

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 1 of 77

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [1- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [2- Wrestling Results from Groton Triangular](#)
- [2- Groton Prairie Mixed](#)
- [3- Pro-Life Rule Blocking Telemedicine Abortions Approved](#)
- [4- SD News Watch: Abortion rights battle expected during 2022 South Dakota legislative session](#)
- [8- School Board Agenda](#)
- [9- SDHDA Hosting Listening Sessions regarding Housing Finance Programs](#)
- [10- Weather Pages](#)
- [15- Daily Devotional](#)
- [16- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [17- Subscription Form](#)
- [18- News from the Associated Press](#)



## UpComing Events

### Friday, Jan. 7

Penguin Classic Debate on-line  
5 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling at Milbank  
Girls Basketball hosts Sisseton with C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and varsity.

### Saturday, Jan. 8

**CANCELLED:** Groton Robotics Tournament  
Penguin Classic Debate on-line  
Girls Basketball Classic at Redfield. Groton Area vs. Platte-Geddes at 3:30

### Monday, Jan. 10

Boys' Basketball hosts Webster Area. C game starts at 5 p.m. with JV and Varsity to follow.  
7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Tuesday, Jan. 11

5 p.m.: 7th/8th grade basketball game with Waubay-Summit at Waubay. Single game so they may play extra quarters.  
6 p.m.: Girls' Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian. JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Thursday, Jan. 13

Boys' Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli. at Elementary Gym: 7th grade game at 4 p.m., 8th grade game

## Coming up on GDILIVE.COM

Today: Janice Bahr Funeral, 2 p.m.; GBB hosts Sisseton (JV and Varsity to be livestreamed)

Saturday: James Marx Funeral, 10:30 a.m.; GBB vs. Platte-Geddes at Redfield Classic, 3:30 p.m.

**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.

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 2 of 77

## Kucker wins both matches at Groton Triangular

Korbin Kucker wrestled two matches and won both with a pin at the Groton triangular held Thursday night. Pierce Kettering and Brevin Flihs each won a match via forfeit in the Redfield match and both pinned their opponents during the Webster match. Liza Krueger wrestled one match in the girls division and she won via a pin.

In Redfield match, Porter Johnson, 113, was pinned by Conner Zens with 24 seconds left in the match, Isiah Schaeponiack was pinned by Jacob Fehlman in 21 seconds, Pierce Kettering at 132 and Brevin Flihs at 138 both won by forfeit, Christian Ehresmann, 145, was decided by Mason Whitley, 7-5; Korbin Kucker, 145, pinned Collin Dean in 20 seconds, Cole Bisbee, 160, was pinned by Mason Fey in 52 seconds; Lane Krueger, 220, pinned Gavin Nichols in 3:16, and Walker Zoellner, 106, was pinned by Brady Risetter in 1:49.

In the Webster match, Liza Krueger won her match by pin with one minute left in the match, Pierce Kettering, 132, pinned Blaise McGregor in seven seconds, Brevin Flihs, 138, pinned Gage Baumgarn in 3:49, Cameron Johnson was pinned by Cael Larson in 1:07, Christian Ehresmann, 152, pinned Gavin Witt in 1:02, Korbin Kucker, 160, pinned Cole Shoemaker in 55 seconds, Porter Johnson at 113, Cole Bisbee at 170 and Noah Voeller at 195 both won by forfeit, Lane Krueger, 220, was pinned by Caleb McGregor in 2:36, and Walker Zoellner, 106, was pinned by Tacey Miller in 3:31.

Team scores had Redfield beating Webster, 54-27, Redfield beating Groton Area, 57-24, and Webster Area beating Groton Area, 42-24.

The matches were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Dacotah Bank, Groton Ford, Mike-N-Jo's Body-N-Glass, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, the John Sieh Agency and Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls.

## Groton Prairie Mixed

**Jan. 5 Team Standings:** Cheetahs 9 ½, Chipmunks 9, Jackelopes 6, Shih Tzus 4 ½, Foxes 4, Coyotes 3

**Men's High Games:** Lance Frohling 211, 201, Roger Spanier 196, Mike Siegler 195

**Women's High Games:** Lori Wiley 190, Vicki Walter 172, 166, Sue Stanley 165

**Men's High Series:** Lance Frohling 577, Mike Siegler 507, Roger Spanier 507

**Women's High Series:** Lori Wiley 478, Vicki Walter 474, Sue Stanley 442

## Pro-Life Rule Blocking Telemedicine Abortions Approved

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Kristi Noem and the Department of Health’s rule blocking telemedicine abortions was approved by the South Dakota Legislature’s Interim Rules Review Committee.

“Chemical abortions are four times as likely to cause a woman getting an abortion to end up in an emergency room – and we have a duty to protect the lives of those women,” said Governor Noem. “I look forward to the day when the life of every unborn child is protected in South Dakota. Until then, South Dakotans will know that if a mother uses abortion pills to end her unborn child’s life, she will not get those pills from a stranger over the internet.”

In September, Governor Noem signed Executive Order 2021-12, directing the South Dakota Department of Health to establish rules preventing telemedicine abortions in South Dakota. The rule does the following:

- Requires that no medical abortion by use of mifepristone and misopristol take place except in a licensed abortion facility, with an observation period;
- Requires in-office visits for the taking of the mifepristone and separately for the misopristol. This provision makes South Dakota the only state in the nation to protect the life of the mother to this extent;
- Ensures that South Dakota law is properly followed by requiring that the mother be informed that, after administration of the mifepristone, it is possible to rescue the unborn child and stop the abortion from occurring; and
- Requires abortion facilities collect and maintain certain information.

Governor Noem plans to work with the South Dakota legislature to pass legislation that makes these and other protocols permanent in the 2022 legislative session.



## Abortion rights battle expected during 2022 South Dakota legislative session

**Bart Pfankuch**

**South Dakota News Watch**

Abortion is likely to be a major topic during the 2022 South Dakota legislative session that begins on Jan. 11, as opponents of the medical procedure see an opportunity to capitalize on recent legal cases across the country that further restricted access to abortion.

The anticipated legislation seeking to restrict abortion rights will come as the future of legal abortion in the U.S. is suddenly uncertain, and as a recent poll by South Dakota News Watch shows that three-quarters of registered voters in the state want abortion to remain legal, and that a solid majority of voters do not support increasing restrictions on the procedure.

For several years, Republican-dominated legislatures in South Dakota have considered and sometimes passed laws that make abortions harder to get, often by requiring more steps to be taken by pregnant women who want to terminate a pregnancy. Many of those laws were incremental in nature and were designed to restrict access to abortion without directly violating the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* U.S. Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal across the country.

But the anti-abortion movement in the U.S. saw renewed momentum on several fronts in 2021 that have set the stage for pro-life lawmakers in states like South Dakota to potentially push more aggressive legal steps to restrict access to abortion or even, as pro-choice advocates worry, make abortions essentially impossible to obtain.

As of Jan. 6, no bills related to abortion had been filed prior to the upcoming legislative session, according to the state Legislative Research Council. However, Gov. Kristi Noem has strongly signaled that she is likely to put forward measures to further restrict access to abortion, and a leading pro-life advocate in South Dakota told News Watch that anti-abortion legislation is almost certain to be considered in 2022.

"It's a very exciting time to be part of the pro-life movement in America and especially right here in South Dakota," said Dale Bartscher of Rapid City, executive director of South Dakota Right to Life.

Bartscher would not reveal specifics of bills he expects will be filed this session, but he said Right to Life is working with the governor's office and pro-life lawmakers to take advantage of the apparent legal momentum against abortion rights in the U.S.

"It's our goal to make abortion in the state of South Dakota both illegal and unthinkable," Bartscher said.

Meanwhile, pro-choice advocates in South Dakota are aware that they may have to fight even harder than usual in 2022 to protect a woman's right to choose whether to end a pregnancy.

"We know that we're gearing up for a tough session in terms of reproductive health and reproductive rights," said Kristin Hayward, manager of advocacy and development at Planned Parenthood in South Dakota. "We know that the overwhelmingly conservative legislators are in a space to make legislation on the rights of reproductive health. So while we have to fight every year, we're gearing up this year to expect the expected. This is going to be an extremely stressful next couple months in terms of the work that we're doing."

Bartscher said possible legislation in 2022 could be modeled after highly restrictive laws passed in 2021 in Texas and Mississippi, which some pro-choice advocates worry may essentially make abortions impos-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 5 of 77

sible to get.

In September 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed a Texas law to stand that bans abortion after a doctor can detect a heartbeat in an unborn child, possibly as early as six weeks into pregnancy and before a woman may know she is pregnant. A new Texas law also enables a private citizen to sue abortion providers or anyone involved in helping a woman get an abortion, even someone who drives her to the procedure.

Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on a Mississippi law that bans abortions after 16 weeks, and has yet to rule on the matter. But some legal experts saw the court's questioning as favorable to upholding the Mississippi law, and pro-choice advocates fear the conservative-led court could eventually overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

After the so-called Texas "heartbeat law" was upheld, Noem, a staunch abortion opponent, said on social media: "Following the Supreme Court's decision to leave the pro-life law in place, I have directed the Unborn Child Advocate in my office to immediately review the new law and current South Dakota laws to make sure we have the strongest pro life laws on the books."

During the 2021 session, the South Dakota Legislature passed five measures restricting access to abortion, including one prohibiting a Down Syndrome diagnosis as justification for ending a pregnancy.

Noem recently used an executive order to limit women's ability to get abortion medication through the mail.

In response to questions from News Watch, Noem spokesman Ian Fury did not provide specifics on whether the governor would propose legislation this session or what bills, if any, she may offer.

"Every life deserves protection, and I am committed to taking action to do so," Noem said in an email to News Watch.

Access to abortion is already severely limited in South Dakota compared with other states.

Abortions are performed only two or three days a month at one location in South Dakota — the Planned Parenthood clinic in Sioux Falls, which also provides a wide range of other reproductive-related services, according to Hayward. Doctors who perform abortions must be flown into South Dakota from neighboring states because there are no local providers.

Hayward said that outside the state Legislature, support is strong for keeping abortion legal in South Dakota and that a majority of the state does not want access to abortion further restricted. She noted that statewide referenda in 2006 and 2008 to ban abortions in most instances were both defeated by South Dakota voters.

"When we brought it to a vote in the state, the people stood with us," she said.

As the legislative session approaches, Planned Parenthood is mobilizing members of the medical community who support a woman's right to choose and will seek to bring forward the voices of those in the state who don't want government to intrude in the lives and medical decisions of pregnant women. The group is also encouraging South Dakotans to contact their local legislators to let them know they do not want access to abortion restricted further.

Planned Parenthood is also willing to pursue legal action on any measures that appear to violate any element of constitutional law, Hayward said.

"This goes down to the rights of people at their core, to be able to have privacy and to have rights to their own self," she said. "The state of South Dakota needs to trust the women who reside in the state, trust them 100 percent to make decisions for themselves."

Hayward said pro-choice advocates will aggressively defend a woman's right to abortion just as they would anyone's right to any form of medical care.

"It's not a public health emergency, despite executive orders and language indicating otherwise," Hayward said. "This is private medical care and a discussion between an individual and their doctor, and if you look at it as medical care, shouldn't that person have the right to their own privacy in what medication they take or in what treatment they undergo?"

Hayward said conservative lawmakers in the Legislature should stand on their principles of desiring smaller government when it comes to abortion, just as they do on many other issues.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 6 of 77

"With this conservative super majority in Pierre, they act like they want smaller government, but what they're doing is increasing government intervention in your lives," she said. "What's the next thing to restrict; what's the next thing down the pipe?"

Stronger abortion legislation possible in 2022

The current national legal environment regarding abortion could lead to introduction and consideration of more aggressive legislation on abortion in South Dakota this session compared with past years, according to Republican state Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, a Watertown attorney.

Schoenbeck, a pro-life lawmaker who is president pro tempore in the Senate, said changes in the legal landscape surrounding abortion in America may make some lawmakers likelier to vote for more sweeping or more restrictive abortion legislation this session than in the past.

Given the Supreme Court's upholding of the Texas law and apparent approach to the Mississippi law, South Dakota lawmakers who oppose abortion may back a bill that in the past seemed unconstitutional on its face or that was unlikely to withstand a court challenge.

"In the past, you'll have legislators that wouldn't vote for things that are not realistically going to matter; they'll say, 'I might agree with you, but you're not making progress, you're just making noise,'" said Schoenbeck. "But this session, you'll have legislators who may say, 'Look, the court may let us do more,' so something they might think was a waste of time two years ago, this year they might say, 'I'll vote for that today because I think it can make a difference.'"

Bartscher said pro-life advocates are looking at the Texas and Mississippi laws as potential models for new legislation in South Dakota.

"Definitely they're being looked at as models across the nation; that's the elephant in the middle of the room right now," Bartscher said. "We're looking at that 15-week ban, and we're also looking at the Texas heartbeat bill."

Right to Life of South Dakota has spent the past 51 years lobbying to restrict abortion, Bartscher said, and throughout that time has "continued to chip away to make South Dakota the most pro-life state in the nation."

Bartscher said the anti-abortion movement in South Dakota benefits from having pro-life support from the governor and her entire cabinet, the full congressional delegation and a wide majority of lawmakers. Three legislators serve on the Right to Life board of directors, including Sen. Al Norvstrup, R-Aberdeen, Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, and Rep. Fred Deutsch, R-Florence.

During the annual legislative session, Right to Life representatives are in daily contact with the governor's office and in periodic contact with Noem's office throughout the year, Bartscher said. The group is also working with Mark Miller, the governor's general counsel and interim chief of staff, who also serves as the Unborn Child Advocate in Noem's office.

"Currently, we're working on several pieces of legislation that will be coming this legislative session to strengthen our pro-life values in South Dakota, and whatever pro-life pieces of legislation are submitted, we'll have the support of our lobbying allies across the state, of our pro-life legislators, and of course, we'll have the heart of the governor's office," Bartscher said.

"As we formulate bills, that may include the Mississippi ban and may include a Texas heartbeat bill, but not necessarily so because there's other avenues we can go down to continue to strengthen the current laws in the state of South Dakota," he said.

Poll results viewed through different prisms

The Mason Dixon poll of 500 registered South Dakota voters was conducted in late October and sponsored by News Watch and the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota. The error margin was +/- 4.5%.

Asked whether abortion in South Dakota should be legal, 18.4% of respondents said it should be legal in all circumstances, 19.0% said legal under most circumstances, 38.0% said legal in certain circumstances, 23.0% said not legal under any circumstances, and 1.6% were unsure.

On a subsequent question, whether South Dakota should increase restrictions on abortion, 24.8% of

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 7 of 77

respondents said the state should increase restrictions, 40.2% said restrictions should be left the same, 21.0% wanted restrictions decreased, and 14.0% were unsure.

On both questions, poll results indicated generally stronger support for abortion remaining legal among Democrats and Independents compared with Republicans, and more Republicans than Democrats and Independents wanted restrictions on abortion increased.

The poll provided some interesting results among Republicans in a state with a majority of voters registered with the GOP and where the legislative and executive branches are made up of a super majority of Republicans.

