

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 1 of 77

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

[1- Service Notice: Edwin Tietz](#)

[2- SD News Watch: Investigation Part 4: Federal government relied largely on local lenders to vet more than \\$800 billion in COVID loans](#)

[4- Virtual 2021 South Dakota Festival of Books Videos Available Online](#)

[5- Northern Lights possible tonight](#)

[6- Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller](#)

[7- Downtown Trick or Treat Event Held Friday](#)

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

[9- Weather Pages](#)

[12- Daily Devotional](#)

[13- 2021 Community Events](#)

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

"Creativity doesn't wait for that perfect moment. It fashions its own perfect moments out of ordinary ones."

-Bruce Garrabrandt



Upcoming Events

Saturday, Oct. 30

All State Chorus & Orchestra at Rapid City Civic Center

Pumpkinstakes Oral Interp at Watertown

Tuesday, Nov. 2

Brookings Novice Debate

Volleyball Region 1A Tourney

NCRC Test at GHS, 8:30 a.m. to noon

Thursday, Nov. 4

Aberdeen Novice Online Debate

Volleyball Region 1A Tourney

Bowdle LDE

Friday-Saturday, Nov. 5-6

Golden Eagle Cup Debate & Oral Interp at Aberdeen Central

Service Notice:

Edwin Tomy Tietz

Prayer services for Edwin Tomy Tietz, Sr., 82, of Groton will be 7:00 p.m., November 4, 2021 at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Pastor Brandon Dunham will officiate. Visitation will be held at the chapel from 5-7 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Investigation Part 4: Federal government relied largely on local lenders to vet more than \$800 billion in COVID loans

Bart Pfankuch
South Dakota News Watch

Significant direct oversight of the federal Paycheck Protection Program, which provided more than \$800 billion in forgivable loans to U.S. business during the pandemic, was placed in the hands of the community banks and lending institutions that issued the loans.



Jaime Wood

Jaime Wood, South Dakota director for the U.S. Small Business Administration, said the SBA has entrusted much of the vetting of PPP applications to the lending agencies that processed the loan applications and distributed the money. In many cases, those lenders had pre-existing relationships with borrowers who sometimes received large sums of money.

The lenders are responsible for confirming how many employees the applicant has, where the business is located and whether it is legally registered, among other things, Wood said.

"We're heavily leaning on the input that the community lenders give," Wood said. "Many businesses have accounts with these lenders already ... and we're pretty confident in the integrity of the Paycheck Protection Program."

PPP loans were designed to help businesses continue to pay expenses for employees and other costs during the major slowdown during the pandemic. Loans are forgivable if the money was shown to be used for the purposes outlined in the PPP application.

A South Dakota News Watch investigation published on Oct. 11 has raised questions about whether a business owned by Chris Cammack, son of Senate Majority Leader Gary Cammack, operated in South Dakota and had employees working there during the pandemic. Chris Cammack applied for and received more than \$300,000 in PPP loans for Prairie Mountain Wildlife Studios, a business he said operates in Union Center, S.D., but which property records and legislative testimony by Chris Cammack indicate actually operates in Cypress, Texas.

Chris Cammack did not return calls and emails for comment for the Oct. 11 article and did not return a call or email seeking comment for this article.

Prairie Mountain Wildlife Studios in Union Center received a \$153,600 PPP loan in April 2020 to protect 10 jobs with an annual payroll of \$737,280 in 2019, according to SBA records on Federalpay.org.

The business in Union Center received a second PPP loan of \$161,417 in January 2021, also to protect 10 jobs. Both loans were designed to cover payroll expenses, the records show.

Meanwhile, Chris Cammack's business called PM Wildlife Studios in Cypress, Texas, received a \$241,600 PPP loan in April 2020 to cover payroll, utilities and mortgage interest, according to SBA records. That loan was to protect 25 jobs at an estimated annual 2019 payroll of \$1.16 million.

PM Wildlife Studios in Texas then received a second PPP loan of \$241,600 in January 2021 to cover payroll for 27 jobs at an estimated annual payroll of \$1.16 million, according to Federalpay.org.

In South Dakota, through two rounds of PPP lending in 2020 and 2021, about 300 qualified SBA-approved lenders made more than 64,000 loans valued at \$2.7 billion, according to federal records. Nationally, the PPP program that has now ended had nearly 12 million loans valued at almost \$803 billion over 2020-21.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 3 of 77

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of PPP loan information. The left screenshot is for PM Wildlife Studios Inc, a corporation in Cypress, TX, with a loan size of \$241,600. The right screenshot is for Prairie Mountain Wildlife Studio LLC, a sole proprietorship in Union Center, SD, with a loan size of \$161,417. Both screenshots include details on jobs retained, loan approval dates, and loan status.

Business Name	Entity Type	Location	Loan Size	Jobs Retained	Loan Approved	Loan Status
PM Wildlife Studios Inc	Corporation (Business legal structure)	Cypress, TX	\$241,600	27	2021-01-21	Ongoing Loan
Prairie Mountain Wildlife Studio LLC	Sole Proprietorship (Business legal structure)	Union Center, SD	\$161,417	10	2021-01-28	Ongoing Loan

Chris Cammack's business in Texas, PM Wildlife Studios, received more than \$480,000 in forgivable PPP loans in 2020 and 2021, at the same time his business in South Dakota, Prairie Mountain Wildlife Studios, received two PPP loans valued at more than \$300,000. Photo:

Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

An SBA regional official said he was unable to discuss the PPP loans made to Cammack or any other individual applicant.

Chris Chavez, spokesman for the regional SBA office based in Denver, said the SBA takes any complaint of potential fraud very seriously. Chavez said in an email to News Watch that the SBA wants to hear from anyone who suspects fraud has been committed within the PPP program.

"The SBA takes fraud seriously, and, as such, all applicants are required to provide certification of their eligibility upon application," Chavez wrote. "Misrepresentation of eligibility is unlawful, and, when appropriate, these cases are referred to the Office of the Inspector General. The Office of Inspector General and the agency's federal partners are working diligently to resolve the fraud incidents. The SBA encourages anyone suspecting fraud or misuse of relief programs to visit sba.gov/fraud."

Chris Cammack is not known to be under investigation and has not been charged with any crime at this time.

Several criminal cases alleging criminal fraud in the PPP program have been filed by federal authorities.

According to the law firm Arnold & Porter, which is tracking COVID relief fraud, several criminal cases of PPP fraud are pending across the country. In one case, a Delaware woman was charged with inflating revenues and number of employees at her business to obtain \$246,000 in PPP loans. In another case, a Tennessee man was charged with obtaining \$6 million in PPP loans by inflating the revenues and number of employees at his company and then misusing the PPP funds to buy a home and a car.

Wood, SBA director in South Dakota, said she is not directly involved in auditing of applications or PPP loans awarded. While refusing to comment directly on the loans obtained by Chris Cammack, Wood said it was not uncommon for a business owner to live in one state and have businesses qualify for PPP loans in another state.

The lender on both PPP loans made to Cammack's business in South Dakota, and one of the PPP loans made to his business in Texas, was First Dakota National Bank. First Dakota is based in Yankton, S.D., and has branches in several South Dakota cities.

Dave Kroll, chief lending officer for First Dakota, said his institution made more than 4,000 PPP loans totaling more than \$200 million.

Kroll said privacy laws prevent him from speaking about any specific loan or applicant.

Kroll said First Dakota is proud of its efforts to efficiently provide loans that helped businesses stay



Dave Kroll

afloat during the uncertainty of the pandemic. Kroll said working with the rapidly changing rules of the PPP program and desire to distribute funds quickly created a hectic time for lenders.

Kroll said all PPP applicants were required to provide documentation of business location, operations and employment. In general, if the proper documentation was submitted, First Dakota approved the loans and distributed the federal funds.

"Because of the nature of the program, we followed what was required," Kroll said. "If they provided everything that was required, we certainly weren't denying them access to the PPP program."

Kroll said First Dakota felt comfortable with the PPP loans it made because the bank followed program rules closely and in part because the bank knew many of its PPP customers through prior relationships.

"As a whole, First Dakota does business in South Dakota largely with people we know," Kroll said. "It was still a manual process, and I feel good in our due diligence in reviewing the PPP documents that were required."

Kroll said lenders and applicants who engaged in the PPP program were generally aware that much of the resulting loan information would be open to public review, as it would with any government program.

Virtual 2021 South Dakota Festival of Books Videos Available Online More Than 50 Presentations Available for Free Viewing

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Ready to relive the Virtual 2021 South Dakota Festival of Books, or catch a presentation you missed? Our gallery of nearly 50 video presentations from the October online event is now live at sdbookfestival.com/virtual!

Find educational and entertaining discussions by nationally recognized writers such as Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday, internationally bestselling mystery writer J.A. Jance, and National Book Critics Circle Award-winning poet Layli Long Soldier. You can also check out local and regional favorites, including New York Times bestseller Kent Meyers, memoirist Mary Alice Haug, South Dakota Poet Laureate Christine Stewart-Nunez and many more!

[CHECK OUT VIRTUAL VIDEO GALLERY](#)

About the Virtual 2021 South Dakota Festival of Books

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the 2021 South Dakota Festival of Books switched from an in-person format to an all-virtual format.

The Festival, in its 19th year of bringing readers and writers together, typically includes more than 100 public presentations and was scheduled for Oct. 1-3 in Deadwood. In lieu of in-person events, the 50-plus authors on the 2021 roster discussed books, taught workshops, and interacted with fans via Zoom and Facebook live. Those recordings, except for a handful restricted by copyright or other factors, are now available for viewing.

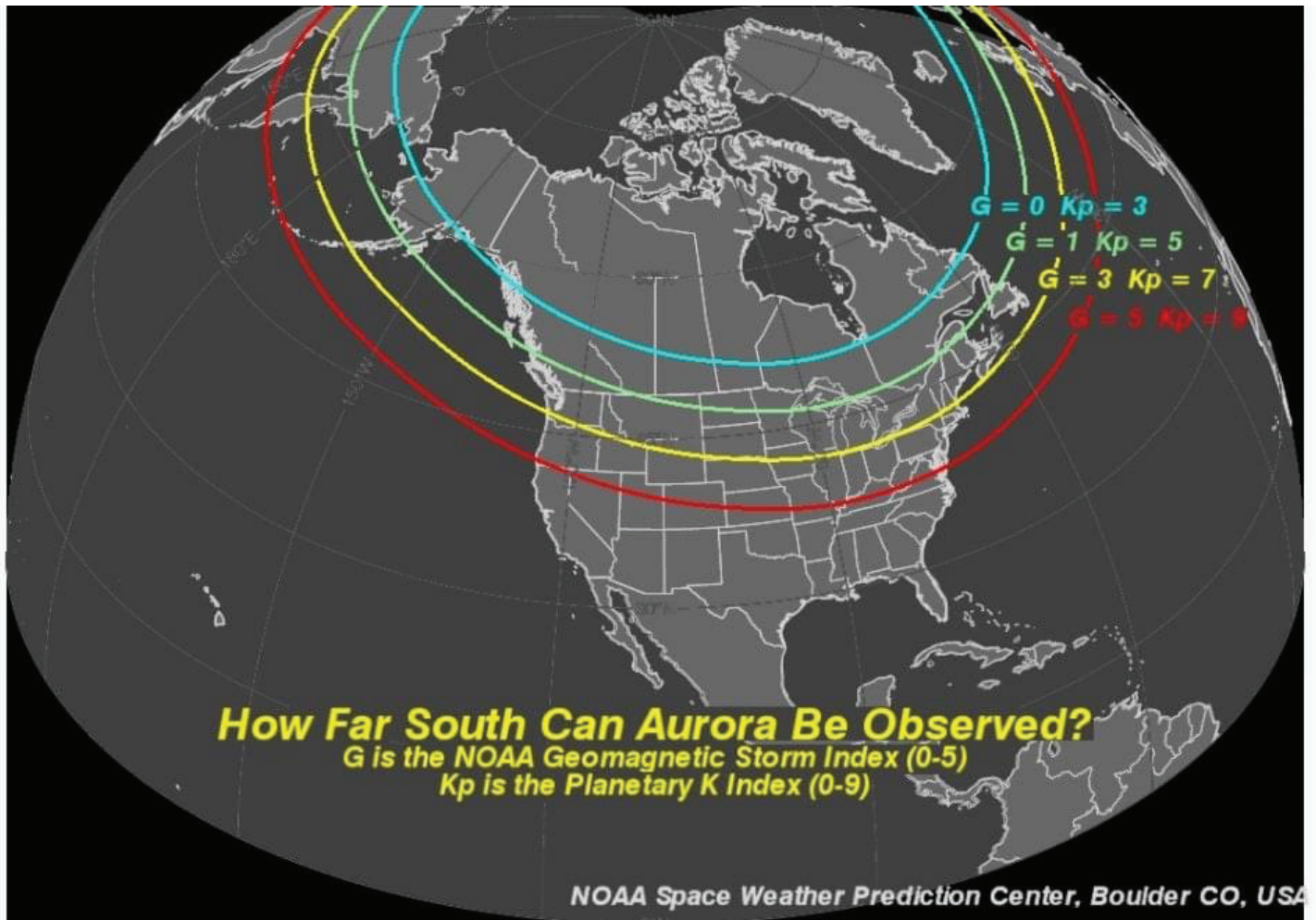
"The advantage of a virtual event is that people in any location can to use an internet connection to enjoy conversations with fellow readers and highly-respected authors," said South Dakota Humanities Council Executive Director Ann Volin. "We're pleased to offer Festival fans this opportunity to continue to enjoy and relive the distinctive moments from the event via these recordings."

Learn More About SDHC and the Festival of Books

The South Dakota Humanities Council provides humanities programs, including the Festival of Books, to readers and writers all year long. Want to find out more? Visit sdhumanities.org/subscribe to receive SDHC E-updates!

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 5 of 77



The Space Weather Prediction Center continues to forecast G3 storm conditions for Saturday evening into early Sunday morning. (10/29 - 10/30).

Here's a map showing how aurora viewing is related. Auroras will be possible for all of South Dakota.

**Note on time on Saturday.
21-00 UTC is 4 pm to 7 pm. CT
00-03 UTC is 7 pm to 10 pm. CT**

<https://www.swpc.noaa.gov/>

#481 in a series Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Quick update today to cover the latest developments with vaccines. Let's have a look at the numbers first: As of midday today, we were up to 45,797,078 cases in the US during this pandemic with a seven-day new-case average of 72,569. It seems likely we'll hit 46 million before the next time we talk. Hospitalizations are down to 51,8116. The seven-day deaths average is about the same as it's been running at 1381 with a total of 743,050 deaths so far in the pandemic.

This is the news I waited for yesterday; it hit this afternoon: The FDA commissioner has signed off on the emergency use authorization (EUA) extension of eligibility for Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine to the 5 to 11 age group. That makes some 28 million children newly eligible to receive the vaccine. It will be administered at 10 micrograms (one-third the adult dose) in a series of two vaccinations 21 days apart. The Administration has 15 million doses ready to go and just completed the purchase of 50 million more; and if I had to guess, those are going to start shipping today so that they will be available as soon as vaccinations can begin. That moment arrives sometime after Tuesday's CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meeting and the CDC director's sign-off on their recommendations, perhaps as soon as Wednesday or Thursday. If you've been waiting, the moment draws ever closer.

The CDC posted in its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report today the results of a study from a team in its VISION Network which includes Columbia University Irving Medical Center in New York, HealthPartners in Minnesota and Wisconsin, Intermountain Healthcare in Utah, Kaiser Permanente Northern California, the Regenstrief Institute in Indiana, and the University of Colorado. The project involved analyzing medical records from more than 7000 adults in 187 hospitals across nine states who were hospitalized for Covid-19-like illness and tested positive for Covid-19, comparing "the odds of receiving a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result . . . between unvaccinated patients with a previous SARS-CoV-2 infection . . . and patients who were fully vaccinated with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine." The findings provide further evidence to support vaccination: Unvaccinated previously-infected adults were more than five times as likely to have a laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 infection as fully vaccinated individuals and concluded, "All eligible persons should be vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible, including unvaccinated persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2."

The evidence just keeps piling up. The folks asserting they should not have to be vaccinated because they are already protected by a prior infection are quite simply wrong. While natural infection does elicit some immune response and does confer some degree of protection, it is not at all in the same league as the response and protection afforded by vaccination. It gets more and more clear that, as the authors said, everyone who is eligible needs vaccination to protect them from this virus.

And this is all the news I have since yesterday. Have a lovely weekend, keep safe, and we'll talk again.

Downtown Trick or Treat Event Held Friday



Scarlet Stubbs during Groton Main Street trick or treat Friday evening.

(Photo by Bruce Babcock)

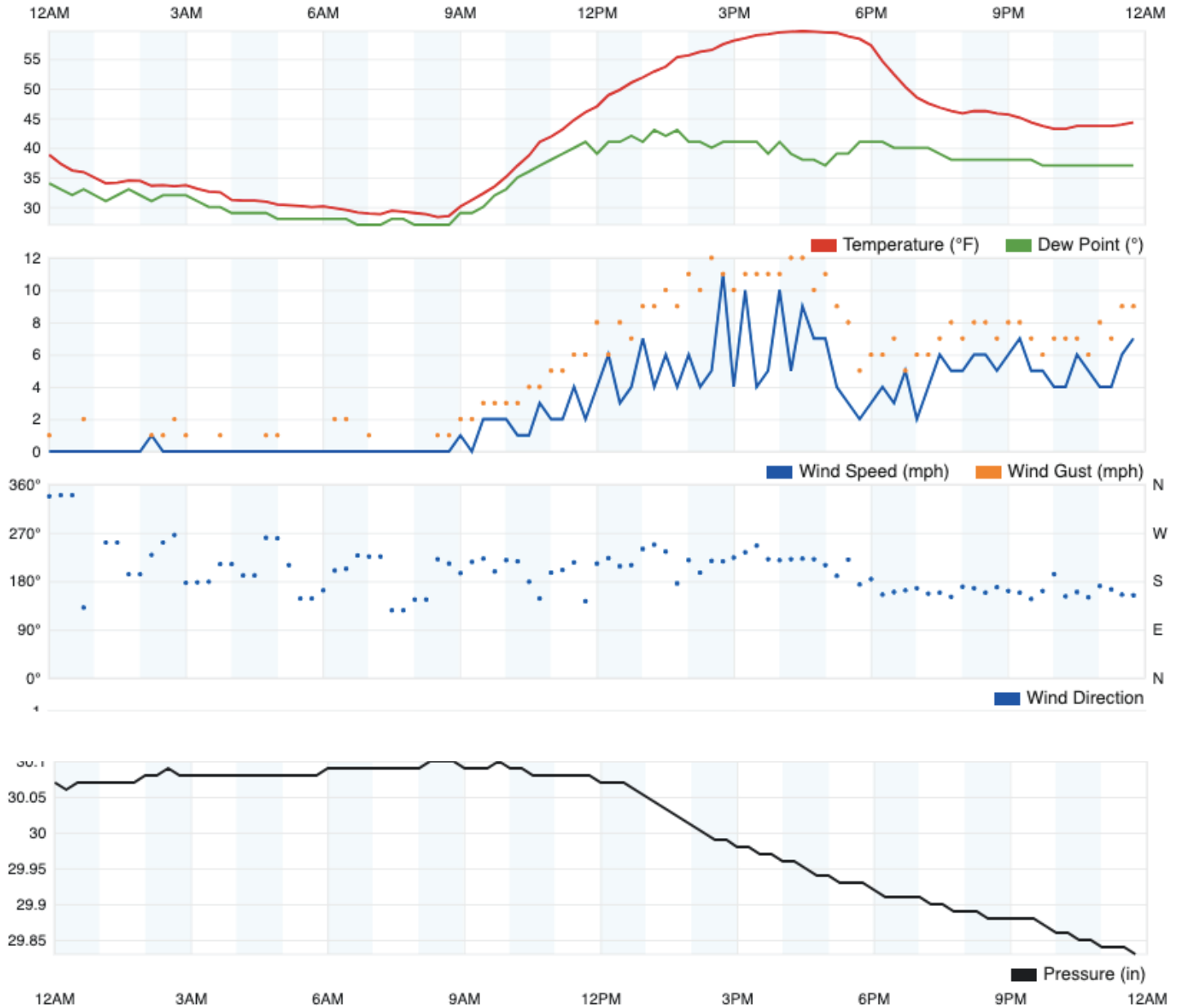


Babcock family at Base Kamp Lodge giving out candy. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 8 of 77

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 9 of 77

Today



Sunny then
Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

High: 52 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 28 °F

Sunday



Sunny

High: 45 °F

Sunday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 24 °F

Monday



Sunny

High: 41 °F

Falling Temperatures and Breezy

Today
*Increasing Clouds & Breezy.
Highs 49 to 55°F
Temperatures Falling*

Tonight
*Mostly Clear.
Lows 25 to 32°F*

Sunday
*Mostly Sunny & Breezy.
Highs 40 to 47°F*

A cold front will sweep through the region this morning. Temperatures will fall behind the front as northwest winds increase. High pressure builds in tonight and Sunday bringing continued dry and cooler conditions.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 10 of 77

Today in Weather History

October 30, 1943: Snow fell across much of central and north central South Dakota on this date in 1943. Snowfall amounts of 2 to 7 inches occurred. Snowfall amounts included, 2 inches at Timber Lake, 4 inches at Murdo, 5 inches at Mobridge, and 7 inches at Kennebec and Pierre.

October 30, 1950: Much above normal temperatures occurred across the entire area of central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota. Record highs were mostly in the 80s across the area. The records were 78 degrees at Sisseton, 80 degrees at Wheaton, 85 degrees at Watertown and Aberdeen, 86 degrees at Mobridge, 88 degrees at Pierre, and a hot 91 degrees at Kennebec.

1991: The Perfect Storm, also known as the No-Name Storm reached maximum strength on this day with a low pressure of 972 mb and sustained winds of 69 mph.

1925 - Nashville, TN, was blanketed with an inch of snow, their earliest measurable snow of record. (The Weather Channel)

1947 - The Donora, PA, smog disaster finally came to an end. For five days an inversion trapped impurities in the lower atmosphere over the Monongahela Valley killing 20 persons, and leaving more than 2000 others sick. (26th-30th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 74 mph near the town of Gould. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the central U.S. Temperatures warmed into the 80s from Texas to the Lower Missouri Valley. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Ten cities in the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date. The morning low of 20 degrees at South Bend IND was a record for October, and lows of 18 degrees at Grand Rapids MI and 20 degrees at Fort Wayne IND equalled records for Oct

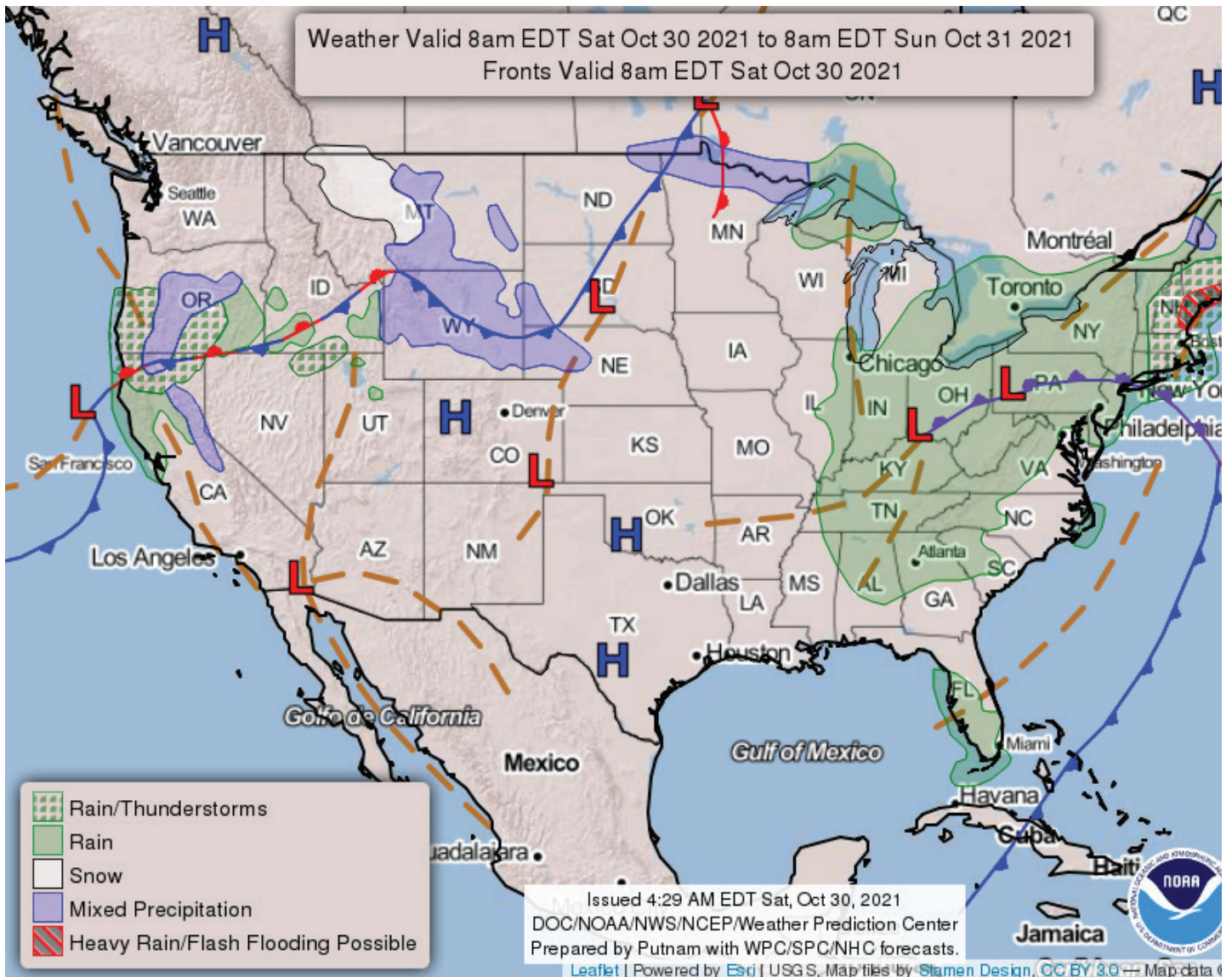
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 11 of 77

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 59.7 °F at 4:30 PM
Low Temp: 28.3 °F at 8:30 AM
Wind: 12 mph at 4:30 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 85° in 1950
Record Low: 8° in 1991
Average High: 51°F
Average Low: 27°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 2.09
Precip to date in Oct.: 4.30
Average Precip to date: 20.42
Precip Year to Date: 19.72
Sunset Tonight: 6:23:52 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09:34 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 12 of 77



THE SONGS OF BIRDS

Ornithologists claim that there are over 9,000 birds that live throughout the world. Some make their homes in places that are covered by ice the entire year. Others make their homes in hot and arid places. Many live on the land, but some actually live on the water.

The largest bird is the male African ostrich. It may grow eight feet tall and weigh three hundred pounds. The smallest bird is the Cuban fairy hummingbird. It is about two inches long and weighs about one-tenth of an ounce.

The fastest fliers are the common swifts of Europe. They can fly as fast as two hundred miles an hour. But the highest flyers are the geese. They are known to have the strength and ability to fly higher than twenty-nine thousand feet.

The graceful flight of birds, their sweet songs, and beautiful colors have inspired artists, musicians, and poets. The Psalmist wrote, "The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches."

Each kind of singing bird has its special song. However, we know that sparrows can sing as many as twenty variations of the same song! They, like every other bird, are God-fashioned and "God-tuned." No other bird has such God-given skills.

Just as God has planted songs in the heart of every bird, He has also planted songs in the heart of every Christian: songs of peace and pardon and joy. With His songs in our hearts let us sing His praises!

