA now has yet another potentially significant issue on its hands — even without knowing the full scope of the accusations that the Suns say are coming.

The statements from the Suns came two days after Boston center Enes Kanter called for Tibetan independence, comments that prompted a Chinese broadcasting partner to stop streaming Celtics games in the basketball-crazed country.

There are also two high-profile players sidelined for various reasons, with Brooklyn not allowing Kyrie Irving to be around their team until he gets vaccinated against the coronavirus and Philadelphia's Ben Simmons not participating in practices or games with the 76ers after seeking a trade that has yet to be made.

AP Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds contributed to this report.

More AP NBA coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBAand> https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Jury gets chance to hear Elizabeth Holmes' bold promises

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A jury weighing the fate of fallen Silicon Valley star Elizabeth Holmes got its first chance Friday to listen to recordings of her boasting to investors about purported breakthroughs in a blood-testing technology.

The technology heralded as a quantum leap in blood testing, however, later dissolved into a scandal that now threatens to send her to prison.

The drama unfolded in a San Jose, California, courtroom with federal prosecutors playing a series of recordings from a December 2013 conference call that Holmes held with investors in Theranos, the company she started in 2003 after dropping out of college at 19 in hopes of becoming a revered visionary in the mold of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

The audio clips of Holmes capped the sixth week of a high-profile trial revolving around allegations that Holmes duped sophisticated investors and major retailers with bogus promises about a Theranos device dubbed Edison. The company's machine was supposed to be able to quickly scan for hundreds of potential health problems with a few drops of blood taken with a finger prick.

In the recordings, Holmes — speaking in a husky voice that some critics said she adopted to sound more authoritative — boasted about partnerships with big pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer that evidence in the trial has revealed didn't pan out. She also mentioned contracts that never materialized because Theranos couldn't get the Edison to work properly. The device's repeated failures disillusioned former U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis, a former Theranos board member ally who testified earlier in the trial.

"We could establish what has the opportunity to be the largest lab in the country," Holmes told investors in one of the clips played Friday. She laid out that ambition just a few months after Theranos had struck a deal to set up blood-testing "wellness centers" in Walgreens stores across the country.

But Theranos wound up in only 40 Walgreens stores. After investing \$140 million in Theranos, Walgreens wound up ending the Theranos alliance in 2016, not long after a series of explosive articles in The Wall Street Journal and regulatory audits exposed chronic flaws in the blood-testing technology.

Before everything blew up, Holmes raised hundreds of millions of dollars from a list of investors that included billionaires such as media mogul Rupert Murdoch, the Walton family behind Walmart, and Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison. The clips played Friday were recorded by Bryan Tolbert, an adviser to Dallas real estate developer Carl Hall, who invested \$7 million in Theranos.

The flurry of investments at one point valued privately held Theranos at \$9 billion, including a \$4.5 billion stake owned by Holmes. Now she is facing up to 20 years in prison if she is convicted in a trial that is scheduled to continue until late this year.

As she has done throughout the trial, Holmes on Friday sat stoically alongside her lawyers while her voice filled the courtroom. She has yet to have a reason to speak during the trial, though her attorneys have signaled she make eventually take the witness stand to defend her actions as Theranos' CEO.

Holmes, 37, has denied any wrongdoing, and blamed any misconduct on her former boyfriend, Ramesh "Sunny" Bulwani, who was Theranos' chief operating officer. In court documents, Holmes' lawyers have asserted she was manipulated by Bulwani, a charge his lawyer has vehemently denied. Bulwani faces a separate trial next year.

The jury that listened raptly to the recordings of Holmes was whittled down Friday when U.S. District Judge Edward Davila dismissed one member for an undisclosed reason. Originally composed of 17 people, including five alternates, the jury is now down to 10 men and four women.

Where are the workers? Cutoff of jobless aid spurs no influx

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, CASEY SMITH and LARRY FENN Associated Press/Report for America
INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Earlier this year, an insistent cry arose from business leaders and Republican governors: Cut off a \$300-a-week federal supplement for unemployed Americans. Many people, they argued, would then come off the sidelines and take the millions of jobs that employers were desperate to fill.

Yet three months after half the states began ending that federal payment, there's been no significant influx of job seekers.

In states that cut off the \$300 check, the workforce — the number of people who either have a job or are looking for one — has risen no more than it has in the states that maintained the payment. That federal aid, along with two jobless aid programs that served gig workers and the long-term unemployed, ended nationally Sept. 6. Yet America's overall workforce actually shrank that month.

"Policymakers were pinning too many hopes on ending unemployment insurance as a labor market boost," said Fiona Greig, managing director of the JPMorgan Chase Institute, which used JPMorgan bank account data to study the issue. "The work disincentive effects were clearly small."

Labor shortages have persisted longer than many economists expected, deepening a mystery at the heart of the job market. Companies are eager to add workers and have posted a near-record number of available jobs. Unemployment remains elevated. The economy still has 5 million fewer jobs than it did before the pandemic. Yet job growth slowed in August and September.

An analysis of state-by-state data by The Associated Press found that workforces in the 25 states that maintained the \$300 payment actually grew slightly more from May through September, according to data released Friday, than they did in the 25 states that cut off the payment early, most of them in June. The \$300-a-week federal check, on top of regular state jobless aid, meant that many of the unemployed received more in benefits than they earned at their old jobs.

An earlier study by Arindrajit Dube, an economist at University of Massachusetts, Amherst and several colleagues found that the states that cut off the \$300 federal payment saw a small increase in the number of unemployed taking jobs. But it also found that it didn't draw more people off the sidelines to look for work.

Economists point to a range of factors that are likely keeping millions of former recipients of federal jobless aid from returning to the workforce. Many Americans in public-facing jobs still fear contracting COVID-19, for example. Some families lack child care.

Other people, like Rachel Montgomery of Anderson, Indiana, have grown to cherish the opportunity to spend more time with their families and feel they can get by financially, at least for now. Montgomery, a 37-year-old mother, said she has become much "pickier" about where she's willing to work after having lost a catering job last year. Losing the \$300-a-week federal payment hasn't changed her mind. She'll receive her regular state jobless aid for a few more weeks.

"Once you've stayed home with your kids and family like this, who wants to physically have to go back to work?" she said. "As I'm looking and looking, I've told myself that I'm not going to sacrifice pay or flexibility working remotely when I know I'm qualified to do certain things. But what that also means is that

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 60 of 88

it's taking longer to find those kinds of jobs."

Indeed, the pandemic appears to have caused a re-evaluation of priorities, with some people deciding to spend more time with family and others insistent on working remotely or gaining more flexible hours.

Some former recipients, especially older, more affluent ones, have decided to retire earlier than they had planned. With Americans' overall home values and stock portfolios having surged since the pandemic struck, Fed officials estimate that up to 2 million more people have retired since then than otherwise would have.

And after having received three stimulus checks in 18 months, plus federal jobless aid in some cases, most households have larger cash cushions than they did before the pandemic. Greig and her colleagues at JPMorgan found in a study that the median bank balance for the poorest one-quarter of households has jumped 70% since COVID hit. A result is that some people are taking time to consider their options before rushing back into the job market.

Graham Berryman, a 44-year-old resident of Springfield, Missouri, has been living off savings since Missouri cut off the \$300-a-week federal jobless payment in June. He has had temporary work reviewing documents for law firms in the past. But he hasn't found anything permanent since August 2020.

"I'm not lazy," Berryman said. "I am unemployed. That does not mean I'm lazy. Just because someone cannot find suitable work in their profession doesn't mean they're trash to be thrown away."

Likewise, some couples have decided that they can get by with only one income, rather than two, at least temporarily.

Sarah Hamby of Kokomo, Indiana, lost her \$300-a-week federal payment this summer after Gov. Eric Holcomb, a Republican, ended that benefit early. Hamby's husband, who is 65, has kept his job working an overnight shift at a printing press throughout the pandemic. But he may decide to join the ranks of people retiring earlier than they'd planned.

And Hamby, 51, may do so herself if she doesn't find work soon. The jobs she had for decades at auto factories have largely disappeared. The positions that she sees available now require skills she doesn't have. Yet she isn't desperate for just any job.

"I'm at a point where I feel too old to go off and get educated or trained to do other type of work," she said. "And to be honest, I don't want to go work at a computer, in an office, like what a lot of us are being pushed to do. So now I'm stuck between doing some line of work that pays too little for what it's worth — or is too physically demanding — or I just don't work."

Nationally, the proportion of women who were either working or looking for work in September fell for a second straight month, evidence that many parents — mostly mothers — are still unable to manage their childcare duties to return to work. Staffing at childcare centers has fallen, reducing the care that is available. And while schools have reopened for in-person learning, frequent closings because of COVID outbreaks have been disruptive for some working parents.

Exacerbating the labor shortfall, a record number of people quit their jobs in August, in some cases spurred by the prospect of higher pay elsewhere.

In Missouri, a group of businesses, still frustrated by labor shortages more than three months after the state cut off the \$300-a-week federal jobless checks, paid for billboards in Springfield that said: "Get Off Your Butt!" and "Get. To. Work."

The state has seen no growth in its workforce since ending emergency benefits.

"We don't know where people are," said Brad Parke, general manager of Greek Corner Screen Printing and Embroidery, who helped pay for the billboards. "Obviously, they're not at work. Apparently, they're at home."

Richard von Glahn, policy director for Missouri Jobs With Justice, an advocacy group, suggested that many people on the sidelines of the job market want more benefits or the flexibility to care for children.

"People don't want to go back" to the pre-pandemic job market, von Glahn said. "Employers have a role in creating a work environment and offering a package that provides workers the security they need."

In Wyoming, fewer people are in the workforce now than when the state cut off all emergency jobless aid. Fear of contracting COVID-19 likely discouraged some people from seeking jobs, Wenlin Liu, chief economist at the state Economic Analysis Division, said last week.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 61 of 88

Wyoming has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country, he noted, and has been a COVID-19 hotspot since late summer. The surge in infections, Liu said, may be causing some parents to keep their children home.

State Rep. Landon Brown, a Republican, defended the cutoff of federal unemployment aid.

"Wyoming," Brown said, "is not interested in continuing to allow the federal government to keep people away from jobs, paying them as much to stay home in some cases as to go and get a job."

Mississippi ended all emergency jobless aid on June 12. Yet it had fewer people working in August than in May. In Tupelo last week, a job fair attracted 60 companies, including a recruiter from VT Halter Marine, a shipbuilder located 300 miles south. About 150 to 200 job seekers also attended, fewer than some businesses had hoped.

Adam Todd had organized the job fair for the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, which helps people find jobs and distributes unemployment benefits. The agency has received "calls of desperation," Todd said, "from businesses needing to recruit workers during the pandemic."

"We're in a different point in time than we have been in a very long time," Todd said. "The job seeker is truly in the driver's seat right now."

Fenn is a data journalist based in New York. Smith 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.

Rugaber reported from Arlington, Virginia. AP Writers Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi, Mead Gruver in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Summer Ballentine in Jefferson City, Missouri, contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: Texas abortion law gets Supreme Court arguments

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday allowed a Texas law that bans most abortions to remain in effect for now. But in an unusual move the justices said they want to hear arguments in the case at the soonest opportunity.

Those arguments at the high court on Nov. 1 will help the justices decide whether the law, the most restrictive abortion law in the nation, should be blocked while legal challenges continue.

The law, known as Senate Bill 8, has been the subject of a series of legal challenges since before it went into effect in September, and it made one previous trip to the high court. Except for a brief window when a lower court judge blocked it, however, it has remained in place. That has meant that most women in Texas seeking abortions have been unable to get them unless they travel out of state.

Here are some questions and answers about the law, its path through the courts and what happens next.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE SUPREME COURT DECIDING?

The challenges to Texas' law now before the Supreme Court were brought by abortion providers and the Biden administration.