A strong majority of Republicans in the poll (61.8%) said abortion should be legal in most or certain circumstances, and only a third of Republicans (36.1%) said they wanted restrictions on abortion increased.

The News Watch/Chiesman Center polling data was interpreted differently by those on differing sides of the abortion debate. Supporters of a woman's right to choose said the results show that a strong majority of voters want abortion to remain legal and do not want further restrictions enacted on the procedure.

Noem, however, said the polling data indicates strong statewide support for limiting abortion.

"It is encouraging to see that a strong majority of South Dakotans support restrictions on ending the lives of unborn children," Noem wrote to News Watch after the poll results were provided to her office.

Bartscher said the polling data shows a broad level of support for restrictions or a ban on abortion by Republicans but also among many Independents and Democrats. He said national polls consistently show that 75% of Americans support some level of restrictions on abortion, and that the Right to Life movement has gained traction with younger people.

"We're a big tent and we welcome them one and all," he said.

Even if restrictions to abortion are heightened in South Dakota, it is likely that women who want to terminate a pregnancy will still do so, according to a News Watch data analysis in 2021. Using data from health departments in South Dakota and neighboring states, News Watch showed that even when the Sioux Falls clinic closed completely during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, many South Dakota women traveled to other states to get the procedures.

State data show that abortions performed in South Dakota fell from about 400 in 2019 to 125 in 2020, a year in which the clinic ceased providing abortions for seven months. But that year, more than 450 South Dakota women traveled to a different state to obtain an abortion, far more than in a typical year, according to data from neighboring states.

Abortion legislation is one of several areas that civil rights advocates expect to face battles in the 2022 South Dakota legislative session.

Jett Jonelis, advocacy manager for the American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, said lawmakers and Noem also appear intent on trying to limit the rights of transgendered South Dakota residents and to intrude on what is taught in school classrooms.

Bills have already been filed to ban transgendered girls from participating in female athletics on the high school and collegiate levels and to ban teaching of so-called critical race theory in public schools.

"Unfortunately, I don't think it will be better this year as far as protecting the rights of marginalized people and the rights of all South Dakotans" are concerned, Jonelis said.

However, Jonelis said she also expects the current political climate in the state will energize those who want to protect personal freedoms and civil rights.

"I think people are going to be fired up, and I think we will be even stronger and more effective this year as well," she said.

"We have tons of community organizations that are focused on education equity, abortion rights and racial and indigenous justice and free speech."

## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

### School Board Meeting

January 10, 2022 – 7:00 PM – GHS Library Conference Room

#### AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

#### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

#### CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of December 13, 2021 school board meeting as drafted or amended.

#### OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Approval of December 2021 District bills for payment.
3. Approval of December 2021 Financial Report, Custodial Accounts, and Investments.
4. Approval of December 2021 School Lunch Report.
5. Approval of December 2021 School Transportation Report.
6. Continued discussion and necessary action on District response to COVID-19.
  - a. Local COVID-19 Update
  - b. Discussion/Adoption of shortened isolation period for COVID positive individuals
7. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve hiring Barb Hoops, Special Education Paraprofessional, 7 hours/day at \$12.10/hour.
2. Consider proposal from JLG Architects for elementary roofing project.
3. Review preliminary 2022-2023 school calendar.
4. Set date and time for annual school board election – April 12, 2022 (7:00 AM to 7:00 PM), and authorize Business Manager to designate officials, with voting precincts in Andover, Bristol, Columbia, and Groton. [3-year terms expiring: Mrs. Gengerke, Mr. Flihs, Mr. Harder]

#### ADJOURN

## SDHDA Hosting Listening Sessions regarding Housing Finance Programs

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA), in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, will be hosting five listening sessions around the state to solicit comments on the 2022 Annual Action Plan of the Consolidated Plan and the allocation plans for the HOME, Housing Tax Credit, Housing Trust Fund, HOME-American Rescue Plan, Emergency Solutions Grant, Community Development Block Grant, and Housing Opportunity Fund Programs.

The listening sessions are an opportunity for the public to provide their comments, suggestions and ideas prior to drafting the 2022-2023 plans. The public will have another chance to provide written comments once the draft plans have been released in February. Persons interested in providing comments may do so by appearing at one of the listening sessions scheduled for Yankton, Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, Pierre, and Rapid City, or by sending written comments to SDHDA, PO Box 1237, Pierre, SD 57501, by 5 p.m. CST, Feb. 4. The listening sessions will be held at the following locations on the respective dates:

### Yankton

Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022

2:00 p.m. (CST)

Planning and Development District III – Meeting Room  
1808 Summit St.

### Pierre

Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022

2:00 p.m. (CST)

South Dakota Housing Development Authority – Board Room  
3060 E. Elizabeth St.

### Sioux Falls

Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022

9:30 a.m. (CST)

Downtown Sioux Falls Library – Meeting Room A  
200 N. Dakota Ave

### Rapid City

Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2022

10 a.m. (MST)

City Hall Community Room – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
300 6<sup>th</sup> St.

### Aberdeen

Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022

5:30 p.m. (CST)

Public Safety Building – Community Room  
114 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SE

For those unable to attend the meetings in person, the Pierre meeting will also be available via Skype for Business. Be sure to download the application onto your device in plenty of time prior to joining the meeting.

Join by Phone: 844.773.7615

Conference ID: 612350

and/or

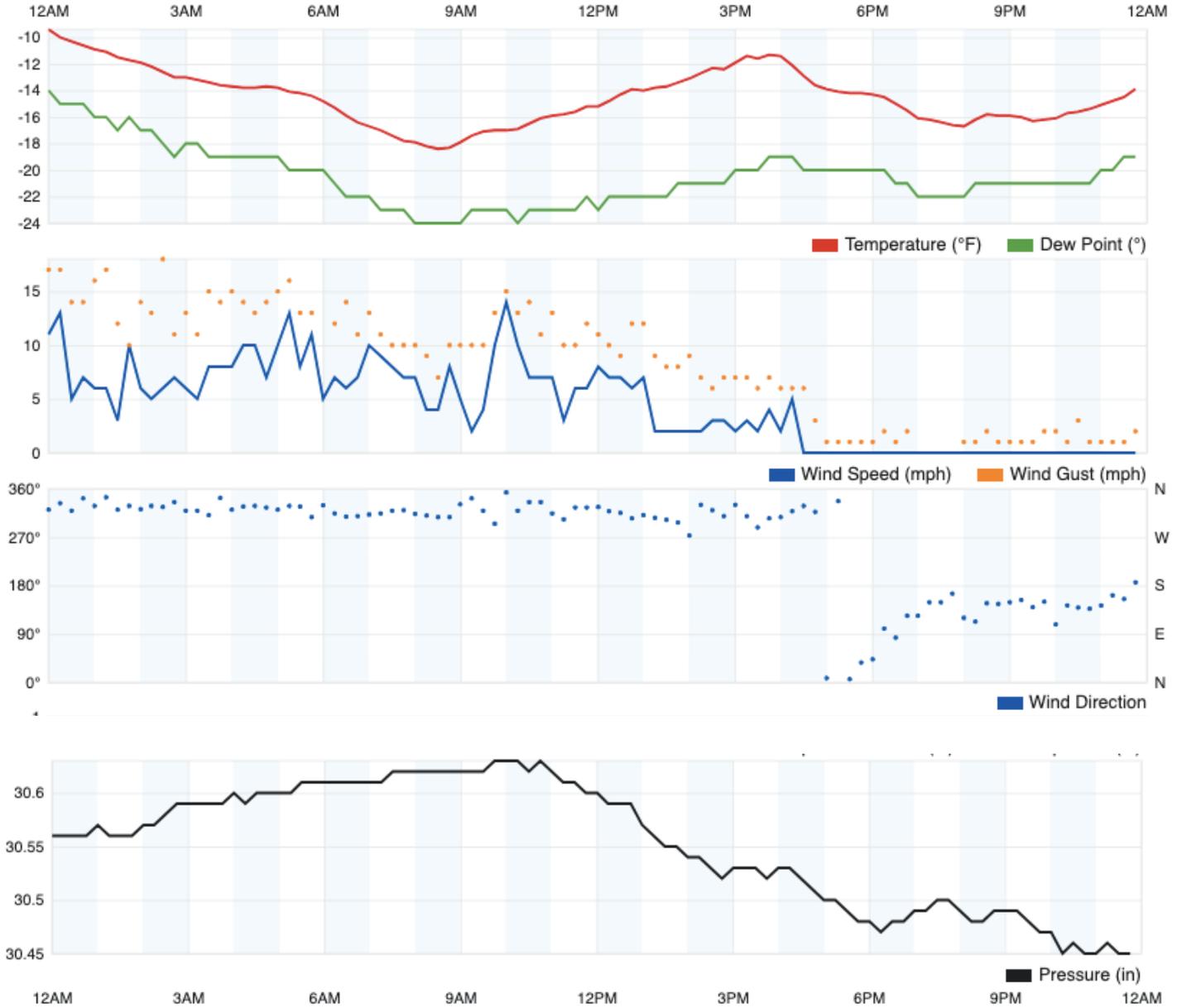
Join by desktop or tablet: <https://meet.sdhda.org/chas/6ZLVZZM6?sl=1>

For more information contact Chas Olson at 605.773.3181 or [Chas@sdhda.org](mailto:Chas@sdhda.org).

# Groton Daily Independent

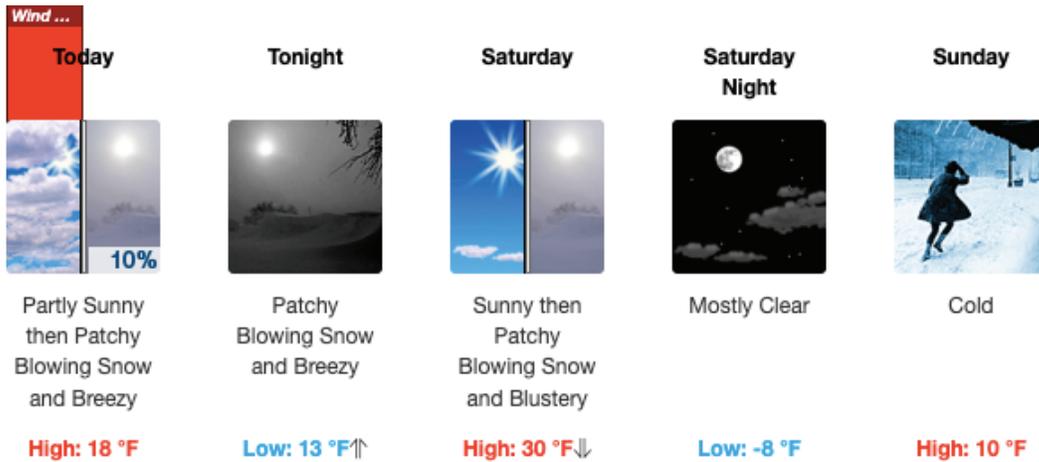
Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 10 of 77

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 11 of 77



## Warming Today & Saturday

Today: Teens and 20s, *becoming breezy*  
Saturday: 20s to mid 30s



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures will rise into the teens to 20s today on breezy winds out of the southeast, and into the 20s to mid 30s Saturday.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 12 of 77

## Bitterly Cold to Dangerous Wind Chills this morning!

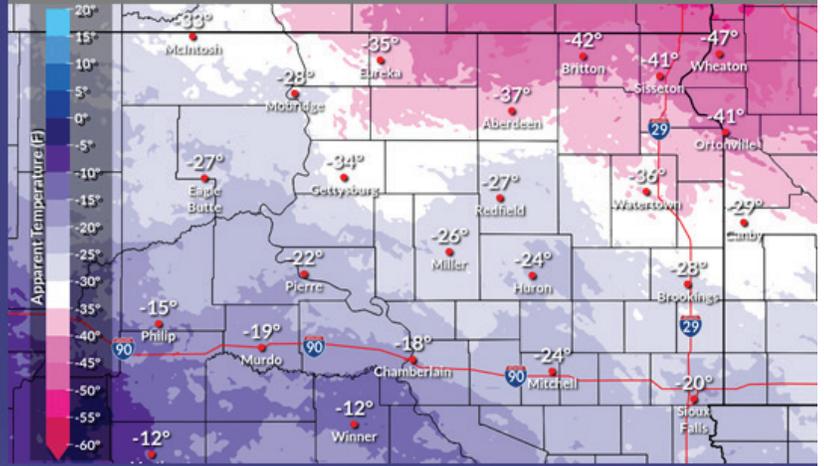
Wind Chills between  $-25$  to  $-45^{\circ}$  can cause frostbite in a matter of minutes to exposed skin



NWS Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 1/7/2022 5:15 AM Central

## Lowest Wind Chills this Morning



## Slight Warm Up this afternoon and Saturday

Highs Today: Teens and 20s (becoming breezy)  
Highs Saturday: 20s to mid 30s

**Bitterly Cold to Dangerous Wind Chills will continue through the morning hours. Bundle up if you have plans to be outdoors!**

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 13 of 77

## Today in Weather History

January 7, 1873: A blizzard raged across the Great Plains. Many pioneers, unprepared for the cold and snow, perished in the tristate region of southwest Minnesota, northwestern Iowa, and southeastern South Dakota. Visibility was down to three feet. Cows suffocated in the deep drifts, and trains were stuck for days. More than 70 people died; some bodies were not found until spring.

The following appears on pages 260-261 in the "History of Dakota Territory" by George Kingsbury. "On the 7th of January, 1873, a brother and sister of "John Foster," aged respectively fourteen and twelve years, went a short distance from home and soon afterward a blizzard came up suddenly. The children wandered in the storm to an old sod house that stood out on the prairie and there sought shelter from the driving snow. However, as the house was roofless, it afforded but poor protection against the blizzard, and the children perished, their bodies being buried in the snow. Our subject and the father were absent from home at the time. Weeks passed, and despite continued searching, the bodies of the children were not found, but in March, a neighbor dreamed that the children were in the old house, and on the 16th of that month, their bodies were found there."

January 7, 1980:

A strong area of low pressure moved out of the northern Rockies across South Dakota and central Minnesota on January 6th and 7th. Heavy snow, along with very high winds, caused widespread blowing and drifting snow with low visibilities. Many roads were closed, and many motorists were stranded. Snowfall amounts across western and northern Minnesota were from 7 to 12 inches.

January 7, 1989: Heavy snowfall of 5 to 19 inches fell in the north and east-central South Dakota on the 6th and 7th. Snow and blowing snow reduced visibilities to near zero in many locations as winds gusted to near 50 mph. Part of Interstate 29 north of Sisseton closed the night of the 7th. Icy roads contributed to a school bus accident that injured eight boys. Extreme wind chills of 30 to 60 below also occurred. Snowfall amounts included 8 inches in Sisseton, with 12 to 19 inches across Marshall and Roberts counties.

This storm also affected northern Minnesota from the 6th through the 8th with heavy snowfall of 8 to 12 inches with local amounts of 24 to 26 inches. The heavy snow was followed by an Arctic intrusion, which brought in 35 to 50 mph winds. Snowdrifts were from 5 to 10 feet in some areas. The strong winds caused near-blizzard conditions along with extremely low wind chills.

1966: Tropical Cyclone Denise dropped 45 inches of rain on La Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean in 12 hours and 71.80 inches of rain in 48 hours through the 8th.