Prayer: We ask, Father, that "songs of salvation" will rise from our hearts as we enjoy the gifts of Your love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. Psalm 104:12

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 13 of 77

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. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 14 of 77

News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP FOOTBALL=

All-Nations Class 9A State=

Semifinal=

Todd County 36, Red Cloud 24

All-Nations Class 9B State=

Semifinal=

McLaughlin 42, Omaha Nation, Neb. 6

Tiospa Zina Tribal 38, Lower Brule 16

Winnebago, Neb. 52, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 0

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

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

Native American reporting icon retiring, sort of, at 87

By KEVIN WOSTER South Dakota Public Broadcasting

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Over the course of a news career that covered more than four decades, I've had some pretty cantankerous reactions to my journalism.

But I've never been firebombed. I've never had my windows shot out. And I've never had an attempt on my life.

Tim Giago has had all that and more in his journalism career. And the "more" includes transformational work in the coverage of Native American issues, the development of Native American newspapers and journalists, and a long personal news career that earned him a vast collection of awards and honors.

It included prodding then-Gov. George S. Mickelson in 1990 to declare a Year of Reconciliation between Native people and non-Natives and, later, to be a leader in the effort to get the state Legislature to change Columbus Day to Native American Day, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

That followed with a similar challenge by Giago to then-Gov. Mike Rounds to declare Year of Unity in South Dakota.

Throw in a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard here and an H.L. Mencken Award for editorial writing there, a South Dakota Hall of Fame induction here and a Native American Journalists Association induction there and you've got a pretty admirable set of accolades.

And a news career to look back on with pride.

Now, at 87, Giago has decided to retire, sort of. But he's still writing his weekly column for Native Sun News Today, the most recent of the publications he has founded. He's also working on a book, which he says will be "a contemporary look at where things are today in Indian Country, where we've been and where we're going. I've got time now to do that. So I'm sitting there banging away at it."

Giago has been banging away at his writing in meaningful ways since he started the Lakota Times in Pine Ridge Village in 1981. And he was the target of trouble from the start.

"I had just moved into the very first newspaper building next to Sioux Nation Shopping Center," Giago says. "They called me about 3 in the morning and said somebody had shot out all the windows."

In December of that year, Giago moved across the street to what he thought would be a more secure building, which included bars on the windows.

"That's when they firebombed it," Giago says. "Luckily, the fire had just started and a BIA patrol was coming by. The officer kicked the burning bottles away from the building."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 15 of 77

There was more trouble coming, however. It happened one night as Giago left the newspaper building to get in his pickup and drive home.

"Somebody shot a bullet through my windshield," he says.

There was a message being sent, Giago believes, and it was to shut up and change his pointed writing. And it left him with a choice.

"You know, I decided that I could keep doing what I was doing or fold up and walk away," he says. "I decided to hang in there and work with it. I had a lot of people contact me and tell me to hang in there, that I was doing good and touching on issues that nobody was writing about."

So he hung in there and kept at it. The culprits of the shootings and firebombing were never identified. But Giago presumes it was somebody he had offended, possibly a member of the American Indian Movement.

"I had been critical of the damage they had done in Wounded Knee during the takeover," he says.

Years later, he ran into one of the AIM founders, Vernon Bellecourt, eating breakfast in a New York City hotel. Bellecourt waved Giago over to join him. They had a good talk and became good friends, Giago says.

"I said we were probably working toward the same thing from different perspectives," Giago says. "I'm trying to do it as a writer. And I think writing has more impact than violence."

Giago's writing inspired and challenged, calling out examples of racism and poor treatment of Native people, and denial of sovereign rights. In the late 1980s, he began a relationship with then-Gov. George Mickelson.

Mickelson had said at the time that his father, George T. Mickelson, who had served as governor years earlier, left office feeling that he had failed to improve race relations in South Dakota. So George S. Mickelson was trying to find some ways to do what his father wished he had.

When Mickelson came to Rapid City in 1989 to cut the ribbon on a new publication facility for Giago, they had a long talk about race issues in the state. Mickelson asked what he could do as governor. Giago ended up challenging the governor to make a significant move on racial reconciliation.

Out of that meeting came editorials by Giago challenging Mickelson to act. The governor declared a year of reconciliation for 1990. The governor also went to the Wounded Knee memorial site on Dec. 29, 1990, to observe the anniversary of the Wounded Knee massacre.

"That was the first time a South Dakota governor had done that, and I don't think it has been done since," Giago says. "I would think every governor should do that. It needs to be recognized."

Giago wasn't done with his challenges to Mickelson. In another editorial, he urged the governor to support the changing of Columbus Day to Native American Day. Eventually, that passed the Legislature and South Dakota stood alone as the only state to celebrate Native American Day as a state holiday.

"There was no one addressing those issues, talking about Columbus Day as a holiday. The white media didn't see a problem. And we (Native Americans) saw Columbus coming to America as really being the beginning of the end of Indian Country. A lot of things he did were terrible and never made the history books. We felt that shouldn't be a holiday. And my newspaper started protesting against it."

Giago kept shaking things up. And Mickelson kept trying to make improvements in race relations. His reconciliation work was imperfect but good-hearted. And it seemed to begin a process of significant change in race relations. But Mickelson died with seven others when the state plane crashed in Iowa in April of 1993. And the reconciliation effort has never been the same.

"I went off to Harvard on the Nieman in '90 and Mickelson died in '93," Giago says. "And no one ever really picked it up after that."

Giago sees some promising changes toward Native Americans in schools and some colleges and thinks "that's where we have to start." But he also believes that state government can and should do "a hell of a lot better" than it is doing now.

"We need to have the leadership in Pierre start making some decisions to bring us closer together," Giago says. "And I don't see that happening now. And it needs to be done."

And somebody with a respected voice in Indian Country needs to keep calling for that. So while Giago might be "retired," he's still banging away on that keyboard.

"There's so damn much to write about and so little time to write. There's something happening all the

time that needs to be mentioned, and something good in Indian Country that I know nobody will write about if I don't."

With obligations like that, Giago is likely to keep pounding that keyboard for years to come.

19 states sue Biden administration over COVID vaccine rule

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Eighteen states filed three separate lawsuits Friday to stop President Joe Biden's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for federal contractors, arguing that the requirement violates federal law.

Attorneys general from Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming signed on to one lawsuit, which was filed in a federal district court in Missouri. Another group of states including Georgia, Alabama, Idaho, Kansas, South Carolina, Utah and West Virginia filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Georgia.

Texas also sued individually on Friday.

The states asked a federal judge to block Biden's requirement that all employees of federal contractors be vaccinated against the coronavirus by Dec. 8, arguing that the mandate violates federal procurement law and is an overreach of federal power.

"If the federal government attempts to unconstitutionally exert its will and force federal contractors to mandate vaccinations, the workforce and businesses could be decimated, further exacerbating the supply chain and workforce crises," Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt, a Republican, said in a statement. "The federal government should not be mandating vaccinations, and that's why we filed suit today – to halt this illegal, unconstitutional action."

New Hampshire's Republican Attorney General John Formella said in a statement that COVID vaccines are safe, effective and encouraged but that the benefits "do not justify violating the law."

Florida sued on Thursday, bringing to 19 the number of states challenging the Biden administration mandate in four federal courts.

Biden has argued that sweeping vaccine mandates will help end the deadly pandemic, but Republicans nationwide have opposed the vaccination requirements and have threatened to bring similar legal challenges.

Texas filed a similar lawsuit Friday in a federal district court in a federal court in Galveston, Texas, seeking to block enforcement of the mandate.

"The Biden Administration has repeatedly expressed its disdain for Americans who choose not to get a vaccine, and it has committed repeated and abusive federal overreach to force upon Americans something they do not want," said Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, in a statement. "The federal government does not have the ability to strip individuals of their choice to get a vaccine or not. If the President thinks his patience is wearing thin, he is clearly underestimating the lack of patience from Texans whose rights he is infringing."

A number of states have also said they will challenge Biden's plan to have the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration issue a rule that would mandate vaccines for all private businesses with 100 or more employees.

"We will not allow the Biden administration to circumvent the law or force hardworking Georgians to choose between their livelihood or this vaccine," Republican Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia said in a statement.

The Democratic Party of Georgia called the lawsuit a "dangerous political stunt."

Florida filed a separate lawsuit against the federal mandate on Thursday. All the suits argue that the president doesn't have the authority to issue the rule and that it violates procurement law. The suits also argue that the rule violates the 10th Amendment reserving power to the states, illegally uses federal spending to coerce the states, and that 60 days of public comment wasn't properly allowed.

The Georgia-led suit, for example, argues that such a rule could only stand if Congress passed it in a law.

"Biden has again demonstrated open disdain for the rule of law in seizing power Congress never gave him," Republican Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall said.

The states argue that large number of federal contract workers will quit, meaning states will have to choose between breaching the contracts because of a reduced labor force that can't do all the work, or

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 17 of 77

breaching the contracts by retaining unvaccinated employees in violation of federal rules.

All but two of the states that have sued trail the national average in vaccination rate. Only New Hampshire and Florida exceed the nationwide rate.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

15-26-28-35-45, Mega Ball: 4, Megaplier: 3

(fifteen, twenty-six, twenty-eight, thirty-five, forty-five; Mega Ball: four; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$22 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$116 million

US to gauge climate damage from federal oil and gas sales

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — U.S. government regulators for the first time will analyze greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas drilling on federal lands on a national scale, as the Biden administration steps up efforts to address climate change, the Interior Department said Friday.

The announcement comes as officials are set to hold lease sales in numerous Western states next year amid a fierce debate over federal fossil fuel reserves.

Interior's Bureau of Land Management released a report saying oil, gas and coal extraction from federal lands produced more than 1 billion tons (918 million metric tons) of greenhouse gases last year. That's about one-fifth of all U.S. energy-related emissions.

President Joe Biden campaigned on promises to end new drilling on public lands to help combat climate change. But his attempt to suspend new leases — while oil and gas sales underwent a sweeping review — was blocked by a federal judge in Louisiana.

Including greenhouse gas emissions in lease reviews lets the administration highlight what scientists say are the increasing "social costs" of climate change — from rising sea levels and wildfires to public health problems.

Democrats and many environmentalists want to factor those costs upfront into lease sales. They argue that failing to do so amounts to an industry subsidy.

But the change comes as rising energy prices expose the administration to sharp attacks from Republicans.

Emissions have been declining in the U.S. as power plants switch from burning coal to natural gas. Placing more obstacles to development will hurt both the petroleum industry and U.S. economy, Republicans say.

Environmental assessments that include a greenhouse gas analysis will be released in coming days for lease sales planned early next year in Colorado, Montana, North and South Dakota, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and other states, administration officials said.

New land bureau director Tracy Stone-Manning, who underwent a bitter confirmation fight, said the agency wants to develop public lands responsibly and make sure climate impacts are considered.

"We will continue to exercise the authority and discretion provided under law to conduct leasing in a manner that fulfills the Interior Department's legal responsibilities," Stone-Manning said in a statement.

The ranking GOP member of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Wyoming's John Barrasso, said in response to Stone-Manning's announcement that the added scrutiny of leases would "hamstring American energy."

"Tracy Stone-Manning and the Bureau of Land Management want to build new regulatory road blocks for oil and gas leasing on America's federal lands," Barrasso said. "This draft plan will result in less American energy production, fewer jobs for energy workers, and more frivolous lawsuits from environmental activists."

Some parcels that had been nominated by companies for sale were deferred and won't be offered, of-

officials said, citing concerns including potential impacts to struggling populations of a bird, the greater sage grouse. They did not immediately respond to requests for specifics on the size and location of those parcels.

Federal agencies have previously conducted reviews of potential greenhouse gas impacts from individual lease sales across the U.S. West following court orders. Officials in many cases concluded the emissions were miniscule on a global scale.

But environmentalists have long maintained those reviews were too narrow and ignored the cumulative impact of huge tracts of public lands in multiple states and offshore in the Gulf of Mexico being leased for oil, gas and coal extraction.

The Interior Department in August determined it was not going to do further climate impact studies on a Gulf of Mexico sale that is scheduled next month, covering roughly 136,000 square miles (352,000 square kilometers) offshore.

Andrew Black with the National Wildlife Federation said including the full costs of energy development was crucial to understanding its impacts.

"You're looking at this not just as an environmental issue, but what the climate effects are on communities that are encountering devastating droughts, fires, flooding," said Black, who worked for Stone-Manning at the federation before she joined the administration.

The oil and gas industry will keep pushing for lease sales to be held this year, said Kathleen Sgamma with the Western Energy Alliance, an industry group. A second lawsuit against the Biden administration is pending before a federal judge in Wyoming,

"It will be litigated how they use the social cost of carbon," Sgamma said. "That's going to affect regulation all throughout the government, not just in this case."

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

Woman dies after front-end loader hit her in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 49-year-old woman died Friday after she was hit by a front-end loader on private property in Sioux Falls, police said.

Authorities said either drugs nor alcohol appear to be a factor in the incident, which happened at about 9:30 a.m.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating.

The woman's name was not immediately released.

Sanford: 97% of workforce complying with vaccine mandate

By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Sanford Health, a dominant provider of health care in the Upper Midwest, said that 97% of its workforce has complied with a mandate to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Monday or potentially lose their job.

Sanford announced in July it was mandating COVID vaccinations for all its employees, citing the spread of more contagious variants.

The health care provider has 46 hospitals, 1,500 physicians and more than 200 Good Samaritan Society senior care locations in 26 states and 10 countries. It is based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and has major medical centers in Fargo and Bismarck, North Dakota, and Bemidji, Minnesota.

The company, which bills itself as one of the largest rural health care systems in the country, has a total of about 48,000 employees. Based on its estimates, fewer than 1,500 employees system-wide remained unvaccinated.

More than 90% of clinicians and 70% of nurses in the organization were already fully vaccinated when the mandate was announced this summer, system officials said. Sanford officials on Friday would only provide the overall vaccination rate among all employees.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 19 of 77

"The vaccine mandate has worked," Dr. Doug Griffin, Sanford's vice president and medical officer in Fargo, said in a statement. "As a result of our high employee vaccination rate, we have also seen a decline in Covid-19 infections and sick leave among staff."

Employees who are not fully vaccinated or don't have an approved exemption by Nov. 1 will be suspended for up to 60 days without pay and removed from the work schedule, Griffin said.

"Continued failure to comply with the COVID-19 vaccine requirements within 60 days will result in the employee being considered to have voluntarily resigned from their employment," he said. "We anticipate during this time that employees will make an effort to comply with the policy and overall we expect the number of staff departures tied to the mandate will be minimal," Griffin said.

Critics of mandatory vaccination argue it takes away people's right to make their own medical decisions. The Biden administration, public health officials and many business leaders agree that vaccine requirements are legal and 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.

The American Hospital Association earlier announced its support of hospitals and health systems that implement mandatory COVID vaccination policies for health care workers.

Tessa Johnson, who heads the North Dakota Nurses Association, said the group, which is a member of the hospital association, also supports hospitals and health systems with mandatory vaccination policies.

Johnson said she knows of no widespread resignations at Sanford or other health systems due to the mandatory policy. Sanford employees are already required to have several other vaccines, including annual flu shots that also need to be completed by Nov. 1. As with all vaccines, the hospital will allow certain exemptions for medical or religious reasons when it comes to the coronavirus shot.

"I've heard stories of nurses walking out in waves but that is not the case," Johnson said. "It's not the first time we've been mandated to do something and it probably won't be the last time," she said.

Associated Press writer Dave Kolpack contributed from Fargo, North Dakota.

Family of man killed by police ask about nonlethal measures

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Family members of a man shot and killed by Sioux Falls police are questioning why officers did not use nonlethal measures in a confrontation with him.

The brother and sister-in-law of the man who was killed have identified him as 52-year-old Elwood Dwyer. Police say he was shot by police after an hour-long stand-off Thursday when he exited a house armed with a knife and charged at officers.

Dwyer was suspected of stabbing and wounding three people who were known to him, including two adults and a juvenile. Their conditions are not known.

The man's brother, Daniel Dwyer, says his sibling had a history of mental illness and had previously been tased by police following a fight with an officer outside a store last June, the Argus Leader reported.

Police have not said whether other methods were used to subdue Dwyer before he was killed.

Daniel Dwyer and his wife, Lisa Dwyer, learned about the shooting from someone who had been in the area at the time. Lisa Dwyer says she called the Sioux Falls Police Department multiple times, but after waiting for a callback finally went to the scene.

The Dwyers say that two of the victims are directly related to Elwood. It's unclear who the third victim is.

Police have not identified any of the victims, but police say all three were known to the suspect.

The Department of Criminal Investigations is investigating the case, which is typical for officer-involved shootings.

How 'Let's Go Brandon' became code for insulting Joe Biden

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 20 of 77

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Republican Rep. Bill Posey of Florida ended an Oct. 21 House floor speech with a fist pump and the phrase “Let’s go, Brandon!” it may have seemed cryptic and weird to many who were listening. But the phrase was already growing in right-wing circles, and now the seemingly upbeat sentiment -- actually a stand-in for swearing at Joe Biden -- is everywhere.

South Carolina Republican Jeff Duncan wore a “Let’s Go Brandon” face mask at the Capitol last week. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz posed with a “Let’s Go Brandon” sign at the World Series. Sen. Mitch McConnell’s press secretary retweeted a photo of the phrase on a construction sign in Virginia.

The line has become conservative code for something far more vulgar: “F--- Joe Biden.” It’s all the rage among Republicans wanting to prove their conservative credentials, a not-so-secret handshake that signals they’re in sync with the party’s base.

Americans are accustomed to their leaders being publicly jeered, and former President Donald Trump’s often-coarse language seemed to expand the boundaries of what counts as normal political speech.

But how did Republicans settle on the Brandon phrase as a G-rated substitute for its more vulgar three-word cousin?

It started at an Oct. 2 NASCAR race at the Talladega Superspeedway in Alabama. Brandon Brown, a 28-year-old driver, had won his first Xfinity Series and was being interviewed by an NBC Sports reporter. The crowd behind him was chanting something at first difficult to make out. The reporter suggested they were chanting “Let’s go, Brandon” to cheer the driver. But it became increasingly clear they were saying: “F--- Joe Biden.”

NASCAR and NBC have since taken steps to limit “ambient crowd noise” during interviews, but it was too late — the phrase already had taken off.

When the president visited a construction site in suburban Chicago a few weeks ago to promote his vaccinate-or-test mandate, protesters deployed both three-word phrases. This past week, Biden’s motorcade was driving past a “Let’s Go Brandon” banner as the president passed through Plainfield, New Jersey.

And a group chanted “Let’s go, Brandon” outside a Virginia park on Monday when Biden made an appearance on behalf of the Democratic candidate for governor, Terry McAuliffe. Two protesters dropped the euphemism entirely, holding up hand-drawn signs with the profanity.

On Friday morning on a Southwest flight from Houston to Albuquerque, the pilot signed off his greeting over the public address system with the phrase, to audible gasps from some passengers.

Veteran GOP ad maker Jim Innocenzi had no qualms about the coded crudity, calling it “hilarious.”

“Unless you are living in a cave, you know what it means,” he said. “But it’s done with a little bit of a class. And if you object and are taking it too seriously, go away.”

America’s presidents have endured meanness for centuries; Grover Cleveland faced chants of “Ma, Ma Where’s my Pa?” in the 1880s over rumors he’d fathered an illegitimate child. Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson were the subject of poems that leaned into racist tropes and allegations of bigamy.

“We have a sense of the dignity of the office of president that has consistently been violated to our horror over the course of American history,” said Cal Jillson, a politics expert and professor in the political science department at Southern Methodist University. “We never fail to be horrified by some new outrage.”

There were plenty of old outrages.

“F--- Trump” graffiti still marks many an overpass in Washington, D.C. George W. Bush had a shoe thrown in his face. Bill Clinton was criticized with such fervor that his most vocal critics were labeled the “Clinton crazies.”

The biggest difference, though, between the sentiments hurled at the Grover Cleverlands of yore and modern politicians is the amplification they get on social media.

“Before the expansion of social media a few years ago, there wasn’t an easily accessible public forum to shout your nastiest and darkest public opinions,” said Matthew Delmont, a history professor at Dartmouth College.

Even the racism and vitriol to which former President Barack Obama was subjected was tempered in part because Twitter was relatively new. There was no TikTok. As for Facebook, leaked company docu-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 21 of 77

ments have recently revealed how the platform increasingly ignored hate speech and misinformation and allowed it to proliferate.

A portion of the U.S. was already angry before the Brandon moment, believing the 2020 presidential election was rigged despite a mountain of evidence to the contrary, which has stood the test of recounts and court cases. But now it's more than that to die-hard Trump supporters, said Stanley Renshon, a political scientist and psychoanalyst at the City University of New York.

He cited the Afghanistan withdrawal, the southern border situation and rancorous school board debates as situations in which Biden critics feel that "how American institutions are telling the American public what they clearly see and understand to be true, is in fact not true."

Trump hasn't missed the moment. His Save America PAC now sells a \$45 T-shirt featuring "Let's go Brandon" above an American flag. One message to supporters reads, "#FJB or LET'S GO BRANDON? Either way, President Trump wants YOU to have our ICONIC new shirt."

Separately, T-shirts are popping up in storefronts with the slogan and the NASCAR logo.

And as for the real Brandon, things haven't been so great. He drives for a short-staffed, underfunded team owned by his father. And while that win — his first career victory — was huge for him, the team has long struggled for sponsorship and existing partners have not been marketing the driver since the slogan.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani, Mary Clare Jalonick, Brian Slodysko and Will Weissert in Washington and Jenna Fryer in Charlotte, N.C., contributed to this report.

Biden, Europeans take up Iran nuclear program in Rome talks

By JOSH BOAK and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

ROME (AP) — As Iran's nuclear program makes troubling advances, President Joe Biden is set to huddle Saturday with European allies to talk through strategy as they press for a diplomatic resolution — and to plan for the possibility Iran declines to return to the negotiating table.

The meeting with the leaders of Germany, France, and Britain — known as the E3 — comes at a pivotal time, as Iran continues to enrich uranium to near-weapons-grade levels. Biden is trying to revive the 2015 nuclear deal and bring Iran back into compliance with the pact that would have kept the Islamic republic at least one year away from the potential to field a nuclear weapon.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the meeting with Germany's Angela Merkel, France's Emmanuel Macron, and Britain's Boris Johnson would feature the leaders "all singing from the same song sheet on this issue."

He called it a "study in contrast with the previous administration since Iran was one of the areas of most profound divergence between the previous administration and the Europeans."

The U.N.'s atomic watchdog has said Iran is increasingly in violation of the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal and the U.S. has participated indirectly in talks aimed at bringing both Washington and Tehran back into compliance. Those Vienna talks have been on hiatus since June, when Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi took power.

Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union remain part of the deal.

The meeting will take place while the leaders are in Rome for the Group of 20 summit, the first stop on Biden's five-day foreign trip. He's also going to a U.N. climate conference in Scotland.

Biden was welcomed to the summit site by Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi and joined his counterparts for the customary "family photo," before he attended the opening plenary session on the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recovery.

Saturday's meeting follows days after Ali Bagheri, Iran's deputy foreign minister and chief negotiator for the talks, tweeted that Iran has agreed to restart negotiations by the end of November and a date for a resumption of talks "would be announced in the course of the next week."

Sullivan said Thursday that the U.S. was still trying to determine whether Iran was serious about the

negotiations.

"It's not entirely clear to me yet whether the Iranians are prepared to return to talks," he told reporters aboard Air Force One as Biden flew to Rome for the Group of 20 summit. "We have heard positive signals that they are, but I think we have to wait and see when and whether they actually show up at the negotiating table."

Sullivan said the group would be sending "clear messages" to Iran that the window for negotiation "is not unlimited."

"We, of course, retain all other options to be able to deal with this program as necessary," he said.

Saturday's meeting comes days after American officials blamed Iran for a drone attack on a remote U.S. outpost in Syria. Officials said Monday the U.S. believes that Iran resourced and encouraged the attack, but that the drones were not launched from Iran.

No deaths or injuries were reported as a result of the attack.

In retaliation, the U.S. Treasury Department on Friday announced new penalties against two senior members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and two affiliated companies for supplying lethal drones and related material to insurgent groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and Ethiopia.

At the summit, Biden was expected to push for progress toward his goal of establishing a global 15% corporate minimum tax, even as his domestic effort to raise the business rate to that figure was stuck in limbo in Washington.

He also was expected to discuss measures to ease a global energy supply crunch that has led to rising prices, imperiling the global economic recovery. On Sunday, Biden planned to host an event on strengthening supply chains around the world as factories and ports have struggled to deliver goods in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.

G-20 opens with call for more vaccines for poor countries

By NICOLE WINFIELD and DAVID MCHUGH Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The leaders of the world's economic powerhouses on Saturday took part in the first in-person summit since the coronavirus pandemic, with climate change, COVID-19 economic recovery and the global minimum corporate tax rate on the agenda.

Italian Premier Mario Draghi welcomed the Group of 20 heads of state to Rome's Nuvola cloud-like convention center in the Fascist-era EUR neighborhood, which was sealed off from the rest of the capital. Saturday's opening session was focused on global health and the economy, with a meeting on the sidelines among U.S. President Joe Biden, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to discuss next steps on Iran's nuclear program.

Host leader Draghi opened the forum with a sharp call for redoubled efforts to get vaccines to the world's least-prosperous countries.

Draghi underlined that while 70% of people in rich countries have been vaccinated, only 3% in the poorest countries have had their shots, calling it "morally unacceptable."

Draghi urged a new commitment to multilateral cooperation: "The more we go with all our challenges, the more it is clear that multilateralism is the best answer to the problems we face today," he said. "In many ways, it is the only possible answer."

Italy is hoping the G-20 will secure key commitments from countries representing 80% of the global economy — and responsible for around the same amount of global carbon emissions — ahead of the U.N. climate conference that begins Sunday in Glasgow, Scotland.

Most of the heads of state and government who are in Rome will head to Glasgow as soon as the G-20 is over. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping are participating remotely.

On the eve of the meeting, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the Glasgow meeting risked failure over the still-tepid commitments from big polluters, and challenged the G-20 leaders to overcome "dangerous levels of mistrust" among themselves and with developing nations.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 23 of 77

"Let's be clear — there is a serious risk that Glasgow will not deliver," Guterres told reporters in Rome. A recent U.N. environment report concluded that announcements by dozens of countries to aim for "net-zero" emissions by 2050 could, if fully implemented, limit a global temperature rise to 2.2 degrees Celsius (4 F). That's closer but still above the less stringent target agreed in the Paris climate accord of keeping the temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 F) compared with pre-industrial times.

The U.N. chief also blamed geopolitical divides for hampering a global vaccination plan to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, saying action "has taken a back seat to vaccine hoarding and vaccine nationalism."

The G-20, though, will likely be a celebration of one agreement, on a global minimum corporate tax. The G-20 leaders are expected to formally affirm their commitment to establishing a 15% global minimum corporate tax rate by 2023, a measure aimed at preventing multinational companies from stashing profits in countries where they pay few or no taxes.

The move has been praised by White House officials as a "game changer" that would create at least \$60 billion in new revenue a year in the U.S. - a stream of cash that could help partially pay for a nearly \$3 trillion social services and infrastructure package that President Joe Biden is seeking. U.S. adoption is key because so many multinational companies are headquartered there.

But Biden is struggling to come to agreement with members of his own party on what will be included in the massive spending plan, not to mention how it will be paid for. The president's struggles to come to terms on U.S. legislation were not expected to be a central part of Biden's conversations with fellow leaders, White House officials said.

Biden is also expected to raise concerns about an imbalance in supply and demand in the global energy markets, according to a senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity. The official said that Biden would underscore the importance of finding greater stability in both the oil and gas markets, for the sake of a global economy that's been badly bruised by the coronavirus pandemic. U.S. oil prices are near 7-year highs.

The summit could be an opportunity for dialogue because it includes delegations from major energy producers Saudi Arabia and Russia, major consumers in Europe and China, and the U.S., which is both. So far, Saudi-led OPEC and allies including Russia, dubbed OPEC+, have ignored Biden's pleas to increase production faster than its current pace of 400,000 barrels per day each month into next year.

