

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 1 of 82

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- City Council Story](#)
- [2- COVID-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [7- Groton Area wins open round of region play](#)
- [8- Cornhole Sets installed at City Park](#)
- [9- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [10- Weather Pages](#)
- [13- Daily Devotional](#)
- [14- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [15- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Upcoming Events

### 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

## **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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## Roundtable meeting set for November 15th

The Groton City Council met Tuesday evening where it was announced that there will be a Groton Residential Development Roundtable Meeting on November 15th at noon at the Groton Community Center. Casey Crabtree, Heartland Consumer Power District's Director of Economic Development, will be the guest speaker.

Todd Gay, Groton Electric Superintendent, came before the council to talk about some requested adjustments. He requested that the hours for the department be from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with a half hour break. Gay said those hours work better for a family life. He also requested that the electric department get time and a half pay when being called out after hours, and he requested that the electric lineman wage be adjusted because other areas around Groton pay higher for the same position. The council agreed to the temporary change in hours, which will be reviewed at the first meeting in December.

The council authorized the mayor to sign the Funding Agreement with the State of South Dakota Department of Transportation for a runway project at the Groton Airport. The airport has seen a number of improvements with more on the way.

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

As of midday today, we seem to be sort of stalled out. We're at a seven-day new-case average of 74,504, which is actually a couple of thousand above where we were last time we talked. We also broke the 46-million mark yesterday so that we're now at 46,058,641. Sigh. Here's the history:

April 28, 2020 – 1 million – 98 days  
June 11 – 2 million – 44 days  
July 8 – 3 million – 27 days  
July 23 – 4 million – 15 days  
August 9 – 5 million – 17 days  
August 31 – 6 million – 22 days  
September 24 – 7 million – 24 days  
October 15 – 8 million – 21 days  
October 29 – 9 million – 14 days  
November 8 – 10 million – 10 days  
November 15 – 11 million – 7 days  
November 21 – 12 million – 6 days  
November 27 – 13 million – 6 days  
December 3 – 14 million – 6 days  
December 7 – 15 million – 4 days  
December 12 – 16 million – 5 days  
December 17 – 17 million – 5 days  
December 21 – 18 million – 4 days  
December 26 – 19 million – 5 days  
December 31 – 20 million – 5 days  
January 5 – 21 million – 5 days  
January 9 – 22 million – 4 days  
January 13 – 23 million – 4 days  
January 18 – 24 million – 5 days  
January 23 – 25 million – 5 days  
January 30 – 26 million – 7 days

February 7 – 27 million – 8 days  
February 19 – 28 million – 12 days  
March 7 – 29 million – 16 days  
March 24 – 30 million – 17 days  
April 8 – 31 million – 15 days  
April 24 – 32 million – 16 days  
May 18 – 33 million – 23 days  
July 16 – 34 million – 59 days  
July 31 – 35 million – 15 days  
August 11 – 36 million – 11 days  
August 17 – 37 million – 6 days  
August 23 – 38 million – 6 days  
August 30 – 39 million – 7 days  
September 5 – 40 million – 6 days  
September 12 – 41 million – 7 days  
September 18 – 42 million – 6 days  
September 27 – 43 million – 9 days  
October 6 – 44 million – 9 days  
October 18 – 45 million – 12 days  
November 1 – 14 days

Hospitalizations are continuing to decline and are now at a seven-day average of 49,809. Deaths have also stalled just above 1300 at a daily average of 1309. We've been sort of dead in the water for close to two weeks; this is worrisome. I guess we'll

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 3 of 82

see how things look as we go along, but we're going into the winter holidays at way too high a level for my comfort.

Today was the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meeting to discuss the Pfizer/BioNTech application for an extension of its emergency use authorization (EUA) to vaccinate ages 5 to 11 with two 10 microgram doses (one-third the dose being given to ages 12 and older) given 21 days apart. I listened right through the vote which was 14 to 0 to recommend the extension. There were really no serious concerns raised by committee members or others who presented or asked questions. Around an hour after the vote, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC, formally endorsed the vaccine for this 5 to 11 age group. That's the last hurdle before shots can go into arms. I'm going to guess that, just as soon as your local clinic or pharmacy has doses, the vaccinations in this age group will commence. As Walensky said tonight, "Together, with science leading the charge, we have taken another important step forward in our nation's fight against the virus that causes Covid-19." Indeed, we have. Now to get folks to take that step.

There is only a handful of nations in the world who have not reported a single case of Covid-19. Among them until Friday was Tonga, a Polynesian country consisting of more than 170 islands in the South Pacific with a population of around 100,000. They preemptively declared a state of emergency in March, 2020, and closed the border; that worked pretty well until last week when a traveler from New Zealand (1500 miles away) landed in the country and tested positive while still in a hotel designated for managed quarantine of new arrivals. The visitor had tested negative before departing for Tonga and was fully vaccinated. All airport staff who had contact with anyone from the flight this person was on were quarantined, and the nation is prepared for a lockdown if necessary. This did prompt a rush for vaccination among the population; considering they had 86 percent of the population with a first dose and 62 percent with a second dose, any rush is only going to improve the situation. While the strict measures for control have damaged the economy of Tonga, they might just get ahead of this virus far enough to avoid any sort of surge of cases. I certainly hope so. Other countries with no reported cases to date include Tuvalu and Nauru in the Pacific, as well as Turkmenistan and North Korea, although no one really believes these last two when they say they've had no cases.

We might as well get this out of the way early today: The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine does not cause infertility. That tired old rumor is going around again, just in time for the authorization of the vaccine for very young children; we're hearing that vaccinating your six- or seven- or ten-year-old today will cause that child to be unable to reproduce in the future or interfere with normal development at puberty. The claim is that boys are as much at risk as young girls. The supposed mechanism by which this harm is done is also tired and old: that the vaccine elicits the production of antibody to a protein called syncytin-1 which is found in the placenta that develops during pregnancy and then that these antibodies attack the placenta, endangering a pregnancy. Because there is something like syncytin-1 in some sperm cells too, male fertility is purportedly equally at risk. This, of course, is not even close to true—no part of it. If you want the full Monty, check out my Update #287 posted December 6 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4237138519635855>.

Here's the short version: (1) There is no mechanism by which these vaccines could interfere with fertility. They do not contain RNA sequences complementary with anything even sort of like the sequence for syncytin-1, so there's no way for them to elicit antibodies against syncytin-1. (For the record, they are not complementary with any other human protein either.) Dr. Paul Offit, director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and member of the FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC), explained in a video, "Those two proteins are very different. It's like saying you and I both have the same social security number because they both contain the number

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 4 of 82

five." That's not exactly persuasive—or even remotely connected with reality.

(2) In the months these vaccines have been in clinical trials and wide distribution, "There's no evidence that there is an adverse effect on fertility of these vaccines, and there's no reason why one would suspect that an mRNA vaccine would have this," according to Dr. Peter Marks, head of the FDA's vaccine division who spoke about this in a news conference on Friday. The fact is that, even though hundreds of millions of doses have gone into people since the first mRNA vaccine was tested, birth rates have actually gone up somewhat. It's been over a year since the first clinical trials commenced. If these vaccines had an adverse effect on fertility, by now we would have seen a drop instead.

I'll add that stoking fears about fertility are not a new tactic of the scaremongers. As long as 20 or 30 years ago, these rumors that one vaccine or another is an attempt to reduce the population have been going around here and there around the globe. Vaccine as population control isn't close to a new argument, but it is garbage. Please take it out with the other trash.

I've read an interesting study from a team at Texas A & M University published Friday in JAMA Network Open. They took a look at Covid-19 transmission among football players in the Southeastern Conference (SEC), which is college-level play involving 14 universities in 11 states. They had almost 1200 players wear sensors that determined what kind of close contact they had during games so that interactions could be analyzed. The Conference used a set of mitigation measures which included PCR testing for every player three times per week along with strict isolation and quarantine measures as well as contact tracing when there was a positive test. Players did not wear masks on the field, and of course, they were not using hand sanitizer every time they touched the football or another player or their mouthguards and such; so the usual mitigation measures were not going to be much help. The study period covered the 2020 football season between September 26 and December 19; this means there was no vaccine available and also that the more transmissible Delta variant was not a factor.

The data from the sensors showed the players had 109,762 opposing-player interactions in the 64 regular season games. Of the 1200 players, 138 tested positive during the season, but only 18 of those positive tests were within 48 hours of a game, which does suggest that the vast majority of sick players were kept off the field by the testing and quarantine measures in use. Among contacts of those 18 who did test positive within 48 hours of a game, none of the contacts got sick, so it appears transmission really was interrupted by the measures used. According to the paper, "no instances of in-game SARS-CoV-2 transmission was found." It is suggested that the brief nature of contacts on the field helped; most contacts lasted less than 26 seconds. It also helps that football is an outdoor sport; we know that the huge volume of air surrounding people outdoors provides an enormously beneficial dilution factor: The risk of transmission outdoors is 18 times lower than that for indoor activities. The researchers concluded, "Even during a pandemic, infectious diseases can be effectively monitored and prevented during contact sports through multi-pronged and innovative strategies that leverage traditional public health practices and applied technologies. Active and vigilant surveillance can prevent introduction of SARS-CoV-2 or similar threats into game play and prevent game-specific exposures, transmission, and downstream infections and reduce stress on public health systems."

We've talked from time to time about infections in various animals, from pets to farmed mink to residents of zoos across the country. We've also talked about efforts to vaccinate animals. One of the primary makers of veterinary vaccines is Zoetis, which makes a spike (S) protein-based vaccine for use in animals. It is available right now for mink and zoo animals, both of which can become severely ill. It has not been available for domesticated dogs and cats, which are not considered to be at high risk of transmission from their owners, although there have been some infections of this type. The vaccine is given as two doses



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 5 of 82

21 days apart. About four million doses have been made in the US so far, and most of those have gone into farmed mink. Zoetis promised in July to donate 11,000 doses to almost 70 zoos. Zoo animals considered most at risk include primates, big cats, mustelids (ferrets, river otters, and wolverines), canines, bears, flying foxes, and hyenas. When we remember some zoos have critical captive breeding programs for endangered species, it becomes clear how important these efforts might be.

I've been keeping my eye on case rates and my mind on previous patterns with this virus. And that has me trying to decide what I think we're going to see over the next two or three months. At this point last year, cases were rising once again to the highest peak we've had in this pandemic. I don't think that's at all likely to happen again this fall and winter; but I am not sanguine that this is over either. We still have more than 70,000 new cases per day and well over 1000 people per day dying from this infection. This is not a great starting place. I remember all of the times over the past year and a half when experts have told us we're not getting new cases low enough before the next wave hits; and I remember they've been right each of those times.

Everyone who knows things agrees that what happens next depends on when and how many of the remaining people we can get vaccinated. Some experts think we've seen our last wave before the virus tapers off to an endemic infection, something that's always in the population and waiting to surge, but something we will have to live with. Others think we're going to be in trouble again before we reach endemic status. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota and one of the country's foremost experts on patterns of transmission, told the Washington Post, "I'm incredibly doubtful this is our last surge, and I think some geographic areas are going to be hit again. There's this waning immunity issue. Is it or is it not occurring, and how much? Could we be back in the soup again when we're in pretty darn good shape today? What will it be like in 12 months?" That's what I'd like to know. I'm still trying to make decisions about the winter holidays—and the rest of my life. So are lots of people.

Novavax's vaccine has finally received emergency authorization; the country taking this action is Indonesia. This is a protein sub-unit vaccine: It introduces submicroscopic (virus-sized) particles covered with viral spike (S) protein and is an adjuvanted vaccine, which means it contains a substance, an adjuvant, that provides a stronger and more durable stimulus to the immune system. A two-dose vaccine, the doses are given with a 21-day interval between. If you're interested in the details, check out my Update #407 posted April 5, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4593935953956108>.

This vaccine was developed as early as some that are already in current use, but the company ran into one snag after another along the way. Manufacturing issues delayed clinical trials and then also delayed approvals after the trials. It has been quite effective—90.4 percent efficacy overall in US trials and 100 percent efficacy against moderate or severe disease, but we should note that the clinical trials were complete before Delta became the dominant variant. The company has made a big commitment of over a billion doses to Covax, the WHO effort to provide quantities of vaccine globally, focusing on less-served countries. For now, it can supply doses to Indonesia which has been using Chinese vaccines, but has had real issues with breakthroughs that raised serious concerns. This vaccine still does not have the official WHO acceptance that will enable it to supply those promised doses to Covax, and the Indonesian authorization does not impact that situation. Authorization from a country the WHO recognizes as having stringent regulations would trigger their acceptance.

The US is such a country. Novavax does anticipate submitting an application for this vaccine to the FDA by the end of the year. Having missed the first wave of vaccinations in the US, it may not be a big player in the primary vaccination series here if authorized, but it may help us to chip away at the vaccine-hesitant

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 6 of 82**

since it contains no nucleic acid and a whole lot of folks who are refusing vaccination are under the misimpression that the vaccines currently on offer alter your DNA one way or another—even though that is pure bullshit. Perhaps there's a market for it among some subset of the refuseniks. The vaccine may also play an important role in boosting already-immunized people. It is generally believed the protein-subunit vaccines like Novavax's offering may be particularly good at amplifying protection in those who have been previously vaccinated with a different vaccine. We'll keep an eye on this one.

The FDA's action on an extension of the Moderna vaccine's EUA to children aged 12 to 17 has been delayed. The initial application for extension was submitted in June, and the matter is still pending. On Sunday, the company said the FDA needs more time to evaluate the risk of myocarditis (heart muscle inflammation) after vaccination based on international reports of increased risk. There is also some increased risk for the condition from the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, but it appears Moderna's risk is somewhat higher. We will note here that, even so, the condition has been mild, transient, and super-rare; but I'm guessing that, given we have one vaccine authorized for the age group, the agency isn't going to be in a big hurry where supplies are adequate for eligible recipients. The issue is that risk is highest in males aged 16 to 29, and this includes the age group for which Moderna now seeks authorization. Indications from the FDA are that there may not be a decision before January. The risk seems to be lower in children 12 to 15 and even lower yet in younger children, and so the company plans to seek an extension of their EUA to the 6 to 11 age group soon.

And that's what we have for today. Take care, and we'll talk again in a few days.

## Groton Area wins open round of region play

Groton Area's volleyball team posted a 3-0 win over Sisseton in the opening round of the Region 1A Tournament that was played in Redfield. Action continues on Thursday with Groton Area taking on Redfield at Henry with the match starting around 7:30 p.m.

Sydney Leicht had six kills to lead the Tigers to a 25-15 first set win. Aspen Johnson had three kills and a block while Madeline Flihs had two kills, Allyssa Locke had two ace serves and Anna Fjeldheim had one kill. Sisseton was led by Avery Despiegler with three kills while Chloe Langager had two kills and Hailey Nelson had one kill. The set was tied three times with the last tie at five before Groton Area took a 13-6 lead en route to the win.

Leicht was again on fire in the second set with five kills and two ace serves as the Tigers won, 25-19. Madeline Flihs had two kills and an ace serve, Johnson had two kills and a block, Fjeldheim and Maddie Bjerke each had a kill and Elizabeth Flihs and Alyssa Thaler each had an ace serve. Krista Langager led Sisseton with three kills and a block, Linnea Silk had a kill and a bloc while Avery Despiegler, Emmalee Nielsen and Sadie Medenwald each had three kills. The set was tied six times with four lead cahnges before the Tigers got the upper hand with a four point rally towards the end to get the win.

Madeline Flihs powered in four kills, a block and an ace serve as the Tigers won the third set, 25-12. Fjeldheim and Leicht each had two kills and an ace serve, Elizabeth Flihs had a kill and two ace serves and Johnson had a block. Nielsen and Langager each had two kills for Sisseton and Silk had one. Sisseton had a 1-0 lead before Groton Area scored six unanswered points to take a 6-1 lead and went on for the win.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Lori's Pharmac, Blocker Construction, Groton Legion Post #39, S & S Lumber, Groton Chiropractic, John Sieh Agency, Mike-N-Jo's Body-N-Glass, Dacotah Bank, Marty Weismantel Insurance Agency, Bierman Farm Service, Allied Climate Professionals, Bary Keith at Harr Motors





## Cornhole Sets installed at City Park

Cornhole sets were installed at the Groton City Park on Tuesday. The pads were poured last month with the sets arriving Tuesday and were installed. They are located on the north end of the park.

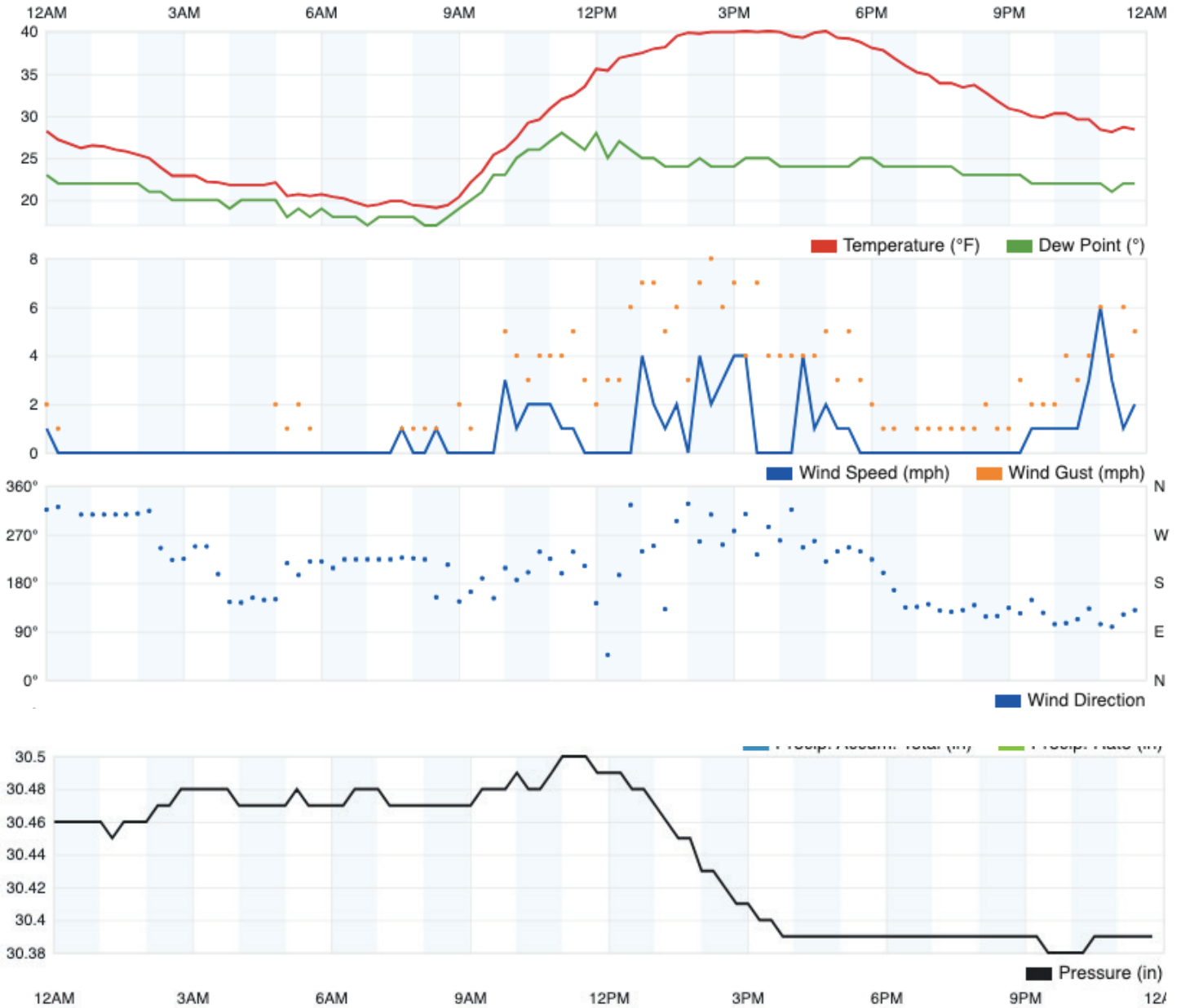




# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 9 of 82

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 10 of 82

Today



Sunny

High: 47 °F

Tonight



Clear then  
Patchy Fog

Low: 25 °F

Thursday



Patchy Fog  
then Sunny

High: 52 °F

Thursday  
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 36 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny

High: 57 °F



## Gradual Warming

Updated: 11/3/2021 5:05 AM Central

Today

45 to 52°



Thursday

50 to 60°



Friday

54 to 62°



Saturday

60 to 65°



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OPERATING AS A FEDERAL AGENCY

Heads up for some potential fog along/near the Missouri River this morning, and patchy fog across the area again on Thursday morning. Otherwise the main story is warming temperatures over the next several days, as highs climb to 10 to 20 degrees above normal by the weekend.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 11 of 82

## Today in Weather History

November 3rd, 2003: Heavy snow fell across the area, including 6 to 9 inches across Big Stone County in Minnesota, with nine inches in Ortonville. Heavy snow of up to eight inches fell across Grant County in South Dakota. Six inches fell at Big Stone City, and 8 inches fell at Milbank. Heavy snow also fell from the early morning to around noon across parts of central South Dakota. Six inches of snow fell at Kennebec, Fort Thompson, Gann Valley, and Miller.

1890 - The temperature at Los Angeles, CA, reached 96 degrees, a November record for 76 years. (David Ludlum)

1927 - Somerset VT was deluged with 8.77 inches of rain to establish a 24 hour record for the state. (3rd-4th) (The Weather Channel)

1927: Historic flooding occurred across Vermont from November 2nd through the 4th. The flood washed out 1285 bridges, miles of roads and railways, and several homes and buildings. Eighty-four people were killed from the flooding, including Lt. Governor S. Hollister Jackson.

1961 - A rare November thunderstorm produced snow at Casper, WY. (3rd-4th) (The Weather Channel)

1966: An early season snowfall, which started on the 2nd, whitened the ground from Alabama to Michigan. Mobile, Alabama, had their earliest snowflakes on record. Louisville, Kentucky measured 13.1 inches, Nashville; Tennessee reported 7.2 inches, and Huntsville, Alabama, had 4 inches of snow.

1987 - Twenty-one cities, mostly in the Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 80 degrees at Columbus OH was their warmest reading of record for so late in the season. Showers and thundershowers associated with a tropical depression south of Florida produced 4.28 inches of rain at Clewiston in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A sharp cold front brought about an abrupt end to Indian Summer in the north central U.S. Up to a foot of snow blanketed Yellowstone Park WY, and winds in the mountains near the Washoe Valley of southeastern Wyoming gusted to 78 mph. Unseasonably warm weather continued in the south central U.S. Del Rio TX tied Laredo TX and McAllen TX for honors as the hot spot in the nation with a record warm afternoon high of 91 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Cold weather prevailed in the central U.S. Six cities in Texas, Minnesota, and Michigan, reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 7 above zero at Marquette MI was their coldest reading of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary)

2001: Hurricane Michelle reached peak intensity on this day as a Category 4 storm. Michelle made landfall on November 4-5, between Playa Larga and Playa Giron, Cuba, as a Category 4 hurricane, the strongest to strike the country since 1952's Hurricane Fox. The storm caused an estimated \$2 billion US dollars in damage to Cuba.

2002: A Magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck central Alaska. The quake is the 9th largest to be recorded in the US.

2007: Dense fog in the early morning hours resulted in a 100 vehicle pile-up just north of Fowler, CA on I-99. Two people were killed, and 41 others were injured. The thick seasonal fog is known as "Tule fog" and typically occurs in Central California in late fall and winter.

2011: Floodwaters by Tropical Depression Keila's heavy rainfall were responsible for several deaths in Oman.

2013: The town of Arnhem in the Netherlands was hit with several tornadoes.



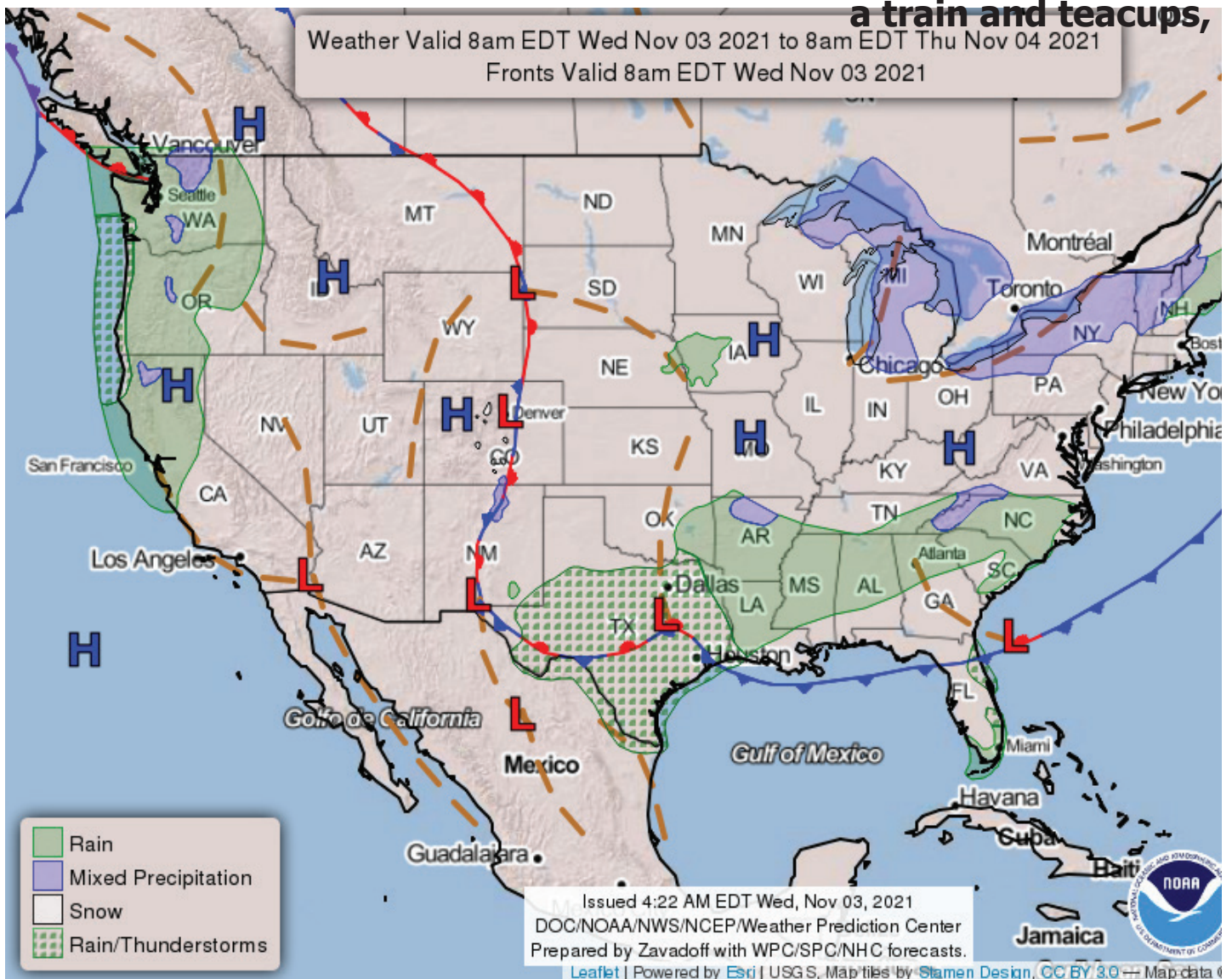
# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 12 of 82

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 41 °F at 2:39 PM**  
**Low Temp: 19 °F at 7:07 AM**  
**Wind: 8 mph at 1:17 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 76° in 2020**  
**Record Low: 1° in 1991**  
**Average High: 49°F**  
**Average Low: 25°F**  
**Average Precip in Nov.: 0.10**  
**Precip to date in Nov.: 4.30**  
**Average Precip to date: 20.57**  
**Precip Year to Date: 19.72**  
**Sunset Tonight: 6:18:10 PM-**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:15:08 AM**



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 13 of 82



## INSIDE VS. OUTSIDE

As John left for the Army in World War I, his mother slipped a copy of the Twenty Third Psalm into his hand. "Here," she said with tears in her eyes and pain in her heart, "take this with you wherever you go, never lose it and read it every time you are afraid and ask God to protect you!"

He followed her advice even in the fiercest combat zones. One day during a time of intense fighting, he slipped the Psalm from his pocket and started to read it. Suddenly, a bomb burst near him, and he jumped into a foxhole and lost the tattered piece of paper. It frightened him, and he said, "Now, I'll always have bad luck."

After the battle, he went to a tattooist with a copy of the Psalm and asked, "Please, Sir, tattoo this Psalm on my arm. I never, ever want to be without it."

Many of us are like that soldier. We have God's Word in our Bibles but not in our hearts. We keep His Word on our tables or desks but not in our minds. We do not allow it to become the centerpiece of our lives. It's outside and "nearby" but not inside working its way out where it can make a difference in our lives.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul," said David, "and do not forget all His benefits - Who forgives all your sins, Who heals all Your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion."

When we pause and think of this Lord that David is writing about, it does not make any sense to keep Him in a Book or on a piece of paper. He deserves to be living deep within our hearts, guiding and guarding our lives giving us His peace and power.