1989: Empty foundations are all that remain of four homes on the southwest end of Allendale, Illinois after an F4 tornado ripped through. The tornado was extremely rare due to its strength and the fact that it occurred so far north during the middle of meteorological winter.

2008: A rare, EF3 tornado tracked across southeastern Wisconsin. Experiencing a tornado in Wisconsin in January is extremely rare. In fact, it had only happened once between 1950 and 2007, when an F3 tornado affected parts of Green and Rock Counties on January 24, 1967. That tornado in South Central Wisconsin was part of a much larger outbreak of 30 tornadoes across mostly Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. Wisconsin ended up with 30 tornadoes in 1967.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 15 of 77



## STAY FOCUSED

"Rivers and streams are crooked because they follow the line of least resistance." This statement is true of flowing water and true of most of us.

Being "steadfast" or committed in our devotion to God is crucial. We are not worth very much to our Savior if He is not our Lord. And if He is the Lord of our lives, others will see His influence in all that we do.

Unfortunately, many who profess to be followers of the Lord are not consistent in their witness for Him - they are not "steadfast." When in church they do as others do, and when they are away from the church, they do whatever is convenient. A psychologist might classify them as having a "split-personality." Like a river or stream, they "follow the line of least resistance."

David did not follow the "line of least resistance." He declared his commitment to God when he wrote, "My heart is steadfast, O God!" He did not leave any room to roam or waver in his willingness to walk with and be faithful to His Lord. He did not stray when life became a struggle or run in defeat when times became difficult. He was one who was "steadfast" and can be seen turning his troubles into triumph when he trusted the Lord.

Those around us need to see us as being "steadfast" in the Lord. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our feet planted in His Word, our ears open to hear His voice, our hearts filled with His compassion and our eyes fixed on His path and our minds centered on doing His will.

Prayer: Lord, it is possible for us to be "steadfast" if we are willing to "stand fast" in our commitment to You. Let us sing in confidence as we stand steadfast. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 57:7 My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 16 of 77

## 2021 Community Events

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 17 of 77

## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

### Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White ..... \$41.54/year
- Colored ..... \$74.55/year
- Colored ..... \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly\* ..... \$21.30/year

\* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent

[www.397news.com](http://www.397news.com)

### Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month ..... \$15.98
- 3 Months ..... \$21.30
- 6 Months ..... \$26.63
- 9 Months ..... \$31.95
- 12 Months ..... \$42.60

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

[paypal.me/paperpaul](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 18 of 77

News from the  Associated Press

## Thursday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Chester 50, McCook Central/Montrose 48

Crawford, Neb. 50, Edgemont 36

Dakota Valley 56, LeMars, Iowa 46

Dell Rapids 69, Canton 66

Ethan 65, Avon 29

Flandreau 63, Parker 52

Garretson 48, Beresford 36

Hamlin 62, Castlewood 46

Hot Springs 64, Bennett County 35

Howard 60, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 30

Lemmon 45, Heart River, N.D. 36

Lennox 61, Rock Valley, Iowa 51

Lyman 54, Gregory 45

Menno 46, Mitchell Christian 35

Milbank 66, Clark/Willow Lake 56

Mobridge-Pollock 54, Miller 46

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 40, Tri-Valley 31

Platte-Geddes 50, Corsica/Stickney 47

Red Cloud 81, Pine Ridge 45

Scotland 42, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 27

Sioux Falls Lincoln 74, Pierre 51

Sioux Falls Washington 67, Aberdeen Central 52

Sioux Valley 71, Baltic 27

Spearfish 85, Hill City 60

Sully Buttes 64, Highmore-Harrold 47

Sundance, Wyo. 63, Newell 34

Timber Lake 51, Faith 49

Viborg-Hurley 51, Hanson 50

Warner 51, Ipswich 50, OT

Waubay/Summit 61, Langford 25

Wessington Springs 61, Sunshine Bible Academy 25

White River 75, Kadoka Area 43

Wolsey-Wessington 52, James Valley Christian 42

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Stanley County vs. McLaughlin, ppd.

Tiospa Zina Tribal vs. Aberdeen Roncalli, ppd.

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Christian 34, Oakes, N.D. 33

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 54, Burke 39

Bridgewater-Emery 53, Freeman 41

Britton-Hecla 50, Webster 40, OT

Canton 69, Dell Rapids 46

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 19 of 77

Crawford, Neb. 52, Edgemont 39  
DeSmet 36, Arlington 34  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 55, Estelline/Hendricks 39  
Dupree 69, Little Wound 50  
Ethan 52, Avon 37  
Florence/Henry 49, Wilmot 21  
Gregory 60, Lyman 33  
Hamlin 57, Castlewood 39  
Harrisburg 46, Bishop Heelan Catholic, Sioux City, Iowa 44  
Heart River, N.D. 52, Lemmon 32  
Herreid/Selby Area 53, Faulkton 43  
Hill City 58, Spearfish 54, OT  
Hitchcock-Tulare 39, Northwestern 31  
Hot Springs 64, Bennett County 35  
Lennox 36, Rock Valley, Iowa 25  
Leola/Frederick 53, Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 43  
Menno 40, Mitchell Christian 14  
Miller 55, Mobridge-Pollock 47  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 64, Tri-Valley 37  
Philip 42, New Underwood 29  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 56, Howard 48  
Scotland 40, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 39  
Sioux Falls Christian 58, Canistota 20  
Sioux Falls Washington 54, Aberdeen Central 27  
St. Thomas More 49, Sturgis Brown 32  
Upton, Wyo. 50, Lead-Deadwood 21  
Viborg-Hurley 61, Hanson 55, 2OT  
Warner 52, Ipswich 37  
Wessington Springs 41, Sunshine Bible Academy 12  
West Central 68, Tea Area 58  
White River 64, Kadoka Area 53  
Wolsey-Wessington 46, James Valley Christian 33  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Colome vs. Kimball/White Lake, ppd.  
Stanley County vs. McLaughlin, ppd.  
Tiospa Zina Tribal vs. Aberdeen Roncalli, ppd.  
Winner vs. Todd County, ppd.

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

## South Dakota makes it harder for women to get abortion meds

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers on Thursday approved Gov. Kristi Noem's new rule for medical abortions that make the state one of the hardest places in the U.S. to get abortion pills.

The rule requires women to return to a doctor to receive the second of two drugs used to carry out a medication abortion. Usually women receive both drugs in one visit, taking the second medication at home.

Doctors and abortion rights advocates decried the rule as a dangerous intrusion on the relationship between doctors and patients.

The Republican governor initiated the rules change in September through an executive order, ahead

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 20 of 77

of the Food and Drug Administration's decision last month to permanently remove a requirement that women seeking abortion pills pick them up in person. The new rules, spurred by the governor's order, had stalled in a legislative committee last month after Republican Sen. Timothy Johns, said he did not see any evidence that the requirement was really necessary for the abortion-seeker's safety, as Noem argued.

Johns on Thursday sided with three other Republicans on the committee in approving the rule change, which is expected to take effect later this month.

Currently, women seeking a medical abortion in South Dakota must visit a provider, wait 72 hours, then return to take the first drug, mifepristone. At that time, they also receive a hormone blocker called misoprostol, which is usually taken in subsequent days to end the pregnancy.

Under the new rule, women will have to wait at least a day after receiving the first drug, then return to receive the second one.

The change comes as the U.S. Supreme Court is considering a case that could severely erode abortion rights that have stood for half a century.

Noem's administration argued the extra visit is necessary to make sure women don't have complications from the drug.

But doctors warned that making it harder for women to get the second drug is dangerous. Forgoing the second drug creates a greater risk of hemorrhage, according to the South Dakota Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

"How many women will be unable to comply, unable to return for the third time in about a week and decide they just have to take their chances and skip taking the second drug?" asked Nancy Turbak Berry, a lawyer representing Planned Parenthood, at the committee's meeting last month. "How many emergency rooms and clinics in the outlying areas of our state are going to be faced with unnecessary medical emergencies?"

One medical trial, which published its findings in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, tried to study the effects of women either not taking the second drug or taking the hormone progesterone, which anti-abortion activists claim may stop a medical abortion. But the trial halted at just 12 participants after three were rushed to the hospital due to bleeding. Two of the women had not received any medication the second round; one had received progesterone.

Dr. Erica Schipper, a Sioux Falls obstetrician and gynecologist, noted that studies on halting the medical abortion process have so far been limited, but pointed out that abortion-causing medication has a long track record of safety.

Since 2000, when medication abortion became available in the United States, the FDA has tracked 26 deaths associated with the drug, though not all of those can be directly attributed to the medication due to underlying health conditions and other factors. Schipper said that constitutes a low risk, considering that drugs like acetaminophen — marketed as Tylenol — account for an estimated 150 deaths every year.

"(The rule) will unfortunately increase government interference in the physician-patient relationship and cause far more problems than it will solve," Schipper said, adding that it could delay treatment for patients who get abortions for medically-necessary reasons and sets a precedent of the state government regulating prescription drugs.

Several physicians opposed to abortions testified to the committee Thursday, asserting that medical abortions do present risks and requiring extra visits helped mitigate it. Dr. Glenn Ridder, who is the medical director at the Alpha Center, a crisis pregnancy center in Sioux Falls, said the third visit was an opportunity to evaluate whether the woman needed to even take the second drug.

In halting Noem's rule last month, two Democrats argued that it was more akin to a law that should be debated in the full Legislature. Noem said she would support legislation to make the rule into law.

But lawmakers on Thursday washed their hands of the debate over the merits of the rule and instead focused on whether the Department of Health made the steps necessary to enact it.

"I'm troubled by it; I truly am troubled," Johns said in voting to approve the rule.

## Environmental justice in spotlight as WH official departs

BY DREW COSTLEY AP Science Writer

The White House's top official on environmental justice is stepping down a year after President Joe Biden took office with an ambitious plan to help disadvantaged communities and overhaul policies that have historically hurt them.

The departure Friday of Cecilia Martinez, senior director for environmental justice at the Council for Environmental Quality, puts a spotlight on both the administration's successes and promises yet to be fulfilled.

"It was a hard decision," Martinez told the Associated Press in an interview Wednesday. She said that after many months of working on Biden's environmental policy, she needed time to rest and be with her family.

Colleagues at the White House and in Congress say her departure is a loss since she played a pivotal role in centering disadvantaged communities in President Biden's environmental and climate policies.

"Her credibility in terms of environmental issues — in particular environmental justice issues — is going to be missed," said Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz, said.

Martinez helped develop then-candidate Joe Biden's environmental justice agenda while he was campaigning by setting up meetings between Biden's team and key environmental justice leaders from around the country. She went on to oversee a review of the Council on Environmental Quality as part of Biden's transition team and was eventually appointed as the top ranking official on environmental justice in the administration.

"Cecilia has been the heart, soul, and mind of the most ambitious environmental justice agenda ever adopted by a President," Brenda Mallory, chair of the Council of Environmental Quality, said in a statement. "She is an unwavering and effective champion for the communities that, for far too long, have been overburdened by pollution and left out of government decisions that affect them."

Through executive orders and legislation, the administration has tried to direct resources toward disadvantaged communities, develop tools to monitor climate and economic justice and pass regulations to clean up the environment.

Some of that was accomplished. The White House's Justice40 initiative mandated that 40% of benefits from federal investments in sustainable and green infrastructure, such as clean energy, pollution cleanup and water improvements, go to disadvantaged communities.

The administration also created a mapping tool that will help identify communities most in need of such investments.

And the Biden administration has restored dozens of environmental regulations rolled back during the Trump administration, including rules that limit the amount of toxic waste coming from coal plants, require extensive environmental reviews of major infrastructure projects, and protect endangered wildlife.

Martinez was central to much of that progress, but she and others in the White House say much more work remains to be done. She said everyone she has worked with on the federal level is "very much interested in communities holding us accountable."

Reflecting on year one of Biden's administration, environmental justice leaders around the country expressed disappointment and frustration at what they call a lack of progress and failure to protect communities most vulnerable to climate change, most exposed to pollution and that have the least access to environmental benefits such as clean water.

"I would say that overall there was some progress made in advancing environmental justice priorities more through executive actions than legislation," said Juan Jhong-Chung, climate justice director at the nonprofit Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition. "But our communities are still waiting for the results on the ground."

Some money from the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill will be spent on projects like cleaning up toxic waste sites.

But a lot more investment that would have gone toward environmental and climate justice initiatives in frontline communities likely will not be part of Biden's "Build Back Better" bill, a signature policy of the administration. Moderate Democrats have demanded cuts and it's unclear what, if any, part of the bill may

eventually pass.

Dallas Goldtooth, campaign organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Biden's promises on environmental justice were an "over-commitment" and that the administration "has not been sincere in actualizing its ambitions."

He also said the Biden administration has failed to protect indigenous communities from projects such as the Line3 and Dakota Access pipelines. Both oil pipelines were met with protests and legal challenges from indigenous and environmental groups who said that construction and operation of the pipelines could threaten the water and air quality in their communities.

But the Biden administration decided not to cancel the Line3 pipeline's permits and to keep the Dakota Access pipeline open while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted an environmental review.

Based on the mixed results of the first year of Biden's environmental justice agenda, many environmental justice advocates are skeptical that the administration can deliver on its ambitious promises.

"It has been disappointing," Goldtooth said. "I've got friends who are in the administration and ... I'm cheering them on, but I also feel for them when their hands are tied."

The White House has not said who might replace Martinez, a longtime environmental justice advocate from New Mexico whose research centered on effects of radiation poisoning and who founded the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit.

## Conditions remain dry throughout Missouri river basin

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Conditions remain dry throughout the Missouri River basin, so officials are predicting that the amount of water flowing down the river this year will be below average again.

The dry forecast reduces the chance of widespread flooding along the river this spring although some local flooding is still possible if chunks of ice block the flow of water or if heavy rains fall on an area.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Thursday that last year was the tenth driest year on record in the Missouri River basin. Roughly 15.2 million acre feet of water flowed down the river last year. This year, runoff is expected to increase to 21.7 million acre feet, but that would still be only 84% of the long-term average.

So the amount of water released from the dams along the river will remain at a low level early this year as officials work to conserve water. But there should be enough water in the river to meet the needs of cities downstream that rely on it.

## South Dakota AG charges former police officer with assault

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota attorney general on Thursday charged a former Sioux Falls police officer with assaulting a man he was arresting last year.

Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg said in a statement that his office will handle the prosecution of former Officer Joseph Larson, who faces a charge of simple assault. The charge is a misdemeanor if a person is convicted of it for the first time. Prosecutors requested a warrant for Larson's arrest on Thursday, according to court documents.

Larson was arresting a man early on July 24 when he allegedly used improper force, repeatedly striking the man in his groin, while trying to buckle him into the back of a patrol car, according to court documents. The man went to the emergency room later that day and reported pain on the left side of his neck, shoulder and ribs.

An investigator with the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation reported in court documents that a Sioux Falls Police Department trainer who reviewed video of the arrest said Larson's blows were outside of officers' training.