COVID-19 memorial creators reflect as world nears 5M deaths

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

As the world nears the milestone of 5 million COVID-19 deaths, memorials large and small, ephemeral and epic, have cropped up around the United States.

In New Jersey, one woman's modest seaside memorial for her late brother has grown to honor thousands of lost souls. In Los Angeles, a teen's middle school project commemorating her city's fallen through a patchwork quilt now includes the names of hundreds more from around the world.

Here's a look at what inspired some U.S.-based artists to contribute to the growing collection of memorials honoring the nearly 5 million dead worldwide from COVID-19.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Back in June, Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg purchased more than 630,000 small white flags in preparation for staging a massive temporary memorial on the National Mall.

It would be more than enough, she thought, to represent all the Americans who would have succumbed to the virus as the pandemic seemed to be on the retreat.

She was wrong. By the time "In America: Remember" opened Sept. 17, more than 670,000 Americans had died as the virus' delta variant fueled a deadly resurgence. At the end of the exhibit's two-week run, the number was more than 700,000.

Firstenberg was struck by how strangers connected in their grief at the installation, which ended Oct. 3.

"I was blown away by the willingness of people to share their grief and by the willingness of others to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 24 of 77

lessen it, to honor it," she said. "So when I looked out on those flags, I saw hope. I really believe humanity is going to win out."

The installation was the second monumental exhibit to remember virus victims that the Maryland-based artist has staged. Firstenberg previously planted nearly 270,000 white flags outside Washington's RFK Stadium last October to represent the national death toll at the time.

"For the first one, my motivation was outrage that the country could let something like this happen," she said. "This time it was really to cause a moment of pause. The deaths have been relentless. People have become fully inured to these numbers."

WALL TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

On Jan. 25, Rima Samman wrote her brother Rami's name on a stone and placed it on a beach in her hometown of Belmar, New Jersey, surrounded by shells arranged in the shape of a heart. It would have been Rami's 41st birthday, had he not died from COVID-19 the previous May.

A makeshift memorial quickly grew up after Samman, 42, invited others in an online support group to contribute markers memorializing their own loved ones. By July there were more than 3,000 stones in about a dozen hearts outlined by yellow-painted clam shells.

Samman and other volunteers decided to preserve the memorial because it was located on a public beach and exposed to the elements. They carefully disassembled the arrangements and set them in display cases.

"I knew if we just demolished it, it would crush people," she recalled. "For a lot of people, it's all they have to remember their loved ones."

The displays are now the centerpiece of the Rami's Heart COVID-19 Memorial, which opened in September at Allaire Community Farm in nearby Wall Township. It includes a garden, walking path and sculptures, and honors more than 4,000 virus victims and growing.

Maintaining the memorial has been both rewarding and tough, as she is still mourning the loss of her brother.

"It's a double-edged sword because as much as working on the memorial helps, every day you're exposed to this grief," Samman said. "It's a lot of pressure. You want to make sure it's done right. It can be draining."

LOS ANGELES

Madeleine Fugate's memorial quilt started out in May 2020 as a seventh grade class project.

Inspired by the AIDS Memorial Quilt, which her mother worked on in the 1980s, the then-13-year-old encouraged families in her native Los Angeles to send her fabric squares representing their lost loved ones that she'd stitch together.

The COVID Memorial Quilt has grown so big it covers nearly two dozen panels and includes some 600 memorial squares honoring individuals or groups, such as New Zealand's more than two dozen virus victims.

The bulk of the quilt is currently at the Armory Art Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, with a smaller portion on permanent display at the California Science Center in Los Angeles and another featured at the International Quilt Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Fugate, her mother and a small, dedicated band of volunteers meet Sundays to sew and embroider panels. Fabric and other materials are donated by victims' families.

Now a high school freshman, she plans to keep the project going indefinitely.

"I really want to get everyone remembered so that families can heal and represent these people as real people who lived," she said.

Fugate would like to see a more formal national memorial for COVID-19 victims one day, and perhaps even a national day of remembrance.

"It would be amazing to see that happen, but we're still technically fighting the war against this virus," she said. "We're not there yet, so we just have to keep doing what we're doing. We are the triage. We're helping stop the bleeding."

S Koreans send off former President Roh in small funeral

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Dozens of relatives and dignitaries gathered in South Korea's capital on Saturday to pay their final respects to former President Roh Tae-woo, a key participant in a 1979 military coup who later won a landmark democratic election before his political career ended with imprisonment for corruption and treason.

Pandemic restrictions limited the size of funeral services for Roh, who died Tuesday at age 88 from complications from various illnesses. Doctors said his condition worsened in recent years because of a degenerative disorder.

President Moon Jae-in's decision to hold a state funeral for Roh was controversial because of his links to the coup and a bloody suppression of pro-democracy protesters in the southern city of Gwangju in 1980 that killed around 200 people and injured hundreds of others.

Gwangju and several other cities and provincial governments refused to raise flags half-staff or set up memorial altars for Roh in accordance with state funeral procedures.

Moon, who did not visit Roh's memorial altar at a Seoul hospital before leaving for Rome on Thursday for meetings with Pope Francis and Group of 20 leaders, said through his office that Roh made "significant contributions to national development despite many historical wrongdoings."

On the final day of a five-day funeral procession, honor guards wrapped Roh's coffin with the national flag and placed it into the back of a limousine. The vehicle then rolled out of the hospital and followed a black convertible topped with a huge portrait of Roh in a motorcade that drove toward his house in northern Seoul.

Family members quietly toured the house, led by a grandson who carried a smaller portrait of Roh. Then they headed toward southern Seoul for a funeral service at a square at Olympic Park, a venue built for the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games held during the first year of Roh's presidency.

The funeral's participants were limited to 50 people, including relatives, government officials, religious leaders and foreign diplomats, because of COVID-19 concerns. Roh's wife, Kim Ok-suk, and their two children, Roh Soh-young and Roh Jae-heon, sat quietly in chairs distanced apart, looking solemnly at the ground.

Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum, Seoul's No. 2, said in a speech that Roh will be remembered for his many accomplishments as president, including the successful hosting of the Olympics, expanding relations with communist nations and easing tensions with North Korea.

Kim also regretted that Roh never apologized in person over the coup and military atrocities, although his children conveyed his remorse while his health deteriorated in recent years.

"It's undisputable truth President Roh Tae-woo has an immense fault that cannot be erased," said Kim. "Attending the funeral service today, we realize that nobody is free from the (judgement) of history."

Roh's criminal convictions legally prevent him from being buried with other former leaders and national heroes at the country's national cemetery. His cremated remains will be kept at a Buddhist temple in Paju, north of Seoul, until his tomb is ready at nearby Paju Reunification Park, which was built during his presidency in 1989 as a symbol of peace between the two Koreas.

Gwangju Mayor Lee Yong-sup, a member of Moon's liberal Democratic Party, said the city couldn't honor Roh when he was a core member of dictator Chun Doo-hwan's military junta that massacred its citizens.

"He was the president of our country, and while it's our traditional sentiment to mourn a person who died, Gwangju cannot do that (for Roh)," Lee said Wednesday.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement that Roh leaves a "complicated legacy" but credited him for solidifying South Korea's democratic transition as president.

Roh took office in 1988 after he became the country's first directly elected leader in decades following successive military governments in Seoul.

He was a major player in a December 1979 military coup that brought his longtime army friend Chun to power. Their takeover came months after their mentor, dictator Park Chung-hee, was assassinated by

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 26 of 77

his spy chief following 18 years of rule.

Roh had been Chun's hand-picked successor, but massive pro-democracy protests in 1987 forced them to accept a direct presidential election, which initiated South Korea's transition toward democracy.

Despite his military background, Roh crafted a softer image during the presidential campaign, calling himself an "average person." He won a closely contested vote in December 1987, largely thanks to a split in liberal votes between opposition candidates Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, who both later became presidents.

During his five-year term, Roh actively pursued diplomacy with communist nations following the fall of the Berlin Wall, establishing relations with the Soviet Union and China in the early 1990s.

He also took steps to improve relations with North Korea, which led to the Koreas jointly issuing a statement vowing a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and joining the U.N. at the same time in 1991.

His government was also credited for successfully hosting the 1988 Seoul Olympics, which were seen as South Korea's coming-out party to the world following its rapid rebuild from the destructions of the 1950-53 Korean War.

After his successor, Kim Young-sam, investigated the coup and the crackdown in Gwangju, Roh was arrested, convicted of mutiny, treason and corruption and received a prison term of 22 1/2 years. Chun was sentenced to death.

The Supreme Court later reduced those sentences to life imprisonment for Chun and 17 years for Roh. After spending about two years in prison, Roh and Chun were released in late 1997 under a special pardon requested by then President-elect Kim Dae-jung, who sought national reconciliation.

Roh had stayed mostly out of the public eye following his release from prison. Last April, his daughter, Roh So-young, wrote on Facebook that her father had been bed-bound over the past 10 years without being able to speak or move his body.

A World Remembers: Memorials honor COVID-19's 5 million dead

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

BERGAMO, Italy (AP) — The Italian city that suffered the brunt of COVID-19's first deadly wave is dedicating a vivid memorial to the pandemic dead: A grove of trees, creating oxygen in a park opposite the hospital where so many died, unable to breathe.

Bergamo, in northern Italy, is among the many communities around the globe dedicating memorials to commemorate lives lost in a pandemic that is nearing the terrible threshold of 5 million confirmed dead.

Some have been drawn from artist's ideas or civic group proposals, but others are spontaneous displays of grief and frustration. Everywhere, the task of creating collective memorials is fraught, with the pandemic far from vanquished and new dead still being mourned.

Memorial flags, hearts, ribbons: These simple objects have stood in for virus victims, representing lost lives in eye-catching memorials from London to Washington D.C., and Brazil to South Africa.

The collective impact of white flags covering 20 acres on the National Mall in the U.S. capital was literally breathtaking, representing the more than 740,000 Americans killed by COVID-19, the highest official national death toll in the world.

One honored 80-year-old Carey Alexander Washington of South Carolina, who was vaccinated and contracted the virus while still working as a clinical psychologist in March. His 6-year-old granddaughter Izzy collapsed in grief when she found her "papa's" flag -- a moment captured by a photographer and shared on Twitter.

"Families like mine, we're still grieving," said Washington's daughter, Tanya, who traveled from Atlanta to see the memorial. "It was important to witness that honor that was being given to them. It gave a voice to all our loved ones that have been lost."

A memorial wall in London similarly conveys the scale of loss, with pink and red hearts painted by bereaved loved ones on a wall along the River Thames. Walking the memorial's length without pausing to read names and inscriptions takes a full nine minutes. The hearts represent the over 140,000 coronavirus

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 27 of 77

deaths in Britain, Europe's second-highest toll after Russia; like elsewhere in the world, the actual number is estimated to be much higher:160,000.

"It shocks people," said Fran Hall, a spokeswoman for the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice. She lost her husband, Steve Mead, in September 2020, the day before his 66th birthday. "Every time we are here, people stop and talk to us, and quite often they are moved to tears as they are walking by, and thank us."

In Brazil's capital, relatives of COVID-19 victims planted thousands of white flags in front of Brazil's Congress in a one-day, emotion-laden action meant to raise awareness of Brazil's toll of more than 600,000, the second-highest in the world.

And in South Africa, blue and white ribbons are tied to a fence at the St. James Presbyterian Church in Bedford Gardens, east of Johannesburg, to remember the country's 89,000 dead: each blue ribbon counting for 10 lives, white for one.

How victims of war, atrocities and even health crises are remembered has evolved through the ages. Victorious statues of generals gave way to tombs of the unknown soldier after World War I, in a bid to remember the sacrifices of ordinary soldiers. Paris' Arche de Triomphe was one of the first.

"World War I was a benchmark, which is particularly relevant because it was followed by the 1918 flu pandemic," said Jennifer Allen, an assistant professor of history at Yale University who has studied memorial culture.

That pandemic seems to have been little memorialized, partly because of the keen focus on the war dead. "It was a period of mass death," Allen said. "That is why we talk about the lost generation."

Holocaust memorials were the next major testaments to mass killing, Allen said. They span big, traditional monuments like Berlin's Holocaust Memorial, and more personalized tributes where victims are named, like the so-called Stumbling Stones outside buildings where Jews lived before the Holocaust.

Not since the AIDS quilt made its way across the United States, with loved ones adding squares for people who had succumbed, has a health crisis been the object of memorials of a scale like those now honoring the COVID-19 dead. The quilt has grown to nearly 50,000 squares, representing more than 105,000 individuals.

Memorials like the AIDS quilt and the Stumbling Stones have helped solidify a trend toward grass-roots remembrances and the desire to honor victims as individuals, Allen said. Both are emerging in the COVID-19 memorials.

"We want to get to the individuals, who make up all of the millions of deaths," Allen said. "As people so often point out: These were mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children, neighbors. "

Collectively memorializing the coronavirus dead has been complicated by the weight of private grief, which was too often borne alone in the first wave, when funerals could not take place and loved ones too often died without the presence or caress of a loved one.

An Italian Facebook group, Noi Denunceremo, was started as a place to publicly, if virtually, remember the dead during the country's first draconian lockdown, and developed quickly into a collection of data on alleged failures that have been turned over to prosecutors.

In India, one of the world's most affected countries, an online memorial was launched in February, www.nationalcovidmemorial.in, inviting submissions verified with death certificates. So far, it has only 250 tributes, a minute fraction of the over 457,000 confirmed dead, which is itself a vast undercount.

"It's not memorializing only, it's how we can pay respect and dignity" to the dead, said Abhijit Chowdhury of the COVID Care Network that started the memorial from the eastern city of Kolkata.

In Russia's second-largest city, St. Petersburg, a bronze statue called "Sad Angel" was placed in March outside a medical school to honor the dozens of doctors and medical workers who died of COVID-19. The sculpture of an angel with his shoulders slumped and head hanging disconsolately is especially poignant because its creator, Roman Shustrov, himself died of the virus in May 2020.

Italy has not dedicated a national monument to its some 132,000 confirmed dead, but it has designated a coronavirus remembrance day. Premier Mario Draghi stood among the first newly planted trees in Bergamo's Trucca Park on March 18, the first anniversary of the indelible image of army trucks bringing dead

to other cities for cremation after the city's morgue was overwhelmed.

Bergamo's mayor said the city considered proposals for statues or plaques bearing the names of the dead. One was too monumental; the other ignored that so many dead were not officially counted due to lack of testing.

"The Woods of Memory is a living monument, and it immediately seemed to us to be the most convincing, the most emotive and the one that was closest to our sentiments," Bergamo Mayor Giorgio Gori said.

Only 100 trees have been planted so far of the 700 that are planned, facing the hospital's morgue. The rest should be planted by next year's March 18 remembrance day.

There are no plans to add names, but in at least one case, loved ones have claimed a sapling: Roses are planted at the base, with personal mementoes hanging from it and a white rock bearing the handwritten name of a dearly departed: Sergio.

AP journalists Pan Pylas in London, Phil Marcelo in Boston, Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi, Mogomotsi Magome in Johannesburg, Irina Titova in St. Petersburg, Russia, and Débora Álvares in Brasilia, Brazil, contributed to this report.

Earth gets hotter, deadlier during decades of climate talks

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

World leaders have been meeting for 29 years to try to curb global warming, and in that time Earth has become a much hotter and deadlier planet.

Trillions of tons of ice have disappeared over that period, the burning of fossil fuels has spewed billions of tons of heat-trapping gases into the air, and hundreds of thousands of people have died from heat and other weather disasters stoked by climate change, statistics show.

When more than 100 world leaders descended on Rio de Janeiro in 1992 for an Earth Summit to discuss global warming and other environmental issues, there was "a huge feeling of well-being, of being able to do something. There was hope really," said Oren Lyons, faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, one of the representatives for Native Americans at the summit.

Now, the 91-year-old activist said, that hope has been smothered: "The ice is melting. ... Everything is bad. ... Thirty years of degradation."

Data analyzed by The Associated Press from government figures and scientific reports shows "how much we did lose Earth," said former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency chief William K. Reilly, who headed the American delegation three decades ago.

That Earth Summit set up the process of international climate negotiations that culminated in the 2015 Paris accord and resumes Sunday in Glasgow, Scotland, where leaders will try to ramp up efforts to cut carbon pollution.

Back in 1992, it was clear climate change was a problem "with major implications for lives and livelihoods in the future," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the AP this month. "That future is here and we are out of time."

World leaders have hammered out two agreements to curb climate change. In Kyoto in 1997, a protocol set carbon pollution cuts for developed countries but not poorer nations. That did not go into effect until 2005 because of ratification requirements. In 2015, the Paris agreement made every nation set its own emission goals.

In both cases, the United States, a top-polluting country, helped negotiate the deals but later pulled out of the process when a Republican president took office. The U.S. has since rejoined the Paris agreement.

The yearly global temperature has increased almost 1.1 degrees Fahrenheit (0.6 degrees Celsius) since 1992, based on multi-year averaging, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Earth has warmed more in the last 29 years than in the previous 110. Since 1992, the world has broken the annual global high temperature record eight times.

In Alaska, the average temperature has increased 2.5 degrees (1.4 degrees Celsius) since 1992, accord-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 29 of 77

ing to NOAA. The Arctic had been warming twice as fast as the globe as a whole, but now has jumped to three times faster in some seasons, according to the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program.

That heat is melting Earth's ice. Since 1992, Earth has lost 36 trillion tons of ice (33 trillion metric tons), according to calculations by climate scientist Andrew Shepherd of the University of Leeds. That includes sea ice in the Arctic and Antarctic that melts now more in the summer than it used to, the shrinking of giant ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica, and melting glaciers.

And Michael Zemp, who runs the World Glacier Monitoring Service, said Shepherd's numbers may be a little low. He calculates that since 1992, the glaciers of the world have lost nearly 9.5 trillion tons of ice (8.6 trillion metric tons), about a trillion tons more than Shepherd's figures.

With more ice melt in the ocean and water expanding as it warms, the world's average sea level has risen about 3.7 inches (95 millimeters) since 1992, according to the University of Colorado. That may not sound like much, but it is enough to cover the United States in water to a depth of 11 feet (3.5 meters), University of Colorado sea level researcher Steve Nerem calculated.

Wildfires in the United States have more than doubled in how much they have burned. From 1983 to 1992, wildfires consumed an average of 2.7 million acres a year. From 2011 to 2020, the average was up to 7.5 million acres, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

"The unhealthy choices that are killing our planet are killing our people as well," said Dr. Maria Neira, director of the World Health Organization's environment, climate change and health program.

The United States has had 265 weather disasters that caused at least \$1 billion in damage — adjusted to 2021 dollars — since 1992, including 18 so far this year. Those disasters have caused 11,991 deaths and cost \$1.8 trillion. From 1980 to 1992, the U.S. averaged three of those billion-dollar weather disasters a year. Since 1993, the country has averaged nine a year.

Worldwide there have been nearly 8,000 climate, water and weather disasters, killing 563,735, according to the EM-DAT disaster database. Those figures are probably missing a lot of disasters and deaths, said the Debarati Guha-Sapir, who oversees the database for the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the University of Louvain School of Public Health in Brussels.

Medical researchers earlier this year looked at 732 cities worldwide and calculated how many deaths were from climate change-caused extra heat. They found that on average since 1991, there have been 9,702 heat deaths from global warming a year just in those studied cities, which adds up to 281,000 climate-caused heat deaths since 1992.

But that's a small proportion of what really is happening, said study author Ana Vicedo-Cabrera, an epidemiologist at the Institute of Social and Preventative Medicine at the University of Bern in Switzerland. Using those cities, researchers calculated that during the four hottest months of the year, the added heat from climate change is responsible for 0.58% of the globe's deaths.

That comes to about 100,000 heat deaths caused by climate change a year for 29 years, she said.

WHO officials said those figures make sense and calculate the annual death toll from climate change will rise to 250,000 a year in the 2030s.

Scientists say this is happening because of heat-trapping gases. Carbon dioxide levels have increased 17% from 353 parts per million in September 1992 to 413 in September 2021, according to NOAA. The agency's annual greenhouse gas index, which charts six gases and weights them according to how much heat they trap, rose almost 20% since 1992.

From 1993 to 2019, the world put more than 885 billion tons (803 billion metric tons) of carbon dioxide in the air from the burning of fossil fuels and making of cement, according to the Global Carbon Project, a group of scientists who track emissions.

A pessimistic Lyons, the Native American activist, said, "I would say this meeting in Glasgow is the last shot."

Read stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

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Art Therapy: How UK's COVID memorial wall brought comfort

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — It can take between five and ten minutes to walk the heart-festooned memorial wall in London commemorating those who died from COVID-19 in the U.K. — far longer if you pause every few steps to read the heartfelt messages of love that bereaved families and friends have overlaid the pink and red hearts with.

Walking along the 8-foot-high Portland stone wall on the south side of the River Thames, directly opposite the Houses of Parliament, is a somber experience, especially for those who lost someone and who think the British government could have done a lot more to prevent the U.K.'s enormous death toll during the pandemic.

As the global death toll nears the threshold of 5 million dead, Britain officially has recorded around 140,000 coronavirus-related deaths, Europe's second highest toll after Russia. The actual number is believed to be higher — around 160,000 — as there was very little testing done in the early days of the pandemic in the U.K. in the spring of 2020.

The National COVID Memorial Wall on a half-kilometer stretch of the Albert Embankment is dedicated to those who died, with each life lost represented by a carefully painted heart that volunteers freshen up on a weekly basis with long-lasting masonry paints.

There's also the odd cake and a cup of coffee.

For the volunteers, it's a bit like art therapy — meditative.

"For me I think it has absolutely fulfilled the original intention which was to remind people of the scale of our loss," said Fran Hall, a spokesperson for the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice who lost her husband of three weeks, Steve Mead, in September 2020, a day before his 66th birthday.

Hall makes the weekly trek along with several others to ensure the hearts don't fade to pink from luscious red and add inscriptions from those bereaved who can't make the journey to the wall.

"We're getting red back onto the wall, to keep it vibrant," said Hall. "As you walk along you'll see thousands and thousands of names, so the hearts have been personalized. They're all special."

The memorial was established in March by the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice and campaign group Led by Donkeys as a visual representation of the scale of loss in the U.K. during the pandemic. Incredibly it took less than two weeks for the army of volunteers to paint the 150,000 or so hearts.

The government has yet to give the wall official status, though Prime Minister Boris Johnson told bereaved families, including Hall herself, recently that it is a "good candidate" to be a permanent memorial.

"This memorial means so much to the bereaved as a lot of us could not have our last goodbyes," said Amanda Herring who lost her 54-year old brother Mark Herring just before the U.K. was first put into lockdown in March 2020.

"It just needs to be a permanent memorial for our loved ones and it does mean so much to me, and this is why I come down to help with the fellow bereaved, who are now my friends, to help re-freshen the hearts and add new inscriptions ... which in a way is so heart-breaking," she added.

COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice, which has around 4,000 members, has been calling for a public inquiry into the government's handling of the pandemic so lessons can be learned to limit future virus-related deaths.

It has criticized Johnson and his Conservative government for mismanagement during the pandemic, including delaying lockdowns, a lack of protective gear for health workers, and having a too-lax travel policy — a combination that it says meant tens of thousands of people died needlessly. A parliamentary report has already declared the coronavirus pandemic "one of the most important public health failures

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 31 of 77

the United Kingdom has ever experienced.”

After months of deflecting calls, Johnson has confirmed that a public inquiry with statutory powers will start to hear evidence next year and that the bereaved families will have a role in it. However, the bereaved families think that’s too late and watch with horror the U.K.’s rising infection levels, which are running several-fold more than countries like France and Germany. Though the rollout of vaccines has clearly limited the number of people dying from COVID after being infected, the U.K. is still recording around 150 virus-related deaths a day — another thousand families a week grieving.

“We feel that nobody is listening to us and to get our stories out will make other people maybe take more care, maybe think twice about getting on a packed train or not wearing a mask if they hear our stories, they are heartfelt,” said Sioux Vosper, who lost her 80-year-old father John David Leigh in April 2020.

“It’s a nine-minute walk from one end to the other and everyone that comes here, they can’t help but think all those numbers they saw on the television were just numbers, they come here and they’re beating hearts, they can’t shy away from that,” she added.

Braves throw 2-hitter, blank Astros 2-0 for 2-1 Series lead

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Ian Anderson had pitched five no-hit innings when Brian Snitker walked up to the 23-year-old and said, “That’s it.”

“Are you sure? Are you sure?” the rookie right-hander asked.

“I’m going with my gut right here,” the manager said.

On a night that showed how much baseball has evolved in the Analytics Age, Anderson and the Braves’ bullpen took a no-hit bid into the eighth inning, Austin Riley and Travis d’Arnaud drove in runs and Atlanta beat the Houston Astros 2-0 on Friday to grab a 2-1 World Series lead.

Pinch-hitter Aledmys Díaz blooped a single leading off the eighth against Tyler Matzek that dropped in front of Eddie Rosario, just 232 feet from home plate, for Houston’s first hit as the left fielder pulled up to avoid colliding with shortstop Dansby Swanson.

Alex Bregman grounded a single through the wide-open right side of a shifted infield leading off the ninth against Will Smith, who remained perfect in five save chances this postseason.

Anderson threw 76 pitches, and A.J. Minter, Luke Jackson, Matzek and Smith combined for the last 57 of the 18th two-hit shutout in Series history.

“Obviously you want the chance to compete, especially on the biggest stage like this is,” Anderson said. “But, yeah, I knew he wasn’t going to budge.”

Snitker didn’t consider giving Anderson a chance to join the Yankees’ Don Larsen, whose perfect game in 1956 is the only Series no-hitter.

“He wasn’t going to pitch a nine-inning no-hitter,” Snitker said. “He wasn’t going to have pitches to do that.”

Anderson struck out four and walked three, throwing just 39 of 76 pitches for strikes.

“He was effectively wild,” Astros manager Dusty Baker said. “Our guys never could zero in on the strikes.”

Anderson is 4-0 in his postseason career with a 1.26 ERA.

“He’s turned into an absolute animal, a beast in the playoffs,” Matzek said.

Complete games are near extinction. The closest Anderson came to a no-hitter in the minors was on June 28, 2019, when he was pulled after seven innings and 102 pitches for Double-A Mississippi against Jackson, and teammate Jeremy Walker finished with hitless relief.

“Luke Jackson didn’t know. Minter didn’t know,” Matzek said of the no-hit bid. “After I got done with my inning, they went up and said: ‘Hey, did you know you gave up the first hit?’ And I said, ‘Yeah, I did know. I paid attention.’”

Of the 60 previous times the Series was tied 1-1, the Game 3 winner went on to win 39 times — including six of the last nine.

Riley hit an RBI double in the third on a cutter from rookie Luis Garcia after Freddie Freeman singled,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 32 of 77

and d'Arnaud added his second Series homer in the eighth, a 437-foot drive off Kendall Graveman that was d'Arnaud's first long ball at home since September 2020.

Atlanta, which stranded nine runners, improved to 6-0 this postseason at Truist Park, which opened in 2017 and where it has won 11 of its last 12 games. The Braves stopped a five-game home World Series losing streak.

Houston, the top-hitting team in the majors during the season with a .267 average, was limited to seven baserunners.

"We didn't swing it for one game," Bregman said. "I think we flush it and move on to the next day and have a short memory."

Díaz's hit ended the longest no-hit bid in the Series since Game 2 in 1967. Boston ace Jim Lonborg pitched a one-hitter and allowed a two-out double in the eighth to St. Louis' Julian Javier.

Pinch-runner Jose Siri stole second with two outs in the eighth and went to third when d'Arnaud's throw skipped into center field for an error, but Siri was stranded when Michael Brantley popped out against Matzek.

On a damp 49-degree night, rookie starters matched up in the Series for just the eighth time. Garcia gave up three hits in 3 2/3 innings with six strikeouts and four walks. He threw 72 pitches and came out after getting the first two outs of the fourth with just two pitches.

