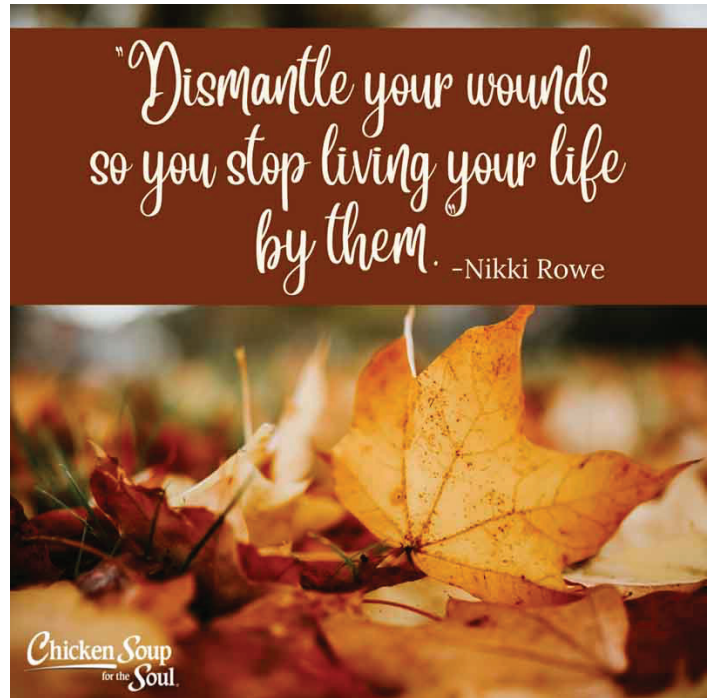


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UpComing Events

Wed-Fri., Nov. 24-26: No School - Thanksgiving Vacation

Thursday, Nov. 25

Community Thanksgiving Dinner, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Groton Community Center

Tuesday, Nov. 30

Groton Novice Debate
JH GBB hosting Clark/Willow Lake (7th at 6 p.m. with 8th to follow)

Wednesday, Dec. 1

8:30 a.m. to Noon: ACT Practice Test

Thursday, Dec. 2

LifeTouch Pictures Retake at Elementary, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

8:30 a.m. to Noon: ACT Practice Test

JH GBB at Northwestern (7th at 6:30 p.m. followed by 8th)

Friday, Dec. 3

State Oral Interp at Huron

8:30 a.m. to Noon: ACT Practice Test

Saturday, Dec. 4

State Oral Interp at Huron

10 a.m.: JH GBB Jamboree in Groton

10 a.m.: Wrestling Invite at Clark-Willow Lake

Monday, Dec. 6

4 p.m.: School Board planning/work session
JH GBB hosts Langford. 7th at 6 p.m. with 8th to follow

Tuesday, Dec. 7

GBB at Flandreau Indian. JV at 5 p.m. with varsity to follow

JHGBB at Tiospa Zina (7th at 4 p.m. with 8th to follow)

Thursday, Dec. 9

7 p.m.: MS/HS Christmas Concert

Friday, Dec. 10

GBB hosts Britton-Hecla. JV at 6 p.m. with Varsity to follow

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
© 2021 Groton Daily Independent

Gov. Noem to Host Christmas At The Capitol Tree-Lighting Ceremony

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem will host the 2021 Grand Lighting Ceremony for Christmas at the South Dakota Capitol in the Rotunda on Tuesday, Nov. 23, at 7:30 p.m. CST. The public is invited to join Governor Kristi Noem, First Gentleman Bryon Noem, and Pierre Mayor Steve Harding as they welcome guests and light the Capitol trees.

This year's Capitol Christmas display includes more than 80 trees decorated by volunteers from communities, schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, and state government offices. This year's theme for Christmas at the Capitol is "Winter Wishes."

The largest tree, a 25-foot Colorado Blue Spruce, is decorated by the South Dakota Christmas at the Capitol Committee in honor of their 40th Anniversary. It was donated by Austyn and Jessica Gackle of Pierre, SD.

At the ceremony, music will be provided by the TF Riggs Chamber Choir of Pierre.

Immediately after the ceremony, kids of all ages can pose for pictures with Santa Claus in front of the South Dakota Christmas tree.

The holiday display will be open to the public from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily starting on Nov. 24. The last day to view the display is Dec. 26.

You can follow the Christmas at the Capitol events on Facebook or visit the website at christmasatthe-capitol.sd.gov/.

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The battle of the north returned in week 11. The Green Bay Packer fans, so in awe of the Jim Marshall "Odin" opening video, were thankful they were inside as the cold westerly winds blew hard through the Twin Cities. Instead, they enjoyed the comforts of modern technology and were treated to another epic showdown between two longtime rivals.

The Vikings beat the Packers on a last-second Greg Joseph field goal, 34-31, and notched their 500th win in franchise history.

The winning formula for the Vikings this season goes through Justin Jefferson. When JJ catches seven or more passes, the Vikings are 5-0. Today he finishes with eight catches for 169 yards and two touchdowns.

After four seasons with the Vikings, Kirk Cousins is beginning to realize that, to win, he must take advantage of the dynamic offensive weapons at his disposal. He finished with 341 yards and 3 touchdowns, Adam Thielen finished with eight catches and a touchdown, and Dalvin Cook ran for 86 yards and a touchdown.

The Vikings had a great day on offense, but big leads don't matter much when Aaron Rodgers is on the other side of the field. He keeps the Packers in every game and Sunday was no different, as he finished with 385 yards and four touchdowns. After the Vikings took a seven-point lead with just over two minutes left in the game, Rodgers needed just one play to hit Valdez-Scantling for a 75-yard touchdown to tie the game. Ironically, the 385 yard game was the most yards Rodgers has ever passed for in a losing effort to the Vikings. Rumors have it that this may have been his last road game against the Vikings in the Packer green and yellow.

Key takeaways from today's game.

1. Free safety Xavier Woods was exposed all day with missed tackles and gave up the two big scores to Valdez-Scantling and Davante Adams. After two impressive weeks by rookie Cam Bynum while filling in for Harrison Smith, Mike Zimmer will have some decisions to make going into next week on who will start along side the all pro safety.

2. The Vikings are becoming much more aggressive offensively but took a knee at the end to burn up the clock and not give Rodgers any chance to do his magic. Great coaching decision by Clint Kubiak. The play calling today was what the Viking fans have been clamoring for all season long- get the ball downfield to all of your weapons.

3. Coming into today's game, normally the talk is about the high octane offense of the Packers but in the past three games it was all about their defense, giving up just 34 points. The Vikings amassed that output in just four quarters.

4. This was the first divisional road loss for Matt LaFleur as head coach of the Packers over the past 4 years.

5. After missing an extra point early in the game, Mike Zimmer entrusted Joseph to end the game with a 29-yard field goal to seal the victory. Prince's "Let's Go Crazy" rang out through US Bank Stadium and the Go Pack Go chants would not be heard from again for another season.

Looking forward to next week

The Vikings take on a revitalized San Francisco 49er's team on the road next Sunday. The Niners are 5-5 but struggle at home with a 1-4 record. They have won 2 in a row, an impressive win over the Rams on Monday night and an easy road win over the Jaguars this past weekend. Jimmy Garoppolo seemed to be on the hot-seat at the beginning of the year but has secured the starting role over first round pick, Trey Lance from NDSU.

Practicing Gratitude

I love Thanksgiving. I love preparing the food all day and enjoying it while sitting around a table with some of the people I love most. And there is one holiday tradi-

tion that I have grown to adore. As we sit down to eat, we share one thing we feel grateful for this year.

Practicing gratitude has been shown to improve aspects of mental health and our sense of well-being, and it isn't hard to understand why. Saying or thinking "I am grateful for..." feels really good and doing so regularly can help shape our outlook on the world and our place in it. I know this, and still, I fail to follow through with regularly practicing gratitude like some experts recommend.

There is no time like the present, right? Let's try it. Here are some things this Prairie Doc is feeling particularly thankful for this year:

I am thankful for my health, thankful to be alive. As I grow older, and as I continue to walk with my patients as they encounter disease and sometimes death, the simple wonder of being alive and feeling well has never felt so clear. None of us will avert death but feeling gratitude for life does make each day a little sweeter.

I am grateful for my family and friends who have sustained me through difficult times and shared in my joy. I am on the receiving end of hugs, snuggles, and the hilarious and warm actions of my children, who give me laughter and hope every day.

I am incredibly grateful to be a physician. I feel fortunate to have a profession that gives me meaning and connects me to people and my community. I am indebted to my colleagues and mentors, including my Prairie Doc cohorts and the original Prairie Doc, Rick Holm, who generously shared so much with me about being a physician.

There. That felt good. I hope you'll try it too, around the Thanksgiving table, privately in a journal, or however it works for you. Let's make a habit of practicing gratitude.

Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its twentieth season of truthful, tested, and timely medical information, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Kelly Evans-Hullinger, MD

Trouble with tonsils

Editor's note: Our understanding is that Tony was injured in a scrum over the giblets at Thanksgiving dinner but is resting comfortably and we expect him to be back with a new column next week. Here's one from 2011.

It had been going on since December—a recurring case of strep throat, that India couldn't shake despite round after round of antibiotics. We'd knock it down, it would rear back up. India spent most of her time around the house with a tissue dangling from one persistently runny nostril. The choice was simple. We could start buying antibiotics by the vat or India could have a tonsillectomy.

I am not sure why humans come with non-essential parts like tonsils, adenoids, wisdom teeth, appendixes, gizzards and ear hair other than that without them surgeons would have smaller flat screen televisions. The entire flat screen television industry would be in peril if not for strep throat. The economy is a delicate thing.

We told India that the operation would be "no big deal" because that is what everyone says. But they always fail to include the last part of the sentence, which is "compared to being run over by a bus."

Dylan, who has had a similar history of throat ailments, overheard a discussion wondering if we shouldn't consider having his tonsils, which are the size of footballs, out too, our reasoning being that "we had met our deductible." That is how medicine in America works. The way we saw it, it was almost like a free surgery. You'd be silly to pass up a deal like that. We have not seen Dylan since. There are rumors he is spending the summer with his cousins in Wahpeton, a dangerous gambit in my eyes because Dylan's aunt, Mean Arlene, is a legendary hypochondriac and four-time AMA Mother of the Year. They have met their deductible so often, they have become close friends. She makes the kids wash in Amoxicillin before lunch, and there is not a tonsil left in the house.

We visited India in the recovery room after the surgery, and not long after so did Dr. Stenger, who she had made promise to show her the tonsils and adenoids before he sent them off either to the lab or to Iceland, where they are considered a delicacy. As you can imagine, viewing these bloody pink organs was quite traumatic and required a sedative. But I'm all right now. You're talking to a guy who fainted in the dental chair just from hearing the plan for removing my wisdom teeth. I woke up thinking, "Thank God, that's over," only to learn that they were going to have to put me down again—this time with an actual anesthetic.

According to our insurance policy, all tonsillectomy victims are "to be thrown into the street" before the day has elapsed, or as I understand it, someone back at corporate headquarters of the insurance company turns into a pumpkin. And if you think that's rough, there was a woman with a hip replacement down the hall they made dance within the first 24 hours. That explains why you sometimes hear Chubby Checker playing in the halls of Post-Op.

Indy's challenge was to eat a whole green Popsicle before she could go home, but the poor girl's throat was too sore. After consulting with the admissions desk and learning that we might be responsible for any additional days in the room at \$895 a pop, I offered India \$50 bucks to eat that Popsicle. When the going gets tough, the tough start bribing.

After six days, she has graduated from liquids to muffins and applesauce, but she still isn't talking, resorting to a notebook or email to communicate. From a girl who has been known to text her parents from the back seat of the car, this is nothing new.

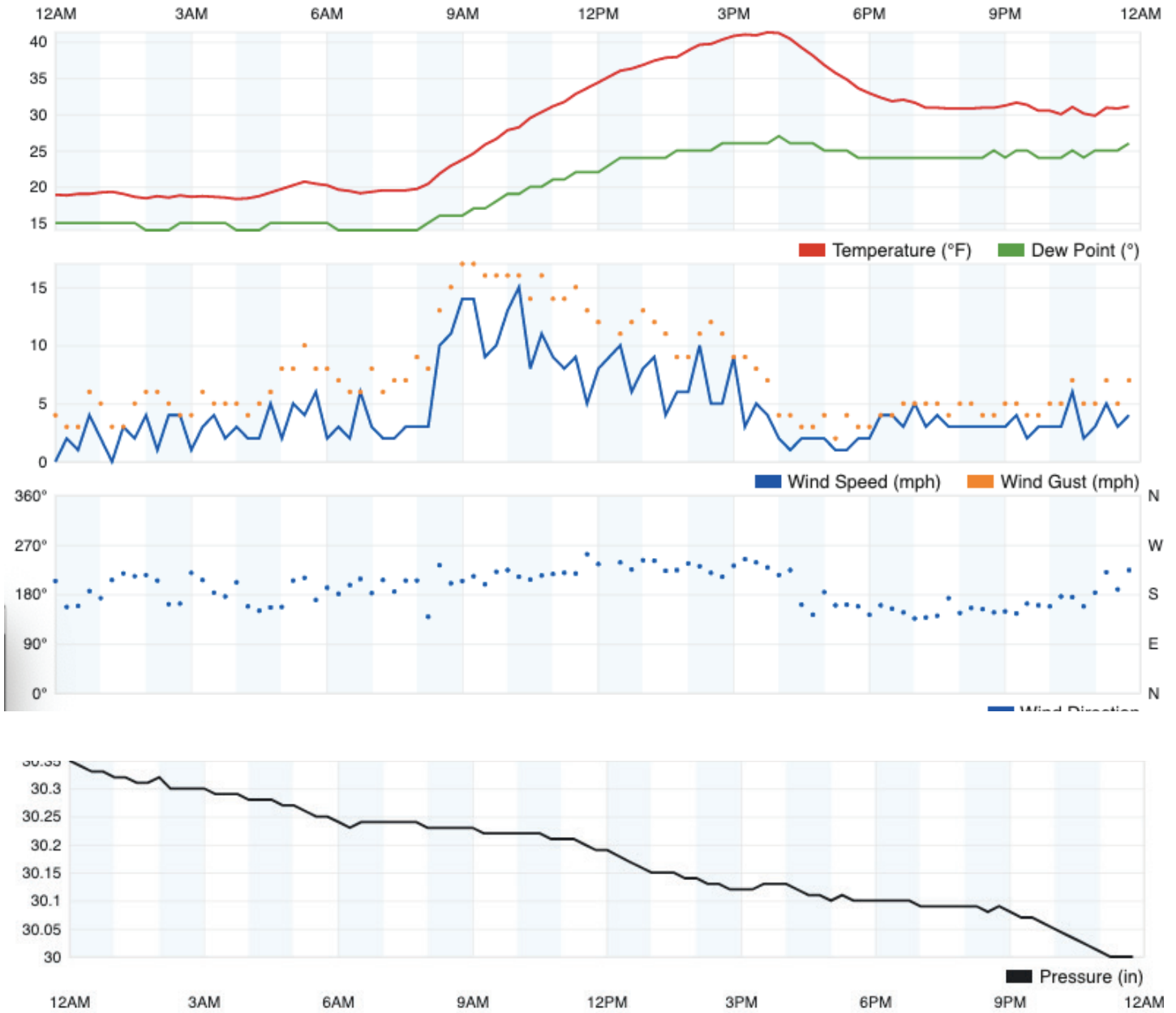
Now that I am an expert in the field of tonsil extraction, you are probably wondering, "Tony, should I consider having my tonsils out?" But offering medical advice through a column would be highly irresponsible, so all I am going to say is that you should consider all of those hard-working flat screen TV makers and their families. Not to mention the green Popsicle industry. And those hungry people in Iceland. What have they ever done to you? Nothing. They're just people like you and me trying to get by.

Besides, you've probably already met your deductible.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thanksgiving Day
				
Mostly Sunny	Decreasing Clouds	Breezy. Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Snow	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 52 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 30 °F

Very Warm and Dry Today. Cold & Windy Wednesday.



Increased Fire Weather concerns this afternoon over south central South Dakota, where relative humidity values will fall into the teens to low 20s. Winds will shift and increase out of the west 10 to 20 mph with a few gusts up to 25 to near 30 mph.

Relative Humidity (%)	11/23 Tue				11/24 Wed								
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	57	38	38	57	72	92	88	85	72	61	60	74	84
Britton	51	39	41	67	85	96	100	92	72	63	62	74	84
Eagle Butte	45	30	31	50	64	75	85	81	81	58	55	62	77
Eureka	55	38	41	67	81	85	92	92	75	58	60	80	84
Gettysburg	47	35	36	57	72	78	88	88	88	69	66	77	92
Kennebec	29	21	22	37	61	78	81	81	72	57	59	72	84
McIntosh	38	29	31	48	58	69	85	75	72	53	53	71	84
Milbank	44	36	38	60	72	78	85	88	69	61	60	68	74
Miller	40	27	29	53	75	78	85	85	75	64	66	81	88
Mobridge	47	32	31	55	69	81	85	75	69	52	51	65	80
Murdo	27	19	18	34	52	63	75	72	78	56	56	68	71
Pierre	37	27	26	47	64	72	78	81	72	59	56	66	74
Redfield	53	33	34	57	78	88	92	92	75	66	71	81	88
Sisseton	44	36	41	67	75	78	81	88	75	58	58	73	73
Watertown	49	39	39	57	67	75	85	92	81	66	66	74	77
Wheaton	49	41	44	69	88	96	100	88	69	60	57	67	76

Wind Gusts (mph)	11/23 Tue				11/24 Wed								
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	18	15	14	10	14	15	18	26	31	31	30	23	22
Britton	24	22	18	9	12	12	16	26	33	35	33	26	22
Eagle Butte	14	14	14	15	17	20	29	33	35	35	31	25	22
Eureka	9	12	12	13	14	16	21	25	31	31	29	24	22
Gettysburg	13	15	15	14	16	17	23	29	35	35	32	26	22
Kennebec	20	22	21	12	14	16	18	28	36	36	35	26	22
McIntosh	17	18	16	14	17	21	30	33	36	36	33	26	22
Milbank	23	24	21	12	12	14	17	23	30	32	32	28	22
Miller	17	20	21	14	15	16	17	23	31	30	30	23	22
Mobridge	10	12	13	12	13	16	21	26	31	31	31	23	20
Murdo	25	23	21	14	16	17	22	31	38	38	33	26	22
Pierre	14	16	16	10	10	12	15	25	32	32	31	24	18
Redfield	18	17	17	13	14	14	18	23	32	32	30	24	21
Sisseton	24	24	16	10	13	17	21	25	33	35	33	26	21
Watertown	26	28	30	18	15	14	15	21	29	31	31	26	22
Wheaton	21	18	17	9	12	14	20	24	31	32	32	26	22



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 11/23/2021 4:12 AM

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Today in Weather History

November 23, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across most of northern South Dakota, adding to already significant snow depth. Roads became snow-packed, which hampered travel, resulting in the postponement of many activities. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Aberdeen, Isabel, Roscoe, and Mellette; 7 inches at Eagle Butte, Timber Lake, Selby, Faulkton, Leola, Frederick, Webster, and Sisseton; and 8 inches at Britton, Ipswich, Eureka, and McLaughlin.

1912: The Rouse Simmons was a three-masted schooner famous for sinking during a violent storm on Lake Michigan on this day. The ship was bound for Chicago with a cargo of Christmas trees when it foundered off the coast of Two Rivers, Wisconsin, killing all on board.

1943 - Northern New Hampshire was in the grips of a record snowstorm which left a total of 55 inches at Berlin, and 56 inches at Randolph. The 56 inch total at Randolph established a 24 hour snowfall record for the state. In Maine, Middle Dam received a record 35 inches of snow in 24 hours. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Rain and gale force winds prevailed along the Northern Pacific coast. Quillayute, WA, received 1.57 inches of rain in 24 hours, including nine tenths of an inch in six hours. Heavy snow fell over northern Oregon and the Cascade Mountains of Washington State. Temperatures began to moderate in the eastern U.S. following a bitterly cold weekend. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Low pressure crossing the Great Basin brought wintry weather to parts of the western U.S. Up to a foot of snow blanketed Yellowstone Park, and winds gusted to 70 mph at Casper WY, and reached 95 mph near Reno NV. Up to seven inches of rain was reported in the Grass Valley and Nevada City area of California. Paradise CA was soaked with 5.37 inches of rain in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Low pressure tracking across the Carolinas brought heavy rain to parts of the Southern Atlantic Coast Region for Thanksgiving Day, and blanketed the Middle Atlantic Coast States and southern New England with heavy snow. The storm produced up to nine inches of snow over Long Island NY, and up to 14 inches over Cape Cod MA, at Yarmouth. Totals of 4.7 inches at New York City and 6.0 inches at Newark NJ were records for Thanksgiving Day, the 8.0 inch total at Providence RI was a record for any given day in November, and the 6.5 inch total at Strasburg CT was a record for the month of November as a whole. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 - An outbreak of severe thunderstorms produced reports of 54 tornadoes across portions of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Alabama. In Texas's Hardin county, one person was killed with three injured when a tornado struck during the afternoon (Associated Press).