Prayer: Forgive us, Lord, for not allowing You to be at the center of all that we do or say, think about or seek. May Your Word be the light of our life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Praise the Lord, O my soul and do not forget all His benefits. Psalm 103:2

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 14 of 82

## 2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)  
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)  
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm  
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS  
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.  
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament  
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon  
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament  
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament  
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton  
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament  
**Cancelled** Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)  
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)  
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)  
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
10/29/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)  
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes  
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 15 of 82

News from the  Associated Press

## Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Brandon Valley def. Mitchell, 22-25, 25-16, 25-16, 21-25, 15-11

Harrisburg def. Watertown, 25-15, 25-22, 17-25, 25-8

Rapid City Central def. Sturgis Brown, 22-25, 17-25, 25-23, 25-21, 15-10

Rapid City Stevens def. Spearfish, 25-16, 25-16, 25-21

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Pierre, 25-22, 25-16, 21-25, 25-16

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Huron, 25-15, 25-22, 25-10

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Aberdeen Central, 28-26, 25-15, 21-25, 19-25, 15-10

Yankton def. Brookings, 25-20, 25-21, 25-22

SoDak Qualifier First Round=

Class A=

Region 1=

Florence/Henry def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-14, 25-12, 25-10

Groton Area def. Sisseton, 25-15, 25-19, 25-12

Redfield def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-19, 25-17, 25-22

Webster def. Milbank, 23-25, 25-13, 20-25, 25-21, 15-11

Region 2=

Deubrook def. Flandreau, 25-23, 16-25, 25-10, 25-9

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Deuel, 25-11, 25-17, 25-22

Great Plains Lutheran def. Sioux Valley, 25-23, 25-15, 18-25, 25-12

Hamlin def. Flandreau Indian, 25-0, 25-0, 25-0

Region 3=

Baltic def. McCook Central/Montrose, 25-16, 27-29, 25-17, 25-17

Madison def. Dell Rapids, 25-21, 25-14, 14-25, 16-25, 15-2

Sioux Falls Christian def. Tri-Valley, 25-11, 25-9, 25-10

Region 4=

Beresford def. Tea Area, 17-25, 25-22, 25-13, 16-25, 15-11

Dakota Valley def. Vermillion, 25-9, 25-16, 25-15

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Lennox, 25-11, 25-20, 23-25, 25-21

Parker def. Canton, 25-20, 21-25, 25-22, 25-20

Region 5=

Parkston def. Bon Homme, 25-23, 25-12, 25-16

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-13, 25-13, 26-24

Wagner def. Hanson, 25-11, 25-11, 26-24

Region 6=

Chamberlain def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-10, 25-12, 25-19

Dupree def. Stanley County, 25-16, 16-25, 25-23, 25-19

Mobridge-Pollock def. McLaughlin, 25-6, 25-6, 25-6

Winner def. Crow Creek, 25-7, 25-13, 25-10

Region 7=

Belle Fourche def. Custer, 25-9, 25-16, 25-21

Hill City def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-12, 25-9, 25-13

St. Thomas More def. Hot Springs, 25-21, 22-25, 25-16, 25-15

Class B=

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 16 of 82

## Region 1=

Aberdeen Christian def. Britton-Hecla, 25-10, 25-9, 25-17

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Langford, 25-16, 25-14, 25-22

Northwestern def. Wilmot, 25-4, 25-8, 25-5

Warner def. Leola/Frederick, 25-13, 25-14, 25-6

## Region 2=

Faulkton def. North Central Co-Op, 25-12, 25-5, 25-4

Highmore-Harrold def. Ipswich, 25-8, 25-27, 10-25, 25-19, 15-8

Miller def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-21, 25-9, 25-14

Potter County def. Sully Buttes, 28-26, 27-29, 25-17, 25-14

## Region 3=

Arlington def. Lake Preston, 25-13, 25-10, 25-14

Castlewood def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-21, 25-11, 25-20

Estelline/Hendricks def. DeSmet, 30-28, 25-19, 25-23

Wolsey-Wessington def. James Valley Christian, 25-12, 25-20, 25-20

## Region 4=

Bridgewater-Emery def. Howard, 25-10, 25-14, 25-13

Chester def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-8, 25-10, 25-10

Colman-Egan def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-5, 25-22, 25-15

Ethan def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-22, 24-26, 23-25, 25-12, 15-7

## Region 5=

Alcester-Hudson def. Scotland, 25-23, 27-25, 25-18

Freeman def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-15, 25-18, 15-25, 25-15

Gayville-Volin def. Centerville, 25-9, 25-17, 25-13

Irene-Wakonda def. Menno, 25-12, 26-24, 20-25, 25-15

## Region 6=

Avon def. Gregory, 25-20, 26-24, 25-22

Burke def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-23, 23-25, 25-15, 25-23

Platte-Geddes def. Wessington Springs, 25-14, 25-17, 25-14

Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Kimball/White Lake, 29-27, 20-25, 21-25, 25-23, 15-10

## Region 7=

Edgemont def. New Underwood, 25-14, 25-10, 18-25, 28-26

Jones County def. Kadoka Area, 19-25, 25-13, 25-19, 25-17

Philip def. Lyman, 25-11, 25-13, 25-18

White River def. Wall, 20-25, 25-13, 25-18, 25-22

## Region 8=

Bison def. Lemmon, 28-26, 25-16, 18-25, 25-21

Faith def. McIntosh, 25-20, 25-13, 25-12

Harding County def. Newell, 25-13, 22-25, 25-22, 25-22

Timber Lake def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-12, 25-11, 25-12

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

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

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 17 of 82

05-10-26-58-65, Mega Ball: 9, Megaplier: 2  
(five, ten, twenty-six, fifty-eight, sixty-five; Mega Ball: nine; Megaplier: two)  
Estimated jackpot: \$26 million  
Powerball  
Estimated jackpot: \$132 million

## 2 suspects charged in connection with Rapid City killing

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Officials say two men were arrested Tuesday in connection to the killing of a Rapid City man whose body was found next to a highway.

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office says Jacob Stanton, 25, and Andrew Thorson, 29, both of Rapid City, are charged with accessory to murder in the death of 24-year-old Dhani Aronson.

A passerby called dispatchers about 7 a.m. Monday to report finding a body in a ditch off Highway 16 near Rapid City. An autopsy ruled the death to be a homicide but authorities have not said how Aronson died.

"We're pleased at how quickly the investigators were able to put the pieces together and make arrests in this murder case," Pennington County investigator Tony Harrison said, adding that more charges are possible.

Court documents do not list attorneys for Stanton or Thorson.

## US says oil, gas sales damage climate — but won't stop them

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Biden administration is planning to sell oil and gas leases on huge tracts of public land in the U.S. West, despite the Interior Department's conclusion that doing so could cost society billions of dollars in climate change impacts, according to government documents.

Administration officials announced last week that government regulators for the first time will analyze greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels extracted from government-owned lands across the U.S.

Burning those fuels accounts for about 20% of energy-related U.S. emissions, making them a prime target for climate activists who want to shut down leasing. President Joe Biden campaigned on pledges to end new drilling on public lands.

Hundreds of parcels of land that companies nominated for leasing were dropped from the sales because of concerns about wildlife being harmed by drilling rigs.

Yet officials with the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) said for now there's little they can do to prevent the broad climate change impacts from burning fuels extracted from the remaining parcels. That's in part because they can't discern the significance of emissions from government-owned fuel reserves versus other sources, officials wrote in newly released documents.

The determination applies to lease sales planned early next year in Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota and other states.

"BLM has limited decision authority to meaningfully or measurably prevent the cumulative climate change impacts that would result from global emissions," agency officials wrote in their Montana lease proposal.

Similar statements were included in documents released for sales in other states.

The leasing plans could change as the administration continues to analyze greenhouse gas emissions and their effects on people and the environment, administration officials said Tuesday.

The land bureau plans to defer leasing on almost 600 square miles (1550 square kilometers) in Wyoming, 213 square miles (550 square kilometers) in Colorado and 5 square miles (14 square kilometers) in Montana because of potential impacts to a struggling bird species, the greater sage grouse, and migrating pronghorn antelope.

Still, Wyoming has the most land up for new leasing, roughly 280 square miles (725 square kilometers).

The so-called social costs of emissions from burning oil and gas from all the parcels — including more natural disasters, crop losses and public health problems due to climate change — are projected to range from \$630 million to about \$7 billion, according to land bureau documents.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 18 of 82

The administration's decision not to cite the climate costs as a reason to limit leases frustrates environmental activists and others who have urged curbs in government fossil fuel sales. They said it undermined the president's participation in the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, where Biden and other world leaders on Tuesday pledged to cut emissions of methane, a byproduct of drilling.

Harvard University economics professor James Stock said it was confusing for the administration to put a dollar value to greenhouse emissions, but then assert that such impacts are impossible to discern because of the global nature of climate change.

"To say it's too hard, they can't do that — that's simply not true. All of those calculations have been done," Stock said. "This is very surprising to me and inconsistent with the Biden administration's climate goals."

Similar determinations that U.S. fossil fuel lease sales should not be sharply restricted over global warming concerns were made under former Presidents Donald Trump and Barack Obama.

"This seems to be business as usual," Jeremy Nichols with the environmental group WildEarth Guardians said of the upcoming lease sales. "It flies in the face of scientists finding that any more fossil fuel production is unacceptable and countries need to find ways to limit production."

Republicans and petroleum industry representatives were quick to slam Biden last week when he announced plans to analyze greenhouse gas emissions. The decision not to directly address them reinforces that stopping development of federal lands would have little impact on climate change, said Kathleen Sgamma with the Western Energy Alliance, an industry trade group.

"Stopping all leasing and development on federal lands would have zero impact on climate change, as the production is simply displaced to nonfederal lands or to OPEC or other foreign producers," Sgamma said.

Studies by independent experts have concluded that some but not all reduced drilling on federal lands and waters would be offset by crude imports.

Approvals to drill on leased U.S.-owned lands surged toward the end of Trump's presidency, as companies stockpiled permits. That continued when Biden first took office before slowing in recent months. Figures released Tuesday showed 261 drilling permits approved in September, compared to more than 800 during Trump's last full month in office.

Land bureau officials said in the leasing documents that their regulatory authority was limited to activities tied directly to oil and gas development — not the subsequent burning of the fuels. Instead, they propose curbing emissions by addressing methane leaks from oil field activities and other avenues.

Additional measures to reduce methane emissions from drilling were announced Tuesday by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Next year's lease sale will be the first by the bureau since Biden suspended the program just a week after taking office as part of his plan to address climate change.

The administration in June was ordered to resume the sales by a federal judge in Louisiana, who said Interior officials offered no "rational explanation" for canceling them.

Attorneys general from 13 states sued the administration saying the suspension would cost the states money and jobs.

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Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

## Jean Rounds, wife of GOP Sen. Mike Rounds, dies from cancer

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Jean Rounds, the wife of Republican Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota, died Tuesday following a battle with cancer. She was 65.

Jean Rounds had a sarcoma cancer and had been undergoing treatment since May of 2019. Doctors initially found a malignant, aggressive tumor near her sciatic nerve. She underwent multiple rounds of chemotherapy and surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, but Mike Rounds said in September of 2020 that doctors later found another tumor during a checkup.

Mike Rounds, who previously served as South Dakota's governor, won a second Senate term last year

while his wife was undergoing treatment. He said in a statement that she died Tuesday morning.

As South Dakota's first lady from 2003 to 2011, Jean Rounds advocated for childhood literacy through the "Reach out and Read" program and promoted awareness of women's heart health. She also led the design of the governor's mansion that was completed in 2005. And she continued to serve on the commission that oversees the state Capitol grounds until her death.

The couple met while attending South Dakota State University, where Jean Rounds earned a degree in office management. She worked in state government for 27 years and held positions at the university, the State Planning Bureau and the Department of Transportation.

"Jean was not only a pillar in her community, she was one of the kindest people you'll ever meet," South Dakota's other senator, Republican John Thune, tweeted.

Jean Rounds said in a statement last year that her cancer diagnosis was the hardest challenge she had faced, but that her husband had been with her "every step of the way."

"He never complained and he sat with me in that hospital room at Mayo Clinic for days on end," she said.

The couple lived in Fort Pierre, which is just across the Missouri River from the state capital, Pierre. They had four children and 10 grandchildren.

"The love of my life is with the Lord," Mike Rounds said in a statement. "No more treatments. No more pain. Just peace."

## Sheriff who responded to South Dakota AG's fatal crash dies

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The sheriff who responded to the scene of a fatal car crash caused by the South Dakota attorney general last year has died, the Hyde County Sheriff's office said Tuesday.

The office declined to release further details about the death of Sheriff Mike Volek, but said it planned to release a statement, KELO-TV reported. He was 69 and had served as sheriff for 22 years.

Volek responded to a 911 call from Attorney General Jason Ravensborg late on Sept. 12, 2020. At the time, Ravensborg said he thought he hit a deer or other animal along a rural stretch of highway near Highmore. Both men checked Ravensborg's car and filled out paperwork documenting the damage. Volek then lent Ravensborg his personal vehicle to drive to his home in Pierre.

When Ravensborg drove back to Highmore the next day to return Volek's car, he stopped at the crash scene and discovered the body of 55-year-old Joseph Boever.

Ravnsborg then drove to Volek's house to report the body. They both returned to the crash scene, where Volek said he would handle the investigation and asked Ravensborg to return to Pierre, according to Ravensborg's statement.

Volek had not spoken publicly about the crash.

Ravnsborg pleaded no contest to two misdemeanor charges in the crash in August. The Legislature will consider impeaching him next week.

## South Dakota speaker names panel to weigh AG's impeachment

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota House speaker on Tuesday named the six fellow Republicans and two Democrats who will join him in looking into the investigation of a fatal crash caused by the state attorney general and assess whether he should be impeached.

The Legislature next week will consider whether to impeach Jason Ravensborg, the state's top law enforcement officer, for his conduct following the crash that killed a pedestrian last year.

House Speaker Spencer Gosch named a committee that will be a mix of Ravensborg's political allies and those who have called for his ouster. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader first reported that the committee had been assembled.

Gosch will preside over the committee, but only vote if there is a tie. He did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the committee.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 20 of 82

Republican Rep. Jon Hansen, who is on the committee and a member of legislative leadership, said the committee's plan of action had not been ironed out, but that he would push for the committee to create a report that can be presented to the full House.

"We gather the facts, we gather the law, and then we just present that to the legislative members," he said, adding "I'm not going to be the decider — that's not one member's decision."

Another committee member, House Democrat Leader Jamie Smith, said the committee would provide an "opportunity to see the evidence that's been gathered and look at this situation as an open investigation into whether" Ravensborg should continue serving as attorney general.

The committee also includes House Republican Leader Kent Peterson, Democrat Rep. Ryan Cwach and Republican Reps. Mike Stevens, Steven Haugaard, Doug Barthel and Kevin Jensen. Most of the lawmakers are either members of either the House Judiciary Committee or the high-powered House State Affairs Committee.

Gov. Kristi Noem, who has publicly called for Ravensborg's resignation, delivered a hard drive containing the crash investigation to the House speaker shortly after the attorney general's criminal trial concluded in August.

Ravnsborg, who was elected to his first term as attorney general in 2018, pleaded no contest to a pair of misdemeanors in the crash that killed 55-year-old Joseph Boever, who was walking along a rural stretch of highway when Ravensborg's vehicle struck him. Ravensborg has insisted that he did not realize he killed a man until he returned to the scene the next day and discovered his body.

Noem's Secretary of Public Safety, Craig Price, has said that after overseeing the investigation, he believed Ravensborg should have faced felony manslaughter charges. But Jensen argued the committee's probe should be limited to the misdemeanor traffic charges and avoid rehashing the criminal investigation.

"Do these charges rise to the level of impeachment?" he said. "This is unprecedented. What we do here will set a standard for the rest of South Dakota history."

This story was updated to correct the spelling of Joseph Boever's last name, which had been misspelled "Boevers."

## North Dakota, South Dakota celebrate 132 years of statehood

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Tuesday is the birthday for both Dakotas.

President Benjamin Harrison signed papers admitting North Dakota and South Dakota as the 39th and 40th states in the union on Nov. 2, 1889. Legend says Harrison shuffled the statehood papers before signing them.

The two states are now 132 years old. They initially were part of the Dakota Territory created in 1861, which also included much of the present-day states of Montana and Wyoming.

## Retailers association offers cash incentive to lure workers

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has not been immune to the labor shortages that are plaguing businesses nationwide.

That's prompted the South Dakota Retailers Association to offer a cash incentive of \$1,000 to try to lure out-of-state workers to fill jobs at businesses that are association members.

The cash payout would supplement any hiring bonuses or other incentives offered by an individual business.

The first incentive installment of \$500 would be paid after 90 consecutive days of employment in South Dakota, averaging at least 30 hours a week. The second \$500 will be paid after 180 days of employment, KOTA-TV reported.

"If we can take an individual who is a primary wage earner, and we can have their spouse, neighbor, family member who is moving and coming along with them to South Dakota, and we can get them into a retail career, than that is absolutely a win for both parties," said Nathan Sanderson, the association's



executive director.

Sanderson said workforce shortages have plagued South Dakota for years, and it is something that the association has worked to combat for just as long. However, the bonuses are a new step for them.

"We've been addressing this up to this labor shortage up to this point with information," Sanderson said. "Things like tips and tricks to make sure employees feel valued, make sure you are compensating them properly, helping them with child care. Ultimately, what it comes down to is that those things are all good, but maybe we can do more."

## Youngkin's Virginia win jolts Democrats, tight race in NJ

By WILL WEISSERT and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Republican Glenn Youngkin won the Virginia governor's race early Wednesday, tapping into culture war fights over schools and race to unite former President Donald Trump's most fervent supporters with enough suburban voters to become the first GOP candidate to win statewide office in a dozen years.

The 54-year-old Youngkin's defeat of Democrat Terry McAuliffe marked a sharp turnabout in a state that had shifted to the left over the past decade and which President Joe Biden captured by 10 points in 2020. And as the party felt the sting from that loss, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey was virtually deadlocked in his bid to win reelection in a state Biden won by 15 points.

The elections were the first major tests of voter sentiment since Biden took office and suggested growing frustration. They also underscored that, with Trump out of office, Democrats can't center their messages on opposition to him. The results ultimately pointed to a potentially painful year ahead for Democrats as they try to maintain thin majorities in Congress.

And they put a new focus on congressional Democrats' inability so far to pass Biden's massive domestic policy legislation, though it's unclear whether the defeat will be enough to jolt them into action.

The mood among Republicans was celebratory.

"This is the spirit of Virginia coming together like never before," Youngkin told cheering supporters in a hotel ballroom in Chantilly, about 25 miles west of Washington. AC/DC's "Thunderstruck" blared from speakers as the race was called after midnight.

Youngkin promised to lead not just from the state capital but with "a vision where Virginians' power, the power that has historically resided in the marble halls in Richmond is spread out, spread out into the kitchen tables that are held together with the bond and the spirit of liberty and freedom."

A political neophyte, Youngkin was able to take advantage of apparent apathy among core Democratic voters fatigued by years of elections that were seen as must-wins, as well as growing frustrations with Biden and the economy. He successfully portrayed McAuliffe, a former Virginia governor, Democratic National Committee chairman and close friend of Bill and Hillary Clinton, as part of an elite class of politicians. He also seized on a late-stage stumble by McAuliffe, who during a debate performance suggested parents should have a minimal role in shaping school curriculums.

Perhaps most significantly, Youngkin prevailed in a task that has stumped scores of Republicans before him: attracting Trump's base while also appealing to suburban voters who were repelled by the former president's divisive behavior.

During the campaign, Youngkin stated his support for "election integrity," a nod at Trump's lie that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, while also focusing on education and business-friendly policies. He never campaigned in person with Trump, successfully challenging McAuliffe's effort to cast him as a clone of the former president.

That approach could provide a model for Republicans competing in future races that feature significant numbers of Democratic or independent voters.

Elsewhere in the country Tuesday, mayoral contests helped shape the leadership of some of the nation's largest cities. Democratic former police captain Eric Adams won in New York, and Boston voters elected City Councilor Michelle Wu, the city's first female and Asian American mayor. Cincinnati is getting its first

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 22 of 82

Asian American mayor, Aftab Pureval.

Minneapolis voters rejected a ballot initiative that sought to overhaul policing in their city, where George Floyd was killed by a white police officer on Memorial Day 2020, sparking the largest wave of protests against racial injustice in generations. The initiative would have replaced the police force with a Department of Public Safety charged with undertaking "a comprehensive public health" approach to policing.

In the New Jersey governor's race, incumbent Gov. Murphy was trying to become the first Democrat reelected to the office in 44 years. But Republican challenger Jack Ciattarelli posted a surprisingly strong showing, campaigning on issues including taxes and opposition to pandemic mask and vaccination mandates. The race was too early to call with votes still being tallied.

But no other contest in this off-year election season received the level of national attention — and money — as the governor's race in Virginia, a state with broad swaths of college-educated suburban voters who are increasingly influential in swaying control of Congress and the White House.

A former co-CEO at the Carlyle Group with a lanky, 6'6" build that once made him a reserve forward on Rice University's basketball team, Youngkin poured vast amounts of his personal fortune into a campaign that spent more than \$59 million. Favoring fleece vests, Youngkin sought to cut the image of a genial suburban dad.

Youngkin ran confidently on a conservative platform. He opposed a major clean energy mandate the state passed two years ago and objected to abortion in most circumstances.

He also opposed mask and vaccine mandates, promised to expand Virginia's limited charter schools and ban critical race theory, an academic framework that centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people. In recent months, it has become a catch-all political buzzword for any teaching in schools about race and American history.

McAuliffe tried to energize the Democratic base by highlighting abortion, denouncing a new Texas law that largely banned the procedure and warning that Youngkin would seek to implement similar restrictions.

Youngkin didn't discuss abortion much publicly, and a liberal activist caught him on tape saying the issue couldn't help him during the campaign. He said an election win would allow the party to "start going on offense" on the issue.

While McAuliffe pulled on the star power of a host of national Democrats, including former President Barack Obama and ex-Georgia governor candidate Stacey Abrams, Youngkin largely campaigned on his own, focusing on issues he said were important to Virginians.

Youngkin also proved perhaps most successful in deflecting McAuliffe's efforts to tie him to Trump and the former president's divisive political style.

Polls showed the race tightening after McAuliffe said during a late September debate that he didn't think "parents should be telling schools what they should teach." That prompted Youngkin to run hundreds of TV ads on the statement and to focus on his own pledges to make school curricula less "un-American" and to overhaul policies on transgender students and school bathrooms.

The race took an especially bitter turn last week, when Youngkin ran an ad featuring a mother and GOP activist who eight years ago led an effort to ban "Beloved," the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Black Nobel laureate Toni Morrison, from classrooms.

McAuliffe accused Youngkin of uncorking a "racist dog whistle," but Youngkin said Virginia parents knew what was really at stake — and so did families across the country. That was a nod to how tapping into parental activism could work for the GOP next year and in future election cycles.

"America is watching Virginia," Youngkin said as part of his closing argument. "And America needs us to vote for them too."

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Associated Press writers Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, Hank Kurz in Richmond, Alexandra Jaffe in McLean and Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

## Pandemic, politics drive Xi's absence from global talks

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 23 of 82

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping has been absent from the Group of 20 summit in Rome and this week's global climate talks in Scotland, drawing criticism from U.S. President Joe Biden and questions about China's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

China is the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide and has pledged to begin reducing that output by 2030 and obtaining carbon neutrality by 2060. The U.S. and others have urged Beijing to make bigger commitments, but Xi's administration has strongly implied those will only come in exchange for political concessions.

China has enforced tight travel restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic and Xi hasn't left the country since making a January 2020 trip to neighboring Myanmar.

That was just weeks before the outbreak, believed to have originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan, spread worldwide. China has come under heavy pressure to reveal more information about the origin of the pandemic and has been accused of mismanaging the outbreak and then seeking to cover up its mistakes.

China has also come under heavy criticism over its policies toward Muslims in its Xinjiang region and its crackdown on civil rights in Hong Kong. Like all Chinese leaders, Xi is extremely image conscious and his public appearances are carefully choreographed to avoid potentially embarrassing confrontations.

His formerly heavy travel schedule took him across continents, with first lady Peng Liyuan, an accomplished musician, on hand to add a bit of glamor and a human touch.

Those travels included trips to several African nations and a meeting with the former Japanese emperor in Tokyo. Xi rode in a gilded carriage with Britain's Queen Elizabeth and paid a visit to North Korea's capital that included a ride through city streets lined by tens of thousands of cheering citizens of the hard-line communist state.

Such travels have underscored China's more assertive foreign policy, as the world's second-largest economy seeks to exert its influence beyond East Asia with Xi's signature "Belt and Road" overseas infrastructure investment program.

The president's decision not to attend the meetings in Rome and Glasgow seems at odds with that policy, although Xi isn't alone in staying away. Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country has aligned with China in opposing U.S. influence in world affairs, also remained at home.

"I think it's been a big mistake, quite frankly, for China, with respect to China not showing up," Biden said Monday at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow.

"They've lost an ability to influence people around the world and all the people here at COP — the same way, I would argue, with regard to Russia," Biden said.

Responding to Biden's remarks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Wednesday said China's response to climate change "is concrete" and pointed to recent achievements in reforestation and renewable energy.

Friction in bilateral relations is complicating cooperation on climate change between the two countries, said Shi Yinhong, professor of international relations at Beijing's Renmin University.

Biden has taken COP26 as "an important occasion for China and the U.S. to compete for global influence, ideology and image," said Shi, who attributed Xi's absence from the meetings to China's "zero tolerance" approach to dealing with the pandemic, which has been largely controlled within the country.

Despite not leaving China, Xi has remained in contact with foreign heads of state through virtual meetings, said Zhao Kejin, who teaches international relations at Beijing's Tsinghua University.

The U.S. wants Chinese cooperation in responding to climate change, but Beijing is also looking for changes in U.S. policy, including its support for the self-governing island of Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, Zhao said.

"This result was produced by the U.S. failing to integrate ties with China into its overall multilateral relationships," Zhao said.

Even without Xi's presence, China is an active participant in the Glasgow climate conference, with senior



economics official and top climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua leading the Chinese delegation during the two weeks of meetings. Xie told reporters in Glasgow that China hopes nations will continue working toward the goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday said Xi's absence "doesn't mean the Chinese are not engaging" in the fight against climate change, but added that he wants China to do more to slash carbon emissions.

Johnson told reporters that China had already made a "substantial" commitment and praised Beijing's decision to end financing for overseas coal plants, though not yet at home.

## **UN report says Ethiopia's war marked by 'extreme brutality'**

By JAMEY KEATEN and CARA ANNA Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. human rights chief said Wednesday that Ethiopia's yearlong war has been marked by "extreme brutality" as a joint investigation into alleged atrocities faulted all sides for committing abuses, and "the big numbers of violations" are linked to Ethiopian forces and those from neighboring Eritrea.

The investigation was hampered by authorities' intimidation and restrictions and didn't visit some of the war's worst-affected locations. It said all combatants have committed abuses which may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The report, a rare collaboration by the U.N. human rights office with the government-created Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, was released a day before the war's one-year mark and as Africa's second most populous country enters a new state of emergency with rival Tigray forces threatening the capital.

The U.N. told The Associated Press the collaboration was necessary for its team to gain access to a troubled region that Ethiopian authorities have largely prevented journalists, rights groups and other observers from entering.

The conflict that erupted in Ethiopia's Tigray region has killed thousands of people since the government of Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed allowed soldiers from Eritrea to invade Tigray and join Ethiopian forces in fighting the Tigray forces who long dominated the national government before Abiy took office. Ethnic Tigrayans across the country have since reported being targeted with arbitrary detentions, while civilians in Tigray have described gang rapes, famine and mass expulsions.

In western Tigray, claimed by forces from the neighboring Amhara region, "it was apparent that the Tigrayans had left most of the areas, as it was difficult to find Tigrayans to interview," the report said.

The joint investigation covers events until late June when the Tigray forces regained much of their region, but it failed to visit some of the deadliest sites of the war, including the city of Axum, because of security and other obstacles. Notably, the report said, obstacles included the Ethiopian government's failure to release satellite phones procured for the investigation — crucial tools as phone and internet service are cut off in Tigray.

The investigation breaks little new ground and confirms in general the abuses described by witnesses throughout the war. But it gives little sense of scale, saying only that the more than 1,300 rapes reported to authorities are likely far fewer than the real number.

Despite the report's shortcomings, the prime minister's office said in a statement that it "clearly established the claim of genocide as false and utterly lacking of any factual basis." The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission chief Daniel Bekele said the investigation didn't identify violations amounting to genocide, but the U.N. didn't go that far.

The prime minister's statement noted "serious reservations" about the report but claimed it laid "sinister allegations to rest." And it acknowledged the need to "redouble our efforts" to hold perpetrators accountable. A high-level task force will be formed, it said.

Among the investigation's findings: Several Ethiopian military camps were used to torture captured Tigray forces or civilians suspected of supporting them. Others were detained in "secret locations" and military camps across the country, with detentions arbitrary in many cases. Tigray forces detained some ethnic

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 25 of 82

Amhara civilians in western Tigray in the early days of the war on suspicion of supporting the military, and in some cases tortured them.

"The Tigray conflict has been marked by extreme brutality. The gravity and seriousness of the violations and abuses we have documented underscore the need to hold perpetrators accountable," said Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights. Reports of abuses such as summary executions in Tigray continue, she said.

And yet the report gives little sign that Eritrean soldiers were responsible for many of the atrocities, as witnesses have alleged. Until March, Ethiopia's prime minister denied they were even in the country.

Bachelet told reporters that while the report doesn't explicitly mention Ethiopian and Eritrean forces were responsible for the majority of the violations, "I would say that the big numbers of violations of human rights are linked to the Ethiopian and Eritrean defense forces." She also noted "disturbing suggestions of ethnically motivated violence" that warrant further investigation. She denied the probe came under government pressure.

Ethiopia's government imposed a blockade on Tigray since the Tigray forces regained control in June, cutting off almost all access for commercial goods and humanitarian aid. That followed large-scale looting and destruction of food and crops that "has had a severe socioeconomic impact on the civilian population," the report says. In addition, some camps for displaced people didn't receive food rations for months.

The investigation, however, "could not confirm deliberate or willful denial of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Tigray or the use of starvation as a weapon of war." It called for further investigation.

In a separate statement on events since the investigation, Bachelet expressed deep concern over the state of emergency Ethiopia's government imposed Tuesday with "sweeping powers" of detention and military conscription.