It was not clear whether Larson had legal representation, and attempts by The Associated Press to reach him were unsuccessful Thursday. Larson wrote in the arrest report that he had pushed on the man's hip and pelvis area in an attempt to get him to sit down in the patrol car, according to court documents.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 23 of 77

Sioux Falls police referred questions to the mayor's office. Mayor Paul TenHaken said in a statement that Larson didn't work another shift after the department learned of his actions, and the case was immediately referred to the Division of Criminal Investigation.

He said no other details would be provided "to protect the integrity of the ongoing criminal proceedings."

## Deadwood gambling revenue increases in latest fiscal year

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — Casinos aren't the only entities that have profited from a strong year for Deadwood's gambling industry in South Dakota.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism receives about \$3 million in gambling revenue each year. This past fiscal year it received \$3.8 million, KELO-TV reported.

"We are so grateful for all that Deadwood does every year. They continue to innovate, do new things, push the boundaries on what's new because they are always having something new in Deadwood. And what that results in is great numbers, said state tourism spokeswoman Katlyn Svendsen. "They have had fantastic numbers over the last few months. And that means big business for tourism in South Dakota."

City governments, school districts and the Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission also get some of the revenue. About \$17 million in gambling revenue taxes will be distributed this year.

"It's great that as Deadwood does better, so do the entities throughout South Dakota do better and that's really the story today. Everybody is doing a little bit better because Deadwood is doing better," said Mike Rodman, executive director of the Deadwood Gaming Association.

From July of 2020 to June of 2021 Deadwood gambling brought in \$126 million in revenue, a 20% increase over the last fiscal year.

Casinos, like Tin Lizzie, are even more excited to see what this next year will bring.

The Deadwood Sports Betting Legalization Amendment was approved by voters in November 2020. The amendment authorized the Legislature to legalize sports betting in Deadwood.

"Adding Sportsbook that just further adds to the value of Deadwood and the community so we are just looking forward to the things coming next year as well," Josh Thurmes, assistant general manager of Tin Lizzie.

## Some say politics at play in Djokovic detention in Australia

By STEVE McMORRAN Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — On the tennis court, Novak Djokovic's timing is perfect. But when the No.1 player boarded a plane for Australia to play the first Grand Slam of the year with a COVID-19 vaccine exemption, his timing hardly could have been worse.

While he was in the air, the game apparently shifted — and he was denied entry when he landed. Some are saying politics is at play in a country seeing a virus surge and debating how best to beat it back.

Australian officials initially said Djokovic, a vocal skeptic of vaccines who has refused to say if he got the COVID-19 shot, would be given an exemption to stringent vaccine rules and be able to participate in the Australian Open.

But when he landed, his visa was canceled and he's now in an immigration detention hotel while he fights the decision.

It's not clear what caused the reversal, but the news of the exemption led to an outcry that the star was receiving special treatment from Australia, which has seen some of the world's most stringent pandemic rules.

Djokovic's refusal to discuss his vaccine status or explain why his health-based exemption had been granted didn't sit well in Open host Melbourne, where 92% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated and where cases are rising.

Melbourne reported 21,728 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, in addition to six deaths and an increase in hospitalizations. By 9 a.m., 18 state-run PCR testing sites had already reached capacity and closed.

In 2020 and 2021, Melbourne residents spent 256 days under severe restrictions on movements and

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 24 of 77

gatherings.

Against that backdrop, many in Australia have cheered the decision to block Djokovic's arrival.

Columnist Peter FitzSimons wondered how it could be any other way.

"The first grand slam of the year is, after all, held in one of the most locked-down cities on the planet, where the people have made extraordinary sacrifices to keep the population as healthy as possible," he wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald this week. "And he was meant to just waltz on in, be the exception to the rule, just because he could hit a ball well?"

On social media, many shared that sentiment, with one poster complaining that during the lockdowns he could not fly to Australia from Britain to attend family funerals, and so the tennis star should not be allowed in.

But some say the athlete is being made a scapegoat.

"The guy played by the rules, he got his visa, he arrives, he's a nine-time champion and whether people like it or not he's entitled to fair play," Former Australian Open tournament director and Davis Cup player Paul McNamee told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "There's no doubt there's some disconnect between the state and the federal government."

"I hate to think politics are involved, but it feels that way," he added.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who had not initially objected to the decision of Tennis Australia and the Victoria state government to grant Djokovic an exemption, quickly embraced the move by the federal Border Force to deny him entry.

"No one is above these rules," Morrison said. "Our strong border policies have been critical to Australia having one of the lowest death rates in the world from COVID. We are continuing to be vigilant."

In recent months, Morrison's government has pivoted to a living-with-the-virus approach that includes more open borders and a lighter touch on domestic restrictions. He implemented the changes just as the highly contagious omicron variant started to take hold.

Morrison, who is seeking re-election in March, has faced heavy criticism for the new strategy. But he points to Australia's low death rate and strong economy — both among the best in the world — as evidence he can steer the country through the crisis.

"We have no choice but to ride the wave (of omicron cases)," he said. "What's the alternative? What we must do is press on."

Morrison has also been criticized for failing to secure enough rapid antigen tests to take pressure off PCR testing sites where waiting times in some states have exceeded five hours. He has refused to make rapid tests widely available and free.

Australia's most populous state, New South Wales, has been hardest hit by the current omicron surge, which emerged after state Premier Dominic Perrottet relaxed mask mandates and other rules. Other states have been slower to relax virus-related restrictions, creating tension between Australia's states and the federal government.

The cancellation of Djokovic's visa has also rubbed many in his native Serbia, where he has long been a national hero, the wrong way. The Serbian president condemned the move and Djokovic's family voiced anger at what they portrayed as an affront to the Serbian people.

"You, famous Prime Minister (Morrison) of the faraway naturally beautiful country, are behaving according to your own principles, which have nothing to do with us and our principles," Djokovic's father Srđan told reporters. "We are humans, and you, sir, are not."

Djokovic has been left to wait out the court process at a Melbourne hotel that also houses refugees and asylum-seekers who have been transferred from Australia's off-shore detention centers. In October, a COVID-19 outbreak at the hotel infected about half of the 46 asylum-seekers then being held there.

Djokovic's brother Djordje said the tennis star had been taken "to a dirty room without any belongings."

"He was treated like a criminal, while he is a healthy and decent man and a sportsman who has not endangered anyone's life and has not committed any federal or legal offence," Djordje added.

The process that led to the original decision to grant Djokovic an exemption now is under scrutiny. Ten-

nis Australia insists the exemption was granted by an independent panel of medical experts, unaware of whose applications they were assessing.

The cases of two other Australian Open players who also received health-based vaccine exemptions are currently being closely examined.

The Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported Friday that Renata Voracova, a 38-year-old doubles player from the Czech Republic, also had her visa canceled and was taken to the same hotel where Djokovic is staying. Tennis Australia and Australia's Home Affairs department did not immediately respond to calls for confirmation.

It remained unclear who the third player was.

## **Kazakh president: Forces can shoot to kill to quell unrest**

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Kazakhstan's president authorized security forces on Friday to shoot to kill those participating in unrest whom he called "terrorists," opening the door for a dramatic escalation in a crackdown on anti-government protests that have turned violent.

The Central Asian nation this week experienced its worst street protests since gaining independence from the Soviet Union three decades ago, and dozens have been killed in the unrest. The demonstrations began over a near-doubling of prices for a type of vehicle fuel but quickly spread across the country, reflecting wider discontent with authoritarian rule.

In a televised address to the nation, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev used harsh rhetoric, referring to those involved in the turmoil as "terrorists," "bandits" and "militants" — though it is unclear how peaceful protests gathered steam and then descended into violence.

"I have given the order to law enforcement and the army to shoot to kill without warning," Tokayev said. "Those who don't surrender will be eliminated."

He also blasted calls for talks with the protesters made by some countries as "nonsense." "What negotiations can be held with criminals, murderers?" Tokayev asked.

Amid the growing crackdown, internet service has been severely disrupted and sometimes blocked, and several airports closed, including one in Almaty, the country's largest city — making it difficult to get information about what's happening inside the country. Cellphone service have been severely disrupted as well.

Tokayev has also called on a Russia-led military alliance, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, for help, and troops began arriving Thursday.

Kazakhstan's Interior Ministry reported Friday that security forces have killed 26 protesters during the unrest, which escalated sharply on Wednesday. Another 18 were wounded and more than 3,000 people have been detained. A total of 18 law enforcement officers were reported killed, and over 700 injured.

The numbers could not be independently verified, and it was not clear if more people may have died in the melee as the protests turned extremely violent, with people storming government buildings and setting them ablaze.

More skirmishes in Almaty were reported on Friday morning. Russia's state news agency Tass reported that the building occupied by the Kazakh branch of the Mir broadcaster, funded by several former Soviet states, was on fire.

But the Almaty airport — stormed and seized earlier by the protesters — was back under the control of Kazakh law enforcement and CSTO forces, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Friday. The airport will remain shut until Friday evening, local TV station Khabar 24 reported, citing the airport's spokespeople.

Tokayev indicated on Friday morning that some measure of calm had been restored, saying "local authorities are in control of the situation." Still, he added said that "counterterrorist actions" should continue.

Tokayev has vacillated between trying to mollify the protesters — including issuing a 180-day price cap on vehicle fuel and a moratorium on utility rate increases — and promising harsh measures to quell the unrest.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 26 of 77

Worries that a broader crackdown could be on the horizon grew after Tokayev called on the CSTO for help. The operation is its first military action, an indication that Kazakhstan's neighbors, particularly Russia, are concerned that the unrest could spread.

Kazakh officials have insisted that troops from the CSTO alliance, which includes several former Soviet republics, will not be fighting the demonstrators, and instead will take on guarding government institutions. It wasn't immediately clear whether the foreign troops deployed thus far were at all involved in suppressing the unrest.

In his address to the nation, Tokayev repeated his allegations that "foreign actors" along with "independent media" helped incite the turmoil.

He offered no evidence for those claims, but such rhetoric has often been used by former Soviet nations, most prominently Russia and Belarus, which sought to suppress mass anti-government demonstrations in recent years.

Kazakh media cited foreign ministry officials as saying that a total of 2,500 troops from CSTO nations have arrived to Kazakhstan, and all of them were deployed to Almaty.

In other parts of the country life started to return to normal. In the capital, Nur-Sultan, access to the internet has been partially restored, and train traffic has been resumed across Kazakhstan.

Tokayev said in his address to the nation that he decided to restore internet access in certain regions of the country "for certain time intervals," without going into details where exactly the internet will be restored, where, or for how long.

## **"A hurricane:" Virus storm sends test-makers into overdrive**

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

GUIPRY, France (AP) — As countless millions of people in Europe waste hours in lines for COVID-19 tests and scour their nasal passages with self-test kits at home, at the other end of the chain, workers are straining to meet the demand.

At NG Biotech, production lines are humming, spitting out freshly packaged tests every second or so. The French start-up is recruiting more hands so its workforce that has already expanded six-fold during the pandemic can manufacture night and day.

"It has been like a hurricane," says Milovan Stankov-Pugès, co-founder and CEO of the test-kit manufacturer in western France's Brittany region.

The wildfire spread across Europe of the highly contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus is driving soaring needs for testing. Infection-detection is buckling under the strain of unprecedented numbers of cases. Some French laboratories are running short of reactive agents needed for PCR tests and are having to ration their use. In the past week, France has recorded an average of more than 200,000 new cases per day.

Schools in France are distributing home test kits to children, to try to slow rampaging infections so classes can stay open. The government has softened self-isolation rules, trying to limit disruption to the economy and essential services by allowing people to return to work faster after testing positive. The fully vaccinated can now break quarantine after five days with a negative test and no symptoms.

In an extraordinary stopgap measure to ease staff shortages at hospitals, France is even allowing health care workers who are infected with the coronavirus but have few or no symptoms to keep treating patients rather than self-isolate.

Securing tests has become a battle, sometimes with long lines. French supermarkets have exceptionally been granted permission for the month of January to sell self-testing kits that previously were available only in pharmacies.

"Under the legislation in France three or four years ago, it would have been inconceivable to distribute home tests to detect a virus," said Stankov-Pugès, as his workers furiously boxed tests for shipment.

"In the face of necessity, everyone broke down the barriers and was pragmatic and arranged things so

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 27 of 77

the easiest tools to use could also be used at home.”

Before the sweep of the delta and then the omicron variant prompted governments in Europe and elsewhere to bring back unpopular restrictions and roll out vaccination boosters, NG Biotech was producing around 500,000 tests per month.

The company ramped up to more than 2.5 million tests delivered in December and is now scaling up again with the aim of soon reaching 5 million per month, Stankov-Pugès said.

“This is a 10-times increase in only three months,” he said. “This wave took everyone by surprise.”

## Top-ranked Novak Djokovic spends religious day in detention

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

Regardless of who made an error on the visa or the vaccination waiver or whatever, the reality Friday for tennis No. 1 Novak Djokovic was spending one of his important religious holidays in an Australian detention hotel working on his challenge against deportation.

Djokovic has been receiving calls from Serbia, including from his parents and the president, hoping to boost his spirits. A priest from the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church in Melbourne sought permission from immigration authorities to visit the nine-time Australian Open champion to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas.

“Our Christmas is rich in many customs and it is so important that a priest visits him,” the church’s dean, Milorad Locard, told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. “The whole thing around this event is appalling. That he has to spend Christmas in detention ... it is unthinkable.”

Djokovic’s supporters gathered outside the Park Hotel, used to house refugees and asylum seekers near downtown Melbourne, waving flags and banners.

They mixed with human rights advocates who were there more to highlight the plight of other longer-term people in detention, many who have long complained about their living conditions and exposure to the coronavirus in the pandemic.

A day after both the prime minister and the home affairs minister said it was the responsibility of the individual to have their visa documents in order, it seemed to dawn on people locally that whatever mistakes happened in the process, one of the highest-profile athletes in the world was in detention.

The Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported later Friday that Renata Voracova, a 38-year-old doubles player from the Czech Republic, had her visa canceled and was taken to the same hotel where Djokovic is staying. Tennis Australia and Australia’s Home Affairs department did not immediately respond to calls for confirmation.

Djokovic flew to Australia confident he had everything he needed to compete, given he had been approved by Victoria state government for a medical exemption.

That same evidence didn’t comply with the Australian government’s regulations.

So, instead of preparing to defend his Australian Open title, and bid to win a men’s-record 21st major title, he’s preparing to go to the Federal Circuit Court on Monday to challenge his visa cancellation and deportation.

Attention is moving away from Djokovic’s vaccination status — a touchy topic in a city where people spent so long in lockdown and were subject to harsh travel restrictions — and onto questions about how the nine-time Australian Open champion could have wound up in this situation.

Even some who have been critical of Djokovic in the past are now in his corner.

“Look, I definitely believe in taking action, I got vaccinated because of others and for my mums health, but how we are handling Novak’s situation is bad, really bad,” Nick Kyrgios, an Australian player and outspoken critic of some of Djokovic’s opinions on vaccinations, posted on Twitter. “This is one of our great champions but at the end of the day, he is human. Do better.”

Jelena Djokovic posted on social media to thank her husband’s supporters.

“Thank you dear people, all around the world for using your voice to send love to my husband,” she posted on Twitter. “I am taking a deep breath to calm down and find gratitude (and understanding) in this

moment for all that is happening.”