While Baker (72) and Snitker (66) had the highest combined ages of World Series managers, they lifted their starting pitchers on the timetable triggered by modern metrics — after exactly 18 batters each, not wanting leadoff hitters to face the same pitcher for the third time.

Snitker, in his 44th season with the Braves, knows a few years ago he would have let Anderson stay in. "The me of old, probably a couple years ago," Snitker said, "I'm how the hell am I doing this?"

HOME COOKING

In the Series for the first time since 1999, the Braves won at home for the first time since the sixth and final game of the 1995 World Series against Cleveland.

HAMMERIN' HANK

Major League Baseball held a pregame tribute to Hank Aaron, the former Braves star and executive who died in January. Hank Aaron Jr. threw the ceremonial first pitch, accompanied by mother Billye Aaron and siblings Gaile and Dorinda.

FAMILY AFFAIR

Baker had hitting coach Troy Snitker go to the plate to exchange lineup cards with his dad, the Braves' manager.

UP NEXT

Zack Greinke will start Game 4 on Saturday night for Houston, while the Braves go with the first of consecutive bullpen games in response to losing Game 1 starter Charlie Morton to a broken leg.

"Night shift's ready," Matzek said.

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

Speed of Texas abortion cases has few high court precedents

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In only a handful of cases has the Supreme Court, where decorative turtles symbolize the deliberate pace of justice, moved as quickly as it is in the fight over the Texas law that bans most abortions. They include some of the most famous disputes of the last 50 years.

The cases being argued Monday could signal how the justices will rule in an even bigger abortion case that will be heard a month later and asks them to overrule the two landmark cases that guarantee a woman's right to an abortion, *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

But abortion is not directly at issue in the Texas cases. Rather, the court will decide whether abortion providers or the federal government can sue in federal court over the Texas law, which has an enforcement

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 33 of 77

mechanism that Chief Justice John Roberts has described as “unusual, if not unprecedented.”

The high court has so far allowed the Texas law, which effectively bans abortion at around six weeks of pregnancy, to be in effect even as it appears to conflict with the Roe and Casey decisions. Those cases remain the law of the land until the Supreme Court says otherwise.

WHO CAN SUE, BE SUED?

The Texas law bans abortion once cardiac activity is detected in the fetus, usually around six weeks and before some women even know they are pregnant.

Federal courts have had no trouble blocking similar laws enacted elsewhere as inconsistent with the Supreme Court’s rulings on abortion that essentially don’t let states prohibit abortion before a fetus can survive outside the womb, usually around 24 weeks.

The difference in Texas is the way the law is enforced. Rather than let state officials enforce it, as typically happens, Texas puts the power in the hands of private citizens, who can sue anyone who performs or abets an abortion. The pregnant woman herself cannot be sued.

Texas legislators have said that they designed the law this way precisely to make it hard to challenge in federal court.

Abortion providers first sued to block the law before it took effect, but they were rebuffed by a federal appeals court and ultimately the Supreme Court.

The Justice Department then stepped in with a new lawsuit. A federal judge blocked the law, agreeing with the substance of the new suit, but the appeals court put the law back in place after just 48 hours.

When the Biden administration asked the court to block the law, the justices put off a decision but agreed to decide whether, at this early stage of the court fight, either providers or the federal government could sue in federal court to stop a law that the administration argues has “made abortion effectively unavailable in Texas after roughly six weeks of pregnancy.”

The decision on enforcement, the state and an architect of the law say in court papers, means that federal courts are effectively closed to the law’s challengers at this point. The issues also include whom to sue and whether federal courts have the power to compel state judges to follow their orders.

In neither case is the constitutionality of the law directly at issue, but the motivation for both lawsuits is that the Texas ban conflicts with Roe and Casey.

EXPRESS LANE

The Texas cases join Bush v. Gore, the Watergate tapes and Pentagon Papers cases, and just a few others that were heard and decided by the justices under a tight timeline that compressed months of briefings and arguments into weeks, and in some cases, days.

In those situations, hard deadlines loomed or the fate of a presidency hung in the balance.

It’s not clear why the court is acting so quickly now. The justices, by a 5-4 vote, rejected an early plea to block the law before it took effect in September.

The conservative majority’s one-paragraph opinion last month cited “novel and complex” procedural questions that the court usually leaves to lower courts to sort through before it steps in.

Polls conducted after the court’s Texas abortion vote showed sharp drops in approval of the court. At around the same time, several justices made public pleas that they not be viewed as partisan politicians.

It’s possible that the decision to grant full review to the Texas cases and, presumably, issue a reasoned opinion is aimed at addressing these concerns.

Then too, the court might want to have the Texas cases squared away before arguments on Dec. 1 in a case from Mississippi that could dramatically change abortion rights in the United States.

The justices have not offered an explanation for their actions. It remains to be seen how quickly the court will issue a decision.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Justices Clarence Thomas and Stephen Breyer are the only two justices who were members of the court during Bush v. Gore, which effectively settled the 2000 presidential election in favor of Republican George W. Bush. Thomas was part of the majority, and Breyer dissented.

Roberts was a law clerk to Justice William Rehnquist in 1981, when the court moved quickly to decide a case that was related to the release of the American hostages in Iran. Faced with a deadline for the U.S. to transfer previously blocked assets to the Iranians, the court acted in less than a month to grant, hear and decide the case. Rehnquist wrote the court's opinion, which was issued eight days after arguments.

Supreme Court declines to block Maine vaccine mandate

By DAVID SHARP and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has rejected an emergency appeal from health care workers in Maine to block a vaccine mandate that went into effect Friday.

Three conservative justices noted their dissents. The state is not offering a religious exemption to hospital and nursing home workers who risk losing their jobs if they are not vaccinated.

Only New York and Rhode Island also have vaccine mandates for health care workers that lack religious exemptions. Both are the subject of court fights. On Friday, a federal appeals court panel upheld New York state's vaccine mandate for health care workers, rejecting arguments by lawyers for doctors, nurses and other professionals that it did not adequately protect those with religious objections.

As is typical in emergency appeals, the Supreme Court did not explain its action. But Justice Neil Gorsuch said in a dissent for himself and two fellow conservatives that he would have agreed to the health care workers' request.

"Where many other States have adopted religious exemptions, Maine has charted a different course," Gorsuch wrote. "There, healthcare workers who have served on the front line of a pandemic for the last 18 months are now being fired and their practices shuttered. All for adhering to their constitutionally protected religious beliefs. Their plight is worthy of our attention."

He was joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett noted in a short statement agreeing with the court's decision not to intervene that the justices were being asked to "grant extraordinary relief" in a case that is the first of its kind. She was joined by a fellow conservative, Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

The legal team that sued to stop the mandate vowed to return to the Supreme Court to press for a full review on the merits. "This case is far from over," said Mat Staver, founder and chair of the Liberty Counsel.

Democratic Gov. Janet Mills said she was gratified that the mandate was upheld, saying it's imperative for hospitals to "take every precaution to protect their workers and patients against this deadly virus."

"This rule protects health care workers, their patients, and the stability of our health care system in the face of this dangerous virus," she said in a statement. "Just as vaccination defeated smallpox and vaccination defeated polio, vaccination is the way to defeat COVID-19."

The high court has previously turned away students at Indiana University and teachers in New York City who objected to being vaccinated. Both the university and city allow people to seek religious exemptions. All of the justices have been vaccinated.

Maine's requirement was put in place by the governor. A federal judge in Maine declined to stop the mandate, concluding that the lawsuit was unlikely to succeed. The Oct. 13 decision prompted a flurry of appeals that landed, for a second time, in the Supreme Court.

The Liberty Counsel, which filed the lawsuit, claimed to be representing more than 2,000 health care workers who don't want to be forced to be vaccinated.

Dozens of health care workers have opted to quit, and a hospital in Maine's second-largest city already curtailed some admissions because of an "acute shortage" of nurses.

But most health workers have complied, and Maine residents in general have been supportive of the vaccine. The Maine Hospital Association and other health care groups support the requirement.

Enforcement of the mandate began on the same day the governor announced 80% of eligible Mainers

were vaccinated.

Mills said she applauds those who "rolled up their sleeves to do what's right for themselves, their neighbors, and their communities."

Sharp reported from Portland, Maine. Associated Press writer Mark Sherman contributed to this report.

US Democratic governors to participate in U.N. climate talks

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — U.S. governors want a seat at the table as international leaders prepare to gather in Scotland at a critical moment for global efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions and slow the planet's temperature rise.

At least a half dozen state governors — all Democrats — plan to attend parts of the two-week United Nations' climate change conference in Glasgow, known as COP26. Though states aren't official parties to talks, governors hold significant sway over the United States' approach to tackling climate change by setting targets for reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to renewable energy.

Take California, where Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has pledged to halt the sale of new gas-powered cars in the state by 2035, a move aimed at accelerating the nation's transition to electric vehicles. Or Washington, where Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee backed legislation requiring the state's electricity be carbon-neutral by 2030.

"Governors can do a lot," said Samantha Gross, director of the Energy Security and Climate Initiative at the Brookings Institute. "When they're talking to people on the sidelines and sharing policies and ideas and helping to demonstrate the commitment of the U.S. as a whole, there's quite a bit that they can do."

Governors slated to attend are Inslee, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Hawaii Gov. David Ige, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown. All six governors are part of the U.S. Climate Alliance, an effort started by Inslee and former Govs. Jerry Brown of California and Andrew Cuomo of New York in 2017 as the Trump administration backed away from U.S. climate goals. The alliance plans to announce "ambitious" new climate commitments in Scotland, though it hasn't shared specifics.

Newsom announced Friday he would participate virtually due to unspecified family obligations. California Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis will instead lead the state's delegation, which includes more than a dozen lawmakers and top administration officials.

"All eyes will be on Glasgow, with the world asking the question: 'What are we doing to do about (climate change)?"' Kounalakis said. "And California has answers."

Other states sending officials include Maryland and Massachusetts, which have Republican governors.

Few U.S. states are as influential as California, which is home to nearly 40 million people and would be the world's fifth-largest economy if it were its own nation. It's led the nation in vehicle emissions standards, was the first state to launch a carbon pollution credit program known as cap-and-trade and has set some of the nation's most ambitious goals on reducing emissions.

It's the nation's seventh-largest oil producing state, though Newsom officials say the state has six times as many jobs in clean energy as it does in the oil industry. Newsom has made strides to lower demand and eventually end production, but some environmental groups say he's got to act significantly faster.

Several other state leaders heading to Glasgow also come from places that rely on oil and gas production as a key piece of the economy. New Mexico's Lujan Grisham travels to the climate conference as she juggles competing pressures from environmental activists and the fossil fuel industry while running for reelection in 2022.

New Mexico is one of the top oil states. Amid surging oil output, Lujan Grisham has pushed to rein in leaks and emissions of excess natural gas by the industry and signed legislation that mandates and incentivizes New Mexico's own transition to zero-emissions electricity by 2045.

"We — as a state, as a nation, as a planet — must go further by pursuing bold, equitable and just climate

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 36 of 77

solutions. I am looking forward to this significant opportunity for collaboration and action at the global level," Lujan Grisham said in a recent statement.

In March, Lujan Grisham wrote President Joe Biden, asking to exempt New Mexico from an executive order halting gas and oil production on federal land. Oil field royalties, taxes and lease sales account for more than one-quarter of the state's general fund budget, underwriting spending on public schools, roads and public safety.

Edwards of Louisiana, a state that's suffered significant flooding and damage from hurricanes, plans to promote his state as a hub for clean energy projects. He's set a goal to cut the state's net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050, though his administration is still putting together a strategy document for reaching that goal.

"No state in our nation is more affected by climate change than Louisiana, but it's also true that no state is better positioned to be part of the solution to the problems facing our world," he said recently.

The governors will participate on panels through the U.S. Climate Alliance alongside members of the Biden administration. They'll also participate alongside 65 subnational governments in announcing "dozens" of new commitments on Nov. 7. The panel will also focus on politics that can "turbocharge greenhouse gas emissions reductions," according to an alliance press release.

"Governors and mayors around the world do not believe we should rely just on our federal governments," Inslee, of Washington, said during a Thursday news conference.

It's critical for U.S. and world leaders to move from planning to implementation of aggressive climate strategies, said Katelyn Sutter, senior manager for U.S. climate at the Environmental Defense Fund.

"We need policy to back up pledges to reduce emissions," she said. "That's where a state like California, and now Washington and others that have momentum moving forward, can really be impactful."

As for California, Newsom administration officials said they hope to demonstrate that tackling the climate crisis can be good for the economy and that pollution targets should be made with historically underserved communities in mind. The administration recently proposed banning new oil wells within 3,200 feet (975 meters) of homes, schools and hospitals, and Newsom has directed the state's air regulator to develop a plan to end oil production by 2045.

"We can help push national governments to increase their ambition," said Lauren Sanchez, Newsom's senior adviser for climate.

This story has been corrected to say the Republican-led states sending representatives are Maryland and Massachusetts, not Maryland and North Carolina.

Associated Press writers Morgan Lee in Santa Fe, N.M., Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, La., and John O'Connor in Springfield, Ill., contributed reporting.

NYC braces for fewer cops, more trash as vax deadline looms

By MICHAEL R. SISA, MICHELLE L. PRICE and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Mounting trash. Closed firehouses. Fewer police and ambulances on the street.

That's the possibility New York City is bracing for come Monday as a COVID-19 vaccine mandate looms and thousands of municipal workers remain unwilling to get the shots.

Police officers, firefighters, garbage collectors and most other city workers faced a 5 p.m. Friday deadline to show proof they've gotten at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Workers who don't comply will be put on unpaid leave starting Monday.

Mayor Bill de Blasio held firm on the mandate even as tempers flared on Friday with six firefighters suspended for taking a fire truck to a lawmaker's office and threatening his staff over the vaccine mandate.

The incident was a dramatic escalation after firefighters and other workers rallied Thursday outside de Blasio's official residence, sanitation workers appeared to be skipping garbage pick ups in protest and the city's largest police union went to an appeals court seeking a halt to the vaccine requirement.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 37 of 77

Pat Lynch, president of the Police Benevolent Association, said the hard deadline "sets the city up for a real crisis." Andrew Ansbro, president of the Uniformed Firefighters Association, warned longer response times will "be a death sentence to some people."

De Blasio said Thursday that the city has contingencies to maintain adequate staffing and public safety, including mandatory overtime and extra shifts — tools that he said were typically used "in times of challenging crisis."

The mayor called the sanitation slowdowns "unacceptable" and said the department will move to 12-hour and begin working Sunday shifts to ensure trash doesn't pile up.

"My job is to keep people safe — my employees, and 8.8 million people," de Blasio said at a virtual news briefing. "And until we defeat COVID, people are not safe. If we don't stop COVID, New Yorkers will die."

People who refuse to get vaccinated are now a big factor in the continued spread of the virus. Backers of mandates say New Yorkers have a right not to be infected by public servants unwilling to get the shots.

Mandates have gotten support in the court systems as well, as on Friday, when a federal appeals panel upheld New York state's vaccine mandate for health care workers.

Nearly one-fifth of city employees covered by the impending city mandate had yet to receive at least one vaccine dose as of Thursday, including 21% of police personnel, 29% of firefighters and EMS workers and 33% of sanitation workers, according to city data. City jail guards have another month to comply.

As of 8 p.m. Thursday, 33,400 city workers remained unvaccinated. The city said it would provide updated vaccine rates on Saturday.

The fire department said it was prepared to close up to 20% of its fire companies and have 20% fewer ambulances in service while changing schedules, canceling vacations and turning to outside EMS providers to make up for expected staffing shortages.

"The department must manage the unfortunate fact that a portion of our workforce has refused to comply with a vaccine mandate for all city employees," Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro said.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, who had COVID-19 in January, said his department was sending reminders to workers whose records indicated they hadn't yet received a shot and that NYPD vaccination sites will remain open all weekend. Shea said thousands of officers who've applied for medical and religious exemptions will be allowed to work while their cases are reviewed.

Nearly 1,000 officers were vaccinated on Friday alone, the NYPD said, rushing to meet the deadline for the mandate and an extra incentive: workers who get a shot by Friday will get \$500.

"On Monday, when this thing really starts being enforced, we're going to check the vaccination status and if you're not vaccinated, no pay and you're going to be not able to work," Shea said in a video message Wednesday to officers. "I don't think anyone wants that to happen. I don't think you want it to happen. I certainly don't. We need you out there."

Fire department officials are holding virtual meetings with staff, imploring them to get vaccinated.

A Staten Island judge on Wednesday refused a police union's request for a temporary block on the mandate, but she ordered city officials into her courtroom next month to explain why the requirement shouldn't be reversed. If the mandate is deemed illegal, workers put on leave will be given back pay, the city said.

Mike Salsedo, 44, was among hundreds of firefighters protesting Thursday outside de Blasio's residence, Gracie Mansion. He said he believes he has natural immunity to COVID-19 after having the disease last year and doesn't need to be vaccinated, a stance that's contrary to the consensus among public health experts.

"I'm a man of faith, and I don't believe that putting something manmade into my body is good," Salsedo said.

Another firefighter, Jackie-Michelle Martinez, said the ability to choose was "our God-given right" as she questioned the city's decision to move away from its previous policy, which allowed workers to stay on the job if they had a negative COVID-19 test.

"If the weekly testing is working, why are you, Mayor de Blasio, eliminating it?" she asked.

COVID-19 is the leading cause of death of law enforcement officers in the U.S., killing 498 officers since the start of 2020 compared to 102 gun deaths, according to the Officer Down Memorial Page, which tracks police fatalities.

De Blasio on Thursday credited the impending deadline for moving the needle on vaccinations across city government. In the last week, the number of affected workers who've gotten at least one dose rose from 71% to 79%.

When the state required all workers at hospitals and nursing homes to get vaccinated, a last-minute rush of people to comply meant that a few facilities experienced staffing challenges.

"We expected that a lot of the vaccinations would happen toward the end of the deadline," de Blasio said. "We also know a lot of people make the decision once they really realize that they're not going to get paid. That's just the human reality."

On Twitter, follow Michael Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak, Michelle L. Price at twitter.com/michelleprice and Karen Matthews at twitter.com/1karenmatthews

Ex-Maryland man who joined al-Qaida sentenced at Guantanamo

By BEN FOX Associated Press

FORT MEADE, Md. (AP) — A military jury imposed a sentence of 26 years Friday on a former Maryland man who admitted joining al-Qaida and has been held at the Guantanamo Bay detention center. But under a plea deal, the man could be released as soon as next year because of his cooperation with U.S. authorities.

The sentencing of Majid Khan is the culmination of the first trial by military commission for one of the 14 so-called high-value detainees who were sent to the U.S. naval base in Cuba in 2006 after being held in a clandestine network of overseas CIA detention facilities and subjected to the harsh interrogation program developed in response to the 9/11 attacks.

Khan, a 41-year-old citizen of Pakistan who came to the U.S. in the 1990s and graduated from high school near Baltimore, earlier pleaded guilty to war crimes charges that included conspiracy and murder for his involvement in al-Qaida plots such as the deadly bombing of the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, in August 2003.

He apologized for his actions, which included planning al-Qaida attacks in the U.S. after 9/11 and a failed plot to kill former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. During a two-hour statement to jurors on Thursday, he said: "I did it all, no excuse. And I am very sorry to everyone I have hurt."

The jury of eight military officers was required to reach a sentence of 25 to 40 years. Jurors heard of Khan's extensive cooperation with U.S. authorities following his guilty plea and heard the statement from the prisoner that also described his brutal CIA interrogation and captivity in the three years before he came to Guantanamo.

In addition to the sentence, the jury foreman said seven of the eight jurors had drafted a letter to Pentagon legal authorities recommending clemency for the defendant, which is an option under the military commission legal system.

A pretrial agreement means he could be released as early as February, at which point he would be resettled in an as-yet to be determined third country. He cannot return to Pakistan.

Jurors were not told about the pretrial agreement, which requires a Pentagon legal official known as a convening authority to cut his sentence to no more than 11 years because of his cooperation. He would also be given credit for some of the time he has already spent in custody.

It will be up to the Biden administration, which is working to close the detention center that now holds 39 men, to find a country willing to accept Khan for resettlement along with his wife and the daughter who was born after he was captured in Pakistan.

Wells Dixon, a lawyer for the Center for Constitutional Rights who was part of the defense team, said he expected Khan's sentence to be completed in February. He said Khan's team looks forward to working with the Biden administration to ensure "he has the necessary support to allow him to move on with his life and be a positive, contributing member of society."

Despite the pretrial agreement, the prosecution urged the jury to recommend a sentence at the higher end of the range as the defense urged jurors to consider Khan's cooperation, contrition and the brutal

conditions of his captivity.

"Since the commission of these crimes, Majid is a different person," said Army Maj. Michael Lyness, a military defense attorney. "Majid Khan is reformed and deserving of your mercy."

Army Col. Walter Foster, the lead prosecutor, sought to cast doubt on Khan's story of being led astray by radical Islam as a young man. He conceded the prisoner had also experienced "extremely rough treatment" at the hands of the CIA, but pivoted to remind the court of the 11 people killed in the Marriott bombing.

"He is still alive and with us today, a luxury that the dead and victims of the J.W. Marriott bombing do not have," Foster said.

Khan's cooperation is expected to help with other war crimes cases at Guantanamo, one involving five men held there who are charged with planning and aiding the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Such cases have been bogged down for years in the pretrial stage at the base and become one of the obstacles to closing the detention center.

The Associated Press viewed proceedings at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay from a video feed at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Oregon's biggest city has 'long way to go' repairing its rep

By SARA CLINE Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Portland's "badly damaged" reputation — marked by months of destructive protests, a homeless crisis and record year of homicides — is hurting the standing of Oregon's largest city, according to the city's main tourism promoter.

Travel Portland, the city's tourism promotion group partly funded by taxes, presented data to the City Council and mayor this week showing the city has declined to its "lowest levels" of being a likely destination for delegates to attend conferences. Just 64% of surveyed tourists said they would visit Portland again.

"There's an old saying, 'It takes a lifetime to build a reputation and you can ruin it in an instant.' That's true of cities, as it is people," Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said in response to the Travel Portland data. "And we're just going to have to commit to that long term process of improving the safety and the livability and the economic prosperity of the city."

The liberal city had long been known nationally for its ambrosial food scene, craft breweries and nature-loving hipsters. But last year, it became the epicenter of racial justice protests following the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis.

For months, a small downtown area was consumed by protests that often turned violent, with clashes between demonstrators and federal agents, plumes of teargas, fireworks exploding in the streets and rubber bullets flying through the air.

While Portland's violent protests have largely eased, there are still outbreaks— including earlier this month. Amid a vigil for a slain activist killed two years ago, a crowd of 100 people smashed storefront windows, ignited fires in dumpsters and caused at least \$500,000 in damage to city buildings and businesses.

Travel Portland presented data collected by MMGY Travel Intelligence. The travel research and consulting company asked people how likely they are to attend a meeting, conference or convention — either for business or leisure purposes — in Portland in the next 24 months. The question was asked about 21 different destinations, and Portland was "toward the bottom" of the list.

The survey showed that half of event planners and two-thirds of attendees surveyed recently indicated that their "likelihood" to book or attend meetings in the city over the next two years was heavily influenced by the "visibility" of racial and social protests.

"The impact of this is that we likely won't even get the opportunity to bid on many conventions for the next two years, which will affect our long term successes well into the future," said Jeff Miller, the president and CEO of Travel Portland.

Portland City Commissioner Dan Ryan said one of his friends who recently volunteered at a convention texted him about her experience with visitors who felt unsafe in the city.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 40 of 77

The woman told Ryan "it was really depressing to have so many people approach her, that looked angry, that we allowed ourselves to even host a big convention... like we weren't ready for it."

While the most recent Portland consumer research showed that the likely return rate of visitors to the city represented an improvement from earlier this year, the level was lower than surveys conducted before the pandemic and the protests.

Portland's central city hotel occupancy rate has also improved since the start of the pandemic, but Miller said the number of hotel rooms booked in September lags behind 14 competing visitor cities that Travel Portland tracks except Minneapolis and San Francisco.

"Recovery is happening elsewhere, just not here," Miller said.

Portland is in the midst of homeless crisis that local businesses, organizations and residents are urging the city to do something about — in the form of additional housing, mental health resources, cleanups and increased public safety.

At a recent City Council meeting, workers in a Portland neighborhood with many medical services buildings spoke about their experience that staff and patients endure because of a large nearby homeless encampment.

"The first thing that they see is garbage, RVs and tents blocking our sidewalks and discarded drug paraphernalia," said Sonia Bouchard, the director of operations at the Oregon Clinic Gastroenterology East at Gateway. "They're often yelled at, approached for money and in some cases threatened."

Employees often witness erratic behavior, fights, nudity and drug use, she said. Patients have told staff that they feel unsafe and some have decided to switch doctors.

"We've added fencing and security," said Dr. Harry Bray. "But, we feel at this point, we are unable to make things better and we need your help."

The spiraling homeless crisis has already impacted some major events in the city.

Over the summer, Oregon's largest annual golf event was relocated from Portland and the site's proximity to a sprawling encampment of homeless people to the farflung suburb of West Linn.

The city is also in the midst of its most violent year — with at least 69 homicides reported so far this year in Portland, surpassing the previous annual record of 66 set in 1987.

Despite the challenges, Wheeler insisted the city is resilient and that with "a lot of work" Portland will re-emerge as a safe and desirable travel destination.

Travel Portland has increased its marketing of the city, but officials said more is needed and city officials expect a budget windfall soon with an anticipated \$60 million in extra funding that the City Council could use as it wants — including tourism promotion and efforts to make the city more appealing and safer.

"I'm not saying stop your marketing, but right now people don't buy it," Wheeler said. "They want to see this results. They want to see action."

Sara Cline 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.

Sheriff defends filing of criminal complaint against Cuomo

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and MICHAEL HILL Associated Press

CLARKSVILLE, N.Y. (AP) — A New York sheriff on Friday defended his decision to file a criminal complaint against former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo without consulting prosecutors or the accuser, a woman who says the Democrat groped her late last year.

But Sheriff Craig Apple said he was confident in the strength of the case, which he said was based on witness interviews and voluminous records.

"I feel very confident that the district attorney is going to prosecute this," he told reporters at a news conference in Albany, the state capital.

A court summons requires Cuomo to appear for an arraignment on Nov. 17, though that date could change.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 41 of 77

He will be allowed to report voluntarily, but Undersheriff William Rice told The Associated Press the ex-governor will be booked at the sheriff's headquarters, including being photographed, fingerprinted and probably placed in handcuffs during a transport to court. Cuomo will not likely spend any time in a holding cell, Rice said.

The one-page complaint filed in Albany City Court accuses Cuomo of forcible touching by putting his hand under a woman's shirt on Dec. 7.

The complaint did not name the woman, but she has identified herself as Brittany Commisso, who worked as one of Cuomo's executive assistants before he resigned amid sexual harassment allegations in August.

Forcible touching is a misdemeanor in New York, punishable by up to a year in jail, though many cases for first-time offenders are resolved with probation or a shorter jail sentence.

After the charge was filed, the Albany County District Attorney's Office said that it had not been informed ahead of time. It has been conducting its own investigation and was expected to take the lead on a decision about whether to prosecute.

Commisso's lawyer, Brian Premo, said he had also expected the district attorney's office to handle the case.

"I have no doubt that the sheriff's investigators did a thorough job," Premo told Albany radio station Talk 1300. "I have no doubt that they believe in their case. I have no issue with any of that. It's just that this is a politically charged matter, right? ... So I think it's only prudent to allow the prosecutorial authority to have a say in how the investigation is conducted and whether there's a prosecution, right?"

In an interview earlier in the day with Talk 1300, the sheriff said it was "disheartening" that the court system made the criminal complaint public immediately, something he described as a "leak," although such court filings are public in New York and are routinely made available to reporters.

"We didn't want everybody to know exactly what we were doing because we didn't want all this, the circus," Apple said on the radio program, as he sought to explain the confusion over the complaint's filing Thursday.