She also said her office has received reports of a "highly organized system" of detaining thousands of Tigrayans in western Tigray in recent months that now encompasses "the general civilian population."

The Tigray forces since June have moved into the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions, and Bachelet noted an increasing number of allegations of abuses committed by them, including rapes.

The joint investigation, based on more than 260 interviews with victims and witnesses, said it had received no response from Eritrea's government or Amhara regional officials. Eritrea's information minister tweeted Wednesday that Eritrea rejects the report's credibility.

The Tigray external affairs office in a statement Wednesday called the participation of the EHRC "an affront to the notion of impartiality" and said the report was "fraught with problems." The report acknowledged that the presence of EHRC staffers at times inhibited interviews.

The investigation said Ethiopia's government should "consider" setting up a court to ensure accountability, and expressed concern that "investigations conducted by Ethiopian national institutions do not match the scope and breadth of the violations it has identified."

"We don't have enough transparency," Bachelet said.

Cara Anna reported from Nairobi, Kenya.

## UK tells private sector it must invest big to save planet

By FRANK JORDANS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — Britain called Wednesday for the world's financial industry to channel its vast funds towards greener investments to ensure that global efforts to curb global warming succeed.

Treasury chief Rishi Sunak said that while the U.K. government is providing fresh financing to help poor countries cope with climate change, "public investment alone isn't enough."

Speaking at the U.N. climate summit in the Scottish city of Glasgow, Sunak said U.K. financial institutions and publicly traded companies will be required to publish plans detailing how green their investments and their own businesses are — in order to ensure they're actually contributing to reductions in global warming.

As home to the City of London, one of the world's major financial centers, the U.K. "has a responsibility

to lead the way" in financing those and other efforts to fight global warming, said Sunak.

The push for greener investments also represents a major opportunity. The measure is part of a plan that aims to create "the world's first net-zero aligned financial center" to meet the demands of those seeking to profit from the drive toward a low-carbon economy, Sunak said.

Scores of countries, including Britain, have announced plans to cut their greenhouse gas emissions to "net zero" in coming decades to help curb man-made climate change.

Cities, states and companies have also embraced the goal, which means limiting greenhouse gas emissions to the amount that can be absorbed again through natural or artificial means. Experts caution that there are various ways to calculate "net zero" — and deciding on one standard definition is one of the big challenges going forward.

Sunak called for a "historic wall of capital" to help countries, companies and cities meet their net-zero goals — but poor nations have noted angrily that Britain and other wealthy countries failed to meet their commitment to provide \$100 billion a year to finance climate-related projects in the developing world by 2020.

That target is now expected to be met in 2023.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen described climate change as both a huge financial challenge, with a price tag of \$100 trillion, and "the greatest economic opportunity of our time."

"Many renewables are now cheaper than carbon-based fuel alternatives and have lower long-term operating costs," she said. "In many cases, it's simply cost effective to go green."

U.S. President Joe Biden issued an executive order earlier this year aimed at requiring companies to disclose climate-related financial risks.

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Kirka reported from London.

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Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>.

## **In Virginia, GOP finds new playbook — not easily replicated**

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

In a stunning victory in Virginia and a strong showing in New Jersey, the Republican Party has fashioned a playbook that could repair the GOP's tarnished image in swing states and suburban districts across the nation.

But it is a formula that may be difficult to replicate on a broad scale in next year's midterm elections.

Republican businessman Glenn Youngkin, virtually unknown a year ago, won the Virginia governor's race early Wednesday by running away from the national Republican Party and its most prominent leaders — especially Donald Trump.

The Virginia Republican spent the closing months of his campaign avoiding the divisive issues that most animate Trump's base, including the baseless prospect of election fraud. And Youngkin benefited from running against former Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a political insider with a muddled message.

"Candidates matter," Youngkin chief strategist Jeff Roe said. "We weren't defined by Obama, we weren't defined by Trump, we were defined by Glenn."

With a clear enthusiasm advantage on the right, Democrats should worry that the Republican victory in Virginia and a closer-than-expected governor's race in New Jersey — which remained virtually deadlocked early Wednesday — could signal an anti-Democrat wave in 2022.

Democrats lost 63 seats in the House and six in the Senate the year after Republican Bob McDonnell won the Virginia governor's race in 2009, the last Republican to win a statewide contest. This year, President Joe Biden's sagging numbers and Democratic dysfunction on Capitol Hill have added to the traditional prevailing winds that plague the party in the White House.

But to take advantage of such a climate in Tuesday's elections, Republicans in Virginia — and New Jersey, to some extent — followed a strategy that relied on placating Trump's base while avoiding Trump and his



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 27 of 82

brand of politics. And in a surprise move, Trump cooperated by keeping a low profile, participating only in remote call-in appearances and sending emails late in the race to his supporters.

In New Jersey, Republican Jack Ciattarelli was locked in a tight race with incumbent Gov. Phil Murphy in a state Biden carried by 16 points a year ago. The New Jersey Republican distanced himself from Trump in the election's closing weeks, having once described him as an embarrassment who was unfit to serve as president. While Trump encouraged Virginia voters to support Youngkin on the eve of the election, he said nothing about Ciattarelli.

Meanwhile, as Democrats in Virginia and New Jersey railed against Trump, the Republican candidates tapped into just enough pro-Trump-style grievance to energize the former president's base. And Youngkin, in particular, offered an uplifting message focused on "kitchen-table" issues — education chief among them — that gave Trump-weary Republicans and independents permission to vote GOP again.

Perhaps to avoid turning Trump against them, Youngkin's team worked to keep all high-profile Republicans out of the state. Ambitious GOP surrogates actively politicking in other states, including Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, played no significant role in Virginia.

But as the undisputed head of today's GOP, Trump's muted role loomed above the others.

That worked out well for Youngkin, who earned favorable ratings from about half of Virginia voters compared with Trump, who earned a "very" unfavorable rating from about half of the electorate, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of voters.

Trump's pugilistic leadership alienated women and suburban voters in Virginia and across the country in 2020, giving Biden a 10-point victory in the state and allowing Democrats to take control of Congress and the White House.

Whether Republicans can maintain this week's success in the 2022 midterms — where the most competitive races will be in traditional swing states and moderate districts — may depend on whether Trump is content to remain an afterthought in national politics, even as he moves toward a 2024 presidential run.

That's not likely.

Already, Trump is actively involved in key Senate races in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Arizona and North Carolina, where Republican candidates are fighting each other for his support. Most are parroting Trump's rhetoric about "election integrity," code for false claims of election fraud. And Trump's link to GOP House candidates may be even stronger: 121 House Republicans are on record voting against certifying his loss in the 2020 election.

After briefly raising concerns about election integrity in the Republican primary fight this spring, Youngkin landed on a far less controversial policy that would help him unify both Trump's fiery base and anti-Trump suburban voters: education.

Taking a page from Democrats, the Virginia Republican promised to boost teacher pay and spend more on local schools than ever before. To appeal to Trump's base, he railed against "critical race theory," an academic framework that isn't taught in Virginia schools, but centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people.

But the broader issue of education didn't begin to resonate more intensely until McAuliffe quipped during a late-September debate that, "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach."

The comment, taken out of context during a discussion about banning books, became a centerpiece of Youngkin's campaign, which quickly launched a "Parents Matter" effort reinforced by heavy advertising spending. The issue tapped into suburban parents' deep frustration with pandemic-related forced school closures, which extended across the state for much of last year.

"That struck a nerve with parents, including me," said Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel, suggesting the issue could help Republicans in the future. "Across the country, I think the suburbs are coming back to us."

Overall, 14% of Virginia voters said education was the most important issue facing the state, according to VoteCast. About twice as many cited economy and jobs, while 17% named COVID-19. Voters who

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 28 of 82

ranked the economy and education as the top issues were more likely to back Youngkin over McAuliffe. Democrats quickly explained away their struggles by pointing to historical patterns. Indeed, only once in the last 40 years has a Virginia candidate won the governor's race when their party held the White House. And not since 1977 has a New Jersey Democrat won a second consecutive term.

But they also glossed over their candidates' obvious shortcomings.

Democrats privately acknowledged they may have underestimated the extent to which voters continue to dislike political insiders in the post-Trump era. Murphy was seeking his second term, while McAuliffe spent years as a top political fundraiser for Bill and Hillary Clinton before being elected Virginia governor in 2013.

And as a 64-year-old white man, he struggled to energize young people and voters of color who animate the base of today's Democratic Party.

But above all, the Democrats' message simply was insufficient to generate energy with a fatigued Democratic electorate.

The former governor largely ignored his own accomplishments as governor — and his plans for the state if elected again — and focused the bulk of his record fundraising haul on linking Youngkin to Trump. It didn't help that Youngkin had spent millions of dollars over the summer running positive TV ads casting himself as an affable suburban dad.

While Democrats across the country were badly shaken by Tuesday's results, Biden pollster John Anzalone cautioned against reading too much into the off-year elections.

He predicted that Democrats would have a much more positive message for voters for the 2022 midterms highlighting the policies they adopted to help working families and seniors. That assumes, of course, that Democrats in Congress can come together to enact Biden's agenda.

"Underestimate us today ... at your own risk," Anzalone said.

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Peoples has been covering national politics for AP since 2011.

## Italy-Croatia fight over Prosecco name gets ready to pop

By COLLEEN BARRY AP Business Writer

PROSECCO, Italy (AP) — On tiny pockets of terraced terrain overlooking a bay shared by Italy, Slovenia and Croatia, Milos Skabar is reviving a centuries-old winemaking tradition known as Prosekar, which shares roots with its better-known bubbly cousin, Prosecco.

But this humble fizzy blend, virtually unknown beyond the Italian port city of Trieste where it's made on a strip of land between the Adriatic Sea and Slovenia, is caught up in a dispute that's about to pop: The makers of Italy's hugely popular sparkling wine Prosecco are fighting to prevent Croatian winemakers from using the name Prosek for their sweet dessert wine.

The handful of Prosekar makers hope to use their ties to Prosecco's birthplace, just above Trieste, to gain greater recognition for their wine but worry their name is at risk, too.

"Prosekar wine is the original, because it was born 300 years before Prosecco," said Skabar, surveying his vineyard with a port view, the hills of Slovenia a dark green line in the distance. "So, it is the father of Prosekar, Prosecco, Prosek and all the rest."

At stake in the battle is not only the sanctity of Prosecco, the world's top-selling wine, but also the European Union's system of geographical designations created to guarantee the distinctiveness and quality of artisanal food, wine and spirits, defenders say. That market is worth nearly 75 billion euros (\$87 billion) annually — half of it in wines, according to a 2020 study by the European Commission, the EU's executive branch.

The Italian government has pledged to defend Prosecco's name, and other makers of protected products with distinct geographic roots, from Italy's Parmigiano Reggiano cheese to France's Champagne, are mobilizing as the European Commission prepares to deliberate on Croatia's petition to label its niche wine with the traditional Prosek name.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 29 of 82

"The problem for us is not that these producers, who make a very small number of bottles, enter our market. But it is the confusion it could generate among consumers," said Luca Giavi, general director of the Prosecco DOC consortium, which promotes Prosecco and assures the quality of wines under the EU's "denomination of controlled origin" designation.

Prosecco has annual sales of 2.4 billion euros (\$2.8 billion), most of it exported. "Everyone perceives the situation as a threat to our success," producer Stefano Zanette said, with worldwide buyers possibly not able to distinguish between the similar names.

Croatia argues that the Prosek name and tradition is centuries old, predating Prosecco's protections in the EU system, and that its place as a dessert wine makes it distinct from Prosecco.

"Consumers will not be confused by this," Ladislav Ilcic, a Croatian member of the European Parliament, said in a recent debate. "Prosek should legitimately receive the protected denomination of origin, and producers should have full access to markets."

The Brussels-based European Federation of Origin Wines is preparing a brief to support Italy. It believes the European Commission's decision to hear the case has defied its own battle to get other nations and trading blocs to recognize the EU's system of geographic designations.

The dispute, which will be decided in the coming months, is likely to turn on Prosecco's origin story, emanating from the bilingual Italian village of Prosecco near the Slovenian border above Trieste, where winemaking once flourished.

It is here, say the ethnic Slovene Italians who make Prosekar, that the grape known as Glera — the basis of both Prosecco and Prosekar — originated.

But besides common etymological roots, Prosekar, Prosecco and Prosek have little in common.

Prosecco, made predominantly from the Glera grape, is produced by three consortia spanning nine Italian provinces in alpine foothills that curve along the Adriatic Sea. They put out more than 550 million bottles a year.

Prosek is a sweet wine made in Dalmatia with dried native Croatian grapes, none of them Glera, and may be red or white.

Prosekar, on the other hand, is an equal blend of Glera and two other grapes, made by fewer than a dozen micro-producers. In decades past, Prosekar was mainly produced at home and shared among friends, family and neighbors, often served from ad-hoc taverns in private houses.

Prosecco makers moved to protect their coveted geographical indication 12 years ago, after seeing winemakers in northeast Italy lose the right to use the label Tocai in a European decision that protected wines produced in Hungary's Tokaji region. In Italy, Tocai was simply the name of the grape variety, with no geographic ties. The decision gutted the makers of Friuli Tocai, who struggled to find a market with a new name: Friulano.

Both the Italian and Croatian regions tussling over the Prosecco name shared a history of Venetian and then Austro-Hungarian control, spanning the period when Prosecco migrated northwest, into present-day Italy, and south, along Croatia's Dalmatian coast.

Prosecco defenders say the name Prosek has never been uniformly applied and came to mean even a generic form of dessert wine.

Written documents link the village of Prosecco to wine as early as the 1600s and 1700s, when wines were called "of Prosecco" to indicate their village of origin, wine historian Stefano Cosma said. "By the 1800s, it was already a sparkling wine," he said.

In present-day Prosecco, Prosekar winemakers hope that because the EU has included the village itself in the geographic territory for the protected wine, they might have a shot at expanding their market for Prosekar, which they say was first made in 1548.

But because their wine has not earned the EU designation, Prosekar producers are banned as much as Prosek makers from using their name. They so far haven't been challenged as long as they don't sell beyond Trieste, said Andrej Bole, a sixth-generation Prosekar producer.

"We are outlaws," Bole said. But "for now, we are tolerated."



They are working with the Prosecco consortium to help their wine earn the coveted origin insignia, which is awarded with each vintage. The question of legally using the Prosecco name won't be decided until that hurdle is cleared, the head of the consortium said.

"We have to look at the European norms," Giavi said. "But there is that option, which we don't mind."

## Bangladesh's villages bear the brutal cost of climate change

By JULHAS ALAM and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

SHYAMNAGAR, Bangladesh (AP) — With each tide, Abdus Satter watches the sea erode a little more of his life.

His village of Bonnotola in southwestern Bangladesh, with its muddy roads and tin-roofed houses, was once home to over 2,000 people. Most were farmers like the 58-year-old Satter. Then the rising seas poisoned the soil with salt water. Two cyclones in the last two years destroyed the mud embankments that shielded the village from tidal waves.

Now, only 480 people remain, with the rest rendered homeless by the sea.

The effects of global warming — particularly increased cyclones, and coastal and tidal flooding that bring salt water further inland — are devastating Bangladesh and destroying the livelihoods of millions, said Mohammad Shamsuddoha, chief executive of the nonprofit Center for Participatory Research Development.

"It's a grave concern for a country like Bangladesh," he said, adding that projections show some 30 million people may be displaced from the country's coastal regions.

With world leaders gathered in Glasgow, Scotland, for a U.N. climate conference this week, countries like Bangladesh are pressing for more financial support to cope with global warming.

A decade-old deal for rich countries to give poor nations \$100 billion each year to switch to clean energy and adapt to climate change has not been fulfilled. Even the money that is being provided — about \$80 billion in 2019 — is spread too thin to make much of a difference on the ground.

In Gabura, another village in the Bengal River delta, Nazma Khatun, 43, has been struggling to feed her two daughters. Half of her meager daily income — less than \$3 from sewing and selling cloth — goes toward medicine for skin diseases she says everyone in the village suffers from due to rising sea levels, which have contaminated land and water.

"We have water everywhere, but we don't have a drop any more to drink from ponds or wells," she said.

This land was once fertile. Khatun said mango and jackfruit used to flourish, and everyone grew vegetables in their backyard, relying on ponds, rivers and wells for drinking water.

"Now it's impossible. See the pond here, fresh water is gone," she said.

In 1973, 833,000 hectares (3,216 square miles) of land was affected by the encroaching sea water, accelerated by more frequent cyclones and higher tides that have contaminated water supplies. That's bigger than the U.S. state of Delaware.

This grew to 1.02 million hectares (3,938 square miles) in 2000, and 1.056 million hectares (4,077 square miles) in 2009, according to Bangladesh's Soil Resources Development Institute. Salinity in soil has increased by 26% over the past 35 years.

At Bonbibi Tola village, women gather daily at a hand-pump well to collect water for cooking and drinking. The women walk up to 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) hauling water daily.

But this won't last long. Wells in the region only have fresh water in the months after monsoon rains. In the summer — when the flow from Himalayan rivers decreases — fresh water becomes scarce, said one of the women, Maheswari Halder.

"This is the fate we all surrender to," she said.

The three villages lie in Bangladesh's southwestern Shyamnagar region, home to 400,000 people. Officials say the government lacks funding for additional desalination plants to convert salt water into fresh water.

"The area needs maybe 500 desalination plants. But we've only 50 or so," said Alamgir Kabir, director of a local NGO, the Nawabenki Ganomukhi Foundation.

Despite seeing its gross domestic product rise from \$6.2 billion in 1972 to \$305 billion in 2019, Ban-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 31 of 82

gladesh can't pay the cost of global warming on its own. There are only six countries in the world more impacted by climate change from 2000 to 2019, according to the 2021 Climate Change Performance Index by nonprofit Germanwatch. In those years, Bangladesh lost 0.41% of its gross domestic product due to climate change, and a single cyclone in 2019 caused losses of \$8.1 billion,

Nor should it, says Abul Kalam Azad, the country's special envoy to the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of nations most at risk from the impacts predicted of a hotter future. Bangladesh, a country of about 160 million, has historically contributed a fraction of the world's emissions, and yet the country is being devastated by climate change, he said.

Azad says aid in the form of high-cost loans would be of no use, but low-cost loans combined with grants would help.

Environmental campaigners say a sea change is needed in the international debate on climate aid to ensure a steady increase in funding to poor, vulnerable nations from a variety of public and private sources.

"You also need to make sure that at least 50% of the funds go into adaptation (to climate change) because people are on the front line," said Jennifer Morgan, the head of Greenpeace International.

Speaking before fellow leaders Monday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh raised the thorny issue of major polluters paying compensation for the destruction caused by global warming.

"The issue of loss and damage must be addressed, including global sharing of responsibility for climate migrants and those displaced by sea-level rise, salinity increase, river erosion, floods, droughts," she said.

The 2015 Paris accord already contains a provision for this. Article 8 states that parties to the pact, "recognize the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, and the role of sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage."

"Unfortunately, there hasn't been a single penny paid for loss and damage," Saleemul Huq, director of the Bangladesh-based International Centre for Climate Change and Development, said in a recent documentary.

Huq argues that a compensation fund for oil spills offers a template for how big polluters, particularly fossil fuel companies, could provide funding to nations whose islands have been washed away or farms turned to desert as a result of global warming.

Rich countries such as the United States are wary of any suggestion that they might be legally liable for their decades-long greenhouse gas emissions still lingering in the atmosphere.

But addressing such issues in Glasgow will be critical, said Huq. "Otherwise, the developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable countries, will deem the (conference) a failure."

For Satter, it may already be too late.

Every morning, waves gush into his home and soon he, his wife and two sons will have to flee. The sea has snatched away their future and their past, he said, pointing to a muddy trench that was once a courtyard where his parents' graves lay.

"It's just a matter of time," he said.

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Ghosal reported from New Delhi. Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

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## 'My name is Cleo': Police weep upon rescuing Australian girl

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Police smashed their way into a suburban house on Wednesday and rescued a 4-year-old girl whose disappearance from her family's camping tent on Australia's remote west coast more than two weeks ago both horrified and captivated the nation.

Officials wept with relief after seeing body camera video of a police officer scooping up the girl, Cleo

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 32 of 82

Smith, and hearing her say, "My name is Cleo." A 36-year-old local man was arrested after the late-night raid at the house in the coastal town of Carnarvon, which followed a tip to police on Tuesday.

The girl was reunited with her mother Ellie Smith and stepfather Jake Gliddon soon after her rescue. "Our family is whole again," the mother said on social media.

Western Australia state Police Commissioner Chris Dawson would not detail what the girl had gone through. She is "as well as you can expect," Dawson said. "This has been an ordeal. I won't go into any more details, other than to say we're so thankful she's alive."

Dawson said "dogged, methodical police work" led to her being found.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison reacted from the United Arab Emirates on his way home from Scotland, thanking police for finding Cleo and supporting her family.

"It's every parent's worst nightmare. The fact that that nightmare has come to an end and our worst fears were not realized is just a huge relief, a moment for great joy," Morrison told reporters.

"This particular case, obviously, has captured the hearts of Australians as we felt such terrible sorrow for the family," he added.

Cleo's family lives in Carnarvon, a community of 5,000 people, and the girl had disappeared with her sleeping bag on the second day of a family camping trip at Blowholes Campground, 75 kilometers (47 miles) north of Carnarvon, on Oct. 16.

A massive land and sea search was initially mounted in the sparsely populated region on the assumption that she had wandered from the tent. But more evidence began to support an abduction.

A vehicle was reported speeding away from the area in the dark hours of the morning. A zipper on a flap of the tent compartment where Cleo and her sister were sleeping was too high for the girl to have reached.

Forensic scientists examined the exterior of the family's home to see if a predator had stalked Cleo and attempted to break in.

And a distraught Ellie Smith made emotional public appeals for information on her daughter's whereabouts that were broadcast across Australia.

New South Wales Police Commissioner Mick Fuller said Dawson told him he had broken down in tears when she was found.

Fuller had called across the country from Sydney on the east coast, to Perth in the west, to congratulate Dawson on the outcome.

"He broke down and cried, which for a veteran in policing, you rarely see that," Fuller told Sydney Radio 2GB. "It speaks volumes in terms of the amount of effort they put into finding her."

"Whilst we were all hoping and praying as the days went on, I think the chances of finding her alive were so slim," he added.

Dawson said body camera video of four police officers breaking into the house with a search warrant and finding the girl made him emotional.

"It's a really joyous occasion. We don't always get these sort of outcomes, and while we were very, very concerned, we didn't lose hope," Dawson said.

Western Australia Police Deputy Commissioner Col Blanch described seeing seasoned detectives "openly crying with relief."

"We were ... looking for a needle in a haystack and we found it," Blanch told Perth Radio 6PR.

"When she said, 'My name is Cleo,' I don't think there was a dry eye in the house," Blanch said, quoting the girl's words to the police officer who picked her up in his arms.

"To see Cleo rescued this morning, I'm speechless," Blanch added.

The state government had offered a 1 million Australian dollar (\$743,000) reward for information five days after her disappearance, but Blanch said the money was not expected to be claimed.

Police had received intelligence on Tuesday guiding them to the house, but the breakthrough was the result of investigators piecing evidence together, Blanch said.

"There were lots of things. There were car movements, there were phone movements, there were antecedents of people," he said.

Carnarvon Shire President Eddie Jones said the local community would be "elated, thankful" when they heard the good news.

"I'm beyond relieved. The nightmare is now finally over for Cleo and her family," Western Australian Premier Mark McGowan posted on social media.

## In Iraq, election fraud claims fuel uncertainty, divisions

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — More than three weeks after Iraqis voted in parliament elections, pro-Iran Shiite militias that emerged as the biggest losers are still rejecting the outcome of the vote, thrusting the country into uncertainty and political crisis.

Militia supporters have pitched tents near the entrance to Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone in an ongoing sit-in, threatening violence unless their grievances are addressed.

The unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud are casting a shadow over an election that was praised by the United States, the U.N. Security Council and others for being the smoothest in years and without major technical glitches. The standoff is also increasing tensions among rival Shiite factions that could reflect on the street and threaten Iraq's newfound relative stability.

The Oct. 10 vote was held months ahead of schedule in response to mass protests in late 2019 that saw tens of thousands of people in Baghdad and predominantly Shiite southern provinces rally against endemic corruption, poor services and unemployment. They also protested against the heavy-handed interference of neighboring Iran in Iraq's affairs through Iran-backed militias.

The election results further exposed the dangerous political divisions among Shiite factions. Shiite Muslims make up the majority of Iraq's estimated 40 million people.

The biggest election gains were made by influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who won 73 out of 329 parliament seats. While he maintains good relations with Iran, al-Sadr publicly opposes external interference in Iraq's affairs. The Taqadum party led by Parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi, a Sunni, came second with 37 seats, while former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law bloc won 35 seats.

Meanwhile, the Iran-backed Fatah Alliance that represents the Shiite paramilitary group known as the Popular Mobilization Forces lost two-thirds of its parliament seats, dropping from 48 to around 16 — a stunning defeat. The alliance had made big gains after participating in elections for the first time in 2018. At the time, it was riding a wave of popularity after playing a major role, alongside Iraqi security forces and a U.S.-led coalition, in the defeat of Islamic State group extremists across the country in 2017.

But the mood changed. Some began questioning the need for the PMF, an armed militia force that increasingly challenged the state's authority. The force itself has splintered, with some factions aligned with top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani breaking away. The militias also lost some popularity in the past two years, alienating many after taking part in brutally suppressing the youth-led protest movement in late 2019 and early 2020.

"Iraq is entering a new phase in its political history that the PMF and its Iranian sponsors are ill-equipped to manage, one in which coercive power may not be sufficient," wrote Ranj Alaaldin, a nonresident fellow at Brookings Institution, "Together with Iran, the PMF is learning the hard way that power through the barrel of a gun is not sustainable."

Election results reflected not only the losses of Iran-allied parties. They showed that even politicians who distanced themselves from Tehran several years ago, such as former Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi and cleric Ammar al-Hakim, fared poorly, said political analyst Tamer Badawi, an associate fellow with the Bonn-based CARPO research center.

"The street's backlash is multilayered and broadly against old guard parties' inability to provide benefits and good governance," said Badawi. He said many Iraqis also blame Iran for Iraq's dire situation.

It's unclear when the final election results will be announced. The higher election committee is currently looking into more than a thousand appeals, although results are not likely to change significantly.

Iraqi troops have been on alert since the election, as militia members and their supporters take to the



street, denouncing the election as a fraud and raising the prospect of clashes. The demonstrators have chanted slogans against the U.S. and denounced U.N. officials, who monitored the election.

The protests appear to be aimed at pressuring al-Sadr to ensure that Iran-aligned factions are part of the next Cabinet, regardless of the number of seats they won. Since it got the largest number of seats, al-Sadr's bloc will seek coalition partners and name the prime minister.

"If they are outside of the government, they will lose financial resources and this will weaken them," a senior Shiite official said, adding that Fatah Alliance leaders were stunned by their electoral loss. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to divulge sensitive information.

Al-Sadr has kept quiet about plans for coalition negotiations, pending final results. But he has announced the closure of the offices of his Saraya al-Salam fighters in various provinces — a largely symbolic move apparently meant to show he is serious about bringing all arms under state control. He has also called for new dialogue about the ongoing American troop presence and condemned strikes against diplomatic missions that were believed to have been carried out by PMF groups.

Shiite factions will need to find some common ground to prevent a resurgence of IS, a Sunni group, Badawi said. Last week, suspected IS militants attacked a predominantly Shiite village in Diyala province, killing 11 civilians and spurring a revenge attack on a nearby Sunni village.

But analysts say the threats from Fatah-linked groups will likely persist until they reach a power-sharing deal with al-Sadr.

## COVID-19 vaccine campaign expands to elementary-age children

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

The U.S. enters a new phase Wednesday in its COVID-19 vaccination campaign, with shots now available to millions of elementary-age children in what health officials hailed as a major breakthrough after more than 18 months of illness, hospitalizations, deaths and disrupted education.

With the federal government promising enough vaccine to protect the nation's 28 million kids ages 5-11, pediatricians' offices, pharmacies, hospitals, schools and health clinics were poised to begin the shots after the final OK late Tuesday.

"This is not going to be 'The Hunger Games,'" said Dr. Allison Arwady, Chicago's public health commissioner, referring to the chaotic early national rollout of adult vaccines nearly a year ago. Chicago expected to have nearly enough vaccine in just the first week for nearly half of its 210,000 school-aged children, and many more doses later on.

"Our goal is to be ready, have a calm rollout," Arwady said.

Kid-sized doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine cleared two final hurdles Tuesday — a recommendation from CDC advisers followed by a green light from Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The actions mean sleepovers, playdates and family get-togethers put off for more than a year will be back on the agenda for many kids, along with a chance for fewer school interruptions.

"There are children in the second grade who have never experienced a normal school year," Walensky said. "Pediatric vaccination has the power to help us change all of that."

Thousands of pediatricians pre-ordered doses, and Pfizer began shipments soon after the Food and Drug Administration's decision Friday to authorize emergency use. Pfizer said it expects to make 19,000 shipments totaling about 11 million doses in the next several days, and that millions more will be available to order on a weekly basis.

The vaccine — one-third the dose given to older children and adults and administered with kid-sized needles — requires two doses three weeks apart, plus two more weeks for full protection to kick in. That means children who get vaccinated before Thanksgiving will be covered by Christmas.

"This is a big milestone for 5- to 11-year-olds because they make up nearly 40% of children under 18," said Dr. Jennifer Shu, a Decatur, Georgia, pediatrician, who received her first shipment Tuesday morning.

"The timing before winter holidays is very fortunate," she added. "This age group will be able to spend

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 35 of 82

holidays with friends and family more safely than they have been able to since the start of the pandemic.”