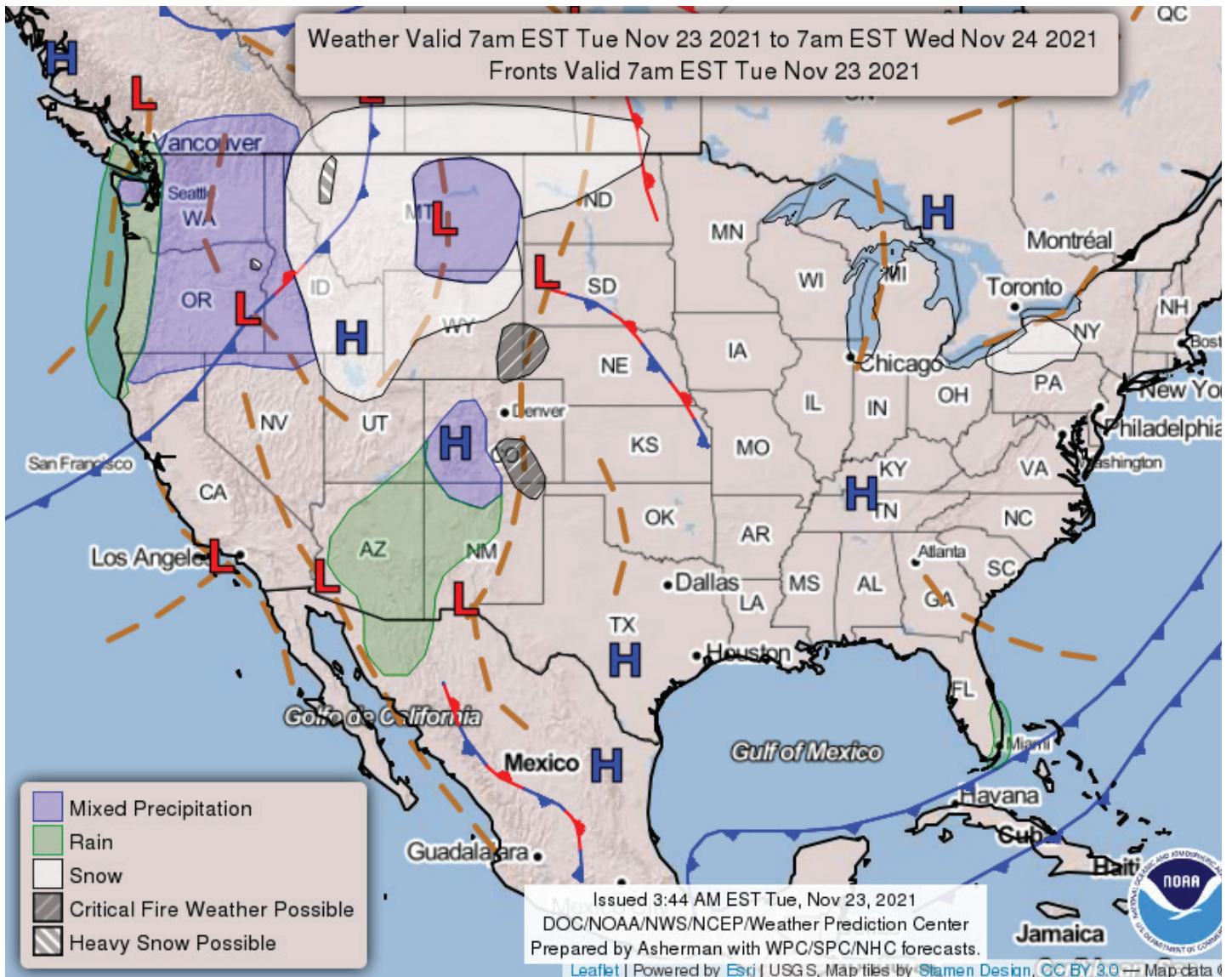
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 41.3 °F at 3:45 PM
Low Temp: 18.3 °F at 4:00 PM
Wind: 17 mph at 9:15 AM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 59° in 1917
Record Low: -17° in 1985
Average High: 39°F
Average Low: 16°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.60
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.16
Average Precip to date: 21.07
Precip Year to Date: 19.88
Sunset Tonight: 4:56:52 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:42:15 AM



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WHERE IS HE WHEN WE NEED HIM?

The night was so dark that even the stars were hidden behind the clouds. The winds were so fierce and the rains so heavy that it was nearly impossible to see. A chaplain noticed a young sailor trying to hide behind the ship's guns where there was a dim light. Trying to comfort him, the chaplain opened his New Testament to John 3:16 and asked him to read that verse. He wanted to talk to him about God. "For God so loved the world," he began reading quietly, "that He gave His only forgotten Son."

Many of us frequently forget the Lord, His Word and His works until we need His help. This happened to the people of Israel. The Psalmist reminds us of this in two simple words that all of us, unfortunately, can relate to: "They forgot."

Often when we face a crisis, it is easy to focus on the crisis rather than the Christ who can guide and guard us through it safely if we would only allow Him. We think of everything that we can do rather than what He can do. So, we delay calling on Him. More than we can realize He is waiting to hear our voice. He wants to comfort and care for us, strengthen and sustain us. But we choose to tackle the task by ourselves - believing that we can live life without Him. Then, when we realize that we are helpless, we turn to Him and, as always, He responds. Perhaps He allows us to "try it" on our own and fail so that He can remind us of our weakness and His enduring strength.

His promise? "Call on me, and I will answer you..." And again, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!"

Prayer: How foolish we are, Father, to ever forget that You are always present waiting and wanting to help us. Help us to remember You in the good times and in the bad times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But they soon forgot what He had done. Psalm 106:13a

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
06/17/2021 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)
11/11/2021 Veteran's Day Program at the GHS Arena
11/21/2021 Groton Area Snow Queen Contest
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
11/30/2021 James Valley Telecommunications Holiday Open House 10am-4pm
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$83 million

Powerball

07-20-29-38-67, Powerball: 22, Power Play: 2

(seven, twenty, twenty-nine, thirty-eight, sixty-seven; Powerball: twenty-two; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$213 million

Brown, Fuller lead Washington past George Mason 77-74

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Terrell Brown Jr. scored 23 points and PJ Fuller added 21 off the bench, and Washington held off George Mason 77-74 on Monday night in an opening-round game of the Crossover Classic.

Brown and Fuller combined to score Washington's final 15 points, including 7-for-7 shooting from the foul line in the final 1:30.

Washington led 71-65 after a three-point play by Brown with 1:30 remaining. D'Shawn Schwartz hit a jumper and DeVon Cooper added a 3-pointer to draw George Mason within a point, 71-70, with 42 seconds left.

Brown missed a jumper but Jamal Bey grabbed the rebound for the Huskies, forcing the Patriots to foul. They sent Fuller to the line and he made both for a 3-point lead at :18. George Mason opted for the layup to draw within one, then turned around and sent Brown to the line. He made both and, now leading by three, the Huskies chose to foul.

By the time the clock ran out there were eight made free throws in the final 18 seconds, the last two by Fuller to cap the win for the Huskies (3-2).

Brown made 8 of 9 free throws, Fuller 6 of 6 and Washington hit 21 of 28 from the line. George Mason made 21 of 26 free throws.

Cooper and Josh Oduro led George Mason (4-2) with 21 points each. Davonte Gaines had 13 points and 10 rebounds.

Washington led 31-23 at the half but a 10-2 run by George Mason got the Patriots even early in the second half.

The round-robin event hosted by South Dakota State continues on Tuesday. Washington will play South Dakota State and George Mason will take on Nevada. South Dakota State defeated Nevada 102-75 on Monday night.

—
More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Wilson leads South Dakota State to 102-75 romp over Nevada

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Douglas Wilson scored 24 points as South Dakota State romped past Nevada 102-75 on Monday night.

Wilson sank 9 of 11 shots from the floor for the Jackrabbits (5-1), who picked up their fourth straight win. Noah Freidel added 21 points. Baylor Scheierman finished with 18 points and 10 rebounds, while Charlie Easley had 10 points and seven boards.

Warren Washington had 20 points for the Wolf Pack (1-4), who have now lost four games in a row. Desmond Cambridge Jr. added 17 points. Will Baker scored 12.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

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South Dakota newspaper pushes House Speaker to open records

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota newspaper is preparing to launch a second lawsuit if the House Speaker does not disclose the names of lawmakers who called for a special legislative session this month to consider whether to impeach the state's attorney general.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader and the South Dakota Newspaper Association last month asked the state Supreme Court to force House Speaker Spencer Gosch to divulge who petitioned for the special session.

A sizable majority of the Republican-dominated House voted Nov. 9 to have a committee prepare a report and recommend whether Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg should be impeached for his conduct surrounding a fatal car crash. He pleaded no contest in August to a pair of misdemeanors in the crash that killed 55-year-old Joseph Boeve.

The organizations argued that Gosch had violated state open records laws by keeping secret a record that triggered legislative action, but the high court declined to step in and ruled the organizations had to follow the procedures for other public records requests. The Legislature met earlier this month without the public knowing which lawmakers had petitioned for the special session.

But the news media organizations indicated they would continue to press Gosch and the Legislature to divulge the record. A lawyer representing the media organizations contacted the Legislative Research Council and House Speaker Spencer Gosch last week about serving a lawsuit to force them to divulge the record.

David Bordewyk, executive director of the South Dakota Newspaper Association, said Monday that a lawsuit has not been filed, but that the organization intends to press for the records to be opened to the public.

"It's not right and it sets a bad precedent if it were to stand," he said of Gosch's decision to keep the record secret.

The Argus Leader did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

To call the special session, both the House and Senate had to win support from two-thirds of their members.

While the Senate leadership has released the names of lawmakers who signed the petition, Gosch argued that information is exempt from open records laws because it falls under an exception that keeps "correspondence" from being released to the public.

Gosch also criticized the media organizations for attempting to serve the lawsuit to the Legislative Research Council, which is the office that facilitates the Legislature's work.

"If you want to come after someone, come after the one who made the decision," he wrote on Twitter.

Trial in Ahmaud Arbery's killing nears going to the jury

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — Prosecutors were scheduled to go before a jury one last time Tuesday before the panel begins deliberations in the trial of three white men charged in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery.

The prosecution gets the final word in the case of the 25-year-old Black man's death because it carries the burden of proving its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys spent hours on Monday delivering closing arguments that spilled into a second day.

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After the prosecution wraps up, Superior Court Judge Timothy Walmsley will give instructions to the disproportionately white jury on how to apply the law before it begins deliberations at the Glynn County courthouse in the port city of Brunswick.

Arbery's killing became part of a larger national reckoning on racial injustice after a graphic video of his death leaked online two months later.

Father and son Greg and Travis McMichael grabbed guns and pursued Arbery in a pickup truck after spotting him running through their subdivision on Feb. 23, 2020. A neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, joined the chase and recorded the video of Travis McMichael opening fire as Arbery threw punches and grabbed for McMichael's shotgun.

No one was charged in the killing until Bryan's video leaked and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case from local police. All three men are charged with murder and other offenses.

"They made the decision to attack Ahmaud Arbery in their driveways because he was a Black man running down the street," prosecutor Linda Dunikoski told the jury in her initial closing arguments Monday.

Defense attorneys used their closing arguments Monday to argue that the McMichaels were attempting a legal citizen's arrest when they set off after Arbery, seeking to detain and question him as a suspected burglar after he was seen running from a nearby home under construction.

Attorney Jason Sheffield said his client, Travis McMichael, fired his shotgun in self-defense after Arbery charged at him, threw punches and tried to grab the weapon. Sheffield called Arbery's death a tragedy, but one that was his own fault.

Attorneys for the other two defendants blamed Arbery as well. Laura Hogue, an attorney for Greg McMichael, said Arbery "chose to fight." Kevin Gough, who represents Bryan, questioned why Arbery didn't call for help if he was in danger.

"Maybe that's because Mr. Arbery doesn't want help," Gough said.

Prosecutors said there was no evidence Arbery had committed crimes in the defendants' neighborhood. He had enrolled at a technical college and was preparing at the time to study to become an electrician like his uncles.

Bus crashes, catches fire in Bulgaria; at least 45 dead

By VESELIN TOSHKOV and STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — North Macedonia's chief prosecutor says that 12 children were among the some 45 people who died in a fiery bus crash in Bulgaria early Tuesday morning.

Lubomir Jovevski spoke to reporters as he visited the scene of the accident on a highway in the west of the country.

The cause of the crash was not immediately confirmed, but it appeared that the bus hit a highway guard rail, crashed and caught fire.

The bus was one of four carrying Macedonian tourists home from a trip to the Turkish city of Istanbul. The crash happened at 2 a.m.

Seven survivors were taken to hospitals for treatment.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — A bus carrying people home to North Macedonia from a tourist trip to Istanbul crashed and caught fire in western Bulgaria early Tuesday, killing at least 45 people, authorities said.

The accident happened around 2 a.m. and there were children among the victims, authorities said. Seven people were taken to hospitals for treatment.

The cause of the crash was not immediately confirmed, but it appeared that the bus hit a highway guard rail, crashed and caught fire.

The bus was one of four traveling together. Officials said an investigation will be launched. The precise death toll was unclear.

Photos taken shortly after the crash showed the bus engulfed in flames with plumes of thick, black smoke rising from the scene.

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Daylight revealed the burned-out bus, its windows all broken, charred and gutted, sitting upright against the median barrier.

Interior Minister Boyko Rashkov told reporters at the crash site that he had "never in my life seen something more horrifying."

"The picture is horrifying, the people who were on the bus are turned to charcoal," Rashkov said. "It is impossible to say how many they were. There were four buses that traveled together, and it is possible that passengers changed buses during the stops."

Media in North Macedonia, a country of about 2 million people, reported that police were outside the Skopje offices of a travel company that is believed to have organized the trip to Turkey.

Bulgarian Caretaker Prime Minister Stefan Yanev, who also visited the site of the crash, told reporters it was "a huge tragedy."

"I take this opportunity to send my condolences to the relatives of the victims," Yanev said. "Let's hope we learn lessons from this tragic incident and we can prevent such incidents in the future."

Bulgarian news agency Novinite said representatives from North Macedonia's embassy visited a hospital where some of the victims were taken.

Albanian Foreign Minister Olta Xhaska wrote online that almost all of those who died in the crash were ethnic Albanians.

North Macedonia's prime minister, Zoran Zaev, told Bulgarian television channel bTV that he had spoken to one of the bus survivors.

"One of the passengers told me that he was asleep and woke up from an explosion," Zaev told bTV, adding that the authorities will gather information that is "important for the families of the dead and the survivors."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressed her condolences to the families and friends of those who died in the "tragic bus accident" and said that "in these terrible times, Europe stands in solidarity with you."

In 2019, Bulgaria, an EU nation of 7 million, had the second-highest road fatality rate in the 27-nation bloc with 89 people killed per million population, according to European Commission data.

McGrath reported from Bucharest, Romania.

Ex-South Korean strongman Chun Doo-hwan dies at age 90

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Former South Korean military strongman Chun Doo-hwan, who seized power in a 1979 coup and brutally crushed pro-democracy protests before going to prison for misdeeds while in office, died Tuesday. He was 90.

Chun, who suffered in recent years from Alzheimer's disease and a blood cancer, was declared dead after a heart attack at his Seoul home, police and emergency officials said.

Chun's rule lasted until 1988 and remains for many South Koreans a time marked both by severe political repression, as well as rapid social and economic changes. Chun's coup extended military-backed rule of the country, after the assassination of his mentor and former army general, Park Chung-hee, who had held power since 1961. During their back-to-back dictatorships, South Koreans suffered huge human rights abuses but the country's economy grew dramatically from the ruins of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Chun was an army major general when he seized power in December 1979 with his military cronies. Tanks and troops rolled into Seoul in a coup that came less than two months after Park was assassinated by his own intelligence chief during a late-night drinking party after a harsh 18-year rule.

Chun quickly consolidated his power by launching a bloody crackdown on a civil uprising in Gwangju. Government records show about 200 died due to the crackdown, but activists say the death toll was much higher. Chun's government also imprisoned tens of thousands of others, saying it was rooting out social evils.

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Chun's military tribunal arrested prominent opposition leader Kim Dae-jung and sentenced him to death for allegedly fomenting the Gwangju uprising. After the United States intervened, Kim's sentence was reduced and he was eventually freed. Kim later became president and won the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to promote democracy in South Korea and reconcile with rival North Korea.

Despite political oppression, South Korea's economy boomed during Chun's tenure. He introduced several liberalizing measures, including an end to a Korean War-era curfew and an easing of restrictions on overseas trips. South Korea also won the rights to host the 1988 Summer Olympics, which were seen as celebrating the country's economic rise. The Olympics were held after Chun left office.

Many conservatives still view Park as a hero who pulled the country up from poverty, but for most people Chun is a highly negative figure, mainly because of the Gwangju crackdown. Chun never apologized and refused to acknowledge he was behind orders to fire on demonstrators in Gwangju.

Last month, Chun's army friend and another ex-President Roh Tae-woo, who played a key role in the 1979 coup, died at the age of 88. Roh never directly apologized over the crackdown too.

"Gwangju is truly a huge pain in our country's modern history. Chun and Roh were the only two people who could have brought a historic closure to such pains," said Jang Seung-Jin, a professor at Seoul's Kookmin University. Jang said it was "very regrettable" that both leaders died without apologizing and disclosing the full details of the crackdown.

Jang added that South Koreans remain divided over the legacy of their past military rulers. He said that "fake news" about the Gwangju crackdown has been fed by Chun's refusal to fully acknowledge what happened.

"The only reaction I had to the news of his death was 'wow, he's finally gone,'" said Byun Hye-min, an office worker in Seoul. Byun noted there was still a lot of "anger" about "the things he did and his refusal to apologize."

Chun's rule was also marred by deadly North Korean attacks, though he sought reconciliation with the North during his time in power.

In 1983, North Korean commandos triggered a bomb that targeted Chun during a visit to Myanmar. Chun narrowly escaped injury in the attack, which killed 21 people, including several South Korean government ministers. In 1987, North Korean agents bombed a South Korean airliner, killing all 115 people on board.

At home, public anger over his dictatorship led to massive street protests in 1987, forcing Chun to accept a constitutional revision to introduce direct presidential elections, which were considered as the start of South Korea's transition to democracy.

Roh, the governing party candidate, won a hotly contested December 1987 election, largely due to a splitting of the vote between liberal opposition candidates Kim Dae-jung and his chief rival, Kim Young-sam.

During Roh's presidency, Chun took refuge for two years in a Buddhist temple in the face of massive public criticism. After Roh left office in 1993, Kim Young-sam became president and had both Chun and Roh stand trial as part of a reform drive. The two ex-presidents were convicted of mutiny and treason over the coup and the Gwangju crackdown, as well as corruption. Chun was sentenced to death and Roh to 22 1/2 years in prison.

Kim Young-sam eventually pardoned the two former presidents in late 1997 at the request of then President-elect Kim Dae-jung, who sought greater national reconciliation to revive the economy, hit by an Asian foreign exchange crisis.

When Roh died on Oct. 26, there was a rare outpouring of public sympathy for him, with high-profile figures paying respects to the former leader and the government holding a public funeral for him.

Though Roh never directly apologized over the crackdown, his son repeatedly visited a Gwangju cemetery to pay respects to the victims and apologized on behalf of his father, who was bed-ridden in the 10 years before his death.

Presidential spokesperson Park Kyung-mee expressed condolences to Chun's family, but added it was regrettable that the former leader had failed to apologize for the Gwangju events before his death. She said the Blue House doesn't plan to send mourning flowers or any official representative to pay respects.

Associated Press writer Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this report.

West Africa has highest numbers of child soldiers, says UN

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP) — Trapped in conflicts, the children of West and Central Africa are the most recruited by armed groups in the world and also have the highest number of victims of sexual violence, says a report released Tuesday by the United Nations Children's Fund.

For five years the region has seen increased conflicts in which more than 21,000 children have been recruited by government forces and armed groups, says the report. In addition, more than 2,200 children in the region have been victims of sexual violence since 2016, says the report.

More than 3,500 children have been abducted, making it the region with the second-highest abductions in the world, said the report.

"The numbers and trends are extremely worrying for current and future generations of children," Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF's regional director for West and Central Africa told The Associated Press.

"Not only have grave violations against children perpetrated by parties to the conflicts not stopped across West and Central Africa, but we have even seen a spike over the past five years, with a 50% increase in the total number of verified grave violations," she said.

Since 2005, when the U.N. established a system to monitor and report on serious violations against children, such as recruitment, abduction, rape and attacks on schools and hospitals, one out of four violations globally was committed in West and Central Africa, said the report.

In conflict-affected countries such as Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, violence has had devastating humanitarian consequences for children and communities, with the pandemic exacerbating the situation, said the U.N.

More than 57 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance, a number that's doubled since last year as a result of conflict and the virus.

While some countries have been a concern for nearly a decade or more, there are three new areas of concern: Burkina Faso, Cameroon and the countries surrounding Lake Chad, according to the U.N.'s annual report on children and armed conflict.

Conflict in the four countries straddling the Lake Chad basin — Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria — has displaced some 3 million people and in Burkina Faso, where a jihadist insurgency has killed thousands, child recruitment rose at least five-fold this year, up from four documented cases in all of last year, according to information seen by the AP in an unpublished report by international aid and conflict experts.

During a deadly attack in June in the country's Sahel region where at least 160 people were killed, children were seen alongside jihadists, chanting "Allahu akbar" (God is great in Arabic) as they burned homes.

Children associated with armed groups are often exposed to "unbearable levels of violence" and their recruitment can be preceded and followed by other violations such as abduction, sexual violence and the killing and maiming of children, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba told The Associated Press.

The U.N. is calling for parties to the conflict to prevent and end violations against children and for perpetrators to be held accountable. It urges aid groups to increase the documentation of violations and to work to prevent and respond to them. UNICEF says that it needs more than \$92 million to protect children in emergencies across West and Central Africa, more than half of which is not yet funded.

German soldiers face vaccine mandate as COVID cases rise

BERLIN (AP) — The German military is poised to make coronavirus vaccines mandatory for troops as COVID-19 infections continue to rise across the country.

The Defense Ministry on Tuesday confirmed a report in the German military blog Augen Geradeaus that officials and soldiers' representatives agreed late Monday to add the coronavirus shot to the list

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of vaccines soldiers must get. The measure still needs to be formally added to military regulations, the ministry said in a statement.