"We weren't expecting a five-minute turnaround" for the court to decide whether to issue a summons or a warrant, he said later, adding that the confusion would have no effect on a "solid case."

The sheriff said he would have liked to have had "a deeper conversation" with the district attorney and a chance to reach out to Cuomo's attorney.

He commended his investigators, saying "they took a very high-profile investigation and decided to break it down."

He said it was commonplace for the sheriff's office to file misdemeanor charges in the city court without first consulting with the district attorney's office.

Commisso accused Cuomo of groping her when they were alone in an office at the governor's mansion in Albany. Cuomo has denied the allegations.

The AP does not identify alleged sexual assault victims unless they decide to tell their stories publicly, as Commisso has done.

The former governor's attorney, Rita Glavin, reasserted the governor's denial and said the sheriff's filing of the criminal complaint was politically motivated. She cited Friday's announcement by state Attorney General Letitia James that she will run for governor.

"The timing of this charge, on the eve of Tish James announcing her run for governor, is highly suspect and should give all of us pause that the heavy hand of politics is behind this decision," Glavin said.

James oversaw a civil investigation into Cuomo's conduct with women, but she was not involved in the sheriff's criminal probe.

Apple insisted that politics played no part in the investigation. The sheriff and the attorney general are both Democrats, as is District Attorney David Soares.

"We expect clear-headed people will make better decisions going forward," Glavin said in a statement. "But should this case move forward, we are prepared to vigorously defend the governor and challenge every aspect of the specious, inconsistent and uncorroborated allegations made against him."

Calvan reported from New York City. Associated Press Writer Michael R. Sisak contributed to this report.

Big, messy, complicated: Biden's plan churns in Congress

By LISA MASCARO and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's big. It's messy. And it's very politically complicated. That's President Joe Biden's sweeping domestic policy package as Democratic leaders in Congress try to muscle it into law.

Fallout was brutal Friday after Biden's announcement of a \$1.75 trillion framework, chiseled back from an initial \$3.5 trillion plan, still failed to produce ironclad support from two key holdout senators — West Virginia's Joe Manchin and Arizonan Kyrsten Sinema. On Capitol Hill, Congress adjourned the night before with fingers pointed, tempers hot and so much at stake for the president and his party.

Yet a formal nod of endorsement of Biden's plan from the party's Congressional Progressive Caucus late Thursday moved the president one step closer to the support needed for passage in the House. Determined to wrap it up, the House will try next week to pass Biden's big bill, along with a companion \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package.

"It's only 90% done," said Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. "So you got to get through the complicated — the last 10%, as you know, is always the most difficult."

The fast-moving — then slow-crawling — state-of-play in Congress puts the president and his party at significant political risk.

Biden's slipping approval rating and the party's own hold on Congress are at stake with the 2022 midterm election campaigns soon underway. Democrats are struggling in governor's races next week in Virginia and New Jersey, where safe victories might have been expected.

"It's sort of stunning to me that we're in this place," exasperated Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., told reporters late Thursday as the House adjourned.

Biden arrived that morning on Capitol Hill triumphant in announcing a historic framework on the bill that he claimed would get 50 votes in the Senate. But the two Democratic Senate holdouts Manchin and Sinema responded — maybe, maybe not.

Manchin and Sinema's reluctance to fully embrace Biden's plan set off a domino series of events that sent Biden to overseas summits empty handed and left the party portrayed as in disarray.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was forced to abandon plans to pass the related measure, the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure plan, that has become tangled in the deliberations. Progressives have been refusing to vote for that public works package of roads, bridges and broadband, withholding their support as leverage for assurances that Manchin and Sinema are on board with Biden's big bill.

"Everyone is very clear that the biggest problem we have here is Manchin and Sinema," Rep. Ruben Gallego of Arizona told reporters. "We don't trust them. We need to hear from them that they're actually in agreement with the president's framework."

Still, step by step, Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer are edging their caucuses closer to resolving their differences over what would be the most ambitious federal investments in social services in generations and some \$555 billion in climate change strategies.

"We will vote both bills through," said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., the chairwoman of the progressive caucus, after endorsing Biden's plan.

Lawmakers are expected to spend the weekend negotiating final details on text that's swelling beyond 1,600 pages. Some are trying to restore a paid family leave program or lower prescription drug costs that fell out of Biden's framework.

Manchin and Sinema, the two holdouts, now hold enormous power, essentially deciding whether Biden will be able to deliver on the Democrats' major campaign promises.

Both have privately indicated that they are on board, according to Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, a Biden ally.

"I have new optimism," tweeted Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, who was part of a small entourage that

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 43 of 77

met privately with Sinema at the Capitol.

"Same," responded Rep. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., who served as a bridge between progressives and the Arizona senator.

But it won't be easy, if past congressional battles are any measure. Legislating is work that takes time and rarely happens on schedule.

Democrats took the full first year of Barack Obama's presidency to pass the Affordable Care Act in a Senate vote on Christmas Eve 2009 — and that was only part of the way. It wasn't signed into law until March 2010.

Republicans tried and failed to repeal the same health care law during Donald Trump's first year in a stunning midnight flop in 2017.

Biden's package is even more sweeping than those.

"Let's get this done," he exhorted in an address at the White House on Thursday. He claimed the package "will fundamentally change the lives of millions of people for the better."

While much has been cut from Biden's sweeping vision, still in the mix is a long list of priorities: free prekindergarten for all youngsters, expanded health care programs — including the launch of a new \$35 billion hearing aid benefit for people with Medicare — and \$555 billion to tackle climate change.

There's also a one-year extension of an enhanced child care tax credit that was put in place during the COVID-19 rescue and new child care subsidies.

Other expanded health care programs build on the Affordable Care Act by funding subsidies to help people buy insurance policies and providing coverage in states that declined Obamacare's Medicaid expansion.

An additional \$100 billion to bolster the immigration system could boost the overall package to \$1.85 trillion if it clears Senate rules.

Republicans remain overwhelmingly opposed, forcing Biden to rely on the Democrats' narrow majority in Congress with no votes to spare in the Senate and few in the House.

Biden's proposal would be paid for by imposing a new 5% surtax on income over \$10 million a year and an additional 3% on those over \$25 million and by instituting a new 15% corporate minimum tax, keeping with his plans to have no new taxes on those earning less than \$400,000 a year. A special billionaires' tax was not included.

Revenue to help pay for the package would also come from rolling back some of the Trump administration's 2017 tax cuts and stepping up pursuit of tax dodgers by the IRS. Biden has vowed to cover the entire cost of the plan, ensuring it does not pile onto the nation's debt load.

Just in case they can't wrap it up soon, Democrats gave themselves a new deadline — approving an extension until Dec. 3 of routine transportation funds that will be at risk of expiring without the infrastructure bill.

"The current situation is about as bad as it can get," said Jim Manley, a former top Senate aide.

The progressives' endorsement was progress for Biden, he said. But with trust low, he also said, "I am afraid that it is going to take a while."

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Doctors question sedative dose used in Oklahoma execution

By ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS Associated Press

While medical experts say it's unclear why an Oklahoma inmate began convulsing and vomiting after the first of three drugs used to execute him was administered, all agree the dosage was massive compared with what's standard in surgeries — with one doctor calling it "insane."

The state's prisons agency is now likely to face new litigation, which may focus on the state's description of the execution of John Marion Grant for the 1998 slaying of a prison cafeteria worker as "in accordance with" protocols.

Grant, 60, convulsed and vomited after the sedative midazolam was administered. That drug was fol-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 44 of 77

lowed by two more: vecuronium bromide, a paralytic, and potassium chloride, which stops the heart.

Thursday's lethal injection ended a six-year moratorium on executions in Oklahoma that was brought on by concerns over its execution methods, including prior use of midazolam.

Oklahoma's protocols call for administering 500 milligrams of the sedative. Arkansas and Ohio are among other states that use that dose of midazolam in executions.

"It's just an insane dose and there's probably no data on what that could cause," said Jonathan Groner, an Ohio State University medical school surgery professor and lethal injection expert.

He added that sedation does not increase as the dosage goes up.

"There's a reason these drugs are given by anesthesiologists and not prison guards," he said.

Grant was strapped to a gurney inside the execution chamber when the drugs were administered. After several minutes, two members of the execution team wiped the vomit from his face and neck. He was declared unconscious about 15 minutes after receiving the first drug and declared dead about six minutes after that, at 4:21 p.m.

In a statement released immediately after the execution, state prisons spokesman Justin Wolf said it "was carried out in accordance with Oklahoma Department of Corrections' protocols and without complication."

On Friday, prisons director Scott Crow said it was "without complication" because there was no interruption of the agency's process for putting someone to death. He said Grant's vomiting "was not pleasant to watch, but I do not believe it was inhumane."

Crow said the doctor monitoring the execution said Grant was unconscious when he was vomiting and that "regurgitation is not a completely uncommon instance or occurrence with someone who is undergoing sedation."

Dr. Karen Sibert, an anesthesiologist and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, disputed that, saying that type of nausea is not normally associated with the class of drugs that includes midazolam. A lack of oxygen could have brought on the convulsions, along with Grant's high levels of anxiety and distress, she said.

"Midazolam does not usually cause it by itself," Sibert said.

Even before Grant's execution, more than two dozen Oklahoma death row inmates were part of a federal lawsuit challenging the state's lethal injection protocols, arguing that the three-drug method risks causing unconstitutional pain and suffering. A trial is set for early next year.

The state almost surely will face new lawsuits over its execution protocols, said Robert Denham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center, a capital punishment clearing house that opposes the death penalty. The Corrections Department's statement indicating that the execution wasn't botched could provide proof of the protocols' unconstitutionality, said Denham.

"Either they lied to the public and they can't be trusted or they told the truth and the protocol can't be trusted," Denham said.

Grant was the first person in Oklahoma to be executed since a series of flawed lethal injections in 2014 and 2015. He was serving a 130-year prison sentence for several armed robberies when witnesses say he dragged prison cafeteria worker Gay Carter into a mop closet and stabbed her 16 times with a homemade shank.

States turned to midazolam over the past decade after supplies of more powerful barbiturates such as sodium thiopental disappeared or companies made them unavailable following pressure from death penalty opponents. Even death penalty opponents agreed such a drug wouldn't cause pain.

Midazolam has been associated with other troublesome executions, with accounts of inmates snorting and gasping following its administration, or coughing loudly, or their stomachs inflating and deflating.

In April 2014, Oklahoma inmate Clayton Lockett struggled on a gurney before dying 43 minutes into his lethal injection during the state's first use of midazolam — and after the state's prisons chief ordered executioners to stop.

Oklahoma halted executions in 2015 after other problematic lethal injections. While the moratorium was in place, Oklahoma moved ahead with plans to use nitrogen gas to execute inmates, but ultimately

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 45 of 77

scrapped that idea and announced last year that it planned to resume executions using the same three-drug lethal injection protocol that was used during the flawed executions.

In 2015, a divided U.S. Supreme Court said Oklahoma's use of midazolam didn't violate the Constitution's Eighth Amendment prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. The court also said "some risk of pain is inherent in any method of execution."

But Denham notes that the court said inmates challenging its use hadn't proved it was unconstitutional, not that the drug itself was constitutional.

Oklahoma has six more executions scheduled to take place through March, and prison officials say they have confirmed a source to supply all the drugs needed.

Welsh-Huggins reported from Columbus, Ohio. Associated Press writers Sean Murphy in McAlester, Okla., Jake Bleiberg in Dallas and Jill Zeman Bleed in Little Rock, Ark., contributed to this report.

FDA paves way for Pfizer COVID-19 vaccinations in young kids

By MATTHEW PERRONE and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration on Friday paved the way for children ages 5 to 11 to get Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine.

The FDA cleared kid-size doses — just a third of the amount given to teens and adults — for emergency use, and up to 28 million more American children could be eligible for vaccinations as early as next week.

One more regulatory hurdle remains: On Tuesday, advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will make more detailed recommendations on which youngsters should get vaccinated, with a final decision by the agency's director expected shortly afterwards.

"The rationale here is protect your children so that they can get back towards normal life," said FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks. "The tremendous cost of this pandemic has not just been in physical illness, it's been in the psychological, the social development of children" too.

A few countries have begun using other COVID-19 vaccines in children under 12, including China, which just began vaccinations for 3-year-olds. But many that use the vaccine made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech are watching the U.S. decision, and European regulators just began considering the companies' kid-size doses.

With FDA's action, Pfizer plans to begin shipping millions of vials of the pediatric vaccine — in orange caps to avoid mix-ups with the purple-capped doses for everyone else — to doctors' offices, pharmacies and other vaccination sites. Once the CDC issues its ruling, eligible kids will get two shots, three weeks apart.

While children are at lower risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 than older people, 5- to 11-year-olds still have been seriously affected -- including over 8,300 hospitalizations, about a third requiring intensive care. The FDA said 146 deaths have been reported in that age group.

And with the extra-contagious delta variant circulating, the government has counted more than 2,000 coronavirus-related school closings just since the start of the school year, affecting more than a million children.

"With this vaccine kids can go back to something that's better than being locked at home on remote schooling, not being able to see their friends," said Dr. Kawsar Talaat of Johns Hopkins University. "The vaccine will protect them and also protect our communities."

The American Academy of Pediatrics also applauded FDA's decision, and said pediatricians were "standing by" to talk with parents.

Vaccinating this age group is "an important step in keeping them healthy and providing their families with peace of mind," said Dr. Lee Savio Beers, the academy's president.

Earlier this week, FDA's independent scientific advisers voted that the pediatric vaccine's promised benefits outweigh any risks. But several panelists said not all youngsters will need to be vaccinated, and that they preferred the shots be targeted to those at higher risk from the virus.

Nearly 70% of 5- to 11-year-olds hospitalized for COVID-19 in the U.S. have other serious medical condi-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 46 of 77

tions, including asthma and obesity, according to federal tracking. Additionally, more than two-thirds of youngsters hospitalized are Black or Hispanic, mirroring long-standing disparities in the disease's impact.

The question of how broadly Pfizer's vaccine should be used will be a key consideration for the CDC and its advisers, who set formal recommendations for pediatricians and other medical professionals.

A Pfizer study of 2,268 schoolchildren found the vaccine was nearly 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infections, based on 16 cases of COVID-19 among kids given dummy shots compared to just three who got vaccinated.

The FDA ultimately assessed more children — 3,100 — who received the kid dosage to conclude it was safe. Youngsters experienced similar or fewer temporary reactions — such as sore arms, fever or aches — that teens experience.

But the study wasn't large enough to detect any extremely rare side effects, such as the heart inflammation that occasionally occurs after the second full-strength dose, mostly in young men and teen boys. It's unclear if younger children getting a smaller dose also will face that rare risk. FDA pledged Friday to keep a close watch.

Some parents are expected to vaccinate their children ahead of family holiday gatherings and the winter cold season.

Laura Cushman of Salt Lake City plans to get her three children — ages 7, 9 and 11 — vaccinated as soon as possible.

"We just want them to get to resume their pre-COVID life a little bit more. And feel safe about it," she said.

But a recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey suggests most parents won't rush to get the shots. About 25% of parents polled earlier this month said they would get their children vaccinated "right away." But the remaining majority of parents were roughly split between those who said they will wait to see how the vaccine performs and those who said they "definitely" won't have their children vaccinated.

The similarly made Moderna vaccine also is being studied in young children, and both Pfizer and Moderna also are testing shots for babies and preschoolers.

AP reporter Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City contributed.

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Letitia James announces she will run for New York governor

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York Attorney General Letitia James formally announced Friday that she is running for governor, a widely anticipated move from the woman who oversaw an investigation into allegations that former Gov. Andrew Cuomo sexually harassed numerous women.

James announced her candidacy on Twitter, saying, "I'm running for Governor of New York because I have the experience, vision, and courage to take on the powerful on behalf of all New Yorkers."

A campaign video cited the multiple lawsuits she filed against former President Donald Trump's administration and an investigation into deaths in New York's nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

James, 62, is the first woman elected as New York's attorney general and the first Black person to serve in the role. She's expected to be a strong challenger against Gov. Kathy Hochul, who had been Cuomo's lieutenant governor, for the Democratic nomination.

Hochul, who is from the Buffalo area, entered office with a reputation as centrist who is working to bolster her ties to New York City, where James' political support is based.

James was born and raised in Brooklyn and made her first run for City Council as a candidate of the liberal Working Families Party. Her path to the nomination will be the obverse of Hochul's, trying to win over upstate Democrats who might be less progressive.

Before her bombshell report was released, prompting Cuomo's resignation, James had been known

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 47 of 77

nationally for her frequent legal tussles with Trump.

Since she became attorney general in 2019, her office has investigated Trump's business affairs and filed dozens of lawsuits against the Republican's administration over federal policies on immigration, the environment and other matters.

"I've sued the Trump administration 76 times. But who's counting?" James said in her kickoff video, making a playful shrug of her shoulders while looking into the camera.

James also filed a lawsuit accusing the National Rifle Association's leaders of financial mismanagement, the latest in a string of regulatory actions that have delighted liberals but drawn complaints from Republicans that she has unfairly used her office to target political opponents.

While under public pressure in 2020, Cuomo authorized James to investigate allegations he had sexually harassed several women. The independent investigators she hired to conduct the inquiry released a report in August concluding that there were credible allegations from 11 women, including one aide who said the governor had groped her breast.

Cuomo has attacked James' report as inaccurate and biased, denied mistreating women and said he resigned in order to avoid subjecting the state to turmoil.

James has dismissed the charge that her investigation was politically motivated, saying Cuomo should take responsibility for his own conduct.

James made the announcement the day after a criminal complaint was filed against Cuomo in Albany, accusing the former governor of committing a misdemeanor sex crime of groping a woman in December 2020.

Cuomo's lawyer, Rita Glavin, said in a statement that the Democrat never assaulted anyone. He's due in court Nov. 17 to respond to the charge.

"Tish James abused her office to falsely accuse Governor Cuomo because she was afraid to confront him in an election and let the people decide," Cuomo's spokesperson Rich Azzopardi said in a statement Friday after James' announced her campaign.

Cuomo was once one of James' strongest political allies.

As governor, he endorsed James for attorney general and headlined a fundraiser for her in 2018 as she ran in a four-way Democratic primary to replace Eric Schneiderman, who abruptly resigned amid allegations that he abused women.

New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio have both said they are considering a run. Two other potential Democratic candidates come from Long Island: Suffolk County executive Steve Bellone and U.S. Rep. Thomas Suozzi, who lives in Nassau County.

On Friday morning, James and Hochul each made brief appearances at a downtown Brooklyn restaurant for a traditional preelection breakfast for Democratic power players.

Hochul thanked the crowd for supporting her as the state's first-ever female governor and implying in her remarks that she expected to win multiple terms as governor.

"I feel the weight of history on my shoulders because it's my responsibility to demonstrate that a woman can govern with strength, with heart and passion and fight for the people of this state. And so when I'm done with my terms, no one will ever question the ability of a woman to hold the highest office in this state or in this land," Hochul said.

James, speaking about 20 minutes after Hochul at the restaurant in her home turf, drew loud applause and asked, "Is Brooklyn in the house?"

The attorney general did not make any campaign remarks but urged attendees to vote in the city's upcoming elections on Tuesday and think about "the threats to our democracy, to our freedom" including reproductive rights and threats to the environment.

"Let everybody know that Brooklyn and New York State — we're one," James said.

Her candidacy was quickly endorsed Friday by John Samuelsen, the international president of the Transport Workers Union, which represents 150,000 workers in the airline, railroad, transit industry and more.

Rapper Fetty Wap arrested on federal drug charges in NYC

By TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rapper Fetty Wap was charged on Friday with participating in a conspiracy to smuggle large amounts of heroin, fentanyl and other drugs into the New York City region.

The rapper, whose real name is Willie Maxwell, was arrested Thursday at Citi Field, home of the Mets, where the three-day Rolling Loud hip-hop music festival is taking place. An indictment that had previously blacked out Maxwell's name was unredacted on Friday to publicly add his name to a case involving five other defendants, including a New Jersey corrections officer.

"The fact that we arrested a chart-topping rap artist and a corrections officer as part of the conspiracy illustrates just how vile the drug trade has become," Michael J. Driscoll, a top official with the FBI's New York office, said in a statement.

The indictment charges Maxwell and his co-defendants with conspiracy to possess and distribute more than 100 kilograms (220 pounds) of heroin, fentanyl and crack cocaine between June 2019 and June 2020. The scheme involved using the U.S. Postal Service and cars with hidden compartments to move the narcotics from the West Coast to Long Island, where they were stored for distribution to dealers on Long Island and in New Jersey, authorities said.

Maxwell, 30, pleaded not guilty and was ordered held without bail at a virtual hearing on Friday. His lawyer, Elizabeth Macedonio, didn't argue for bail and a prosecutor told a magistrate judge that there was a potential plea deal in the works.

There was no immediate response to a message left with Macedonio seeking comment.

Maxwell rose to prominence after his debut single "Trap Queen" reached No. 2 on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart in May 2015.

He has had other brushes with the law, including a 2019 arrest in Las Vegas for allegedly assaulting three employees at a hotel-casino. He was previously arrested in November 2017 and charged with DUI after police say he was drag racing on a New York City highway.

Maxwell experienced personal tragedy in October 2020 when his younger brother, 26-year-old Twyshon Depew, was shot and killed in their hometown of Paterson, New Jersey.

Then in June 2021, Maxwell's 4-year-old daughter, Lauren, died.

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:

Fauci had no involvement in study on monkey threat responses

CLAIM: Dr. Anthony Fauci's experiments include one that magnified terror in the brains of monkeys and subjected them to frightening stimuli.

THE FACTS: A tweet that circulated widely across platforms this week falsely suggested a study decried by animal activists was among "Fauci's experiments," despite the fact that the nation's top infectious disease expert had no part in the research, nor did the institute he directs, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "Reading through Fauci's experiments and the one I find most alarming is the use of an acid to destroy a region of monkeys' brains to magnify terror," read the tweet, first posted by the conservative commentator Candace Owens. "They then simulated images of spiders and tormented them with fear. Human DNA is 97% identical to apes. Why fund that research?" In reality, the research mentioned in the tweet was conducted by researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health, a division of the National Institutes of Health that is separate from the one Fauci heads. "Dr. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is not involved and has never been involved in this study," NIMH's press team said in an emailed statement. "Additionally, the study was not funded

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 49 of 77

by NIAID." NIMH also disputed the framing of the tweet, saying that while the study did use lesioning techniques to alter the brains of monkeys, it was "critically important" research to learn more about brain circuits that help with emotion expression and regulation. In the 2019 study, researchers used injections of acid to target areas of the brain in rhesus macaques. They then observed the monkeys responding to a fake rubber snake, a fake spider and neutral stimuli. The study authors said their work provided "insights into the neural regulation of defensive responses to threat and inform the etiology and treatment of anxiety disorders in humans." While the study in question found monkeys with the lesions had an increased defensive response to threat, other research has found that brain lesions blunted or had no effect on emotional threat responses in monkeys. Several animal activist groups and federal lawmakers have publicly criticized this research and other studies involving monkeys at the NIH. Responding to such criticism, NIMH defended its use of the primates, saying, "monkeys are critical for studying these brain circuits because their brains are structurally and functionally similar to human brains." NIMH added that animals used in its research are protected by laws, regulations and policies that are intended to ensure a commitment to animal welfare. Owens did not respond to an emailed request for comment. Her tweet followed scrutiny of several experiments using dogs — some of which were funded in part by the Fauci-run NIAID.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report with additional reporting by Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in Atlanta.

Incorrect comparisons made between refugee aid, social security payments

CLAIM: Refugees resettled in the U.S. receive \$2,125 per month from the government, while Social Security recipients only receive an average of \$1,400 per month.

THE FACTS: Posts sharing inaccurate comparisons between the amount of government funding given to refugees seeking resettlement in the U.S. and monthly payments received by Social Security beneficiaries have been circulating for months on Twitter and other platforms. The State Department defines a refugee under the Immigration and Nationality Act as someone who has experienced persecution or has a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, making them eligible for resettlement in U.S. communities. Social media users have incorrectly claimed that refugees receive \$2,125 per month from the government, while Social Security recipients who have been paying into the system for years only receive an average of \$1,400 per month. "The assertion made in the Twitter post is inaccurate," State Department spokesperson Ned Price wrote in an email to the AP. The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration offers a one-time, per capita amount of \$2,275 to resettlement agencies, and of that amount, \$1,225 is available for agencies to use toward refugees' initial housing, food, clothing and furniture costs. The rest of the funds go toward services including assistance with cultural orientation, assistance with enrollment in English language services and school, access to immigration assistance and referral to other social, medical and employment services. Assistance is only provided directly to refugees in the "rare event" they have established family or friend relationships who are able to meet their basic needs, such as housing, Price said. In that case, a one-time payment of \$1,225 per person is provided directly. After the initial resettlement period, the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement works through individual states and nonprofit organizations to connect refugees with language, employment and social services. The Office of Refugee Resettlement's web page states that its Cash and Medical Assistance program, which is similar to Medicaid, lasts for up to eight months from the date of arrival in the U.S. Refugees are also eligible for public benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid. Social Security helps older Americans, workers who become disabled and families in which a spouse or parent dies. Most workers have to pay Social Security taxes for as long as they are working and qualify for retirement benefits after about 10 years of work. Workers are eligible for the retirement benefits in their 60s, depending on their birth year. When it comes to payments, the Social Security Administration's monthly statistical snapshot for September 2021, the most recent data, shows that beneficiaries on average received about \$1,439 monthly. However, this number changes from month to month and varies greatly depending on the type of benefit.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 50 of 77

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in Atlanta contributed this report.

Japan has not substituted ivermectin for COVID-19 vaccines

CLAIM: "Japan has pulled the vaccines and substituted ivermectin — and in one month, wiped COVID out in that country."

THE FACTS: An article published this week by a conservative radio host recirculated a months-old false claim that Japan had halted the use of coronavirus vaccines in favor of using the parasite drug ivermectin, and that the switch has led to the eradication of coronavirus cases. The claims are not true. Japan has continued to administer vaccines and has not authorized ivermectin for treating COVID-19. The drug is used to treat infections of roundworms and other parasites in humans and animals. Many health officials have warned against ivermectin's use for COVID-19, saying that it could cause harmful side effects and that there's little evidence it helps. The drug is not listed by the Japanese government as an approved medicine to treat the coronavirus, according to the Japan Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency's list of medical products approved for COVID-19. The same list shows that the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines all remain authorized under Special Approval for Emergency use in the country. The false assertion that ivermectin gained approval for use among COVID patients in Japan emerged in August after Haruo Ozaki, the chairman of the Tokyo Medical Association, said at a news conference that the drug may have benefits for COVID patients but needs to be studied further. Some people online misinterpreted this as an endorsement of the drug and mischaracterized Ozaki as a government official. But the Tokyo Medical Association is an independent organization. It is not a government agency and does not reflect the official stance of the Japanese Ministry of Health. While Japan did suspend the use of about 1.63 million doses of the Moderna vaccine in August after contamination was found in unused vials, it did not totally stop administering the vaccine. The Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines were unaffected. Japan has recorded more than 20,000 new COVID-19 cases and more than 650 deaths in the past month, though daily new cases have seen a steep decline from when they surged around the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo. Experts say an effective vaccine campaign, widespread use of face masks and subdued nightlife could be credited with the decline. About 70% of the population is fully vaccinated.

— Sophia Tulp

Children in video died in stampede, not after receiving COVID-19 vaccine

CLAIM: Video shows 13 children lying on the floor dead after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine at a school in South Africa.