Texas law prohibits abortions once medical professionals can detect cardiac activity — usually around six weeks, before some women know they're pregnant. That conflicts with Supreme Court precedent, which says states are prohibited from banning abortion before viability, the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, around 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The Supreme Court could reconsider those precedents in a case it's hearing in December, but it hasn't yet.

As far as the Texas law goes, the way it is written has so far made it unusually difficult to challenge in courts. The question the justices are considering is whether the Justice Department and abortion providers can challenge the law in federal court. Even if the justices decide that either or both can sue, they still must vote on whether to allow the law to remain in effect while the legal challenges continue.

WHAT IS UNUSUAL ABOUT THE SUPREME COURT'S ACTION FRIDAY?

The court is moving at a really rapid pace. Normally there are months between when the court agrees

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 62 of 88

to hear a case and arguments in a courtroom. This time the court has put the parties on an extraordinarily compressed time table to file briefs and prepare for arguments in a little over a week. That suggests the justices plan to make a decision quickly.

In addition, usually the high court only agrees to hear arguments in cases where lower federal courts have decided an issue in conflicting ways. That's not the case here.

HOW IS TEXAS' LAW UNUSUAL?

The law differs from similar efforts to restrict abortions in other states by leaving enforcement to private citizens, who can sue doctors or anyone who helps a woman get an abortion. That unique enforcement mechanism has frustrated efforts to challenge it. Usually the state would enforce the law and suing state officials would be the appropriate legal avenue.

THE CASE HAS ALREADY BEEN TO THE SUPREME COURT ONCE?

Yes. Abortion providers brought their challenge before the law went into effect and sought to have the Supreme Court step in to stop it. The court declined in a 5-4 ruling. The justices in the majority said "serious questions" had been raised about the law. But they cited a host of issues, including the law's novel enforcement mechanism and the fact that no one had yet actually attempted to sue someone under the law for helping a woman get an abortion, as among the reasons they declined to intervene. The majority stressed it was not making any conclusions about the constitutionality of the law.

Liberal justices and Chief Justice John Roberts dissented. Justice Sonia Sotomayor called her conservative colleagues' decision "stunning." Justice Elena Kagan wrote that the law was "patently unconstitutional," and Justice Stephen Breyer said a "woman has a federal constitutional right to obtain an abortion during" the first stage of pregnancy.

WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO HAPPEN NOW?

The four justices who would have blocked the law in the first place all have raised questions about its unusual structure. It's not clear if one or more of the conservatives who initially voted to let the law take effect will be persuaded by the administration's arguments and now vote to halt the law's enforcement.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE LAW IN TEXAS?

Since the law took effect in early September, providers say 80% or more of abortions previously provided in the state are now prohibited. Texas women have sought out abortion clinics in neighboring states, some driving hours through the middle of the night and including patients as young as 12 years old. The law makes no exception in cases of rape or incest.

EXPLAINER: California proposes limits on community drilling

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — An ambitious plan by California regulators to block new oil and gas wells within 3,200 feet (975 meters) of schools and homes is drawing protests from the oil industry and plaudits from environmentalists, who still want the state to go further.

But the plan released Thursday is just a first step, and things are far from settled. Here's a look at what's in the proposal, how it came about and what's next:

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN UNDER THE PLAN?

It adopted as written, the state would stop allowing new oil and gas wells to be drilled within 3,200 feet of K-12 schools and daycares, homes and dorms, health care centers such as hospitals or nursing homes, and public-facing businesses.

It wouldn't stop existing drilling within those zones but would create more than a dozen new pollution control measures designed to limit the negative health effects for people who live nearby.

WHY WAS IT PROPOSED?

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has made bold pronouncements about his desire to wean the state from oil and gas production and use, declaring that oil won't be part of the state's future. When he took office in 2019, he told the state's oil and gas regulator to make health and safety part of its mission. This proposal flows from that.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 63 of 88

It would create the largest buffer zone around oil drilling and community sites in the nation if adopted, something the governor and his administration have touted repeatedly.

A 15-member panel of experts, including scientists and public health leaders, concluded that living within 3,200 feet, or about 1 kilometer, of oil and gas drilling increased the risks for respiratory problems or birth complications, based on studies conducted in California and other oil-producing states like Texas and Pennsylvania.

Some people who live near drilling sites say they experience nosebleeds, headaches, respiratory issues and other problems.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO EXISTING WELLS?

Wells that fall within the 3,200-foot zone wouldn't have to close down. But they would have to meet new pollution controls. Administration officials say they hope those rules will prompt some well owners to shut them down.

One of those controls is a leak detection and response plan that would require operators to detect for chemicals such as methane or hydrogen sulfide with an alarm system. Operators would have to suspend use of the well or production facility until a leak is corrected and the state's oil regulator gives the OK to resume. They must notify the community if the leak isn't stopped within 48 hours.

Other controls include preventing and recovering the release of vapors, keeping sound and lighting low between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m., and conducting water sampling.

WHEN DOES IT TAKE EFFECT?

Not for a while — and it could change. The proposal released Thursday will now go through a 60-day public comment period, followed by an economic analysis and another year of bureaucratic wrangling. The final rule won't take effect until at least 2023, and oil drillers would have a year or two to comply with the strictest parts.

WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING?

There are more than 18,000 active oil and gas wells in California within 3,200 feet of community sites, mostly in Los Angeles County and the Central Valley, particularly in oil-rich Kern County.

Low-income Californians and communities of color are the most likely to live in neighborhoods with oil drilling. In some places, people live right next door or across the street from drilling operations, exposing them to loud sounds, foul smells and, sometimes, emissions.

Oil development began in Los Angeles as early as the 1890s, said Bhavna Shamasunder, a professor of urban and environmental policy at Occidental College who focuses on environmental justice research. City planners allowed oil development to occur alongside residential and commercial buildings, with little to no environmental considerations, she said. Wealthier communities often had more power to fight development.

WHAT DO ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SAY?

Environmental groups are pleased with the proposed rules, but they plan to push the Newsom administration to go even further. They want the state to block any new permits to do work at existing wells in the buffer zone except to plug and abandon them. Under the administration's proposal, a well could get a permit to re-drill or go deeper.

They are also concerned about the eventual enforcement of the rule. The Geologic Energy Management Division, the state oversight body, has often faced pushback from critics who say it doesn't do enough to regulate the oil industry.

Dan Ress, staff attorney at the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, said the proposal needs to be clearer about what happens to oil companies that break the rules for new pollution controls.

"There's just a lot of these issues with enforcement that don't make us comfortable trusting CalGEM," Ress said.

WHAT ABOUT THE OIL COMPANIES?

The oil industry and its allies in organized labor, particularly the State Building and Construction Trades Council, are against the proposal. They warn it will reduce California's access to reliable energy and raise prices. But they aren't being specific on what changes they will push.

Kevin Slagle, a spokesman for the Western States Petroleum Association, said the oil industry lobby-

ing arm would work toward regulations that consider "the unique needs of each community and region." In other words, the group does not want a statewide rule. He said it was too early to know whether the petroleum association would file legal challenges.

Peter Scolari of 'Newhart,' 'Bosom Buddies,' dies at 66

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Peter Scolari, a versatile character actor whose television roles included a yuppie producer on "Newhart" and a closeted dad on "Girls" and who was on Broadway with longtime friend Tom Hanks in "Lucky Guy," has died. He was 66.

Scolari died Friday morning in New York after fighting cancer for two years, according to Ellen Lubin Sanitsky, his manager.

He first gained attention as the then-unknown Hanks' co-star in the 1980-82 sitcom "Bosom Buddies," in which their characters disguised themselves as women to live in affordable, females-only housing.

The two actors went on to work together in projects including Hanks' 1996 movie directorial debut "That Thing You Do!" and in 2013's "Lucky Guy," Nora Ephron's play about newspaper columnist Mike McAlary.

Scolari also performed on Broadway in "Wicked," "Hairspray" and 2014's "Bronx Bombers," in which he played baseball's Yogi Berra.

"We were friends and colleagues for over 40 years," Bob Newhart said in a statement to The Associated Press. He said the contributions of on-screen couple Scolari and Julia Duffy in "Newhart" were an "essential part" of the show's success.

"In life, he was a fantastic person, and it was a joy to work together. He will be sorely missed and his passing at 66 is much too early," said Newhart, who is 92.

Scolari's recent roles included Bishop Thomas Marx on the supernatural series "Evil." Series co-creator Robert King remembered him Tuesday as "just wonderful."

He was "one of the funniest — sneakily funny — actors we've worked with. He always took a nothing scene and found different ways to twist it, and throw in odd pauses that made it jump," King said on Twitter.

He received three Emmy nominations playing husband to Duffy's Stephanie and colleague to Newhart's inn owner and local TV host in the 1982-90 sitcom.

"No better partner," Duffy posted on Twitter, along with a broken-heart emoji and a photo of a scene in which she and Scolari are dancing a tango.

In 2016, he won an Emmy Award for the role of Ted Horvath, father to Lena Dunham's Hannah, in "Girls." In the course of the dramedy created by Dunham, Ted comes out as gay and leaves his wife to find fulfillment.

In an Instagram post, Dunham said she "couldn't have been raised up by a better TV 'papa.' Thank you, Scolari, for every chat between set ups, every hug onscreen and off and every 'Oh, Jeez.' We will miss you so much."

Harvey Fierstein, who starred in "Hairspray," tweeted there "wasn't a sweeter man on the planet."

Scolari's more than four-decade career included numerous guest roles on series including "ER," "White Collar" and "Blue Bloods."

A New York native whose previous marriages ended in divorce, he's survived by his wife, actor Tracy Shayne, who played opposite him as Berra's wife in "Bronx Bombers." Other survivors include his children Nicholas, Joseph, Keaton, and Cali.

Supreme Court doesn't block Texas abortion law, sets hearing

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is allowing the Texas law that bans most abortions to remain in place, but has agreed to hear arguments in the case in early November.

The justices said Friday they will decide whether the Justice Department and abortion providers can

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 65 of 88

sue in federal court over a law that Justice Sonia Sotomayor said was "enacted in open disregard of the constitutional rights of women seeking abortion care in Texas."

Answering that question will help determine whether the law should be blocked while legal challenges continue. The court is moving at an unusually fast pace that suggests it plans to make a decision quickly. Arguments are set for Nov. 1.

The court's action leaves in place for the time being a law that clinics say has led to an 80% reduction in abortions in the nation's second-largest state.

The justices said in their order that they were deferring action on a request from the Justice Department to put the law on hold. Sotomayor wrote that she would have blocked the law now.

"The promise of future adjudication offers cold comfort, however, for Texas women seeking abortion care, who are entitled to relief now," Sotomayor wrote.

Sotomayor was the only justice to make her views clear, but it seems there were not five votes on the nine-member court to immediately block the law Friday. It takes just four justices to decide to hear a case.

The court first declined to block the law in September, in response to an emergency filing by the abortion providers. The vote was 5-4 vote, with the three appointees of former President Donald Trump joining two other conservatives in the majority. Chief Justice John Roberts joined Sotomayor and the other two liberal justices in voting to keep the law on hold while the legal fight goes on in lower courts.

Now, though, the justices, in a rare move, have decided to weigh in before lower courts definitively decide the issues.

Kimberlyn Schwartz, a spokeswoman for Texas Right to Life, said she was happy the law remains in effect. "This is a great development for the Pro-Life movement because the law will continue to save an estimated 100 babies per day, and because the justices will actually discuss whether these lawsuits are valid in the first place," Schwartz said in a statement.

Amy Hagstrom Miller, the chief executive of Whole Woman's Health, said Friday's order means patients will continue to be denied care at her four clinics in Texas, on top of the hundreds who already have been turned away. Providers say the ability of Texas' nearly two dozen clinics to stay open is threatened the longer the law stays in effect, although Hagstrom Miller said she was not aware of any imminent closures.