There were 1,215 active COVID-19 cases as of Monday reported within the military and the ministry's civilian staff.

The nationwide tally of newly confirmed cases rose by 45,326 in the past 24 hours, the country's disease control agency said Tuesday. A further 309 deaths from COVID-19 were reported, taking the total toll since the start of the outbreak to 99,433.

On Monday, the U.S. State Department urged Americans not to travel to Germany because of rising case numbers, and to ensure they are fully vaccinated if they do.

Some German states have tightened rules for unvaccinated people in recent days and urged people who haven't done so yet to get the shot.

But a sizeable minority has resisted calls to do so, prompting a stark warning from the country's health minister about the consequences of not getting vaccinated.

"By the end of this winter pretty much everyone in Germany (...) will have been vaccinated, recovered or died," health minister Jens Spahn said Monday.

About 68% of Germany's population of 83 million has been fully vaccinated, far below the minimum threshold of 75% that the government is aiming for.

Follow all AP stories on the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

UN nuclear watchdog chief presses for more access in Iran

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The head of the United Nations' atomic watchdog met Tuesday with Iranian officials to press for greater access in the Islamic Republic ahead of diplomatic talks restarting over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers.

Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency yet again faces tightrope-style talks with Iranian officials as his inspectors remain unable to access surveillance footage and face greater challenges in trying to monitor Tehran's rapidly growing uranium stockpile. In the wake of then-President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal from Iran's deal, the Islamic Republic now enriches small amounts of uranium up to 60% purity — its highest ever and close to weapons-grade levels of 90%.

While Iran maintains its program is peaceful, regional rival Israel has repeatedly warned it won't allow Tehran to build a nuclear weapon and is suspected of launching attacks targeting its program as part of a wider regional shadow war playing across the Mideast in recent years. The U.S. under President Joe Biden, meanwhile, has said it's willing to return to the deal, but has warned time is running out.

All this raises the risk of a wider confrontation with Iran, which has taken a harder tack ahead of the talks under new President Ebrahim Raisi, a protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Writing on Twitter on Monday, Grossi said he hoped to "address outstanding questions" with Iranian officials.

"I hope to establish a fruitful and cooperative channel of direct dialogue so the (IAEA) can resume essential verification activities in the country," Grossi wrote.

On Tuesday, Grossi went to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, the country's civilian nuclear agency, for his third-such visit since February. He spoke with Mohammad Eslami, the new head of the organization. The U.N. in 2008 sanctioned Eslami for "being engaged in, directly associated with or providing support for Iran's proliferation sensitive nuclear activities or for the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems."

After their talk, Eslami gave a news conference in which he described the ongoing issues as "technical" and not governed by the "political issues and conspiracies" of Iran's enemies.

"Some parts are yet to be answered and some parts have to do with issues that have already been closed in the past," he said. "They have been addressed in the nuclear deal and have been closed. Today, we agreed to put an end to them."

Eslami did not elaborate.

Grossi for his part described the talks as "intense" and was not as definitive as Eslami.

"We are continuing at this point our negotiations with a view to finding common ground," Grossi said. He was due to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian afterward.

Under a confidential agreement called an "Additional Protocol" with Iran, the IAEA collects and analyzes images from a series of surveillance cameras installed at Iranian nuclear sites. Those cameras helped it monitor Tehran's program to see if it is complying with the nuclear deal.

Iran's hard-line parliament in December 2020 approved a bill that would suspend part of U.N. inspections of its nuclear facilities if European signatories did not provide relief from oil and banking sanctions by February. Since February, the IAEA has been unable to access imagery from those cameras.

Under the deal, the IAEA also placed around 2,000 tamper-proof seals on nuclear material and equipment. Those seals communicated electronically to inspectors. Automated measuring devices also provided real-time data from the program. Inspectors as well haven't been able to access that data, making the task of monitoring Iran's enriched uranium stockpile that much more difficult.

The agency also has sought monitoring of activities at a centrifuge parts production site near northern city of Karaj. The IAEA has had no access there since June after Iran said a sabotage attack by Israel considerably damaged the facility and an IAEA camera there.

In a separate report to IAEA member states earlier this month, the agency said Grossi also was concerned about inspectors "being subjected to excessively invasive physical searches by security officials at nuclear facilities in Iran."

Tuesday's meeting comes ahead of a wider meeting of the IAEA member states. Iran avoided facing a censure vote at the board with a similar Grossi visit in September.

Meanwhile in Israel, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett described Iran's nuclear program as being in a "very advanced stage," without providing details. Ahead of the resumption of nuclear talks between global powers and Iran, Bennett said he expects "disagreement with our greatest of friends."

"Either way, even with the return to an agreement, Israel is of course not part of the agreement. Israel is not bound by it," he told a security conference in Herzliya. "We will maintain our freedom to act."

Associated Press writer Tia Goldenberg in Tel Aviv, Israel, contributed to this report. Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Afghan referee sees no fair play in EU border policies

By EDVIN ZULIC Associated Press

VELIKA KLADUSA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Ibrahim Rasool loved his job as a referee because of sportsmanship and fair play. But the 33-year-old from Afghanistan says there's nothing fair about the way the European Union treats people flocking to its borders in search of a better life.

Rasool told The Associated Press that police in Croatia ignored pleas from a pregnant woman and families with small children and instead deported him and 16 others back to Bosnia when they crossed into the EU country this month.

Rasool provided video that he said he had filmed inside a Croatian police van and in a forest at Croatia's border with Bosnia. Croatian police insulted the people who tried to make it in and told them to go back to Afghanistan, Rasool said.

Croatian police have not responded to an AP request seeking information about the alleged Nov. 10 border incident.

"Police didn't (pay) attention to kids, to woman pregnant, (to) women, nobody," Rasool said. "They show (us) gun, (say) 'Don't move. Stop. We are police.'"

The video provided by Rasool showed people crouched inside a fenced, moving van that included women and small children. In the forest video, men are carrying an apparently pregnant woman in a blanket. Neither video could be independently verified.

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Rasool said Croatian police told the group there is no space in the EU for people from Afghanistan, referring to the migrants as "animals" and "dirty people."

Croatian police have faced multiple accusations of pushing back migrants and refugees and using violence to do so. The European Court of Human Rights last week ruled against Croatia in a 2017 pushback case after which a 6-year-old Afghan girl was killed by a train.

Although Croatian authorities last month were forced to suspend three special police officers who were filmed hitting migrants with batons while forcing them out of Croatia, they have rejected accusations of a systematic, widespread abuse of migrants in the border zone.

Rasool and his group have been stuck in a makeshift camp near the Bosnian border town of Velika Kladusa. The camp has no facilities other than improvised tents but Rasool said it was still better than official migrant camps "because we are free."

Upon leaving Afghanistan four years ago, Rasool first went to Iran, then to Turkey and Greece. He came to Bosnia two months ago through Albania and Montenegro after staying in Greece for more than three years. Despite being turned back repeatedly at the Croatian border, Rasool and his fellow migrants will try again to cross as soon as they can.

Once they reach Croatia, migrants seek to go to Italy or Slovenia before moving on toward Western Europe's wealthiest countries. Several thousand people remain stuck throughout the Balkans looking for a chance to reach the EU.

"We cannot stay in Bosnia because the weather is going (to be) very cold" soon, said Rasool.

Rasool provided the AP with copies of his FIFA-approved referee certificates and photos from some of the hundreds of futsal matches he handled in Afghanistan. He said he fled his home country over disagreements with the management of the Afghan football association.

"I want to continue my job, I want to be back to my normal life," he said. "It doesn't matter which country."

Futsal is a form of soccer played on a much smaller, hard court and mainly indoors.

While in Greece, Rasool coached refugee teams, he said. In Bosnia, he could be seen playing soccer with children and other men in the camp. Returning home to Afghanistan is not an option, especially after NATO troops pulled out and the Taliban took over again.

But Rasool said his hopes of a brighter future in the West have been shaken badly by the treatment at the Croatian border. The fourth time he tried to cross into Croatia, police took all his money and laughed at him and others.

"They stole from refugees," he said. "They think we are animals, not human."

He said the Taliban, Croatia and other EU governments are all playing with people's lives.

"If European Union accept this" stance by Croatian border police, then it is no better than the Taliban, he said.

Follow AP's coverage of migration issues at <https://apnews.com/hub/migration>

Rittenhouse tells Fox News 'not a racist person,' backs BLM

NEW YORK (AP) — Kyle Rittenhouse, who was acquitted on charges stemming from killing two men and wounding another during the unrest that followed the shooting of a Black man by a white police officer, said in a wide-ranging interview that aired Monday night he's "not a racist person" and supports the Black Lives Matter movement.

"This case has nothing to do with race. It never had anything to do with race. It had to do with the right to self-defense," the 18-year-old told Fox News host Tucker Carlson in an interview that aired Monday night. Rittenhouse is white, as were the men he shot.

Rittenhouse was 17 last year when he traveled 20 miles (32 kilometers) from his home in Antioch, Illinois, to Kenosha, Wisconsin, which had been racked with protests in the wake of the Aug. 23 shooting

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of Jacob Blake. That shooting and the response in Kenosha — protests that turned destructive — became part of the national reckoning over police use of force against Black people following George Floyd's death in Minneapolis the previous May at the hands of police.

Rittenhouse, armed with an AR-style semiautomatic rifle, joined others who said they were intent on protecting private property from potential damage on Aug. 25. During his trial, prosecutors argued that the teenager was a "wannabe soldier" who went looking for trouble that night. Rittenhouse countered that he fired in self-defense after he was attacked and in fear for his life.

"I thought they came to the correct verdict because it wasn't Kyle Rittenhouse on trial in Wisconsin — it was the right to self defense on trial," Rittenhouse said in the interview. "And if I was convicted... no one would ever be privileged to defend their life against attackers."

He said some people, including some who have made threats against him, are "too ignorant to look at the facts."

The shootings quickly made Rittenhouse a rallying cry for supporters of Second Amendment rights and those angered by the sometimes violent protests seen in some American cities after Floyd's death.

Rittenhouse was photographed in a bar before the trial with apparent members of the far-right Proud Boys. Rittenhouse's attorneys have said he is not a white supremacist.

"I'm not a racist person. I support the BLM movement, I support peacefully demonstrating," Rittenhouse told Carlson. He said, "I feel like my life has been extremely defamed," and hinted that he may be taking action, saying: "I have really good lawyers who are taking care of that right now."

He also hit hard at his former attorneys, John Pierce and Lin Wood, who he said used him to promote a "cause" as they raised \$2 million for his bail.

When asked about that over the weekend, Pierce said he had no comment. Wood told The Associated Press that the foundation he heads, Fightback Foundation, raised money for Rittenhouse's bail and publicly said the case was a Second Amendment issue.

"I was not an attorney pushing for a cause," Wood said. "Fightback has a mission that includes the right to bear arms and self-defense."

Rittenhouse told Carlson that he wishes the shootings in Kenosha "never would've happened."

"But it did, and we can't change that. But how... polarized it became is absolutely sickening, like right or left, people using me for a cause that should never have been used as a cause."

Rittenhouse said that his life is different from what he had planned. He said he is taking college prerequisites to become a nurse and hopes to study on campus, but is now also thinking about studying law. He plans to move from the Midwest, but is not exactly sure where he will go.

"I'm going to go lay low and live my life and enjoy it," he said.

A jury last Friday found Rittenhouse not guilty on charges of homicide, attempted homicide and reckless endangering in the deaths of Joseph Rosenbaum, 36, and Anthony Huber, 26, and the wounding of Gaige Grosskreutz, now 28.

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

Back in power, Israel's Left finds its influence is limited

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — After years in Israel's political wilderness, small dovish parties that support Palestinian statehood are back in government. But they are finding their influence is limited, with coalition partners who support Jewish West Bank settlement showing little appetite for compromise and the country's decades-long occupation churning on.

The parties are having to rein themselves in as hopes for a Palestinian state slip further away under their watch, with settlement construction booming and peace talks a distant memory. Nonetheless, the left-leaning lawmakers say their presence in the coalition is important and that the alternative is worse.

"Unfortunately, this is not the government that will sign a peace agreement with the Palestinians," said

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Mossi Raz, a lawmaker from the dovish Meretz party, which is part of the coalition. "We are not a fig leaf. We are making our voices heard. But our power is meager."

Israel's coalition government, formed in June after a lengthy political crisis, is a fractious collage of parties from across the political spectrum bound by the goal of keeping former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu out of power. The parties agreed to put aside contentious issues like the country's 50-plus-year occupation of territories Palestinians want for their state, choosing instead to focus on less divisive issues, like the pandemic, the economy and the environment.

Yet the occupation grinds on. Under the current government, Israel has moved ahead on building thousands of homes for settlers in the West Bank. Its defense minister has outlawed six Palestinian rights groups, alleging links to a militant faction. Radical settlers have stepped up violent attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, as Israeli soldiers stand by or assist the settlers. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who once headed the country's main settler lobbying group, rejects the idea of a Palestinian state, and Palestinians remain deeply pessimistic about the near-term future.

Israel's two center-left parties, Labor and Meretz, spent years in the opposition. It's been a decade for Labor and more than twice that long for Meretz.

Labor had made resolving the conflict with the Palestinians a core issue when it was in power in the 1990s - even as settlement construction continued, as it has under all Israeli governments for the past 54 years.

In the mid-1990s, a Labor-led government that also included Meretz signed interim peace agreements with the Palestinians known as the Oslo Accords.

But moving ahead with the agreements stalled when a right-wing government took over in 1996 after a wave of attacks by Palestinian militants, followed by failed peace talks under another short-lived Labor government in 2000 and the outbreak of a Palestinian uprising later that year.

The Israeli electorate shifted to the right, and the political base of Labor and Meretz shrank. Labor, home to Israel's founding leaders and the country's ruling party for the first two decades, won just a handful of seats in Israel's 120-member parliament in recent elections. Meretz dropped from a high of 12 seats in the 1990s to six seats.

Some Labor and Meretz voters bolted to the centrist Yesh Atid, which focuses on economic issues and is the second-largest party in parliament.

Following elections in March, Meretz and Labor agreed to put aside ideological differences to form a coalition led by Yesh Atid, with centrist and right-wing parties, along with one Islamist party, opposed to Netanyahu's rule.

But in the negotiations to forge the coalition, nationalist parties blocked the dovish factions from positions that help set policy on the Palestinians. The nationalist parties also have veteran lawmakers who know whose back to scratch to push their priorities, a skill left-leaning parties were missing after years in opposition, said Gayil Talshir, a political analyst at Jerusalem's Hebrew University.

Still, the left has leverage to push for some of its priorities, she said. The coalition commands a razor-thin majority in parliament and needs the support of Labor and Meretz, which have a total of 13 seats in parliament. "No one really wants to go to elections," Talshir said.

For now, much of the left's impact has been with its rhetoric, and even that has been watered down for fear of rocking the boat. The response was muted after the government outlawed the six Palestinian NGOs, including groups that monitor Israeli human rights violations in the occupied territories.

Meretz leader Nitzan Horowitz, who serves as health minister, demanded clarifications and said it was concerning, but stopped short of condemning it.

Public Security Minister Omer Barlev of Labor said that the decision was made over his head despite his membership in the country's Security Cabinet.

Labor and Meretz have also been unable to slow settlement expansion.

Israel's environment minister, Meretz politician Tamar Zandberg, acknowledged the party cannot achieve everything it wants but said it remained committed to the coalition deal it had signed.

"Within those limitations, we will do everything in our power to promote as much of our agenda as possible," she recently told The Associated Press.

In the months since the coalition was formed, there have been small steps toward repairing the relationship with the Palestinian self-rule government, headed by Mahmoud Abbas, after years of rupture under Netanyahu. Several Israeli government ministers have met with Abbas, and Israel granted more work permits for Palestinian laborers.

Lior Amihai of the Yesh Din rights group, which documents settler violence against Palestinians, said he has noticed a change in style, though not substance. He said a parliamentary hearing on settler violence was recently held, for instance, something he wouldn't have expected in other Knesset sessions.

"I can't point to results in the field in terms of the occupation but there is a different feeling. You can work with the Knesset," said Amihai.

Ahmad Majdalani, a top Palestinian official, said the change is only cosmetic and Israel has a long way to go.

"We believe that this government has not changed its policy towards the Palestinian issue," he said.

Trans Netflix workers drop labor complaint but one resigns

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two former Netflix employees who criticized anti-transgender comments on Dave Chappelle's TV special are dropping labor complaints and one has resigned from the company, it was announced Monday.

Terra Field, a senior software engineer who is trans, announced that Field had voluntarily resigned as of Sunday.

"This isn't how I thought things would end, but I'm relieved to have closure," Field said in a resignation letter posted online.

Chappelle's "The Closer" first aired on Oct. 1 and gained millions of views. However, Chappelle's disparaging remarks about the transgender community raised protests within Netflix and from activists. About 30 Netflix workers staged a an Oct. 20 walkout and joined a rally at Netflix offices in Los Angeles.

Field was suspended by the company after attending a business meeting for senior executives but was quickly reinstated.

Field and B. Pagels-Minor, a game launch operations program manager who also is trans, filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board. They alleged that Netflix retaliated against the workers to keep them from speaking up about working conditions, including "Netflix's products and the impact of its product choices on the LGBTQ+ community."

"We have resolved our differences in a way that acknowledges the erosion of trust on both sides and, we hope, enables everyone to move on," Netflix said in a statement Monday.

Pagels-Minor has acknowledged that they were the employee that Netflix fired last month for allegedly disclosing confidential financial information about what it paid for "The Closer." The information was referenced in a Bloomberg news article.

Pagels-Minor has denied the allegations.

Netflix ran into a buzz-saw of criticism not only with the special but in how internal memos responded to employees' concerns, including co-CEO Ted Sarandos' assertion that "content on screen doesn't directly translate to real-world harm."

Sarandos also wrote that Netflix doesn't allow titles that are "designed to incite hate or violence, and we don't believe 'The Closer' crosses that line."

Netflix continues to make the special available for streaming.

World Cup host Qatar used ex-CIA officer to spy on FIFA

By ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The tiny Arab nation of Qatar has for years employed a former CIA officer to

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help spy on soccer officials as part of a no-expense-spared effort to win and hold on to the 2022 World Cup tournament, an investigation by The Associated Press has found.

It's part of a trend of former U.S. intelligence officers going to work for foreign governments with questionable human rights records that is worrying officials in Washington and prompting calls from some members of Congress for greater scrutiny of an opaque and lucrative market.

The World Cup is the planet's most popular sports tournament. It's also a chance for Qatar, one of the wealthiest countries in the world, to have a coming-out party on the world stage.

The AP's investigation found Qatar sought an edge in securing hosting rights by hiring former CIA officer turned private contractor Kevin Chalker to spy on rival bid teams and key soccer officials who picked the winner in 2010. Chalker also worked for Qatar in the years that followed to keep tabs on the country's critics in the soccer world, the AP found.

The AP's investigation is based on interviews with Chalker's former associates as well as contracts, invoices, emails, and a review of business documents.

The surveillance work included having someone pose as a photojournalist to keep tabs on a rival nation's bid and deploying a Facebook honeypot, in which someone posed online as an attractive woman, to get close to a target, a review of the records show. Operatives working for Chalker and the Persian Gulf sheikhdom also sought cell phone call logs of at least one top FIFA official ahead of the 2010 vote, a review of the records show.

Chalker also promised he could help the country "maintain dominance" over its large population of foreign workers, an internal document from one of Chalker's companies reviewed by the AP shows. Qatar — a country with a population of 2.8 million, of whom only 300,000 are citizens — is heavily reliant on foreign-born labor to build the stadiums and other infrastructure needed for the tournament.

Qatari government officials did not respond to requests for comment. FIFA also declined to comment.

Chalker, who opened an office in Doha and had a Qatari government email account, said in a statement provided by a representative that he and his companies would not "ever engage in illegal surveillance."

Chalker declined requests for an interview or to answer detailed questions about his work for the Qatari government. He also claimed that some of the documents reviewed by the AP were forgeries.

The AP reviewed hundreds of pages of documents from Chalker's companies, including a 2013 project update report that had several photos of Chalker's staff meeting with various soccer officials. Multiple sources with authorized access provided documents to the AP. The sources said they were troubled by Chalker's work for Qatar and requested anonymity because they feared retaliation.

The AP took several steps to verify the documents' authenticity. That includes confirming details of various documents with different sources, including former Chalker associates and soccer officials; cross-checking contents of documents with contemporaneous news accounts and publicly available business records; and examining electronic documents' metadata, or digital history, where available, to confirm who made the documents and when. Chalker did not provide to the AP any evidence to support his position that some of the documents in question had been forged.

Many of the documents reviewed by the AP outlining work undertaken by Chalker and his companies on behalf of Qatar are also described in a lawsuit filed by Elliott Broidy, a one-time fundraiser for former U.S. President Donald Trump. Broidy is suing Chalker and has accused him of mounting a widespread hacking and spying campaign at Qatar's direction that includes using former western intelligence officers to surveil FIFA officials. Broidy's lawyers did not respond to requests for comment. Chalker's legal team has argued the lawsuit is meritless.

Former associates say Chalker's companies have provided a variety of services to Qatar in addition to intelligence work. His company Global Risk Advisors bills itself as "an international strategic consultancy specializing in cybersecurity, military and law enforcement training, and intelligence-based advisory services" and its affiliates have won small contracts with the FBI for a rope-training course and tech consulting work for the Democratic National Committee.

Chalker worked at the CIA as an operations officer for about five years, according to former associates.

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Operations officers typically work undercover trying to recruit assets to spy on behalf of the United States. The CIA declined to comment and does not usually discuss its former officers.

Chalker's background in the CIA was attractive to Qatari officials, said former associates.

"That was part of his mystique. All these young wealthy Qataris are playing spy games with this guy and he's selling them," said one former associate, who like others interviewed by the AP, spoke on the condition of anonymity because they feared retribution for revealing the spying efforts of Qatar.