THE FACTS: The video, taken in 2020, shows children who died in a stampede at school in Kenya. The Department of Health in South Africa confirmed to the AP that the claim being shared was false. The graphic video, which shows a row of children on stretchers with the sounds of wailing in the background, is accompanied by comments that falsely state the children died from the COVID-19 vaccine. It circulated widely across social media and on Telegram with claims the media was not covering the deaths and that tech companies were blocking the video. The Department of Health of South Africa confirmed to the AP that they had not had any reports of deaths of children due to the vaccine. "In fact, this is just misinformation designed to mislead our people, parents and guardians in particular," Foster Mohale, a health department spokesperson, said in an email. South Africa is not vaccinating children in schools. Those 12 and above can choose to go to vaccination centers to get shot, but it is completely voluntary. The Associated Press reported on the stampede, which took place at Kakamega Primary School in Kenya in February 2020. It occurred after students trampled over each other as they were released for the school day. Fourteen children died in the stampede and 39 others were injured. The AP reported that grief-stricken parents wailed and collapsed at the three hospitals where the bodies of the dead were taken. The cause of the stampede was unclear at the time. The recent false claims about the video began circulating this week after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration backed a low dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children in the U.S. The panel voted that the vaccine's benefits in preventing COVID-19 outweighed any potential risks.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy in New York contributed this report.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 51 of 77

Video shows California ceremony, not US troops in Taiwan

CLAIM: A video shows the U.S. military in Taiwan.

THE FACTS: The video in question was filmed in front of City Hall in Monterey Park, California, and shows an annual memorial ceremony commemorating a 1937 battle between Chinese and Japanese troops. A post that circulated on Twitter recently showed a video of people marching with American and Taiwanese flags. A tweet in Chinese falsely claimed that the video showed the U.S. military in Taiwan. The video can be found circulating on Twitter as early as 2018. But the procession was filmed thousands of miles away, outside Monterey Park City Hall, Amy Wang, press division director of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles, told The Associated Press. The event is hosted each July by the local Taiwanese American community. She could not confirm which year the video was taken, but said those shown in the clip are part of the Taiwanese American community. The annual event commemorates the Marco Polo Bridge incident, a July 1937 conflict between Chinese and Japanese troops near the bridge outside Beijing, which triggered the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The U.S. switched diplomatic recognition of China from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, but continues to maintain a robust, unofficial relationship with Taiwan. On Thursday, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen confirmed that some U.S. troops were on the ground there, the AP reported.

— Associated Press writer Arijeta Lajka in New York contributed this report.

Western New York church did not get a liquor license

CLAIM: An image of a newspaper article shows that True Bethel Baptist Church in Buffalo, New York, recently became the first church in New York to obtain a liquor license.

THE FACTS: This claim and the image it appeared in have circulated widely online this week, but they are both fake, True Bethel Baptist Church and The Buffalo News confirmed. "True Bethel Baptist Church becomes the first Church in NYS to receive a Liquor License: Rev. Darius Pridgen thanks Mayor Brown," read the fake headline in the image, which was made to look like an issue of The Buffalo News. "This is in fact a fake story," said Amy Yakawiak, information specialist at The Buffalo News, who said it wasn't clear where the false image originated. "This is completely false," said Danetta McKinnon, pastor of administration at True Bethel Baptist Church. McKinnon noted that the bogus claim had been circulating since early September. An internet search did not reveal any credible news articles making this claim, and a search of the New York State Liquor Authority's website did not turn up any legitimate liquor license records matching True Bethel Baptist Church.

— Ali Swenson

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'Rust' armorer attorneys blame producers for 'unsafe' set

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Attorneys for Hannah Gutierrez Reed, who was in charge of weapons on the movie set where Alec Baldwin fatally shot cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, say she doesn't know where the live rounds found there came from, and blamed producers for unsafe working conditions.

Gutierrez Reed was the armorer on the set of "Rust." The 24-year-old, who had worked on one previous feature film, hasn't spoken publicly about the accident.

"Ultimately this set would never have been compromised if live ammo were not introduced," said attorneys Jason Bowles and Robert Gorence in a statement. "Hannah has no idea where the live rounds came from. Hannah and the prop master gained control over the guns and she never witnessed anyone shoot live rounds with these guns and nor would she permit that."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 52 of 77

During a news conference Wednesday, Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza said there was "some complacency" in how weapons were handled on the set of "Rust."

Investigators initially found 500 rounds of ammunition — a mix of blanks, dummy rounds and what appeared to be live rounds. Industry experts have said live rounds should never be on set.

Additional ammunition, a dozen revolvers and a rifle were more recently seized in the search of a white truck used for storing props including firearms, according to an inventory list filed Friday in court.

Investigators with the Santa Fe Sheriff's Office declined to provide further information about the newly seized weapons and ammunition. It was unclear whether live rounds were encountered.

Attorneys for Gutierrez Reed said she is "devastated and completely beside herself" over the death of Hutchins. They argued that producers on the film were cutting corners that sacrificed safety.

"Hannah was hired on two positions on this film, which made it extremely difficult to focus on her job as an armorer," they said. "She fought for training, days to maintain weapons, and proper time to prepare for gunfire but ultimately was overruled by production and her department. The whole production set became unsafe due to various factors, including lack of safety meetings. This was not the fault of Hannah."

Veteran prop master Neal W. Zoromski earlier told The Los Angeles Times that he declined an offer to work on "Rust" because producers insisted that one person could serve as both assistant prop master and armorer. Zoromski said those are "two really big jobs" that couldn't be combined. He called the production "an accident waiting to happen."

A spokesperson for the producers of "Rust" didn't immediately respond to emails Friday. They have previously said that they are cooperating with the police investigation.

Others have raised questions about the production. The film's gaffer, Serge Svetnoy, earlier faulted the movie's producers for "negligence."

"To save a dime sometimes, you hire people who are not fully qualified for the complicated and dangerous job," Svetnoy said in a Facebook post.

On the morning of the shooting, Gutierrez Reed told detectives that she checked the dummy bullets — bullets that appear real, save for a small hole in the side of the casing that identifies them as inoperable — to ensure none were "hot," according to a search warrant affidavit made public Wednesday.

When the crew broke for lunch, the guns used for filming were locked in a safe inside the props storage truck, Gutierrez Reed said. The ammunition, however, was left unsecured on a cart. There was additional ammo inside the prop truck.

After lunch, the film's prop master, Sarah Zachry, removed the guns from the safe and handed them to Gutierrez Reed — Gutierrez Reed told investigators.

According to a search warrant affidavit released last Friday, Gutierrez Reed set three guns on a cart outside the church, and assistant director Dave Halls took one from the cart and handed it to Baldwin. The document released Wednesday said the armorer sometimes handed the gun to Baldwin, and sometimes to Halls.

Halls told investigators that he failed to fully check the revolver. Normally, he told detectives, he would examine the barrel for obstructions and have Gutierrez Reed open the hatch and spin the drum where the bullets go, confirming none of the rounds is live.

This time, he reported, he could only remember seeing three of the rounds, and he didn't remember if the armorer had spun the drum. He then yelled out "cold gun" to indicate that it was safe to use.

Messages left with Halls haven't been returned.

West Virginia: First to worst in COVID-19 vaccine efforts

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

KENOVA, W.Va. (AP) — When COVID-19 vaccines first became available, Ric Griffith's family-owned drugstore was among 250 mom-and-pop pharmacies that helped West Virginia get off to the fastest start of any state in vaccinating its residents.

Republican Gov. Jim Justice went on national news shows to declare West Virginia — a place that regu-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 53 of 77

larly ranks near the bottom in many health indicators — “the diamond in the rough.”

Nine months later, those days are a distant memory. Demand for the vaccine has almost dried up, the question of whether to get a shot has become a political hot button, and West Virginia’s vaccination rate has plummeted to the lowest among the states, by the federal government’s reckoning.

The governor, who spent months preaching the virtues of the vaccine to reluctant West Virginians, is still doing that but is also promoting a new law that would allow some exemptions to employer-imposed vaccination requirements.

And those shots? They’re mostly sitting on shelves.

“I’m afraid that while taking a victory lap, we discovered that there were more laps to go in the race,” Griffith, who is also a Democratic member of the state House of Delegates, said Monday of West Virginia’s descent from first to worst. The druggist has since turned his attention to preparing 3,000 pumpkins for a big Halloween event that was waylaid by the pandemic last year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 41% of West Virginia’s 1.8 million residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, while 49% have had at least one dose. The CDC says the state’s rate of about 89,000 doses administered per 100,000 population is the nation’s worst.

Officials with West Virginia’s coronavirus task force claim that the state’s percentage is actually higher and that the CDC reports only part of the data.

Nationally, 57.5% of the population is fully vaccinated and 66.5% has gotten at least one dose.

In West Virginia, it wasn’t for lack of trying. For months, Justice offered an assortment of giveaways to encourage people to get vaccinated. Toting his dour-faced pet bulldog around the state, he dispensed cash, cars, pickup trucks, ATVs, riding lawn mowers, tickets to college athletic events and college scholarships.

It made for good photo opportunities. But the state’s vaccination rate barely budged.

By the fall, a new wave of sickness and death arrived. Hospitals saw a crush of patients, and the number of active cases, which had dipped below 1,000 in early July, ballooned to nearly 30,000 by mid-September before falling sharply. The number of deaths from the outbreak has soared to about 4,400.

West Virginia has the nation’s third-oldest population, with nearly 20% of its residents over 65. Health officials said most of the virus deaths have involved people in that vulnerable age group.

The governor continues to encourage residents to wear masks and stay out of crowds and has scolded the unvaccinated. “We should be very respectful of others,” he said recently. “The more of us that are vaccinated, the less will die.”

Griffith said he was proud of Justice’s nonstop effort to push vaccines “and the obvious love he has for the people of West Virginia.”

But Justice also ended a statewide indoor mask mandate in June and has opposed vaccination and mask requirements since. And in October he pushed through the GOP-controlled Legislature a bill allowing workers to use medical or religious exemptions to get out of employer-required COVID-19 vaccine mandates. The law takes effect in January.

The bill was introduced after President Joe Biden announced plans to require that federal contractors and employees at all U.S. businesses with 100 or more workers be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

In part because of distrust of government and doubts about the safety of the vaccine, interest in COVID-19 vaccinations has waned in a state where President Donald Trump carried every county in the 2020 election.

Christopher Holmes, 44, of Sissonville, said he and his family were determined not to get vaccinated. Then in June, Holmes contracted the virus, spent 80 days in a hospital and lost 110 pounds. He had to learn to walk again and remains in rehabilitation.

When he went into the hospital, his daughter was the only vaccinated one in the family. By the time he got out, everyone had their shots.

“I don’t want anyone to go through what I went through,” Holmes said. “I hope everyone gets the shot because you don’t want to take it home to your family. If you save one life, it’s worth it.”

Last January, demand for the vaccine at Griffith & Feil Drug in Kenova along the Ohio and Kentucky line was so high that Griffith and his daughter, pharmacist Heidi Griffith Romero, had to limit the number of daily customers.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 54 of 77

According to state data, at least 7.4% of West Virginia's population received the first of two doses that month, and the per-capita vaccination rate was higher than that of any other state.

In the spring, reports surfaced of rare but potentially dangerous blood clots from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. After a brief pause, the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration recommended that the single-dose vaccine be allowed to resume.

But "the public's confidence never seemed to recover from that," Romero said.

She now sees just five to 10 people per week coming in for their first doses. The pharmacy also administers shots in nursing homes to two to 10 people per week.

Romero said people are uncomfortable because claims about the shots' safety have not been backed up by years of study.

Griffith said he will get the word out at this weekend's Pumpkin House display, asking the expected thousands of visitors to wear masks and get their initial shots or their boosters.

He called the state's low vaccine rate frustrating and acknowledged the giddiness of the early days may have been premature.

Griffith was led to paraphrase his favorite quote from Mark Twain.

"I've studied the human race," the druggist said, "and I find the results humiliating."

Biden tells Macron US 'clumsy' in Australia submarine deal

By SYLVIE CORBET and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Working to patch things up with an old ally, President Joe Biden told French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday the U.S. had been "clumsy" in its handling of a secret U.S.-British submarine deal with Australia, an arrangement that left France in the lurch and rattled Europe's faith in American loyalty.

Biden and Macron greeted each other with handshakes and shoulder grabs before their first face-to-face meeting since the deal was publicly announced in September, marking the latest American effort to try to smooth hurt French sensibilities. Biden didn't formally apologize to Macron, but conceded the U.S. should not have caught its oldest ally by surprise.

"I think what happened was — to use an English phrase — what we did was clumsy," Biden said, adding the submarine deal "was not done with a lot of grace."

"I was under the impression that France had been informed long before," he added.

The U.S.-led submarine contract supplanted a prior French deal to supply Australia with its own diesel-powered submarines. The U.S. argued that the move, which will arm the Pacific ally with higher-quality nuclear-powered boats, will better enable Australia to contain Chinese encroachment in the region.

Macron told reporters after the meeting: "We are building the trust again. Trust is like love. Declaration is good, but proof is better."

The French leader said he believed Biden was sincere when he said he thought France had been informed about the submarine deal by Britain and Australia.

Seated beside Biden earlier, Macron said of the American president: "We clarified together what we had to clarify" when asked if U.S.-France relations had been repaired. "What really matters now is what we will do together in the coming weeks, the coming months, the coming years."

To that end, Macron's goal for the meeting was securing greater U.S. intelligence and military cooperation supporting French anti-terrorist operations in the Sahel region of Africa.

Macron praised Biden's "very operational, very concrete decisions" in recent weeks that helped the French military fighting Islamic extremists in the Sahel. He said the U.S. had strengthened its support by providing more intelligence and helicopters.

Biden and Macron also discussed new ways to cooperate in the Indo-Pacific, also an effort to soothe French tempers over being left out of the U.S.-U.K.-Australia partnership that accompanied the submarine deal. Other topics on the agenda included China, Afghanistan and Iran, as well as climate change, before next week's U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland.

The French, who lost out on more than \$60 billion from the submarine deal, have argued that the Biden

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 55 of 77

administration at the highest levels misled them about the talks with Australia — and even suggested Biden was adopting the tactics of his predecessor, Donald Trump. France is especially angry over being kept in the dark about a major geopolitical shift, and having its interests ignored in the Indo-Pacific where France has territories with 2 million people and 7,000 troops.

The row challenged Biden's carefully honed image of working to stabilize and strengthen the trans-Atlantic alliance after Trump's presidency, when France for the first time in some 250 years of diplomatic relations pulled its ambassador to the U.S. in protest.

U.S. officials, from Biden on down, have worked for weeks to try to soothe tensions, though not to the extent of having Biden visit France himself to try to reset relations. Instead, he's dispatching Vice President Kamala Harris for a visit in early November.

In a concession by the White House, the Biden-Macron meeting in Rome was organized and hosted by France at Villa Bonaparte, the French Embassy to the Holy See, which Macron's office called "politically important." Meanwhile, first lady Jill Biden was hosting Brigitte Macron for a "bilateral engagement" Friday afternoon.

Biden also praised France as an "extremely valued partner" and a "power in and of itself."

"There is too much that we have done together, suffered together, celebrated together and valued together for anything to ... break this up," Biden said.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the two leaders would "literally cover the waterfront of issues facing the U.S.-France alliance," including counterterrorism in the Middle East, China and trade and economic issues.

"We feel very good about the intensive engagement that we've had with France over the course of the past few weeks," he added.

Following their meeting, Biden and Macron were issuing a joint statement outlining areas of mutual cooperation, including the Indo-Pacific and economic and technological cooperation.

While the U.S. focuses on Asia, Macron was seeking to bolster Europe's independent defense capabilities, with more military equipment and operations abroad.

France is also determined to put "muscle" into Europe's geopolitical strategy toward an increasingly assertive China, France's ambassador to Australia, Jean-Pierre Thebault, told The Associated Press earlier this month.

France wants Western allies to "divide up roles" instead of competing against one another, and for the Americans to be "allies as loyal and as available for their European partners as always," according to the top French official.

Queen Elizabeth II, 95, is advised to rest for 2 weeks

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II has been advised to rest for at least the next two weeks, accepting doctors' recommendations to take on only light duties and not travel, Buckingham Palace said Friday.

The decision comes days after the 95-year-old sovereign underwent medical tests and spent the night at London's King Edward VII's Hospital, her first such stay in eight years. Elizabeth has continued to work since then and will press on with desk-based duties, but will skip the Nov. 13 Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London, an event meant to honor the British and Commonwealth men and women who have fought wars, disasters and pandemics to protect and defend the nation.

"However, it remains the queen's firm intention to be present for the National Service of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday, on 14th November," the palace said.

It is significant that the palace statement highlighted the wish of the monarch to attend Remembrance Sunday ceremonies, as it is a major event on the sovereign's calendar and one to which she has attached great importance.

The queen has long enjoyed robust health, and is said to hate having people make a fuss. But she has reluctantly accepted advice to cut back on her blistering schedule in recent weeks.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 56 of 77

She cancelled a trip to mark 100 years since the creation of Northern Ireland on Oct. 20. That was followed only days later by the announcement that she would not appear at the the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow — a great disappointment to Britain's Conservative government, which was hoping to stress the importance of the two-week meeting to save the Earth from uncontrollable global warming.

She has stayed at Windsor Castle, west of London, holding virtual audiences with ambassadors and poets and otherwise displaying good spirits.

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

Ahead of Rittenhouse trial, race seen as underlying issue

By AARON MORRISON Associated Press

Kyle Rittenhouse, the aspiring police officer who gunned down three people in Kenosha, Wisconsin, during a protest against racism and police brutality, is white. So were those he shot. But for many, his trial next week will be watched closely as the latest referendum on race and the American legal system.

"Make the connection," said Justin Blake, a Black man whose nephew Jacob was a key part of the backstory of the case. "This is clearly Black and white."

Rittenhouse was 17 when he used an AR-style semiautomatic rifle to kill two people and wound a third during the summer of 2020. He had gone to Kenosha, he said, to protect property from protesters who took to the streets in anger days after Jacob Blake was shot in the back by a white Kenosha officer.

Rittenhouse faces the equivalent of murder and attempted murder charges and could get life in prison. He has said he fired in self-defense after being attacked by protesters.

After the shooting, he drew sizable support from opponents of the Black Lives Matter movement and supporters of gun rights. Pro-gun conservatives helped raise \$2 million for his bail and legal defense. After he got out of jail, he was photographed with apparent members of the far-right Proud Boys.

If Rittenhouse gets off, that would send an ominous message to Black America, Justin Blake said.

"If our country shows that you can shoot Caucasians who support us, then this country can never stand up in any international or global hearing and talk about human rights," the uncle said. He said if Rittenhouse goes free, white people will be able to "ride down every African American community and just have fun, like you're going hunting or something."

Rittenhouse's lawyers have said he is not a white supremacist, and his defense fund has said he was not part of a militia group.

Some activists also see a racial double standard in the way the Blake and Rittenhouse cases were handled.

Blake was shot seven times and paralyzed at the door of his SUV as his children sat in the back seat. Police say Rusten Sheskey and two other officers responding to a domestic disturbance had tried to arrest him on an outstanding warrant and, during a scuffle, a pocketknife fell from Blake's pants.

Blake has said he picked the knife up and was prepared to surrender once he put it in the vehicle.

After he was rushed to a hospital, police briefly handcuffed him to his bed. State prosecutors declined to charge the officer, saying the knife justified Sheskey's claim of self-defense. Federal prosecutors also declined to file charges.

Rittenhouse experienced a seemingly different response from law enforcement.

He and others were armed and professed to be there protecting the city's businesses and homes after protesters set fires and vandalized property on two previous nights of unrest in Kenosha, and after weeks of sometimes-violent demonstrations around the U.S. over the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Law enforcement officers saw Rittenhouse and other armed people on the streets that night despite a citywide curfew and passed them bottles of water. One officer was heard over a loudspeaker saying, "We appreciate you guys."

Later that night, Rittenhouse was chased through a used car lot by Joseph Rosenbaum, a participant in the protests, before he fatally shot the man. Rittenhouse was then seen running onto a street with protesters after him.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 57 of 77

A man named Anthony Huber struck Rittenhouse with a skateboard, and the teenager shot and killed him. Seconds later, Gaige Grosskreutz stepped toward Rittenhouse with a pistol, and Rittenhouse shot him in the arm.

Even as people on the street tried to flag Rittenhouse to police officers as the person responsible for the shootings, he was not stopped. With his weapon slung over his shoulder, he put his hands in the air and was waved past a police line.

Hours later, he turned himself in to police in his hometown of Antioch, Illinois.

"What looms above this trial is this whole notion that we have two justice systems, one for Black America and another for white America," said Blake family attorney Ben Crump, the civil rights lawyer who has also represented the families of Trayvon Martin and Ahmaud Arbery, both killed in what prosecutors portrayed as acts of vigilantism.

"I just think that right now in America, there is this notion that certain people have the right to solve every disagreement with a gun," Crump said. "And especially, when we see people protesting for justice for the killing of Black people, that we don't have to respect their rights to the First Amendment."

A week before trial, the judge in Rittenhouse's case ruled that prosecutors and the defense cannot refer to the men killed as "victims," but can call them "rioters" or "looters" if the evidence supports that. The ruling outraged Black activists, who pointed to it as another racial double standard in the judicial system.

Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson, co-executive director of the Highlander Research and Education Center and a leader of the Movement for Black Lives, said Rittenhouse left home with the intention of dispensing "vigilante justice, for the sake of so-called protecting buildings and businesses, at the expense of human life."

"To not call the people that are directly impacted by that 'victims' is nothing but the tenets of white supremacy masked in unjust laws," Henderson said.

Video journalist Carrie Antlfinger in Milwaukee, Wisconsin contributed. Morrison, who reported from New York City, is a member of the AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

Biden: Pope told me that I should 'keep receiving Communion'

By JOSH BOAK, ZEKE MILLER and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Face to face at the Vatican, President Joe Biden held extended and highly personal talks with Pope Francis on Friday and came away saying the pontiff told him he was a "good Catholic" and should keep receiving Communion, although conservatives have called for him to be denied the sacrament because of his support for abortion rights.

The world's two most prominent Roman Catholics ran overtime in their discussions on climate change, poverty and the coronavirus pandemic, a warm conversation that also touched on the loss of president's adult son and included jokes about aging well.

Biden said abortion did not come up in the meeting. "We just talked about the fact he was happy that I was a good Catholic and I should keep receiving Communion," Biden said.

The president's support for abortion rights and same-sex marriage has put him at odds with many U.S. bishops, some of whom have suggested he should be denied Communion. American bishops are due to meet in their annual fall conference in mid-November, and will find themselves debating a possible rebuke of a U.S. president just weeks after their boss spent so much time with Biden that all their subsequent meetings were thrown off by an hour.

Video released by the Vatican showed several warm, relaxed moments between Francis and Biden as they repeatedly shook hands and smiled. Francis often sports a dour look, especially in official photos, but he seemed in good spirits Friday. The private meeting lasted about 75 minutes, according to the Vatican,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 58 of 77

more than double the normal length of an audience with the pontiff,

The pair sat across from each other at a desk in the papal library, accompanied by a translator. They then proceeded to an exchange of gifts and a broader meeting including the first lady and top officials.

"Biden thanked His Holiness for his advocacy for the world's poor and those suffering from hunger, conflict, and persecution," the White House said. "He lauded Pope Francis' leadership in fighting the climate crisis, as well as his advocacy to ensure the pandemic ends for everyone through vaccine sharing and an equitable global economic recovery."

Biden takes pride in his Catholic faith, using it as a moral guidepost to shape his social and economic policies. He wears a rosary and attends Mass weekly.

After leaving the Vatican, Biden said that he had a "wonderful" meeting and that the pope prayed for him and blessed his rosary beads. He said the prayer was about "peace."

A dozen Swiss Guards in their blue and gold striped uniforms and red-plumed halberds stood at attention in the San Damaso courtyard as Biden and his wife, Jill, arrived. They were received by Monsignor Leonardo Sapienza, who runs the papal household, and then greeted one by one the papal ushers, or papal gentlemen, who lined up in the courtyard.

"It's good to be back," Biden said as he shook the hand of one of them. "I'm Jill's husband," he told another before he was ushered into the frescoed Apostolic Palace and taken upstairs to the pope's private library.

According to the Vatican, Biden presented Francis with a woven chasuble, or liturgical vestment, made in 1930 by the famed papal tailor Gammarelli and used by the pope's Jesuit order in the U.S., where it was held in the archives of Holy Trinity Church, Biden's regular parish in Washington. The White House said it would make a donation to charity in the pope's name.

Biden also slipped what's known as a challenge coin into the pope's palm during a handshake, and hailed Francis as "the most significant warrior for peace I've ever met."

The personalized coin depicts Biden's home state of Delaware and a reference to his late son Beau's military unit, the 261st Theater Tactical Signal Brigade. Biden told Francis that Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015, would have wanted him to present the coin to the pope.

"The tradition is, and I'm only kidding about this, but next time I see you, if you don't have it, you have to buy the drinks," Biden said, referring to the coin. He added: "I'm the only Irishman you've ever met who's never had a drink."

Francis laughed and responded: "The Irish brought whiskey."

Biden, 78, also relayed the story of American baseball player Satchel Paige, a Black pitcher who played late into his fifties, in a parable about aging. "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?" Biden quoted Paige as saying. "You're 65, I'm 60," Biden added, as Francis, 84, pointed to his head and laughed.

Francis presented Biden with a ceramic tile depicting the iconography of the pilgrim, as well as a collection of the pope's main teaching documents, the Vatican said. In the Vatican video, he could be heard asking Jill Biden to "pray for me."

The warm encounter stood in stark contrast to Donald Trump's 2017 meeting with Francis, with whom the former president had a prickly relationship. Photos from that 30-minute meeting showed a stone-faced Francis standing beside a grinning Trump. Biden's meeting also was longer than the 52 minutes Barack Obama spent with Francis in 2014.

Biden is visiting Rome and then Glasgow for back-to-back summits, first a gathering for leaders of the Group of 20 leading and developing nations and then a global climate conference.

Biden and Francis have previously met three times, but Friday's encounter was their first since Biden became president.

Biden also met separately Friday with G-20 summit hosts Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi. He ended the day with French President Emmanuel Macron, trying anew to smooth relations after the U.S. and U.K. decided to provide nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, scotching a lucrative French contract in the process.

Biden's meeting with Pope Francis generated some controversy in advance as the Vatican on Thursday

abruptly canceled plans to broadcast the meeting with Biden live and denied independent press access. Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said the revised television plan reflected the virus protocol for all heads of state audiences, though he didn't say why more robust live TV coverage had been initially scheduled and then canceled.

The Vatican instead provided edited footage of the encounter to accredited media.

The Vatican spokesman declined to comment on Biden's remarks about Communion, noting that the Vatican doesn't comment on the pope's private conversations beyond what is written in the official communique, which made no mention of the issue.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement after the Vatican meeting that didn't address Biden's remark about Communion. Instead, the statement suggested that the president would not be singled out in any document emerging from the bishops' meeting next month.

The document "is intended to speak to the beauty of meeting Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and is addressed to all Catholics," the statement said.

There was no immediate response to queries sent by The Associated Press to seven bishops engaged in the debate.

Francis has stressed that he will not reject political leaders who support abortion rights, though Catholic policy allows individual bishops to choose whether to prevent people from taking Communion.

AP Religion Writer David Crary in New York contributed to this report.

Russia hits another virus death record as infections soar

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia on Friday recorded another daily record of coronavirus deaths as authorities hoped to stem the contagion by keeping most people off work.

The government's coronavirus task force reported 1,163 deaths in 24 hours, the largest daily number since the pandemic began. That brought Russia's official total to 236,220 deaths, by far the highest in Europe.

The task force counts only deaths directly caused by the virus. The state statistics service Rosstat, which counts COVID-19 deaths by wider criteria, released figures Friday indicating a much higher toll.

Rosstat counted 44,265 deaths in September caused directly by the virus, or in which it was a contributing cause or of patients believed to have been infected. That would bring Russia's pandemic-long death toll to about 461,000 as of the end of September, nearly twice the task force's count.

Either death figure places Russia among the worst-hit nations in the world during the pandemic.

To contain the spread of infection, Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered a nonworking period from Oct. 30 to Nov. 7, when most state agencies and private businesses are to suspend operations. He encouraged Russia's worst-hit regions to start sooner, and some ordered most residents off work earlier this week.