Critics of the medical exemptions have said if there were no loopholes, then nobody would be in Djokovic’s position right now. And while players have sympathized with Djokovic’s situation, some have said getting vaccinated would have prevented the problems.

Djokovic has been a vaccine skeptic, and has declined to acknowledge if he’s had shots for COVID-19, but there can’t be any doubt he traveled to Australia believing his paperwork was all in order.

The medical-exemption applications from players, their teams and tennis officials were vetted by two independent panels of medical experts at the state level. Djokovic had an approved exemption allowing him into the tournament.

But when he landed at the airport, the Australian government’s Border Force canceled Djokovic’s visa, saying he “failed to provide appropriate evidence to meet the entry requirements.”

Australia’s strict COVID-19 laws dictate that incoming travelers must have had two shots of an approved vaccine, or must have an exemption with a genuine medical reason, such as an acute condition, to avoid quarantine.

Tennis Australia said Djokovic’s request for an exemption “was granted following a rigorous review process.” Neither Tennis Australia nor Djokovic revealed the reason he sought an exemption.

The Australian Border Force rejected his exemption as invalid, canceled his visa and then moved him to the immigration hotel. His lawyers worked urgently to ensure he could stay until Monday, when the a federal judge will hear his challenge, a week before the Australian Open is set to start.

After the news broke of the visa cancellation, Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley defended the “completely legitimate application and process” and insisted there was no special treatment for Djokovic.

He said only 26 people connected with the tournament applied for a medical exemption — to avoid the rule that all players, staff, officials and fans needed to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 to enter Melbourne Park — and only a “handful” were granted. None, except Djokovic, who posted it himself on social media, were publicly identified. However, Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews on Friday said two others were under investigation.

Tiley hasn’t commented officially since then.

## **Polish leader admits country bought powerful Israeli spyware**

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Poland’s most powerful politician has acknowledged that the country bought advanced spyware from the Israeli surveillance software maker NSO Group, but denied that it was being used to target his political opponents.

Jaroslav Kaczynski, the leader of Poland’s ruling conservative party, Law and Justice, said in an interview that the software, Pegasus, is now being used by secret services in many countries to combat crime and corruption. He noted that Pegasus represents a technological advancement over earlier monitoring systems, which did not allow the services to monitor encrypted messages.

“It would be bad if the Polish services did not have this type of tool,” Kaczynski said in an interview to be published in the Monday edition of the weekly “Sieci,” excerpts of which were published Friday by the wPolityce.pl news portal.

The interview follows exclusive reports by The Associated Press that Citizen Lab, a cyber watchdog group at the University of Toronto, found that three Polish government critics were hacked with NSO’s Pegasus spyware.

On Thursday, Amnesty International independently verified the finding by Citizen Lab that Sen. Krzysztof Brejza had been hacked multiple times in 2019 when he was running the opposition’s parliamentary election campaign. Text messages stolen from Brejza’s phone were doctored and aired by state-controlled TV as part of a smear campaign in the heat of the race, which the populist ruling party went on to narrowly win.

Brejza now maintains that the election was not fair since the ruling party would have had access to his campaign’s tactical thinking and plans.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 29 of 77

The revelations have rocked Poland, drawing comparisons to the 1970s Watergate scandal in the United States and eliciting calls for an investigative commission in parliament.

Kaczynski said he sees no reason to set up such a commission, and he denied that the surveillance played any role in the outcome of the 2019 elections.

"There is nothing here, no fact, except the hysteria of the opposition. There is no Pegasus case, no surveillance," Kaczynski said. "No Pegasus, no services, no secretly obtained information played any role in the 2019 election campaign. They lost because they lost. They shouldn't look for such excuses today."

The other two Polish targets confirmed by Citizen Lab were Roman Giertych, a lawyer who represents opposition politicians in a number of politically sensitive cases, and Ewa Wrzosek, an independent-minded prosecutor.

Kaczynski's allies had previously denied that Poland purchased and used Pegasus.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki called the Citizen Lab-AP findings "fake news" and suggested a foreign intelligence service could have done the spying — an idea dismissed by critics who said no other government would have any interest in the three Polish targets.

Deputy Defense Minister Wojciech Skurkiewicz in late December said "the Pegasus system is not in the possession of the Polish services. It is not used to track or surveil anyone in our country."

Media reports say Poland purchased Pegasus in 2017, using money from the so-called Justice Fund, which is meant to help the victims of crimes and rehabilitate criminals. According to investigations by the TVN broadcaster and Gazeta Wyborcza daily, it is used by the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, a special service created to combat corruption in public life that is under the political control of the ruling party.

"The public money was spent on an important public purpose, related to the fight against crime and the protection of citizens," Kaczynski said.

Dozens of high-profile cases of Pegasus abuse have been uncovered since 2015, many by a global media consortium last year, with the NSO Group malware employed to eavesdrop on journalists, politicians, diplomats, lawyers and human rights activists from the Middle East to Mexico.

The Polish hacks are considered particularly egregious because they occurred not in a repressive autocracy but in a European Union member state.

## Billionsaire's looted art still on display at Israel Museum

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — One of the Israel Museum's biggest patrons, American billionaire Michael Steinhardt, approached the flagship Israeli art institution in 2007 with an artifact he had recently bought: a 2,200-year-old Greek text carved into limestone.

But shortly after it went on display, an expert noticed something odd — two chunks of text found a year earlier during a dig near Jerusalem fit the limestone slab like a jigsaw puzzle. It soon became clear that Steinhardt's tablet came from the same cave where the other fragments were excavated.

Last month, Steinhardt surrendered the piece, known as the Heliodorus Stele, and 179 other artifacts valued at roughly \$70 million as part of a landmark deal with the Manhattan District Attorney's office to avoid prosecution. Eight Neolithic masks loaned by Steinhardt to the Israel Museum for a major exhibition in 2014 were also seized under the deal, including two that remain exhibited at the museum.

Museums worldwide are facing greater scrutiny over the provenance — or chain of ownership — of their art, particularly those looted from conflict zones or illegally plundered from archaeological sites. There are growing calls for such items to be returned to their countries of origin.

Donna Yates, a criminologist specializing in artifact smuggling at Maastricht University, said that several recent scandals involving looted artifacts — such as the Denver Art Museum's return of Cambodian antiquities — are "causing museums to reconsider the ownership history of some of the objects that they have."

"They can't really afford the public embarrassment of constantly being linked to this kind of thing, because museums aren't wealthy and many of them hold a place of public trust," she said.

In addition to the Heliodorus Stele and two of the ancient masks, at least one other Steinhardt-owned

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 30 of 77

artifact in the Israel Museum is of uncertain provenance: a 2,800-year-old inscription on black volcanic stone. The museum's display states the origin as Moab, an ancient kingdom in modern-day Jordan.

How it got to Jerusalem remains unclear.

Steinhardt gave the Royal Moabite Inscription to the museum on extended loan in 2002, shortly after buying it from a licensed Israel dealer in Jerusalem, said Amir Ganor, who heads the Israel Antiquities Authority's theft prevention unit.

That dealer, who confirmed the deal but spoke on condition of anonymity because of the legal questions surrounding the item, told The Associated Press that he obtained the inscription from a Palestinian colleague in Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, who didn't specify its provenance.

"I don't know how it got to the dealer in Jerusalem," Ganor said. He said it could have come from the West Bank, neighboring Jordan or through Dubai, a longtime antiquities hub.

The Israel Museum declined interview requests and refused to show the artifact's documentation.

But in a statement, it denied wrongdoing, saying it "consistently follows the applicable regulations at the time the works are loaned." It said all displays are "in full cooperation" with the antiquities authority.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office said the Moabite Inscription wasn't part of the Steinhardt investigation and declined to discuss the item.

James Snyder, who was the Israel Museum's director from 1997 to 2016, said all artifacts coming to the museum have their provenance checked by the IAA before they're exhibited, and that Steinhardt's other looted artworks "came with documentation of legal ownership."

"We were given documentation of legal purchase, it was approved to come in on loan and it was approved to be returned" by the authority, Snyder said.

Israel has a legal antiquities market run by some 55 licensed dealers. They are allowed to sell items discovered before 1978, when a law took effect making all newfound artifacts state property.

This market has provided an outlet for the laundering of smuggled and plundered antiquities from around the Middle East that are given fabricated documentation by dealers in Israel. Israel began closing that loophole in 2016, when it mandated a digital database of dealers' artifacts.

Israel recently returned smuggled antiquities found in dealers' stores to Egypt and Libya. Other antiquities stolen from Iraq and Syria — including thousands of cuneiform tablets purchased by Hobby Lobby owner Steve Green in 2010 — were smuggled to Israeli dealers before being sold to collectors with fraudulent documentation.

Morag Kersel, archaeology professor at DePaul University in Illinois, said the wanton plunder of archaeological sites across the Middle East ultimately "is all demand driven."

"Looters do this because there's someone like Steinhardt who's willing to pay money and buy things that come straight out of the ground," she said.

Under the deal, the Manhattan District Attorney seized 180 of Steinhardt's artifacts and will repatriate them to their respective countries. Steinhardt also agreed to a lifetime ban from acquiring antiquities — though it is unclear how that ban will be enforced.

Steinhardt, 81, is a longtime patron of the Israel Museum and many other Israeli institutions, including a natural history museum at Tel Aviv University bearing his name. Since 2001, his family foundation has donated over \$6.6 million to the Israel Museum, according to partial U.S. tax filings.

Steinhardt was not accused of plundering any items himself and has said he did not commit any crimes. But the DA's office said he "knew, or should have ascertained by reasonable inquiry" that the antiquities were stolen.

Steinhardt declined an interview request. His office issued a brief statement saying the Manhattan DA "did not challenge Mr. Steinhardt's right, title, or interest to any of the artifacts" other than those in the settlement.

The DA began investigating Steinhardt's massive antiquities collection in 2017 after he loaned a Bull's Head sculpture to the Metropolitan Museum of Art that had been plundered from a site in Lebanon.

The DA says the three items at the Israel Museum are "effectively seized in place," and has opened talks

with Israel to coordinate the return of 28 additional items. It said Steinhardt "has been unable to locate" the final nine items traced to Israel.

Of those 40 artifacts, more than half are believed to have been plundered from West Bank sites, according to court documents. An additional nine artifacts from Jordan, many sold to Steinhardt through Israel's licensed antiquities market, are also being repatriated.

Neither the Jordanian government nor the Palestinian Tourism and Antiquities Ministry responded to requests for comment. Under interim peace deals in the mid-1990s, the fate of items taken from the occupied West Bank is to be part of a still elusive peace deal.

The Israel Museum said it had only recently learned about the settlement and is currently examining the matter.

For now, the plundered artifacts in the museum still bear Steinhardt's name.

## Families despair over post-holiday return to remote learning

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Parent Latonya Peterson sums up her frustration over Detroit schools returning — at least temporarily — to virtual learning in three short words: "I hate it."

Facing a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Detroit district this week joined a growing number of others in moving classes online after the winter break. The shift involving 50,000 students once again leaves parents juggling home and work schedules around the educational needs of their children.

A single parent who works more than 60 hours each week at two jobs, Peterson sometimes had to miss work to help her teenage son during more than a year of online learning.

"I will have to take time off, but I'm looking at how long this is going to last. You only get so many off days and so many paid time off days," Peterson said Wednesday, a day after the district announced that students would resume classes at home with laptops through at least Jan. 14.

The vast majority of U.S. districts appear to be returning to in-person learning, but other large school systems including those in Newark, New Jersey, Milwaukee and Cleveland have gone back to remote learning as infections soar and sideline staff members. Dozens of smaller districts have followed, including many around Detroit, Chicago and Washington.

The disruptions also raise alarms about risks to students. Long stretches of remote learning over the last two years have taken a toll, leaving many kids with academic and mental health setbacks that experts are still trying to understand.

President Joe Biden, who campaigned on a promise to reopen classrooms, is pressing schools to remain open. With vaccines and regular virus testing, his administration has said there's no reason to keep schools closed.

"Look, we have no reason to think at this point that omicron is worse for children than previous variants," Biden told reporters on Tuesday. "We know that our kids can be safe when in school."

But the reality for some districts is not so simple: Testing supplies have been scarce, and many districts face low vaccine uptake in their communities. In Detroit, just 44% of residents 5 and older have received a vaccine dose, compared with a statewide rate of 63%.

In a letter to parents, Detroit Superintendent Nikolai Vitti said that in light of low vaccination rates among students and families, a return to the classroom would lead to "extreme levels of positive cases."

"The only way we're going to get to the other side of this pandemic is if we move to higher rates of vaccination," Vitti said.

The closures are often driven by waves of teachers calling in sick. More than a third of Philadelphia's 216 public schools have switched to remote learning through at least Friday, drawing an outcry from families that were given little time to prepare.

On Thursday, Chicago students remained out of school for a second straight day after school leaders failed to reach an agreement with the teachers union over virus safety protocols. The union wants to revert to remote instruction because of the infection surge.

In Detroit, both Peterson and her son, Joshua Jackson, 16, are vaccinated. Joshua would rather stay in-person and said it was more difficult for him to focus in a virtual classroom.

"I feel like I learned less," the high school junior said. "I'm worried that we won't go back to class. They (the district) did it before and said it only would be a short while. It turned out to be the whole school year."

Officials in districts that are returning to online instruction insist the move is only temporary, with most intending to go back to in-person classes within a week or two. As infections reach record levels in some areas, some parents say it's the right move.

Nicole Berry's three children returned to Detroit classrooms last fall, but she has been keeping them home since she caught COVID-19 herself around Thanksgiving and got scared. Detroit gives families the option of full-time remote learning.

Berry, 48, juggles teaching them on her own while also working more than 40 hours per week.

"My children weren't going back anyway. I'd already made the decision," she said.

In Chicago, Jennifer Baez said she hopes the district will allow remote learning until the surge slows down. She and one of her sons got sick recently with COVID-19. She is not certain her kids will keep their masks on or that other precautions are in place.

Baez works remotely as a legal secretary. Because of her youngest son's developmental delays, she is forced to sit with him for much of the school day in his general education classes, where he typically has a classroom aide.

"You just kind of learn to roll with the punches. I feel like as a mother we adapt," Baez said. "If I got to be a lunch lady and a gym teacher and whatever else on top of my law office job, we just do it. Same way we've been doing it since 2020."

## Some virus restrictions back in Australia as omicron surges

SYDNEY (AP) — Australia's most populous state reinstated some restrictions and suspended elective surgeries on Friday as COVID-19 cases surged to another record.

New South Wales reported 38,625 new cases, prompting Premier Dominic Perrottet to announce regulations banning dancing and singing in pubs and nightclubs, and delaying non-urgent surgeries until mid-February.

Hospitalizations reached 1,738 in the state on Friday and health authorities warned that the number could spike to 4,700 or even 6,000 in a worst-case scenario within the next month. Hospitals already are under strain as around 3,800 medical professionals are in isolation after testing positive for COVID-19.

Perrottet acknowledged "it has been an incredibly challenging two years" but said the reintroduction of the protocols was "sensible and proportionate."

The head of the Australian Medical Association criticized Perrottet on Friday, saying the spike in case numbers and hospitalizations resulted from his decision to relax restrictions just as the omicron variant began to surge in the state.