The private surveillance business has flourished in the last decade in the Persian Gulf as the region saw the rise of an information war using state-sponsored hacking operations that have coincided with the run-up to the World Cup.

Three former U.S. intelligence and military officials recently admitted to providing hacking services for a UAE-based company, which was called DarkMatter, as part of a deferred prosecution agreement with the Justice Department. A Reuters investigation from 2019 reported that DarkMatter hacked phones and computers of Qatar's Emir, his brother, and FIFA officials.

Work abroad by ex-U.S. intelligence officials has not always aligned with U.S. interests. The United States was Qatar's biggest rival to win the 2022 World Cup, and former U.S. President Bill Clinton and other celebrities were part of the bid effort. One Global Risk Advisors document lists the United States as a "threat" to Qatar while Russia, one of the U.S.'s biggest geopolitical rivals and the host of the 2018 World Cup, was listed as an "opportunity."

The Sunday Times of London previously reported that unnamed ex-CIA agents helped Qatar's 2010 bid team. But the AP's investigation is the most detailed to date of Qatar's use of former U.S. spies and provides a rare look into the world of former Western spies working in the Gulf for autocratic governments.

"This is a problem for U.S. national security," John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at Citizen Lab, a watchdog group that tracks cyber-surveillance companies. "It's a really dangerous thing when people who handle the most sensitive secrets of our country are thinking in the back of their mind, 'Man, I could really make a lot more money taking this technical knowledge that I've been trained in and putting it in the service of whoever will pay me.'"

When Qatar was picked as the surprise winner in 2010, there was jubilation in the country. Sheik Youssef al-Qaradawi, a prominent Islamic scholar said he was "filled with joy" at the announcement and said Qatar had humbled the United States.

But Qatar's successful bid has long been dogged by allegations of corruption. U.S. prosecutors said last year that bribes were paid to FIFA executive committee members to gain their votes for Qatar.

Qatar has denied wrongdoing but has also had to fend off allegations by labor watchdogs of worker abuses, and an effort by neighboring countries to isolate, weaken and embarrass it through an economic boycott and informational warfare.

Chalker has pitched his companies, including Global Risk Advisors, as an aggressive private intelligence and security agency Qatar needs to fulfill its ambitions.

"The time for half-measures is over and serious consideration needs to be given to how important the 2022 World Cup is to Qatar," one of Global Risk Advisors' project documents from 2014, which also promised a "full-court press utilizing unique, non-traditional capabilities against a wide-ranging set of targets."

Chalker also promised the Qataris the use of I.T. and "technical collection specialists" as well as top field operatives with backgrounds in "highly sensitive U.S. intelligence and military operations" who could "spot, assess, develop, recruit, and handle assets with access to persons and topics of interests" on Qatar's behalf, company materials show.

He also emphasized aggression and discretion, saying his plans included "patsies," and "lightning rods," psychological operations, and "persistent and aggressive distractions and disruptions" aimed at Qatar's enemies all while giving the country "full deniability," company records show.

"The greatest achievement to date of Project MERCILESS ... have come from successful penetration operations targeting vocal critics inside the FIFA organization," Global Risk Advisors said in one 2014 document describing a project whose minimum proposed budget was listed at \$387 million over nine years. It's unclear how much the Qataris ultimately paid the company.

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Records show Chalker sometimes subcontracted with Diligence, a well-known private investigative firm in London founded by former western intelligence officers.

Diligence conducted surveillance in 2010 on the U.S. bid team by having a fake photojournalist secretly report back on what was happening as FIFA officials toured stadiums in the U.S. and met with the officials from the country's bid team, a review of the records show. Tasked with getting close to one unnamed individual, Diligence use a fake Facebook profile of an attractive young woman to communicate with the target, records show.

Just ahead of the 2010 bid, Chalker tasked Diligence to obtain communications and financial records of FIFA officials Jack Warner and Chuck Blazer, a review of the records show. Blazer, a former top U.S. soccer official who pleaded guilty to FIFA-related corruption charges and worked as an informant for the FBI, died in 2017.

Diligence did not respond to requests for comment. Its Swiss affiliate recently settled a lawsuit with Ghanem Nuseibeh, a London consultant who said his mail was stolen and his emails were hacked after he wrote a report critical of Qatar hosting the World Cup. Diligence previously said in court records that it only conducted lawful surveillance on Nuseibeh.

David Downs, who was the executive director of the U.S. bid effort in 2010, said he's not surprised to learn that Qatar was spying on its rivals given how weak their bid was compared to others.

"It's very telling that they would be hiring ex-CIA operatives to get inside information," Downs said. "A lot of what they did was either bending the rules or outright breaking the rules."

Global Risk Advisor documents also highlight the company's efforts to win over Jordan's Prince Ali Bin Al-Hussein, a key figure in the soccer world who ran unsuccessfully to be FIFA's president in 2015 and 2016. In a 2013 document, GRA recommended the Qataris give money to a soccer development organization run by Ali, saying it would "help solidify Qatar's reputation as a benevolent presence in world football."

A representative for Ali said the prince "has always had a direct good personal relationship with Qatar's rulers. He certainly wouldn't need consultants to assist with that relationship."

Qatar has a long history of providing favors and family benefits to key influencers within FIFA and European soccer.

Top European soccer official Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, paid a massive fine for failing to declare two Rolex watches on his return to Germany from Qatar in 2013 — two years after he suggested there were "questions about the Qatari World Cup." And the son of a top FIFA official, Belgium's Michel D'Hooghe, was offered and accepted a job in Qatar shortly after the 2010 vote. A FIFA ethics investigator did not connect the job offer to Qatar's winning hosting rights and both Rummenigge, and D'Hooghe have denied any wrongdoing.

Swiss prosecutors are currently pursuing corruption charges against Jerome Valcke — FIFA's CEO-like secretary-general from 2007 to 2015 — in a case that involves his acquiring use of a Qatari-owned luxury villa on the Italian island of Sardinia.

Valcke, who has denied wrongdoing, oversaw or had input into all aspects of the soccer body's dealings for with Qatar for several years. He was listed as a "potential threat" in GRA documents from 2013.

The Broidy lawsuit also alleges that Valcke was one of several FIFA officials Chalker targeted for hacking and surveillance. Valcke told the AP there "was no reason" for Qatar to identify him in such a way and said he never felt "any direct threats or pressure" in his dealings with the country.

In early 2017, the Qataris sent a request that Chalker submit a proposal to provide staff for a cybersecurity unit, as well as training to protect the royal family, conduct intelligence work and provide security in other areas, emails and other records show.

Chalker signed a master services agreement, a copy of which was reviewed by the AP, with Qatar in August 2017. The signed agreement specified that Chalker's company could provide consulting on surveillance, counter-surveillance, and other areas to "intelligence collection organizations."

Publicly available annual reports and balance sheets filed in Gibraltar show Chalker-owned shell companies saw large deposits that year and ended 2017 with about \$46 million in funds.

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The full scope of his work for Qatar is unclear but the AP reviewed a variety of projects Global Risk Advisors proposed between 2014 and 2017 show proposals not just directly related to the World Cup.

They included "Pickaxe," which promised to capture "personal information and biometrics" of migrants working in Qatar. "Falconeye" was described as a plan to use drones to provide surveillance of ports and borders operations, as well as "controlling migrant worker populations centers."

"By implementing background investigations and vetting program, Qatar will maintain dominance of migrant workers," one company document said.

Qatar relied heavily on foreign workers to build stadiums and the necessary infrastructure for the tournament. It's faced criticism for how the workers have been treated and has not provided full details and data on worker deaths.

Another project, "Viper" promised on-site or remote "mobile device exploitation," which Global Risk Advisors said would deliver "critical intelligence" and enhance national security. The use of such technology provided by private firms is well documented by autocratic countries around the world, including the Gulf.

In July 2017, a month after Qatar's neighbors cut diplomatic ties and began a years-long boycott of the country, Chalker authored a proposal for "Project Deviant." It called for Global Risk Advisors to provide a robust spying and hacking training program for employees at Qatar's Ministry of Interior "based on the elite training undertaken by (Global Risk Advisors) officers from the U.S. military and intelligence agencies." Deviant included a 47-week "field operations tradecraft course" that would include training on surveillance, disguises, interrogation techniques, asset recruitment, hand-to-hand combat, and other areas, a GRA proposal shows.

The 26-week "technical operations tradecraft course" promised to teach Qataris with just even just a basic IT background to become world-class hackers with the "necessary knowledge, skills and techniques to use highly restricted, cutting-edge tools to penetrate target systems and devices, collect and analyze bulk signals data, and to track and locate targets to ultra-precise locations," records show.

The Broidy lawsuit also alleged that Chalker provided similar training to Qatar, noting that former intelligence officers are typically prohibited from such skills with foreign governments.

Specific spying and hacking methods the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies teach their officers are classified and divulging techniques would be against the law. But there's no general ban on working for foreign governments, and distinctions are not always clear between what methods are classified and what are not.

"That line can be hard to draw when it comes to tradecraft that is commonly used," said Bobby Chesney, a professor at the University of Texas School of Law who specializes in national security issues.

Wealthy countries in the Gulf have proven eager to hire ex-U.S. intelligence officials. A private company started by retired Gen. Keith Alexander, who once led the National Security Agency, signed a contract in 2018 with the Prince Mohammed bin Salman College of Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Technologies. The country's leader — and the school's namesake — has been accused of using spyware against critics, journalists and others. Brian Bartlett, a spokesman for Alexander, said the contract has expired and was "focused on the development of the college's educational efforts and its cybersecurity curriculum."

The CIA sent a letter to former employees earlier this year warning of a "detrimental trend" of foreign governments hiring former intelligence officers "to build up their spying capabilities," according to a copy of the letter obtained by the AP and first reported by the New York Times.

"We ask that you protect yourself and the CIA by safeguarding the classified tradecraft that underpins your enterprise," wrote Sheetal Patel, the agency's assistant director for counterintelligence.

US lawmakers too, are taking notice. Congress is advancing legislation that would put new reporting requirements on former U.S. intelligence officers working overseas.

Congressman Tom Malinowski, a Democrat from New Jersey, said it was "absurd" that Qatar and the UAE had former U.S. officials working the front lines of their information war and said it's part of a broader problem about how influential those wealthy countries are in U.S. politics and policymaking.

"There's so much Gulf money flowing through Washington D.C.," he said. "The amount of temptation there is immense, and it invariably entangles Americans in stuff we should not be entangled."

Graham Dunbar contributed reporting from Geneva. Nomaan Merchant contributed from Washington.

[Click here](#) for the statements provided by representatives of Kevin Chalker in response to questions submitted by The Associated Press for this article.

Milwaukee's 'Dancing Grannies' devastated by parade crash

By TIM SULLIVAN, KATHLEEN FOODY and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

The short skirts. The sparkly pompoms. The sassy hip sways. The grandchildren.

They are the Milwaukee Dancing Grannies, a marching, dancing holiday fixture in Wisconsin for nearly 40 years, and a joyful twist on America's expectations that parades are supposed to feature mainly school-age dance troupes.

But tragedy struck the group when, as they marched down yet another Main Street on Sunday, holiday music blaring around them, three grandmothers were killed.

"Our group was doing what they loved, performing in front of crowds in a parade," the group said in a statement Monday morning. "Putting smiles on faces of all ages, filling them with joy and happiness."

Late Sunday afternoon, the driver of a red SUV roared through a Christmas parade in the suburban Milwaukee town of Waukesha, killing at least five people and leaving 48 injured, according to authorities. Police said he had left the scene of a domestic dispute and didn't appear to know anyone in the parade when he drove into the route.

Not even an hour earlier, the Grannies had called out to fans on their Facebook page.

"Waukesha here we come!!!" the post shouted. "The Grannies are kicking off their holiday parades."

The Dancing Grannies grew out of an exercise class in 1984, with dozens of women, most ranging in age from their mid-50s to mid-70s, cycling in and out of the group over the years. They have only one requirement: You need to be a grandmother.

Police identified those killed as Virginia Sorenson, 79; LeAnna Owen, 71; Tamara Durand, 52; and Wilhelm Hospel, 81. The three women were members of the Grannies, and Hospel reportedly helped the troupe with their shows.

Durand was doing her first show with the Grannies on Sunday, said her husband, Dave Durand, who was not at the parade. She'd seen them perform only once before deciding to join – simply because she found joy in dancing.

"She basically danced her way through life," he said of his wife of eight years, a hospice chaplain and former high school and college cheerleader who was "super excited" for her first performance.

"She was totally energetic and was her happiest when she was dancing," he said.

Tamara Durand was a mother of three with one grandchild. She babysat her grandson so her daughter could finish nursing school, and volunteered at hospitals and hospices.

"She was an Energizer Bunny," who ran every morning no matter the weather, Dave Durand said. And she could never pass up sweets, eating "more sugar than a sugar factory."

Jane Kulich, 52, also died. Local news reports said she worked for a local branch of Citizens Bank, which issued a statement saying an employee "was walking with our parade float" when she was struck and killed. The bank did not identify the employee.

Sorenson, a dance lover who had to give up the hobby years ago after surgery, was the group's long-time choreographer.

"It was like I lost a best friend" when she had to stop dancing, she told WDJT, the Milwaukee CBS affiliate, in an August story about the group. The Grannies brought back that joy. "I love it, and I love the ladies."

David Sorenson, her husband of nearly 60 years, told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about how she loved working with the Grannies.

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"What did she like about it? Everything," Sorenson said. "She liked the instructing. She liked the dancing and the camaraderie of the women. She liked to perform."
And, he said: "She taught me to do the cancan."

Tom Brady tosses 2 TDs, Buccaneers beat Giants 30-10

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Tom Brady stepped up in the pocket to scramble, high-stepped a tackler, slid hard for a first down and got up pumping his arm and screaming.

That's one way to erase the taste of losing.

Brady threw for 307 yards and two touchdowns and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers beat the New York Giants 30-10 on Monday night.

The Super Bowl champion Buccaneers (7-3) snapped a two-game skid as Brady avoided dropping three in a row for the first time since 2002.

"We're at a decent point but we can play a lot better than we've played," Brady said. "Hoping our best football is ahead of us."

Brady started 10 for 10 before misfiring on a deep ball to Mike Evans. On the next play, the 44-year-old scrambled 10 yards on third-and-4 to extend Tampa's drive that ended with Ryan Succop kicking a 25-yard field goal that made it 10-3.

"Eleven-yard run. They don't happen very often so I do remember how far they go," Brady said, unaware it was officially ruled 10 yards.

Rob Gronkowski joked that he was open up the seam for a touchdown on the play.

"He could've just chucked it up but I saw him running and that was pretty dope," Gronkowski said. "That was pretty impressive."

Daniel Jones threw a TD pass to left tackle Andrew Thomas and the Giants (3-7) stayed close for one half before unraveling.

"We have to do a better job of putting our players in position to make plays," Giants coach Joe Judge said. "We have to make sure we sit down (Tuesday) as a coaching staff and understand how we're going to play this game and give our players a chance to make plays."

Down 17-10, the Giants drove to the Buccaneers 25 on the opening drive of the third quarter before Jones, under pressure from Devin White, threw incomplete on fourth-and-1 after rushing to the line to beat the play clock.

Brady then connected with Evans on a 5-yard TD pass to extend the lead to 24-10. Evans set a franchise record with his 72nd touchdown, passing Mike Alstott. He made sure to keep the ball after giving away Brady's 600th TD pass to a fan earlier in the season.

"I'm very proud of that accomplishment. Hopefully I can extend it really far," Evans said. "I'm very proud. A-Train was an unbelievable player. I'm happy to be in the same sentence as him, let alone break his record. It's a blessing."

Jones threw an interception to 310-pound nose tackle Steve McLendon on New York's next possession, but Tampa settled for Succop's 40-yard field goal despite starting at the Giants 37. It was McLendon's first career pick in 12 seasons.

Jones was picked by Mike Edwards in the fourth quarter and Succop hit a 30-yarder to cap the scoring.

Brady finished 30 of 46 with one interception. He improved to 6-1 against the Giants in the regular season but has lost two Super Bowls to New York, including one that prevented New England from a perfect season.

The seven-time Super Bowl champion leads the NFL with 29 TD passes and is second in yards passing with 3,172.

Gronkowski was back in Tampa's lineup after missing five of the previous six games. Brady targeted his buddy eight times, connecting with the four-time All-Pro tight end on six passes for 71 yards.

Star running back Saquon Barkley returned for the Giants after missing four games with a sprained

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ankle but only had 25 yards rushing on six carries.

Jones was sacked twice by a ferocious defense that was missing defensive tackle Vita Vea due to a knee injury.

Brady came out firing, completing his first five passes, including a 13-yard TD toss to Chris Godwin.

The Giants tied it at 10-10 after Evans let a pass bounce off his hands and right to Adoree Jackson, who returned the pick 5 yards to the Buccaneers 10.

Jones lofted a 2-yard TD pass to Thomas, who had to jump as he was backing up to haul it in. The 6-foot-6, 315-pound Thomas, wearing a brace on his right arm, was back after missing four games. He celebrated his first career reception with the rest of the offensive line circling around him.

TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

The Giants have lost 10 straight games in prime time, including contests at Washington and Kansas City this season.

RAZZLE-DAZZLE

After using an offensive lineman as a receiver, the Giants had rookie receiver Kardarius Toney throw a deep pass to Darius Slayton that fell incomplete. Cornerback Sean Murphy-Bunting was initially called for pass interference on the play, but the flag was picked up.

INJURIES

Giants: Toney suffered a quad bruise in the fourth quarter. ... FS Logan Ryan was out because of COVID-19 protocols. ... TE Kyle Rudolph left with an ankle injury in the third quarter.

Buccaneers: LG Ali Marpet left in the second quarter with an oblique strain.

UP NEXT

Giants: Host the Philadelphia Eagles (5-6) on Sunday.

Buccaneers: Visit the Indianapolis Colts (6-5) on Sunday.

Follow Rob Maaddi on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/robmaaddi> and his work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/robmaaddi>

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Bidens open holidays with Christmas tree and 'friendsgiving'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden opened the holiday season at the White House by breaking off a sprig from the official Blue Room tree and giving it — and a big smooch — to her toddler grandson.

"Look how beautiful this is," the first lady said of the 18 1/2-foot (5.6 meter) Fraser fir that was delivered by wagon to her Pennsylvania Avenue doorstep by Clydesdale horses named Ben and Winston.

"It is beautiful. It's magnificent, really," she said Monday.

The first lady later joined President Joe Biden for a visit to the Army's Fort Bragg in North Carolina to celebrate "friendsgiving" with service members and military families.

The two events set off a White House holiday season that is expected to be much more festive this year, as public health officials encourage those vaccinated against COVID-19 to get together in person, instead of begging Americans to stay home, as they've done for holidays past.

The holiday tree was presented by the father-and-son team of Rusty and Beau Estes of Peak Farms in Jefferson, North Carolina — a three-time winner of the National Christmas Tree Association's annual contest. The winner gets to present its official tree to the White House.

Son Hunter Biden, his wife, Melissa, and their toddler, Beau, were among a sizable group of White House aides, guests and others who braved crisp winds to watch the brief ceremony marking the start of the administration's first Christmas in the White House.

The Fraser fir will be decorated in the coming days and displayed in the Blue Room, a tradition that dates back to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, after a chandelier is removed so it can be tethered to the

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ceiling for safety. White House grounds superintendent Dale Haney went to the farm in October to pick out a tree. Peak Farms also supplied the official White House tree in 2008 and 2012.

The White House Christmas decorations will be revealed on the Monday after Thanksgiving, the first lady said.

Jill Biden was joined by a D.C. Army National Guard family to honor the National Guard's role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, her office said. She has been using her new role to help highlight and rally support for military families from across the country through an initiative named Joining Forces.

At Fort Bragg, the meal was held in a large hanger replete with pumpkin and pine cone centerpieces for about 250 servicemembers and families. Jill Biden spoke first, stepping out from behind a table to walk the room, talking to families about their late son, Beau, who served in the Delaware National Guard, and how she understood how hard it was to be away during holidays. She talked about how proud she was of the troops before introducing the president, who echoed her praise.

"You do so much, your families do so much," President Biden said. "You're the finest military the world has ever seen ... and I'm so damn proud to be associated with you."

After a quick prayer from the chaplain, the Bidens walked behind the serving tables, donned gloves and aprons and started dishing out the meal to waiting troops. Jill Biden scooped mashed potatoes, the president the stuffing. The troops were handed chocolate chip cookies with the presidential seal, and the long table was full of food including chocolate cakes.

On Tuesday, the Bidens plan to participate in a to-be-announced local service project before resuming their family tradition of celebrating Thanksgiving on the Massachusetts island of Nantucket. Biden put tradition on hold last fall over COVID-19 concerns and hunkered down over Thanksgiving dinner in Delaware with just his wife, their daughter and their son-in-law.

"Last Thanksgiving, for the first time, it was just the four of us," Biden said earlier this month as he commented on the nation's progress against the coronavirus.

Jaffe reported from Fort Bragg, N.C. Associated Press writer Colleen Long contributed to this report.

Alex Jones, Roger Stone subpoenaed by House Jan. 6 committee

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A committee investigating the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection has issued subpoenas to five more individuals, including former President Donald Trump's ally Roger Stone and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, as lawmakers deepened their probe of the rallies that preceded the deadly attack.

The subpoenas issued Monday include demands for documents and testimony from Stone and Jones as well as three people accused of organizing and promoting the two rallies that took place on Jan. 6.

"The Select Committee is seeking information about the rallies and subsequent march to the Capitol that escalated into a violent mob attacking the Capitol and threatening our democracy," said Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, the Democratic chairman of the panel. "We need to know who organized, planned, paid for, and received funds related to those events, as well as what communications organizers had with officials in the White House and Congress."