Kathy Zordan, 44, an insurance auditor in Morton Grove, Illinois, said she was “super excited” for her kindergartner, 5-year-old Liam.

“I told him, ‘Mommy got two shots, Daddy got two shots. This is why people are wearing masks. Hopefully at some point we don’t have to keep wearing the mask. You’re going to get the shots.’”

“He goes to school, he’s among hundreds of other kids every single day and I want him to have this protection,” Zordan added.

Many locations planned mass vaccination events in coming days. And while many pediatricians’ offices were expecting strong demand at least initially, almost two-thirds of parents recently polled by the Kaiser Family Foundation said they would either wait or not seek out the vaccines for their kids.

Hannah Hause, a Colorado mother of four children ages 2, 5, 7 and 8, is among those not in any rush. She’s vaccinated but wants more time to see how the child vaccines play out and are studied in the larger childhood population.

“It’s not studied long-term. It just makes me nervous because that’s my whole world,” she said of her children.

“As long as I can wait, I will wait,” she said.

Walensky said she understood parents’ fears but said “we’ve taken the time to get this right.” She said clinical trials in children showed “no severe events” associated with the vaccine.

“The benefits of this vaccine so much outweigh the risks of COVID itself,” Walensky told “CBS Mornings” on Wednesday.

Government authorities said pediatricians and family doctors, whom parents depend on to give routine childhood vaccinations, could help build trust.

Dr. Ada Stewart, a Black family physician in Columbia, South Carolina, works at a clinic for underserved patients that has been giving COVID-19 shots to grandparents, parents and teens and said she’s ready to add younger children to the mix. She’s seen the toll the virus has taken on them — not just in family illness and death but with school disruptions, slipping grades and mental strain.

School closures throughout the pandemic have disproportionately burdened children of color, widening academic gaps and worsening mental health, according to data presented Tuesday to CDC advisers. That data showed more than 2,000 COVID-related school closures in just the first two months of the current school year. Advocates say getting school-aged kids vaccinated will reduce those disruptions.

But Stewart thinks demand for kids’ shots will be mixed.

“Because many of my patients are Black, Indigenous and people of color, I’ve seen the full spectrum,” from parents eager to get their children vaccinated to those who are more hesitant “because of a history of mistrust in the medical community,” said Stewart, past president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Her message to both is the same: “Vaccines work, they’re safe, they’re effective and they save lives,” she said. “The more individuals that we can get vaccinated including our children, the sooner we will be able to get out of this pandemic.”

A Pfizer study of 2,268 children found the vaccine was almost 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infections. The FDA examined 3,100 vaccinated kids in concluding the shots are safe.

Some skeptics have questioned the need for kids to get vaccinated since they are less likely than adults to develop severe COVID-19. But with the delta variant, they get infected and transmit “just as readily as adults do,” Dr. Anthony Fauci said at a recent White House briefing.

Since the pandemic began, at least 94 children aged 5 to 11 have died from COVID-19, more than 8,300 have been hospitalized and over 5,000 have developed a serious inflammatory condition linked to the coronavirus. Black and Latino youngsters and those with chronic conditions are among the hardest hit.

But while some health authorities say minorities should be over-represented in COVID-19 vaccine studies because they are disproportionately affected by the virus, nearly 80% of kids in Pfizer’s study were white. Black youngsters totaled 6%, Latinos 21%, Asians 6% and less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska or Hawaii natives.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 36 of 82

Infected kids have contributed to the U.S. toll — almost 46 million infections and more than 740,000 deaths.

Lindsay Whelan, a nurse-administrator who helped plan the rollout of kids' shots at Children's Physicians clinics in the Omaha, Nebraska, area, said being a part of the nation's first COVID-19 vaccination program "makes us proud."

With this new round of shots, only one of her six boys will remain unvaccinated, her 4-year-old. Pfizer and Moderna are studying shots in kids that age and younger and Pfizer has said its results may come before year's end.

The shots are important "for protecting them all, getting everybody back to normal, and providing community protection," Whelan said.

Patty Nieberg contributed from Denver.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at @LindseyTanner.

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## Column: A most improbable team brings Atlanta a title

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Columnist

During three decades of nearly uninterrupted excellence, there were so many Atlanta Braves teams that seemed more championship worthy than this one.

The 1993 squad chased down the San Francisco Giants to win one of baseball's last great division races. The '96 group wiped out the New York pinstripers in the first two games of the World Series at Yankee Stadium. The '97, '98 and '99 teams all won more than 100 games.

Yet it was these Braves -- who didn't climb above .500 until early August, who endured a devastating rash of injuries and other setbacks, who had to wheel and deal ahead of the trade deadline to assemble a whole new outfield — who finally brought the tortured A-T-L another title.

No one could've seen it coming.

Well, except for those players dancing in the center of Minute Maid Park early Wednesday morning.

"These guys never gave up on themselves," manager Brian Snitker said. "We used a lot of guys, we lost a lot of pieces over the course of the summer. It was just the next man up. These guys never stopped believing in themselves."

If they were the least bit familiar with their team's history, they had to know how fickle the baseball gods can be.

The Braves won 14 straight division titles from 1991-2005, a staggering streak that may never be eclipsed. They got back to the postseason as a wild card in 2010, Bobby Cox's final season as manager. They claimed another wild card in 2012, followed by a return to the top of the NL East in 2013. A painful rebuilding job came next, but it paid off with another streak of division titles that has grown to four.

When you add it all up, that's 21 postseason appearances in the last 30 completed seasons — a run that meets nearly every requirement to be called a dynasty except the only one that really matters.

Championships.

The '95 Braves had been the only team to win it all during those 20 previous trips to the playoffs.

And even that victory, as glorious and satisfying as it was for a city that has known so much heartache, wound up feeling a bit hollow because of the four other times Atlanta lost the World Series during that single decade, a lone triumph nearly obscured by all the gut-wrenching disappointments.

To this day, it's hard to fathom that a team assembled by a Hall of Fame general manager (John Schuerholz), guided by a Hall of Fame manager (Cox), led on the mound by three Hall of Fame pitchers (Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz), with a lineup that included yet another Hall of Famer (Chipper

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 37 of 82

Jones) and at least two other guys who can make a pretty good case for Cooperstown (Fred McGriff and Andruw Jones) contributed just one title to the franchise resume.

Now, finally, they've got some company.

Shaking off the disappointment of Game 5, when they squandered a 4-0 lead and a chance to celebrate in front of their home fans, these Braves romped past the Houston Astros 7-0 to finish off the World Series four games to two.

It didn't matter that they won just 88 games during the regular season, fewer than every other playoff team and even two teams that didn't make the postseason.

It didn't matter that they were mired in mediocrity much of the season, finally climbing above .500 for the first time on Aug. 6 in their 111th game.

It didn't matter that they had to go down to the final week to finally clinch first place in a division derisively known as the NL Least.

"You boys are going to be world champions the rest of your lives," Snitker told his team in the champagne-soaked visiting clubhouse, holding up the trophy that every team has their sights set on from the first day of spring training.

All that bubbly had to feel cleansing in a way, exorcising the demons of not only a team, but an entire city.

The Braves are the only Atlanta team to win a championship in the four major American sports, which first arrived in the Deep South in 1966.

That was the year the Braves moved in from Milwaukee and the Falcons took flight as an NFL expansion team. The NBA's Hawks would come from St. Louis two years later, followed by the NHL's Flames in 1972.

Those franchises provided a huge boost to Atlanta's fragile self-image, stamping a growing city just emerging from the civil right movement as truly major league. But, as the losses piled up and occasional shots at glory crashed in inevitable defeat, all four teams would come to be viewed as more trouble than they were worth.

Atlanta, which liked to market itself as the "City Too Busy To Hate," earned another embarrassing moniker. Loserville, U.S.A.

The Flames didn't stick around very long, moving to Calgary in 1980 after whiffing on all six of their playoff appearances. Of course, they would go on to win a Stanley Cup title in their new home.

The NHL sent Atlanta another team, the Thrashers, but they left, too, bolting for Winnipeg after just 11 seasons. They never even won a playoff game, much less a series.

While the Braves had all those close-but-no-cigar moments in the 1990s, the Hawks and Falcons have barely even sniffed at a championship.

Atlanta's NFL team did reach the Super Bowl in 2017, only to suffer what is surely the most infamous defeat in the game's history.

After carrying a 28-3 lead on Tom Brady and the New England Patriots deep into the third quarter, the Falcons frittered it away and lost in overtime.

Braves shortstop Dansby Swanson, who grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta, attended that Super Bowl to cheer on his hometown team.

It wasn't lost on him that the Braves clinched their championship in Houston, of all places.

Yep, the same city where the Falcons lost the Super Bowl.

"God bless my soul, but I was here when the Falcons got beat in the Super Bowl. I was at the game in Houston," Swanson said on Fox's postgame show. "So we've kind of come full circle, right? It felt like destiny a little bit, being back here and winning."

Yep, the circle is complete.

This Atlanta team is headed home from Houston with a championship.

A championship that none of us saw coming.

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Paul Newberry is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press who grew up in suburban Atlanta and has covered sports in the city since 1996. Write to him at [pnewberry\(at\)ap.org](mailto:pnewberry(at)ap.org) or at <https://twitter.com>.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 38 of 82

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## Hammerin' Braves rout Astros to win 1st WS crown since 1995

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Most of the season, it just seemed this wasn't their year.

They dropped their first four games, and soon injuries piled up. They lost their most dynamic player before the All-Star break. They were stuck below .500 in August.

Yet out of nowhere, suddenly, these Atlanta Braves transformed themselves and took off.

Jorge Soler, Freddie Freeman and the Braves breezed to their first World Series championship since 1995, hammering the Houston Astros 7-0 on Tuesday night in Game 6. Max Fried threw six dominant innings in a signature pitching performance to close it out.

"We hit every pothole, every bump you could possibly hit this year," Freeman said. "Injuries, every single kind of thing that could happen, that could go wrong went wrong, and we overcame every single one of those things."

How proud Hank Aaron would've been.

Even so, Atlanta's troubles never fully went away.

General manager Alex Anthopoulos, the architect of the Braves' midseason turnaround, missed this crowning achievement after testing positive for COVID-19. He was back home for the clincher.

Soler, a July acquisition who tested positive for the coronavirus in the playoffs, backed Fried early with a monster three-run shot for his third homer against the Astros.

Freeman hit an RBI double and then punctuated the romp with a solo home run in the seventh that made it 7-0.

By then, it was a total team effort. Ailing star Ronald Acuña Jr., the dynamo of Atlanta's future, bounded from the dugout to join the celebration for Freeman, the longtime face of the franchise.

When Yuli Gurriel grounded out to end it, Freeman caught the throw at first base, put the ball in his pocket, and the party was on for manager Brian Snitker's club.

A full hour after the game, hundreds of Braves fans packed behind the team's third base dugout kept doing the chop and chant, causing loud echoes to bounce around the ballpark.

About 700 miles away at suburban Truist Park, thousands of fans poured into the Braves' home to holler.

A mere afterthought in the summer heat among the land of the Giants, White Sox and Dodgers, but magnificent in the Fall Classic.

"This is the toughest team I've ever been a part of," said shortstop Dansby Swanson, who also homered.

Soler tapped his heart twice before beginning his home run trot after connecting off rookie Luis Garcia in the third inning, sending the ball flying completely out of Minute Maid Park and clinching the Series MVP award.

By the end, nothing could stop them. Not a broken leg sustained by starter Charlie Morton in the World Series opener. Not a big blown lead in Game 5.

Steadied by the 66-year-old Snitker, an organization man for four decades, the underdog Braves won the franchise's fourth title.

"They never gave up on themselves," he said on a postgame victory platform. "We lost a lot of pieces over the course of the summer and it was just the next man up."

Consider it a tribute to the greatest Braves player of them all. Aaron died Jan. 22 at 86, still pulling for his old team, and The Hammer's legacy was stamped all over this Series.

"Nobody ever wanted to let Hank down," Snitker said. "That's just the way it was, we didn't want to let him down. He charged us with a responsibility to make these guys better and we weren't going to let him down."

And note the Braves outhomered the top-scoring team in the majors by 11-2.

For 72-year-old Houston manager Dusty Baker, a disappointment. But for many fans rooting against the

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 39 of 82

Astros in the wake of their 2017 sign-stealing scandal, some satisfaction.

"Yeah, it's tough, but you know something? You've got to keep on trucking, and that gives you even more incentive next year," Baker said.

"It's tough to take now, but this too shall pass. I mean, it really hurts, but it's over," he added.

Major credit for Atlanta's title goes to Anthopoulos. Undaunted by Acuña's knee injury, he pulled off a flurry of July trades that brought the Fab Four to an entirely retooled outfield — NL Championship Series MVP Eddie Rosario, Adam Duvall, Joc Pederson and Soler.

"Thanks to God for the opportunity to be on this team," Soler said through a translator.

But even in the Analytics Era, guided by a GM fully versed in new-age ways, the path these Braves took wouldn't add up in any computer. Especially with how things looked in midseason.

"At that time, we were searching," third baseman Austin Riley said before Game 6. "I think there's no question about that."

Minus Acuña, Atlanta wasn't over .500 for a single day until the first week in August. The Braves finished 88-73 for the 12th-best record in the majors and fewest victories among playoff teams; their win total was the lowest for a World Series champion since St. Louis' 83 in 2006.

Plus, some agonizing history in Atlanta, a city where no team had won a title in the four major pro sports besides 1995.

The Braves couldn't convert a 3-1 series advantage over the Dodgers in the NLCS last year. The Hawks fell short in the Eastern Conference finals last season. And then there was the big one, the Falcons blowing a 28-3 lead to the Patriots in the Super Bowl.

But these Braves, not this time.

"Boy, we're in November right now and we've been doing this since February. We've had so many ups and downs this year. For us to be world champions, that is awesome to hear," Freeman said.

Favored in spring training to win their fourth straight NL East title, the Braves lost Acuña to a torn knee in July. Earlier, 2020 Triple Crown contender Marcell Ozuna was injured and later placed on leave while Major League Baseball investigated him under its domestic violence policy. Projected ace Mike Soroka never made it back from an Achilles injury.

Going into the playoffs, their bullpen was a crazy patchwork.

They had a guy who made his big league debut in October, a lefty who was pitching in 2019 for the Texas AirHogs in a now-defunct independent league and a righty who was stacking boxes at an appliance warehouse a decade ago. Toss in a rookie who was off the roster a week ago as he watched Game 1 at a hotel in suburban Atlanta.

For sure, plenty of fans around the country were rooting hard against Jose Altuve and the Houston crew. Many continue to heckle them as the "Cheatin' Astros" for an illegal sign-stealing scheme on the way to their 2017 title, and those feelings might last forever.

Certainly a lot of people were cheering for Baker. A World Series winner as a player and a highly respected figure on and off the field, he wasn't able to check the final box on his resume as a championship skipper.

The Braves' crowns have been spread out over more than a century.

The 1995 Atlanta champs featured five future Hall of Famers — rookie Chipper Jones, aces Tom Glavine, Greg Maddux and John Smoltz, and manager Bobby Cox. Those rings were the lone pieces of hardware that resulted from 14 straight division titles.

The 1957 Milwaukee Braves were led by Aaron in his only NL MVP season. The Hall of Famer's 44 was painted in large numbers on the outfield grass at Truist Park, and Baker and Snitker often mentioned how much he'd meant to them.

There were the 1914 Boston Braves, too, dubbed the "Miracle Braves" back in the day. In last place on the Fourth of July, they surged to win the pennant, then upset a heavily favored team — the Philadelphia A's — to earn their nickname.

Sound familiar?

UP NEXT

Braves: A victory party and probably a parade.

Astros: Scheduled to start the spring training schedule on Feb. 26 vs. St. Louis.

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

## Takeaways from Tuesday's elections: Bad omens for Democrats

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

The off-year elections for governor in Virginia and New Jersey tend to receive outside attention, and the results are mined for deeper meaning about what they portend for the midterm elections the following year that determine which party controls Congress.

Here are some key takeaways from Tuesday's elections:

### DEMOCRATS SEE WORST FEARS IN VIRGINIA

Democrats' worst fears are that they're on course for a 2010-like drubbing in next year's midterm elections and that they can't use the specter of former President Donald Trump to stop it.

Those fears got a lot stronger after Republican Glenn Youngkin won the governor's race in Virginia.

President Joe Biden won Virginia by 10 percentage points just a year ago, and if Democrats cannot generate more enthusiasm than their gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe did, they'll likely be swept out of power in Congress.

In Virginia, governors are limited to a single term and elections are held in odd-numbered years, making it the go-to gauge of voter sentiment before midterms. It usually is a warning for the party in power in Washington and this year was no different.

McAuliffe, elected Virginia governor in 2013, was unable to excite voters amid significant headwinds facing Democrats, including Biden's drooping poll numbers, the congressional stalemate over the president's economic agenda and the persistence of the pandemic.

Democrats have only a five-vote margin in the House and a single-vote margin in the Senate. Historically, the party in power almost always loses seats in Congress. But if 2022 nationally is anything like Virginia 2021, Democrats will lose a lot more than normal.

### YOUNGKIN SHOWS THE GOP THE WAY

Diversifying states with a large share of college graduates like Virginia have been an unsolvable puzzle for the GOP during the political era dominated by former President Donald Trump. But Youngkin seems to have cracked the code.

A former private equity executive, Youngkin presented himself as a nonthreatening suburban dad in a fleece vest. He embraced Trump just enough to win the GOP primary and rev up the party base, but was also able to target more moderate voters by talking about fiscal management and investing in schools and campaigning without the former president at his side.

According to AP VoteCast, a survey of voters, it paid off. While a majority of voters held an unfavorable view of Trump, about half had a favorable view of Youngkin.

Youngkin's arm's-length approach to Trump didn't seem to hurt him with GOP voters. Most Youngkin voters — about 8 in 10 — said the candidate supports Trump the right amount. About 1 in 10 said he supports the former president too much, and about that many said Youngkin supports Trump too little.

Look for more Republicans next year try to model themselves after Youngkin in swing areas — refusing to disavow Trump but not hugging him too closely, and tailoring their messages to both the former president's most hardcore voters and persuadable suburbanites.

### TARGETING EDUCATION ON RACE

Youngkin's signature issue was an unexpected one — education. He prevailed on the issue by both pledging to boost education funding and hammering public schools on hot-button social issues like race and transgender rights.

He said he would ban the teaching of critical race theory in Virginia classrooms even though it is not a part of the secondary school curriculum.

Critical race theory is an academic framework that centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 41 of 82

nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people. In recent months, it has become a catch-all political buzzword for any teaching in schools about race and American history.

The focus comes after lengthy school closures during the pandemic infuriated some traditionally Democratic voting groups and conservatives targeted school board races nationwide over masking rules and teaching racial justice issues. In Virginia, 14% of voters listed education as a top issue, and about 7 of 10 of those voted for Youngkin.

McAuliffe didn't help himself when, during a debate, he said, "I don't believe parents should be telling schools what they should teach," providing Youngkin a pivotal opening to hammer his opponent.

Youngkin also highlighted a controversial high school bathroom rape case in affluent Loudoun County, in Northern Virginia, to argue against allowing transgender students into their chosen restrooms.

## LIBERAL VOTING LAWS AREN'T BAD FOR GOP

Democrats took control of all parts of Virginia's government in 2019 and steadily started liberalizing the state's voting laws. They made mail voting accessible to all and required a 45-day window for early voting, among the longest in the country. This year they passed a voting rights act that made it easier to sue for blocking ballot access.

Trump in 2020 attacked efforts to expand ballot access during the pandemic, spreading baseless claims of fraud.

Republican-controlled states have rushed to tighten voting laws, cutting early voting hours, restricting mail balloting and arguing that liberalizing elections invites fraud and helps Democrats. The latter claim contradicts repeated studies that have found that mail voting does not favor either political party.

Now Virginia's election is another example of how liberal voting laws don't hurt conservatives.

## NEW JERSEY ALSO SCARES DEMOCRATS

The other big governor's race Tuesday was in New Jersey. Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy was favored in his race against Republican Jack Ciattarelli, but the race was too early to call Wednesday morning.

Democrats were looking to the Garden State for hopeful signs, but were quickly disappointed as what should have been a relatively easy race turned into a nail-biter.

Murphy has been able to deliver on many liberal priorities, like expanding government funding for wide-spread prekindergarten and community college, and has the advantage of incumbency that McAuliffe lacks. As such, he may offer more of a model of the position Democrats could be in next year should they manage to pass Biden's agenda. He also avoided McAuliffe's errors on education.

Still, the race remained tight well after midnight in a state Biden won by 16 percentage points, another sign of the grim national environment for the Democrats.

## DON'T OVERINTERPRET

It's still 12 months before Election Day 2022. While Tuesday's results hold some clues as to what might happen, they are merely clues.

The two biggest drags on Democrats currently are the persistence of the coronavirus pandemic and supply chain problems that have pushed up prices. Both could improve over the next 12 months, potentially bolstering the incumbent party -- or they could worsen.

There are signs Democrats could pass Biden's infrastructure and social safety net legislation soon. Most Wall Street forecasts call for robust growth next year.

The U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to issue an opinion on an abortion case next June that will determine whether the conservative majority upholds or overturns Roe v. Wade, the landmark case that affirmed abortion rights.

That could make debates over masking and racial justice lessons in schools seem like quaint relics of Election Day 2021.

So dig into the results of tonight, but they are in no way definitive. A lot can happen in the next year, and probably will.

**AP VoteCast: Youngkin win built by small gains in key groups**



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 42 of 82

By SARA BURNETT and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

Republican Glenn Youngkin mobilized voters concerned about education and race, while making small gains with suburban voters and other key groups to help his party rebound from Donald Trump's poor showing in Virginia last year and win the governor's race.

The former private equity executive's victory came even as Trump remains broadly unpopular in the commonwealth. Youngkin managed to keep Trump at arm's length without angering Trump's base. A year after Democrat Joe Biden dispatched Trump in Virginia by 10 percentage points, it was Youngkin's supporters, not Democrat Terry McAuliffe's, who were more fired up — 74% of them said they were "extremely" interested in the election, compared with 63% who voted for McAuliffe, according to AP VoteCast.

Here's a snapshot of what matters to voters, based on preliminary results from AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 2,500 voters in Virginia conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.

## BIG COMEBACK BUILT ON SMALL GAINS

Both Democrats and Republicans pulled together familiar coalitions. Men, rural and small town voters and white evangelicals were squarely in Youngkin's corner, while McAuliffe was the choice for Black voters, moderates, and voters under 45. Women were only slightly more likely to back the Democrat than the Republican, 53% to 46%.

But small shifts added up to make a difference for Youngkin. In 2020, voters ages 45 and older split about evenly between Biden and Trump. This year they were more likely to back Youngkin over McAuliffe, 55% to 45%.

Youngkin also performed better with suburban voters, a group that helped Democrats win elections across the country during the Trump era. Last year, about 6 in 10 suburbanites in Virginia backed Biden. A year later, Youngkin, who lives in a northern Virginia suburb, was competitive with McAuliffe with those voters, earning the support of 49% of them.

In recent elections, Democrats have built a sizable edge with voters who have college degrees. McAuliffe still won those voters Tuesday, but only narrowly, as Youngkin closed the gap compared to 2020.

He performed somewhat better than Trump among white voters — both men and women. White voters made up 72% of the electorate and backed Youngkin over McAuliffe, 60% to 40%. Youngkin also appeared to make inroads with Latino voters, who closely divided between Youngkin and McAuliffe.

## BIDEN'S PERFORMANCE

The governor's race was seen by some as a test of Biden's standing so far. The president and his wife campaigned for McAuliffe in the state, as did other top Democrats. Three-quarters of voters said negotiations in Washington over Biden's governing agenda were an important factor in their vote.

Biden won Virginia by 10 percentage points last year. Now, 47% of Virginia's voters approve of Biden's job performance, while 53% disapprove — a split similar to U.S. adults nationwide in recent AP-NORC polling.

## TRUMP FACTOR

While McAuliffe leaned on his party for help, Youngkin didn't campaign with Trump or other GOP leaders. The political newcomer started the campaign with a blank slate on policy and cast himself as an affable, suburban dad. McAuliffe called him a "Trump wannabe" — and Trump endorsed Youngkin — but it doesn't look like all Virginia voters bought it.

While Trump was unpopular with a majority of voters, half had a favorable opinion of Youngkin. About 4 in 10 have an unfavorable opinion of the candidate.

About half said they have a "very" unfavorable opinion of Trump, but only about 3 in 10 said the same about Youngkin.

Close to half of Virginia voters said Youngkin supports Trump too much, while roughly as many said he supports Trump the right amount. Most Youngkin voters — about 8 in 10 — said the candidate supports Trump the right amount, but about 1 in 10 said he supports the former president too much. About that many said Youngkin supports Trump too little.

## MCAULIFFE GETS MORE BLAME FOR ATTACKS

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 43 of 82

Overall, about half of Virginia voters said they have a favorable opinion of McAuliffe, while about half held an unfavorable view.

In a very contentious race, McAuliffe appears to have taken more of the blame for the tone. Most voters thought the gubernatorial campaign featured unfair attacks from at least one candidate, but voters were somewhat more likely to say only McAuliffe attacked Youngkin unfairly than the other way around. Close to 2 in 10 voters said both attacked the other unfairly.

## SCHOOL DEBATE DECISIVE FOR MANY

Schools became a major focus of the governor's race for Youngkin, who localized a debate happening nationwide after McAuliffe said during a debate that parents shouldn't "be telling schools what they should teach."

A quarter of Virginia voters said the debate over teaching critical race theory in schools was the single most important factor in their vote for governor, and 71% of those voters backed Youngkin.

Most Youngkin voters — about three-quarters — said the public school system in Virginia is focusing on racism too much. Among McAuliffe voters, just over half said the focus is too little, while about a third said it's about right.

McAuliffe voters had concerns about schools, too — but they were more likely to be focused on COVID-19 precautions. Roughly a quarter of voters identified the debate over handling COVID-19 in schools as most important factor in their vote, and 63% of them backed McAuliffe.

About 6 in 10 Virginia voters support both mask mandates for teachers and students in K-12 schools and COVID-19 vaccine mandates for teachers. Those voters were more likely to be McAuliffe supporters. While the vast majority of McAuliffe voters backed mask mandates for teachers and students and COVID-19 vaccine mandates for teachers in K-12 schools, only about a third of Youngkin backers supported each policy.

## TOP ISSUE

Thirty-five percent of Virginia voters said the economy and jobs was the most important issue facing the state, while 17% named COVID-19 and 14% chose education.

Health care, climate change, racism, immigration, abortion and law enforcement were all lower-tier issues.

Voters who ranked the economy and education as the top issues were more likely to back Youngkin over McAuliffe. Voters who identified COVID-19 as the top issue supported McAuliffe over Youngkin. McAuliffe also earned the majority backing of the roughly 2 in 10 who ranked health care, climate change or racism as the top issue.

## IS VIRGINIA'S ECONOMY SOARING OR SINKING?

Youngkin, a former private equity executive, often asserted during the campaign that Virginia's economy was "in the ditch," but a majority of voters disagreed. Fifty-six percent said the state's economy is in good shape, compared with 44% saying economic conditions are poor.

Youngkin argued that Virginia's record budget surplus was the result of overtaxation as he campaigned on a promise to enact substantial tax cuts.

McAuliffe countered that the surplus was due to strong economic growth under Democratic leadership and argued that Youngkin's opposition to abortion rights and conservative position on LGBTQ issues would hamper efforts to recruit new businesses to the commonwealth.

## MORE INDECISION THAN 2020

About 6 in 10 voters say they've known all along whom they would be backing the governor's race. In the presidential race last year, three-quarters of Virginia voters said they knew all along whom they would back, though about as many decided in the last few days.

About 3 in 10 voters now say they decided over the course of the campaign, and they slightly preferred Youngkin over McAuliffe, 55% to 45%.

## CONTINUED SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE VOTE COUNT

Although Virginia experienced no major issues with its vote count in 2020, only about half of voters in Virginia are "very confident" that the votes in the election for governor will be counted accurately. Another

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 44 of 82

3 in 10 voters are "somewhat confident."

Just 19% of Youngkin's voters said they were "very confident" the vote would be counted accurately. That compares with 77% of McAuliffe voters.

Still, overall confidence is stronger among voters now compared with voters in last year's presidential election: Just 25% then said they were very confident votes would be counted accurately.

AP VoteCast is a survey of the American electorate conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago for Fox News and The Associated Press. The survey of 2,655 voters in Virginia was conducted for seven days, concluding as polls closed. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The survey combines a random sample of registered voters drawn from the state voter file and self-identified registered voters selected from nonprobability online panels. The margin of sampling error for voters is estimated to be plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. Find more details about AP VoteCast's methodology at <https://www.ap.org/votecast>.

## Biden uses trip abroad to confront China on climate, more

By JOSH BOAK, ZEKE MILLER, ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — Over five days abroad at two global summits, President Joe Biden showed a new willingness to openly confront China over climate change and its lack of leadership on the global stage.

Biden ended his time at the U.N. climate summit in Scotland on Tuesday by chastising Chinese President Xi Jinping for physically skipping the event and failing to make the level of commitments that roughly 100 other nations did to curb greenhouse gasses. Xi also avoided the earlier Group of 20 summit in Rome, allowing Biden to dominate the conversation as he met with his French, Italian, British and German counterparts.

"We showed up, and by showing up we've had a profound impact on the way I think the rest of the world is looking at the United States in its leadership role," Biden said at a Tuesday news conference wrapping up his trip abroad. Biden added that China had made a "big mistake" in bypassing the events because "they've lost an ability to influence people around the world."

But Biden's global progress and willingness to challenge China — a stance that also was critical to the rise of his predecessor Donald Trump — may be lost in the fog of domestic politics.

Biden jetted back to Washington to confront his deepest challenge yet as he struggles to pass \$3 trillion in new government spending, including \$555 billion to combat climate change. His poll numbers are flagging. The headwinds could worsen in Congress, where a wave of retirements bodes poorly for holding on to Democratic majorities in next year's elections.