"These new restrictions that we understand may come in today might slightly slow the spread but there's no way they're going to turn this curve around," AMA president Omar Khorshid told the 10 Network. "Everyone is either immune or they've caught the virus."

"It's going to take some weeks to reach this peak and therefore we just have to brace ourselves," Khorshid added.

Deputy health secretary Susan Pearce predicted that New South Wales would be over the worst of the omicron surge by the middle of next month.

"Overseas experiences have shown that this will rise quickly and pass quickly," Pearce told reporters. "We believe by the middle of February we will be certainly well past the peak of this."

The broader COVID-19 picture was similar across Australia on Friday with record case numbers in most states. More than 76,000 new cases were recorded nationwide, with more than 3,600 people in hospitals, including 223 in intensive care.

Victoria state, where tennis star Novak Djokovic was spending his second day in quarantine, reported

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 33 of 77

21,728 cases and will introduce new rules requiring anyone with a positive rapid antigen test to isolate and inform close contacts.

Queensland reported 10,953 cases as Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk encouraged people to work from home if possible.

## How do I know if I have a cold, the flu or COVID-19?

By VICTORIA MILKO AP Science Writer

How do I know if I have a cold, the flu or COVID-19?

Experts say testing is the best way to determine what you have since symptoms of the illnesses can overlap.

The viruses that cause colds, the flu and COVID-19 are spread the same way — through droplets from the nose and mouth of infected people. And they can all be spread before a person realizes they're infected.

The time varies for when someone with any of the illnesses will start feeling sick. Some people infected with the coronavirus don't experience any symptoms, but it's still possible for them to spread it.

Cough, fever, tiredness and muscle aches are common to both the flu and COVID-19, says Kristen Coleman, as assistant research professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. Symptoms specific to COVID-19 include the loss of taste or smell.

Common colds, meanwhile, tend to be milder with symptoms including a stuffy nose and sore throat. Fevers are more common with the flu.

Despite some false portrayals online, the viruses have not merged to create a new illness. But it's possible to get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time, which some are calling "flurona."

"A co-infection of any kind can be severe or worsen your symptoms altogether," says Coleman. "If influenza cases continue to rise, we can expect to see more of these types of viral co-infections in the coming weeks or months."

With many similar symptoms caused by the three virus types, testing remains the best option to determine which one you may have. At-home tests for flu aren't as widely available as those for COVID-19, but some pharmacies offer testing for both viruses at the same time, Coleman notes. This can help doctors prescribe the right treatment.

Laboratories might also be able to screen samples for various respiratory viruses, including common cold viruses. But most do not have the capacity to routinely do this, especially during a COVID-19 surge, Coleman says.

Getting vaccinated helps reduce the spread of the viruses. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it is safe to get a flu and COVID-19 shot or booster at the same time.

## Americans do not remember Jan. 6 Capitol riot as one people

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Side by side at ground zero on the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a Republican governor read from the Gettysburg Address and a Democratic governor read from the Declaration of Independence as Americans everywhere mourned and remembered as one people.

On Thursday, in contrast, the anniversary of the assault on the U.S. Capitol exposed a nation of two peoples.

Democrats, led by one angry president standing in the gleaming hall of statues overrun a year ago by the pro-Trump mob, remembered. Republicans in large measure moved on.

How a nation mourns and remembers has long been fundamental to America's glossy ideal of shared values, common purpose and familiar sense of history. The division on this day showed a country far removed from that.

The counterpoint to President Joe Biden's plea to save democracy and to the moment of mute remembrance led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was a day of silence from most of the Republican lawmakers

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 34 of 77

who, just like the Democrats, had been hunted by the attackers.

"How dare anyone — anyone — diminish, belittle or deny the hell they were put through?" Biden demanded. "We saw it with our own eyes. ... The lies that drive the anger and madness we saw in this place, they have not abated."

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina acknowledged Jan. 6, 2021, was a "dark day in American history." But he accused Biden of mining it for political gain.

"What brazen politicization of January 6 by President Biden," he tweeted.

Outside Washington, vigils planned for the day were scattered and largely split along ideological or party lines.

It was wholly unlike Sept. 11, 2002, when doves were sent aloft, cannons fired and choirs across the country sang Mozart's Requiem. New York's Republican governor, New Jersey's Democratic governor, the ex-mayor (and future Trump lawyer) Rudy Giuliani and Republican President George W. Bush joined New York City crowds in commemoration of a day honored worldwide.

In that unified, wounded and vengeful time, Americans were gung-ho about a war in Afghanistan that would last so long it was fought by troops who weren't born when it began.

For his Jan. 6 remarks, Biden chose not the White House but the scene of the crime, which is also the seat of democracy. He spoke from a mirror-polish circular platform in Statuary Hall. He and Vice President Kamala Harris had no live audience before them for their televised remarks.

Biden's raw edge showed through his carefully-scripted speech as he called out Donald Trump repeatedly, not by name but by position — "the former president." "He's a defeated former president," Biden said, practically spitting out "defeated."

"You can't love your country only when you win," he said of the attackers whom some Republicans brand as "American patriots."

With revulsion, he recalled the American flags brandished as spears by the rioters and the mock gallows they erected outside for Vice President Mike Pence when he was inside, preparing to carry out his ceremonial duty of affirming the election result.

"I will allow no one to place a dagger at the throat of democracy," Biden said.

The events of that day brought a measure of unity in the first shockwaves as top Republicans joined Democrats in assailing Trump's exhortation to his followers to "fight like hell" at the Capitol. Graham notably said he was through with Trump, a separation that could be measured in weeks, not the forever he suggested.

That commonality dissolved within hours, after shaken lawmakers regrouped to certify Biden's victory. Trump's hold on the party has only tightened since.

Many Republican officials, it is said, remain aghast at Trump's machinations. But you have to take a Democrat's word for that.

"Just about every one of them is so afraid of Donald Trump," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York told CBS.

"Even when they whisper to us that they don't like what he's saying, don't agree with what he's saying, they're afraid to resist him. He has a power over the Republican Party right now that is damaging."

Polls help illustrate that power, suggesting that two-thirds of Republicans believe Trump's thoroughly debunked allegations that the election was fraudulent.

And despite the graphic violence that unfolded before the cameras on Jan. 6, 2021, only about four in 10 Republicans recall the attack as very or extremely violent, compared with nine in 10 Democrats, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Even one of the most divisive figures of the 9/11 era bemoaned the divisions of today.

Former Vice President Dick Cheney came to the Capitol with his daughter, Rep. Liz Cheney, one of the few Republicans to go all in to stand up to Trump. He said today's Republican Party is not the party he represented in Congress before joining the Bush administration.

"It's not a leadership that resembles any of the folks I knew when I was here for 10 years," he told reporters. In a statement, he expressed disappointment "at the failure of many members of my party to

recognize the grave nature of the January 6 attacks and the ongoing threat to our nation.”

In Florida, Trump canceled a news conference, opting instead to issue statements laced with election falsehoods reheated from his protracted, losing fight to stay in power after his defeat.

On the eve of the anniversary of the insurrection, he falsely accused the Biden administration of moving toward a federal mask mandate and implored his supporters — “MAGA nation” — to “rise up.”

But on Thursday, a year after people fought “like hell” for him, they did not rise again.

## **Analysis: Taking on Trump is Biden’s reluctant calling**

By ZEKE MILLER and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It may not be the fight he sought, but taking on Donald Trump is President Joe Biden’s calling.

Biden offered himself as a guardian of American democracy in a visceral speech Thursday discussing the horrors of the Jan. 6 insurrection that sought to overthrow his 2020 election victory. Trump’s refusal to accept the reality of his defeat spawned a conspiracy that came close to shattering the nation’s system of government and continues to ripple through society a year later.

“I did not seek this fight, brought to this Capitol one year ago today, but I will not shrink from it either,” Biden said in his 25-minute address from Statuary Hall, where rioters had roamed one year earlier. “I will stand in this breach. I will defend this nation. And I will allow no one to place a dagger at the throat of democracy.”

Yet even in his own telling, Biden’s presidency has been shaped by and in response to his predecessor.

At age 75 and grieving the recent death of his adult son, the former vice president decided to reenter public life to battle for the “soul of America” after watching Trump deliver praise for some of the white supremacists at a violent protest in Charlottesville in 2017. Biden vanquished fresher and more popular faces in a contentious 2020 Democratic primary on the promise that he was the most capable of unseating Trump. And he was sworn into the office just two weeks after the violent insurrection because he convinced Americans that he could turn the page on a turbulent four years.

Biden didn’t mention the former president by name even once in Thursday’s remarks. But he fired off zingers and reprimands aimed directly at Trump and the party that has increasingly cast itself in his image.

Trump, said Biden, is not just a former president, but a defeated one whose “bruised ego matters more to him than our democracy.”

He refuted Trump’s “big lie” — three of them, actually — and efforts to continue to sow doubt about the conduct of an election that even the former president’s own attorney general and judicial picks determined to be fair and free of significant misconduct.

He mocked the self-described patriotism of those who attacked law enforcement and breached the Capitol, as well as that of the man who inspired them to do it. “You can’t love your country only when you win,” Biden said.

The anniversary marked Biden’s most forceful condemnation of his predecessor, after a maiden year in office spent trying, often unsuccessfully, to avoid talking about “the former guy.”

“I’m tired of talking about Donald Trump,” he said four weeks into his presidency. “I don’t want to talk about him anymore.”

But in the past year, Trump has gone from twice-impeached pariah to self-styled president-in-exile, his grip on the GOP stronger now than when he left office. Trump has mounted an aggressive campaign to oust from his party the few Republicans willing to condemn him. And he has amassed a war chest with the aim of retaking the White House in 2024.

It is a paradox for the president: Biden is often at his best when he takes on Trump, yet talking about the former president also serves to elevate him in the national conversation.

There could well be a rematch in 2024. Biden, who has said he intends to seek another term, told ABC last month that he’s even more likely to run again if Trump is on the GOP ticket.

But there’s a simultaneous effort afoot to change how elections are run, and that could portend a very

different dynamic in a contested election next time.

Republicans in numerous states are promoting efforts to influence future elections by installing sympathetic leaders in local election posts and they're backing for elective office some of those who participated in the insurrection. Democrats, for their part, are pushing voting changes that would seek to undo those GOP efforts and enshrine in law other longtime Democratic priorities.

The violence on Jan. 6 was only a small piece of the overall effort by pro-Trump allies to subvert the election. More than 50 lawsuits were filed in battleground states alleging some type of election fraud, a push that failed after judges named to the bench by many different presidents — including Trump himself — rejected the claims. The Justice Department launched an effort to investigate instances of widespread voter fraud, only to have former Attorney General William Barr tell The Associated Press there was none. And Trump allies made unfounded accusations about voting machines used in many states, including false claims that some were made by a company with ties to Venezuela, among other wild allegations now the subject of defamation litigation.

Despite his insistent speech Thursday, Biden and other administration officials do not generally publicly dwell on the conspiracy theories around the election, in part because it gives fuel to the fire. And it's widely expected that, despite Biden's pledge to help push voting rights legislation to completion, he's not going to look back at the events of 2020 much more. His belief is that he's more likely to win over Trump supporters by governing, and doing it well, than by constantly re-litigating his presidential win.

As he left the Capitol on Thursday, Biden stopped to explain why he had decided to so forcefully criticize Trump after shying away from it for so long. "The way you have to heal is you have to recognize the extent of the wound."

"You've got to face it," he added. "That's what great nations do. They face the truth. Deal with it. And move on."

Much as Biden would like to move on, though, the future of America's democracy is now tethered to the events of the 2020 election and the ongoing fallout that show no signs of disappearing.

## Supreme Court weighs vaccine rules affecting more than 80M

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is taking up two major Biden administration efforts to bump up the nation's vaccination rate against COVID-19 at a time of spiking coronavirus cases because of the omicron variant.

The justices on the conservative-oriented court are hearing arguments Friday about whether to allow the administration to enforce a vaccine-or-testing requirement that applies to large employers and a separate vaccine mandate for most health care workers. The arguments were expected to last at least two hours.

Legal challenges to the policies from Republican-led states and business groups are in their early stages, but the outcome at the high court probably will determine the fate of vaccine requirements affecting more than 80 million people.

"I think effectively what is at stake is whether these mandates are going to go into effect at all," said Sean Marotta, a Washington lawyer whose clients include the American Hospital Association. The trade group is not involved in the Supreme Court cases.

The challengers argue that the vaccine rules exceed the administration's authority, but Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, the administration's top Supreme Court lawyer, wrote that both are needed to avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths.

Keeping the vaccine mandate for health care workers on hold "will likely result in hundreds or thousands of deaths and serious illnesses from COVID-19 that could otherwise be prevented," Prelogar wrote.

Nearly 207 million Americans, 62.3% of the population, are fully vaccinated, and more than a third of the country has received a booster shot, including the nine justices.

Andy Slavitt, a former adviser to the Biden administration on COVID-19, said the vaccine requirements are extremely effective for 15% to 20% of Americans "who don't like to get a shot, but they will and don't

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 37 of 77

have any strenuous objection.”

The high court will be weighing in on administration vaccine policies for the first time, although the justices have turned away pleas to block state-level mandates.

But a conservative majority concerned about federal overreach did bring an end to the federal moratorium on evictions put in place because of the pandemic.

Three conservatives, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, probably hold the key to the outcome, Marotta said.

They broke with the other justices on the right over state mandates for health-care workers, but joined them to allow evictions to resume.

Both vaccine rules will exacerbate labor shortages and be costly to businesses, opponents said. “People are going to quit. It will make a bad situation worse and they’re not going to come back,” said Karen Harned, executive director of the National Federation of Independent Business’ Small Business Legal Center.

Her group is among those challenging an emergency rule adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration under which workers at businesses with 100 or more employees must be vaccinated or get tested weekly and wear masks while working. The rule has exceptions for those who work alone or mostly outdoors.

The OSHA rule is supposed to take effect Monday, although the agency has said it would not impose fines on businesses that don’t comply before late February.

The vaccine mandate, for its part, applies to virtually all health care staff in the country. It covers health care providers that receive federal Medicare or Medicaid funding, potentially affecting 76,000 health care facilities as well as home health care providers. The rule has medical and religious exemptions.

Decisions by federal appeals courts in New Orleans and St. Louis have blocked the mandate in about half the states. The administration has said it is taking steps to enforce it in the rest.

Both cases are coming to the court on an emergency basis and the court took the unusual step of scheduling arguments rather than just ruling on briefs submitted by the parties. Unlike in other cases the court hears, a decision from the justices could come in weeks if not days.

Because of the pandemic the justices will hear the cases in a courtroom closed to the public. Only the justices, lawyers involved in the cases, court staff and journalists will be present. The public can listen live, however, a change made earlier in the pandemic when the justices for nearly 19 months heard cases via telephone.

## **Biden warns of US peril from Trump’s ‘dagger’ at democracy**

By LISA MASCARO, ZEKE MILLER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden forcefully blamed Donald Trump and his supporters Thursday for holding a “dagger at the throat of democracy” with election lies that sparked last year’s deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol, using the anniversary of the attack to warn that America’s system of government remains under urgent threat.