The subpoenas are the latest in a wide net the House panel has cast in an effort to investigate the deadly day when a group of Trump's supporters, fueled by his false claims of a stolen election, brutally assaulted police and smashed their way into the Capitol to interrupt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

The committee has already interviewed more than 150 people across government, social media and law enforcement, including some former Trump aides who have been cooperative. The panel has subpoenaed more than 20 witnesses, and most of them, including several associates who helped plan the massive "Stop the Steal" rally the morning of Jan. 6, have signaled they will cooperate.

Stone was convicted in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation of lying to Congress about his efforts to gather inside information about Russia-hacked Democratic emails that were published by

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WikiLeaks in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. He was subsequently pardoned by Trump.

The House subpoena notes that Stone spoke at rallies on the day before the Capitol insurrection and used members of a far-right group, the Oath Keepers, as personal security guards while he was in Washington.

In a statement, Stone said he has yet to see the details of the subpoena but called any allegation of his involvement on that day as "categorically false."

"I have said time and time again that I had no advance knowledge of the events that took place at the Capitol on that day," the conservative provocateur said. "After the subpoena is served and after my counsel reviews the requests, I will make the determination of how I will proceed."

The House panel also wants to hear from Jones, with Thompson saying that the conspiracy theorist and radio personality helped organize the Jan. 6 rally at the Ellipse that preceded the insurrection. The letter from Thompson says that Jones repeatedly promoted Trump's claims of election fraud, urged his listeners to come to Washington for the rally and marched from the Ellipse to the Capitol. Thompson also wrote that Jones "made statements implying that you had knowledge about the plans of President Trump with respect to the rally."

A lawyer who has represented Jones previously did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The other three subpoenas were issued to Dustin Stockton, Jennifer Lawrence and Taylor Budowich for their alleged involvement in the promotion and organization of the series of rallies following the 2020 presidential election that promoted false information regarding the election results, including the Ellipse rally that preceded the violent attack on the Capitol.

Stockton and Lawrence were key leaders of the "Stop the Steal" movement after the election and helped to organize the rally on Jan. 6 that preceded the attack on the Capitol. The couple said they planned to testify and would turn over documents requested by the committee.

Both have disavowed the violence. Stockton said he had previously reached out to the committee to cooperate voluntarily.

"We were shocked and horrified by what happened on the 6th," Lawrence told The Associated Press on Monday. "We need to get to the bottom of what really happened so we can move forward as a country."

Budowich, who now serves as Trump's chief spokesperson, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The results of the election were confirmed by state officials and upheld by the courts. Trump's own attorney general, William Barr, had said the Justice Department found no evidence of widespread fraud that could have overturned the results.

The committee is seeking information from Stockton and his fiance, Lawrence, who they say were involved in organizing some of the rallies. The committee alleges Stockton was concerned enough that the Ellipse rally would lead to "possible danger" that he escalated those concerns to then-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows.

The panel has already demanded documents and testimony from several other Trump advisers — some have cooperated and some have not. Steve Bannon, a longtime ally of Trump, was indicted on Nov. 12 on two counts of criminal contempt of Congress after he defied a subpoena from the House committee. The committee is giving Meadows more time to comply with a subpoena before the panel moves forward with a contempt vote.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker and Nomaan Merchant in Washington and Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

Waukesha parade crash suspect's bail raises questions

By SCOTT BAUER, BERNARD CONDON and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER Associated Press

WAUKESHA, Wis. (AP) — The suspect in a Christmas parade crash in suburban Milwaukee that killed five people was free on \$1,000 bail posted just two days before the deadly event, a fact that is leading to a review of what happened and renewed calls for giving judges more power to set higher bails.

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One pending case against Darrell Brooks Jr. included an allegation that he deliberately hit a woman with his car in early November after a fight. Prosecutors in Milwaukee County on Monday called their bail recommendation "inappropriately low" given the facts of that case and the Sunday crash, and said they would review it.

Julius Kim, a defense attorney and former assistant prosecutor, said the bail could easily have been set more than twice as high.

"He was accused of running over the mother of his kid, and to put it at \$1,000 strikes me as low," Kim said. "It could have been an inexperienced attorney who happened to be reviewing cases that day."

Police said Brooks, 39, was behind the wheel of the SUV that sped through the parade route in Waukesha on Sunday, killing five and injuring 48 others. Waukesha Police Chief Dan Thompson said Brooks was leaving the scene of a domestic dispute that had taken place just minutes earlier.

Brooks has been charged with crimes 16 times since 1999 and had two outstanding cases against him at the time of the parade disaster. That included resisting or obstructing an officer, reckless endangering, disorderly conduct, bail jumping and battery for the Nov. 2 incident.

Thompson said police were going to recommend he face five charges of first degree intentional homicide, which is punishable by life in prison.

Legal experts cautioned that one extreme case should not be reason to push for higher bail amounts that would keep poorer defendants behind bars longer while they await trial.

"We don't want to have a kneejerk reaction here and say 'Let's lock up a lot of people pretrial,'" said John Gross, a law professor at the University of Wisconsin Law School and also director of its Public Defender Project.

"I'm sure the district attorney's office is going to look back at this and ask themselves, 'Did we get this wrong?'" said Gross, the law school professor. "This is such an extreme incident ... could they reasonably expect he would get behind a vehicle and run people down on a parade route? What would have alerted you to the capacity he would have had for this kind of violence?"

Some Republicans were quick to jump on the case as an example of a broken legal system.

Republican Rebecca Kleefisch, a former Wisconsin lieutenant governor who is running for governor in 2022, called the killings "yet another avoidable tragedy that occurred because a violent career criminal was allowed to walk free and terrorize our community."

And Republican state Rep. Cindi Duchow said she was reintroducing a constitutional amendment that would change the bail process in Wisconsin to allow judges to consider a defendant's danger to the community when setting bail. Judges currently are only allowed to consider the possibility that defendants might not show up for a court appearance when setting bail.

"He tried to run over his girlfriend with his car -- that's attempted murder," Duchow said. "If you're a danger to society, you should have to work hard to get out."

Thompson, the police chief, said that there was no evidence the bloodshed Sunday was a terrorist attack or that Brooks knew anyone in the parade. Brooks acted alone, the chief said.

Brooks had left the site of the domestic disturbance before officers arrived, and was not being chased by police at the time of the crash, according to the chief, who gave no further details on the dispute.

Brooks is an aspiring rapper. On a YouTube page, a video that has since been removed showed him rapping in front of a red Ford SUV resembling the one at the parade. The rapper uses the name MathBoi Fly on his Twitter and other social media accounts.

On Sunday, a joyous scene of marching bands and children dancing in Santa hats and waving pompoms gave way in an instant to screams and the sight of crumpled bodies as the SUV sped through barricades and struck dancers, musicians and others in the community of 72,000.

Police identified those killed as Virginia Sorenson, 79; LeAnna Owen, 71; Tamara Durand, 52; Jane Kulich, 52; and Wilhelm Hospel, 81. Sorenson, Owen and Durand were members the Dancing Grannies club, and Hospel helped out with the group.

"It looked like dummies being thrown in the air," said Nicole Schneiter, who was there with her children and grandchildren. "It took a second to register, like, 'Is that what we really just saw?' And then you

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looked in the road and there were just people laying in the road.”

At least nine patients, most of them children, were in critical condition Monday at two hospitals, and seven others were reported in serious condition.

Hundreds gathered at a downtown park Monday night in Waukesha, Wisconsin, for a candlelight vigil in honor of those lost and hurt in a deadly Christmas parade crash a day earlier. A pair of clergy solemnly read the names of those who died. Volunteers handed out sandwiches, hot chocolate, and candles at the vigil, which was attended by interfaith leaders and elected officials.

“We are parents. We are neighbors. We are hurting. We are angry. We are sad. We are confused. We are thankful. We are all in this together. We are Waukesha Strong,” said a tearful Amanda Medina Roddy with the Waukesha school district.

The chief said that police weren’t pursuing Brooks before he entered the parade route, but an officer did fire a shot to try to stop him. The officer stopped firing because of the danger to others. Brooks was not injured.

Mayor Shawn Reilly described the parade as a “Norman Rockwell-type” event that “became a nightmare.”

Bauer reported from Madison, Wis., and Condon reported from New York. Associated Press writers Kathleen Foody in Chicago, Tammy Webber in Fenton, Michigan and Michael Biesecker in Washington contributed.

Bidens open holidays with Christmas tree and ‘friendsgiving’

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden opened the holiday season at the White House on Monday by breaking off a sprig from the official Blue Room tree and giving it — and a big smooch — to her toddler grandson.

“Look how beautiful this is,” the first lady said of the 18 1/2-foot (5.6 meter) Fraser fir that was delivered by wagon to her Pennsylvania Avenue doorstep by Clydesdale horses named Ben and Winston.

“It is beautiful. It’s magnificent, really,” she said.

The first lady later joined President Joe Biden for a visit to the Army’s Fort Bragg in North Carolina to celebrate “friendsgiving” with service members and military families.

The two events set off a White House holiday season that is expected to be much more festive this year, as public health officials encourage those vaccinated against COVID-19 to get together in person, instead of begging Americans to stay home, as they’ve done for holidays past.

The holiday tree was presented by the father-and-son team of Rusty and Beau Estes of Peak Farms in Jefferson, North Carolina — a three-time winner of the National Christmas Tree Association’s annual contest. The winner gets to present its official tree to the White House.

Son Hunter Biden, his wife, Melissa, and their toddler, Beau, were among a sizable group of White House aides, guests and others who braved crisp winds to watch the brief ceremony marking the start of the administration’s first Christmas in the White House.

The Fraser fir will be decorated in the coming days and displayed in the Blue Room, a tradition that dates back to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, after a chandelier is removed so it can be tethered to the ceiling for safety. White House grounds superintendent Dale Haney went to the farm in October to pick out a tree. Peak Farms also supplied the official White House tree in 2008 and 2012.

The White House Christmas decorations will be revealed on the Monday after Thanksgiving, the first lady said.

Jill Biden was joined by a D.C. Army National Guard family to honor the National Guard’s role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, her office said. She has been using her new role to help highlight and rally support for military families from across the country through an initiative named Joining Forces.

At Fort Bragg, the meal was held in a large hanger replete with pumpkin and pine cone centerpieces for about 250 servicemembers and families. Jill Biden spoke first, stepping out from behind a table to walk the room, talking to families about their late son, Beau, who served in the Delaware National Guard, and

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how she understood how hard it was to be away during holidays. She talked about how proud she was of the troops before introducing the president, who echoed her praise.

"You do so much, your families do so much," President Biden said. "You're the finest military the world has ever seen ... and I'm so damn proud to be associated with you."

After a quick prayer from the chaplain, the Bidens walked behind the serving tables, donned gloves and aprons and started dishing out the meal to waiting troops. Jill Biden scooped mashed potatoes, the president the stuffing. The troops were handed chocolate chip cookies with the presidential seal, and the long table was full of food including chocolate cakes.

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"Last Thanksgiving, for the first time, it was just the four of us," Biden said earlier this month as he commented on the nation's progress against the coronavirus.

Jaffe reported from Fort Bragg, N.C. Associated Press writer Colleen Long contributed to this report.

Elizabeth Holmes makes her case to the jury in fraud trial

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Elizabeth Holmes, the one-time medical entrepreneur now charged with building a fraudulent company based on promises of a revolutionary technology, returned to the witness stand Monday.

Her testimony, which focused largely on her enthusiasm based on positive early tests of that blood-testing technology, may be her best shot to avoid conviction on charges of criminal fraud. Prosecutors alleged she duped investors and patients into believing she had invented a breakthrough in blood-testing technology.

Monday's proceedings resumed after a roughly 90-minute delay, with Holmes again at the witness stand wearing a cobalt dress with a black blazer. She spent most of her time describing clinical studies and other records extolling the effectiveness of a small blood-testing device made by Theranos, a startup she founded in 2003 after dropping out of Stanford University at 19.

U.S. District Judge Edward Davila didn't explain why he met with lawyers from both sides of the case behind closed doors while a masked — and befuddled — audience sat in a packed courtroom.

Holmes' latest round of testimony came after her lawyers called her to the stand during the final hour of Friday's proceedings in what has been the most dramatic moment of a high-profile trial that began in early September.

Anticipation of Holmes' return to the stand Monday drew a large crowd outside of the San Jose, California, courthouse where the trial is occurring, with the first person lining up around 1 a.m. PT. The roughly 35 people who got into the small courtroom Monday included one of Holmes' biggest foils — former Wall Street Journal reporter John Carreyrou, who wrote a series of explosive articles starting in October 2015 that triggered Theranos' collapse and the ensuing criminal case.

Responding to friendly questions posed by one of her attorneys gave Holmes a chance to sway the jurors who will determine her fate. If convicted, Holmes, a former billionaire who is now 37, could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.

After being prompted by her attorney to explain some technical terms about blood testing, Holmes looked directly at the jury sitting a few feet to her right and delved into the topic as if she were a teacher addressing her students.

Having shed the mask that she's worn while sitting stoically through trial, Holmes also occasionally smiled as she discussed the studies. She also tried to make eye contact with the 14 jurors, including two alternates, as they walked out during a morning break and later at the conclusion of the day's proceedings.

The studies, conducted with several major pharmaceutical companies from 2008 to 2010, showed the

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third generation of a Therasanos device known as the Edison was delivering mostly encouraging results that gave Holmes reason to believe she and the company were on the road to success.

"Results have been excellent," one report said. Another concluded that the "results have been precise."

Another exchange between Holmes and her attorney, Kevin Downey, underscored the rote tone of Monday's testimony. Prompted by Downey, Holmes explained that she defined a success as something that "has successfully achieved the objective of a program."

The positive reports and Holmes' testimony seemed primarily aimed at providing insight into Holmes' state of mind in an attempt to illuminate why she eventually became so effusive about Therasanos technology, which she promised would be able to scan for hundreds of potential diseases and other health problems with just a few drops of blood taken with a finger prick.

But by 2015, Therasanos' own lab director concluded the company's technology was malfunctioning in ways that produced misleading results that could potentially endanger patients. Therasanos wound up running the tests on traditional blood-testing machines while continuing to raise hundreds of millions of dollars from billionaires and less sophisticated investors.

Other evidence presented at the trial showed Holmes distributed misleading information in 2013 about a purported partnership with Pfizer and other pharmaceutical companies that helped Therasanos raise money.

Having spent only about three hours on the stand so far, Holmes' testimony is expected to eventually delve into more intriguing territory.

Before the trial started, Holmes' lawyers filed documents indicating she intends to blame whatever misconduct that occurred at Therasanos on her former lover and the company's former chief operating officer, Sunny Balwani. Those documents assert that Balwani, who faces a separate criminal trial next year, manipulated Holmes through "intimate partner abuse." Balwani's lawyer has blasted those allegations as baseless.

Holmes' testimony will resume Tuesday morning and is expected to continue into next week.

Alex Jones, Roger Stone subpoenaed by House Jan. 6 committee

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A committee investigating the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection issued subpoenas Monday to five more individuals, including former President Donald Trump's ally Roger Stone and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, as lawmakers deepened their probe of the rallies that preceded the deadly attack.

The subpoenas include demands for documents and testimony from Stone and Jones as well as three people accused of organizing and promoting the two rallies that took place on Jan. 6.

"The Select Committee is seeking information about the rallies and subsequent march to the Capitol that escalated into a violent mob attacking the Capitol and threatening our democracy," said Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, the Democratic chairman of the panel. "We need to know who organized, planned, paid for, and received funds related to those events, as well as what communications organizers had with officials in the White House and Congress."

The subpoenas issued Monday are the latest in a wide net the House panel has cast in an effort to investigate the deadly day when a group of Trump's supporters, fueled by his false claims of a stolen election, brutally assaulted police and smashed their way into the Capitol to interrupt the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

The committee has already interviewed more than 150 people across government, social media and law enforcement, including some former Trump aides who have been cooperative. The panel has subpoenaed more than 20 witnesses, and most of them, including several associates who helped plan the massive "Stop the Steal" rally the morning of Jan. 6, have signaled they will cooperate.

Stone was convicted in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation of lying to Congress about his efforts to gather inside information about Russia-hacked Democratic emails that were published by WikiLeaks in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. He was subsequently pardoned by Trump.

The House subpoena notes that Stone spoke at rallies on the day before the Capitol insurrection and used members of a far-right group, the Oath Keepers, as personal security guards while he was in Washington.

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In a statement, Stone said he has yet to see the details of the subpoena but called any allegation of his involvement on that day as "categorically false."

"I have said time and time again that I had no advance knowledge of the events that took place at the Capitol on that day," the conservative provocateur said. "After the subpoena is served and after my counsel reviews the requests, I will make the determination of how I will proceed."

The House panel also wants to hear from Jones, with Thompson saying that the conspiracy theorist and radio personality helped organize the Jan. 6 rally at the Ellipse that preceded the insurrection. The letter from Thompson says that Jones repeatedly promoted Trump's claims of election fraud, urged his listeners to come to Washington for the rally and marched from the Ellipse to the Capitol. Thompson also wrote that Jones "made statements implying that you had knowledge about the plans of President Trump with respect to the rally."

A lawyer who has represented Jones previously did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The other three subpoenas were issued to Dustin Stockton, Jennifer Lawrence and Taylor Budowich for their alleged involvement in the promotion and organization of the series of rallies following the 2020 presidential election that promoted false information regarding the election results, including the Ellipse rally that preceded the violent attack on the Capitol.

Stockton and Lawrence were key leaders of the "Stop the Steal" movement after the election and helped to organize the rally on Jan. 6 that preceded the attack on the Capitol. The couple said they planned to testify and would turn over documents requested by the committee.

Both have disavowed the violence. Stockton said he had previously reached out to the committee to cooperate voluntarily.

"We were shocked and horrified by what happened on the 6th," Lawrence told The Associated Press on Monday. "We need to get to the bottom of what really happened so we can move forward as a country."

Budowich, who now serves as Trump's chief spokesperson, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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The panel has already demanded documents and testimony from several other Trump advisers — some have cooperated and some have not. Steve Bannon, a longtime ally of Trump, was indicted on Nov. 12 on two counts of criminal contempt of Congress after he defied a subpoena from the House committee. The committee is giving Meadows more time to comply with a subpoena before the panel moves forward with a contempt vote.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker and Nomaan Merchant in Washington and Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

Chief: No evidence parade-crash suspect knew anyone on route

By SCOTT BAUER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER Associated Press

WAUKESHA, Wis. (AP) — The SUV driver who plowed into a Christmas parade in suburban Milwaukee, killing at least five people and injuring 48, was leaving the scene of a domestic dispute that had taken place just minutes earlier, Waukesha's police chief said Monday.

Police Chief Dan Thompson said that there was no evidence the bloodshed Sunday was a terrorist attack or that the suspect, Darrell Brooks Jr., knew anyone in the parade. Brooks acted alone, the chief said.

Brooks, 39, of Milwaukee, had left the site of the domestic disturbance before officers arrived, and was

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not being chased by police at the time of the crash, according to the chief, who gave no further details on the dispute.

Police said they were drawing up five charges of intentional homicide against Brooks.

He has been charged with crimes 16 times since 1999 and had two outstanding cases against him at the time of the parade disaster — including one in which he was accused of deliberately running down a woman with his vehicle.

On Sunday, a joyous scene of marching bands and children dancing in Santa hats and waving pompoms gave way in an instant to screams and the sight of crumpled bodies as the SUV sped through barricades and struck dancers, musicians and others in the community of 72,000.

The dead were identified as four women ages 52 to 79 and an 81-year-old man. Members of a Dancing Grannies club were among those killed, as was a bank employee.

Mayor Shawn Reilly described the parade as a “Norman Rockwell-type” event that “became a nightmare.”

“It looked like dummies being thrown in the air,” said Nicole Schneider, who was there with her children and grandchildren. “It took a second to register, like, ‘Is that what we really just saw?’ And then you looked in the road and there were just people laying in the road.”

At least nine patients, most of them children, were listed in critical condition at two hospitals, and seven others were reported in serious condition.

Hundreds gathered at a downtown park Monday night for a candlelight vigil to honor those lost and hurt. Volunteers handed out sandwiches, hot chocolate and candles at the vigil, which was attended by interfaith leaders and elected officials.

“We are parents. We are neighbors. We are hurting. We are angry. We are sad. We are confused. We are thankful. We are all in this together. We are Waukesha Strong,” said a tearful Amanda Medina Roddy with the Waukesha school district.

The chief said that while police were not pursuing Brooks before he entered the parade route, an officer did fire a shot to try to stop him but ceased shooting because of the danger to others. Brooks was not injured.

Brooks has two open criminal cases in Milwaukee County. In one case, filed Nov. 5, he is charged with resisting or obstructing an officer, reckless endangering, disorderly conduct, bail jumping and battery. Records show his \$1,000 cash bond was posted on Friday.

In that case, a woman told police that Brooks deliberately ran her over with his vehicle in a gas station parking lot after a fight. She was hospitalized for her injuries.

In the other case, filed in July 2020, Brooks is charged with reckless endangering and illegal possession of a firearm.

His attorney in those cases, Joseph Domask, said he was not representing him in the parade crash.

The Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office said prosecutors’ \$1,000 bail recommendation for Brooks was “inappropriately low,” given the charges. The DA’s office said it is investigating the matter.

Republican Rebecca Kleefisch, a former Wisconsin lieutenant governor who is running for governor in 2022, called the killings “yet another avoidable tragedy that occurred because a violent career criminal was allowed to walk free and terrorize our community.”

Brooks is an aspiring rapper. On a YouTube page, a video that has since been removed showed him rapping in front of a red Ford SUV resembling the one at the parade. The rapper uses the name MathBoi Fly on his Twitter and other social media accounts.

The horror of the crash was recorded by the city’s livestream and onlookers’ cellphones. One video shows the moment the SUV broke through the barricades and includes the apparent sound of gunfire.