But she said clinics are trying "to band together and get resources" to keep doors open. In 2013, another restrictive Texas anti-abortion law led to the closing of half the state's 40-plus clinics. The Supreme Court ultimately struck down that law in 2016, but some clinics never reopened.

"It's a matter of time if this law continues to be enforced," Hagstrom Miller said. "It will cause clinics to close and further decimate the fabric of care that is needed to take care of people across the state."

The law has been in effect since September, aside from a district court-ordered pause that lasted just 48 hours, and bans abortions once cardiac activity is detected, usually around six weeks and before some women know they are pregnant.

That's well before the Supreme Court's major abortion decisions allow states to prohibit abortion, although the court has agreed to hear an appeal from Mississippi asking it to overrule those decisions, in *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

But the Texas law was written to evade early federal court review by putting enforcement of it into the hands of private citizens, rather than state officials.

The focus of the high court arguments will not be on the abortion ban, but whether the Justice Department and the providers can sue and obtain a court order that effectively prevents the law from being enforced, the Supreme Court said in its brief order.

If the law stays in effect, "no decision of this Court is safe. States need not comply with, or even challenge, precedents with which they disagree. They may simply outlaw the exercise of whatever rights they disfavor," the Biden administration wrote in a brief filed earlier in the day.

Other state-enforced bans on abortion before the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, around 24 weeks, have been blocked by courts because they conflict with Supreme Court precedents.

"Texas should not obtain a different result simply by pairing its unconstitutional law with an unprecedented

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 66 of 88

enforcement scheme designed to evade the traditional mechanisms for judicial review," the administration wrote.

A day earlier, the state urged the court to leave the law in place, saying the federal government lacked the authority to file its lawsuit challenging the Texas ban.

The Justice Department filed suit over the law after the Supreme Court rejected the earlier effort by abortion providers to put the measure on hold temporarily.

In early October, U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman ruled for the administration, putting the law on hold and allowing abortions to resume.

Two days later, a three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals put the law back into effect.

The court already is hearing arguments on Dec. 1 in the Mississippi case in which that state is calling for the court to overrule the Roe and Casey decisions.

Associated Press writer Paul Weber contributed to this report from Austin, Texas.

Big tech data centers spark worry over scarce Western water

By ANDREW SELSKY and MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

THE DALLES, Ore. (AP) — Conflicts over water are as old as history itself, but the massive Google data centers on the edge of this Oregon town on the Columbia River represent an emerging 21st century concern.

Now a critical part of modern computing, data centers help people stream movies on Netflix, conduct transactions on PayPal, post updates on Facebook, store trillions of photos and more. But a single facility can also churn through millions of gallons of water per day to keep hot-running equipment cool.

Google wants to build at least two more data centers in The Dalles, worrying some residents who fear there eventually won't be enough water for everyone — including for area farms and fruit orchards, which are by far the biggest users.

Across the United States, there has been some mild pushback as tech companies build and expand data centers — conflicts likely to grow as water becomes a more precious resource amid the threat of climate change and as the demand for cloud computing grows. Some tech giants have been using cutting-edge research and development to find less impactful cooling methods, but there are those who say the companies can still do more to be environmentally sustainable.

The concerns are understandable in The Dalles, the seat of Wasco County, which is suffering extreme and exceptional drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The region last summer endured its hottest days on record, reaching 118 degrees Fahrenheit (48 Celsius) in The Dalles.

The Dalles is adjacent to the the mighty Columbia River, but the new data centers wouldn't be able to use that water and instead would have to take water from rivers and groundwater that has gone through the city's water treatment plant.

However, the snowpack in the nearby Cascade Range that feeds the aquifers varies wildly year-to-year and glaciers are melting. Most aquifers in north-central Oregon are declining, according to the U.S. Geological Survey Groundwater Resources Program.

Adding to the unease: The 15,000 town residents don't know how much water the proposed data centers will use, because Google calls it a trade secret. Even the town councilors, who are scheduled to vote on the proposal on Nov. 8, had to wait until this week to find out.

Dave Anderson, public works director for The Dalles, said Google obtained the rights to 3.9 million gallons of water per day when it purchased land formerly home to an aluminum smelter. Google is requesting less water for the new data centers than that amount and would transfer those rights to the city, Anderson said.

"The city comes out ahead," he said.

For its part, Google said it's "committed to the long-term health of the county's economy and natural resources."

"We're excited that we're continuing conversations with local officials on an agreement that allows us to keep growing while also supporting the community," Google said, adding that the expansion proposal

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 67 of 88

includes a potential aquifer program to store water and increase supply during drier periods.

The U.S. hosts 30% of the world's data centers, more than any other country. Some data centers are trying to become more efficient in water consumption, for example by recycling the same water several times through a center before discharging it. Google even uses treated sewage water, instead of using drinking water as many data centers do, to cool its facility in Douglas County, Georgia.

Facebook's first data center took advantage of the cold high-desert air in Prineville, Oregon, to chill its servers, and went a step further when it built a center in Lulea, Sweden, near the Arctic Circle.

Microsoft even placed a small data center, enclosed in what looks like a giant cigar, on the seafloor off Scotland. After retrieving the barnacle-encrusted container last year after two years, company employees saw improvement in overall reliability because the servers weren't subjected to temperature fluctuations and corrosion from oxygen and humidity. Team leader Ben Cutler said the experiment shows data centers can be kept cool without tapping freshwater resources.

A study published in May by researchers at Virginia Tech and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory showed one-fifth of data centers rely on water from moderately to highly stressed watersheds.

Tech companies typically consider tax breaks and availability of cheap electricity and land when placing data centers, said study co-author Landon Marston, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at Virginia Tech.

They need to consider water impacts more seriously, and put the facilities in regions where they can be better sustained, both for the good of the environment and their own bottom line, Marston said.

"It's also a risk and resilience issue that data centers and their operators need to face, because the drought that we're seeing in the West is expected to get worse," Marston said.

About an hour's drive east of The Dalles, Amazon is giving back some of the water its massive data centers use. Amazon's sprawling campuses, spread between Boardman and Umatilla, Oregon, butt up against farmland, a cheese factory and neighborhoods. Like many data centers, they use water primarily in summer, with the servers being air-cooled the rest of the year.

About two-thirds of the water Amazon uses evaporates. The rest is treated and sent to irrigation canals that feed crops and pastures.

Umatilla City Manager Dave Stockdale appreciates that farms and ranches are getting that water, since the main issue the city had as Amazon's facilities grew was that the city water treatment plant couldn't have handled the data centers' discharge.

John DeVoe, executive director of WaterWatch of Oregon, which seeks reform of water laws to protect and restore rivers, criticized it as a "corporate feel good tactic."

"Does it actually mitigate for any harm of the server farm's actual use of water on other interests who may also be using the same source water, like the environment, fish and wildlife?" DeVoe said.

Adam Selipsky, CEO of Amazon Web Services, insists that Amazon feels a sense of responsibility for its impacts.

"We have intentionally been very conscious about water usage in any of these projects," he said, adding that the centers brought economic activity and jobs to the region.

Dawn Rasmussen, who lives on the outskirts of The Dalles, worries that her town is making a mistake in negotiating with Google, likening it to David versus Goliath.

She's seen the level of her well-water drop year after year and worries sooner or later there won't be enough for everyone.

"At the end of the day, if there's not enough water, who's going to win?" she asked.

Follow Andrew Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky>

Group clings to faith as US works on Haiti kidnapping case

By PIERRE-RICHARD LUXAMA and MATÍAS DELACROIX Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — A U.S. religious organization whose 17 members were kidnapped in Haiti

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 68 of 88

asked supporters on Friday to pray and share stories with the victims' families of how their faith helped them through difficult times as efforts to recover them entered a sixth day.

Ohio-based Christian Aid Ministries issued the statement a day after a video was released showing the leader of the 400 Mawozo gang threatening to kill those abducted if his demands are not met. Haitian officials have said the gang is seeking \$1 million ransom per person, although they said it wasn't clear if that includes the five children in the group, the youngest being 8 months old.

"You may wonder why our workers chose to live in a difficult and dangerous context, despite the apparent risks," the organization said. "Before leaving for Haiti, our workers who are now being held hostage expressed a desire to faithfully serve God in Haiti."

The FBI is helping Haitian authorities recover the 16 Americans and one Canadian. A local human rights group said their Haitian driver also was kidnapped.

"Pray that their commitment to God could become even stronger during this difficult experience," Christian Aid Ministries said.

At the White House on Friday, U.S. press secretary Jen Psaki sidestepped questions about whether the Biden administration would look to halt deportations of Haitians to their home country or consider adding a U.S. military presence on the ground in response to the missionaries' kidnappings.

"We are working around the clock to bring these people home," she said. "They are U.S. citizens, and there has been targeting over the course of the last few years of U.S. citizens in Haiti and other countries too...for kidnapping for ransom. That is one of the reasons that the State Department issued the warning they did in August about the risk of kidnapping for ransom."

Psaki spoke a day after a couple hundred protestors shut down one neighborhood in Haiti's capital to decry the country's deepening insecurity and lack of fuel blamed on gangs, with some demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry.

The streets of Port-au-Prince were largely quiet and empty on Friday, although hundreds of supporters of Jimmy Cherizier, leader of "G9 Family and Allies," a federation of nine gangs, marched through the seaside slum of Cité Soleil.

"We are not involved in kidnapping. We will never be involved in kidnapping," Cherizier, known as Barbecue, claimed during a speech to supporters.

As they marched, the supporters sang and chanted that G9 is not involved in kidnappings. Some of them were carrying high caliber automatic weapons.

"This is the way they are running the country," Cherizier, who is implicated in several massacres, said as he pointed to trash lining the streets with his assault weapon.

Amid the worsening insecurity, the office of Prime Minister Ariel Henry announced late Thursday that Léon Charles had resigned as head of Haiti's National Police and was replaced by Frantz Elbé. The newspaper Le Nouvelliste said Elbé was director of the police departments of the South East and Nippes and previously served as general security coordinator at the National Palace when Jocelerme Privert was provisional president.

"We would like for public peace to be restored, that we return to normal life and that we regain our way to democracy," Henry said.

Weston Showalter, spokesman for the religious group, has said the families of those kidnapped are from Amish, Mennonite and other conservative Anabaptist communities in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Oregon and Ontario, Canada. He read a letter from the families, who weren't identified by name, in which they said, "God has given our loved ones the unique opportunity to live out our Lord's command to love your enemies."

The organization later issued a statement saying it would not comment on the video.

The gang leader's death threat added to the already intense concern in and around Holmes County, Ohio, where Christian Aid Ministries is based and which has one of the nation's largest concentrations of Amish, conservative Mennonite and related groups. Many members of those groups have supported the organization through donations or by volunteering at its warehouse.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 69 of 88

UNICEF said Thursday that 71 women and 30 children have been kidnapped so far this year — surpassing the 59 women and 37 children abducted in all of last year. “They represent one third of the 455 kidnappings reported this year,” the agency said.

Associated Press writers Dánica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Aamer Madhani in Washington, D.C., Kantele Franko in Columbus, Ohio, Peter Smith in Pittsburgh contributed to this report.

Analysis: Choosing a perfect NBA Top 75 team was impossible

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

The results are in and what happens now was inevitable.

The top 76 players in NBA history have been announced, with the full 75th anniversary team having been revealed by the league. Now the debate begins to decide who must have been No. 77.

Vince Carter, Chris Bosh, Dwight Howard, Bernard King all are solid candidates. So, too, are Klay Thompson, Kyrie Irving, Tracy McGrady, Pau Gasol and Tony Parker. And so on.

And so on.

And so on.

Fact is, no team was going to be perfect, even with the extra player that got on this one because of a tie in the voting — which included The Associated Press. There was no way to avoid arguments about who should have been on the list, or who shouldn't have been.

It wasn't perfect. But it's right.