And another blow greeted his arrival: Republican Glenn Youngkin defeated Democrat Terry McAuliffe in the race for Virginia governor, an outcome widely thought to cast another shadow on the 2022 elections and reflect poorly on Biden's own agenda as well as his efforts to campaign for McAuliffe.

The president stressed that he wants to compete against China, rather than have conflict. But he also showed a new strategy of using climate as a cudgel against Beijing.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters during the trip that China has an obligation to "step up" on climate and the U.S. will keep pressing Beijing. One tool might be economic penalties: Biden brokered a deal with the European Union to block "dirty steel" made possible by Chinese coal plants.

The president outlined his thinking by quoting his father at Tuesday's news conference.

"My dad had an expression. He said the only conflict worse than one that's intended is the one that's unintended," the president said, adding that he wants to make sure in an upcoming virtual meeting with Xi that there are no misunderstandings.

Biden was well-received on the world stage, where he shared backslaps, handshakes and elbow-bumps with global leaders across two major international summits, with European Commission President Ursula

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 45 of 82

von der Leyden referring to him as “dear Joe.” He scored victories on key priorities like a global minimum tax on corporations and boosted global commitments to combat climate change.

Biden insisted no world leaders had been pressing him on the fate of the budget and climate legislation back in Washington and he expressed confidence in its passage. But members of his own party are growing impatient at the delays in settling intraparty conflicts over the matter.

Since he launched his presidential campaign in 2015, Biden has cast the 21st century as a generational struggle between democracies and autocracies — principally the rising threat from China.

As much as the five-day European trip was meant to promote Biden’s message that America is back, it also was meant to highlight why he believes the U.S. must reengage with the world after four years of isolation. The president worked to forge new alliances and coalitions meant to contain Beijing from all sides, and on a host of economic, security and environmental issues.

Asked why American should commit to cutting emissions when China and Russia have not done likewise to the same degree — a frequent complaint that his predecessor cited to justify withdrawing from the 2015 Paris climate accord — Biden answered forcefully: “Because we want to be able to breathe, and we want to be able to lead the world.”

Biden issued a rare public mea culpa during the climate summit for America’s step away from leadership on climate during the Trump administration.

“Those of us who are responsible for much of the deforestation and all of the problems we have so far,” Biden said, have “overwhelming obligations” to the poorer nations that account for few of the emissions yet are paying a price as the planet has grown hotter.

As for Trump’s action, he said: “I shouldn’t apologize, but I do apologize for the fact the United States, the last administration, pulled out of the Paris accords and put us sort of behind the eight ball a little bit.”

Biden also eased a trade war with Europe that threatened to raise prices on goods in the U.S. and harm American exports ranging from motorcycles to whiskey. The new agreement would still block Chinese steel production that is coal dependent and allow his administration to devote its focus to renewed trade talks with China, as Biden maintains Trump’s pressures in a simmering economic conflict.

But the fundamental challenge between China and the U.S. on climate might be an incompatible set of world views. Biden sees the efforts to limit global warming as an opportunity to create jobs and boost economic growth as the U.S. becomes more innovative. He pronounced the next decade crucial for getting climate change under control.

China, for its part, still sees coal and oil as necessary to keep fueling an economy that is now the second-largest in the world. The country’s lead negotiator at the U.N. summit said China must first become wealthier before it can transition faster to renewable energy.

“So regarding the fact that China is the current largest emitter, it’s because China is at a special development stage,” said Xie Zhenhua. China, Xie added, can accelerate its emission cuts later.

The U.S., too, still has plenty of work to do. It gets most of its energy from natural gas, and from a significant amount of coal, and Biden acknowledged during the trip that the U.S. is pushing the Gulf to pump more oil to ease gasoline prices.

China itself has committed to have a carbon neutral economy by 2060, 10 years after the U.S. The question for Biden might be how much of a difference those 10 years could make for the world’s two leading powers.

## Close races for governor unfolding in Virginia, New Jersey

By WILL WEISSERT and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Tight races for governor unfolded in Virginia and New Jersey late Tuesday with the Democratic candidates narrowly trailing their Republican rivals in states that President Joe Biden easily captured a year ago.

Near midnight, the elections were still too early to call. As the vote count progressed, both races looked to be tight.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 46 of 82

In Virginia, Democrat Terry McAuliffe addressed supporters in the Washington suburbs, vowing to “count all these votes.” Kristin Davison, an aide to Republican Glenn Youngkin, appeared onstage at a separate event and said his campaign would continue to track the incoming votes but was pleased with the way things appeared to be headed.

Meanwhile, in New Jersey, Gov. Phil Murphy was trying to win reelection against Republican former State Assembly member Jack Ciattarelli in a race that was also too early to call. If successful, Murphy would be the first Democrat reelected as the state’s governor in 44 years.

The evening’s results, though, may ultimately be interpreted as an early judgment of Biden, who captured Virginia last year by a comfortable 10-point margin and easily won New Jersey. The closeness of governor’s races indicated just how much his party’s political fortunes have changed in a short period.

The White House has been shaken in recent months by the chaotic withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, a sometimes sluggish economic recovery amid the pandemic and a legislative agenda at risk of stalling on Capitol Hill.

A loss in Virginia, which has trended toward Democrats for more than a decade would particularly deepen the sense of alarm inside the party heading into next year’s midterm elections, when control of Congress is at stake. But Biden expressed optimism going into the evening while acknowledging that “the off-year is always unpredictable.”

“I think we’re going to win in Virginia,” Biden said at a news conference in Scotland, where he was attending an international climate summit. “I don’t believe — and I’ve not seen any evidence that — whether or not I am doing well or poorly, whether or not I’ve got my agenda passed or not, is gonna have any real impact on winning or losing.”

Elsewhere, Democrat Eric Adams won the New York City mayoral election, and a ballot question promoted by top national progressives was defeated in Minneapolis. It had sought to reshape policing in the city, where the killing of George Floyd last year touched off sweeping demonstrations for racial justice across the nation.

But no other race received the level of attention of the Virginia governor’s campaign. That’s in part because such contests in many states have sometimes shown voter frustration with a party newly in power, foreshadowing significant turnover in Congress the following year.

In 2009, during President Barack Obama’s first year in office, Republican Bob McDonnell’s victory in Virginia previewed a disastrous midterm cycle for Democrats, who lost more than 60 House seats the following year.

The top of the Virginia Republican ticket featured a white man in Youngkin, a Black woman, Winsome Sears, running for lieutenant governor and vying to be the first woman of color to hold the post, and a Hispanic man running to be attorney general, Jason Miyares.

AP VoteCast, a survey of statewide voters, showed about half of Virginians had favorable opinions of Youngkin, compared to 55% saying they had unfavorable opinions of Trump, suggesting that the Republican gubernatorial candidate had successfully distanced himself from the former president. Youngkin was endorsed by Trump but didn’t personally appear with him, though the party is still dominated by the former president.

McAuliffe, by contrast, campaigned with his party’s top national stars, including Biden, whose last visit to Virginia came a week before Election Day. VoteCast found Biden underwater, with 48% of Virginia’s voters approving of his job performance compared to 52% disapproving — especially stark in a state he had won so handily.

VoteCast also found that Youngkin was making small gains in the suburbs, staying competitive with McAuliffe after about 6 in 10 voters in the same areas backed Biden over Trump last year.

In Norfolk, along the state’s Atlantic coast, 29-year-old Cassandra Ogren said she voted for McAuliffe in part because of his support for abortion rights and her concern about restrictions recently enacted in Texas, where a new law mostly bans the procedure. But she was also motivated by Youngkin’s ties to Trump.

"Anyone endorsed by President Trump is not someone I want representing me," Ogren said.

VoteCast found that Virginia voters saw the economy as the race's top issue, followed by the coronavirus pandemic and schools. The significance many voters placed on schools seemed like good news for Youngkin. His pledge to ensure parents have greater say in what their kids are taught was a centerpiece of his campaign — possibly foreshadowing similar arguments GOP candidates will use across the country next year.

Youngkin has decried "critical race theory," an academic framework that centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people. In recent months, it has become a catch-all political buzzword for any teaching in schools about race and American history.

The issue took on greater weight after McAuliffe said during a debate that "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach."

Bennett White, 24, a Youngkin voter in Norfolk, said he didn't want "our next generation of leaders to be looking at their peers in the lens of race."

"I just want to make sure that my mom is safe in the classroom," said White whose mother is a teacher, "and that her ideals and everyone's ideals are protected, and we're not turning into brainwashing academies."

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Associated Press writers Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, Hank Kurz in Richmond, Virginia, Alexandra Jaffe in McLean, Virginia, and Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

## Supreme Court to hear arguments in major gun rights case

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is set to hear arguments in a gun rights case that could lead to more guns on the streets of New York and Los Angeles and threaten restrictions on guns in subways, airports, bars, churches, schools and other places where people gather.

The case before the court Wednesday centers on New York's restrictive gun permit law and whether limits the state has placed on carrying a gun in public violate the Second Amendment.

Gun rights advocates including the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association and two private citizens challenging the law hope that the court with a 6-3 conservative majority is poised to side with them. They want the court to say the New York law is too restrictive, which could call into question similar laws in other states. Such a ruling could dramatically increase the number of people eligible to carry firearms as they go about their daily lives.

The court last issued major gun rights decisions in 2008 and 2010. Those decisions established a nationwide right to keep a gun at home for self-defense. The question for the court now has to do with carrying a gun in public for self-defense.

In most of the country gun owners have little difficulty legally carrying their weapons when they go out. But about half a dozen states, including populous California and several Eastern states, restrict the carrying of guns to those who can demonstrate a particular need for doing so. The justices could decide whether those laws, known as "may issue" laws, can stand.

The arguments come as gun violence has surged. Gun control groups say if a high court ruling requires states to drop restrictions, the result will be more violence. Gun rights groups, meanwhile, say the risk of a confrontation is precisely why they have a right to be armed for self-defense.

The New York law the court is reviewing has been in place since 1913 and says that to carry a concealed handgun in public for self-defense, a person applying for a license has to demonstrate "proper cause," an actual need to carry the weapon. Applicants who get a license are either issued an unrestricted license, which gives them broad ability to carry a weapon in public, or a restricted license allowing them to carry a gun in certain circumstances. Those circumstances include for hunting or target shooting, when traveling for work or when in backcountry areas.

New York says if the Supreme Court sides with the challengers to the law it would have "devastating consequences for public safety," invalidate longstanding laws like New York's and jeopardize firearm restrictions that states and the federal government have in place where people gather, from airports to schools.

The Biden administration, which is urging the justices to uphold New York's law, says California, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island all have similar laws that could be affected by a ruling from the court. Connecticut and Delaware also have "may issue" laws, though they are somewhat different.

## Feds seek tougher sentences for veterans who stormed Capitol

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

During his 27 years in the U.S. Army, Leonard Gruppo joined the Special Forces, served in four war zones and led a team of combat medics in Iraq before retiring in 2013 as a lieutenant colonel.

During his six minutes inside the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, Gruppo joined a slew of other military veterans as a mob of pro-Trump rioters carried out an unparalleled assault on the bastion of American democracy. He's among dozens of veterans and active-service members charged in connection with the insurrection.

Now, cases like his are presenting a thorny question for federal judges to consider when they sentence veterans who stormed the Capitol: Do they deserve leniency because they served their country or tougher punishment because they swore an oath to defend it?

The Justice Department has adopted the latter position. In at least five cases so far, prosecutors have cited a rioter's military service as a factor weighing in favor of a jail sentence or house arrest. Prosecutors have repeatedly maintained that veterans' service, while commendable, made their actions on Jan. 6 more egregious.

The participation of veterans in the riot was particularly shocking because some of them apparently used training they received in the U.S. military against their own government to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power. Several veterans are among the far-right extremists charged with plotting coordinated attacks on the Capitol, including Oath Keepers members who marched up the Capitol steps in a "stack" formation used by military infantrymen.

Prosecutors' arguments about rioters' military service didn't sway one of the first judges to hear them — at Gruppo's sentencing hearing last Friday.

"I don't view his military service that way. I just can't bring myself to do that," Chief U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell said before sentencing Gruppo to two years of probation, including 90 days of house arrest.

A prosecutor argued that Gruppo's military service supported the Justice Department's recommendation for a 30-day jail sentence. Assistant U.S. Attorney Hava Mirell said Gruppo, 56, of New Mexico, was trained to recognize the obvious danger at the Capitol and "to assist rather than to harm."

"But the fact that he did receive that training and the fact that he intentionally overlooked his oath to commit one of the most destructive acts against our Constitution and our democracy, that does affect the government's view of his conduct," she said.

Defense attorney Daniel Lindsey argued his client's service to the country shouldn't be used against him. He said Gruppo initially wanted to keep quiet about his military service because he felt he had dishonored it.

"And he did," Howell interjected. "Let's not mince words."

But the judge said she was surprised by the Justice Department's position because she believes most Americans would have "enormous respect" for Gruppo's service.

"And it's not just because I grew up on military bases around the world," Howell added.

In most criminal cases, judges typically view a defendant's military service as a mitigating factor that favors leniency, said James Markham, a professor of public law and government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. But he recognizes how the Justice Department could conclude that rioters with military experience should be held to a higher standard than those without it.

"It's obviously not related to their military service directly, but it's also not entirely conceptually unre-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 49 of 82

lated that somebody who is a veteran or had military service could be viewed as having a more refined understanding of the importance of civilian control and electoral stability," said Markham, a lawyer and Air Force veteran.

Over 650 people have been charged in the Jan. 6 attack. Some of the rioters facing the most serious charges, including members of far-right extremist groups, have military backgrounds. A handful of riot defendants were on active duty, including an Army reservist who wore a Hitler mustache to his job at a Navy base.

More than 100 riot defendants have pleaded guilty, mostly to misdemeanors punishable by a maximum of six months incarceration. Two dozen have been sentenced as of Friday. At least three of the sentenced defendants are veterans, according to an Associated Press review of court records.

In September, U.S. District Judge James Boasberg sentenced Air Force veteran Derek Jancart to 45 days in jail for joining the riot. Prosecutors had sought a four-month jail sentence for Jancart, an Ohio steelworker.

"He swore an oath to defend the country and instead he participated in an attack on democracy itself," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Leslie Goemaat.

Jancart said he loves his country and is ashamed of his actions. The judge told Jancart that he respects his military service, particularly his deployment to Afghanistan, but said it wasn't the only factor to consider.

"You attempted with others to undermine one of our country's bedrock acts, which is the peaceful transfer of power following a democratic election," Boasberg said.

Another Air Force veteran, Thomas Vinson, was sentenced on Oct. 22 to five years of probation. Prosecutors had recommended three months of house arrest for Vinson, a Kentucky resident who served in the Air Force from 1984 through 1988.

Vinson, whose wife also was sentenced to probation for entering the Capitol on Jan. 6, told U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton that he loves his country and joined the military to defend it.

"I took that oath to the Constitution, and I know I broke that oath that day by entering that building," Vinson said.

At least two other rioters who served in the military are scheduled to be sentenced in the coming days.

Prosecutors have recommended two months in jail for Boyd Camper, who served in the U.S. Marines from 1987 to 1990. The Montana man told the FBI that he believed he was on the "front line" and entered a "combat" state of mind at the Capitol, where he used a camera with an extension pole to record himself inside the building, according to prosecutors.

"His voluntary decision to storm a guarded government building is nothing short of shocking in light of his former military service and training," prosecutors wrote ahead of Camper's Oct. 12 sentencing.

Prosecutors are seeking two months of house arrest for Air Force veteran Jonathan Ace Sanders Sr., who is scheduled to be sentenced on Thursday. Surveillance video captured the Indiana man wearing a military-type vest as he walked through the Capitol, according to prosecutors.

"As an Air Force veteran, Sanders was well aware of the great jeopardy posed by the rioters' violent entry into the Capitol," prosecutors wrote. "His repeated assertions that he had done nothing wrong is not credible — his background shows he knew better."

## **Witness: Rittenhouse said people 'were trying to hurt him'**

By TAMMY WEBBER, MICHAEL TARM and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — A friend of Kyle Rittenhouse testified that the Illinois teen was "freaking out" and "really scared" in the moments after he shot three people during street protests against racial justice, and that Rittenhouse told him he had to do it because "people were trying to hurt him."

Dominick Black, who faces his own trial for buying the 17-year-old Rittenhouse an AR-15 style rifle he wasn't old enough to legally possess, said Tuesday he was stunned when Rittenhouse called him seconds after the first shooting.

"I didn't believe the gunshots were actually his until I got a phone call and I answered it and he just



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 50 of 82

said, "I shot somebody, I shot somebody," Black recounted.

Testimony is expected to continue on Wednesday.

Black was the first witness called after opening statements at Rittenhouse's murder trial that cast him in sharply different lights.

For prosecutors, Rittenhouse was the problem — triggering a confrontation with one man that set in motion the bloodshed that followed. Rittenhouse's attorneys portrayed him as someone out of options who had to use deadly force to defend himself.

Prosecutor Thomas Binger described the unrest in Kenosha as "two of the roughest nights that our community has ever seen" and said outsiders were drawn to the city "like moths to a flame."

Yet Binger repeatedly stressed that amid the hundreds of people in Kenosha and the anger and chaos in the streets, "the only person who killed anyone is the defendant, Kyle Rittenhouse."

"When we consider the reasonableness of the defendant's actions, I ask you to keep this in mind," Binger said, after explaining to the jury that a claim of self-defense can be valid only if Rittenhouse reasonably believed he was using deadly force to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm.

Rittenhouse attorney Mark Richards countered that his client was a victim, pointing to evidence that one man tried to grab his gun and others kicked the teen in the face and clubbed him in the head with a skateboard.

"You as jurors will end up looking at it from the standpoint of a 17-year-old under the circumstances as they existed," Richards said.

Rittenhouse, now 18, is charged with killing two men and wounding a third during the summer of 2020 with an assault-style rifle. The one-time police youth cadet could get life in prison if convicted.

The teenager traveled to Kenosha from his home in Illinois, just across the Wisconsin state line, after protests broke out over the shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, by a white Kenosha police officer. Rittenhouse said he went there to protect property after two nights in which rioters set fires and ransacked businesses.

Black, who was dating Rittenhouse's sister at the time, testified that he and Rittenhouse went to downtown Kenosha to help protect a car dealership after vehicles were burned the night before. Black said he thought nobody would start trouble if they saw him with his assault-style rifle. He also said Rittenhouse helped give medical aid and put out fires.

Black said he was on the roof as protesters hurled gasoline bombs and rocks at the business. He said he heard gunshots but didn't know Rittenhouse was involved until the teenager called and said, "I shot somebody, I shot somebody."

Binger, the prosecutor, said it's not known exactly what words were said, but it is clear that Rittenhouse started a confrontation that led Joseph Rosenbaum to begin chasing Rittenhouse across a parking lot.

Binger emphasized that Rosenbaum, 36, was killed by a shot to the back after he threw a plastic bag. The first two bullets hit Rosenbaum in the lower extremities, causing him to fall forward, the prosecutor noted.

Richards, the defense attorney, argued that it was Rosenbaum who "lit the fuse that night." Rosenbaum yelled an expletive at Rittenhouse and lunged for his gun before Rittenhouse fired at him, according to the defense.

Rittenhouse fired four shots in less than a second because Rosenbaum was "trying to take Kyle's weapon from him to use against him," Richards said.

Binger said that after shooting Rosenbaum, Rittenhouse fled the scene instead of rendering aid, despite portraying himself as a medic earlier in the night. But Richards said Rittenhouse didn't stop to help because the crowd wanted to "kill him," and instead ran toward police.

The crowd at that point believed Rittenhouse was an active shooter, according to the prosecutor.

Moments after shooting Rosenbaum, Rittenhouse shot and killed Anthony Huber, 26, a protester from Silver Lake, Wisconsin, who was seen on bystander video hitting Rittenhouse with a skateboard. The defense attorney portrayed Rittenhouse as the victim, saying Huber was "trying to separate the head from the body" with the skateboard.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 51 of 82

Rittenhouse then wounded Gaige Grosskreutz, 27, a protester from West Allis, Wisconsin, who had a gun in his hand as he stepped toward Rittenhouse.

Prosecutors called FBI agent Brandon Cramin to testify about infrared surveillance video of the protest on the night of the shooting. Prosecutors have said previously that the video would show that it was Rittenhouse following or chasing Rosenbaum at one point. They played a grainy video from 8,500 feet in which figures on the ground weren't immediately identifiable. After a dispute between the two sides over whether additional surveillance videos exist that the defense hadn't seen, Cramin, who testified off-camera by the court's order, was asked by the judge if he could return and testify another day.

The defense challenged the notion that Rittenhouse was an outsider drawn to Kenosha by a call to arms on right-wing social media. Richards said Rittenhouse had strong ties to Kenosha — his father lived there and Rittenhouse worked in Kenosha County as a lifeguard — and had seen livestreams of what was happening.

As his attorney displayed photos and video clips from the night of the shootings, Rittenhouse, wearing a dark pinstriped suit and tie, leaned on his elbows to view the images on a desktop monitor. He sat ramrod straight as audio of gunfire was played, and occasionally turned toward jurors, seeming to scrutinize their reactions.

His mother, Wendy Rittenhouse, sat behind him.

The most serious count against Rittenhouse, first-degree intentional homicide, is Wisconsin's top murder charge.

Rittenhouse has been painted by supporters on the right — including foes of the Black Lives Matter movement — as a patriot who took a stand against lawlessness by demonstrators and exercised his Second Amendment gun rights. Others see him as a vigilante and police wannabe.

He is white, as were those he shot, but many activists see race as an underlying issue in the case, in part because the protesters were on the streets to decry police violence against Black people.

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Forliti reported from Minneapolis; Webber reported from Fenton, Michigan. Associated Press writer Scott Bauer contributed from Madison, Wisconsin.

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

## The Latest: Braves win first World Series title since 1995

HOUSTON (AP) — The Latest on Game 6 of the World Series (all times local):

10:35 p.m.

The Atlanta Braves have won their first World Series championship since 1995, hammering the Houston Astros 7-0 in Game 6.

Jorge Soler hit his third home run of the Series, a go-ahead three-run drive in the third off Luis Garcia, and Freddie Freeman and Dansby Swanson also connected.

Max Fried allowed four hits over six innings for the win.

Steadied by 66-year-old manager Brian Snitker, an organization man for four decades, the underdog Braves won the franchise's fourth title, about 9 1/2 months after Hall of Fame slugger Hank Aaron died on Jan. 22 at 86.

The loss left Houston's 72-year-old Dusty Baker still seeking his first title as a manager.

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10:15 p.m.

The Atlanta Braves are three outs from their first World Series title since 1995.

The Braves lead the Astros 7-0 after eight innings and are ready to turn the ball over to closer Will Smith for the ninth. If the lead holds, it will be the most lopsided Series clincher since Kansas City's 11-0 win over St. Louis in Game 7 in 1985.

Atlanta went down in order in the top of the eighth, and Braves manager Brian Snitker sent left-hander Tyler Matzek out for a second inning in the bottom of the frame.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 52 of 82

Matzek struck out Aledmys Díaz, Marwin Gonzalez and Jose Altuve in order, ending a memorable post-season for a pitcher who was out of pro ball as recently in 2019 following a battle with the yips. Matzek has a 1.72 ERA in 13 appearances during this run.

10:05 p.m.

Freddie Freeman hit a solo home run in the seventh inning and the Atlanta Braves headed into the eighth with a 7-0 lead over the Houston Astros.

Atlanta reliever Tyler Matzek pitched around a leadoff single in the bottom of the seventh, leaving the Braves six outs from their first World Series title since 1995.

Freeman, the longtime Braves star and 2020 NL MVP, also had an RBI double in the fifth. He homered to center field with two outs in the seventh off reliever Ryne Stanek.

The slugger also went deep during Game 5 back home in Atlanta.

Braves starter Max Fried was removed after six shutout innings. He gave up four hits, struck out six and walked none.

9:30 p.m.

Max Fried is the first starter to get an out in the sixth inning of this World Series, and the Braves lead Houston 6-0 with nine outs between them and a championship celebration.

Fried retired 17 straight batters before Michael Brantley reached on an infield single with two outs in the sixth -- Brantley had been the last batter to reach, too, when he stepped on Fried's ankle on a close play at first in the first inning.

Fried opened the inning by striking out Martín Maldonado and getting a popup from Jose Altuve. After Brantley reached, he struck out Carlos Correa on a fastball that sailed to the backstop, requiring a slick play by catcher Travis d'Arnaud to retrieve it and relay to first for the out.

The Braves left-hander has thrown 74 pitches, setting him up to pitch deep into Atlanta's potential clinch. There hasn't been a complete game in the postseason since Justin Verlander did it for Houston in Game 2 of the 2017 AL Championship Series. It hasn't been done in the World Series since Kansas City's Johnny Cueto in Game 2 in 2015.

The Braves threatened in the top of the inning with singles by Adam Duvall and Ozzie Albies. Phil Maton struck out d'Arnaud, and Dansby Swanson grounded out to end the inning.

9:05 p.m.

Dansby Swanson hit a two-run homer in the fifth inning, Freddie Freeman added an RBI double and the Atlanta Braves have opened a 6-0 lead over Houston as they close in on their first championship since 1995.

Max Fried is rolling along for the Braves after escaping a jam in the first. Pitching with intense purpose and throwing his fastball more than during his previous two starts, when he struggled, the left-hander has allowed three hits and struck out four in five sharp innings.

He fanned Kyle Tucker and Alex Bregman in a 1-2-3 fifth, leaving Fried at 52 pitches. After the first two Astros hitters reached base, the last 15 have made 15 outs -- including a pair of double-play grounders.

Ozzie Albies walked to start the fifth. One out later, Swanson hit his second homer of the Series -- both off Cristian Javier -- to make it 5-0.

Swanson, the top overall pick in the 2015 amateur draft by Arizona, was the Most Outstanding Player at the 2014 College World Series as he helped Vanderbilt win a national championship.

Jorge Soler, who launched a three-run homer in the third, walked with two outs against lefty Blake Taylor and scored from first base when Freeman doubled off the left-center fence.

8:35 p.m.

Atlanta starting pitcher Max Fried has gotten 12 outs over 12 batters for the Braves, who lead 3-0 in Houston after four innings in pursuit of their first World Series title since 1995.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 53 of 82

Fried allowed a leadoff single for the second inning in a row, but also got a double-play grounder for the second inning in a row.

After Carlos Correa had a bloop hit drop in shallow right-center to start the fourth before he was retired when Yordan Alvarez grounded into a double play. Yuli Gurriel, the AL batting champion this season, then grounded out.

This is Fried's ninth career postseason start for the Braves. Only Tom Glavine (32), John Smoltz (27), Greg Maddux (27) and Steve Avery (12) have more.

Cristian Javier, the third Astros pitcher, took over in the fourth and struck out Austin Riley and Joc Pederson as part of his own 1-2-3 inning.

Javier was back on the mound for the first time since allowing back-to-back homers to Dansby Swanson and Jorge Soler in the seventh inning of Game 4 on Saturday night, when Atlanta won 3-2 and made him the loser pitcher.

8:15 p.m.

Jorge Soler's three-run blast has given the Braves a 3-0 lead in the third inning. And if it holds it might have earned him World Series MVP.

Ozzie Albies got Atlanta's first hit of Game 6 with a single on a grounder to right field to start the third inning.

Travis d'Arnaud hit a fly ball to center field that José Siri grabbed for the first out. Dansby Swanson followed with a long fly ball to left field that Michael Brantley caught on the track just in front of the wall for the second out.

Luis García then walked Eddie Rosario, which prompted a visit to the mound from pitching coach Brent Strom.

There was a full count when Soler connected on his third home run of the Series to give the Braves the lead. The soaring 446-foot shot that sailed over the wall in left field brought eight of his teammates out of the dugout to celebrate as he rounded the bases.

Houston manager Dusty Baker shook his head as he watched the Braves take another huge early lead. The Astros fell behind 4-0 after a grand slam by Adam Duvall in the first inning of Game 5 before rallying for the 9-5 win.

The homer chased García. Brooks Raley took over and Freddie Freeman grounded out for the third out of the inning.

Martín Maldonado singled to start the bottom of the third. Max Fried retired Jose Altuve before Brantley grounded into a double play to end the inning.

7:45 p.m.

Atlanta starting pitcher Max Fried needed only eight pitches to retire three straight Houston batters in the bottom of the second inning to keep Game 6 scoreless.

Fried appeared to be OK after getting spiked on the right foot when trying to cover first base on a strange play in the first. The lefty has retired six in a row since allowing a leadoff single to Jose Altuve in the first, and then getting stepped on by Michael Brantley.

Kyle Tucker opened the Astros second with a grounder, before Alex Bregman fouled out down the right field line and Jose Siri flew out.

Houston right-hander Luis Garcia struck out Austin Riley to open the second inning, giving the Astros rookie right-handed starter three consecutive strikeouts — against the Nos. 2-4 hitters in Atlanta's lineup.

After Riley struck out, Garcia wrapped up his second consecutive 1-2-3 inning when Adam Duvall grounded out and Joc Pederson hit a routine flyball.

7:30 p.m.

The Houston Astros stranded runners at second and third base in the first inning of World Series Game



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 54 of 82

6 against the Atlanta Braves' Max Fried.

Jose Altuve reached on an infield single to the shortstop hole leading off, and Michael Brantley hit a slow roller to first baseman Freddie Freeman. Fried took an indirect route to the base, and Brantley stepped on the pitcher's foot and went past the bag without touching it. The Braves did not ask for a video review while checking that Fried was OK.

Fried struck out Carlos Correa, Yordan Álvarez advanced the runners with a grounder and Fried struck out Yuli Gurriel with a 98.4 mph fastball, his fastest pitch of the year.