“It was like a war scene walking through there” afterward, said Ken Walter, who had been riding in the parade in a hot air balloon basket towed on a trailer along with his wife and youngest son. “There were these piles of blankets with cops standing over them that you just knew were bodies.”

Walter said he saw a red SUV careen into view and watched it hit a member of his real estate-agency parade contingent, then barrel straight into members of the Waukesha South High School marching band.

The SUV continued down the parade route. Behind it, people were screaming, running, searching for family and friends and unsure whether they were still in danger, he recalled.

Schneider said that after sheltering in a store, she emerged to see bodies in the street, along with strollers, chairs, candy and shoes.

Police identified those killed as Virginia Sorenson, 79; LeAnna Owen, 71; Tamara Durand, 52; Jane Kulich, 52; and Wilhelm Hospel, 81.

The Milwaukee Dancing Grannies posted on its Facebook page that its members were "doing what they loved, performing in front of crowds in a parade, putting smiles on faces of all ages, filling them with joy and happiness."

Eighteen children ages 3 to 16 were brought to Children's Wisconsin Hospital, including three sets of siblings, said Dr. Amy Drendel, medical director of the emergency department.

They suffered injuries ranging from scrapes on their faces to broken bones and serious head injuries, she said. Six were listed in critical condition.

The Waukesha school district canceled classes Monday and Tuesday and said extra counselors would be on hand for students and staff. The parade's lineup included cheer, dance and band entries associated with district schools.

The parade, held each year on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. This year's parade was the 59th one.

Waukesha is about 55 miles (90 kilometers) from Kenosha, where Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted Friday of all charges in the shooting deaths of two men and the wounding of a third during unrest there in 2020.

This story has been corrected to show that online court records indicate a Darrell Brooks Jr. faces charges in another case that include second-degree recklessly endangering safety and that bail in a previous case was \$1,000, not \$500.

Bauer reported from Madison, Wis., and Balsamo reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Doug Glass in Minneapolis, Kathleen Foody in Chicago, Tammy Webber in Fenton, Michigan, Bernard Condon in New York and Michael Biesecker in Washington contributed.

Attorneys make final case to jurors in Ahmaud Arbery's death

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — Attorneys made a final push Monday to persuade the jury in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, with the prosecution saying that three white men chased him solely "because he was a Black man running down the street" and defense attorneys repeatedly blaming Arbery for his own death.

In closing arguments, a defense attorney for the man who fired the fatal gunshots said the 25-year-old Arbery was killed as he violently resisted a legal effort to detain him to answer questions about burglaries in a neighborhood just outside the port city of Brunswick, Georgia.

"It is absolutely, horrifically tragic that this has happened," attorney Jason Sheffield said. "This is where the law is intertwined with heartache and tragedy. You are allowed to defend yourself."

The attorneys made their appeals to the disproportionately white jury after 10 days of testimony that concluded last week. Closing arguments were to resume Tuesday. Prosecutors will get the final word because they carry the burden of proving their case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Arbery's killing became part of a larger national reckoning on racial injustice after a graphic video of his death leaked online two months later. Though prosecutors did not argue that racism motivated the killing, federal authorities have charged all three men with hate crimes, alleging that they chased and killed Arbery because he was Black.

Father and son Greg and Travis McMichael grabbed guns and pursued Arbery in a pickup truck after spotting him running through their subdivision on Feb. 23, 2020. A neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, joined the chase and recorded the video of Travis McMichael opening fire as Arbery threw punches and

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grabbed for his shotgun.

No one was charged in the killing until Bryan's video leaked and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case from local police. All three men are charged with murder and other offenses.

Prosecutor Linda Dunikoski told the jury the defendants had no evidence Arbery committed crimes but instead acted on assumptions based on neighborhood gossip and speculative social media posts.

"They made the decision to attack Ahmaud Arbery in their driveways because he was a Black man running down the street," Dunikoski said. She added: "They shot and killed him. Not because he was a threat to them but because he wouldn't stop and talk to them."

Defense attorneys say the men suspected Arbery had burglarized a house under construction and intended to hold him until police arrived. Security cameras recorded Arbery inside the house five times, but none of the videos showed him stealing or damaging anything.

Dunikoski said the McMichaels and Bryan chased Arbery for five minutes, using their trucks to cut him off, run him off the road and otherwise prevent him from fleeing. She repeated Greg Michael's words to local police after the shooting that Arbery was "trapped like a rat."

Bryan recorded Travis McMichael standing with a shotgun outside the driver's side door of his idling truck when Arbery approached on foot, then ran around the passenger side. They met in front of the truck, which blocked the camera's view, when Travis McMichael fired the first of three shotgun blasts. The video shows Arbery punching him and grabbing for the gun as two more shots are fired, then Arbery turns to try to run again before falling facedown in the street.

"He chose to fight," said Laura Hogue, an attorney for Greg McMichael. She said Arbery decided "without any sense of reason to run at a man wielding a shotgun, leaving him with no other alternative but to be placed in a position to kill him."

Referring to a smiling photo of Arbery the jury had been shown at the trial, Hogue told panel: "A beautiful teenager with a broad smile in a crooked baseball cap can go astray ... And years later he can end up creeping into a home that's not his own, and run away instead of facing the consequences."

Bryan's attorney, Kevin Gough, suggested Arbery should have cried for help if he was being chased unjustly.

"Why isn't he calling out, 'Hey, somebody call 911! There's crazy people after me,'" Gough said. "Maybe that's because Mr. Arbery doesn't want help."

Gough said Bryan did not know the McMichaels had guns until moments before the shooting. He suggested a higher power guided Bryan to join the pursuit so he could record the shooting on his phone.

"You can call it karma. You can call it fate. I would call it divine providence," Gough said. "Somebody is guiding Mr. Bryan, whether it's a conscious thought process or not. Something is guiding Mr. Bryan down this street to document what's going on."

Sheffield, who represents Travis McMichael, said his client never wanted to shoot Arbery but was forced to make a life-or-death decision when Arbery charged at him in front of the truck.

He said residents of Satilla Shores were already nervous amid reports of thefts and suspicious people in the neighborhood. He said Arbery's frequent visits to the unfinished home made it reasonable to suspect he had stolen items from a boat the home's owner kept in the doorless garage a short time before he installed the cameras.

Dunikoski noted that Arbery never threatened the McMichaels during the chase, and he carried no weapons.

"You can't bring a gun to a fistfight. It's unfair, right?" the prosecutor said.

She said it was Travis McMichael who attacked Arbery — first with his truck, then by pointing a shotgun at him as Arbery ran toward him.

"They can't claim self-defense under the law because they were the initial, unjustified aggressors," Dunikoski said, "and they started this."

Arbery had enrolled at a technical college and was preparing to study to become an electrician like his uncles when he was killed.

Police tie car used in Young Dolph's killing to 2nd shooting

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Police in Tennessee have tied a car used in the killing of rapper Young Dolph to a shooting that left a woman dead and wounded another person days before the ambush on the hip-hop artist, authorities said Monday.

Two men exited a white Mercedes-Benz and fired shots into a Memphis bakery where Young Dolph was buying cookies Wednesday and killed him, Memphis police said. Police have released photos taken from surveillance video that captured the shooting, but no suspect information has been released and no arrests have been made.

The same car was used in a Nov. 12 shooting in the city of Covington, located about 40 miles (64 kilometers) north of Memphis, Capt. Jack Howell of the Covington Police Department told The Associated Press.

Howell said the Mercedes followed another vehicle out of a nighttime high school football game. At an intersection, two people got out of the Mercedes and fired about 40 rounds from high-powered rifles into the other car, Howell said.

Two women were shot. One woman died of her wounds, and the other woman remains hospitalized, Howell said. Covington police are working with Memphis authorities and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation on the search for the suspects, who are believed to be from the Memphis area, Howell said.

Evidence found in the Mercedes when it was located in a Memphis neighborhood Saturday tied the car to both shootings, Howell said.

"The car connected with our shooting is also connected with the shooting in Memphis regarding the rapper," Howell said.

Young Dolph, whose real name was Adolph Johnston Jr., had been in his hometown of Memphis to participate in Thanksgiving turkey giveaways and visit a cancer center. Friends and associates handed out turkeys, stuffing mix and cranberry sauce at a Memphis church Friday, an event the 36-year-old rapper helped organize and was supposed to attend.

Young Dolph was shot at Makeda's Cookies, a beloved, family-owned bakery known for its tasty butter cookies and banana pudding. The bakery was a favorite of the rapper, who regularly visited it when he was in the city.

The store where he was shot, which is near Memphis International Airport, remained boarded up and could be closed for the rest of the year, the bakery's management has said.

A second location in downtown Memphis reopened to customers Monday. More than \$85,000 has been donated online in support of the bakery, which is named after a 6-year-old girl who died of cancer.

Fans of the cookie shop, which also sells its products in grocery stores and caters events, say it is an important part of the community.

Julian Boyd, a co-owner of D'Bos Wings N More restaurant, said the Black-owned bakery was popular among celebrities and regular folks alike.

"As a community, we have to do a better job of loving and supporting our Black-owned businesses instead of inflicting violence in them," Boyd said. "All of the attention that this beautiful Black-owned business is getting is going to be directly related with gun violence. That's terrible."

Fernando González, AP head of Caribbean news, dies in Cuba

By JOHN RICE Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Fernando González, who spent decades covering and directing major stories for The Associated Press across Latin America, from papal visits to border skirmishes, hurricanes and hostage standoffs, has died in Havana.

González, 60, died at his home early Monday after suffering a heart attack, Cuba's forensic medicine director said.

Gregarious and seemingly inexhaustible, González, known for his trademark long gray ponytail, was

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especially strong and compassionate in crisis situations, both covering the news and tirelessly organizing help when colleagues were ill or injured.

"Fernando represented the best of AP. He was a terrific journalist and loved the big stories," said AP Executive Editor Julie Pace. "He was also a warm and caring colleague, someone whose impact was felt across all corners of the organization. He will be dearly missed."

Born in Uruguay, González graduated from high school in Santiago, Chile, and then attended the University of Miami. He worked for a local radio station before eventually moving into news production, often freelancing for The Associated Press in Latin America.

González joined the AP full time in 2002 as senior producer for television news in Havana. He moved to Washington, D.C., in 2014 as regional video editor for Latin America and the Caribbean and then to Mexico City as the AP's deputy news director for the region in 2016. González returned to Cuba in 2020 as news director for the Caribbean and Andes.

Among the major stories he covered were the 1996 hostage siege at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru, Hurricane Mitch's devastating impact on Central America in 1998, and the 2004 coup that overthrew Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In 2007 González reported from Antarctica on the visit of U.N Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

González also covered three papal trips to Cuba by St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, as well as President Barack Obama's historic visit in 2016 and the death of former Cuban President Fidel Castro later that year.

Anita Snow, who reopened AP's Havana bureau in 1999 after a nearly 30-year absence, praised González as "a great journalist," calling him, "an even better human being: warm, generous and consistently kind."

"And he probably knew Latin America better than anyone," said Snow, who worked with González in Cuba and Mexico. She is currently an AP writer in Phoenix.

Chris Gillette, senior video producer for the AP in Brazil and a high school classmate of González, agreed.

"He was a really good people person, and very charming, so he was able to get into places others might find challenging — a true raconteur, amiable and smart," Gillette said.

Nico Maounis, head of special news events for AP's broadcast services, recalled Gonzalez as the consummate deal broker, gaining the AP access to everyone from presidents and other high officials to the simple man on the street.

"What was he like as a person? He was outgoing, he was cosmopolitan, he was funny, he was a diplomat, he was serious, a comic and a joker. He was everything," Maounis said.

Longtime AP photographer Enric Marti summed up González's compassion for those less fortunate, noting how he continued to patronize his favorite Mexico City restaurant, Lucille, even during the pandemic when others stayed away, tipping the waiters handsomely.

"He kept going and raised money for the waiters. ... They basically had no tips and no money," said Marti, AP's deputy director of photography/global enterprise. "Whenever I was in town we would meet in Lucille. It was Fernando's bar."

González is survived by his wife Lisa, children Maria Linda and Nicolas, and three grandchildren, as well as his parents.

Trump-backed Parnell loses custody battle, suspends campaign

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Sean Parnell, the candidate endorsed by former President Donald Trump for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania, on Monday suspended his campaign after he lost a court fight over custody of his three children in which the judge said he believed allegations of abuse by Parnell's estranged wife.

In a statement, Parnell said he was devastated by the judge's decision, and planned to ask the judge to reconsider, but that he cannot continue his campaign.

The high-stakes campaign in the battleground state could help determine control of the U.S. Senate in next year's election.

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The decision by a judge in Butler County came two weeks after Parnell took the stand to deny allegations by his estranged wife that he had hurt her and the children.

The judge, James Arner, wrote in an order Monday that Parnell's estranged wife, Laurie Snell, will have sole legal custody of the school-age children, as well as primary physical custody. Parnell will have physical custody on three weekends per month, Arner wrote.

Snell was "the more credible witness," Arner summed up in his 16-page opinion, saying she could remember and describe details in a convincing manner.

Pennsylvania's Senate seat is opening up with the retirement of two-term Republican Sen. Pat Toomey, and both Republicans and Democrats have a big field of candidates in the politically divided state.

Parnell's withdrawal comes as many in the state Republican Party remain undecided about their field, which includes conservative commentator Kathy Barnette, real estate investor Jeff Bartos and Carla Sands, Trump's ambassador to Denmark.

Also swirling is a suggestion from Mehmet Oz — the cardiac surgeon and longtime host of TV's "Dr. Oz Show" who gained fame as a protege of Oprah Winfrey — that he is being encouraged to enter the Republican primary.

Parnell's withdrawal represents a major blow to Trump, who had enthusiastically endorsed Parnell in September with the encouragement of his eldest son.

Trump spokesperson Taylor Budowich said Trump and Parnell spoke before Parnell's announcement and that Parnell informed Trump of his intention to suspend his campaign, given the decision.

He said on Twitter that the Pennsylvania Senate race "remains a top priority" for the former president and that "rallying our movement behind the best America 1st candidate remains critical."

Parnell's candidacy was a constant presence in the custody case, with the judge noting in his opinion that Parnell argued that Snell "is motivated to embarrass him in public and damage his political career," while Snell argued that Parnell "is motivated to preserve a public image and his political career."

Snell testified about enduring years of rage and abuse from Parnell, including once when he choked her so hard she had to bite him to get free and another time when he slapped one of their children hard enough to leave welts through the back of the child's shirt.

Parnell's testimony, rather, he found "less credible," saying Parnell was "somewhat evasive" and simply denied Snell's allegations.

"Upon consideration of the credible evidence, I find that Sean Parnell did commit some acts of abuse in the past" against Snell, Arner wrote. He also believed that Parnell slapped the child, as Snell testified, Arner wrote.

But, he wrote, Snell having agreed previously that Parnell can have substantial periods of unsupervised custody indicates that she does not view him as posing harm to the children, Arner wrote.

Snell's lawyer, Jen Gilliland Vanasdale, said Snell "is grateful that justice prevailed."

Testifying under oath on Nov. 8, Parnell denied Snell's allegations, saying he had never choked her or pinned her down, and never struck one of their children in a fit of rage.

Snell and Parnell have been living apart for at least three years, but had split custody of their children evenly.

Parnell's history with his wife became a subject in the Republican primary campaign, days after Trump's endorsement.

Parnell, a decorated former Army Ranger who led a platoon in Afghanistan, penned a memoir of his service, which became a New York Times bestseller. He also has written four action novels, and emerged as a regular guest on Fox News programs before running for Congress last year and landing a coveted speaking slot at the Republican National Convention.

Trump's endorsement came in early September, as Parnell was an in-demand guest on cable TV and conservative podcasts to discuss the Taliban's seizing control of Afghanistan ahead of the withdrawal of American forces.

Even amid headlines about the custody case, Trump had backed up his support for Parnell by scheduling

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a fundraiser with Donald Trump Jr. on Jan. 25 at Trump's Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida.

Trump allies have privately warned that his haphazard endorsement process — often driven more by a thirst for revenge or flattery than strategic considerations about who is best positioned to win a general election — could create headaches for him down the line.

Trump takes great pride in his endorsement record, seeing it as a proxy of his political strength, and some aides have counseled him to be more judicious in his picks.

In addition to Parnell, Trump has endorsed several other candidates who have faced allegations of assaulting women, including former White House staffer Max Miller. Miller has denied the charges.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report. Follow Marc Levy on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/timelywriter>.

Ethiopia PM says he will lead army 'from the battlefield'

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's Nobel Peace Prize-winning prime minister says he will lead his country's army "from the battlefield" beginning Tuesday, a dramatic new step in a devastating yearlong war.

"This is a time when leading a country with martyrdom is needed," Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said in a statement posted on social media Monday night. With rival Tigray forces moving closer to the capital of Addis Ababa, his government declared a state of emergency earlier this month.

An estimated tens of thousands of people have been killed in the war between Ethiopian and allied forces and fighters from the country's northern Tigray region, who long dominated the national government before Abiy took office. The United States and others have warned that Africa's second-most populous country could fracture and destabilize the Horn of Africa.

The statement by the prime minister, a former soldier, did not say where exactly he will go Tuesday. His spokeswoman, Billene Seyoum, did not respond to a request for comment.

"Let's meet at the battlefield," the 45-year-old prime minister said.

In response, the spokesman for the Tigray forces Getachew Reda tweeted that "our forces won't relent on their inexorable advance towards bringing (Abiy's) chokehold on our people to an end." The Tigray forces say they are pressuring Ethiopia's government to lift a months-long blockade of the Tigray region of some 6 million people, but they also want Abiy out of power.

The prime minister's statement also claimed that the West is trying to defeat Ethiopia, the latest pushback against what his government has described as meddling by the international community. Envoys from the African Union and the U.S. have continued diplomatic efforts in pursuit of a ceasefire to the fighting and talks without preconditions on a political solution.

Shortly after Abiy's announcement, a senior State Department official told reporters the U.S. still believes "a small window of opportunity exists" in the mediation efforts.

In a year's time, Abiy's government has gone from describing the Tigray conflict as a "law enforcement operation" to an "existential war." With Ethiopia's military reportedly weakened in recent months, and with its retreat from Tigray in June, ethnic-based regional forces have been stepping up and Abiy's government has called on all able citizens to join the fight.

The prime minister chaired an executive meeting Monday of the ruling Prosperity Party, and Defense Minister Abraham Belay told state media that "all security forces will start taking special measures and tactics as of tomorrow." He declined to elaborate.

Abiy's announcement brought shock from the man who nominated him for the Nobel, Awol Allo, a senior lecturer in law at Keele University in Britain. "The announcement is replete with languages of martyrdom and sacrifice," he said in a tweet. "This is so extraordinary and unprecedented, shows how desperate the situation is."

The prime minister in his 2019 Nobel acceptance speech spoke passionately about war: "I crawled my way to peace through the dusty trenches of war years ago. ... I witnessed firsthand the ugliness of war

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in frontline battles. ... War is the epitome of hell for all involved. I know because I have been there and back.”

Abiy was awarded the Nobel for making peace with neighboring Eritrea, on whose border he fought while stationed in the Tigray region.

The terms of that peace deal have never been made public. Critics of the current conflict allege that the deal was instead an agreement for the two countries to wage war on the Tigray leaders, who were unpopular among many Ethiopians for their repressive 27-year rule despite significant development gains.

Eritrean soldiers have been blamed for some of the worst atrocities in the war, even as Abiy denied for months that they were inside Tigray.

Biden to keep Powell as Fed chair, Brainard gets vice chair

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday he is nominating Jerome Powell for a second four-year term as Federal Reserve chair, endorsing his stewardship of the economy through a brutal pandemic recession in which the Fed’s ultra-low rate policies helped bolster confidence and revitalize the job market.

Biden also said he would nominate as vice chair Lael Brainard, the lone Democrat on the Fed’s Board of Governors and the preferred alternative to Powell among many progressives.

His decision strikes a note of continuity and bipartisanship at a time when surging inflation is burdening households and raising risks to the economy’s recovery. In backing Powell, a Republican who was elevated to his post by President Donald Trump, Biden brushed aside complaints from progressives that the Fed has weakened bank regulation and has been slow to take account of climate change in its supervision of banks.

“When our country was hemorrhaging jobs last year, and there was panic in our financial markets, Jay’s steady and decisive leadership helped to stabilize markets and put our economy on track to a robust recovery,” Biden said, using Powell’s nickname.

In a second term that begins in February, Powell would face a difficult and high-risk balancing act: Inflation has reached a three-decade high, causing hardships for millions of families, clouding the recovery and undercutting the Fed’s mandate to keep prices stable. But with the economy still 4 million-plus jobs shy of its pre-pandemic level, the Fed has yet to meet its other mandate of maximizing employment.

Next year, the Fed is widely expected to begin raising its benchmark interest rate, with financial markets pricing in at least two increases. If it moves too slowly to raise rates, inflation may accelerate further and force the central bank to take more draconian steps later to rein it in, potentially causing a recession. Yet if the Fed hikes rates too quickly, it could choke off hiring and the recovery.

If confirmed, Powell would remain one of the world’s most powerful economic officials. By either raising or lowering its short-term interest rate, the Fed seeks to either cool or stimulate growth and hiring, and to keep prices stable. Its efforts to direct the U.S. economy, the largest in the world, typically have global consequences.

The Fed’s benchmark rate, which has been pegged near zero since the pandemic hammered the economy in March 2020, influences a wide range of consumer and business borrowing costs, including for mortgages and credit cards. The Fed also oversees the nation’s largest banks.

For months Powell was the favorite to be reappointed, but a vigorous campaign by environmental and public interest groups in support of Brainard clouded the picture in recent weeks. Critics, including Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Massachusetts, argued Powell had loosened bank regulations that were put in place after the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

And two other senators expressed opposition to Powell last week because they said he was insufficiently committed to using the Fed’s regulatory tools to combat global warming.