“From where I come from I'm simply LOST FOR WORDS!! BEYOND HONORED & BLESSED!!” LeBron James tweeted in response to his selection.

Clearly, being part of the team meant a lot to those who were selected, and therefore it stands to reason that those who didn't make the team are justifiably disappointed.

“Just looking at the list, and then thinking about the history of the NBA, how do you differentiate? I looked at it and it seems like there's 50 or 60 guys who were kind of automatic,” Golden State coach Steve Kerr said after the final installment of the list was revealed. “And then, just pick one. You can't go wrong or you can't be right, depending on how you look at it.”

Kerr — who was one of the voters — said Thursday that there was a strong case for two of his players, Thompson and Draymond Green. Both were perfectly valid arguments, and Thompson has taken to Instagram since the team was announced to express his disappointment. But as Kerr said, voting is subjective. There were no rules. Pick 75 players, the order of which didn't matter since there wasn't a ranking.

One of the best things about the list is it pays tribute to the past, and not just the recent past. All 50 players who were selected a quarter-century ago as members of the Top 50 team were retained for this team.

And some who could have been on that Top 50 team — Dominique Wilkins and Bob McAdoo — were added this time around. Also on the list were some obvious contemporary players who were locks to be picked this year, players like James, Kobe Bryant, Stephen Curry and Dwyane Wade.

In 2046 or so, when the NBA picks the Top 100 team, some of the omissions — or snubs, depending on perspective — from this year's group will likely be included as well.

“Being a part of an elite group is always special, and I'm thrilled and excited to be part of an elite group,” Wilkins said. “But it'd have been nice if I was part of it 20-something years ago.”

There will always be a “but.”

Roughly half of the NBA players already enshrined in the Basketball Hall of Fame didn't make the Top 75 team, simply because there wasn't enough space. Alex English is 20th all-time in scoring; hardly anybody even seemed to mention him as a candidate. Howard is about to move into 10th all-time in rebounding; he's not on the list. Mark Jackson is fourth all-time in assists; he's not on this team.

Not being named to this team should hardly diminish what those players — and others not included — accomplished.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 70 of 88

"Leading scoring of the 80s Not a top 75 NBA player?! Alex is in my book!" former NBA coach George Karl tweeted in English's defense.

And Golden State's Andre Iguodala said this on behalf of Irving, easily one of the top ballhandlers in NBA history: "Top 20 at least."

It's impossible to compare eras, which is part of the reason so many people might be puzzled that so many current players didn't make the list. There wouldn't have been tons of outrage if players from back in the day like Paul Arizin, Dave DeBusschere, Pete Maravich or Sam Jones were left off this time around.

Here's why they belong, though: The league exists now because of what they did back then.

It's something to keep in mind while arguing over which players from today didn't make a list.

Tim Reynolds is a national basketball writer for The Associated Press and was one of the 88 voters who participated in the NBA's 75th anniversary team balloting. Write to him at [treynolds\(at\)ap.org](mailto:treynolds(at)ap.org)

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports. Follow the AP's coverage of the NBA's 75th anniversary season: <https://apnews.com/hub/nba-at-75>

White House: Biden to outline filibuster changes in 'weeks'

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Friday that President Joe Biden would speak in the coming weeks about moving to "fundamentally alter" the filibuster or even eliminate the legislative roadblock that empowers the Senate minority as he aims to pass sweeping voting laws and secure the nation's credit.

Press secretary Jen Psaki said Americans should "stay tuned" about what changes Biden would embrace, as he appears to be warming to changing the Senate rule. Biden has previously stated he was supportive of requiring that lawmakers physically hold the Senate floor to sustain a filibuster, but on Thursday suggested he could support eliminating it entirely for some issues.

In a CNN town hall, Biden said that if Republicans refuse to provide the votes necessary to raise the debt limit — as they threatened last month before backing down on the eve of a potential government default — "I think you'll see an awful lot of Democrats being ready to say, 'Not me. I'm not doing that again. We're going to end the filibuster.'"

He predicted that eliminating the 60-vote threshold to end debate on most legislation would be "difficult" beyond the debt limit, which he called a "sacred right."

"Voting rights is equally as consequential," Biden added, suggesting he would be open to filibuster changes to pass the long-stalled Democratic legislation as well as "maybe more" on unspecified issues.

Psaki on Friday declined to elaborate on Biden's remarks, only to say that Biden believes "we are at an inflection point on a range of issues" and that "not getting voting rights done is not an option."

"I think the president will have more to say about this in the coming weeks," she added.

Biden on Thursday suggested that he had not moved sooner to support changes to the filibuster to avoid angering Senate moderates like Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema, whose votes he needs to pass his multitrillion-dollar domestic spending initiatives.

Biden said the negotiating process on the twin infrastructure and social benefits bills were keeping him from other legislation.

"What it's done is prevented me from getting deeply up to my ears — which I'm going to do once this is done — in dealing with police brutality, dealing with the whole notion of: What are we going to do about voting rights," Biden said. "It's the greatest assault on voting rights in the history of the United States — for real — since the Civil War."

On Wednesday, Senate Republicans blocked Democrats aiming to take up the sweeping elections legislation that they have claimed would serve as a powerful counterweight to new voting restrictions taking effect in conservative-controlled states.

But there were signs that Democrats are making headway in their effort to create consensus around

changing Senate procedural rules.

Sen. Angus King, a Maine independent who caucuses with Democrats, recently eased his longstanding opposition to changing the filibuster rules, which create a 60-vote threshold for most legislation to pass.

"I've concluded that democracy itself is more important than any Senate rule," said King, who acknowledged that weakening the filibuster would likely prove to be a "double-edged sword" under a future Republican majority.

EXPLAINER: Where does Gabby Petito slaying probe go next?

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Now that the decomposed remains of Brian Laundrie have been found, where does the investigation into the strangling of his girlfriend, Gabby Petito, go from here?

Petito, 22, was discovered slain last month on the edge of Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, one of the places the young couple had visited during a cross-country van trip that ended with Laundrie mysteriously returning home alone to Florida in the vehicle.

Laundrie, named a "person of interest" in the case, was missing for a month before his skeletal remains were found Wednesday in a swampy wilderness park near his home.

The case has drawn worldwide interest and numerous theories online from amateur true-crime sleuths. It has also thrown a spotlight on the many missing-persons cases involving women of color who do not get a fraction of the attention given to Petito, who was white.

Here are some lingering questions:

CAN AUTHORITIES PROVE IF LAUNDRIE KILLED PETITO?

It could take a DNA match to answer that. Both sets of remains were exposed to the elements and animals for weeks.

The FBI has not said whether there are any witnesses to Petito's killing or its immediate aftermath. One piece of evidence is Laundrie's use of a debit card that didn't belong to him after Petito was listed as missing.

"That would be circumstantial evidence that points to him," said Alfredo Garcia, former dean at the St. Thomas University College of Law in Miami Gardens and a one-time Miami prosecutor. "It's a difficult proposition to establish but not impossible."

The DNA matching effort and any use of fingerprints would be complicated by the fact that the couple were romantically involved and lived together in close quarters. But forensic experts have many techniques to solve crimes despite such obstacles.

"Reconstruction experts can do amazing things, so I would not be surprised if at some point we got a definitive, or near-definitive, conclusion that Laundrie was the killer," said Bob Jarvis, a law professor at Florida's Nova Southeastern University.

WHY DID THE LAUNDRIE SEARCH TAKE SO LONG?

Laundrie, 23, was reported missing from his home in North Port on Sept. 17, two days after he was named a person of interest in Petito's disappearance.

His family said Laundrie left home Sept. 13, telling parents Chris and Robert Laundrie he was going for a hike in the 25,000-acre (10,100-hectare) Carlton Reserve a few miles away.

Federal, state and local law enforcement officials spent weeks searching the reserve, where at one point 75% of the land had been under water. The area is home to alligators, bobcats, coyotes and snakes.

Although divers and cadaver dogs were brought in, it wasn't until the heavy late-summer rains stopped and the water receded that Laundrie's remains and a backpack and notebook belonging to him were found with his father's help.

Officials have not released the cause of death for Laundrie or said whether a note or other evidence about Petito was found.

ARE LAUNDRIE'S PARENTS IN LEGAL TROUBLE?

Prosecutors could look into obstruction of justice charges against the parents if they hid their son, but it would not be an easy case to prove, legal experts said. Petito's body hadn't yet been found during the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 72 of 88

time he was home.

"That's a steep hill to climb," Garcia said. "How can you establish they knew he committed the crime? Did they intentionally help him avoid detection and arrest? You have to establish knowledge and intent."

Laundrie's parents have not given any media interviews and initially referred law enforcement officials to their attorney, Steven Bertolino. He said the parents cooperated with investigators and are "heartbroken" over the entire situation.

Before he disappeared, Laundrie would not talk to police, on the advice of his lawyer.

WILL THERE BE REPERCUSSIONS FOR UTAH POLICE?

The police department in Moab, Utah is conducting an internal review of officers' actions when Petito and Laundrie were stopped Aug. 12 after the two got into a scuffle.

Police body-camera video showed a distraught Petito describing a fight that escalated. A police report concluded she was the aggressor, but the only injuries consisted of a few scratches. Officers decided to separate them for the night rather than file any charges.

The question is whether the Moab officers followed policy and, if not, whether that led to further violence and possibly Petito's slaying.

WHAT ABOUT 'MISSING WHITE WOMAN SYNDROME'?

Much was made in the media about the intense interest in Petito's case compared with the scant attention paid to numerous missing-persons cases involving women of color.

Native American women, in particular, generate little media coverage when they disappear.

In Wyoming, where Petito was found, just 18% of cases of missing indigenous women over the past decade had any media mentions, according to a state report released in January.

One sample of 247 missing teens in New York and California found 34% of white teens' cases were covered by the media, compared with only 7% of Black teens and 14% of young Latinos, according to Carol Liebler, a communications professor at Syracuse University.

"What's communicated is that white lives matter more than people of color," she said.

Petito's father, Joseph Petito, said the Gabby Petito Foundation is in the formative stages and will seek to fill in any gaps that exist in the work of finding missing people.

"We need positive stuff to come from the tragedy that happened," he said. "We can't let her name be taken in vain."

US budget deficit hits \$2.77 trillion in 2021, 2nd highest

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. budget deficit totaled \$2.77 trillion for 2021, the second highest on record but an improvement from the all-time high of \$3.13 trillion reached in 2020. The deficits in both years reflect trillions of dollars in government spending to counteract the devastating effects of a global pandemic.

The Biden administration said Friday that deficit for the budget year that ended Sept. 30 was \$360 billion lower than 2020, as a recovering economy boosted revenues, helping to offset government spending from pandemic relief efforts.

Before the deficit ballooned during two years of a global pandemic, the biggest deficit had been a short-fall of \$1.4 trillion in 2009. At that time, the U.S. was spending heavily to lift the country out of a severe recession following the 2008 financial crisis.

As a percentage of the overall economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, the 2021 deficit represents 12.4% of GDP, down from the 2020 deficit, which was 15% of GDP.

The 2020 deficit was the highest in relation to the overall economy since World War II, when it hit 29.6% of GDP in 1943 as the United States was borrowing heavily to finance the war effort. Those figures remained elevated at 22.2% of GDP in 1944 and 21% of GDP in 1945 before beginning to retreat once the war was won.

For 2021, the joint report from Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget said government spending increased 4.1% to \$6.82 trillion. This was offset by an increase of 18.3% in government revenues

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 73 of 88

to \$4 trillion. The revenue gain reflected an improving economy as millions of people who had lost jobs at the start of the pandemic went back to work and corporate profits rebounded after a horrendous 2020.