The president set the tone on a day of remembrance that brought fiery speeches, moments of silence and anguished accounts from lawmakers recalling the terrifying hours of Jan. 6, 2021, when the Trump mob laid siege to the Capitol and rioters tried to stop the routine, ceremonial certification of election results.

Notably, almost no Republicans joined Biden and the Democrats in what some hoped would be a day of reconciliation. Instead, it was a fresh and jarring display of a nation still deeply torn by the lies that led to the riot, by its unsettled aftermath and Trump’s persisting grip on a large swath of the country.

“For the first time in our history, a president not just lost an election, he tried to prevent the peaceful transfer of power as a violent mob breached the Capitol,” Biden said. “You can’t love your country only when you win.”

Biden’s criticism of the defeated president was rife with condemnation for the assault that has fundamentally changed Congress and the nation, and has raised global concerns about the future of American democracy.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 38 of 77

His voice booming at times, reverberating in the ornate Statuary Hall where rioters had laid siege, the president called on Americans to remember what they saw Jan. 6 with their own eyes: the mob attacking police and breaking windows, a Confederate flag inside the Capitol, gallows erected outside amid calls to hang the vice president — all while Trump sat at the White House watching on TV.

"The former president's supporters are trying to rewrite history," Biden said, incredulous. "They want you to see Election Day as the day of insurrection and the riot that took place here on January 6 as a true expression of the will of the people. Can you think of a more twisted way to look at this country, to look at America? I cannot."

Until the anniversary, Biden had mentioned the attack only sparingly but he aggressively weighed in Thursday and coupled his message with a call for voting rights legislation that Democrats have long been urging.

The president's remarks drew a stark contrast with the false narratives that persist about the Capitol assault, including the continued refusal by many Republicans to affirm that Biden won the 2020 election. Five people died in the Capitol siege and its immediate aftermath.

"We must be absolutely clear about what is true and what is a lie," Biden said. "The former president of the United States of America has spread a web of lies about the 2020 election."

Yet even as the president spoke, the vanquished Trump gave no signs of letting go, a show of the division in the country emphasized by the silence and absence of most Republicans to join Biden at the Capitol.

From Florida, Trump revived his unfounded attack on the elections. He accepted no responsibility for sending the thousands of supporters to the Capitol that day when he told them to "fight like hell." By Thursday evening, he was sending out a fundraising appeal.

Even among congressional Republicans who condemned the attack in the days afterward, few spoke that way now — some joining in Trump's false portrayals.

"What brazen politicization of January 6 by President Biden," tweeted Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a sometimes Trump confidant who had initially said he had abandoned Trump after the riot only to quickly embrace him again.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell — who at the time said Trump was "practically and morally" responsible for the attack — issued a statement that highlighted the gravity of that day, but also said some Democrats were trying to exploit it for other purposes. He was absent, with a contingent attending the funeral of former colleague Sen. Johnny Isakson in Georgia.

Rep. Liz Cheney, vice chair of the House committee investigating the attack and one of the few GOP lawmakers attending the Capitol ceremonies, warned that "the threat continues." Trump, she said, "continues to make the same claims that he knows caused violence on January 6."

"Unfortunately, too many in my own party are embracing the former president, are looking the other way or minimizing the danger," she told NBC's "Today" show. "That's how democracies die. We simply cannot let that happen."

She was joined by her father Dick Cheney, the former vice president and now a Republican Party elder. They were the only members of the GOP seen for a moment of silence on the House floor.

Dick Cheney was greeted by several Democrats and said in a statement: "I am deeply disappointed at the failure of many members of my party to recognize the grave nature of the January 6 attacks and the ongoing threat to our nation."

Throughout Thursday, lawmakers shared their experiences of being trapped in the House or rushed away from the Senate, as the siege raged for hours. Rep. Dan Kildee of Michigan showed a shard of glass from one of the Capitol's broken windows he carries in his pocket.

"January 6 is not over," he said, choking up. "The threat, and the lie that fuels that threat, continues to rear its head." He said: "To truly protect our democracy we need truth."

The House panel investigating the insurrection plans to spend the coming months exploring and revealing what happened with public hearings.

Biden and his administration have come under criticism from some in his party for not adequately explaining how they believe democracy is at risk, or pushing Congress hard enough to pass election and

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 39 of 77

voting rights legislation that is stalled by a Republican filibuster in the Senate.

Barack Obama, the former president, said “nothing is more important” on the anniversary than ensuring the right to vote.

“Our democracy is at greater risk today than it was back then,” Obama said in a statement.

Biden’s address, and that of Vice President Kamala Harris who is leading the administration’s efforts on the voting and elections legislation, appeared as a direct response to critics.

“We must pass voting rights bills,” Harris said in her address. “We cannot sit on the sidelines.”

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi drew on history with a hope that Americans would turn to their “better angels” to resolve differences. Lawmakers held an evening vigil on the Capitol steps.

Other remembrances — or demonstrations — were few around the country.

Biden’s sharp message and the Republicans’ distance from it come as lawmakers are adjusting to the new normal on Capitol Hill — the growing tensions that many worry will result in more violence or, someday, a legitimate election actually being overturned.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed that 3 in 10 Republicans say the attack was not violent. Around two-thirds of Americans described the day as very or extremely violent, including about 9 in 10 Democrats.

The percentage of Americans who blame Trump for the riot has grown slightly over the past year, with 57% saying he bears significant responsibility, up from 50% in the days after the attack.

Trump’s claims of widespread election fraud were rejected by the courts and refuted by his own Justice Department.

An investigation by the AP found fewer than 475 cases of voter fraud among 25.5 million ballots cast in the six battleground states disputed by Trump, a minuscule number in percentage terms.

## **US hiring may have rebounded last month before omicron surge**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation is surging and new omicron infections are spiking, but America’s employers are thought to have kept right on hiring in December on the strength of solid consumer spending.

One reason for optimism about the jobs data the government will issue Friday morning is that it wasn’t likely affected much by the omicron wave. The hiring figures will reflect the state of the job market for the first half of December, before omicron viral cases spiked.

Economists have estimated that employers added 400,000 jobs last month, according to a survey by data provider FactSet. That would mark an increase from 210,000 in November. The unemployment rate is expected to have fallen from 4.2% to 4.1%, a relatively healthy level.

Many employers need to fill jobs because they continue to enjoy steady demand from customers despite chronic supply shortages. In fact, Friday’s employment report will conclude one of the best years for American workers in decades, though it was one that followed 2020 — the job market’s worst year since records began in 1939, a consequence of the pandemic recession.

Companies posted a record number of open positions last year and offered sharply higher pay to try to find and keep workers. Americans responded by quitting jobs in droves, mostly for better pay at other employers.

All told, the number of jobs grew more than 4% in 2021 through November, the biggest gain since 1978, after a 6.2% plunge in jobs in 2020. So great was the pandemic-driven loss of employment, though, that even now, the economy remains nearly 4 million jobs shy of pre-pandemic levels.

Economists have cautioned that job growth may slow in January and possibly February because of the spike in new omicron infections, which have forced millions of newly infected workers to stay home and quarantine, disrupting employers ranging from ski resorts to airlines to hospitals.

Alaska Airlines said it’s cutting 10% of its flights in January because of an “unprecedented” number of employees calling in sick. But because omicron is less virulent than previous COVID-19 variants and few states or localities have moved to limit business operations, economists say they believe its economic

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 40 of 77

impact will be short-lived.

"In the end, the hit from omicron will probably be modest and relatively brief," said Jim O'Sullivan, an economist at TD Securities.

Still, Andrew Hunter, an economist at Capital Economics, a forecasting firm, calculates that up to 5 million people — roughly 2% of America's workforce — could be stuck at home with COVID over the next week or so. Workers without sick leave who miss a paycheck are classified by the government as jobless. Any such trend could sharply lower job gains in the employment report for January, to be released next month.

Omicron will also likely weigh on jobs at restaurants and bars. The number of Americans willing to eat at restaurants started to slip in late December, according to the reservations website OpenTable. Restaurant traffic was nearly at pre-pandemic levels for much of November but had fallen nearly 25% below those levels by Dec. 30, based on a weekly average of OpenTable data.

Other measures of the economy have mostly reflected a resilient economy. A survey of manufacturing purchasing managers found that factory output grew at a healthy pace in December, if slower than in previous months. Hiring also picked up. Auto dealers report that demand for new cars is still strong, with sales held back by semiconductor chip shortages that have hobbled auto production.

Last month, Americans' confidence in the economy actually rose slightly, according to the Conference Board, suggesting that spending probably remained healthy through year's end. Thanks to solid consumer spending and increased business purchases of machinery and equipment, the economy is estimated to have expanded at an annual rate of up to 7% in the final three months of 2021.

## Teen, parents returning to court in Michigan school shooting

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Two parents charged with their son in a fatal Michigan school shooting are returning to court to ask for a lower bail to get out of jail.

James and Jennifer Crumbley have been locked up since Dec. 4, unable to meet a \$500,000 bond. They're hoping a judge is willing to reduce it Friday to \$100,000.

The Crumbleys are charged with involuntary manslaughter for the Nov. 30 shooting at Oxford High School, which killed four teenagers and injured others. They're accused of making a gun accessible to son Ethan Crumbley and refusing to take him home earlier that day when school counselors confronted them with distressing drawings of violence.

"The last thing they expected was that a school shooting would take place, or that their son would be responsible," defense attorneys Shannon Smith and Mariell Lehman said in a court filing.

Separately, Ethan, 15, also faces a court hearing Friday. He is charged as an adult with murder and other crimes.

Prosecutors are opposing the parents' request for a lower bond. They noted that the elder Crumbleys were missing for hours when charges were announced Dec. 3 before police found them miles away in a Detroit art studio early the next morning.

Smith said they had planned to appear in court on Dec. 4.

The Crumbleys "will flee if they get the opportunity," prosecutors said in a court filing, noting they were behind in mortgage payments and had put their house up for sale.

Oxford High students are expected to return to school next week for the first time since the shooting but at a different building. The high school, roughly 30 miles (50 kilometers) north of Detroit, could reopen during the week of Jan. 23.

## Missouri man to be sentenced for killing wife he buried

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri man who admitted to burying his wife's body and misleading authorities for more than a year about her whereabouts will be sentenced Friday for killing her.

Jurors in November convicted 26-year-old Joseph Elledge of second-degree murder in the killing of 28-year-old Mengqi Ji, whom he met after she moved from China to study engineering at the University of Missouri.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 41 of 77

The jury recommended that Elledge be sentenced to 28 years in prison, and the judge's sentence can't exceed that recommendation. A second-degree murder conviction requires Elledge to serve at least 85% of his sentence before he would be eligible for parole.

Elledge reported Ji missing in October 2019, prompting months of extensive searches. Her remains were found last March in a park near Columbia, where the couple lived.

Boone County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Knight described Elledge as a "stone cold killer" and argued that he was guilty of first-degree murder because he intentionally killed Ji. Prosecutors used social media posts, audio tapes and a journal Elledge kept to document the couple's volatile relationship.

But Elledge said Ji's death was accidental. He said Ji fell and hit her head on Oct. 8, 2019, after he pushed her during an argument, and that he found her dead in bed the next morning. He said he panicked, put her body in the trunk of her car and didn't report what happened while he tried to decide what to do.

On Oct. 10, 2019, with the couple's then-year-old daughter in the car, Elledge drove to Rock Bridge State Park, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) south of Columbia. There, he dug a grave and buried Ji at a site near the spot where he had proposed to her. He then returned home and reported her missing.

Elledge's attorney Scott Rosenblum argued that his client was awkward and made "unbelievably dumb" decisions after Ji died, but that he never intended to kill his wife and should not have been charged with murder.

Jurors opted for a second-degree murder conviction, which doesn't carry a mandatory life sentence.

Elledge said he discovered in the days before Ji's death that she had been exchanging sexually suggestive messages with a man from China via social media. He also testified that the couple's relationship suffered because of tension caused by her parents, who moved from China to live with them after their daughter was born in October 2018.

The couple met in 2015 at Nanova, a company that makes dental products, where Ji was Elledge's supervisor. They began dating the following year and eventually traveled to China, where Elledge asked Ji's parents for permission to marry her. The couple married in 2017.

Ji earned a master's degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering from the University of Missouri in December 2014. Elledge was a student at the university when his wife died.

An attorney for Ji's family told the Columbia Daily Tribune after the verdict that they were pleased with Knight's efforts.

## A season of joy -- and caution -- kicks off in New Orleans

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Vaccinated, masked and ready-to-revel New Orleans residents began ushering in Carnival season Thursday with a rolling party on the city's historic streetcar line, an annual march honoring Joan of Arc in the French Quarter and a collective, wary eye on coronavirus statistics.

Carnival officially begins each year on Jan. 6 — the 12th day after Christmas — and, usually, comes to a raucous climax on Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, which falls on March 1 this year. Thursday's festivities came two years after a successful Mardi Gras became what officials later realized was an early Southern superspreader of COVID-19; and nearly a year after city officials canceled 2021 parades.

This year, the party is going on despite rapidly rising COVID-19 cases driven by the omicron variant.

"Without a doubt, we will have Mardi Gras 2022," Mayor LaToya Cantrell said during a Thursday morning kickoff event, where participants removed protective masks long enough to sample slices of king cake, a seasonal delicacy.

"Having a Mardi Gras, and a successful and healthy Mardi Gras, is as important to this region's mental health as it is important to the economic health of this city," added James Reiss, an official with the Rex Organization, a 150-year-old Carnival group.

Still, in a season known for excess, the virus prompted restraint. At Bywater Bakery, owner Chaya Conrad usually has a daylong block party with live music to mark the beginning of Carnival season. After a "virtual" recorded concert last year, she had planned to return to the big block party Thursday. But after the virus sickened many of her employees over Christmas, she canceled the extravaganza. Instead, a piano player

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 42 of 77

on a flatbed truck played as customers snapped up king cakes.

"I don't need the musicians getting sick. I don't need my customers getting sick and I don't need my other half of my staff getting sick," Conrad said. "When this dies down then we'll have the big block party."

In what has become a traditional kickoff to the season, a group known as the Phunny Phorty Phellows boarded one of the historic St. Charles line streetcars Thursday night along with a small brass band. Vaccinations and protective masks were required and seating on the streetcar was limited.

Larger, more opulent parades will follow in February as Mardi Gras nears.

"It was certainly the right thing to do to cancel last year," said Dr. Susan Hassig, a Tulane University epidemiologist who also is a member of the Krewe of Muses and rides each year on a huge float in the Muses parade. "We didn't have vaccines. There was raging and very serious illness all over the place."

Now, she notes, the vaccination rate is high in New Orleans, where 81% of all adults are fully vaccinated, according to the city's statistics.

And while people from outside the city are a big part of Mardi Gras crowds, Cantrell's anti-virus measures include proof of vaccination or a negative test for most venues.

Sharing Hassig's cautious optimism is Elroy James, president of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, a predominantly Black organization whose Mardi Gras morning parade is a highlight of Carnival. Early in the pandemic, COVID-19 was blamed for the death of at least 17 of Zulu's members.