Brainard, meanwhile, cast 20 dissenting votes against financial rule changes in the past four years. In March 2020, she opposed a regulatory change that she said would reduce the amount of reserves large

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banks were required to hold to guard against losses. She has also spoken more forcefully than Powell on ways the Fed can confront global warming.

Biden sought to assuage those concerns. He said Powell had committed to making climate change "a top priority" and had agreed to make sure "that our financial regulations are staying ahead of emerging risks."

"Jay, along with the other members of the Fed Board that I will nominate must ensure that we never again expose our economy and American families to those kinds of risks," he said at the White House, referring to the 2008 financial crisis.

Biden still has the opportunity to fill three more positions on the Fed's Board of Governors, including the vice chair for supervision, a top bank regulatory post. Those positions will be filled in early December, Biden said.

Biden acknowledged that some Democrats encouraged him to pick a new Fed chair, for a "fresh start." But he said he wanted to go in a different direction.

"We need stability and independence at the Federal Reserve," he said. "I believe Fed leadership with broad and bipartisan is important, especially now, in such a politically divided nation."

Biden praised Powell for his efforts to achieve maximum employment, but did not press him on inflation, which has emerged as the biggest economic threat to his administration. Biden said the U.S. economy is in the midst of a "historic recovery" that gives the Fed an opportunity to "attack inflation from a position of strength, not weakness."

Powell said "we know that high inflation takes a toll on families, especially those less able to meet the higher costs of essentials, like food, housing and transportation." He pledged to use the Fed's tools — principally raising interest rates — "to prevent higher inflation from becoming entrenched."

Powell's renomination is widely expected to be approved by the Senate Banking Committee and then the full Senate.

Some liberal Democrats such as Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, chair of the Banking Committee, have endorsed Powell, as have moderate Democrats, including Sen. Jon Tester of Montana. He was also endorsed by Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pennsylvania, the senior Republican on the panel, and will likely receive widespread support from Republicans.

Wall Street cheered the renomination, with stock prices rallying and measures of fear in the market easing immediately after the announcement. The S&P 500 is on pace to close at another record.

The 68-year-old lawyer was nominated for the Fed's Board of Governors in 2011 by President Barack Obama after a lucrative career in private equity and having served in a number of federal government roles.

Unlike his three immediate predecessors, Powell lacks a Ph.D. in economics. Yet he has earned generally high marks for managing perhaps the most important financial position in the world, especially in his response to the coronavirus-induced recession.

Still, the spike in inflation has forced the Powell Fed to dial back its economic stimulus sooner than envisioned. At its latest meeting in early November, the central bank said it would start reducing this month its \$120 billion monthly bond purchases and likely end them by mid-2022. Those purchases have been intended to keep longer-term borrowing costs low to spur borrowing and spending.

For months, Powell characterized inflation as "transitory," but more recently, he conceded that higher prices have persisted longer than expected. At a news conference this month, Powell acknowledged that high inflation could last into late summer 2022.

Brainard's elevation to the Fed's No. 2 position follows the key role she played in the Fed's emergency response to the pandemic recession. She is part of a "troika" of top policymakers that includes Powell and Richard Clarida, whom she will replace as vice chair in February.

Brainard was an architect of the Fed's new policy framework, adopted in August 2020, under which it said it would no longer raise rates simply because the unemployment rate had fallen to a low level that could spur inflation. Instead, the Fed said it would await actual evidence that prices are rising.

Brainard also was key in the Fed's redefinition of its maximum employment goal as "broad and inclusive," taking into account the unemployment rate for Blacks and other groups and not just for Americans

as a whole in policy decisions.

She has also spoken about ways the Fed could more directly take account of climate change in bank supervision. Many environmental groups say loans to oil and gas companies, as well as to commercial real estate developers, could default and cause large losses at banks, should environmental damage worsen or renewable energy provide a greater share of power generation.

"Climate change," she said, "is projected to have profound effects on the economy and the financial system, and it is already inflicting damage."

Associated Press Writer Josh Boak contributed.

Former Netanyahu aide testifies in ex-PM's corruption trial

JERUSALEM (AP) — A ex-aide to Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday took the stand in the former Israeli prime minister's corruption trial, describing his boss as a "control freak" who was obsessed with the way he and his family were portrayed in the media.

Nir Hefetz, a former spokesman for Netanyahu, is a key prosecution witness expected to deliver critical testimony in the trial, which revolves around accusations that Netanyahu committed fraud, breach of trust and accepted bribes. The former premier, now opposition leader, denies any wrongdoing.

Hefetz left a long career in journalism in 2009 to work as a spokesman for Netanyahu's government, and in 2014 became the Netanyahu family's spokesman and adviser. In 2018, after he was arrested in connection with one of Netanyahu's corruption cases, Hefetz signed a state's witness deal and provided investigators with recordings of conversations with Netanyahu and his family.

His testimony was delayed by a week after Netanyahu's defense attorneys requested time to review new evidence. The information presented last week alleged that Netanyahu's wife, Sara, had accepted an expensive bracelet as a gift from two billionaire friends, Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan and Australian billionaire James Packer.

Netanyahu appeared in the Jerusalem District Court Monday morning flanked by fellow Likud party politicians. Hours later, he was given permission to leave the court before the testimony ended.

Netanyahu is charged in three separate cases. The first alleges that Netanyahu received gifts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars from wealthy friends, including Milchan and Packer.

In the second case, Netanyahu is accused of orchestrating positive coverage in a major Israeli paper in exchange for promoting legislation that would have harmed the news outlet's chief rival, a free pro-Netanyahu daily.

The third, nicknamed Case 4000, alleges that Netanyahu promoted legislation worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the owner of Israeli telecom giant Bezeq in exchange for positive coverage on its Walla news site.

In his opening testimony, Hefetz said that Netanyahu was a "control freak" when it came to his public image.

"Netanyahu spends at least as much as his time on media as he spends on security matters, including on matters an outsider would consider nonsense," Hefetz said.

He also described being the main envoy between Netanyahu and Bezeq owner Shaul Elovitch, and said that Elovitch's wife, Iris, personally took control over the news site.

"Netanyahu had the greatest control over the Walla website, including what the headline would be, where it would be on the home page," he said. "I thought the Elovitches were doing a good job."

Hefetz spent most of the day on the stand before the session ended late in the afternoon. His testimony is expected to continue for weeks or even months.

The former prime minister was indicted in 2019, repeatedly rejecting calls to step down. He has accused law enforcement, the media and courts of launching a "witch hunt" against him.

His trial formally began in 2020, while the country was embroiled in a two-year-long political crisis that saw four elections end in deadlock over Netanyahu's leadership and indictment. The trial is expected to

take years.

Earlier this year, Netanyahu and his long-ruling Likud party were ousted from power after a coalition united in their opposition to the long-serving prime minister formed a government.

Target to keep stores closed on Thanksgiving for good

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Target will no longer open its stores on Thanksgiving Day, making permanent a shift to the unofficial start of the holiday season that was suspended during the pandemic.

To limit crowds in stores, retailers last year were forced to turn what had become a weekend shopping blitz into an extended event, with big holiday discounts beginning as early as October.

That forced shift appears to have been fortuitous.

U.S. holiday sales last November and December rose 8.2% in 2020 from the previous year, according to The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group. The trade group predicts 2021 could shatter that record, growing between 8.5% and 10.5%.

Americans, able to get the same offers over a broader timespan and relieved from some of the stresses that go hand in hand with the holidays, appeared to embrace the change, which has also resonated with workers, Target said.

"What started as a temporary measure driven by the pandemic is now our new standard — one that recognizes our ability to deliver on our guests' holiday wishes both within and well beyond store hours," Target CEO Brian Cornell wrote in a note to employees. "You don't have to wonder whether this is the last Thanksgiving you'll spend with family and friends for a while, because Thanksgiving store hours are one thing we won't 'get back to' when the pandemic finally subsides."

Target is the first major retailer to make such a permanent move during the pandemic, and its decision could push other retailers to follow in its path, says Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics a retail research firm. He believes retailers are also looking at whether it's worth spending money on labor and other costs to open on Thanksgiving when shoppers are turning more to online shopping and away from physical stores.

"With all these online shopping opportunities, is it really necessary to open on Thanksgiving?" Perkins said.

Macy's, which will not open its stores on Thanksgiving for the second year in a row, said that its curbside pickup service will be available at select locations. It also noted that it hasn't announced future plans but "we lean into what our customers as well as colleagues tell us is important to them on these decisions."

Kohl's and Walmart will also be closed on Thursday, but Walmart said it hasn't made a decision yet on the future of Thanksgiving Day store shopping; Kohl's declined to comment.

Target said that distribution and call centers will have some staff on Thanksgiving, and they will collect holiday pay.

The holiday shopping season started to creep into Thanksgiving Day 20 years ago when retailers began kicking off sales into the wee hours of the morning on Black Friday. Ten years later, Target and other major stores opened their doors on the holiday itself, creating a new shopping tradition.

Many did so to compete with Amazon and other rising online threats. At its peak five years ago, about 25 chain stores ushered in crowds at its physical stores on Thanksgiving, according to Julie Ramhold, consumer analyst with DealNews.com.

But the shift seemed to merely cannibalize Black Friday sale, with big crowds showing up for door buster deals on Thanksgiving. The shopping event was diluted further when stores began marketing Black Friday deals for the entire holiday week and then later for the entire month of November.

Big retailers suffered blowback from critics who said thousands of people were forced to work rather than being with family during the holiday. Crowds started to also diminish for Thanksgiving Day in recent years, too, and the number of retail chains and malls, including Mall of America in Minnesota, stopped the practice. That whittled the number of stores open on the holiday down to well under 20 major chains, excluding pharmacies and grocers that remain open for a least for a few hours.

Some, like Costco and Nordstrom, never opened their doors during the holiday, saying they wanted to respect the holiday.

Thanksgiving had historically not been a big sales day; it never makes it into the top 10 because stores usually opened their doors around 5 p.m.

However, it's been a big online shopping day. For the past two years, the holiday trailed only Cyber Monday and Black Friday in online sales, according to the Adobe Digital Economy Index.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

Is travel safe during the pandemic this holiday season?

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

Is travel safe during the pandemic this holiday season?

It depends. It can be safe if you're fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but officials say people who haven't gotten the shots should delay travel.

Regardless of vaccination status, all travelers should keep taking precautions like avoiding indoor, unmasked crowds, says Dr. Keith Armitage, an infectious disease expert at Case Western Reserve University.

"The delta variant has really brought us back to an earlier time in the pandemic," he says.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says not to travel if you're sick, or if you tested positive for COVID-19 and your isolation period isn't over yet — even if you're fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated people who decide to travel should get a COVID-19 test one to three days before travel and three to five days after returning.

All travelers must still wear masks on trains, planes and other indoor public transportation areas, the agency says.

Airlines say plane cabins are low risk since they have good air circulation and filtration. However, there is no requirement for vaccination or testing before domestic flights, and passengers can remove their face masks while eating or drinking.

Hotels aren't risky for the vaccinated as long as they wear masks around strangers, Armitage says. More fraught are family gatherings with unvaccinated individuals, particularly for those who are older or have health problems.

Health experts suggest looking at the case levels and masking rules in the place you are visiting before you travel.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org. Read more here:

Why can't some COVID-19 vaccinated people travel to the US?

Can at-home COVID-19 tests make holiday gatherings safer?

Can I get the flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time?

Florida clears Groveland Four of 1949 rape of white woman

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A judge on Monday officially exonerated four young African American men of the false accusation that they raped a white woman seven decades ago, making partial and belated amends for one of the greatest miscarriages of justice of Florida's Jim Crow era.

At the request of the local prosecutor, Administrative Judge Heidi Davis dismissed the indictments of Ernest Thomas and Samuel Shepherd, who were fatally shot by law enforcement, and set aside the convictions and sentences of Charles Greenlee and Walter Irvin. The men known as the Groveland Four, who ranged from 16 to 26 at the time, were accused of raping a woman in the central Florida town of Groveland in 1949.

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"We followed the evidence to see where it led us and it led us to this moment," said Bill Gladson, the local state attorney, following the hearing in the same Lake County courthouse where the original trials were held. Gladson, a Republican, moved last month to have the men officially exonerated.

The men's families said maybe this case will spark a reexamination of other convictions of Black men and women from the Jim Crow era so those falsely convicted can have their names cleared.

"We are blessed. I hope that this is a start because lot of people didn't get this opportunity. A lot of families didn't get this opportunity. Maybe they will," said Aaron Newson, Thomas' nephew. He broke into tears as he spoke. "This country needs to come together."

Thomas was killed by a posse that shot him more than 400 times shortly after the rape accusation. The local sheriff, Willis McCall, fatally shot Shepherd and wounded Irvin in 1951 as he drove them to a second trial after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned their original convictions, saying no evidence had been presented. The sheriff claimed the men tried to escape, but Irvin said McCall and his deputy shot them in cold blood.

Gilbert King, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his 2012 book about the case, "Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America," attended the hearing with Thurgood Marshall Jr., the son of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice.

Thurgood Marshall Sr., then with the NAACP, represented Irvin during his second trial, but an all-white jury again convicted him and he was sentenced to death. Irvin narrowly escaped execution in 1954 and Gov. LeRoy Collins commuted his sentence to life with parole. Greenlee, also sentenced to life, was paroled in 1962 and died in 2012. Irvin died in 1969, one year after he was paroled.

King said having the men exonerated in the same building where the trials were held was "of significant importance because upstairs there was a courtroom where 72 years ago (an) abomination of justice took place." He praised Gladson for pursuing justice.

"He could have easily kicked this case down the road and let someone else deal with it," King said. "Even when it got frustrating and he felt there was no path toward this day, he dug in harder."

Marshall Jr. said that, perhaps more than any other case, the Groveland Four "haunted" his father.

"But he believed better days were ahead," Marshall Jr. said.

The Florida Legislature in 2017 formally apologized to the men's families. Gov. Ron DeSantis and the state's three-member Cabinet granted posthumous pardons more than two years ago. In 2018, then-Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi directed the state Department of Law Enforcement to review the case. Earlier this year, the agency referred its findings to Gladson for his review.

Gladson and an investigator interviewed the grandson of Jesse Hunter, the now-deceased prosecutor of two of the Groveland Four defendants. According to the grandson, Broward Hunter, his grandfather and a judge in the case knew there was no rape.

The grandson also suggested to Gladson, based on letters he found in his grandfather's office in 1971, that Willis may have shot Shepherd and Irvin because of the sheriff's involvement in an illegal gambling operation. Shepherd was believed to be involved with the gambling operation too, and Willis might have seen a rape case as a "a way to get some people that were on his s--- list," Hunter told the prosecutor and investigator.

Gladson also said that James Yates, a deputy who served as a primary witness, likely fabricated evidence, including shoe casts.

The prosecutor also had Irvin's pants sent to a crime lab in September to test for semen, something that was never done at Irvin's trial, even though jurors were given the impression that the pants were stained. The results showed no evidence of semen, the motion said.

"The significance of this finding cannot be overstated," Gladson said in his motion.

'Annoyed': Austria's national lockdown dampens holiday mood

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — After indulging in one last night out, Austrians awoke groggily Monday to their fourth

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national lockdown of this pandemic, cutting short a Christmas season of shared merriment to fight rising coronavirus infections.

In the capital, Vienna, people headed to work, brought children to school or exercised outdoors, more or less normally. This was not the draconian lockdown of the pandemic's dawn in 2020, when movements were strictly monitored. Police cars circulated Monday, in keeping with government promises to step up controls, but no spot checks were being made.

"I am particularly annoyed by the lockdown," said Georg Huber, a lawyer on his way to the office. "One should have implemented a mandatory vaccination in the summer, when it turned out it would not be enough to hope that people get there without any coercion. I think the government just overslept."

Austria has one of the lowest vaccination rates in western Europe, about 66% of its population of 8.9 million people, with a vocal minority who refuse to be inoculated.

The government announced a 10-day nationwide lockdown on Friday as the average daily COVID-19 deaths tripled in recent weeks and hospitals in hard-hit states warned that intensive care units were hitting capacity. It also pledged to be the first European country to mandate vaccines beginning Feb. 1.

Under the lockdown, people can leave their homes only for specific reasons, including buying groceries, going to the doctor or exercising. Day care centers and schools remained open for those who need them, but parents were asked to keep children at home if possible.

The restrictions are likely to be extended, for a total of 20 days, after which the government has indicated plans to open up so many Austrians can celebrate Christmas as normal. Restrictions, however, are expected to remain for the unvaccinated.

At Vienna's largest vaccine center, the government's actions were apparently pushing more people to get vaccinated. The daily numbers of vaccinations has grown from 1,000 a day two weeks ago to 12,000 a day this week, with at least 20% coming for their first jab.

"There are some who waited to see how it was going with the vaccinations, which is a deeply human problem," said Dr. Susanne Drapalik, the chief physician for Samaritans Federation, which is running the center. Others were getting vaccinated so they can work, such as truck drivers who drive to countries where a health pass is required, or getting jabs ahead of the Feb. 1 mandate.

"Compulsory vaccinations are a hotly debated topic," Drapalik said. "The argument that every citizen has a responsibility to himself and to others did not work."

Barbara Kier, a singer and voice-over actor, was there for her booster shot, but said her 57-year-old mother was still unpersuaded to get her first.

"I can only give her my opinion. She must decide for herself," she said "She said she won't go yet, not that she will never go. I don't know what she is waiting for!"

Health Minister Wolfgang Mueckstein said the lockdown was needed to bring down the number of new daily infections, which have spiked to as many as 15,000 a day, and to reduce the number of virus patients in intensive care. But most of all, he said, it was needed to bring relief "to the people who work in this sector, the nurses and doctors who cannot take it anymore."

"It is a situation where we have to react now. The only way is with a lockdown, a relatively hard method, to lower the numbers with a wooden hammer," Mueckstein told national broadcaster ORF.

Political analysts say the Austrian government did not effectively communicate the importance of vaccines early enough, and that many Austrians did not take the vaccination campaign seriously after former Chancellor Sebastian Kurz declared the pandemic "over" last summer. Kurz was forced out in a corruption scandal last month, replaced by his foreign minister, Alexander Schallenberg, who within a week expanded the controversial lockdown on Austria's unvaccinated people to a lockdown for everyone.

Schallenberg also has pledged to make vaccinations mandatory by Feb. 1, with details still to be hammered out. Experts have speculated that it could be limited to certain age groups or even tied to employment, as Italy has done. In Italy, health passes are required to enter workplaces, and can be obtained with a negative test as well.

On the eve of Austria's latest lockdown, people flocked to Christmas markets for one last night of public socializing and in-person holiday shopping. The Austrian Trade Association said sales were up 15% on

Saturday, compared with the same day in 2019, before the pandemic.

Still, many business owners feared the pre-lockdown boost would not be enough to salvage their holiday season.

Boutiques in Vienna's main shopping district adjusted to the lockdown by putting up signs advising customers they could order online for pickup. Sales people remained on the job behind locked doors to fill orders.

Sophie Souffle, who sells jewelry at markets all year round, makes most of her money over the six-week Christmas market period. Any promised help from the government will be enough to get by, she said, "but it won't be enough to invest for future business."

She looked around Sunday as people strolled among the market stands, window shopping more than buying, and socialized in small groups, sensing more desperation than holiday spirit.

"The mood is pre-apocalyptic," she said.

Follow all AP stories on the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

IOC call with Chinese tennis star Peng raises more questions

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

A video call between the head of the International Olympic Committee and Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai, whose nearly three-week disappearance from public view sparked an outcry, was meant to reassure the world that she was safe — but instead has raised more questions.

Concern grew in the last week for the former No. 1-ranked doubles player — who hadn't been seen since accusing a senior Chinese official of sexual assault on Nov. 2. Tennis stars and fans alike demanded to know #WhereIsPengShuai, and the head of the Women's Tennis Association threatened to pull lucrative events from China.

On Sunday, the IOC said Peng spoke to its president, Thomas Bach, and other officials in a 30-minute video call from Beijing. According to the organization's statement, she reassured them that she was well and thanked them for their concern — while asking for privacy.

The IOC posted a photo that shows Bach facing a screen on which Peng appears but did not release video of the call. On the same day, China Open posted videos and photos of her appearance at a youth tennis tournament in Beijing that morning.

The IOC's short statement, which offered few details and no follow-up on her allegations, seems unlikely to close the door on Peng's case — and it's leading to increasing criticism of the sports body, which was already facing calls for a boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics, which open on Feb. 4.

Even after the statement was published Sunday, the WTA repeated what chairman and CEO Steve Simon has been saying for more than a week, calling for a full, fair and transparent investigation "without censorship."

The IOC was already under pressure for pushing ahead with the Games amid allegations that China has committed human rights violations against Uyghur Muslims, Tibetans, and other minorities. China denies the accusations. "We are firmly opposed to any words and deeds that politicize sports in violation of the Olympic spirit," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Monday, when asked about a possible boycott.

Now, some critics say the IOC's handling of the call with Peng makes it an active partner in delivering Beijing's message — while not providing Peng with an open forum to discuss her allegations.

Yaqiu Wang, a spokeswoman for Human Rights Watch, tweeted that the IOC is "actively playing a role in the Chinese government's enforced disappearance, coercion and propaganda machinery."

When asked about the criticism, the IOC said in a statement Monday that the main purpose of the call was to find out how Peng was — and that she "was very clear in confirming that she is safe and well."

She agreed to stay in touch with Olympic officials — including having dinner with Bach in Beijing in January — and the body said it told her she could reach out whenever "she deems it appropriate." It added

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that in order to respect Peng's privacy, it would not comment further.