"Under President Biden's leadership, the U.S. economy is getting back on track and Americans are getting back to work," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Shalanda Young, acting director of the Office of Management and Budget, said in a joint statement.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office expects the deficit will fall to \$1.15 trillion in the current budget year, which began Oct. 1, and will dip below \$1 trillion for three years from 2023 through 2025 before rising again above \$1 trillion for each year through 2031.

That CBO forecast does not include the spending that will occur if Biden is able to get two pending measures through Congress: a \$1 trillion proposal for traditional infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges, and his plan to bolster the social safety net and combat climate change.

The safety-net measure had a price tag of \$3.5 trillion but is expected to be scaled back to around \$2 trillion or less to meet the objections of moderate Democrats, including Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia.

In their comments Yellen and Young credited Biden's economic policies for contributing to a lower deficit, including Biden's "swift action to mount a historic vaccination effort" and his success in getting Congress to approve \$1.9 trillion in extra spending in the stimulus bill passed in March.

"While the nation's economic recovery is stronger than those of other wealthy nations, it is still fragile," Yellen said. "In order to build upon the progress that has been made ... Congress should pass President Biden's Build Back Better plan."

Yellen and other administration officials have argued that running large deficits now is an acceptable way to boost economic growth and address long-term problems facing the middle class, such as a lack of child care. Yellen has said efforts to address those issues will boost productivity over the long-term and are cost-effective at a time when the government's borrowing costs are so low.

For 2021, interest on the debt totaled \$562 billion, up \$40 billion from the previous year. However much of that increase is due to higher inflation, which required the government to pay holders of Treasury securities higher returns. Payments on overall debt have remained relatively stable because interest rates have stayed low, even though the debt levels have been surging. Total public debt now stands around 100% of total GDP.

The CBO projections are that the deficits over the next decade will add another \$12.1 trillion to the national debt.

Congress earlier this month approved a short-term increase in the debt limit to \$28.88 trillion that will allow Yellen to keep employing extraordinary measures to avoid the first-ever default on the debt, something she has warned would be catastrophic and likely push the country into another recession.

Yellen has said her maneuvering room will run out in December if Congress does not either enact a sizable increase in the borrowing limit or suspend it altogether. Congress must also enact a budget plan for this year or approve another stop-gap spending bill by Dec. 3 to avoid a government shutdown.

Campaigners stage climate protests across continents

BERLIN (AP) — Environmental campaigners staged protests on several continents on Friday to press their demands for more government action to curb global warming ahead of the upcoming U.N. climate summit in Glasgow.

Protesters rallied in Uganda, Bangladesh, India, Italy, Sweden and Germany to call for measures preventing dangerous global warming levels and taking into account the plight of the world's poorest, who are particularly hard-hit by climate change.

Thousands of mostly young people rallied at Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate, carrying banners featuring slogans such as "Act now or swim later" and "Don't melt our future."

Many called on the next German government to place greater emphasis on tackling climate change, with some protesters attempting to blockade the offices of the three parties currently negotiating to form a coalition government.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 74 of 88

Those parties include the center-left Social Democrats who came first in the Sept. 26 election ahead of outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right Union bloc.

The Union bloc is not part of those talks, though Merkel is expected to attend the U.N. climate talks next month in her role as head of a caretaker government.

In Stockholm, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg took part in the protest. Her weekly "school strike for climate" helped inspire the international protest movement that saw regular, vast demonstrations before restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic curtailed such rallies.

Thunberg said campaigners wanted to put pressure on leaders meeting in Glasgow next month to agree on tougher actions for tackling climate change.

"We are not going to let them get away with just talking and not doing anything and pretending the situation is under control," she said.

Also at the Stockholm protest were activists from developing countries, who said the voices of people most affected by global warming need to be heard in the climate debate.

"It's really just symbolic of how the youth, the global youth movement is coming together and uniting and coming together as one community fighting for the same thing," said Mitzi Jonelle Tan, an activist from the Philippines.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <http://apnews.com/hub/climate>

NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

Unvaccinated FEMA employees aren't replacing noncompliant health care workers

CLAIM: Workers with the Federal Emergency Management Agency are not required to be vaccinated against COVID-19, but are being used to replace health care personnel who are refusing to comply with vaccination mandates.

THE FACTS: The claims are spreading across social media platforms, gaining thousands of likes and shares, but both assertions are false. FEMA workers are considered federal employees and are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Nov. 8 under an executive order issued by President Joe Biden. Also, the agency is not sending its workers to replace unvaccinated health care personnel. "FEMA employees are required to be vaccinated as determined by the president," FEMA's director of public affairs, Jaclyn Rothenberg, told the AP, adding: "The social media posts that claim FEMA workers are replacing unvaccinated health care workers are unequivocally false." FEMA coordinates within the federal government to prepare for and respond to disasters. While the agency has supported states and health care systems throughout the pandemic, it has mainly done so by providing resources and coordination assistance, such as setting up mobile vaccination units and reimbursing states for some inoculation efforts, Rothenberg said. In other cases, the agency has coordinated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to distribute supplies such as ventilators and antibody treatments, and has worked with other federal agencies that deploy medical staff requested by states, according to Rothenberg. "In partnership with Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs, and Department of Defense, we have deployed medical staff at the request of the state to alleviate some of the stress caused by COVID on the state's health care system," Rothenberg wrote in an email. "These deployed medical staff abide by the vaccination and other preventive measures requirements established by the receiving facility." Some states have raised the possibility of addressing potential staffing shortages by calling in medically trained National Guard members. The Guard is also mandated to receive the vaccine under a Pentagon order.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 75 of 88

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in Atlanta contributed this report.

No 'epidemic' of vaccine-related plane crashes reported

CLAIM: Vaccine-related strokes in pilots have caused an "epidemic of plane crashes."

THE FACTS: A video circulating widely on Facebook and various video-sharing websites this week spreads a bogus claim that vaccine-linked medical ailments in pilots have caused numerous recent plane crashes. The nearly 30-minute video uses fake news banners and fear-mongering narration to baselessly suggest recent plane accidents, including an Oct. 11 small plane crash in a San Diego suburb, happened because pilots had strokes caused by COVID-19 vaccines. "There's a silent epidemic of plane crashes happening around the country and nobody's connecting the dots," the video's narrator says. "By listening to the audio from the cockpit of this latest crash, it's clear that the pilot was having a stroke. The pilot was a doctor from a hospital. He was required to get the vaccine." It's true the pilot in the Oct. 11 crash was a cardiologist, but the claim that he suffered a medical condition after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is not supported by any evidence to date. The National Transportation Safety Board, which said it is investigating the crash, has not yet stated a cause. The idea that there's an "epidemic" of vaccine-related plane crashes is also unsupported. FAA spokesperson Brittany Trotter told The Associated Press in an email that the agency "has seen no evidence of aircraft accidents or pilot incapacitations caused by pilots suffering medical complications associated with COVID-19 vaccines." FAA data shows that fatality rates from general aviation accidents have decreased in 2021. Pilots who want to fly a plane or serve as a required airline crew member after receiving a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine must wait 48 hours before doing so, according to FAA guidelines. That's intended to allow pilots to wait out any side effects from the vaccine, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says are typically mild to moderate and resolve within a few days. There is no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines increase the risk of stroke, but the coronavirus itself is associated with an increased risk of stroke, according to Dr. Mitchell S.V. Elkind, a professor of neurology and epidemiology at Columbia University and the immediate past president of the American Heart Association. "About 1-2% of people hospitalized with COVID develop strokes," Elkind told the AP in an email. "So getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent adverse outcomes of COVID, including stroke."

Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report.

Irish agency says poster listing 'death' as COVID vaccine side effect is fake

CLAIM: An official government poster from Ireland's Health Products Regulatory Authority says sudden death is a side effect of the COVID-19 vaccines.

THE FACTS: The poster was fabricated. Ireland's agency in charge of regulating medicines and devices has not listed "sudden death" as a COVID-19 side effect. Siobhan Molloy, a spokesperson for Ireland's Health Products Regulatory Authority, said in an email that the poster was not produced by the country's regulatory authority. "I can categorically state this is not an HPRRA produced poster — or indeed a piece of communication produced by the Health Service Executive (HSE) who on behalf of the Irish Department of Health produce advice information," she said. The Health Products Regulatory Authority is responsible for regulating medicines and devices that are used on people and animals. While the poster was designed to look official, Molloy said the "people of Ireland" logo does not exist and is not representative of the authority either. Death is not listed as a side effect from the vaccine by the Ireland Health Service Executive agency. In its official informational pamphlets for the vaccine, the agency says the COVID-19 vaccine can "protect people and reduce the illness and deaths caused by the virus." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and numerous health officials have found COVID-19 vaccines, which have undergone clinical trials and been administered to millions in the U.S., to be safe and effective.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy in New York contributed this report.

Video doesn't show Indigenous people in Australia protesting vaccines

CLAIM: A video shows aboriginal people in Australia defending themselves with bows and arrows against

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 76 of 88

authorities trying to forcibly administer COVID-19 vaccines.

THE FACTS: The video was filmed in Brazil nearly a year before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. It shows a March 2019 demonstration in Sao Paulo by a group of Guarani Indigenous people who were protesting changes to health care infrastructure and resources. But social media users are falsely claiming it shows Indigenous people in Australia staving off coronavirus vaccination efforts. "The Australian Aborigines are defending themselves with bow and arrow against the authorities who are forcibly trying to vaccinate them," reads one false tweet that shared the video. The original video was posted to Twitter on March 28, 2019, by a journalist working for the Latin American news outlet TeleSur. The journalist shared the video alongside a tweet stating that it captured tension in front of the Sao Paulo mayor's office after the mayor refused to meet with a group of Guarani people. The protesters were demanding to speak with the mayor about recent changes to health care services provided to Indigenous communities, according to a local news report from G1, a website operated by the Brazilian outlet Globo. Photos showing the same scene can be found on the stock photo site Alamy and in the Globo report describing the event. Google maps data confirms the location was Sao Paulo's city hall.

— Sophia Tulp

Purported Canadian memo about anti-Biden phrase is fabricated

CLAIM: Canadian government agency Shared Services Canada sent a memo to employees banning them from using the phrase "Let's Go Brandon" or risk being fired "without recourse or labor union participation."

THE FACTS: Social media users and conservative outlets shared an image of a letter they falsely claimed was an official memo from a Canadian government agency directing employees not to use a slogan popular among critics of President Joe Biden. The falsified memo from Shared Services Canada, which used the image of the Canadian flag in its letterhead, said federal employees were banned from using the phrase "Let's Go Brandon" in any variation, under any circumstance, and violators of the policy could be fired. Online posts echoed the false language. The phrase refers to a meme that emerged earlier this month from a video of an interview with NASCAR driver Brandon Brown after he won an Xfinity Series race at Alabama's Talladega Superspeedway. A reporter said on air that fans behind him were chanting "Let's go Brandon," when video footage indicates the actual chant was "F--- Joe Biden." Some people have suggested the reporter purposefully misinterpreted the crowd's chant and the quote has become a catchphrase among critics of Biden. Shared Services Canada, which is responsible for providing information technology services across federal agencies, told the AP that the letter circulating on social media is not a real memo from the department. "We can confirm this message was not issued by Shared Services Canada and it does not reflect departmental policy," an agency spokesperson wrote in an email. A second false claim — that Facebook had amended its hate speech policy to ban accounts from using "Let's go Brandon" — also circulated online this week. The claim originated in a tweet by conservative commentator Jeff Charles, who told the AP his post was satirical. His Twitter bio also states: "I spit hot satire." However, many social media users spread the incorrect claim seemingly believing it was true. A Facebook spokesperson told the AP in an email that Facebook has not changed its hate speech policy as falsely claimed.

— Sophia Tulp. Associated Press writer David Klepper in Providence, Rhode Island, contributed to this report.

Photo of bare grocery shelves show impact of winter storm, not 'Build Back Better'

CLAIM: Photo of empty grocery shelves shows impact of President Joe Biden's "Build Back Better" policies.