Luis Garcia opened the first by retiring three straight batters for Houston, throwing nine of 12 pitches for strikes and reaching 96.5 mph, up from his 93.5 mph average during the regular season.

He retired Eddie Rosario on a soft fly toward the right field line, with 6-foot-4 Kyle Tucker making a diving catch 275 feet from home plate.

Garcia struck out Jorge Soler on a full-count cutter and Freeman on a fastball.

7:10 p.m.

Country music artist Carly Pearce performed a rousing rendition of the National Anthem before the start of Game 6, where Minute Maid Park's retractable roof was open on a beautiful 72-degree night.

Local furniture store owner Jim McIngvale, better known as Mattress Mack, who has gained celebrity status for his wild promotions and philanthropy in the community, joined a rally nun on the field as she threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

The rally nuns, from the Dominican Sisters of Mary Immaculate Province, got their name when they began attending games during the ALCS and Houston won every game they attended.

McIngvale has a lot riding on this Series. Those who bought a mattress priced at \$3,000 or more at one of his three Gallery Furniture stores before the series started will get their money back if the Astros win the Series.

To hedge that bet, the 70-year-old made a huge wager on the Astros to win it all. McIngvale has said he placed a \$3.2 million bet that will pay \$36 million if Houston earns another title.

Houston native rapper Travis Scott, whose Astroworld music festival is this weekend at NRG Park, wrapped up the pregame festivities by saying: "Let's go Houston. It's our time. Let's play ball."

Scott wore a gray Astros jersey with his nickname "La Flame" printed on the back with the No. 1.

4:55 p.m.

Braves manager Brian Snitker said he dropped Ozzie Albies from second to seventh in the batting order "just to change the look."

Albies was 3 for 18 with three walks and no extra-base hits in the first five games. He had not hit lower than fifth during the regular season.

Freddie Freeman was moved back from second to third.

"I kind of want (Jorge) Soler to split the lefties, if nothing else," Snitker said. "I don't think it matters to Freddie whether he hits two or three. He's going to get up in the first inning regardless. I think Jorge has been having some really good at-bats. And just kind of balance things out a little bit."

3:28 p.m.

Eddie Rosario was back in the Atlanta Braves' leadoff spot against right-hander Luis Garcia and Jorge Soler moved to designated hitter in Game 6 of the World Series against Houston.

First baseman Freddie Freeman hit third following Rosario and Soler, followed by third baseman Austin Riley, center fielder Adam Duvall, right fielder Joc Pederson, second baseman Ozzie Albies, catcher Travis d'Arnaud and shortstop Dansby Swanson.

Game 2 loser Max Fried was on the mound.

3:10 p.m.

Alex Bregman remained seventh in the Houston Astros' batting order and Carlos Correa third for World

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 55 of 82

Series Game 6 against the Atlanta Braves on Tuesday night.

Astros manager Dusty Baker dropped Bregman down from third and moved Correa up from fifth for Game 5. Bregman hit an RBI double that started Houston's comeback from a four-run deficit and Correa had three hits and two RBIs.

Bregman is hitting .111 (2 for 18) in the Series and Correa is at .263 (5 for 19).

Second baseman Jose Altuve was to lead off, followed by left fielder Michael Brantley, Correa, designated hitter Jordan Álvarez, first baseman Yuli Gurriel, right fielder Kyle Tucker, Bregman, center fielder Jose Siri and catcher Martín Maldonado.

Right-hander Luis Garcia was on the mound with three days' rest after lasting 3 2/3 innings and taking the loss in Game 3.

2:45 p.m.

Major League Baseball planned to have the retractable roof open at Minute Maid Park for Game 6 of the World Series.

The roof was closed for Atlanta's opening win last week and remained closed for batting practice the next day, then was open for Houston's Game 2 win.

It was 78 degrees when early batting practice started Tuesday and skies were mostly clear.

11:15 a.m.

Atlanta Braves infielder/outfielder Ehire Adrianza was placed on the postseason paternity list ahead of World Series Game 6 on Tuesday night and replaced on the active roster by infielder Johan Camargo.

Adrianza is 0 for 2 in the Series, making two pinch hit appearances. He will be allowed to return should the Series extend to a Game 7.

Camargo was 0 for 4 in the NL Championship Series.

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

## Minneapolis voters reject replacing police with new agency

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and MOHAMED IBRAHIM Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minneapolis voters on Tuesday rejected a proposal to replace the city's police department with a new Department of Public Safety, an idea that supporters had hoped would bring radical change to policing in the city where George Floyd's death under an officer's knee brought calls for racial justice.

The initiative would have changed the city charter to remove a requirement that the city have a police department with a minimum number of officers. Supporters said a complete overhaul of policing was necessary to stop police violence. Opponents said the proposal had no concrete plan for how to move forward and warned it would leave some communities already affected by violence more vulnerable as crime is on the rise.

Those opponents welcomed the amendment's defeat but stressed the urgency of transforming policing in the city even without it.

"Tonight Minneapolis voters have made clear that we want a planful approach to transforming policing and public safety in our city that needs to include meaningful consultation with the communities that are most impacted by both violent crime and by over-policing," said Leili Fatehi, manager of the All of Mpls campaign.

The ballot proposal had roots in the abolish-the-police movement that erupted after Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer last year. The debate over racial justice in policing brought national attention to Tuesday's vote, as well as a river of out-of-state money seeking to influence the outcome that could have shaped change elsewhere, too.

The ballot question called for a new Department of Public Safety to take "a comprehensive public health

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 56 of 82

approach to the delivery of functions" that would be determined by the mayor and City Council. Supporters argued it was a chance to reimagine what public safety can be and how money gets spent. Among other things, supporters said, funding would go toward programs that don't send armed officers to call on people in crisis.

Democratic Mayor Jacob Frey was also in a tough fight for a second term, facing a bevy of opponents who have attacked him for his leadership in the wake of Floyd's death. Frey opposed the policing amendment. Two of his leading challengers in the field of 17 candidates, Sheila Nezhad and Kate Knuth, strongly supported the proposal.

With nearly complete returns, Frey had about 43% of the first-choice vote. He needed more than 50% to win outright under the city's ranked-choice voting system, with the city to begin sorting second- and potentially third-choice votes Wednesday morning. Nezhad and Knuth were both near 20%.

A jubilant Frey didn't claim victory when he spoke to supporters late Tuesday but called it "a really good night" and said the city had sent a message to the entire country that true change requires hard work, not slogans.

"There will be many that will try to argue that this is a blow to reform. That is dead wrong," Frey said. "Reform has begun, but it must continue."

The vote was a defeat for Yes 4 Minneapolis, which spearheaded the amendment drive and vowed to keep fighting for change.

"We changed the conversation about what public safety should look like," the group tweeted. "We showed the country and the world the power of democracy and of the people. Now, we will work to hold the system accountable. We will work to heal our city and create safer streets for all our communities."

The police union didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

A separate ballot question, on whether to replace the city's "weak mayor, strong council" system with a more conventional distribution of executive and legislative powers that would give the mayor clearer authority over day-to-day government operations, passed with about 53% of the vote.

The future of policing in the city where Floyd's death in May 2020 launched a nationwide reckoning on racial justice overshadowed everything on the municipal ballot.

Rishi Khanna, 31, a tech worker, voted yes on replacing the police department, saying he didn't believe police officers are qualified to deal with many situations, such as mental health crises. He said he thought having professionals equipped to deal with a range of public safety issues in the same department as law enforcement would benefit both residents and police officers.

"I understand that law enforcement will have to have a seat at the table, but I think both in our community and in communities around the country, too often law enforcement is the only seat at the table," he said. "I don't think that's the right solution."

Askari Lyons, 61, voted against the ballot initiative. A resident of the city's largely Black north side, where violent crime runs higher than in the rest of the city, he said he believed Minneapolis police officers "may have learned a lesson after George Floyd's death and what happened to the cop that killed him."

Lyons called it "unwise" to replace the department and said he believed change within the department is imminent.

"People are so frustrated, so angry, so disappointed" with the violence occurring citywide as much as they are with the city's law enforcement, he said.

The proposed amendment to the city charter would have removed language that mandates that Minneapolis have a police department with a minimum number of officers based on population. It would have been replaced by a new Department of Public Safety that would take a "comprehensive public health approach to the delivery of functions" that "could include" police officers "if necessary, to fulfill its responsibilities for public safety."

Supporters of the change argued that a complete overhaul of policing is necessary to stop police violence. They framed it as a chance to re-imagine what public safety can be and to devote more funding toward new approaches that don't rely on sending armed officers to deal with people in crisis.

But opponents said the ballot proposal contained no concrete plan for how the new department would

operate and expressed fear that it might make communities already affected by gun violence even more vulnerable to rising crime. The details, and who would lead the new agency, would be determined by the mayor and the City Council.

Two nationally prominent progressive Democratic leaders — U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar, who represents the Minneapolis area, and state Attorney General Keith Ellison — both supported the policing amendment. But some leading mainstream liberals, including Gov. Tim Walz and U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith, opposed it and feared the backlash could lead to Democratic losses across the country in 2022.

Support didn't cleanly follow racial lines. Opponents included several prominent Black leaders, including some who have been top voices in the police accountability movement.

Minister JaNaé Bates, a spokeswoman for the pro-amendment campaign, told reporters Monday that even if the proposal failed, the activists behind it changed the conversation around public safety.

"No matter what happens, the city of Minneapolis is going to have to move forward and really wrestle with what we cannot unknow: that the Minneapolis Police Department has been able to operate with impunity and has done quite a bit of harm and the city has to take some serious steps to rectify that," Bates said.

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Mohamed Ibrahim 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.

## US gives final clearance to COVID-19 shots for kids 5 to 11

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writers

U.S. health officials on Tuesday gave the final signoff to Pfizer's kid-size COVID-19 shot, a milestone that opens a major expansion of the nation's vaccination campaign to children as young as 5.

The Food and Drug Administration already authorized the shots for children ages 5 to 11 — doses just a third of the amount given to teens and adults. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention formally recommends who should receive FDA-cleared vaccines.

The announcement by CDC director Dr. Rochelle Walensky came only hours after an advisory panel unanimously decided Pfizer's shots should be opened to the 28 million youngsters in that age group.

The decision marks the first opportunity for Americans under 12 to get the powerful protection of any COVID-19 vaccine.

"As a mom, I encourage parents with questions to talk to their pediatrician, school nurse or local pharmacist to learn more about the vaccine and the importance of getting their children vaccinated," Walensky said Tuesday night, in a statement.

In remarks earlier in the day, she said while the risk of severe disease and death is lower in young children than adults, it is real — and that COVID-19 has had a profound social, mental health and educational impact on youngsters, including widening disparities in learning.

"There are children in the second grade who have never experienced a normal school year," Walensky said. "Pediatric vaccination has the power to help us change all of that."

President Joe Biden called the decision "a turning point."

"It will allow parents to end months of anxious worrying about their kids, and reduce the extent to which children spread the virus to others," he said in a statement. "It is a major step forward for our nation in our fight to defeat the virus."

The American Academy of Pediatrics welcomed the decision as its members get ready to start the first injections into little arms, which the CDC said could begin "as soon as possible." The 5- to 11-year-olds will receive two low doses, three weeks apart, of the vaccine made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech -- the same schedule as everyone else, but using a smaller needle.

Pfizer over the weekend began shipping millions of the pediatric shots to states, doctors' offices and pharmacies — in orange caps, to avoid mix-ups with purple-capped vials of adult vaccine.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 58 of 82

Many parents have clamored for vaccine protection for youngsters so they can resume normal childhood activities without risking their own health — or fear bringing the virus home to a more vulnerable family member. But CDC's advisers said they recognize many parents also have questions, and may be fearful of the vaccine because of rampant misinformation.

Members of the advisory panel said they want parents to ask about the shots — and understand that they're far better than gambling that their child will escape a serious coronavirus infection. As for safety, more than 106 million Americans have safely gotten two doses of Pfizer's full-strength shots — including more than 7 million 12- to 15-year-olds.

"I have vaccinated my kids," said CDC adviser Dr. Helen Keipp Talbot of Vanderbilt University, saying she wouldn't recommend something for other families unless she was comfortable with it for her own. "We have seen the devastation of this disease."

In the U.S., there have been more than 8,300 coronavirus-related hospitalizations of kids ages 5 to 11, about a third requiring intensive care, according to government data. The CDC has recorded at least 94 deaths in that age group, with additional reports under investigation.

And while the U.S. has seen a recent downturn in COVID-19 cases, experts are worried about another uptick with holiday travel and as winter sends more activity indoors where it's easier for the coronavirus to spread.

Pfizer's study of 2,268 youngsters found the kid-size vaccine is nearly 91% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 -- based on 16 diagnoses among kids given dummy shots compared to just three who got the real vaccination.

The FDA examined more children, a total of 3,100 who were vaccinated, in concluding the shots are safe. The younger children experienced similar or fewer reactions -- such as sore arms, fever or achiness -- than teens or young adults get after larger doses.

That 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. Regulators ultimately decided the benefits from vaccination outweigh the potential that younger kids getting a smaller dose also might experience that rare risk.

Some of CDC's advisers said for some parents, deciding to get their children vaccinated may hinge on that small but scary risk.

"The risk of some sort of bad heart involvement is much higher if you get COVID than if you get this vaccine," Dr. Matthew Oster, a pediatric cardiologist at Emory University, told the panel. "COVID is much riskier to the heart."

Last week, FDA's advisers struggled with whether every young child needed a vaccine. Youngsters hospitalized with COVID-19 are more likely to have high-risk conditions such as obesity or diabetes. But otherwise healthy children can get seriously ill, too, and the CDC's advisers ultimately recommended the shots for all of them — even children who've already recovered from a bout of COVID-19.

CDC officials calculated that for every 500,000 youngsters vaccinated, between 18,000 and 58,000 COVID-19 cases — and between 80 and 226 hospitalizations — in that age group would be prevented, depending on the pandemic's trajectory. And CDC officials noted that COVID-19 has caused more deaths in this age group than some other diseases, such as chickenpox, did before children were routinely vaccinated against them.

What about younger children? Pfizer is testing shots for babies and preschoolers and expects data around the end of the year. The similarly made Moderna vaccine also is being studied with young children. But the FDA still hasn't cleared its use in teens, and the company is delaying its application for younger children pending that review.

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 Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are watching the U.S. decision, and European regulators just began considering the companies' kid-size doses.

cal Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Facebook to shut down face-recognition system, delete data

By MATT O'BRIEN and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writers

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Facebook said it will shut down its face-recognition system and delete the faceprints of more than 1 billion people amid growing concerns about the technology and its misuse by governments, police and others.

"This change will represent one of the largest shifts in facial recognition usage in the technology's history," Jerome Pesenti, vice president of artificial intelligence for Facebook's new parent company, Meta, wrote in a blog post on Tuesday.

He said the company was trying to weigh the positive use cases for the technology "against growing societal concerns, especially as regulators have yet to provide clear rules." The company in the coming weeks will delete "more than a billion people's individual facial recognition templates," he said.

Facebook's about-face follows a busy few weeks. On Thursday it announced its new name Meta for Facebook the company, but not the social network. The change, it said, will help it focus on building technology for what it envisions as the next iteration of the internet -- the "metaverse."

The company is also facing perhaps its biggest public relations crisis to date after leaked documents from whistleblower Frances Haugen showed that it has known about the harms its products cause and often did little or nothing to mitigate them.

More than a third of Facebook's daily active users have opted in to have their faces recognized by the social network's system. That's about 640 million people. Facebook introduced facial recognition more than a decade ago but gradually made it easier to opt out of the feature as it faced scrutiny from courts and regulators.

Facebook in 2019 stopped automatically recognizing people in photos and suggesting people "tag" them, and instead of making that the default, asked users to choose if they wanted to use its facial recognition feature.

Facebook's decision to shut down its system "is a good example of trying to make product decisions that are good for the user and the company," said Kristen Martin, a professor of technology ethics at the University of Notre Dame. She added that the move also demonstrates the power of public and regulatory pressure, since the face recognition system has been the subject of harsh criticism for over a decade.

Meta Platforms Inc., Facebook's parent company, appears to be looking at new forms of identifying people. Pesenti said Tuesday's announcement involves a "company-wide move away from this kind of broad identification, and toward narrower forms of personal authentication."

"Facial recognition can be particularly valuable when the technology operates privately on a person's own devices," he wrote. "This method of on-device facial recognition, requiring no communication of face data with an external server, is most commonly deployed today in the systems used to unlock smartphones."

Apple uses this kind of technology to power its Face ID system for unlocking iPhones.

Researchers and privacy activists have spent years raising questions about the tech industry's use of face-scanning software, citing studies that found it worked unevenly across boundaries of race, gender or age. One concern has been that the technology can incorrectly identify people with darker skin.

Another problem with face recognition is that in order to use it, companies have had to create unique faceprints of huge numbers of people -- often without their consent and in ways that can be used to fuel systems that track people, said Nathan Wessler of the American Civil Liberties Union, which has fought Facebook and other companies over their use of the technology.

"This is a tremendously significant recognition that this technology is inherently dangerous," he said.

Facebook found itself on the other end of the debate last year when it demanded that facial recognition startup ClearviewAI, which works with police, stop harvesting Facebook and Instagram user images to identify the people in them.

Concerns also have grown because of increasing awareness of the Chinese government's extensive video surveillance system, especially as it's been employed in a region home to one of China's largely

Muslim ethnic minority populations.

Facebook's huge repository of images shared by users helped make it a powerhouse for improvements in computer vision, a branch of artificial intelligence. Now many of those research teams have been re-focused on Meta's ambitions for augmented reality technology, in which the company envisions future users strapping on goggles to experience a blend of virtual and physical worlds. Those technologies, in turn, could pose new concerns about how people's biometric data is collected and tracked.

Facebook didn't provide clear answers when asked how people could verify that their image data was deleted and what the company would be doing with its underlying face-recognition technology.

On the first point, company spokesperson Jason Grosse said in email only that user templates will be "marked for deletion" if their face-recognition settings are on, and that the deletion process should be completed and verified in "coming weeks." On the second, point, Grosse said that Facebook will be "turning off" components of the system associated with the face-recognition settings.

Meta's newly wary approach to facial recognition follows decisions by other U.S. tech giants such as Amazon, Microsoft and IBM last year to end or pause their sales of facial recognition software to police, citing concerns about false identifications and amid a broader U.S. reckoning over policing and racial injustice.

At least seven U.S. states and nearly two dozen cities have limited government use of the technology amid fears over civil rights violations, racial bias and invasion of privacy.

President Joe Biden's science and technology office in October launched a fact-finding mission to look at facial recognition and other biometric tools used to identify people or assess their emotional or mental states and character. European regulators and lawmakers have also taken steps toward blocking law enforcement from scanning facial features in public spaces.

Facebook's face-scanning practices also contributed to the \$5 billion fine and privacy restrictions the Federal Trade Commission imposed on the company in 2019. Facebook's settlement with the FTC included a promise to require "clear and conspicuous" notice before people's photos and videos were subjected to facial recognition technology.

And the company earlier this year agreed to pay \$650 million to settle a 2015 lawsuit alleging it violated an Illinois privacy law when it used photo-tagging without users' permission.

"It is a big deal, it's a big shift but it's also far, far too late," said John Davisson, senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center. EPIC filed its first complaint with the FTC against Facebook's facial recognition service in 2011, the year after it was rolled out.

Ortutay reported from Oakland, Calif.

## Starkly different portrayals of Rittenhouse in Kenosha trial

By MICHAEL TARM, AMY FORLITI and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — Jurors heard starkly different portrayals of Kyle Rittenhouse — instigator or victim — in opening statements at his trial Tuesday on charges of shooting three people on the streets of Kenosha during a turbulent protest against racial injustice.

A prosecutor said Rittenhouse set the bloodshed in motion when he triggered a confrontation with a man that night and then killed him with a bullet to the back.

But Rittenhouse's attorney told the jury that his client acted in self-defense after the man tried to grab Rittenhouse's gun and others kicked the teen in the face and clubbed him in the head with a skateboard.

"You as jurors will end up looking at it from the standpoint of a 17-year-old under the circumstances as they existed," defense attorney Mark Richards said.

Rittenhouse, now 18, is charged with killing two men and wounding a third during the summer of 2020 with an assault-style rifle. The one-time aspiring police officer could get life in prison if convicted.

The teenager traveled to Kenosha from his home in Illinois, just across the Wisconsin state line, after protests broke out over the shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, by a white Kenosha police officer. Rit-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 61 of 82

tenhouse said he went there to protect property after two nights in which rioters set fires and ransacked businesses.

The first witness was Dominick Black, who was dating Rittenhouse's sister at the time. Black faces charges he bought the rifle for Rittenhouse months before the shootings because the teen was not old enough to own one at the time.

Black testified that he and Rittenhouse went to downtown Kenosha to help protect a car dealership after vehicles were burned the night before. Black said he thought nobody would start trouble if they saw him with his assault-style rifle. He also said Rittenhouse helped give medical aid and put out fires.

Black said he was on the roof as protesters hurled gasoline bombs and rocks at the business. He said he heard gunshots but didn't know Rittenhouse was involved until the teenager called and said, "I shot somebody, I shot somebody."

Afterward, Black said, Rittenhouse was "freaking out. He was really scared. He was pale, shaking a lot." Black said Rittenhouse told him that he acted in self-defense because "people were trying to hurt him."

In his opening statement, prosecutor Thomas Binger described the unrest in Kenosha as "two of the roughest nights that our community has ever seen" and said outsiders were drawn to the city "like moths to a flame."

Yet Binger repeatedly stressed that amid the hundreds of people in Kenosha and the anger and chaos in the streets, "the only person who killed anyone is the defendant, Kyle Rittenhouse."

"When we consider the reasonableness of the defendant's actions, I ask you to keep this in mind," Binger said, after explaining to the jury that a claim of self-defense can be valid only if Rittenhouse reasonably believed he was using deadly force to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm.

The prosecutor said that it is not known exactly what words were said, but it is clear that Rittenhouse started a confrontation that led Joseph Rosenbaum to begin chasing Rittenhouse across a parking lot.

Binger emphasized that Rosenbaum, 36, was killed by a shot to the back after he threw a plastic bag. The first two bullets hit Rosenbaum in the lower extremities, causing him to fall forward, the prosecutor noted.

Richards, the defense attorney, argued that it was Rosenbaum who "lit the fuse that night." Rosenbaum yelled an expletive at Rittenhouse and lunged for his gun before Rittenhouse fired at him, according to the defense.

Rittenhouse fired four shots in less than a second because Rosenbaum was "trying to take Kyle's weapon from him to use against him," Richards said.

Binger, the prosecutor, said that after shooting Rosenbaum, Rittenhouse fled the scene instead of rendering aid, despite portraying himself as a medic earlier in the night. But Richards said Rittenhouse didn't stop to help because the crowd wanted to "kill him," and instead ran toward police.

The crowd at that point clearly believed Rittenhouse was an active shooter, according to the prosecutor.

Moments after shooting Rosenbaum, Rittenhouse shot and killed Anthony Huber, 26, a protester from Silver Lake, Wisconsin, who was seen on bystander video hitting Rittenhouse with a skateboard. The defense attorney portrayed Rittenhouse as the victim, saying Huber was "trying to separate the head from the body" with the skateboard.

Rittenhouse then wounded Gaije Grosskreutz, 27, a protester from West Allis, Wisconsin, who had a gun in his hand as he stepped toward Rittenhouse.

Prosecutors called FBI agent Brandon Cramin to testify about infrared surveillance video of the protest on the night of the shooting. Prosecutors have said previously that the video would show that it was Rittenhouse following or chasing Rosenbaum at one point. They played a grainy video from 8,500 feet in which figures on the ground weren't immediately identifiable. After a dispute between the two sides over whether additional surveillance videos exist that the defense hadn't seen, Cramin, who testified off-camera by the court's order, was asked by the judge if he could return and testify another day.

The defense pushed back against the notion that Rittenhouse was an outsider drawn to Kenosha by a call to arms on right-wing social media. Richards said Rittenhouse had strong ties to Kenosha -- his father lived there and Rittenhouse worked in Kenosha County as a lifeguard -- and had seen livestreams



of what was happening.

As his attorney displayed photos and video clips from the night of the shootings, Rittenhouse, wearing a dark pinstriped suit and tie, leaned on his elbows to view the images on a desktop monitor. He sat ramrod straight as audio of gunfire was played, and occasionally turned toward jurors, seeming to scrutinize their reactions.

His mother, Wendy Rittenhouse, sat behind him.

The most serious count against Rittenhouse, first-degree intentional homicide, is Wisconsin's top murder charge.

Rittenhouse has been painted by supporters on the right — including foes of the Black Lives Matter movement — as a patriot who took a stand against lawlessness by demonstrators and exercised his Second Amendment gun rights. Others see him as a vigilante and police wannabe.

He is white, as were those he shot, but many activists see race as an underlying issue in the case, in part because the protesters were on the streets to decry police violence against Black people.

\_\_\_ Bauer reported from Madison, Wisconsin, Forliti from Minneapolis. Associated Press writer Tammy Webber contributed from Fenton, Michigan.

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

## **New Ronald Greene autopsy dumps crash theory in fatal arrest**

By JIM MUSTIAN and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A reexamined autopsy ordered by the FBI in the deadly 2019 arrest of Ronald Greene has rejected the Louisiana State Police claim that a car crash caused his fatal injuries, narrowing prosecutors' focus on the troopers seen on body camera video beating, stunning and dragging the Black motorist.

The unusual second look at what killed Greene confirmed what his family suspected the moment they saw his bruised and battered corpse and his car with only slight damage: A minor crash at the end of a high-speed chase had nothing to do with his death.

The FBI this week received the new forensic review it commissioned in light of the long-buried body camera footage, vehicle black box data and other evidence the state police withheld from Greene's original autopsy. The review, which did not involve another examination of the body, attributes Greene's death to a series of factors, including troopers striking the 49-year-old in the head, restraining him at length and his use of cocaine.

The new review notably removes the crash and "agitated delirium" from the list of causes in Greene's original autopsy, according to a person familiar with the findings who wasn't authorized to discuss the federal inquiry and spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

It also addresses a key unanswered question from the original autopsy, whether the crash that didn't deploy the air bag in Greene's car was severe enough to cause a fractured breastbone and ruptured aorta. The new review determined those injuries were most likely the result of CPR and other life-saving efforts by first responders, the person familiar with the findings said.

Still unclear was whether the new autopsy would prompt the Union Parish coroner to change the manner of Greene's death from accidental to homicide, which could affect the charges available to state and federal prosecutors.

Greene's mother, Mona Hardin, said she hopes the new report brings the case closer to justice "so I can put my son to rest," adding that she has yet to bury his cremated remains. "This thing has been so crazy. No one has properly grieved."

The new autopsy report comes as federal prosecutors are in the final stages of a two-year civil rights investigation that began looking into Greene's death but has since expanded to examine the beatings of several other Black motorists, and whether top brass obstructed justice to shield troopers from possible prosecution.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 63 of 82

Rafael Goyeneche, a former prosecutor who heads the Metropolitan Crime Commission, a New Orleans-based watchdog group, said the new cause of death makes it even more likely prosecutors will bring serious charges. "This yanks the rug from under the defense claim that the accident caused his death and that the beatings weren't that severe," he said.

A Louisiana State Police spokesman said the agency "has been provided no further information on the ongoing federal investigation" but continues to cooperate. A U.S. Justice Department spokesperson declined to speak about an ongoing investigation but added that if the evidence reveals violations of the law, the department will "take all appropriate action."

Greene's May 10, 2019, death came after he failed to stop for a traffic violation and led troopers on a midnight chase across northern Louisiana at speeds topping 115 mph (185 km/h), ending along a rural roadside near Monroe. State police initially told Greene's family he died after crashing into a tree, an account the Union Parish coroner committed to writing in an official report, which describes Greene's death as a motor vehicle accident and makes no mention of a confrontation with troopers.

After officials refused for more than two years to release the troopers' body camera video, the AP obtained and published it this spring, showing white troopers converging on Greene before he can even get out of his car, repeatedly stunning and punching him as he appears to surrender and repeatedly wails, "I'm your brother! I'm scared! I'm scared!" A trooper can later be seen dragging the heavysset Greene by his ankle shackles and he is left prone and face down in the dirt for more than nine minutes before he eventually goes limp.

Yet even after AP published video of Greene's violent arrest, state officials and advocates for the troopers repeated the crash theory, with Gov. John Bel Edwards floating it as recently as September.

"The issue would be did he die from injuries sustained in the accident?" Edwards, a Democrat, said on a radio program. "Obviously, he didn't die in the accident itself because he was still alive when the troopers were engaging with him. But what was the cause of death? I don't know that that was falsely portrayed."

Edwards went on to say troopers' actions were "criminal" but that whether they caused Greene's death was the subject of an investigation and "I'm not going to get in front of that."

A lawyer for the troopers involved in Greene's arrest told a court in July that the crash killed him.

"At trial, defendants will present scientific evidence that Mr. Greene's death was caused by a crash-related blunt force chest trauma resulting in a fractured sternum and ruptured aorta," P. Scott Wolleson wrote in a filing in a civil lawsuit brought by Greene's family.

Greene's was among a dozen cases over the past decade in which an AP investigation found troopers or their bosses ignored or concealed evidence of beatings, deflected blame and impeded efforts to root out misconduct. Dozens of current and former troopers said they occurred in an agency with a culture of impunity, nepotism and in some cases outright racism.

Federal investigators are also examining the actions of police commanders, which included pressuring their own detectives to hold off on arresting the trooper who acknowledged hitting Greene in the head with a flashlight and was overheard on his body camera video boasting to a colleague that he "beat the ever-living f--- out of him."

That trooper, Chris Hollingsworth, died last year in a single-vehicle crash hours after he learned he would be fired for his role in the Greene case.