This is the second time this year that the IOC has been in the spotlight for pushing ahead with an Olympics: Many wanted the body to call off the Summer Games in Tokyo because of concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. Critics note that IOC has a strong interest in holding the events because it generates 91% of its income from sponsors and selling broadcast rights at the Games.

Peng is just one of a number of Chinese businesspeople, activists and ordinary people who have disappeared in recent years after criticizing party figures or in crackdowns on corruption or pro-democracy and labor rights campaigns.

While the ruling Communist Party is quick to blot out any criticism, that this time it came from an athlete made it especially sensitive. State media celebrate athletes' victories as proof the party is making China strong — and the party is vigilant about making sure they cannot use their prominence and public appeal to erode its image.

The tennis star accused a former member of the Communist Party's ruling Standing Committee, Zhang Gaoli, of sexual assault in a social media post that was removed quickly.

She wrote in part: "I know that to you, vice minister Zhang Gaoli, a person of high status and power, you've said you're not afraid. With your intelligence, you certainly will deny it or you can even use it against me, you can dismiss it without a care. Even if I'm destroying myself, like throwing an egg against a rock, or a moth flying into a flame, I will still speak out the truth about us."

Concerns about the censoring of her post and her subsequent disappearance from public view grew into a furor, drawing comments from tennis greats like Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Naomi Osaka, Serena Williams, and Martina Navratilova.

All the while, news of her allegations was blacked out at home. CNN reported that its signal in China had been blocked during reporting on Peng.

A search for her name Monday on Weibo, one of China's leading social media platforms, produced only a few posts, and none that refer to the sexual assault allegation or the questions about her whereabouts.

Still missing is Zhang. He left public life about three years ago after being one of seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee — the apex of political power in China.

The WTA is the first sports body to defiantly stand up to China's financial clout — in what many see as a sharp contrast to the IOC, which says its policy is "quiet diplomacy."

"The statements make the IOC complicit in the Chinese authority's malicious propaganda and lack of care for basic human rights and justice," Global Athlete, a lobby group for athletes, said in a statement.

"The IOC showed a complete disregard for allegations of sexual violence and abuse against athletes," the statement said. "By taking a nonchalant approach to Peng Shuai's disappearance and by refusing to mention her serious allegations of sexual assault, IOC President Thomas Bach and the IOC Athletes' Commission demonstrate an abhorrent indifference to sexual violence and the well-being of female athletes."

AP Sports Writer Graham Dunbar contributed from Geneva.

More AP tennis coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports. More AP Winter Olympics coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/winter-olympics>.

How COVID shots for kids help prevent dangerous new variants

By LAURA UNGAR AP Medical Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Cadell Walker rushed to get her 9-year-old daughter Solome vaccinated against COVID-19 — not just to protect her but to help stop the coronavirus from spreading and spawning even more dangerous variants.

"Love thy neighbor is something that we really do believe, and we want to be good community members and want to model that thinking for our daughter," said the 40-year-old Louisville mom, who recently took Solome to a local middle school for her shot. "The only way to really beat COVID is for all of us collectively

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to work together for the greater good.”

Scientists agree. Each infection — whether in an adult in Yemen or a kid in Kentucky — gives the virus another opportunity to mutate. Protecting a new, large chunk of the population anywhere in the world limits those opportunities.

That effort got a lift with 28 million U.S. kids 5 to 11 years old now eligible for child-sized doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Moves elsewhere, like Austria’s recent decision to require all adults to be vaccinated and even the U.S. authorizing booster shots for all adults on Friday, help by further reducing the chances of new infection.

Vaccinating kids also means reducing silent spread, since most have no or mild symptoms when they contract the virus. When the virus spreads unseen, scientists say, it also goes unabated. And as more people contract it, the odds of new variants rise.

David O’Connor, a virology expert at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, likens infections to “lottery tickets that we’re giving the virus.” The jackpot? A variant even more dangerous than the contagious delta currently circulating.

“The fewer people who are infected, the less lottery tickets it has and the better off we’re all going to be in terms of generating the variants,” he said, adding that variants are even more likely to emerge in people with weakened immune systems who harbor the virus for a long time.

Researchers disagree on how much kids have influenced the course of the pandemic. Early research suggested they didn’t contribute much to viral spread. But some experts say children played a significant role this year spreading contagious variants such as alpha and delta.

Getting kids vaccinated could make a real difference going forward, according to estimates by the COVID-19 Scenario Modeling Hub, a collection of university and medical research organizations that consolidates models of how the pandemic may unfold. The hub’s latest estimates show that for this November through March 12, 2022, vaccinating 5- to 11-year-olds would avert about 430,000 COVID cases in the overall U.S. population if no new variant arose. If a variant 50% more transmissible than delta showed up in late fall, 860,000 cases would be averted, “a big impact,” said project co-leader Katriona Shea, of Pennsylvania State University.

Delta remains dominant for now, accounting for more than 99% of analyzed coronavirus specimens in the United States. Scientists aren’t sure exactly why. Dr. Stuart Campbell Ray, an infectious disease expert at Johns Hopkins University, said it may be intrinsically more infectious, or it may be evading at least in part the protection people get from vaccines or having been infected before.

“It’s probably a combination of those things,” he said. “But there’s also very good and growing evidence that delta is simply more fit, meaning that it’s able to grow to higher levels faster than other variants that are studied. So when people get delta, they become infectious sooner.”

Ray said delta is “a big family” of viruses, and the world is now swimming in a sort of “delta soup.”

“We have many lineages of delta that are circulating in many places with no clear winners,” Ray said, adding that it’s hard to know from genetic features which might have an edge, or which non-delta variants might dethrone delta.

“I often say it’s like seeing a car parked on the side of the road with racing slicks and racing stripes and an airfoil on the back and a big engine,” Ray said. “You know it looks like it could be a real contender, but until you see it on the track with other cars, you don’t know if it’s going to win.”

Another big unknown: Dangerous variants may still arise in largely-unvaccinated parts of the world and make their way to America even as U.S. children join the ranks of the vaccinated.

Walker, the Louisville mom, said she and her husband can’t do anything about distant threats, but could sign their daughter up for vaccination at Jefferson County Public Schools sites on a recent weekend. Solome is adopted from Ethiopia and is prone to pneumonia following respiratory ailments after being exposed to tuberculosis as a baby.

She said she wants to keep other kids safe because “it’s not good to get sick.”

As a nurse leaned in to give Solome her shot, Walker held her daughter’s hand, then praised her for picking out a post-jab sticker appropriate for a brave kid who just did her part to help curb a pandemic.

"Wonder Woman," Walker said. "Perfect."

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NBA laid key foundation during 1960s amid off-court chaos

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Sam Jones remembers the NBA landscape in the 1960s being only marginally different from what he had experienced growing up in America's segregated South.

"There was a quota for Blacks when I came in 1957. There were only two players on each team that were African-Americans," recalled Jones, a member of 10 Boston championship teams, including the eight consecutive titles the Celtics won from 1958-66.

The 1960s was the decade Wilt Chamberlain scored 100 points, the Celtics-Lakers rivalry took flight and the NBA's second dynasty reigned on the Boston Garden's parquet court.

It was also a time of ongoing struggle and crisis across America, when the country was forever altered on a "Bloody Sunday," Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of his dream and Black athletes raised their fists and voices in hopes of holding America to its creed.

In its infancy just 10 years prior, the NBA took its first meaningful strides in the 60s, growing from the little league that could barely get attention, to laying the framework it still stands on today — a place where athletes can be more than entertainment and use their influential platform to effect change.

George Mikan and the Lakers' run of championships in the 50s had provided some buzz around the NBA. Boston then followed with eight consecutive titles — part of 11 in 13 years won by Hall of Famer Bill Russell — the kind of on-court dominance the young league had never seen before.

Still, games were barely being broadcast on television in the '60s and the titles didn't come with the fanfare that are afterthoughts today. Jones, who turned down his first contract after being drafted by the Lakers following a two-year stint in the Army, said: "We never flew first class in my 12 years of playing."

And the on-court success certainly didn't shield the league's Black players from the realities that existed off the court as activists challenged Jim Crow's grip in the South and the Vietnam War was becoming an increasing flashpoint.

Players who spoke out risked everything.

"What we did, we did kind of behind the scenes as best we could, because a lot of us were insecure at the time because there weren't that many of us begin with," said Wayne Embry, who played 11 seasons in the NBA and was on the Celtics' 1968 championship team before becoming the league's first Black general manager in 1972. "When you are on non-guaranteed contracts... if management didn't like what you were doing, you were gone."

That awareness was a common thread among players who challenged the status quo.

"Sacrifice is what strongly characterizes an activist," said Len Elmore, who played 10 seasons in the NBA and is a senior lecturer at Columbia University where he's taught on athlete activism and social justice in sports. "Back in those days those guys could have not only lost their positions but been forgotten by history."

Even star players on premier teams weren't immune from indignities of racism.

"There were a lot places we couldn't eat," Jones said. "If the hotel where we were staying was closed, we had to find a Black section to get food late at night. ... So sometimes we'd just have to wait until the next morning to get food."

Jones said Black players in Boston had a champion in Red Auerbach, who ruled at the helm of the Celtics' dynasty.

Auerbach was known for his demanding style (Jones describes Auerbach as a "taskmaster" and said at times he "overdid it"), but the coach also recognized how his players were affected by what was happening in the world. Sam Jones remembers one example in 1961, when he, K.C. Jones, Satch Sanders

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and Russell refused to play in an exhibition game in Lexington, Kentucky.

The team was in its hotel when Sam Jones asked Sanders to go to the lobby to get some food. They were refused service.

"And so I told Satch, 'I'm going home,'" Jones recalled. "And I said, 'I don't care what you do, I'm going home and I'm not going to play in this game.'"

The duo went to the elevators where they were met by Russell and K.C. Jones. After Sam told them what had happened, Russell implored them to talk to Auerbach.

Auerbach called the hotel manager, who quickly relented and said he'd allow the players to eat in the restaurant. It wasn't enough for Sam Jones.

"Once we eat in the hotel, Blacks will never eat down here again until something happens. So I'm going home," he told Auerbach. "And the rest of the fellas decided that they would go home also. And Red took us to the airport."

Jones credits Auerbach for supporting players when others in his position were shying away from racial issues in a city with a complicated history.

While the Celtics and Bruins broke the color barrier in their sports, the Red Sox were the last Major League Baseball team to field a Black player in 1959. And a decade after the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown vs. The Board of Education* decision in 1954 declared schools separated by race to be unequal, Boston fought desegregation measures by its state legislature. It led to violent protests over court-ordered busing in the 1970s.

"He knew that we were men. We were not children," Jones said. "You got to understand that the Celtics were the first to draft a Black player. Celtics were the first to have a Black coach. The Celtics were the first to start five Black players in the NBA. So there was a lot of things that the Celtics did first for the African-American."

It's also why Elmore believes it made sense that Auerbach tapped Russell to be the team's player-coach when Auerbach retired following Boston's title in 1965-66. Russell led the team to a pair of titles in the dual role in 1967-68 and 1968-69.

"Auerbach was a prescient man," Elmore said. "He saw where the league was going."

There was no escaping the issues for Black players, prompting Russell to tell reporters in 1964: "I'd rather die for something than live for nothing."

For a player of Russell's prominence to show a willingness to put his convictions ahead of his athletic career put him in a small group during that time like Muhammad Ali, Lew Alcindor (now Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) and Jim Brown.

And it was Russell, Abdul-Jabbar and Brown showing support for Ali in Cleveland in 1967 two months after the boxer refused induction into the U.S. military to fight in Vietnam.

Those social and political stances have threaded today's generation of athletes, seeding everything from Colin Kaepernick's national anthem demonstrations to athletes across the sports world advocating for justice in 2020 following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others.

Russell's actions also inspired others in the 1960s, like when Black and white players led by Jerry West, Oscar Robertson and Elgin Baylor nearly refused to play in the 1964 All-Star Game over a dispute with owners about labor conditions.

The NBA was about to broadcast live for one of the first times and owners stood to reap a huge windfall.

The players barricaded themselves in the locker room and the game was briefly delayed. It forced then-Commissioner Walter Kennedy to recognize the players' union and commit to their pension plan demands. Robertson became the first Black president of any national sports or entertainment union the following year.

"As far as I'm concerned, that's the changing of the guard for the player," West said. "It's led to the players and the league basically being partners. To me ... it's been an amazing transformation to see what's happened to the game since then."

AP Basketball writers Tim Reynolds and Brian Mahoney contributed to this report.

More on the NBA At 75: <https://apnews.com/hub/nba-at-75>

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

In Africa, Blinken sees limits of US influence abroad

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Traveling across Africa, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken saw firsthand the limits of America's influence abroad.

Blinken confronted authoritarianism, growing threats from newly energized extremists, and persistent challenges posed by COVID-19 and climate change, all of which have stubbornly resisted various U.S. interventions.

And, nowhere on his three-nation tour last week — to Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal — was he able to escape obvious signs of the intense competition between the U.S. and China: a geopolitical power struggle that has been playing out largely in China's favor for the past two decades, especially in Africa.

Before leaving the continent at his last stop in Senegal, Blinken said he had been well received by all three leaders he met. But, he allowed that "we have to be judged on what we do, not simply on what I say."

The limits of Washington's reach have been evident for some time but have been highlighted in recent months as President Joe Biden has promoted an "America is back" narrative, intended to signal a U.S. return to the international arena and institutions that his predecessor had eschewed.

In Nairobi, much of the secretary's visit and drives through the Kenyan capital took place in the shadow of or literally underneath a massive, Chinese-financed elevated expressway construction project.

In Abuja, Blinken's motorcade from the airport passed the giant and unmissable headquarters building of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Nigeria, where a top official spoke only partially in jest of playing the U.S. and China off of each other and China's attractiveness as a partner.

And, in Senegal, the capital, Dakar, was gearing up to host a major China-Africa trade and investment event less than 10 days after Blinken's departure on Saturday.

While the Biden administration's efforts to help African nations combat the coronavirus pandemic and encourage climate-friendly policies appear to be making some initial progress, the broader picture is less encouraging.

A new wave of authoritarianism has reversed some positive democratization trends despite very public U.S. appeals and protests that have been ignored or only partially heeded by leaders in Ethiopia, Sudan and elsewhere, who have appeared unconvinced or uninterested in the administration's message.

"Governments are becoming less transparent," Blinken said in the Nigerian capital on Friday. "We see this happening across Africa — leaders ignoring term limits, rigging or postponing elections, exploiting social grievances to gain and maintain power, arresting opposition figures, cracking down on the media, and allowing security services to enforce pandemic restrictions brutally."

He cited Ethiopia and Sudan as prime examples.

While Blinken did not go to either country on his trip, he raised the crises at each of his stops and, while he was traveling, top American envoys visited both Khartoum and Addis Ababa to press authorities there to back down on anti-democratic actions.

And yet, despite an agreement in Sudan announced on Sunday after Blinken returned to Washington, neither yielded unvarnished success.

In Sudan, conversations between military leaders and the top U.S. diplomat for Africa, Molly Phee, were followed by a new and deadly crackdown on opposition protesters that Blinken was compelled to formally condemn in a statement.

In a hopeful sign, the country's deposed prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, then signed a deal with the military that will see him reinstated almost a month after a military coup put him under house arrest. But a key pro-democracy group dismissed it as "a form of betrayal" and Blinken himself was cautious, saying

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he was "encouraged" but still wanted to see more.

"I urge all sides to further talks and redouble efforts to complete key transitional tasks on a civilian-led path to democracy in Sudan," Blinken said in a Tweet. "I also reiterate our call for security forces to refrain from excessive force against peaceful protesters."

In Ethiopia, the U.S. special envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman, was rebuffed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in calls for an end to a humanitarian blockade of the northern Tigray region, home to rebels who are now advancing on the capital.

Meanwhile, perennial corruption, abuses of power and a lack of transparency continue to hobble African infrastructure, development and poverty alleviation initiatives championed by the United States.

And, although Biden has spoken of returning Africa to a place of prominence in U.S. foreign policy, other priorities and urgent developments, including pressing matters in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, have often crowded it out in the administration's first 10 months in office.

On Friday, the White House announced that Biden would convene a U.S.-Africa leaders' summit next year "to strengthen ties with African partners based on principles of mutual respect and shared interests and values." But the announcement was short on key details such as who would be attending and when it would occur.

And, it came as Blinken reached Senegal, the third and final stop on his first official trip to sub-Saharan Africa, which had been postponed from August, in a telling sign of priorities, during the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Apart from the attention it absorbed in Washington, the implications of the Afghan exit have left some of America's friends, including in Africa, wondering about the resiliency of their relations with Washington. That has been a particular concern as China has swept in to fill a perceived void in U.S. interest in Africa and a preoccupation with other parts of the world.

That perception, fueled by the Trump administration's indifference to Africa except through the prism of China's rapidly expanding power, is something Biden and Blinken are hoping to change. For example, Blinken did not once mention China by name in what was billed as a major speech on Biden administration policy toward Africa that he delivered on Friday.

Yet China was never far from the top of the agenda.

"Our engagement in Africa, with Africa, is not about China or any other third party," Blinken said in Nigeria. "It's about Africa."

"Our purpose is not to make our partners choose, it is to give them choices," he said in Senegal. "And when people have choices, they usually make the right one."

Senegalese Foreign Minister Aissata Tall Sall, who will co-host the Nov. 29-30 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation with her Chinese counterpart, nodded approvingly at Blinken's remark.

"We have a diplomacy of sovereignty from which we do not exclude anyone," she said. "There is not only one choice. We have many choices."

And, as Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama pointed out, his country and others want the best deals they can get, and often that means looking to China.

"We saw a great opportunity with the Chinese," he said of several major infrastructure projects now underway in Nigeria. "I mean, they're used to a lot of these huge capital projects and infrastructure projects. We would have gone with anybody else that was providing something at a competitive rate for us, but in many areas they were."

"It's not a question of one country or the other per se; it's really a question of the best deal that we can strike," he said, comparing Nigeria to a woman being wooed by various suitors.

"Regarding U.S.-Chinese competition in Africa, I mean, I don't want to sound cynical, almost, about it, but sometimes it's a good thing for you if you're the attractive bride and everybody is offering you wonderful things. You take what you can from each of them."

This story has been corrected to show the spelling of the Ethiopian prime minister's surname is Ahmed, not Ahmedr.

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 23, the 327th day of 2021. There are 38 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 23, 1971, the People's Republic of China was seated in the U.N. Security Council.

On this date:

In 1889, the first jukebox made its debut in San Francisco, at the Palais Royale Saloon. (The coin-operated device consisted of four listening tubes attached to an Edison phonograph.)

In 1903, Enrico Caruso made his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, appearing in "Rigoletto."

In 1914, the seven-month U.S. military occupation of Veracruz, Mexico, ended.

In 1936, Life, the photojournalism magazine created by Henry R. Luce (loos), was first published.

In 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed Nov. 25 a day of national mourning following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In 1980, some 2,600 people were killed by a series of earthquakes that devastated southern Italy.

In 1992, country music star Roy Acuff died in Nashville, Tennessee, at age 89.

In 1996, a commandeered Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the water off the Comoros Islands, killing 125 of the 175 people on board, including all three hijackers.

In 2000, in a setback for Al Gore, the Florida Supreme Court refused to order Miami-Dade County officials to resume hand-counting its election-day ballots. Meanwhile, Gore's lawyers argued in a brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court that the high court should stay out of the Florida election controversy.

In 2003, five U.S. soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan. Eduard Shevardnadze (sheh-vahrd-NAHD'-zeh) resigned as president of Georgia in the face of protests.

In 2006, former KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko (leet-vee-NYEN'-koh) died in London from radiation poisoning after making a deathbed statement blaming Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In 2008, the government unveiled a bold plan to rescue Citigroup, injecting a fresh \$20 billion into the troubled firm as well as guaranteeing hundreds of billions of dollars in risky assets.

Ten years ago: Yemen's authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh (AH'-lee ahb-DUH'-luh sah-LEH') agreed to step down amid a fierce uprising to oust him after 33 years in power.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump selected two Republican women who'd had unflattering things to say about him during the campaign: South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley to serve as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and charter school advocate Betsy DeVos to lead the Department of Education. Two juveniles set a fire in Great Smoky Mountains National Park; the fire spread into the Gatlinburg, Tennessee, area, merging with others, contributing to 14 deaths and up to \$2 billion of damage. Ralph Branca, the Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher who gave up Bobby Thomson's famed "Shot Heard 'Round the World" in 1951, died in Rye Brook, New York, at age 90.

One year ago: The federal government recognized Joe Biden as the "apparent winner" of the Nov. 3 election, formally starting the transition of power; President Donald Trump still refused to concede and vowed to continue a court fight after General Services Administrator Emily Murphy gave the green light for Biden to coordinate with federal agencies ahead of his inauguration. Michigan certified Biden's win in the battleground state. Drugmaker AstraZeneca said late-stage trials showed its COVID-19 vaccine was highly effective. David Dinkins, who in 1990 became the first Black mayor of New York City, died at 93.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Franco Nero is 80. Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas (ES'-tur-hahs) is 77. Actor-comedy writer Bruce Vilanch is 74. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., is 71. Singer Bruce Hornsby is 67. Former Sen. Mary Landrieu (LAN'-droo), D-La., is 66. Actor Maxwell Caulfield is 62. Actor John Henton is 61. TV personality Robin Roberts ("Good Morning America") is 61. Rock singer-musician Ken Block (Sister Hazel) is 55. Actor Salli Richardson-Whitfield is 54. Actor Oded Fehr (OH'-dehd fayr) is

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51. Rapper-actor Kurupt (Tha Dogg Pound) is 49. Actor Page Kennedy is 45. Actor Kelly Brook is 42. Actor Lucas Grabeel (GRAY'-beel) is 37. TV personality Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi is 34. Actor-singer Miley Cyrus is 29. Actor Olivia Keville (TV: "Splitting Up Together") is 19.