THE FACTS: A photo circulating widely on Instagram on Tuesday shows near-empty grocery store shelves in Houston, which the caption falsely suggested was a result of Biden's "Build Back Better," an agenda that focuses on social policy and programs. "Supply chain issues. Terrible job numbers. People quitting their job because the government is essentially forcing them to put a needle in their arm or lose their job. Crumbling economy, terrible inflation, and the list goes on. This is Joe Biden's 'Build Back Better!'" the Instagram caption stated. But the post, which received more than 135,000 likes on Instagram, left out that

the photo was taken during a severe winter storm. The photo was taken on Feb. 20, 2021, in Houston by photographer Francois Picard for Agence France-Presse. The extreme low temperatures left millions in Texas without power and water, which also devastated the entire transportation infrastructure, leading to food supply issues. Some grocery stores had to close locations entirely. The legislation at the center of Biden's "Build Back Better" plan was introduced to the House in September, and Democrats are still working to rally support for the bill. Due to the pandemic, there have been ongoing supply-chain disruptions causing grocery stores to have inconsistent inventory. But there are currently no nationwide food shortages or widespread supply-chain issues, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Robert Durst charged with 1982 murder of wife Kathie Durst

By KAREN MATTHEWS and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Millionaire real estate scion Robert Durst has been charged with murder in the death of his first wife, Kathie Durst, nearly four decades after she disappeared and just days after he was sentenced to life in prison in California for killing a confidante who helped him cover up the slaying.

Authorities in the New York City suburbs confirmed Friday that they have charged Durst, 78, whose lawyers say has been hospitalized on a ventilator in Los Angeles after testing positive for COVID-19.

A state police investigator filed a criminal complaint Tuesday in a town court in Lewisboro, New York charging Durst with second-degree murder in the death of Kathie Durst, who vanished in 1982. He had not been previously charged in Kathie Durst's disappearance.

The case garnered renewed public interest after HBO aired a documentary in 2015 in which the eccentric heir appeared to admit killing people, stepping off camera and muttering to himself on a live microphone: "Killed them all, of course."

The complaint charging Durst wasn't announced at the time by law enforcement officials or Westchester District Attorney Mimi Rocah, who recently convened a grand jury as she seeks to indict him for the killing. The grand jury continues to meet and hear witnesses and could eventually return an indictment.

"The Westchester County District Attorney's Office can confirm that a complaint charging Robert Durst with the murder of Kathleen Durst was filed in Lewisboro Town Court on October 19, 2021. We have no further comment at this time," Rocah's office said in a statement Friday.

Robert Abrams, a lawyer for Kathie Durst's family, said in a statement: "Robert Durst has now been formally charged with the murder of Kathleen McCormack Durst. We are very happy with this development. At this time, however, we will not be making any further comments until the grand jury process is completed."

Messages seeking comment were left with Durst's lawyers.

The one-page felony complaint filed in Lewisboro cites evidence in the files of the Westchester district attorney, the New York State Police and the Los Angeles district attorney, as well as "conversations with numerous witnesses and observations of defendants, recorded interviews and observations of Mr. Durst's recorded interviews and court testimony in related proceedings."

Kathie Durst was 29 and in her final months of medical school when she was last seen. She and Robert Durst, who was 38 at the time, had been married nearly nine years and were living in South Salem, a community in Lewisboro. Her body was never found. At the request of her family, she was declared legally dead in 2017.

The complaint charging Robert Durst bears the name of state police Investigator Joseph Becerra, who reopened the probe in 1999 after receiving a tip about Kathie Durst's disappearance. Authorities searched a lake and the couple's home but turned up little evidence, with Becerra equating the search to a "a needle in a haystack."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 78 of 88

Becerra testified in July at Robert Durst's California trial that he wanted to interview Robert Durst's friend, Susan Berman, but never got the chance because Durst shot and killed her in 2000. Los Angeles prosecutors said Robert Durst killed Berman because she was preparing to confess to police how she helped him cover up Kathie Durst's death.

The criminal complaint filed Tuesday against Robert Durst was done parallel to the grand jury proceedings, which could continue for several more weeks. Such filings are often seen as a first step in the criminal process because, in New York, all felony cases require a grand jury indictment to proceed to trial unless a defendant waives that requirement.

After Berman's death, Durst went into hiding, disguising himself as a mute woman living in a cheap apartment in Galveston, Texas. There, he killed a neighbor and chopped up his body, but was later acquitted after telling the jury he did it in self-defense.

Durst was also sentenced in 2016 to over seven years in prison after pleading guilty to a federal weapons charge stemming from a 2015 arrest in New Orleans.

Durst's family owns more than 16 million square feet of real estate in New York and Philadelphia, including a 10% stake in One World Trade Center, the Manhattan skyscraper formerly known as the Freedom Tower. Family members bought out Robert Durst's stake in the business for \$65 million in 2006.

In the 2015 HBO documentary "The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst," Durst appeared to admit killing people and admitted he made up details about what happened the night she disappeared because he was "hoping that would just make everything go away."

Durst, who has numerous medical issues, sat in a wheelchair for much of the California trial and sentencing hearing. He read his lawyer's questions from a tablet giving live transcriptions because he struggles with hearing.

Durst, testifying in the Los Angeles trial in August, denied killing Kathie Durst. After her medical school called to report that she hadn't been going to class, he said he figured she was "out someplace having fun" and suggested that perhaps drug use was to blame.

"It hadn't occurred to me that anything had happened to her," Durst said, speaking slowly in a strained, raspy voice. "It was more like: What had Kathie done to Kathie?"

On Twitter, follow Karen Matthews at twitter.com/1karenmatthews and Michael Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak

EXPLAINER: Is it time to get a COVID-19 booster? Which one?

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writers

Millions more Americans just became eligible for COVID-19 boosters, but figuring out who's eligible and when can be confusing. And adding to the challenge is that this time around, people can choose a different brand of vaccine for that extra dose.

A number of factors, including the vaccine you started with and when your last dose was, help determine when you qualify. Just like the initial shots, boosters are free and will be available at pharmacies, doctors' offices and clinics.

Here are some things to know:

WHY ARE BOOSTERS NEEDED?

People who are fully vaccinated are still strongly protected against hospitalization and death from COVID-19. But immunity against infection can wane over time, and the extra-contagious delta variant is spreading widely. U.S. health authorities want to shore up protection in at-risk people who were vaccinated months ago, though they emphasize that the priority remains getting the unvaccinated their first shots.

ARE BOOSTERS AVAILABLE FOR ALL THREE VACCINES AUTHORIZED IN THE U.S.?

Yes, Pfizer boosters began last month, and this week the government cleared extra doses of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines too. More than 120 million Americans will become eligible for a booster in the coming months, or about 2 out of every 3 vaccinated adults, officials say. But who's eligible — and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 79 of 88

when — differs depending on which vaccine you got first.

CAN I GET A BOOSTER NOW?

If you got Pfizer or Moderna shots first, you're eligible if your last dose was at least six months ago and you're 65 or older, or are a younger adult who has health problems or a job or living conditions that put you at higher risk of severe illness or exposure to the coronavirus. Health care workers, for example, are included because they are regularly exposed to the virus and can't come to work with even the mildest of infections.

WHAT IF I GOT THE J&J SHOT?

Anyone who got a J&J shot at least two months ago is eligible, regardless of age or other factors.

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DIFFERENT VACCINES?

A single shot of the J&J vaccine is less effective than two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer formulas, and health authorities decided it was important for the J&J recipients to achieve a similar level of protection. As for the timing, J&J simply tested more people with a two-month booster than one at six months. For recipients of Moderna or Pfizer vaccinations, there's no clear data that everybody needs another dose, but immunity against infection in at least some people appeared to wane around six months.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO WAIT SIX MONTHS?

Experts agree that getting a booster too soon can reduce the benefit. Timing matters because the immune system gradually builds layers of defenses over months, and letting that response mature improves the chances another, later dose will provide even stronger protection.

WHAT DOES 'MIXING AND MATCHING' BOOSTER DOSES MEAN?

It means a booster of a different brand from your original vaccination. That gives flexibility in situations such as nursing homes where only one type of booster might be brought in. It also gives people at risk of a rare side effect linked to one kind of vaccine the option of switching to a different shot.

SHOULD I SEEK OUT A DIFFERENT VACCINE?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Food and Drug Administration didn't recommend that people switch but left open the option. Preliminary results of a government study found an extra dose of any vaccine triggered a boost of virus-fighting antibodies regardless of what shots people got to begin with. For people who originally got a J&J vaccination, the Moderna and Pfizer shots appeared to offer a stronger boost. But researchers cautioned the study was too small to say one combination is better than another.

DO I NEED A BOOSTER TO STILL BE CONSIDERED FULLY VACCINATED?

No, the CDC says people still are considered fully vaccinated starting two weeks after the second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or the single-dose J&J shot. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky says the definition of fully vaccinated is not being changed for now because not everyone is eligible for boosters at this point.

WILL THIS BE MY LAST BOOSTER?

Nobody knows. Some scientists think eventually people may get regular COVID-19 shots like annual flu vaccinations. But researchers will need to study how long protection from the current boosters lasts.

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

Limbo in a blue tent: African asylum-seekers stuck on Cyprus

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — It seems a strange place to pitch a tent.

Plump in the middle of the United Nations-patrolled buffer zone that has divided Cyprus along ethnic lines since 1974, in the heart of the island's medieval capital, two Cameroonian asylum-seekers have lived in a small blue tent for nearly five months.

The breakaway Turkish Cypriot north, through which they entered hoping to reach the European Union-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 80 of 88

member, Greek Cypriot south, will deport them if they go back. And the south seems determined not to let them in — to discourage more would-be migrants from trying the same route.

To make things worse, the two can see people freely moving between north and south all the time, as their tent is beside a main authorized crossing — one of nine linking the two communities.

Enjei Grace says that she and Daniel Ejube were wrong to try to enter the internationally recognized south that way to apply for asylum.

"We are sorry," the 24 year-old says with tear-filled eyes, adding that she hopes authorities won't leave them in limbo "forever."

"We just pray that they sort things out, it's not been easy on us," she said.

Neither the Cyprus government nor authorities in the breakaway north have directly referred to the case so far. And the government has given no indication that it would let them in, for fear that could encourage other migrants from the Middle East and Africa to see the buffer zone as an easy gateway to asylum.

Cyprus says it has the highest number of first-time asylum applications among all 27 EU members, relative to its population of roughly 1.1 million. Interior Minister Nicos Nouris has told EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson that the country can't host more asylum seekers "due to the severe burden" on its reception system.

At an EU Asylum Support Office conference in Malta last week, Nouris said Cyprus is "obliged to take significant and drastic" measures along the buffer zone, adding that about 800 migrants crossed it recently within a 10-day span. Nouris added that 15,000 migrants have had their asylum applications rejected but can't be deported because there's no coherent EU policy — or agreement with their home countries — on sending them back.

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades told fellow EU leaders at a Brussels summit on Friday that so far this year the country's authorities have received 6,800 asylum claims, with 6,250 of those filed by people who crossed over from the north.

The Cypriot government claims that Turkey systematically forwards asylum seekers to the Mediterranean island's Turkish Cypriot north so that they can create a new pressure point on the south. It says almost 80% of arriving migrants enter illegally across the buffer zone.

Cyprus was split in 1974 when Turkey invaded following a coup by supporters of union with Greece. Only Turkey recognizes a Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in the north. Only the Greek Cypriot south enjoys full membership benefits. Decades of reunification talks have got nowhere.

The island's convoluted politics were lost on Grace and 20-year-old Ejube when they flew, separately, to an airport in the north with hopes of leaving a troubled past behind. Grace says she fled Cameroon to escape civil war and an uncle who sexually harassed her.

Ejube said his father paid for his trip to Cyprus where he would study and avoid being recruited by Cameroon's rebel forces. Both he and Grace said they didn't know about Cyprus' division.