Moscow introduced the measure beginning Thursday, shutting down kindergartens, schools, gyms, entertainment venues and most stores, and restricting restaurants to takeout or delivery. Food stores, pharmacies and companies operating key infrastructure remained open.

Access to museums, theaters, concert halls and other venues in Russia is limited to people holding digital codes on their phones to prove they have been vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19, a practice that will remain after Nov. 7. Unvaccinated people older than 60 have been ordered to stay home.

The number of new daily cases in Russia rose by 39,849 on Friday, just below the all-time record reported the previous day. The government hopes that by keeping most people out of offices and public transportation, the nonworking period will help curb the spread of the virus, but many Russians rushed to use the time off for a seaside Black Sea vacation or to take a trip to Egypt or Turkey.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova, the head of the government coronavirus task force, voiced concern about a spike in beach vacations.

"We are particularly worried about our citizens booking tourist trips to other regions," she said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 60 of 77

Authorities have blamed soaring infections and deaths on Russia's lagging pace of vaccinations. About 51 million Russians — just over a third of the country's nearly 146 million people — were fully vaccinated as of Friday.

Russia was the first country in the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine in August 2020 and proudly named the shot Sputnik V to showcase the country's scientific edge. But the vaccination campaign has stalled amid widespread public skepticism blamed on conflicting signals from authorities.

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

As COVID cases fall, Halloween brings more fun and less fear

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and TERRY TANG Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Witches and warlocks, ghosts and ghouls can breathe a little easier this year: Coronavirus cases in the U.S. are generally on the decline, and trick-or-treaters can feel safer collecting candy.

And while a new poll indicates Halloween participation is rebounding but still short of pre-pandemic levels, an industry trade group says people who are celebrating are driving record-level spooky spending this year.

Sales of candy, costumes and décor are up at least 25% over last year and are predicted to set a new high, between \$10 to \$11 billion, said Aneisha McMillan, spokeswoman for the trade group Halloween and Costume Association.

"People are really getting the Halloween spirit," she said.

Though the pandemic is still a worry, outdoor activities like trick-or-treating have gotten the thumbs up from Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious diseases expert, and Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Experts advise people to keep sanitizer and masks handy and continue to steer clear of crowded, poorly ventilated spaces, however.

Angela Montierth of Sandy, Utah, said watching her 4-year-old daughter, Justina, celebrate Halloween this year has been "magical." The family didn't do much for the holiday in 2020 besides putting out candy for trick-or-treaters, so this fall they've been trying to make up for it.

"We did a pumpkin patch and we had a little Halloween get-together at our house with other little kids," Montierth said at a trick-or-treat event at Discovery Gateway Children's Museum in nearby Salt Lake City. "At this age they need to be playing with other kids, and they need the socialization aspect."

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 35% of Americans plan to hand out candy this Halloween, down from 42% in pre-pandemic 2019 — but still higher than the 25% mark seen in a separate NORC survey in 2020.

Meanwhile 16% said they intend to take their kids trick-or-treating, compared with 25% in 2019 and 12% last year.

Among those skipping the door-knocking again this year is Rolando Cadillo of Phoenix, whose family includes a 15-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son. Last year they opted for a pandemic-safe Halloween at home and skipped giving out candy. This year they are stocking the sweet stuff but keeping the face masks on.

Cadillo's son will dress up as Spider-Man but won't be trick-or-treating, and he's on the fence about whether to let his daughter go with her friends.

"We plan to stay home, but we're going to give candies to the kids that knock on the door," Cadillo said as the family left a Halloween Spirit costume store. "I think it's better than last year. More people got vaccinated."

Nearly 191 million people in the United States are fully inoculated against COVID-19, about 58% of the population. The country is on the verge of expanding its vaccination effort to children aged 5 to 11, but that won't come until after Halloween pending final approval from the CDC.

Last year Halloween arrived as cases rose to about 81,000 a day around the country in the start of what ended up being a deadly winter surge. Many parades, parties and haunted houses were canceled due to bans on large gatherings and concerns that celebrations would spread the coronavirus. Others went ahead but with pandemic wrinkles and, at times, a nod to the nation's penchant for turning to fear as

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 61 of 77

entertainment in times of turmoil.

Today infections are on a downward swing in the U.S., currently averaging about 73,000 new cases per day compared with 173,000 in mid-September.

Concerns still remain, especially where rural hospitals remain strained. Also in the Phoenix area, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community has banned Halloween activities after a 140% jump in cases.

But in many places, people are ready for a holiday weekend full of festivities.

In Denver, families visited Union Station for a trick-or-treat parade, a face-painting station, a DJ playing Halloween tunes and a children's train ride. A dad dressed as a chef carrying a tiny baby dressed as an ice cream sundae led his cupcake children through the halls, collecting candy as "Monster Mash" played in the background.

Sara Castiglione and her 5-year-old daughter, Emma, were back in the swing of Halloween this year. After hitting the parade on Thursday, Castiglione said their weekend plans include a pumpkin patch and more trick-or-treating.

Last year Emma "was very disappointed and sad that she wasn't able to do anything because of coronavirus," Castiglione said. "She even said today, 'I'm so glad we can go outside and I don't have to wear a mask and we get to do something. I don't even care (about) dressing up, I just wanna do something!'"

Among the costume set, classics remain hot-sellers this year with Google search trends indicating witches, rabbits and dinosaurs are in the top spots. More contemporary get-ups inspired by the likes of the South Korean Netflix smash "Squid Game" and "WandaVision," the hit Marvel series, are also popular, McMillan said. There are even a few topical offerings, like a couples costume of a vaccine and syringe, she said.

But the surge of enthusiasm means there have also been some costume shortages attributed to retailers' uncertainty in placing orders combined with the supply-chain issues bedeviling many parts of the economy.

"A lot of people are getting really creative because they can't find the singular costumes they wanted. They're doing group costumes, or couples costumes, so they can kind of mix and match and pull things together," McMillan said.

Some trends have shifted since last year, with fewer people choosing first-responder and superhero costumes and more leaning toward pop culture and nostalgia.

"This is the millennials' absolute favorite holiday, and they are notoriously nostalgic," McMillan said. "We've all been cooped up for so long. ... I think it's gonna be the biggest celebration ever."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,083 adults was conducted Oct. 21-25 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Whitehurst reported from Salt Lake City. Associated Press writers Sophia Eppolito in Salt Lake City and Patty Nieberg in Denver contributed to this report. Eppolito and Nieberg are corps members of 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.

UK's Johnson gives G-20 stark warning on climate change

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

ROME (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson arrived in Italy for a Group of 20 meeting on Friday with a stark warning: modern civilization could soon lie in ruins like ancient Rome if world leaders don't act to curb climate change.

Johnson has one big goal at the G-20 gathering: to persuade the leaders of the world's biggest economies to put their money where their mouth is at the U.N. climate summit in Scotland that starts Sunday.

Johnson will deploy his ebullience and his — admittedly divisive — charm to try to extract cash and carbon-cutting commitments from the G-20, which contains some of the world's biggest carbon emitters, including China, the United States, India and Russia.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 62 of 77

Johnson told reporters aboard his plane to Rome that the Eternal City's ruins "are a fantastic reminder, a memento mori to us today ... that humanity, civilization, society can go backwards as well as forwards and when things start to go wrong they can go wrong with extraordinary speed."

Still, he has expressed doubts that the COP26 climate summit will achieve its aim of extracting enough carbon-cutting commitments to keep alive the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

Johnson will urge G-20 leaders to act more quickly, saying the world's rich countries, which grew wealthy from using the fossil fuels that warm up the Earth, must bear the brunt of fighting climate change.

He said "unless we get this right in tackling climate change, we could see our world our civilization go backwards and consign future generations to a life far less agreeable than our own," with mass migrations, water shortages and conflicts because of climate change.

Accounting for 75% of the world's trade and 60% of its population, the G-20 has often been accused of being too big and diffuse to take strong collective action. And Johnson's Brexit-tinged global image means his arm-twisting power may be limited.

The G-20 is meeting as the European Union and ex-member Britain wrangle over trade rules, and amid a simmering U.K.-France spat over fishing rights in the English Channel. France is also incensed over a U.S.-U.K.-Australia nuclear submarine deal that saw Australia cancel a multibillion-dollar contract to buy French subs.

Those disputes are clouding Johnson's hopes of a "G-20 bounce" to build momentum for the 12-day COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. He's hoping to leave Rome bearing a sheaf of global carbon-cutting pledges, a plan to curb coal use and a long-promised, never-delivered \$100 billion a year in aid to help developing countries tackle the impacts of climate change.

Major G-20 polluters, including Russia and Australia, have failed to improve on the carbon-cutting pledges made after the Paris conference. Neither Chinese President Xi Jinping nor Russian President Vladimir Putin, leaders of two of the biggest carbon emitters, plan to attend the G-20 or COP26 in person.

China released an updated version of its climate targets this week, promising to hit net-zero carbon emissions by 2060 and to have its emissions peak by 2030.

Johnson said he "pushed" Xi to move the peak to 2025 when the two men spoke by phone on Friday.

"I wouldn't say he committed on that," Johnson admitted.

The world is currently far adrift of the goal set in Paris of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, considered a threshold between manageable and disastrous climate change. Keeping "1.5 alive" is the focus of the Glasgow meeting. To do it, Britain has honed in on a mantra of "coal, cars, cash and trees" — eliminating fossil fuels, switching to clean vehicles, spending money and stopping deforestation.

Johnson faces some big obstacles to winning over the world. Britain's leader is mistrusted by many European leaders for his role in Britain's 2016 decision to leave the EU and the years of rancorous divorce negotiations that have followed. U.S. President Joe Biden has also been wary, seeing echoes in Johnson's crowd-pleasing antics of Donald Trump's populism.

Johnson insists that Brexit does not mean a U.K. retreat from the world, and has championed his vision of an outward-looking "Global Britain" during the country's presidency of the Group of Seven wealthy industrialized nations this year.

As well as casting himself as a climate champion, he's urging G-20 nations to commit to vaccinating the world against the coronavirus by the end of 2022.

Johnson makes a more credible green messenger than some rich nations' leaders. The U.K. has promised to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and has published a detailed plan for getting there. Unlike Australia, it is on course to eliminate coal from its energy mix within a few years. And unlike the United States, there's limited political opposition in the U.K. to tougher climate rules.

But the U.K.'s annual budget, announced Wednesday, made scant mention of climate change while slashing passenger taxes on domestic flights and freezing taxes on automobile fuel.

Pessimists might wonder — if G-20 can't agree how to fight climate change, what hope is there for the

almost 200 nations who will gather at COP26 in Glasgow?

Yet Jared Finnegan, a public policy expert at University College London, sees progress in the fact that a Conservative British government wants to be seen as a green leader, and in the way the global conversation on climate has shifted.

"Even the fact that we're talking about net zero by 2050 -- that is something that just wasn't on the table even five years ago," he said.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

US wages jump by the most in records dating back 20 years

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wages jumped in the three months ending in September by the most on records dating back 20 years, a stark illustration of the growing ability of workers to demand higher pay from companies that are desperate to fill a near-record number of available jobs.

Pay increased 1.5% in the third quarter, the Labor Department said Friday. That's up sharply from 0.9% in the previous quarter. The value of benefits rose 0.9% in the July-September quarter, more than double the preceding three months.

Workers have gained the upper hand in the job market for the first time in at least two decades, and they are commanding higher pay, more benefits, and other perks like flexible work hours. With more jobs available than there are unemployed people, government data shows, businesses have been forced to work harder to attract staff.

Higher inflation is eating away at some of the wage increases, but in recent months overall pay has kept up with rising prices. The 1.5% increase in wages and salaries in the third quarter is ahead of the 1.2% increase in inflation during that period, economists said.

However, compared with a year ago, it's a closer call. In the year ending in September, wages and salaries soared 4.2%, also a record gain. But the government also reported Friday that prices increased 4.4% in September from year earlier. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, inflation was 3.6% in the past year.

Jason Furman, a former top economic adviser to President Barack Obama, said Friday that inflation-adjusted wages still trail their pre-pandemic level, given the big price jumps that occurred over the spring and summer for new and used cars, furniture, and airline tickets.

Whether inflation fades in the coming months will determine how much benefit workers get from higher pay.

Many economists expect inflation to slow a bit, while wages are likely to keep rising.

Pay is rising much faster in the recovery from the pandemic recession than in the recovery from the Great Recession of 2008-2009, when wage growth kept slowing until a year after that downturn ended. That's because of the different nature of the two recessions and the different policy responses.

There has been much more government stimulus during and after the pandemic recession compared with the previous one, including the \$2 trillion financial support package signed by former President Donald Trump in March 2020 and the \$1.9 trillion in aid approved by President Joe Biden this March. Both packages provided stimulus checks and enhanced unemployment benefits that fueled greater spending.

Lower-paid workers have seen the biggest gains, with pay rising for employees at restaurants, bars and hotels by 8.1% in the third quarter from a year earlier. For retail workers it's jumped 5.9%.

The healthy increase for disadvantaged workers "is the result of specific policy choices to give workers a better bargaining hand and to ensure the economy recovered faster," said Mike Konczal, a director at the left-leaning Roosevelt Institute. "The fact that it's happening is pretty unique."

The stimulus checks and an extra \$300 a week in jobless benefits, which ended in early September, gave those out of work more leverage to demand higher pay, Konczal said. In addition, the Fed's low-interest rate policies helped spur more spending, raising the demand for workers.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 64 of 77

In August, there were 10.4 million jobs available, down from the 11 million in July, which was the most in two decades.

Millions of Americans are responding to rising wages by quitting their jobs for better-paying positions. In August, nearly 3% of American workers quit their jobs, a record high. A higher number of quits also means companies have to raise pay to keep their employees.

Workers who switch jobs are seeing some of the sharpest income gains in decades. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, in September job-switchers saw their pay jump 5.4% compared with a year earlier. That's up from just 3.4% in May and the biggest increase in nearly 20 years. For those who stayed in their jobs, pay rose 3.5%.

Esther Cano, 26, is one of those who found a new job that paid more in the July-September quarter. A recent college graduate who isn't yet sure of her long-term career path, she left a job as a dispatcher at an HVAC firm in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for a position at the job placement agency Robert Half. She started in July and got a raise of about 10%.

"What I was requesting was lower than what they were willing to pay," Cano said. "It was a no-brainer on that end, plus the environment, the room for growth, the opportunity."

Cano has already gotten a promotion to a team leader position, where she helps place temporary employees who work in finance and accounting.

Most economists expect solid wage gains to continue for the coming months. Data from the Indeed job listings website shows that employers are still posting huge numbers of available jobs.

Higher pay can fuel inflation, as companies raise prices to cover their increased costs. But that's not the only way businesses can respond. Lydia Boussour, an economist at Oxford Economics, notes that corporate profits in the April-June quarter were at their highest level in nearly a decade. That suggests many companies can pay higher salaries without having to lift prices.

Dad bod FTW, amirite? Dictionary adds hundreds of new words

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Dad bod, amirite, TBH and FTW are now dictionary-appropriate.

Merriam-Webster has added 455 new words to its venerable dictionary, including a number of abbreviations and slang terms that have become ubiquitous on social media.

"Just as the language never stops evolving, the dictionary never stops expanding," the nearly 200-year-old Springfield, Massachusetts-based company said on its website. "New terms and new uses for existing terms are the constant in a living language."

The dictionary company said the quick and informal nature of messaging, texting, and tweeting, which has only increased during the pandemic, has "contributed to a vocabulary newly rich in efficient and abbreviated expression."

Among them: "TBH," an abbreviation for "to be honest" and "FTW," an abbreviation for "for the win."

Merriam-Webster explains that FTW is used "especially to express approval or support. In social media, FTW is often used to acknowledge a clever or funny response to a question or meme."

And it says "amirite" is a quick way to write "am I right," as in, "English spelling is consistently inconsistent, amirite?"

The coronavirus pandemic also looms large in the collection of new entrants as "super-spreader," "long COVID" and "vaccine passport" made the list.

Partisan politics contributed more slang to the lexicon, such as "whataboutism," which Merriam-Webster defines as "the act or practice of responding to an accusation of wrongdoing by claiming that an offense committed by another is similar or worse." For Britons, the dictionary notes that "whataboutery" is more commonly used.

The dreaded "vote-a-ramas" that have become a fixture in the U.S. Congress is explained this way: "an unusually large number of debates and votes that happen in one day on a single piece of legislation to which an unlimited number of amendments can be introduced, debated, and voted on."

And still other new terms come from the culinary world, such as "fluffernutter," the homey sandwich of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 65 of 77

peanut butter, marshmallow crème and white bread.

Horchata, the cold sweetened beverage made from ground rice or almonds and usually flavored with cinnamon or vanilla, also made the cut, as did chicharron, the popular fried pork belly or pig skin snack.

As for "dad bod"? The dictionary defines that as a "physique regarded as typical of an average father; especially: one that is slightly overweight and not extremely muscular."

GOP Trump critic Rep. Adam Kinzinger won't seek reelection

By LISA MASCARO and SARA BURNETT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, a critic of Donald Trump's who is on the panel investigating the deadly Jan. 6 Capitol attack by the former president's supporters, announced Friday that he will not seek reelection next year.

The military veteran, who has represented his northern Illinois congressional district since 2013, was one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump on a charge of inciting the insurrection at the Capitol. Kinzinger joins GOP Rep. Anthony Gonzalez of Ohio as one of the 10 who have decided to bow out of Congress.

The Illinois Republican announced his decision in a video, saying the "time is now" to move on. "My disappointment in the leaders that don't lead is huge," he said.

Kinzinger, 43, hinted at other political plans, saying: "I cannot focus on both a reelection to Congress and a broader fight nationwide. I want to make it clear — this isn't the end of my political future, but the beginning." He also noted that he got married recently and that he and his wife are expecting a baby boy in January.

The announcement came hours after Democrats in Illinois approved new congressional district maps that put Kinzinger in the same district as GOP Rep. Darin LaHood, a strong supporter of Trump's who said Friday he plans to seek reelection. The former president's influence remains strong on GOP voters, and Kinzinger's criticisms of Trump would have been difficult to overcome in a primary for a district drawn to be heavily Republican.

Trump crowed in response: "2 down, 8 to go!"

Kinzinger has been increasingly critical of his own party since Jan. 6, when a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol in a bid to stop Joe Biden from becoming president. Kinzinger, at the invitation of Democrats, defied his leadership to join Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming as a member of the House committee investigating the attack.

He said that the country is "poisoned" and that "we must unplug from the mistruths we've been fed."

Republicans are well positioned to pick up the House majority in next year's midterm elections, but the departure of Kinzinger and other more traditional conservatives casts a shadow over the party now led by Trump.

Kinzinger formed a political organization, Country First, to support candidates who oppose Trump and see him as a threat to democracy. He said in the video released Friday that "I know I'm not alone — there are many Americans desperately searching for a better way."

"They want solutions, not more problems. They want action, not extremism. They want light, not darkness. And the sooner we do it, the better it will be for the land that we love," he said. "Now is the time to put country first."

Former Illinois Republican Party Chair Pat Brady, a Trump critic, called Kinzinger's departure from Congress a "huge loss" for the party and voters in Illinois. He said Kinzinger is "the kind of Republican we need more of."

He also decried a redistricting process that is creating more partisan districts across the country, making primary elections the main battleground for a seat in Congress and resulting in the politicians sent to Washington holding more extreme positions and having less incentive to work with the opposing party.

Among the other moderate members of Congress who could be squeezed out of a seat during redistricting ahead of the 2022 elections include Democratic Rep. Lucy McBath of Georgia, Republican Rep.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 66 of 77

John Katko of New York, Democratic Rep. Stephanie Murphy of Florida, Republican Rep. David Valadao of California and Democratic Rep. Sharice Davids of Kansas.

"There's just not enough people in the middle anymore," Brady said. "It's not working, and it's contributing to the rancor we need to stop."

Associated Press writer Nicholas Riccardi in Denver contributed to this report.

Protesters slam London banks on climate, fossil fuel support

By KHADIJA KOTHIA and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Protesters took to the streets Friday in London's historic financial district to lobby against the use of fossil fuels ahead of the start of the U.N. climate summit in the Scottish city of Glasgow.

The protests in London, which were joined by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg as well as many other young campaigners from around the world, are part of a global day of action before leaders head to Glasgow for the U.N. Climate Change Conference, known as COP26. Many environmentalists are calling the Oct. 31-Nov. 12 gathering the world's last best chance to turn the tide in the battle against climate change.

The protesters included Friday for Future activists from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, who called out the banks for financing activities such as deforestation, mining and polluting industries, which they blame for the destruction of their homes and their futures.

"As much as we are passionate to be here, we shouldn't have to be here," said Brianna Fruean from Samoa. "Our pain, our suffering, our tears and our sorrows shouldn't be what it takes to take action. We already know what we need to do: we need to phase out of the fossil fuel era, we need to divest from these industries that are causing this harm and despair."

The mood music ahead of the climate talks appears fairly downbeat, with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the summit's host, saying it's "touch and go" whether there will be a positive outcome.

On Friday, U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned at the Group of 20 summit of leading industrial and developing nations that "there is a serious risk that Glasgow will not deliver." He said that despite updated climate targets by many countries, the world is "still careening towards climate catastrophe."

The protest in London began at the Climate Justice Memorial outside the insurance marketplace of Lloyd's of London, where red flowers spelling out "Rise Remember Resist" were laid.

The focus later centered on the headquarters of international bank Standard Chartered, where the few dozen protesters, including Thunberg, chanted "Keep it, Keep it, Keep it in the ground!" and "Ensure our future, not pollution!" A vigil outside the Bank of England will round out the day's protests.

"We have companies like Standard Chartered who are funding our death," said Collette Levy-Brown, a climate activist from Botswana. "People are slowly dying. In Africa, we are seeing the climate crisis already."

Across the world, demonstrators have been taking to the streets to urge action now, including in coal-reliant Poland, where city sirens sounded at noon in Warsaw and other major cities. Poland's conservative government has been slow to embrace new climate goals, arguing that the country needs more time to phase out its heavy dependence on coal.

The summit in Glasgow is taking place a year late because of the coronavirus pandemic. Six years ago in Paris, nearly 200 countries agreed to individual plans to fight global warming. Under the Paris pact, nations must revisit their previous pledges to curb carbon pollution every five years and then announce plans to cut even more and do it faster.

The headline goal set in Paris was to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since preindustrial times, yet the world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since then.

The hope is that world leaders will cajole each other in Glasgow into doing more, while ensuring that poorer nations struggling to tackle climate change get the financial support they need to adapt.

The U.N.'s Guterres said, however, there are "serious questions" about some of those emissions pledges and noted that collectively they won't be enough to keep the global temperature rise below 2 degrees

Celsius.

David Keyton in London, Monika Scislowska in Warsaw and Karl Ritter in Rome contributed to this story.

Read more of AP's climate coverage at <http://www.apnews.com/Climate>

G20 leaders to confront energy prices, other economic woes

By DAVID McHUGH and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Leaders of the Group of 20 countries gathering for their first in-person summit since the pandemic took hold will confront a global recovery hampered by a series of stumbling blocks: an energy crunch spurring higher fuel and utility prices, new COVID-19 outbreaks, and logjams in the supply chains that keep the economy humming and goods headed to consumers.

The summit will allow leaders representing 80% of the global economy to talk — and apply peer pressure — on all those issues. Analysts question how much progress they can make to ease the burden right away on people facing rising prices on everything from food and furniture to higher heating bills heading into winter.

Health and finance officials sat down in Rome on Friday before presidents and prime ministers gather for the G-20 on Saturday and Sunday, but the leaders of major economic players China and Russia won't be there in person. That may not bode well for cooperation, especially on energy issues as climate change takes center stage just before the U.N. Climate Change Conference begins Sunday in Glasgow, Scotland.

Here's a look at some of the economic issues facing G-20 leaders:

THE PANDEMIC RECOVERY

The International Monetary Fund says the top priority for the economic recovery is simple: speed up the vaccination of the world population. Yet big headlines on vaccine cooperation may not be forthcoming at the Rome summit.

Health and finance officials there warned of a two-track recovery, with vaccine and spending gaps slowing poorer countries from bouncing back.

Efforts to speed vaccinations were short \$20 billion (17 billion euros) needed to pursue a goal of 40% of the world vaccinated by year's end and 70% by the middle of next year, said Kristalina Georgieva, head of the International Monetary Fund.

The increasing divergence between developing and developed countries would be "a major strategic risk for the rest of the world," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said.

The G-20 countries have supported vaccine-sharing through the U.N.-backed COVAX program, which has failed to alleviate dire shortages in poor countries. Donated doses are coming in at a fraction of what is needed, and developed countries are focused on booster shots for their own populations.

For the developed world, rising consumer prices and government stimulus to help economies bounce back may be a topic at the G-20. But central banks, not presidents and prime ministers, tend to deal with inflation, and stimulus spending is decided at the national level.

GLOBAL TAXES

One major economic deal is already done: The G-20 will likely be a celebration of an agreement on a global minimum corporate tax, aimed at preventing multinational companies from stashing profits in countries where they pay little or no taxes.

All G-20 governments signed on to the deal negotiated among more than 130 countries, and it now faces an ambitious timeline to get approved and enacted through 2023.

U.S. President Joe Biden has tied his domestic agenda to it — creating a global minimum tax can allow the United States to charge higher taxes without the risk of companies shifting their profits to tax havens. U.S. adoption is key because so many multinational companies are headquartered there.

The agreement also helps remove trade tensions between the U.S. and Europe. It allows nations including France, Italy and Spain to back off digital services taxes that targeted U.S. tech companies Google,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 68 of 77

Facebook and Amazon.

Biden goes to the G-20 with his tax and economic agenda still subject to congressional negotiations. That means he will be unable to show that the U.S. is leading on global corporate taxes, though his national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said G-20 leaders understand the nature of congressional talks.

"They'll say, 'Is President Biden on track to deliver on what he said he's going to deliver?' And we believe one way or the other, he will be on track to do that," Sullivan said.

HIGH ENERGY PRICES

The summit offers an opportunity for dialogue on high oil and gas prices because it includes delegations from major energy producers Saudi Arabia and Russia, major consumers in Europe and China, and the U.S., which is both.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin plan to participate remotely.

"Perhaps the most important thing the G-20 could do is to tell those among them that are major energy suppliers that they should think about their future," said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg Bank.

If energy prices are too high in the developed world, it will only speed up the move away from fossil fuels, "which is ultimately, in the long run, bad for the suppliers," he said.

The White House says Biden intends to engage with other key leaders about energy prices, with oil recently hitting a seven-year high in the U.S. at over \$84 per barrel and the international Brent crude benchmark reaching a three-year peak at over \$86.

"We are definitely in an energy crisis, there is no other way to put it," said Claudio Galimberti, senior vice president of analysis at Rystad Energy and an expert in oil market demand.

But he said it's unlikely the G-20 "can take any decision that has immediate impact."

So far, Saudi-led OPEC and allies including Russia, dubbed OPEC+, have ignored Biden's pleas to increase production faster than its pace of 400,000 barrels per day each month into next year.

In one bright spot, Russian President Vladimir Putin told state-controlled company Gazprom to pump more gas into storage facilities in Europe, where prices have quintupled this year and fears have spread about winter shortages.

But producing nations "are in a powerful position," Galimberti said. "There is no one who can put pressure on OPEC+."

SUPPLY CHAINS

Biden will press for countries to share more information about troubles with supply chains that have slowed growth in the developed world. Port and factory closures, shortages of shipping containers and rising demand have contributed to backlogs at ports and delays for deliveries of everything from bicycles to computer chips used in smartphones and cars.

Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, said the president would push for more transparency about identifying logjams with other governments: "How do we know, at every level, where there may be bottlenecks or breaks in the supply chain so that we can quickly respond to them?"

Trade expert Chad P. Bown, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, agreed that sharing information can be helpful but said "there's very little anyone can do" now about the backups over a lack of shipping containers.

Longer term, leaders can discuss efforts to diversify supply of key goods such as masks, other medical protective equipment and semiconductors.