Speaking to investigators shortly before his death, Hollingsworth sought to justify his flashlight strikes on Greene in part because the man "didn't have any apparent injuries" after the crash and "could have done anything once my hold was broke off him."

Bleiberg reported from Dallas.

## Hope after wildfire: Tiny sequoias could grow into giants

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

SEQUOIA CREST, Calif. (AP) — Ashtyn Perry was barely as tall as the shovel she stomped into barren

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 64 of 82

ground where a wildfire last year ravaged the California mountain community of Sequoia Crest and destroyed dozens of its signature behemoth trees.

The 13-year-old with a broad smile and a braid running to her waist had a higher purpose that — if successful — she'll never live to see: to plant a baby sequoia that could grow into a giant and live for millennia. "It's really cool knowing it could be a big tree in like a thousand years," she said.

The bright green seedling that barely reached Perry's knees is part of an unusual project to plant offspring from some of the largest and oldest trees on the planet to see if genes that allowed the parent to survive so long will protect new growth from the perils of climate change.

The effort led by the Archangel Ancient Tree Archive, a Michigan nonprofit that preserves the genetics of old-growth trees, is one of many extraordinary measures being taken to save giant sequoias that were once considered nearly fire-proof but are at risk of being wiped out by more intense wildfires.

The giant sequoia is the world's largest tree by volume and closely related to the redwood, the world's tallest. Sequoias grow naturally only in a 260-mile (420 kilometers) belt of forest on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains. They have a massive trunk and can grow over 300 feet (90 meters) tall. The coast redwood is more slender and is native near the Pacific Ocean in Northern California.

Giant sequoias — and redwoods — are some of the best fire-adapted plants. Thick bark protects their trunks, and their canopies can be so high they are out of reach of flames. Sequoias even rely on fire to help open their cones to disperse seeds, and flames clear undergrowth so seedlings can take root and get sunlight.

In recorded history, large sequoias had never incinerated before 2015. Destruction of the majestic trees hit unprecedented levels last year when 10% to 14% of the estimated 75,000 trees larger than 4 feet (1.2 meters) in diameter burned. Thousands more potentially were lost this year during fires that burned into 27 groves — about a third of all groves.

An initial assessment released Tuesday by Sequoia National Forest said the Windy Fire killed hundreds of giant sequoias and many more burned trees may not survive. Scientists are still tallying the damage in neighboring Sequoia National Park from a different lightning-sparked fire.

Climate change and a century of policies emphasizing extinguishing wildland blazes rather than letting some burn to prevent bigger future fires are to blame, said Christy Brigham, chief of resource management and science at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Hotter droughts have led to more intense fires that have burned through fuels accumulated through fire suppression.

Last year's destruction to the sequoias brought Brigham to tears.

"They're so big and so old and so individual and iconic and quirky that even people who don't love trees, love them. They speak for all the trees," Brigham said. "The fact that we've now created fires that they can't survive is very heartbreaking."

To save the trees this year, extreme measures were taken, including wrapping trunks of the largest trees in a fire-resistant foil, setting up sprinklers, raking the flammable matter from around the trees and even using gel in the canopies to repel flames.

But those labor-intensive measures are not practical, Brigham said. More needs to be done before fire approaches, including thinning vegetation and using prescribed burns to reduce the buildup of vegetation. They are also thinking about replanting.

One of the areas that burned intensely last year was the Alder Creek grove, where the Sequoia Crest community has stood since the middle of last century. Half the 100 homes and cabins were destroyed, leaving empty concrete foundations next to charred tree stumps. Some blackened giants still stand sentry on steep hillsides in the area, 150 miles (241 kilometers) north of Los Angeles.

It was in that grove, one of the few privately owned, that Archangel had gathered cones and taken clippings over the past decade to clone and preserve the genes of two of the oldest and largest trees. One of those trees, named Stagg, the world's fifth-largest, survived while the fire killed one named Waterfall.

"Talk about divine providence," said David Milarch, co-founder of Archangel. "Little did we know that Waterfall would burn down two years ago and we'd have the only seedlings of that tree."

Milarch's mission is to archive the genetics of ancient trees, breed them and replant them. He believes

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 65 of 82

the oldest trees have superior genes that enabled them to live through drought, disease and fire and will give their offspring a better chance of survival.

Two years ago, the undeveloped part of the grove was bought by Save the Redwoods League.

The league is already replanting on its land to study if seedlings can survive where high-severity fire destroyed any ability for trees to naturally reproduce, said Joanna Nelson, science director for the organization.

While Nelson wouldn't rule out using seedlings from Stagg, estimated to be 3,000 years old, the project is designed to find the best genetic diversity to increase their survival.

"That genetic makeup served that tree very well for the past 3,000 years," Nelson said. "However, we know that the next 3,000 years are going to be more difficult -- in terms of warming and drying land and air and bigger wildfires that are more frequent. We have conditions coming that these trees haven't experienced."

Nelson applauded the effort by Sequoia Crest to replant.

Residents who lost homes and those who were spared banded together to excavate water pipes to provide irrigation for the seedlings and, along with Archangel workers and volunteers, dug holes under a thin coat of snow last week and planted small green flags to mark planting locations.

Uta Kogelsberger, whose cabin was destroyed, said she doesn't plan to rebuild but wants to leave a legacy she will probably never see.

"We are all in some ways responsible for these fires — the way we've been treating our planet," Kogelsberger said. "The loss of the cabin was absolutely devastating, but the loss of the amazing ecosystem that surrounds it is just beyond compare. You know, you can replace a house, but you cannot replace a 2,000 to 3,000-year-old sequoia tree."

Residents were joined last week by a science class of seventh and eighth graders from Springville, which sits at the bottom of the mountain, to help plant 150 of the 7-year-old seedlings.

Teacher Vicki Matthews drove the school bus up the cliff-hanging road above the Tule River canyon and into an evergreen forest that first turned a rusty shade from drought or fire damage and then gave way to entire stands of black trees silhouetted against the snow.

The 35 students fanned out across an area once known as "downtown" Sequoia Crest, where the original homes were built and now a sad scene of destruction with stumps poking from the snow like tombstones.

Ashtyn and two friends carefully removed the little tree from its pot, untangled the roots and planted it near a charred rock, packing the soil around it. They named it "Timmy the Tree."

Ashtyn said she'd like to return once a year to see how it's growing. She hopes it becomes a giant.

## Leaders vow to protect forests, plug methane leaks at COP26

By FRANK JORDANS and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — World leaders promised to protect Earth's forests, cut methane emissions and help South Africa wean itself off coal at the U.N. climate summit Tuesday — part of a flurry of deals intended to avert catastrophic global warming.

Britain hailed the commitment by more than 100 countries to end deforestation in the coming decade as the first big achievement of the conference in the Scottish city of Glasgow, known as COP26 — but experts noted such promises have been made and broken before.

More than 120 world leaders were heading home after two days in which they received stark warnings about the state of the Earth from Johnson, naturalist David Attenborough, Queen Elizabeth II and — most powerfully — the people of countries and regions already facing climate upheaval.

Johnson said at a news conference that it was important to "guard against false hope," but added that he was "cautiously optimistic" about the outcome of the talks. The conference aims to keep the world on track to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels — the goal set at the Paris climate conference six years ago.

Johnson had a message for negotiators from around the globe who will strain over the next 10 days



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 66 of 82

to turn politicians' climate promises into reality: "The eyes of the populations of the world are on you."

The U.K. said it has received pledges from leaders representing more than 85% of the world's forests to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. Among them are several countries with massive forests, including Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Indonesia, Russia and the United States.

More than \$19 billion in public and private funds have been pledged toward the plan.

Experts and observers said fulfilling the pledge will be critical to limiting climate change, but many noted that such grand promises have been made before — to little effect.

"Signing the declaration is the easy part," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said on Twitter. "It is essential that it is implemented now for people and planet."

Alison Hoare, a senior research fellow at political think tank Chatham House, said world leaders promised in 2014 to end deforestation by 2030, "but since then deforestation has accelerated across many countries."

Forests are important ecosystems and provide a critical way of absorbing carbon dioxide — the main greenhouse gas — from the atmosphere. But the value of wood as a commodity and the growing demand for agricultural and pastoral land are leading to widespread and often illegal felling of forests, particularly in developing countries. Indigenous peoples are often among the hardest hit.

"We are delighted to see Indigenous peoples mentioned in the forest deal announced today," said Joseph Itongwa Mukumo, an Indigenous Walikale and activist from Congo.

He called for governments and businesses to recognize the effective role Indigenous communities play in preventing deforestation.

"These are billions in investment towards environmental preservation, but it's very difficult for this money to reach Indigenous communities, reach traditional communities," said Chief Ninawa, a leader of the Huni Kui people from the Amazon attending the summit.

Some campaigners said the forests pledge was a step forward. Luciana Tellez Chavez, an environmental researcher at Human Rights Watch, said there were "quite a lot of really positive elements."

She said it was positive to see China and Brazil pledging to protect forests, but noted that Brazil's public statements don't yet line up with its domestic policies and warned that the deal could be used by some countries to "greenwash" their image.

Brazil's government has been eager to project itself as a responsible environmental steward in the wake of surging deforestation and fires in the Amazon rainforest and Pantanal wetlands that sparked global outrage in recent years. Critics caution that its promises should be viewed with skepticism, and the country's president, Jair Bolsonaro, is an outspoken proponent of developing the Amazon.

On Tuesday, the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden launched a plan to reduce methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming. The announcement was part of a broader effort with the European Union and other nations to reduce overall methane emissions worldwide by 30% by 2030.

Clamping down on methane flaring and leaks from oil wells and gas pipelines — the focus of the Biden plan — is considered one of the easiest ways to cut emissions. Reducing methane from agriculture, in particular by belching cows, is a trickier matter.

Helen Mountford, a climate expert at the World Resources Institute, said the agreement "sets a strong floor in terms of the ambition we need globally."

Separately, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany announced a plan to provide \$8.5 billion in loans and grants over five years to help South Africa phase out coal.

South Africa gets about 90% of its electricity from coal-fired plants, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

But campaigners say the world's biggest carbon emitters need to do much more. Earth has already warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (2F). Current projections based on planned emissions cuts over the next decade are for it to hit 2.7C (4.9F) by the year 2100.

Increased warming over coming decades would melt much of the planet's ice, raise global sea levels

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 67 of 82

and greatly increase the likelihood and intensity of extreme weather, scientists say.

"I don't think that activists are being heard here," said Mitzi Jonelle Tan, a climate activist from the Philippines.

"We have to make sure that we really rally together and make sure that we're so loud that the world leaders can't keep ignoring us," she said. "Because every fraction of a degree, every step towards the right direction is what matters here."

At his end-of-summit news conference, Biden acknowledged the fierce skepticism from climate activists who say world leaders are not moving with enough haste.

He insisted that climate activists have been a "vital voice," and expressed optimism that the world is waking up to understanding that the issue is not just a "moral imperative" but also an "enormous opportunity" to spur economies.

"Even if the funding didn't come from some of the governments, you have the private sector now engaged where they're talking about investing —literally the need to invest over trillions of dollars off the sidelines," Biden said.

"So things are changing,," he added. "We just have to have the right stewardship and enough sense as world leaders to get it right."

Some 25,000 people are expected to attend the vast COP26 gathering, from heads of state to activists and charity workers. Attendees on Tuesday included Leonardo DiCaprio, who drew a crowd of journalists and fans. The Hollywood star, who is a U.N. climate change representative, visited an exhibition highlighting the role plants can play in providing solutions to climate change.

One not there was China's Xi Jinping. Biden said the leader of the world's biggest greenhouse-gas-emitting country made a "big mistake" with his absence.

"They've lost an ability to influence people around the world and all the people here at COP," Biden said

As countries announced major initiatives, those attendees appeared ready to do their small part: For a few minutes Tuesday, the vegetarian version of haggis — a Scottish delicacy typically made with sheep's lungs — was sold out. It was outselling the traditional version, servers said — perhaps unsurprising in a crowd well aware of the impact of meat-eating on the climate.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

## Governors and more: What to watch in Tuesday's elections

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

It may be an odd-numbered year but Tuesday's elections aren't sleepy, local contests. Voters in Virginia are weighing in on a governor's race that could rattle President Joe Biden and Democrats in Washington. In Minneapolis, a city still shaken by George Floyd's murder will vote on whether to disband its police department and create a new public safety agency. School board races across the country have become the new battlegrounds for partisan debates over race.

What to watch as returns come in Tuesday:

WILL DEMOCRATS WAKE UP?

Virginia was an early hub of the Democratic resistance to President Donald Trump. Today, it may be the center of Democratic fatigue. Polls have shown that Republicans in Virginia have a sizable enthusiasm advantage over Democrats, jeopardizing Democrats' chances of holding onto the governor's office in a state Biden won by 10 percentage points last year.

Former Gov. Terry McAuliffe has been trying to fire up his voters by casting Republican newcomer Glenn Youngkin as a "Trump wannabe." But it's not clear the label is sticking. Youngkin has avoided being seen with Trump — or any national GOP leaders — and has kept his focus on education, spending and other state issues.

McAuliffe's campaign notes he's running in a tough environment for any Democrat. Biden's approval number have slouched amid a stalemate over his economic agenda in Congress, his pullout from Afghani-

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 68 of 82

stan, rising inflation and the persistence of the coronavirus.

Democrats' best bet may be that the unexpectedly tight race — along with the threats to abortion rights and continued messaging on Trump — jolts their base and pushes them to the polls. Even a narrow win for Democrats in a state they won by double digits last year will be little comfort as the party tries to hold onto its incredibly tight congressional majorities in next year's midterms. Just a five-seat swing in the House or a single one in the Senate could flip a chamber.

## HAS YOUNGKIN CRACKED THE CODE?

Youngkin, in his first bid for public office, is showing Republicans a potential way forward in the post-Trump era. He positioned himself as a nonthreatening suburban dad in a fleece vest, but steadfastly refused to denounce the former president, who remains popular among Republicans.

Youngkin has stayed on message even as McAuliffe hammered him for being a stalking horse for Trump. Rather than engaging, Youngkin has gone after McAuliffe on taxes and especially education.

It's those education attacks that offer the most encouraging path for Republicans. Seizing on widespread discontent with schools during the pandemic and heated debates about race, Youngkin has criticized schools over hot-button conservative issues like critical race theory. He even waded into a murky sexual assault allegation and resurrected a debate about banning books. That's enabled him to appeal both to suburban voters resentful of their local school districts and to hard-line Trump voters who see the education debate as central to their political identity.

The best sign that Youngkin's gambit works will be how he performs in the affluent northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., once a bastion of the Republican Party but now a key part of the Democratic coalition.

If Youngkin makes inroads in northern Virginia and in the Richmond suburbs, it's a sign he was able to successfully walk the line. Likewise, if Democrats hold the margins from their successful 2017 gubernatorial race there, it'd be a sign of continued trouble for Republicans in highly educated suburbs.

## WHEN WILL WE KNOW THE WINNER?

Be wary of early returns in Virginia because they might not resemble the final results.

In 2020, Trump jumped out to a huge early lead over Biden that lasted until early Wednesday, when heavily Democratic counties in northern Virginia finished counting their mail ballots. Once the Democratic counties reported, the race flipped in Biden's favor and he ultimately won by a comfortable margin.

The late swing in favor of Biden was especially big because most counties, including Fairfax, the state's largest, released the results of their mail ballots at the end of the night, and Virginia's mail ballots heavily favored Democrats.

This year, a new state law requires counties to start processing mail ballots at least seven days before Election Day so they can be counted and released on election night soon after the polls close at 7 p.m. EDT. Counties are expected to release the results of their mail ballots first, followed by early in-person votes and, finally, votes cast at local polling places on Election Day. Fairfax County officials have said they plan to follow this procedure.

If Virginia's mail ballots continue to favor Democrats and the Election Day votes favor Republicans, the vote count could swing back and forth, depending on which type of votes are being released.

Mail ballots can arrive as late as Friday and still be counted, as long as they are postmarked by Election Day. Historically, less than 2% of Virginia's votes are counted after Election Day.

## DON'T FORGET NEW JERSEY

The tumult of the Virginia governor's race has overshadowed the only other race for governor Tuesday. In New Jersey, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy is trying to fight off a challenge from Republican Jack Ciatorelli, a former state legislator.

New Jersey is something of a test case for Democrats' theory of how they can win in 2022 and beyond. Murphy fulfilled his campaign promises and was able to implement vastly expanded government funding for widespread prekindergarten and free community college — policies that Biden is struggling to get through the Democrats' razor-thin majorities in Congress. Murphy has embraced the left wing of the party

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 69 of 82

and hosted Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders for a campaign rally last month.

While Ciattarelli has also tried to walk the line between energizing Trump voters and appealing to suburbanites, he faces a more daunting task than Youngkin. New Jersey is a more Democratic state than Virginia — Murphy won his first election by 14 percentage points in 2018. He also has the power of incumbency on his side, unlike in Virginia, the only state in the nation that doesn't allow governors consecutive terms.

The few public polls in the race have shown Murphy with a steady lead. If he wins easily, it may be a sign of hope for Democrats that they can survive 2022 if they deliver on Biden's plans for a massive expansion of social safety net and climate change programs. If it's closer, that'd be another promising indication for GOP hopes in the midterms.

## A NEW URBAN POLITICS

Democrats may firmly control the nation's city halls, but that doesn't mean there's nothing to fight about. Tuesday features a wide array of local and mayoral races that will be the latest installments in the long-running battle between liberals and relative moderates.

The most prominent may be in Minneapolis, where voters will decide whether to disband their police department after the death of George Floyd and replace it with a "Department of Public Safety." The city's mayor, Jacob Frey, a Democrat, opposes the measure and is himself up for reelection against two liberals who contend he hasn't been aggressive enough on reforming the city's police.

In Boston, Michelle Wu, the 36-year-old daughter of Taiwanese immigrants and a protégé of Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, is running against Annissa Essaibi George, the daughter of Tunisian and Polish immigrants who has received support from the city's traditional powerbrokers. In Buffalo, New York, India Walton, a self-described Democratic socialist who won an upset victory in the Democratic primary there in June, will again have to defeat the city's mayor, Byron Brown, who is staging a write-in campaign after losing the primary.

The races may provide a yardstick on whether the liberal wing of the Democratic Party can still dominate in the country's bluest areas. But some mayoral races won't fall into neat ideological categories, such as in Atlanta, where a sprawling field has become a test of whether former Mayor Kasim Reed's ethics turmoil when he was in power should bar him from winning office again.

## WILL SCHOOL BOARDS LAUNCH A CONSERVATIVE COMEBACK?

National conservative groups are pouring money into an unlikely area — local school board races — hoping to capitalize on frustration over pandemic-related closures, mask mandates and culture wars.

Big players have gotten involved, including some big GOP donors, prominent Republican officeholders and former Vice President Mike Pence, who urged attendees of an Ohio rally last weekend to vote for conservative school board candidates. Republican Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is backing an anti-masking candidate running for the board in suburban Des Moines. Dozens of other races, from suburban Denver to suburban Philadelphia, have also become heated.

School board races are small and often not representative of larger trends, but conservatives are hoping to change that Tuesday.

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Associated Press writers Stephen Ohlemacher in Washington and Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus contributed to this report.

## Biden's climate plan aims to reduce methane emissions

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Tuesday launched a wide-ranging plan to reduce methane emissions, targeting a potent greenhouse gas that contributes significantly to global warming and packs a stronger short-term punch than even carbon dioxide.

The plan was announced as President Joe Biden wraps up a two-day appearance at a United Nations climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland. Biden pledged during the summit to work with the European Union and dozens of other nations to reduce overall methane emissions worldwide by 30% by 2030.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 70 of 82

The centerpiece of U.S. actions is a long-awaited rule by the Environmental Protection Agency to tighten methane regulations for the oil and gas sector, as laid out in one of Biden's first executive orders.

The proposed rule would for the first time target reductions from existing oil and gas wells nationwide, rather than focus only on new wells as previous regulations have done.

"One of the most important things we can do in this decisive decade — to keep 1.5 degrees in reach — is reduce our methane emissions as quickly as possible," Biden said, referring to a global pledge to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above levels in the late 19th century.

Methane is "one of the most potent greenhouse gases there is," Biden said, adding that the new U.S. rules and the global pledge are "going to make a huge difference," not only in fighting climate change, but to improve health and reduce asthma and other respiratory problems.

Reducing methane leaks, "capturing methane to turn it into new revenue streams," will save companies money and create "good-paying union jobs for our workers," Biden said.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan said the new rule, established under the Clean Air Act, would lead to significant reductions in methane emissions and other pollutants and would be stricter than a 2016 standard set under President Barack Obama. Congress reinstated the Obama-era standard last summer in a rare effort by majority Democrats to use the legislative branch to overturn a regulatory rollback under President Donald Trump.

The EPA's "historic action" will "ensure robust and lasting cuts in pollution across the country," Regan said, adding that the new rule will protect communities near oil and natural gas sites and advance U.S. climate goals under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Once finalized, the proposed requirements would reduce methane emissions from U.S. drilling operations and equipment by approximately 75% by 2030, compared with 2005, the White House said.

The oil and natural gas industry is the nation's largest industrial source of methane, a highly potent pollutant that is responsible for about one-third of current warming from human activities.

The oil and gas sector also is a leading source of other harmful air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds that contribute to ground-level ozone, or smog, and air toxins such as benzene that are emitted along with methane.

Environmental groups call methane reduction the fastest and most cost-effective action to slow the rate of global warming. Current rules for methane emissions from U.S. oil and gas wells only apply to sources that were built or modified after 2015, leaving more than 90% of the nation's nearly 900,000 well sites unregulated. Many of those sites are smaller, low-producing wells.

Fred Krupp, president of the Environmental Defense Fund, called the new rule "an important step that offers a major victory for nine million Americans living near active oil and gas sites." But he said EPA and other agencies must do more to cut down on flaring and leaks from so-called "marginal wells" that have disproportionately high emissions.

The American Petroleum Institute, the oil and gas industry's top lobbying group, has said it supports direct regulation of methane emissions from new and existing sources but opposes efforts in Congress to impose fees on methane leaks, calling them punitive and unnecessary. The industry says leaks of methane, the main component of natural gas, have decreased even as natural gas production has gone up as a result of the ongoing fracking boom. Technological advancements in recent years have made finding and repairing natural gas leaks cheaper and easier.

"EPA has released a sweeping proposal, and we look forward to reviewing it in its entirety," said API senior vice president Frank Macchiarola. The group will work with EPA to help shape a final rule "that is effective, feasible and designed to encourage further innovation," he said.

The administration's plan includes new safety regulations by the Transportation Department to tighten requirements over methane leaks from the nation's 3 million miles of pipelines.

The Interior Department, meanwhile, is preparing to crack down on methane waste burned at drilling sites on public lands. And the Agriculture Department is working with farmers to establish so-called climate-smart standards to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage.

Biden has previously announced plans to step up efforts to plug leaks at old oil and gas wells and clean up abandoned coal mines. A bipartisan infrastructure bill approved by the Senate includes billions to reclaim abandoned mine land and cap orphaned wells.

The administration also is taking aim at methane emissions from landfills, with emphasis on food loss and waste that serves as a major contributor. EPA has set a voluntary goal of capturing 70% of methane emissions from U.S. landfills.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in an interview that officials are studying ways to reduce methane emissions from livestock, including changes in feed and use of specialized equipment to convert manure into electricity.

"We have just a multitude of ways for agriculture to advance methane reduction to help with the president's goal of reducing" global methane use by 30%, Vilsack told The Associated Press.

Ethan Lane, vice president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said his group has worked with the Biden administration "since day one to ensure the U.S. cattle industry is recognized for our strong record of environmental stewardship," including methane reductions.

"The administration cannot accomplish lasting conservation without the buy-in of cattle producers," he said.

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Associated Press writer Ellen Knickmeyer in Glasgow, Scotland contributed to this story.

## China envoy defends emissions, criticizes US under Trump

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — China is at a "special development stage" that warrants its current status as the world's biggest emitter of climate-damaging fossil fuel pollution, the nation's senior climate negotiator said Tuesday.

Xie Zhenhua, a special climate envoy for China, spoke to reporters at the U.N. climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland.

As a major climate polluter and as the world's second-biggest economy, China has been much talked about, but little seen, at the summit. Chinese President Xi Jinping — who is not known to have left the country during the pandemic — has not joined the more than 100 other world leaders at the event, addressing observers and delegates in a written message Monday instead.

Xie, who played a pivotal role in negotiations that achieved the 2015 Paris climate accord, underscored China's longstanding position that the United States and other developed nations should be the ones acting faster to cut climate-damaging emissions, not China.

China is already "making our biggest possible effort to address climate change," Xie said, saying China was unable to start reining in its reliance on coal-fired power plants any quicker than it already was.

"So regarding the fact that China is the current largest emitter, it's because China is at a special development stage," Xie said. The nation will be able to speed up its emission cuts later, he said.

"We do not only make promises, we honor our promises with real action," he said.

China, which is heavily dependent on coal-fired power, pledged last year to start reining in its fossil fuel emissions later in this decade and to become carbon neutral by 2060.

Climate negotiators welcomed Xi's announcements then, but its 2060 date is a decade later than many other countries' target, and Xi has resisted international calls to move faster. At the climate summit, China has taken part in some initiatives — such as joining a multinational pledge Tuesday to preserve forests — but announced no new climate efforts so far.

Despite China's status as an economic powerhouse, its leaders argue that factors that include China's modest per-capita income make it a developing country still.

As such, it bears less burden to cut emissions than economies like the United States or Europe that have already powered to wealth by burning coal and petroleum, China argues. The average American still produces more than twice the climate-damaging amount of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels than the

average Chinese citizen.

China and U.S. officials long have played a mutual blame game as global warming intensifies, with China faulting the U.S. as the world's largest climate polluter historically, and Donald Trump's administration in particular pointing to China's pollution in justifying rollbacks of U.S. climate efforts.

President Joe Biden used the summit Monday to express regret for the U.S. role in climate damage.

"Those of us who are responsible for much of the deforestation and all of the problems we have so far," Biden said, have "overwhelming obligations" to the poorer nations that account for few of the emissions yet are paying a price as the planet has grown hotter.

Biden also apologized Monday for Trump's decision to leave the Paris climate accord, saying that "put us sort of behind the eight ball a little bit" on combating climate change.

Xie on Tuesday dismissed a reporter's question about whether China, as the world's current worst carbon emitter, bore any similar obligations to other countries for China's role in damaging the Earth's climate.

Instead, he faulted the U.S., saying it was Trump's withdrawal that slowed down climate efforts.

"We have wasted already five years" owing to the U.S. withdrawal from the climate accord, Xie said. "And now we need to work harder and catch up."

Biden rejoined the Paris accord earlier this year as one of his first acts as president.

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

## 'Heartbreaking' Madagascar is wake-up call to climate crisis

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The drought-stricken island nation of Madagascar is a 'wake up call' to what the world can expect in coming years due to climate change, the head of the United Nations' food aid agency said Tuesday.

David Beasley, executive director of the World Food Program, told The Associated Press in an interview that what's happening in the south of the Indian Ocean country is "the beginning of what we can expect" to see as the effects of global warming become more pronounced.

"Madagascar was heartbreaking," Beasley said, referring to his recent visit there. "It's just desperate," with people reduced to selling their household pots and pans to try to buy food, he said.

Some 38 million people worldwide were displaced last year because of climate change, leaving them vulnerable to hunger, according to Beasley. A worst-case scenario could see that number soar to 216 million people displaced due to climate change by 2050.

That's the year many industrialized nations — but not China, Russia or India — have set as their target for achieving carbon neutrality, meaning reducing greenhouse gas emissions to the point where they can be absorbed and effectively add zero to the atmosphere.

When Beasley, a former South Carolina governor, took the World Food Program helm in 2017, the top reason for people being on the brink of starvation was man-made conflict, followed by climate change, he said.

But since then, climate change has been eclipsing conflicts as the bigger driver in displacing people and leaving them not knowing where their next meal will come from. Last year, about 38 million, he said, were displaced "strictly because of climate shocks, climate change," Beasley said.

"I would like to think this is the worst-case scenario — 216 million people by 2050 that will be migrating or displaced because of climate change," he said.

According to updated WFP figures released Tuesday, close to 30,000 people on Madagascar will be one step away from famine by the end of the year, and some 1.1 million already suffer from severe hunger. The island is struggling with exceptionally warm temperatures, drought and sandstorms.

Crops have wilted, and harvests are scarce. People have taken to eating cactus leaves, which usually are cattle fodder, the U.N. food agency said.

"Madagascar is not an isolated incident," Beasley said. "The world needs to look to Madagascar to see

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 73 of 82

what is coming your way and (to) many other countries around the world.”

He pointed out that Madagascar, a country of 27 million people, accounts for only the tiniest fraction of greenhouse gas emissions in global terms.

“What did they do to contribute to climate change?” he asked rhetorically.

The World Food Program has been supplying some 700,000 people on the island with food and supplemental nutritional products for pregnant and nursing women and children.

In Ethiopia, by contrast, famine is man-made, caused by conflict.

The World Food Program estimates that 5.2 million people are in need of emergency food assistance in Tigray, Ethiopia’s embattled northern region. United Nations officials have warned in recent weeks that more than 400,000 people could face starvation and death if humanitarian aid isn’t delivered quickly, but hardly any aid can get to those who desperately need to eat.

The Tigray forces say they are pressuring Ethiopia’s government to lift a months-long blockade on their region of around 6 million people, where basic services have been cut off and humanitarian food and medical aid denied.

Beasley says the WFP has been “messaging to all sides, including the Ethiopian government, the leadership, that this is a crisis” needing immediate access for food aid. But “we’re not making headway,” he said.

“We’re not able to get (food aid) trucks in or get fuel in. We’re not even able to get the cash to the people we need to pay,” Beasley told the AP.

As a result, Tigray’s people “have to be dying at unprecedented numbers, but we can’t get the access we need,” he said. “It’s a disgrace.”