Grace said the island appeared the "main" available EU destination when she decided to emigrate.

After realizing asylum wasn't available in the Turkish-Cypriot north, Grace and Ejube say a friend told them in May that they could easily "jump a fence" at night to reach the south.

Luck was not on their side. U.N. police officers patrolling the fenced area at a section of the capital's 16th century Venetian-built walls happened to notice them and returned them into the buffer zone. Normally, the U.N. passes asylum seekers over to authorities in the south, but this didn't happen with Ejube and Grace.

They've lived there since, with food and clothing donated by the U.N. refugee agency and individuals from both the Greek and the Turkish Cypriot community.

U.N. Peacekeeping Force spokesman Aleem Siddique said the Cyprus government "has the responsibility" to accept asylum seekers and that the Force's job is to coordinate between the two sides to "prevent unauthorized access" to the buffer zone.

Emilia Strovolidou, spokeswoman for the U.N. refugee agency said Grace and Ejube should be allowed access to asylum procedures according to national, EU and international law. "Despite our interventions with the authorities, access has been denied," she said.

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Caro exhibit 'Turn the Page' is a window into his world

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Days shy of his 86th birthday, Robert A. Caro has reached the point where his own life is a piece of history.

The New-York Historical Society has established a permanent exhibit dedicated to Caro, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes and many other honors for his epic biography of Robert Moses, "The Power Broker," and his ongoing series on President Lyndon Johnson. The exhibit, "Turn Every Page," begins Friday and draws upon Caro's archives, which he donated to the society in 2020. It includes videos, photographs, draft manuscripts, reporters notebooks, an outline he keeps on the wall of his office, newspaper clippings and such everyday items as a Smith-Corona typewriter.

Walking through the exhibit on a recent morning, Caro explains that his only dream growing up was to be a writer, "maybe a well known writer." The wall displays on the second floor of the society trace his evolution from editor of his high school newspaper, The Horace Mann Record, to his years as an investigative reporter for Newsday, to his famously lengthy and detailed books.

Asked what kind of impression "Turn Every Page" might leave with young visitors who don't know a lot about him, he responds that "the quality of the writing matters as much in nonfiction as in fiction." He also anticipates a less reverent take:

"This guy is sort of nuts."

Caro began "The Power Broker" more than 50 years ago, but has completed just five other books since the Moses biography came out in 1974: his first four Johnson books and the relatively brief "Working," a compilation of essays and speeches released in 2019. His most recent Johnson biography, "The Passage of Power," was published in 2012, and he answers the inevitable question about the fifth and presumed last volume by saying no release is likely in the near future.

Some artifacts here help explain why.

— Caro points out a handwritten list he compiled in the early 1970s when he was trying to show that Moses had plotted to keep people of color out of Jones Beach State Park, which opened in 1929. Caro knew that Moses had worked to limit mass transportation to Jones Beach, but he wanted tangible evidence of the results. So Caro and his wife and collaborator, Ina Caro, stood near the entrance to the beach, tracked the people coming in and determined that the overwhelming majority were white.

— Pictures from rural Texas, where Johnson was born and raised, remind Caro of how much he — a child of New York City private schools and Princeton University — needed to educate himself. For his Johnson books, he expected to interview a few Texans for "a little more color." He ended up living there for three years, "at the edge of the Hill Country." He remembers the heavy water buckets that women had to haul because their homes had no plumbing, and poking the hard, infertile earth on the former Johnson family ranch.

— The exhibit includes a manuscript page from "Master of the Senate," Caro's third Johnson book. He recalls spending so much time in the Senate in Washington that pages called him the "nut in the gallery." Tourist groups would come and go, sessions on the floor would open and adjourn, but Caro would remain, just absorbing the world that Johnson dominated as Majority Leader in the 1950s.

"There is no substitute for going there yourself," he says, "because you never know what you're going to find out."

"That's why my books keep taking so long."

Louise Mirrer, president and CEO of the historical society, says the exhibit came out of conversations she had about the archives with Caro, who lives nearby and has been visiting the museum since childhood. He didn't want his work confined to a research room. He wanted attendees to understand the world as he did.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 82 of 88

"He's a quintessential New Yorker through whom you can see American history," she says.

The exhibit is called "Turn Every Page" in honor of advice Caro received decades ago from Newsday managing editor Alan Hathway about the importance of looking through every document in hand. That's the fun part, he says, the research, "finding out": the manuscript from a long-lost Johnson crony that acknowledged votes were stolen in Johnson's notorious, narrowly won 1948 Senate race; the boxes of papers Caro has reviewed at the Johnson presidential library in Austin, Texas; the time he and his wife sat on a floor in the pre-Internet years and looked through telephone books to track down old classmates of Johnson.

The pain begins with the writing.

Behind one glass front at the exhibit is a heavily marked-up manuscript page for "The Passage of Power." Johnson is only a month into his presidency, which began after John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, and Caro wants to describe a late-night phone conversation between LBJ and civil rights leader Roy Wilkins. Like many of his peers, Wilkins has come to admire Johnson, after initially distrusting the Texas Democrat who had allied himself with Southern segregationists when he joined the Senate.

Near the end of their call, as Johnson is about to hang up, Wilkins tells him, "Please take care of yourself." When Johnson appears not to take him seriously, Wilkins repeats, "Please take care of yourself," and adds, "We need you."

Lines throughout the page are crossed out and written over. Caro remembers chastising himself — "You, Bob, feel this is such a telling and revealing moment and you're not doing it" — before making a couple of small but satisfying revisions. He changed one sentence from "They believed him," referring to how civil rights leaders felt about Johnson, to "They believed in him." And he set Wilkins' closing words off in their own paragraph, writing in red in the left margin to instruct his typist not to miss the paragraph sign.

"I re-wrote this so many times, he says.

US intel warns China could dominate advanced technologies

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials issued new warnings Friday about China's ambitions in artificial intelligence and a range of advanced technologies that could eventually give Beijing a decisive military edge and possible dominance over health care and other essential sectors in America.

The warnings include a renewed effort to inform business executives, academics and local and state government officials about the risks of accepting Chinese investment or expertise in key industries, officials at the National Counterintelligence and Security Center said. While the center does not intend to tell officials to reject Chinese investment, it will encourage efforts to control intellectual property and implement security measures.

National security agencies under President Joe Biden's administration are making an aggressive public push against China, which some officials have called the greatest strategic threat to the United States. The Biden administration has simultaneously tried to ease some tensions with Beijing dating to the Trump administration and seek common ground on trade and climate change.

Beijing has repeatedly accused Washington of fear-mongering about its intentions and attacked U.S. intelligence for its assessments of China, including allegations that Chinese leaders have withheld critical information about the coronavirus pandemic.

Under President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government has stated its goals to create profitable technologies in robotics and other fields in plans known as "Made in China 2025." The Justice Department in recent years has returned several indictments alleging theft of sensitive U.S. information on behalf of China, including vaccine research and autonomous vehicle technology.

The counterintelligence center's acting director, Michael Orlando, told reporters in a rare briefing Thursday that the U.S. "can't afford to lose" ground to China in several key areas: artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, quantum computing, semiconductors and biotechnology.

Orlando noted that Chinese businesses and academics are beholden to the Chinese Communist Party

and are required to serve the party's interests.

"Although we've been saying this for year after year, people are not digesting this," he said.

Orlando declined to say whether the U.S. should enact tougher restrictions or outright bans on Chinese investment in certain sectors, saying his role was not to suggest policy.

But the counterintelligence center holds regular briefings with private industry and academia while recognizing that industries and universities may still want to seek students, experts and investors from China, Orlando said. He would not name companies with which the center has met.

The center's officer for emerging and disruptive technologies, Edward You, noted the investment of Chinese companies in U.S. and European biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

WuXi Biologics has since 2019 built a vaccine manufacturing facility in Ireland, announced plans for a production facility in Massachusetts and acquired a Bayer plant in Germany. Officials did not disclose any information linking those acquisitions to Beijing's influence but said they were part of a broader pattern by Chinese medical companies.

Chinese companies have also offered COVID-19 testing kits and genetic testing in the U.S., meeting federal privacy standards and other regulations, You said. But the data collected by companies with ties to China could ultimately end up in the hands of Beijing, You said.

China already has the greatest access to medical data of any country, You said. With its data collection and its advancements in technology, Beijing could one day be dominant in health care and leave the U.S. wholly dependent on China, he said.

"If you're President Xi," he said, "that's the gift that keeps on giving."

This story deletes an incorrect reference to WuXi Biologics being headquartered in Hong Kong.

Laundrie family hopes for answers after remains found

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Family members were hoping for more answers from law enforcement regarding the cause of death for Brian Laundrie, who was a person of interest in the death of girlfriend Gabby Petito while the couple was on a cross-country road trip, an attorney said Friday.

"I was informed by law enforcement yesterday that perhaps by mid-day today we'd have some more information," the Laundries' attorney Steve Bertolino told ABC's "Good Morning America" on Friday.

The FBI on Thursday identified human remains found a day earlier in a Florida nature preserve as those of Brian Laundrie. A notebook and backpack believed to belong to Laundrie were also found in the wilderness park, the FBI said. The area where they were found had been underwater during previous searches.

A statement from the FBI did not list a cause of death. It was not clear how long the remains may have been submerged in water.

Petito's body was found Sept. 19 at edge of Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park, which the couple had visited.

"We have no further comment at this time and we ask that you respect the Laundries' privacy at this time," the FBI statement said.

Richard Stafford, attorney for Petito's family, said they would have no immediate reaction to the identification of Laundrie's remains.

"They are grieving the loss of their beautiful daughter," Stafford said in an email. "Gabby's family will make a statement at the appropriate time and when they are emotionally ready."

The discovery of the remains concluded a massive search involving federal, state and local law enforcement that began shortly after Laundrie disappeared Sept. 14, two weeks after the 23-year-old returned alone to his parents' home in North Port, Florida.

The investigation into Petito's slaying, however, is not yet concluded. But only Laundrie has ever been identified by law enforcement officials as a person of interest in the case.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 84 of 88

Petito's family reported her missing Sept. 11, launching a search that garnered worldwide media attention and, in Laundrie's case, focused largely on the Carlton Reserve wilderness park near the Laundrie home. It is a densely wooded, swampy area that's home to alligators, coyotes, bobcats, snakes and numerous other creatures.

The couple first met as teenagers on Long Island, New York, and more recently moved to Florida's Gulf Coast to live with his parents.

They first gained an online following while on their trip in a converted Ford Transit van in videos filled with happy scenes that may have concealed deeper problems. After Petito disappeared, the case became a true-crime obsession on social media.

The intense focus on Petito's case has led to renewed calls for people to pay greater attention to cases involving missing Indigenous women and other people of color. Petito, 22, was white.

The coroner in Wyoming concluded Petito died of strangulation and her body had been where it was found for three or four weeks.

The couple was stopped Aug. 12 by police in Moab, Utah, after they had a physical altercation, but no domestic violence charges were filed. The police department there is conducting an internal review to determine if policy was followed.

Laundrie returned home alone Sept. 1 in the van the couple took on their trip. The van was later impounded by authorities. He was reported missing after telling his parents he was going for a hike in the Carlton Reserve.

Dozens of unconfirmed tips poured into authorities about spotting Laundrie from Wyoming to the Appalachian Trail, but none panned out.

The remains were found Wednesday as searches concentrated on the nearby Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park, where a Ford Mustang that Laundrie drove to the wilderness was found. That park is directly adjacent to the Carlton Reserve, both of which are about 35 miles (56 kilometers) south of Sarasota, Florida.

An earlier version of this report had an incorrect spelling of Brian Laundrie's name.

3 years after Pittsburgh synagogue attack, trial still ahead

By PETER SMITH and MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — As the three-year mark since the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue approaches, survivors are planning now-familiar annual rituals of remembrance, the criminal case involving the suspect plods on, and the site is in line for restoration.