"There is a call to diversify some production of semiconductors geographically" away from Asia, Bown said.

The U.S. and the European Union are talking about finding ways to incentivize chip production at home without starting a subsidy war — for instance, by agreeing on which sectors of the semiconductor industry each side would seek to attract.

Boak reported from Washington.

3 years after Bulger's killing: No charges, still questions

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — He was one of the most infamous criminals ever to be killed behind bars. And investigators narrowed in on suspects immediately after his shocking slaying in a West Virginia prison.

Yet three years later, no one has been charged in the beating death of murderous Boston crime boss James "Whitey" Bulger. Questions such as why the well-known FBI informant was put in the troubled lockup's general population alongside other New England gangsters — instead of more protective housing — remain unanswered.

Federal officials will say only that his death remains under investigation. Meanwhile, the lack of answers has only fueled rumors and spurred claims by Bulger's family that the frail 89-year-old was "deliberately sent to his death" at the penitentiary nicknamed "Misery Mountain."

"This was really a dereliction of duty," said Joe Rojas, a union representative for the correctional staff at the Florida prison where Bulger was held before being transferred to USP Hazelton in Bruceston Mills, West Virginia. "There's no way he should have been put in that institution."

Some of the families of Bulger's victims, however, feel differently.

Steven Davis said holding someone accountable in the killing of the man accused of strangling to death his 26-year-old sister, Debra Davis, in 1981 doesn't change anything for him and other families.

"He had what was coming to him and it didn't come soon enough," the 64-year-old Boston-area resident said. "He's where he should have been a long time ago — in the dirt."

Bulger was found dead on Oct. 30, 2018, hours after arriving at Hazelton from the Coleman prison in Florida, where he was serving a life sentence for participating in 11 killings. The ruthless gangster who spent 16 years on the lam before being captured in 2011 was assaulted and died of blunt force injuries to the head, according to his death certificate.

Federal officials have never officially publicly identified any suspects and have said only that they are investigating his death as a homicide.

But shortly after the killing, a former federal investigator and a law enforcement official who insisted on anonymity because of the ongoing probe identified two Massachusetts organized crime figures as suspects: Fotios "Freddy" Geas and Paul J. DeCologero.

Geas, a Mafia hitman serving life behind bars for his role in the killing of a Genovese crime family boss and other violent crimes, has been in a restricted unit at the West Virginia prison since Bulger's killing even though no charges have been filed, said his lawyer, Daniel Kelly.

Kelly says Geas hasn't been provided regular reviews to see if he can be released from the unit but has petitioned to be returned to the general prison population, where he'd enjoy more freedoms, including the ability to call his family more often.

"He's remaining positive and upbeat, but it's a punitive measure," Kelly said. "It's a prison within a prison."

DeCologero, meanwhile, was moved earlier this year to another high-security penitentiary in Virginia. A member of a Massachusetts gang led by his uncle, DeCologero was convicted in 2006 of racketeering and witness tampering for a number of crimes and is scheduled to be released in 2026.

Brian Kelly, one of the federal prosecutors in Bulger's 2013 murder trial in Boston, said the delays may indicate prison officials don't have any witnesses or video evidence to support charges.

"In a prison environment they are going to have a tough time finding any witnesses to testify as to who did it," said Kelly, now a defense attorney.

A spokesperson for the federal prosecutors' office in West Virginia that's investigating Bulger's killing along with the FBI confirmed this month that the investigation remains open. The spokesperson, Stacy Bishop, refused to answer further questions, saying doing so could jeopardize the probe.

Bulger's transfer to Hazelton — where workers had already been sounding the alarm about violence and understaffing — and placement within the general population despite his notoriety was widely criticized by observers after his killing.

A federal law enforcement official told The Associated Press in 2018 that Bulger had been transferred

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 70 of 77

to Hazelton because of disciplinary issues. Months before he was moved, Bulger threatened an assistant supervisor at Coleman, telling her "your day of reckoning is coming," and received 30 days in disciplinary detention.

Some answers may come in a federal lawsuit filed in West Virginia by Bulger's family. A trial has been set for February in the case, where prison system officials are accused of failing to protect Bulger from other inmates.

The lawsuit — filed on the two-year anniversary of his killing against the former director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the former Hazelton warden and others — says prison system officials were well aware that Bulger had been labeled a "snitch" and that his life was at heightened risk behind bars. Bulger strongly denied ever being an informant.

"USP Hazelton by all accounts was not an appropriate placement of James Bulger and was, in fact, recognized as so inappropriate, the appearance is that he was deliberately sent to his death" by the defendants, the lawsuit says.

The family is seeking damages for Bulger's physical and emotional pain and suffering, as well as for wrongful death. Lawyers representing the family declined to comment and calls to William Bulger, a former Massachusetts Senate president and president of the University of Massachusetts who administers his late brother's estate, went unreturned this week.

Justice Department lawyers urged the judge in court documents filed this month to dismiss the claim, saying Bulger's family "cannot allege that BOP skipped some mandatory, procedural directive" in transferring him to Hazelton or putting him in the general population.

Attorneys for the individual defendants said in another legal filing that the lawsuit "makes no mention of Bulger objecting to his transfer" or "ever requesting protective custody or expressing concern for his safety" upon arriving at Hazelton.

Justice Department lawyers pointed to a declaration from an executive assistant at Hazelton that says staff interviewed Bulger the night of his arrival and reviewed other records to determine if there were non-medical reasons for keeping Bulger out of the general population.

An intake screening form signed by Bulger that was filed in court says that he was asked such questions as: "Do you know of any reason that you should not be placed in general population?" and "have you assisted law enforcement agents in any way?" Both questions were marked "NO."

EXPLAINER: What would Minneapolis policing ballot issue do?

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minneapolis voters are deciding whether to replace the city's embattled police department with a new Department of Public Safety, a proposal that evolved from calls to "defund the police" after the May 2020 death of George Floyd under a Minneapolis police officer's knee.

There has been an emotional debate over what the proposed changes to the city charter will or won't do. Will the city still have police, and how many? The truth is that the details aren't spelled out. The City Council and the mayor would have to agree on at least the broad outlines of the new system within a month after the election.

Here's a look at the amendment and the arguments on both sides leading up to Tuesday's election:

WHAT'S ON THE BALLOT?

Ballot proposal No. 2 asks voters whether the city charter should be amended to remove its requirement that the city have a police department with a minimum staffing level. It would be replaced with a new Department of Public Safety that would take a "comprehensive public health approach" that "could include" police officers "if necessary, to fulfill its responsibilities for public safety." The new department would be led by a commissioner nominated by the mayor and appointed by the council.

WHAT WOULD THE NEW AGENCY DO?

That's not detailed in either the ballot language or in the charter amendment itself. And that's at the crux of the debate.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 71 of 77

Supporters of the change describe a new “holistic” approach to public safety that wouldn’t require sending armed police officers on every call, such as for people having a mental health crisis. They want other professionals available who have expertise in mental health, housing, violence reduction and intervention.

But all that would depend on whatever agreement the City Council and mayor could forge if it passes. Also left to be determined is who would lead the new department. Medaria Arradondo, the city’s popular Black chief, has said passage would put any law enforcement leader in a “wholly unbearable position.”

WOULD MINNEAPOLIS STILL HAVE COPS?

Almost certainly, but it’s not guaranteed how many. Supporters of a new department point out that city ordinances and state statutes contain numerous references to police that effectively mean the new department would still have to have them if the amendment passes. But the charter requirement that the city “must fund a police force of at least 0.0017 employees per resident” would be gone, with funding and staffing levels left for the council and mayor to determine.

The Minneapolis Police Department is already down nearly 300 officers, one-third below its authorized maximum of 888. Only 588 were actually available to work as of mid-October, compared with the charter-mandated minimum of about 730. A major reason is officers quitting, retiring or going on disability leaves for post-traumatic stress disorder following the sometimes violent unrest, looting and arson that followed Floyd’s death. Critics of the proposal blame the dropoff in officers for the surge in gun violence and other crimes that Minneapolis has experienced since then.

WHY DO SUPPORTERS SAY IT’S NEEDED?

Supporters, including the Yes 4 Minneapolis campaign, say the new response options afforded by the “public health approach” would reduce excessive police force and turn the focus to prevention. They say the changes are needed to uproot a police culture that resists change and protects bad apples. They say the new approach ultimately would make the community safer for everyone, including people of color. And they say the new department would be accountable to the entire city because it would have to answer to the 13-member City Council instead of just the mayor.

WHY DO THE OPPONENTS SAY?

Opponents, including the All of Mpls campaign, say the biggest problem is there is no plan, making it a dangerous gamble. Many say they support a lot of the changes proponents want to see, such as the greater reliance on unarmed professionals. But they say it’s not necessary to amend the city charter to accomplish those goals. Many opponents also distrust the City Council, given that a majority of current members, shortly after Floyd’s death, stood on a stage bearing a prominent “Defund Police” sign and pledged to dismantle the department.

Follow Steve Karnowski on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/skarnowski>

Indian movie star Puneeth Rajkumar dies after heart attack

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Puneeth Rajkumar, a leading star of southern Indian regional cinema, died Friday after a massive heart attack, a hospital said. He was 46.

Rajkumar was a lead actor in 29 movies and also appeared on television, where he was the host of India’s version of “Who Wants to be a Millionaire.”

He was taken to Vikram Hospital in Bengaluru, the capital of southern Karnataka state, after complaining of chest pain, the hospital said.

Dr. Ranganath Nayak, a cardiologist at the hospital, said in a statement that Rajkumar was unresponsive and his heart had ceased beating when he arrived.

The Press Trust of India news agency said Rajkumar complained of chest pains after working out for two hours at a gymnasium.

Stunned fans rushed to the hospital as news of his heart attack spread in the city. Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined in mourning Rajkumar’s death, saying that future generations will remember him fondly

for his work and wonderful personality.

He was the son of Rajkumar, the biggest movie star in southern India, but carved a career for himself. After acting as a child in several movies, he debuted as a lead actor a 2002 Kannada-language movie, "Appu." He followed that with other successful films including "Abhi," "Veera Kannadiga," "Maurya," "Ajay" and "Arasu."

He is survived by his wife, Ashwini Revanth, and two daughters.

'Everything is at stake' as world gathers for climate talks

By SETH BORENSTEIN and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

More than one world leader says humanity's future, even survival, hangs in the balance when international officials meet in Scotland to try to accelerate efforts to curb climate change. Temperatures, tempers and hyperbole have all ratcheted up ahead of the U.N. summit.

And the risk of failure looms large for all participants at the 26th U.N. Climate Change Conference, known as COP26, which begins Sunday and runs until Nov. 12.

Six years ago, nearly 200 countries agreed to individual plans to fight global warming in the historic 2015 Paris climate agreement. Now leaders will converge in Glasgow for two weeks starting Sunday to take the next step dictated by that pact: Do more and do it faster.

But except for a slight drop because of the pandemic, carbon pollution from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas is increasing, not falling.

Between now and 2030, the world will spew up to 28 billion metric tons (31 billion U.S. tons) of greenhouse gases beyond the amount that would keep the planet at or below the most stringent limit set in Paris, the United Nations calculated this week.

"Everything is at stake if the leaders do not take climate action," Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate said. "We cannot eat coal. We cannot drink oil, and we cannot breathe so-called natural gas."

Her words were echoed by a man tasked with steering one of the world's richest economic blocs through the climate transition.

"We are fighting for the survival of humanity," European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said. "Climate change and the threatening ecocide are the biggest threats humanity faces."

Climate change is fueling heat waves, flooding, drought and nastier tropical cyclones. Extreme weather also costs the globe about \$320 billion a year in economic losses, according to risk modeling firm AIR Worldwide. And people die.

"The unhealthy choices that are killing our planet are killing our people as well," said Dr. Maria Neira, director of public health and environment at the World Health Organization.

Humanity and the Earth won't quite go off a cliff because of global warming, scientists say. But what happens in Glasgow will either steer the world away from the most catastrophic scenarios or send it careening down a dirt road with tight curves and peril at every turn. It's a situation where even tenths of a degree translate into added risk.

"(The world is) still careening towards climate catastrophe," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Friday, even after some countries' recent emission pledges. "There is a serious risk that Glasgow will not deliver."

For months, U.N. officials have touted concrete goals for these negotiations to succeed:

- Countries must promise to reduce carbon emissions 45% by 2030 compared with 2010.
- Rich countries should contribute \$100 billion a year in aid to poor countries.
- Half of that amount must be aimed at adapting to climate change's worst effects.

World leaders have softened those targets a bit. U.S. Climate Envoy John Kerry told The Associated Press: "There will be a gap" on emission targets.

Under the Paris pact, nations must revisit their previous pledges to curb carbon pollution every five years and then announce plans to cut even more and do it faster. Delayed a year by the pandemic, this year's meeting is the first to include the required ratcheting up of ambitions.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 73 of 77

The hope is that world leaders will cajole each other into doing more, while ensuring that poorer nations struggling to tackle climate change get the financial support they need.

The headline goal set in Paris was to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since preindustrial times, yet the world has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since then.

Every analysis of current climate-change pledges by governments shows that they are not nearly enough to stop warming at that point but will instead lead to at least another degree or a degree and a half Celsius of warming (about 2 to 3 degrees Fahrenheit).

All five emissions scenarios studied in a massive UN scientific assessment in August suggest that the world will cross that 1.5-degree-Celsius threshold in the 2030s, though several researchers told the AP that it is still technically possible to stay within that limit or at least temporarily go over it and come back down.

Small island nations and other poor, vulnerable communities said in 2015 that 2 degrees would wipe them out, and insisted on the 1.5-degree threshold.

"Our way of life is at stake," said Tina Stege, the climate envoy for the Marshall Islands. "Our ability to provide our children with a safe and secure future is at stake. Atoll nations like the Marshall Islands do not have higher ground to retreat to."

As environmental protesters targeted big banks in London's financial center on Friday, parts of Scotland were dealing with unusually heavy rainfall, the kind that scientists say is becoming more intense due to global warming.

In Glasgow, divisions between nations are big and trust is a problem.

Rich countries like the United States and European nations developed the carbon-belching energy and caused most of the problem historically, but now they are asking poor nations to cut or eliminate the use of fossil fuels. In return, they've promised \$100 billion a year to help developing countries switch to clean energy.

So far, the funding has fallen far short of that amount.

"Failure to fulfill this pledge is a major source of the erosion of trust between developed and developing nations," Guterres said.

The key to success may lie with major emerging economies, yet this week China, the world's largest carbon emitter, submitted a new national target that is only marginally stronger than its previous proposal.

China is so important that if every other nation cuts back in line with the 45% global emission reduction and China doesn't, the world's total will drop only 30%, according to Claire Fyson, a top analyst at Climate Action Tracker, a group of scientists that analyze emission pledges.

In the end, every country will be asked to do more in Glasgow, said U.N. Environment Programme Director Inger Andersen. But much of the effort, she said, comes back to China and the U.S.

"We need these two powers to put aside whatever else and to show true climate leadership because this is what it will take," Andersen told the AP.

Borenstein reported from Washington, Jordans from Berlin. Associated Press Writer Ellen Knickmeyer contributed from Washington. Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/borenbears> and Frank Jordans at <https://twitter.com/wirereporter>.

Read more of AP's climate coverage at <http://www.apnews.com/Climate>

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Asian spider takes hold in Georgia, sends humans scurrying

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A large spider native to East Asia has spun its thick, golden web on power lines, porches and vegetable patches all over north Georgia this year — a proliferation that has driven some unnerved

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 74 of 77

homeowners indoors and prompted a flood of anxious social media posts.

In metro Atlanta, Jennifer Turpin — a self-described arachnophobe — stopped blowing leaves in her yard after inadvertently walking into a web created by the Joro spider. Stephen Carter has avoided a walking trail along the Chattahoochee River where he encountered Joro webs every dozen steps.

Farther east in Winterville, Georgia, Will Hudson's front porch became unusable amid an abundance of Joro webs 10 feet (3 meters) deep. Hudson estimates he's killed more than 300 of the spiders on his property.

"The webs are a real mess," said Hudson, an entomologist at the University of Georgia. "Nobody wants to come out of the door in the morning, walk down the steps and get a face full of spider web."

The Joro — *Trichonephila clavata* — is part of a group of spiders known as orb weavers for their highly organized, wheel-shaped webs. Common in Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan, Joro females have colorful yellow, blue and red markings on their bodies. They can measure three inches (8 cm) across when their legs are fully extended.

It's not clear exactly how and when the first Joro spider arrived in the U.S. In Georgia, a researcher identified one about 80 miles (128 km) northeast of Atlanta in 2014. They have also been found in South Carolina, and Hudson is convinced they will spread across the South.

It's also not clear why they are so abundant this year, though experts agree their numbers have exploded.

"We see natural ebbs and flows in the populations of many different species that may be linked to local conditions, particularly slight changes in rainfall," said Paula Cushing, an arachnologist at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

Cushing and other experts say Joros are not a threat to humans or dogs and cats and won't bite them unless they are feeling very threatened. Hudson said a researcher collecting them with her bare hands reported the occasional pinch, but said the spiders never broke her skin.

Researchers, however, don't agree fully on what impact, if any, the spider will have on other species and the environment.

Debbie Gilbert, 67, isn't waiting to find out. She has adopted a zero-tolerance policy for the spiders around her home in Norcross, Georgia, winding their webs with a stick, bringing them down and stomping them.

"I don't advocate killing anything. I live in peace with all the spiders around here and everything else," she said. "But (Joros) just don't belong here, that's all."

Turpin, 50, tried to set a Joro spider web on fire at her East Cobb home, but then got scared it would fall on her and fell into a hole as she quickly backpedaled. She had a neighbor remove it instead.

"I just don't think I'm going to do yard work anymore," she said.

Nancy Hinkle, another entomologist at the University of Georgia, said Joros help suppress mosquitoes and biting flies and are one of the few spiders that will catch and eat brown marmorated stink bugs, which are serious pests to many crops.

"This is wonderful. This is exciting. Spiders are our friends," she said. "They are out there catching all the pests we don't want around our home."

Ann Rypstra, who studies spider behavior at Miami University, was more cautious in her assessment of the Joro's potential impacts, saying more research was needed.

"I'd always err on the side of caution when you have something that establishes itself where it's not supposed to be," she said.

Researchers at South Carolina's Clemson University also were more circumspect, saying in a factsheet published online in August that they "do not yet know if there will be any negative impacts from this non-native species on the local ecology of South Carolina."

Amateur gardeners and naturalists have raised concerns about the safety of native spiders and bees and other pollinators.

Cushing said Joros are probably big enough to take on large pollinators caught in their webs, but those insects may be an insignificant part of their diet. Rypstra has studied a similar spider species and said their webs are used by other spiders as a source of food, so the Joro might help native spiders. But she said there was also evidence Joros compete with other orb weavers.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 75 of 77

The bottom line: there are many unknowns.

Most of the Joros are expected to die by late November, but they may return in equally large, or even larger, numbers next year, though scientists say even that is hard to predict with any certainty.

Anthony Trendl, a homeowner in Suwanee, Georgia, is enjoying them for now. He has started a website, jorospider.com, to share his enthusiasm about the spiders and foster understanding of them. While they raise concerns and can be creepy, they are also beautiful, he said.

"It's been a rough go of things," he said. "I wanted to find some good in this world. To me, nature's an easy place to find it."

Fulton County holds elections amid state takeover threat

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Elections in Georgia's heavily Democratic Fulton County on Tuesday could decide more than Atlanta's next mayor and other local races: Republicans are watching for any mistakes that could justify a state takeover using a sweeping new law.

Struggles to deliver a smooth voting process during the early months of the coronavirus pandemic trained a national spotlight on the state's most populous county. That only intensified as former President Donald Trump and his allies pushed unproven claims that widespread fraud robbed him of victory last year.

Against that backdrop, GOP state lawmakers empowered the Republican-controlled State Election Board to remove local election officials. Democrats said the provision was written with Fulton in mind, and Republicans soon launched a state review that could result in the replacement of the Democrat-controlled county election board with the state board's appointee.

The Atlanta mayor's race Tuesday is the most high-profile municipal election in Fulton County. It's a wide-open contest with 14 candidates, so a runoff is likely. Any missteps could be pounced on as evidence the county isn't competent to run its own elections.

"We know that there's a target on our backs," county Board of Commissioners Chairman Robb Pitts said. "They're trying to use Fulton County and our voters to score political points ... but I'm just not going to let that happen."

Amid a flood of criticism, the county election board voted in February to fire elections director Rick Barron, only to have its decision rejected by the Board of Commissioners.

The drumbeat of negativity has been tough on county staffers. Barron dismisses much of it as politically motivated, noting that at a statewide convention of county election officials, Fulton received a regional award for overcoming obstacles during the 2020 election cycle.

"Our peers nominated us for that and we got a thundering standing ovation," he said.

Republican lawmakers in July requested a performance review "to assure voter confidence in our elections and help to rectify elections process deficiencies." The State Election Board, as required by the new law, responded in August by appointing a three-person panel to review Fulton's election operations.

Some observers believe the problems with the county's election administration have been overblown.

"If you look hard enough in a county that is as large and as populated as Fulton, you're going to find problems," said Daniel Franklin, associate professor emeritus of political science at Georgia State University. "But I'll bet you'd find problems elsewhere, too."

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a longtime critic of Fulton County, seized on the case of two elections workers who were fired this month after colleagues reported seeing them shredding voter registration applications.

"New allegations have come to light that Fulton County was seen shredding 300 applications related to Georgia's municipal elections," Raffensperger said in a news release calling for a Justice Department investigation.

Fulton officials chafed at that characterization.

"We weren't SEEN to have done it," Barron said, adding that Fulton officials immediately contacted both the secretary of state's office and the district attorney's office. "Two of our employees did something and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 76 of 77

we then reported it to them because we're interested in being transparent and making sure that the situation was investigated."

Franklin said Raffensperger's focus on Fulton County makes political sense: After rejecting Trump's calls to "find" enough votes to overturn his loss in Georgia, Raffensperger now faces GOP primary challengers, including one endorsed by the former president.

"The secretary of state's in a very tough reelection campaign and this is red meat for him," Franklin said.

But the county does have a history of problems with its elections. Fulton agreed in 2015 to pay a \$150,000 penalty and improve poll worker training after state investigators found multiple violations of election law in 2008 and 2012.

During the June 2020 primary election, some voters never received requested absentee ballots. Many waited hours to vote after experienced poll workers quit and polling sites were consolidated because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The county made changes before the general election and was observed by an independent monitor from October through January's U.S. Senate runoffs. The monitor, Carter Jones, reported to the State Elections Board that he saw "sloppy processes" and "systemic disorganization" but did not witness "any illegality, fraud or intentional malfeasance."

The elections warehouse was chaotic the night before the general election, while scanners jammed and other equipment went down on election day. Jones also had some concerns involving the way ballots were transferred and stored, according to notes he kept.

Barron said his department has acted on Jones' recommendations, making staffing changes, creating a separate absentee ballot division and updating standard operating procedures.

With the ongoing state review looming, he worries that some of the new law's provisions could complicate things during Tuesday's closely watched election.

The law requires counties to report by 10 p.m. on election night the number of ballots cast by mail, early in person and on election day. That's a tight deadline when polls close at 7 p.m., even tighter with Atlanta keeping polls open until 8 p.m. in its municipal election, Barron said.

Confusion about the new law may affect voters who show up at the wrong precinct, who traditionally cast a significant proportion of Fulton's provisional ballots, Barron said. This election will be the first in which provisional ballots cast by out-of-precinct voters won't count unless it's after 5 p.m. and the voter signs a statement saying it would be impossible to get to his or her own precinct by the close of polls.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Oct. 30, the 303rd day of 2021. There are 62 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 30, 1974, Muhammad Ali knocked out George Foreman in the eighth round of a 15-round bout in Kinshasa, Zaire (zah-EER'), known as the "Rumble in the Jungle," to regain his world heavyweight title.

On this date:

In 1912, Vice President James S. Sherman, running for a second term of office with President William Howard Taft, died six days before Election Day. (Sherman was replaced with Nicholas Murray Butler, but Taft, the Republican candidate, ended up losing in an Electoral College landslide to Democrat Woodrow Wilson.)

In 1921, the silent film classic "The Sheik," starring Rudolph Valentino, premiered in Los Angeles.

In 1938, the radio play "The War of the Worlds," starring Orson Welles, aired on CBS.

In 1945, the U.S. government announced the end of shoe rationing, effective at midnight.

In 1961, the Soviet Union tested a hydrogen bomb, the "Tsar Bomba," with a force estimated at about 50 megatons. The Soviet Party Congress unanimously approved a resolution ordering the removal of Josef Stalin's body from Lenin's tomb.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 115 ~ 77 of 77

In 1972, 45 people were killed when an Illinois Central Gulf commuter train was struck from behind by another train on Chicago's South Side.

In 1975, the New York Daily News ran the headline "Ford to City: Drop Dead" a day after President Gerald R. Ford said he would veto any proposed federal bailout of New York City.

In 1984, police in Poland found the body of kidnapped pro-Solidarity priest Father Jerzy Popieluszko (YEHR'-zee pah-pee-WOOSH'-goh), whose death was blamed on security officers.

In 1995, by a razor-thin vote of 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent, Federalists prevailed over separatists in a Quebec secession referendum.

In 2001, Ukraine destroyed its last nuclear missile silo, fulfilling a pledge to give up the vast nuclear arsenal it had inherited after the breakup of the former Soviet Union.

In 2002, Jam Master Jay (Jason Mizell), a rapper with the hip-hop group Run-DMC, was killed in a shooting in New York. He was 37.

In 2005, the body of Rosa Parks arrived at the U.S. Capitol, where the civil rights icon became the first woman to lie in honor in the Rotunda; President George W. Bush and congressional leaders paused to lay wreaths by her casket.

Ten years ago: Britain's Sunday Telegraph published an interview with Syrian President Bashar Assad, who warned that a western intervention in Syria would lead to an "earthquake" that "would burn the whole region."

Five years ago: The third powerful earthquake to hit Italy in two months spared human life but struck at the nation's cultural identity, destroying a Benedictine cathedral, a medieval tower and other beloved landmarks.

One year ago: A day after Walmart said it had removed ammunition and firearms from displays in U.S. stores because of "civil unrest" in some areas of the country, the retailer said the items had been restored to displays because the unrest had remained isolated. "Full House" actor Lori Loughlin reported to a federal prison in California to begin a two-month sentence for her role in the college admissions bribery scandal. A Connecticut prosecutor said Kennedy cousin Michael Skakel would not face a second trial in the 1975 killing of Martha Moxley; he had served more than 11 years in prison before being freed in 2013.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Claude Lelouch is 84. Rock singer Grace Slick is 82. Songwriter Eddie Holland is 82. R&B singer Otis Williams (The Temptations) is 80. Actor Joanna Shimkus is 78. Actor Henry Winkler is 76. Broadcast journalist Andrea Mitchell is 75. Rock musician Chris Slade (Asia) is 75. Country/rock musician Timothy B. Schmit (The Eagles) is 74. Actor Leon Rippy is 72. Actor Harry Hamlin is 70. Actor Charles Martin Smith is 68. Country singer T. Graham Brown is 67. Actor Kevin Pollak is 64. Rock singer-musician Jerry De Borg (Jesus Jones) is 61. Actor Michael Beach is 58. Rock singer-musician Gavin Rossdale (Bush) is 56. Actor Jack Plotnick is 53. Comedian Ben Bailey is 51. Actor Billy Brown is 51. Actor Nia Long is 51. Country singer Kassadey Osborn (SHeDAISY) (sh-DAY'-zee) is 45. Actor Gael Garcia Bernal is 43. Actor Matthew Morrison is 43. Business executive and former presidential adviser Ivanka Trump is 40. Actor Fiona Dourif is 40. Actor Shaun Sipos (SEE'-pohs) is 40. Actor Tasso Feldman is 38. Actor Janel (juh-NEHL') Parrish is 33. Actor Tequan Richmond is 29. Actor Kennedy McMann is 25.