He said the WFP should be moving in 30 trucks of day loaded with food, and another 70 full of medicine and other humanitarian assistance. “We’re not even getting 10% of that in trucks a day,” the agency director said.

For many of Tigray’s people, Beasley said, it has come down to “either die or migrate.”

Paradoxically, Afghanistan’s new Taliban rulers have allowed WFP access to food distribution centers and schools where many teachers are going unpaid, and protected WFP warehouses, while international donors haven’t been supplying sufficient funding, Beasley said.

“You run into the issue of donors (who) do not want to be seen in any way as aiding or abetting or supporting the Taliban,” Beasley said.

In Afghanistan, 22.8 million people — half of the population — face acute food insecurity, or are “marching toward starvation,” as Beasley put it.

Conflict and drought combined to create that impoverished nation’s food crisis.

The dire situation will grow even more critical starting in January, when the WFP’s food stocks for Afghanistan will run low, if more donors don’t come through.

“That price tag is \$230 million a month feeding them” at only partial rations, Beasley said, adding: that “there are 8.7 million people in Afghanistan knocking of famine’s door.”

The U.N. agency was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year.

## **EXPLAINER: What charges does Kyle Rittenhouse face?**

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Opening statements were held Tuesday in the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot three men, killing two of them and wounding the third, during a protest against police brutality in Kenosha, Wisconsin, last year. Rittenhouse has argued he fired in self-defense after the men attacked him. Here’s a look at the charges:

**FIRST-DEGREE RECKLESS HOMICIDE, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON**

This felony charge is connected to the death of Joseph Rosenbaum, the first man Rittenhouse shot. By-stander video shows Rosenbaum chasing Rittenhouse through a parking lot and throwing a plastic bag at him. Rittenhouse flees behind a car and Rosenbaum follows. No video of the moment Rittenhouse pulled the trigger has surfaced yet, if any exists. Richard McGinnis, a reporter who was trailing Rittenhouse,



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 74 of 82

told investigators that Rosenbaum tried to grab Rittenhouse's gun, according to the criminal complaint.

Reckless homicide differs from intentional homicide in that prosecutors aren't alleging Rittenhouse intended to murder Rosenbaum. Instead, they're alleging Rittenhouse caused Rosenbaum's death by showing an utter disregard for human life.

Former Waukesha County District Attorney Paul Bucher said prosecutors' decision to charge reckless instead of intentional homicide shows they don't know what happened between Rittenhouse and Rosenbaum and what might have been going through Rittenhouse's mind when he pulled the trigger.

The charge is a felony punishable by up to 60 years in prison. The dangerous weapon modifier carries another five years.

## FIRST-DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This felony charge is also connected to the Rosenbaum shooting. McGinnis told investigators he was in the line of fire when Rittenhouse shot Rosenbaum. The charge is punishable by 12 1/2 years in prison. The weapons modifier carries another five years.

## FIRST-DEGREE INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This charge is connected to Anthony Huber's death. Video shows Rittenhouse running down the street after shooting Rosenbaum when he falls to the street. Huber leaps at him and swings a skateboard at his head and neck and tries to grab Rittenhouse's gun before Rittenhouse fires. The criminal complaint alleges Rittenhouse aimed the weapon at Huber.

Intentional homicide means just that — a person killed someone and meant to do it. Bucher said that if Rittenhouse pointed the gun at Rosenbaum and pulled the trigger that would amount to intentional homicide. However, self-defense would trump the charge.

"Why I intended to kill this individual makes the difference," Bucher said.

The count carries a mandatory life sentence. The weapons modifier would add up to five years.

## ATTEMPTED FIRST-DEGREE INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

This is the charge for Rittenhouse shooting Gaige Grosskreutz in the arm seconds after he shot Huber, and as Grosskreutz came toward him holding a pistol. Grosskreutz survived. Video shows Rittenhouse pointing his gun at Grosskreutz and firing a single round.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of 60 years. The weapons modifier would add up to five more years.

## FIRST-DEGREE RECKLESSLY ENDANGERING SAFETY, USE OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON

Video shows an unknown man leaping at Rittenhouse and trying to kick him seconds before Huber moves his skateboard toward him. Rittenhouse appears to fire two rounds at the man but apparently misses as the man runs away.

This charge is a felony punishable by 12 1/2 years in prison. The weapons modifier again would add up to five more years.

## POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON BY A PERSON UNDER 18

Rittenhouse was armed with an AR-style semiautomatic rifle. He was 17 years old on the night of the shootings. Wisconsin law prohibits minors from possessing firearms except for hunting.

The charge is a misdemeanor punishable by up to nine months behind bars.

## FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH AN EMERGENCY ORDER FROM STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kenosha officials imposed an 8 p.m. curfew the night of the shootings. Rittenhouse was still on the streets as midnight approached. The offense is punishable by up to \$200 in forfeitures.

Find AP's full coverage on the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse at: <https://apnews.com/hub/kyle-rittenhouse>

## Sepp Blatter, Platini indicted for fraud in Switzerland

By GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer

GENEVA (AP) — Former FIFA officials Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini were charged with fraud and other offenses by Swiss prosecutors on Tuesday after a six-year investigation into a controversial \$2 million

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 75 of 82

payment.

The 85-year-old Blatter and 66-year-old Platini now face a trial at federal criminal court in Bellinzona. They could be jailed for several years if found guilty, though Swiss cases often take years to reach a conclusion.

"This payment damaged FIFA's assets and unlawfully enriched Platini," Swiss federal prosecutors said in a statement.

The case was opened in September 2015 and ousted Blatter ahead of schedule as FIFA president. It also ended Platini's campaign to succeed his former mentor.

It centers on Platini's written request to FIFA in January 2011 to be paid backdated additional salary for working as a presidential adviser in Blatter's first term, from 1998-2002.

Blatter told FIFA to make the payment within weeks. He was preparing to campaign for re-election in a contest against Mohamed bin Hammam of Qatar, where Platini's influence with European voters was seen as a key factor.

"The evidence gathered by the (attorney general's office) has corroborated that this payment to Platini was made without a legal basis," prosecutors said.

Both Blatter and Platini have long denied wrongdoing and cited a verbal agreement they had made, now more than 20 years ago, for the money to be paid.

Blatter has been charged with fraud, mismanagement, misappropriation of FIFA funds and forgery of a document. Platini has been charged with fraud, misappropriation, forgery and as an accomplice to Blatter's alleged mismanagement.

Fraud and forgery charges can be punished with jail sentences of up to five years.

"I view the proceedings at the federal criminal court with optimism — and hope that, with this, this story will come to an end and all the facts will be worked through cleanly," Blatter said in a statement.

Platini, was not placed under formal investigation until last year, and months later the more serious allegation of fraud was included against both men.

The three-time Ballon d'Or winner, who was captain of his national team when France won the European Championship in 1984, said Tuesday he was "perfectly confident and calm" about the outcome.

"I fully contest these unfounded and unfair accusations," Platini said in a statement.

Platini has long said, and Blatter repeated Tuesday, that he declared the payment and paid taxes on it in Switzerland.

Prosecutors had opened criminal proceedings against Blatter ahead of a police raid at FIFA headquarters in Zurich on the day he and Platini attended a meeting of the soccer body's executive committee.

That came four months after a sweeping U.S. Department of Justice corruption investigation into world soccer was revealed with early-morning arrests of officials from the Americas at luxury hotels in Zurich in May 2015.

In the fallout of those hotel raids, and only days after being elected FIFA president for a fifth time, Blatter announced his plan to resign and call another vote to find a successor.

Platini had long been the expected FIFA heir but his campaign was derailed by the police visit to FIFA's offices even though he was not yet a suspect.

The FIFA ethics committee soon suspended both men for several weeks before banning each for six years.

Platini's ban was later reduced to four years by the Court of Arbitration for Sport on appeal, and he was cleared to return to soccer duty in October 2019. He had been linked to seeking a seat on the executive board of FIFPRO, the global group of soccer player unions.

Blatter has been in poor health and a final round of questioning by Swiss investigators was delayed until August.

After undergoing heart surgery last December, Blatter spent a week in an induced coma.

Blatter also faces a separate criminal proceeding related to authorizing a \$1 million FIFA payment to Trinidad and Tobago in 2010 into the control of then-FIFA vice president Jack Warner. Two former FIFA officials are also suspects in that investigation.

The Swiss investigations of Blatter, and later Platini, were refocused after prosecutor Thomas Hildbrand

joined the case following turmoil in the attorney general's office. The former lead prosecutor, Olivier Thormann, left the federal office in late-2018 after being cleared of a complaint of misconduct in the investigation.

Hildbrand, who is from the same hometown as Blatter, was then brought on to the investigation team with the reputation of having led a previous high-profile case tied to FIFA: the 2001 financial collapse of World Cup marketing agency ISL. Blatter's lawyers failed in court to have Hildbrand removed from the current case.

The attorney general who was overseeing FIFA investigations in Switzerland, Michael Lauber, resigned last year because of misconduct. He was found to have misled an internal investigation into his undeclared meetings with current FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

Infantino was elected to lead FIFA in 2016 after stepping in to be UEFA's emergency election candidate when Platini was suspended and then banned.

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This story has been corrected to show that Michel Platini is 66 years old, not 65.

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

## **"Major cities really matter": Mayors demand climate action**

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

GLASGOW, Scotland (AP) — On a train hurtling toward Glasgow, the mayors of Seattle and Freetown, Sierra Leone, greeted each other like long lost sisters, bonded by years of Zoom calls and collaboration in the fight against climate change.

They lead cities on different sides of the economic and climate divide — one in the cool, northwestern corner of the one of the world's richest nations; the other the capital of an impoverished country in the tropics of West Africa.

But Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and her Freetown counterpart, Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, are both on the front lines of global warming, working to ensure their cities are prepared for rising sea levels, torrential rains and extreme heat.

On Monday, they traveled to the U.N. climate conference in Scotland with a group of big city mayors to demand that world leaders follow the science and act now to head off a catastrophic increase in global temperatures.

Aki-Sawyerr describes herself and mayors as the captains of small boats trying to warn an ocean liner of the dangers ahead.

"I'm going to stand on top of the bow and I'll be waving my hands furiously and I'm going to be saying, 'Look over here, you're hitting an iceberg and you need to stop now,'" she said. "And I'm hoping that there'll be enough of us doing the same thing for it to make a difference."

Aki-Sawyerr and Durkan are part of a delegation from the C40 group of big city mayors who are demanding that they be included in decisions about how to combat global warming and mitigate its effects. City leaders will be asked to implement many of the decisions made by presidents and prime ministers, so they should be consulted and receive funds to do the job, the group says.

The delegation also included the mayors of Los Angeles, Paris and London, as well as the Nordic cities of Oslo and Stockholm, and North Dhaka in Bangladesh.

The mayors sought to underscore their environmental credentials by making the 645-kilometer (400-mile) journey from London to Glasgow by rail. The electric train they traveled on generates about seven times less greenhouse gas emissions per passenger than flying.

Together, the C40 group's 97 members are home to more than 700 million people, or almost 10% of the world's population. Their organization also tries to help local communities, backing a program in which over 1,000 communities supported a campaign for a "net-zero" emissions future.

The mayors aren't alone in saying that cities will play a big part in the fight against climate change.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 77 of 82

More than half the world's population now live in urban areas, and the trend is only going to continue. Despite the economic shock caused by COVID-19, cities are still seen as gateways to a better life because density and diversity lead to creativity and innovation, said Bernice Lee, director of futures at Chatham House think tank in London.

"Crucially, around 80% of emissions come from the planet's cities, so they really have to be part of the solutions, and decisions made in major cities really matter," Lee said. "They can be great environments for both testing and piloting the next generation of solutions."

The U.N. climate conference, known as COP26, comes just two months after an international panel of climate scientists said time was running out to meet the goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) and avert catastrophic climate change. While organizers say Glasgow is the last best chance for an agreement to slash greenhouse gas emissions, some world leaders, including Presidents Xi Jinping of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia, have decided not to attend.

China is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, followed by the U.S., the European Union, India and Russia, according to the International Energy Agency.

Freetown is already seeing the impacts as a changing economy collides with global warming.

Increased migration from the countryside is forcing people to build informal settlements near coastal mangroves and on hillsides around the city, which destroys forests and worsens floods during heavy rains. More than 1,000 people were killed by a mudslide in 2017.

In response, the city is planting trees and working to improve sanitation and flood mitigation projects, Aki-Sawyerr told the U.N. Environment Program. One program gave tricycles to youth groups who collect household waste, which is then composted and returned to urban farmers.

"There are billions of people in the global south for whom climate change impacts are happening today. Now. Those livelihoods are being destroyed," Aki-Sawyerr said. "These are the smaller, smaller emitters ... and yet the consequences are dire."

But the fight against climate change is also taking place 6,700 miles (10,800 kilometers) away in Seattle.

Temperatures in Seattle, known for cloudy skies and drizzling rain, rose above 100 F (38 C) on three consecutive days in June as a mass of hot air sat over the western U.S. and Canada. On June 28, the temperature reached 108 degrees F (42 C), the highest in 151 years of detailed record-keeping.

The state of Washington recorded 138 heat-related deaths this summer compared with seven the previous year.

While scientists are hesitant to link any single weather event to global warming, Seattle officials are preparing for rising sea levels, higher tides and more frequent and longer-lasting heat waves.

Seattle maintained its commitment to the Paris Climate Accord after former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the deal. The city promotes public transportation, cycling and walking as alternatives to solo car journeys and is working to increase energy efficiency in public and private buildings.

"Mayors are the front line in their cities for everything from who picked up the garbage or didn't," Durkan said. "Policy at the national level and central government level — their biggest challenge is how to implement it? What does that mean? Boots on the ground? Our first thought is, how do you implement and what does it mean to real people?"

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

## Faith groups increasingly join fight against climate change

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and JESSIE WARDARSKI Associated Press

POINTE-AUX-CHENES, Louisiana (AP) — On a boat ride along a bayou that shares the name of his Native American tribe, Donald Dardar points to a cross marking his ancestors' south Louisiana burial ground — a place he fears will disappear.

He points to the partly submerged stumps of oak trees killed by salt water on land where he rode horses as a kid, and to his mother's home, gutted by Hurricane Ida. He and his wife have a mission: protecting



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 78 of 82

Pointe-aux-Chenes and other communities at risk in a state that loses about a football field's worth of wetlands every 100 minutes.

For years, Donald and Theresa Dardar have joined forces with the Rev. Kristina Peterson. Working with scientists and members of Pointe-au-Chien and two other tribes, they've set out thousands of oyster shells to protect sacred mounds, obtained financing to refill abandoned oil field canals and built an elevated greenhouse to save their plants and medicinal herbs from flooding.

"It's saving what we know that's going to be destroyed from both the change of the heat and the rising of the water," said Peterson, the pastor of Bayou Blue Presbyterian Church in Gray, Louisiana, and a former professor of environmental planning at the University of New Orleans.

Their vital work to save their bayou home and heritage is part of a broader trend around the world of faith leaders and environmental activists increasingly joining the fight against climate change. From Hindu groups joining river cleanups and Sikh temples growing pesticide-free food, to Muslim imams and Buddhist monks organizing tree-planting campaigns, the movement knows no denominational boundaries but shares as a driving force a moral imperative to preserve what they see as a divinely given environment for future generations.

But some of them believe systemic change to protect those most vulnerable to the climate crisis must also come from world leaders meeting at the U.N. climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

"It's up to them to step up to the plate and do what they're supposed to do," Theresa Dardar said at the tribal center where she handed out supplies to members of her tribe and others who lost their homes after Hurricane Ida hit the small fishing community 80 miles (about 130 kilometers) southwest of New Orleans.

"It's up to you not to just give lip service, but to take action against climate change and sea level rise," said Dardar, a longtime religion teacher at a local Catholic church and head of the environmental nonprofit Lowlander Center.

Pope Francis and dozens of religious leaders recently signed a joint appeal to governments to commit to targets at the Oct. 31-Nov. 12 summit in Glasgow. The summit aims to secure more ambitious commitments to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius with a goal of keeping it to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. The event also is focused on mobilizing financing and protecting threatened communities and natural habitats.

Louisiana holds 40% of U.S. wetlands, but they're disappearing fast — about 2,000 square miles (5,180 square kilometers) of the state have been lost since the 1930s. That's about 80% of the nation's wetland losses, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Peterson arrived in Pointe-aux-Chenes in 1992 after Hurricane Andrew, following a call to link scientists with communities hit by storms, sinking land and sea rise from climate change. Through the Lowlander Center that she co-founded, she worked to protect sacred sites from coastal erosion, refill canals dug by oil companies that allow for saltwater intrusion and build the greenhouse set to open in October. Instead, it was repurposed as a food pantry supply room after Ida.

"There's been so much that has been interrupted ... and these are all critical, critical things," Peterson said.

"We're not going to wait on world leaders to take action. We're doing it now," she said. With Theresa Dardar, they're part of the Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Change Coalition, which includes Buddhist, Baha'i, Christian, Jewish and other faith leaders.

They've also worked closely with Chief Shirell Parfait-Dardar of the Grand Cailou/Dulac Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians. She's the first woman to lead her tribe and the only Indigenous woman on the Louisiana governor's climate change task force. Last year, her tribe and Pointe-au-Chien were among those that filed a formal complaint to the U.N. in Geneva, saying the U.S. government violated their human rights by failing to act on climate change.

"We should be caring for Mother Earth, not abusing her. This is a result of all of the abuse that we've done to her," she said, tearing up and pointing to her home, destroyed by Ida. "If we don't listen to the science, if we don't listen to the wisdom of the elders, we're going to ... keep seeing these massive amounts of destruction."

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 79 of 82

Religious communities are crucial in the fight against climate change, said Nathan Jessee, a researcher at Princeton's High Meadows Environmental Institute who has worked with the area's Indigenous communities.

"There's a long history of faith-based leaders and Indigenous peoples being at the forefront of these struggles for environmental justice," Jessee said. Together, he said, they've demonstrated the fight for clean air and water is a moral and spiritual struggle.

For many faith leaders, preserving the environment is part of their mandate to care for communities most vulnerable to climate change. It's a call that Pope Francis has made often, most broadly in a 2015 encyclical, "Praised Be." It has been echoed by imams, rabbis, patriarchs and pastors who share how their faith traditions interpreted the call.

People of color, the poor, women, children and the elderly suffer the worst climate change impacts, said the Rev. Fletcher Harper, an Episcopal priest, and executive director of GreenFaith, a global multi-faith environmental organization based in New York. "For religious people, that is utterly unacceptable," he said.

On the invitation of Indigenous communities, more than 150 faith leaders gathered in Washington last month to pressure President Joe Biden to stop new fossil fuel projects.

GreenFaith organized other actions across the globe: In Fiji, the leader of the Pacific Council of Churches was photographed on an island which goes underwater at high tide because of rising sea levels. In Jakarta, Indonesia, the largest mosque in Southeast Asia unfurled a banner that read: "Destroying the planet is haram" — forbidden. In Australia, religious groups protested against coal production and urged the prime minister to undertake bold climate action.

"The biggest plus in terms of where we are now is that there is an impatient, feisty, unstoppable grassroots movement," Harper said.

Religious groups including the World Council of Churches also have joined the fossil fuel divestment movement. "This isn't just a stunt," said Harper, whose organization has backed such faith-based efforts since 2013. He said it evolved from a symbolic gesture to a key road map into the future.

Not all religious decision makers are on board with divestment nor is every member of a faith tradition of like mind. In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the general assembly voted in 2018 to continue engaging with fossil fuel companies it holds stock in.

The issue is expected to be raised again in the 2022 general assembly. "The concern with divestment was that there wasn't anything in there for the transition of workers — to go into alternative energies," Peterson said.

Not all the faithful believe in renewable energy or even accept the science behind global warming.

"White evangelical Christians are some of the most suspicious of climate science and the least accepting of solutions to address it," said the Rev. Kyle Meyaard-Schaap, vice president of the Evangelical Environmental Network. His ministry navigates that suspicion by connecting climate science to faith rather than politics, emphasizing authority of scripture and sanctity of human life.

"We don't do this because we're Democrats or Republicans. We don't even do this some of us because we're environmentalists," Meyaard-Schapp said. "We're doing this because we're Christians and we think that this is just part of what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century."

That same belief guided volunteers from Churches of Christ who recently brought boxes of food to the tribal center in Pointe-aux-Chenes. A month after Ida, piles of debris, wrecked boats and destroyed homes lined the bayou that runs through the town. Many were living in cars and tents.

"The scripture tells us that we're supposed to be good stewards of what God gave us," said Jaime Green, a volunteer from New Orleans who often speaks about climate change at the Elysian Fields Church of Christ led by her husband.

"As a faith community, we have to be teaching our congregations and our children, generations to come that they need to take care of what we have, and preserve it as much as we can — and even work to undo some of the damage."

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AP journalists Holly Meyer in Nashville, Tennessee, Nicole Winfield in Rome, and Janet McConnaughey in

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 80 of 82

New Orleans, contributed to this report. Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>

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## 'Ordinary people suffer most': China farms face climate woes

By CHRISTINA LARSON and EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA Associated Press

JIAOZUO, China (AP) — Wang Yuetang's sneakers sink into the mud of what was once his thriving corn and peanut farm as he surveys the damage done by an unstable climate.

Three months after torrential rains flooded much of central China's Henan province, stretches of the country's flat agricultural heartland are still submerged in several inches of water. It's one of the many calamities around the world that are giving urgency to the U.N. climate summit underway in Glasgow, Scotland.

"There is nothing this year. It's all gone," Wang said. "Farmers on the lowland basically have no harvest, nothing." He lost his summer crop to floods, and in late October the ground was still too wet to plant the next season's crop, winter wheat.

On other nearby farms, shriveled beanstalks and rotted cabbage heads bob in the dank water, buzzing with flies. Some of the corn ears can be salvaged, but because the husks are moldy, they can be sold only as animal feed, bringing lower prices.

The flooding disaster is the worst that farmers in Henan like Wang can remember in 40 years — but it is also a preview of the kind of extreme conditions the country is likely to face as the planet warms and the weather patterns growers depend upon are increasingly destabilized.

"As the atmosphere warms up, air can hold more moisture, so when storms occur, they can rain out more extreme precipitation," said Richard Seager, a climate scientist at Columbia University. "Chances are extremely likely that human-induced climate change caused the extreme flooding you saw this summer in places like China and Europe."

China, the most populous country in the world, with 1.4 billion people, is now the planet's largest contributor to climate change, responsible for around 28% of carbon dioxide emissions that warm the Earth, though the United States is the biggest polluter historically.

As world leaders take part this week in the climate summit, China is being criticized for not setting a more ambitious timeline for phasing out fossil fuels.

President Xi Jinping, who has not left China since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and will not be attending the summit but sent a veteran negotiator, has said the country's carbon emissions will level off before 2030. Critics say that's not soon enough.

Chinese government projections paint a worrying vision of the future: rising sea levels threatening major coastal cities, including Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong, and melting glaciers and permafrost imperiling western China's water supply and grand infrastructure projects such as the railroads across the Tibetan plateau.

Top government scientists also predict an increase in droughts, heat waves and extreme rainfall across China that could threaten harvests and endanger reservoirs and dams, including Three Gorges Dam.

Meanwhile, China's people are already suffering the brunt of climate change. And in a common pattern around the world, those who have contributed least to the warming and have the fewest resources to adapt often feel the pain most acutely.

In late July, Chinese news broadcasts carried startling footage of torrential rains swamping Henan's provincial capital, Zhengzhou — at one point, 8 inches (20 centimeters) fell in a single hour — with cars swept away, subways flooded and people struggling through waist-deep water. More than 300 people died as the megacity turned into an accidental Venice, its highways transformed into muddy canals.

Even after the most dramatic storms ceased, the water continued to pool in much of the surrounding countryside, a flat and fertile region.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 81 of 82

Here the economy depends on corn, wheat and vegetables, and other regions of China depend on Henan for food. The local government reported that nearly 3 million acres (1.2 million hectares) of farmland were flooded — an area about the size of Connecticut — with damage totaling \$18 billion.

"All I could do at the time was to watch the heavens cry, cry and cry every day," said Wang, the peanut farmer.

A limited number of rudimentary pumps were shared among farmers in Henan. Soft plastic tubes were stretched across fields to drain water, but they periodically burst, sending farmers running to patch holes.

A 58-year-old farmer who gave only her last name, Song, said everything she owned was submerged by the floods — her home, furniture, fields, farming equipment.

"Nothing was harvested. This year, the common people have been suffering all year long," she said. "Ordinary people suffer most."

"We have been working so hard, breaking our backs ... without even a penny back, my heart aches," said Hou Beibei, a farmer whose simple vegetable greenhouses — plastic tarps covering plots of eggplant, garlic and celery — remain flooded, her hard work washed away.

She is worried about her two young children. "The tuition fees of the children and the living expenses of the whole family rely on this land," she said.

The summer also saw another climate-linked natural disaster in China. In July, the hottest month on Earth in 142 years of record-keeping, according to U.S. weather experts, a vast and toxic blue-green algae bloom spanning 675 square miles (1,748 square kilometers) engulfed coastal waters off the prosperous city of Qingdao, threatening navigation, fishing and tourism. State broadcasts carried footage of people using dump trucks to remove the mounds of algae.

Another threat to China's coastal provinces is sea level rise. Government records show that coastal water levels have already risen around 4.8 inches (122 millimeters) between 1980 and 2017 and project that within the next 30 years, waters could rise an additional 2.8 to 6.3 inches (70 to 160 millimeters).

Because China's coastal areas are largely flat, "a slight rise in the sea level will aggravate the flooding of a large area of land," erasing expensive waterfront properties and critical habitats, a government report projects.

"I think these impacts are triggering a national awakening. I think people are increasingly asking, 'Why have extreme weather events like this happened? What are the root causes?'" said Li Shuo, a climate policy expert at Greenpeace East Asia in Beijing.

"I think this is bringing the Chinese policymakers and the general public to a realization that we are indeed in a climate emergency."

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AP researcher Chen Si contributed research from Shanghai.

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Follow Christina Larson on Twitter: @larsonchristina

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

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 3, the 307th day of 2021. There are 58 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 3, 1997, the Supreme Court let stand California's groundbreaking Proposition 209, which banned race and gender preference in hiring and school admissions.

On this date:

In 1868, Republican Ulysses S. Grant won the presidential election over Democrat Horatio Seymour.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 03, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 119 ~ 82 of 82

In 1911, the Chevrolet Motor Car Co. was founded in Detroit by Louis Chevrolet and William C. Durant. (The company was acquired by General Motors in 1918.)

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won a landslide election victory over Republican challenger Alfred "Alf" Landon.

In 1954, the Japanese monster movie "Godzilla" was released by Toho Co.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In 1970, Salvador Allende (ah-YEN'-day) was inaugurated as president of Chile.

In 1979, five Communist Workers Party members were killed in a clash with heavily armed Ku Klux Klansmen and neo-Nazis during an anti-Klan protest in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In 1986, the Iran-Contra affair came to light as Ash-Shiraa, a pro-Syrian Lebanese magazine, first broke the story of U.S. arms sales to Iran.

In 1992, Democrat Bill Clinton was elected the 42nd president of the United States, defeating President George H.W. Bush. In Illinois, Democrat Carol Moseley-Braun became the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

In 1994, Susan Smith of Union, South Carolina, was arrested for drowning her two young sons, Michael and Alex, nine days after claiming the children had been abducted by a Black carjacker.

In 2004, President George W. Bush claimed a re-election mandate a day after more than 62 million Americans chose him over Democrat John Kerry; Kerry conceded defeat in make-or-break Ohio rather than launch a legal fight reminiscent of the contentious Florida recount of four years earlier.

In 2014, 13 years after the 9/11 terrorist attack, a new 1,776-foot skyscraper at the World Trade Center site opened for business, marking an emotional milestone for both New Yorkers and the nation.

Ten years ago: Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou abandoned his plan to put a European rescue deal to a popular vote. Former San Francisco Giants outfielder Matty Alou died in his native Dominican Republic at age 72.

Five years ago: Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Kaine delivered a speech entirely in Spanish as he addressed a small crowd in a largely Hispanic area of Phoenix as part of Hillary Clinton's push into traditionally Republican Arizona. China's plans for a permanent space station remained firmly on track with the successful launch of its new heavy-lift Long March 5 rocket.

One year ago: Democrat Joe Biden won the presidency in an election that saw more than 103 million Americans vote early, many by mail, amid a coronavirus pandemic that upended a campaign marked by fear and rancor, waged against a backdrop of protests over racial injustice. As vote counting continued in battleground states, Biden's victory would not be known for more than three days; Republican President Donald Trump would refuse to concede, falsely claiming that he was a victim of widespread voter fraud. Kamala Harris made history as the first woman, Black person and person of South Asian descent to become vice president. Democrats clinched two more years of controlling the House but saw their majority shrink. Republicans emerged with a two-seat Senate majority that would be erased by Democratic wins in two runoffs in Georgia in January.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Lois Smith is 91. Actor Monica Vitti is 90. Former Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis is 88. Actor Shadoe Stevens is 75. Singer Lulu is 73. "Vogue" editor-in-chief Anna Wintour is 72. Comedian-actor Roseanne Barr is 69. Actor Kate Capshaw is 68. Comedian Dennis Miller is 68. Actor Kathy Kinney is 68. Singer Adam Ant is 67. Sports commentator and former quarterback Phil Simms is 66. Director-screenwriter Gary Ross is 65. Actor Dolph Lundgren is 64. Rock musician C.J. Pierce (Drowning Pool) is 49. Actor Francois Battiste (TV: "Ten Days in the Valley") is 45. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evgeni Plushenko is 39. Actor Julie Berman is 38. Actor Antonia Thomas (TV: "The Good Doctor") is 35. Alternative rock singer/songwriter Courtney Barnett is 34. TV personality and model Kendall Jenner (TV: "Keeping Up with the Kardashians") is 26.