The landmark synagogue in Pittsburgh's leafy Squirrel Hill neighborhood remains dormant, but a renowned architect is among those working to transform the site where 11 people were killed in America's deadliest antisemitic attack.

No trial date is in sight for the suspect, Robert G. Bowers. Nor is there any indication the U.S. Justice Department is heeding the calls of some members of the targeted congregations to avert a trial by dropping its quest for a death penalty and accepting a guilty plea accompanied by a life sentence.

In the coming days, members of the three congregations whose Sabbath services were underway during the Oct. 27, 2018, attack will join with supporters to pay quiet tribute, gathering for community-service projects and studying the Torah.

And on Wednesday afternoon, three years to the day since the shooting, they will assemble outdoors for a memorial service at Schenley Park, among 11 trees planted there to remember the slain.

"People are having a really difficult time in this COVID era," said Maggie Feinstein, director of the 10.27 Healing Partnership, formed to help those affected by the synagogue shooting and hate crimes. The goal this year was to "come together safely. It's been a long road of not being able to do that."

Bowers' lawyers and federal prosecutors were in a Pittsburgh courtroom this month to argue whether incriminating statements he made at the scene can be used against him.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 85 of 88

Some members of the Tree of Life, Dor Hadash and New Light congregations say their grief has been compounded by the coronavirus pandemic because it further isolated them from one another and from in-person worship.

Rabbi Jeffrey Myers of Tree of Life, who survived the attack, said the dual traumas have left congregants at various stages of recovery.

"There are some who say they're healed," he said. "If that's the case, I say thank God. I can only say for myself, I will always be healing."

The pandemic has also caused delays and logistical challenges in the federal capital murder case against Bowers, a former truck driver whose statements that day and trail of online posts suggest he was consumed by hatred for Jewish people when, authorities say, he launched the attack.

Bowers, 49, has avoided public statements from behind bars as his team of attorneys has fought to prevent him from being executed, even offering to have him plead guilty in return for a life sentence.

U.S. District Judge Donetta Ambrose has sealed about 100 of the roughly 600 docket entries in the case, restricting how much the public can know about the proceedings. The acting U.S. attorney in Pittsburgh, Stephen R. Kaufman, declined to comment for this article, and Bowers' legal team did not respond to messages.

Bowers, armed with an assault-style rifle and three handguns, is accused of shooting 18 people and trading gunfire with officers, getting shot three times before he was taken into police custody. His social media history included posts about a false conspiracy theory that the Holocaust was a hoax and expressed contempt for a nonprofit Jewish group that helps refugees.

In 2019, Bowers' lawyers told Ambrose "this case would already be over — and interests in a speedy resolution vindicated — had the government accepted the defendant's offer to plead guilty as charged and be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of release."

Under then-President Donald Trump, the Justice Department pursued the killings as a death penalty case. But in July, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced a moratorium on federal executions while his agency reviews policies and procedures, adding to the uncertainty. Prosecutors continue to treat it as a capital case, but it's unclear what would happen to Bowers if he is convicted.

Over the past two years, the defense and prosecutors have battled over evidence, search warrants and court procedures, as well as the effect of the pandemic on Bowers' right to a fair trial. The defense team has insisted on safe conditions and expressed concern about the risks of travel, while the U.S. attorney's office has complained about what they deem delay tactics.

Dave Freed, a former U.S. attorney in Harrisburg, called three years an unusually long period between arrest and trial for any criminal case, but said the intense public interest in the synagogue shooting and the potential death penalty both put added pressure on lawyers to get it right.

"I think you have to add COVID to mix — I'm sure it's contributed," said Freed, who did not have a role in the Tree of Life case when he worked for the Justice Department.

Some members of the three congregations want the Justice Department to take the deal that would spare Bowers' life.

Dor Hadash, as a congregation, has urged Garland to abandon pursuit of the death penalty. Individual members of New Light also are opposed to a potential sentence of death.

Author Beth Kissileff urged against the death penalty on religious grounds and because a plea would spare survivors the trauma of a trial. Her husband, New Light Rabbi Jonathan Perlman, survived the shooting.

"As angry as I am that the lives of our friends and congregants were brutally ended, it is God's responsibility, not ours, to avenge their death," she wrote in the Jewish news site, The Forward.

Kissileff said she is encouraged by President Joe Biden's campaign pledge to support legislation eliminating the federal death penalty and to give states incentives to do the same. She is also encouraged by the moratorium imposed by Garland.

Survivors said that they understand that capital cases take a long time, and that the pandemic has made this one take longer, but they want to get it behind them.

"We would like to move on with our lives and we would like to get this over a done with," said Carol

Black, who lived through the attack by hiding in a storeroom.

Survivors are also redoubling efforts to combat violent extremism. Featured speakers at a three-day Eradicate Hate Global Summit, held in Pittsburgh this week, included experts alongside survivors and relatives of victims.

Meanwhile, the Tree of Life Congregation has chosen architect Daniel Libeskind, the master planner for the reconstruction of New York's World Trade Center, to redesign the sprawling synagogue complex, with plans to share space with the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. The goal is to create a solemn memorial as well as a place of regular activity.

"We're all excited about the potential of what the premier architect of his generation could come up with at Tree of Life," Myers said.

Scolforo reported from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through The Conversation U.S. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Mumbai cinemas reopen after 18 months as life swings back

MUMBAI, India (AP) — Movie theaters in India's entertainment capital Mumbai reopened on Friday after more than 18 months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic, the last of the many virus restrictions to go amid a decline in infections.

Theaters opened to half capacity, following the guidelines released last month, but struggled to lure the public back and mostly re-released earlier hits. Many shows were running with fewer audiences, movie ticketing portal BookMyShow showed.

To minimize the danger of the virus, only those with COVID-19 vaccination certificates or with a "safe status" on the state-run health app will be allowed to enter the theaters. Masks and temperature checks are mandatory and no food or beverages will be allowed inside.

Theaters elsewhere in the country are already running shows.

Mumbai city has been one of the country's worst-affected by the pandemic but has gradually reopened following a decline in both COVID-19 cases and deaths. Cinemas there, however, are among the last public places to reopen — a hugely symbolic move in the country's financial capital also known for its Bollywood film industry.

Every year, the \$2.8 billion industry produces more than 2,000 films. Bollywood's success over the years has embedded moviegoing into India's contemporary culture and been a boon for the economy.

The restrictions imposed on movie theaters to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have hurt operators. But the industry is expected to rebound. Indian filmmakers have lined up major big-ticket releases ahead of Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, when sales peak and audiences flock to theaters.

The return to cinemas in Mumbai comes a day after India celebrated its one billionth COVID-19 vaccine dose. About half of India's nearly 1.4 billion people have received at least one dose while around 20% are fully immunized, according to Our World in Data.

India witnessed a crushing coronavirus surge earlier this year but life has swung back to normal. Markets buzz with activity, foreign tourists are allowed again and the country is gearing up to celebrate Diwali.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India's vaccine drive is an example of what it can achieve if the citizens and the government come together with a common goal. He said the milestone has silenced India's critics.

"Injecting 1 billion doses is not a mere figure but a reflection of the country's determination. India has scripted a new chapter in its history. The world will now take India more seriously after this landmark," Modi said in a speech that was televised live across the country.

Modi also exhorted people to buy Indian-made goods to boost the economy, which is expected to gain from the festival season purchases.

"There are some among us who only trust foreign brands even for everyday necessities. The success of Made in India vaccines is a paradigm shift," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 87 of 88

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Oct. 23, the 296th day of 2021. There are 69 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 23, 1973, President Richard Nixon agreed to turn over White House tape recordings subpoenaed by the Watergate special prosecutor to Judge John J. Sirica.

On this date:

In 1707, the first Parliament of Great Britain, created by the Acts of Union between England and Scotland, held its first meeting.

In 1864, forces led by Union Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis repelled Confederate Maj. Gen. Sterling Price's army in the Civil War Battle of Westport in Missouri.

In 1915, tens of thousands of women paraded up Fifth Avenue in New York City, demanding the right to vote.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of Leyte (LAY'-tee) Gulf began, resulting in a major Allied victory against Japanese forces.

In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary's Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces started entering the country, and the uprising was put down within weeks.

In 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck-bombing at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon; a near-simultaneous attack on French forces killed 58 paratroopers.

In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected, 58-42, the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork.

In 1989, 23 people were killed in an explosion at Phillips Petroleum Co.'s chemical complex in Pasadena, Texas.

In 2001, the nation's anthrax scare hit the White House with the discovery of a small concentration of spores at an offsite mail processing center.

In 2009, President Barack Obama declared the swine flu outbreak a national emergency, giving his health chief the power to let hospitals move emergency rooms offsite to speed treatment and protect non-infected patients.

In 2012, during a debate with Democratic rival Joe Donnelly, Indiana Republican Senate candidate Richard Mourdock said that when a woman becomes pregnant during rape, "it is something that God intended to happen." (Other Republican candidates moved to distance themselves from Mourdock, who went on to lose the November election to Donnelly.)

In 2014, officials announced that an emergency room doctor who'd recently returned to New York City after treating Ebola patients in West Africa tested positive for the virus, becoming the first case in the city and the fourth in the nation. (Dr. Craig Spencer later recovered.)

Ten years ago: Libya's interim rulers declared the country liberated, formally marking the end of Moammar Gadhafi's 42-year tyranny. A 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck eastern Turkey, killing some 600 people.

Five years ago: A tour bus returning home to Los Angeles from a casino trip plowed into the back of a slow-moving semi-truck on a California highway, killing 13 people. Bill Murray received the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Former student radical turned California lawmaker Tom Hayden, 76, died in Santa Monica, California.

One year ago: Drugmakers AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson announced the resumption of U.S. testing of their COVID-19 vaccine candidates; each had stopped its testing after a study volunteer developed a serious health issue, requiring a review of safety data. France surpassed 1 million confirmed coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic, becoming the second country in Western Europe (after Spain) to reach the mark. President Donald Trump announced that Sudan would start to normalize ties with Israel, making it the third Arab state to do so as part of U.S.-brokered deals in the run-up to Election Day. Texas country singer and songwriter Jerry Jeff Walker, who wrote the pop song "Mr. Bojangles," died of cancer

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 108 ~ 88 of 88

at age 78.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Philip Kaufman is 85. Soccer great Pele (pay-lay) is 81. R&B singer Barbara Ann Hawkins (The Dixie Cups) is 78. Former ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross is 73. Actor Michael Rupert is 70. Movie director Ang Lee is 67. Jazz singer Dianne Reeves is 65. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 65. Community activist Martin Luther King III is 64. Movie director Sam Raimi is 62. Parodist "Weird Al" Yankovic is 62. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 57. Christian/jazz singer David Thomas (Take 6) is 55. Rock musician Brian Nevin (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 55. Actor Jon Huertas is 52. Movie director Chris Weitz is 52. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 52. Bluegrass musician Eric Gibson (The Gibson Brothers) is 51. Country singer Jimmy Wayne is 49. Actor Vivian Bang is 48. Rock musician Eric Bass (Shinedown) is 47. TV personality and host Cat Deeley is 45. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 45. Actor Saycon Sengbloh is 44. Rock singer Matthew Shultz (Cage the Elephant) is 38. TV personality Meghan McCain is 37. R&B singer Miguel is 36. Actor Masiela Lusha (MAH'-see-el-la loo-SHA') is 36. Actor Emilia Clarke is 35. Actor Briana Evigan is 35. Actor Inbar Lavi is 35. Actor Jessica Stroup is 35. Neo-soul musician Allen Branstetter (St. Paul & the Broken Bones) is 31. Actor Taylor Spreitler is 28. Actor Margaret Qualley is 27. Actor Amandla Stenberg is 23.