"I think most krewes, particularly, I know, for Zulu, we've been very proactive, leaning in, with respect to all of the safety protocols that have been in place since the onset of this thing," James said Wednesday. "Our float captains are confirming our riders are vaccinated. And part of the look for the 2022 Mardi Gras season is face masks."

Reasons for concern remain in a state where the pandemic has claimed more than 15,000 lives over the past two years. Louisiana health officials reported 1,412 hospitalizations as of Wednesday — up from fewer than 200 in mid-December.

Asked whether Carnival krewes should be making contingency plans for their balls in case of future restrictions, Gov. John Bel Edwards said he is not currently planning restrictions on gatherings. But he added that people should be careful about spending time amid large groups of unmasked people.

"Does that apply to a Mardi Gras ball? I think its pretty self-evident that it does," Edwards said.

Muses founder Staci Rosenberg said the krewe had planned to gather in a bar near the streetcar route to await the Phunny Phorty Phellows. The virus surge prompted a move outside.

Hassig says she won't attend indoor gatherings. She, is, however, determined to ride in the Feb. 24 parade — vaccinated, wearing an N95 mask and knowing that outdoor activities are safer.

Hassig rode in her first parade in 2006 as the city struggled to recover from Hurricane Katrina. Now, she wants to participate in the recovery from the economic ravages of the virus.

"It's incredibly important, financially, for the city that this go well," she said.

## 'Hatred in the eyes': How racist rage animated Jan. 6 riots

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Cori Bush is no stranger to protests. She spent years marching the streets of St. Louis and Ferguson, Missouri, rising to public office on the strength of her activism.

But as the Missouri Democrat looked out the window of the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 — only her third day as a member of Congress — she knew what was about to take place would be no peaceful protest. The Confederate flags in the crowd, and the makeshift noose and gallows erected on the Capitol grounds, spoke to a more sinister reality.

"I've been to hundreds of protests and have organized so many protests, I can't count. I know what a protest is: This is not that," Bush, who is Black, said recently in an interview with The Associated Press.

The insurrection by pro-Trump supporters and members of far-right groups shattered the sense of security that many had long felt at the Capitol as rioters forcibly delayed the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

But for people of color, including many in Congress, the attack was more than a violent challenge to

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 43 of 77

a free and fair election — it was an eerily familiar display of white supremacist violence, this time at the very seat of American democracy.

"First of all, as a Black woman, that is already just tough on a level that's different from what a white person would experience," Bush said of the imagery and rhetoric surrounding the attack, especially the Confederate flag that was carried by a rioter inside the Capitol. "But it's especially different for Black people because of our history. The history of this country has been that type of language and imagery is directed right at us in a very negative and oftentimes violent way."

While Bush managed to escape the Capitol and barricade with her staff in her office in a nearby building, dozens of police officers faced down the violent mob in hours of frantic hand-to-hand combat. More than 100 officers were injured, some severely.

A group of officers testified to Congress in July about the physical and verbal abuse they faced from supporters of former President Donald Trump. Harry Dunn, a Black officer, recalled an exchange he had with rioters who disputed that Biden defeated Trump.

When Dunn said that he had voted for Biden and that his vote should be counted, a crowd began hurling a racial slur at him.

"One woman in a pink MAGA (Make America Great Again) shirt yelled, 'You hear that guys, this n--- voted for Joe Biden!'" said Dunn, who has served more than a dozen years on the Capitol Police force.

"Then the crowd, perhaps around 20 people, joined in, screaming, 'Boo! F---ing n---!'" he testified. He said no one had ever called him the N-word while he was in uniform.

Later that night, Dunn said, he sat in the Capitol Rotunda and wept.

Meanwhile, as the attack unfolded at the Capitol, a handful of lawmakers remained trapped in the House and Senate galleries with no escape as rioters fought to break in.

After a gunshot killing Ashli Babbitt, who was among the rioters and attempting to leap through a broken window, rang out in the House chamber, Democratic Rep. Jason Crow of Colorado decided the best thing members could do was take off their congressional pins identifying them as lawmakers.

But for lawmakers of color like Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., removing the pin was not an option.

"I thought there's no way I'm taking off my pin. Because it was either you get recognized by the insurrectionist or you don't get recognized by Capitol Police as a brown woman or Black woman," Jayapal told the AP in December.

She added: "And so many of the members of color that I know did not take off their pins."

Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., the chairman of the panel investigating Jan. 6 and among those stuck in the gallery, said that day specifically brought back "unpleasant experiences" from his early days as a Black politician in Mississippi.

"I saw the kind of hatred in the eyes of the people who broke in the Capitol. It was that same kind of hatred I saw in people who wanted to stop people of color from casting a ballot for the candidate of their choice in Mississippi," Thompson said.

In the aftermath of the attack, Crow and other white lawmakers reckoned with the experiences their colleagues of color faced that day. Crow told his Democratic colleague Rep. Val Demings, a Black former Orlando police chief who was also trapped in the gallery, that he didn't realize at the time how difficult it would be for members of color to disguise themselves from the mob.

"Jason shared after all of it with me that for him — these are his words — as a white male he could take off his pin, or he could keep his pin and run over to the other side with the Republicans and stand there and people may not know the difference," Demings said.

Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., also reflected on his ability to blend in more easily.

"I think to myself, well, if I need to, I can untuck my shirt, I can throw my jacket away. I'm a white guy," Himes said. "There's actually a reasonable probability that I get through this crowd, right? In retrospect, I reflected on the fact that that was not true for Ilhan Omar," he said, referring to the Black Democrat from Minnesota.

Crow himself called the interaction that day a "learning moment."

"It wasn't until that day when I was on the receiving end of the violence of white supremacy in our nation that I understood," he said.

The attack finally ended and the Capitol was secured. The rioters were allowed to peacefully leave the complex and lawmakers who stayed to finish the certification of the election went home. The images that surfaced online and on television showed the Capitol's janitorial staff, the majority of them people of color, sweeping the broken glass and scrubbing the walls.

Rep. Andy Kim, D-N.J., joined them, getting on his hands and knees to pick up water bottles, clothing, Trump flags and U.S. flags. The son of Korean immigrants and, in 2018, the first Asian American to represent New Jersey in Congress, Kim reflected at the time how he, a person of color, was cleaning up after people who waved white supremacist symbols like the Confederate flag during the melee.

While he hadn't considered race at the time, Kim told the AP shortly after the attack, "It's so hard because we don't look at each other and see each other as Americans first."

## Djokovic in limbo as he fights deportation from Australia

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

Locked in a dispute over his COVID-19 vaccination status, Novak Djokovic was confined to an immigration detention hotel in Australia on Thursday as the No. 1 men's tennis player in the world awaited a court ruling on whether he can compete in the Australian Open later this month.

Djokovic, a vocal skeptic of vaccines, had traveled to Australia after Victoria state authorities granted him a medical exemption to the country's strict vaccination requirements. But when he arrived late Wednesday, the Australian Border Force rejected his exemption as invalid and barred him from entering the country.

A court hearing on his bid to stave off deportation was set for Monday, a week before the season's first major tennis tournament is set to begin. The defending Australian Open champion is waiting it out in Melbourne at a secure hotel used by immigration officials to house asylum seekers and refugees.

Djokovic is hoping to overtake rivals Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer and win his 21st Grand Slam singles title, the most by any player in men's tennis.

Djokovic's securing of an exemption so that he could play triggered an uproar and allegations of special treatment in Australia, where people spent months in lockdown and endured harsh travel restrictions at the height of the pandemic.

After his long-haul flight, the tennis star spent the night at the airport trying to convince authorities he had the necessary documentation, to no avail.

"The rule is very clear," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said. "You need to have a medical exemption. He didn't have a valid medical exemption. We make the call at the border, and that's where it's enforced."

Health Minister Greg Hunt said the athlete's visa was canceled after border officials reviewed Djokovic's medical exemption and looked at "the integrity and the evidence behind it."

The grounds on which he was granted an exemption were not immediately disclosed.

While Djokovic has steadfastly refused to say whether he has gotten any shots against the coronavirus, he has spoken out against vaccines, and it is widely presumed he would not have sought an exemption if he had been vaccinated.

A federal judge will take up the case next week. A lawyer for the government agreed the nine-time Australian Open champion should not be deported before then.

"I feel terrible since yesterday that they are keeping him as a prisoner. It's not fair. It's not human. I hope that he will win," Djokovic's mother, Dijana, said after speaking with him briefly by telephone from Belgrade.

She added: "Terrible, terrible accommodation. It's just some small immigration hotel, if it's a hotel at all."

Australia's home affairs minister, Karen Andrews, said Friday that Djokovic could fly out of the country on the first available flight.

"Can I say, firstly, that Mr. Djokovic is not being held captive in Australia. He is free to leave at any time that he chooses to do so," Andrews said. "And Border Force will actually facilitate that."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 45 of 77

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has also spoken to Djokovic and said his government asked that the athlete be allowed to move to a house he has rented and "not to be in that infamous hotel."

He said Djokovic has been treated differently from other players.

"I'm afraid that this overkill will continue," Vucic said. "When you can't beat someone, then you do such things."

Border Force investigations were continuing into two other people who arrived in Australia for the tennis tournament, Andrews said.

Australia's prime minister said the onus is on the traveler to have the proper documentation on arrival, and he rejected any suggestion that Djokovic was being singled out.

"One of the things the Border Force does is act on intelligence to direct their attention to potential arrivals," he said. "When you get people making public statements about what they say they have, and they're going to do, they draw significant attention to themselves."

Anyone who does that, he said, "whether they're a celebrity, a politician, a tennis player . . . they can expect to be asked questions more than others before you come."

The medical-exemption applications from players, their teams and tennis officials were vetted by two independent panels of experts. An approved exemption allowed entry to the tournament.

Acceptable reasons for an exemption include major health conditions and serious reactions to a previous dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. A COVID-19 infection within the previous six months has also been widely reported to be grounds for an exemption, but that's where interpretations appeared to differ between the federal level, which controls the border, and tennis and state health officials.

Former Australian Open tournament director and Davis Cup player Paul McNamee said the treatment of Djokovic was unfair.

"The guy played by the rules, he got his visa, he arrives, he's a nine-time champion and whether people like it or not he's entitled to fair play," McNamee told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "There's no doubt there's some disconnect between the state and the federal government.

"I hate to think politics are involved but it feels that way."

Djokovic tested positive for the coronavirus in June 2020 after he played in a series of exhibition matches that he organized without social distancing amid the pandemic.

Critics questioned what grounds Djokovic could have for the exemption, while supporters argued he has a right to privacy and freedom of choice.

Many Australians who have struggled to obtain COVID-19 tests or have been forced into isolation saw a double standard.

Tension has grown amid another surge of COVID-19 in the country. Victoria state recorded six deaths and nearly 22,000 new cases on Thursday, the biggest one-day jump in the caseload since the pandemic began.

Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley has defended the "completely legitimate application and process" and insisted there was no special treatment for Djokovic.

Twenty-six people connected with the tournament applied for a medical exemption and, Tiley said, only a "handful" were granted. None of those have been publicly identified.

## Virginia preps for more bad weather amid storm of questions

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — With more bad weather looming, Virginia officials sought to reassure the public Thursday as they reacted to harsh criticism of their response to a snowstorm earlier this week that left hundreds of motorists stranded on Interstate 95 in frigid temperatures.

In contrast to his response to Monday's storm, Gov. Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency in advance of the wintry weather that is expected to move into the state late Thursday, and he asked the Virginia National Guard for assistance. The measures are necessary this time, his office said, because of the lingering effects of the first storm.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 46 of 77

Northam also pushed back against the criticism, questioning why drivers were out in force on the highways when they had been warned to stay home, while some experts and officials from other states said they saw little Virginia could have done to prevent the logjam that occurred amid snowy conditions on I-95, the East Coast's longest north-south artery.

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran told The Associated Press on Thursday that no one brought the escalating problems to the attention of the governor's Cabinet promptly on Monday. A county official eventually called him in the middle of the night.

Virginia officials have promised to review the state's response, though how exactly how they will do that is unclear. During an unusually detailed news briefing Thursday to discuss upcoming weather preparations, a Cabinet secretary suggested a joint investigation is possible; others have said each state agency would conduct its own inquiry.

Similar investigations in other states have resulted in revamped alert systems, additional snow-clearing equipment and more aggressive road treatments.

In Virginia, state lawmakers, local officials, at least two members of Congress and the AAA auto club called for action. Stafford County Board of Supervisors Chair Crystal Vanuch, a Republican and lifelong county native, said Thursday that the gridlock was "probably the biggest disaster we've ever seen."

According to Vanuch, the county's emergency operations command received roughly 1,800 calls for service over a 24-hour period — more than five times the normal amount — and local emergency workers told her they weren't getting the help they needed from state officials.

She said she called Moran at 1 a.m. Tuesday and that by daybreak, state officials had begun deploying resources, including helicopters to survey roads and see where the worst chokepoints existed.

Northam, a Democrat who leaves office later this month, said in an uncharacteristically combative interview Wednesday that he was "getting sick and tired of people talking about what went wrong."

He told radio station WRVA that no one was injured and that people should be thanking first responders and emergency workers.

In a conciliatory follow-up statement Thursday, Northam said he was trying to express his appreciation for police troopers and other workers who had put in 30 to 40 hours straight under difficult circumstances.

In the statement, he also said he had compassion for drivers who were stuck in a "scary situation" and reiterated his commitment to doing "everything possible to keep this from happening again."

Many motorists reported being offered little in the way of assistance while they were stuck in the traffic on I-95, which according to officials began Monday morning after a commercial vehicle jackknifed. As heavy, wet snow poured down, more cars and trucks became disabled, further tying up traffic and preventing plowing. Traffic eventually ground to a total halt, leaving some travelers stranded for over 24 hours.

Officials had said that pretreating the roads was not an option because the storm started as rain, which would have washed any brine-chemical solution away.

Transportation experts and officials elsewhere acknowledged the difficulty.

"If we have an event that's going to start as rain and transitions to snow, we do not pretreat, because it would be a waste of time and money," Ohio transportation department spokesperson Matt Bruning said Wednesday.

Andy Alden, a transportation researcher at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, said from his perspective, the state did "everything just about right."

Recent high-profile traffic pileups in other states led to revamped systems that appeared to help stave off future catastrophes.

After a 2014 winter snowstorm crippled the Atlanta area with fewer than 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of snow, stranding drivers in cars overnight and forcing children to sleep at their schools, the state devised a plan to alert residents more quickly of incoming winter storms, more than doubled its fleet of snow-clearing equipment and started keeping salt and gravel on hand in larger quantities.

In New Jersey, which regularly confronts winter weather on its highways, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy faced numerous complaints after a 2018 snowstorm left drivers stuck on major highways. His predecessor,

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 47 of 77

Republican Chris Christie, complained that it took him five hours to travel about 30 miles (48 kilometers). Murphy has been known since to overprepare for storms, sending trucks to brine roadways ahead of storms that never materialize.

"I think it costs 17 cents a mile to brine the road, so if we become the brining state of America, I will not be upset about that," he said in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also made it harder in some states to assemble the workforce needed to plow roads. In Virginia, officials said they had enough employees, but at least one locality cited staffing shortages. Motorists also faced long delays on secondary roads while trying to avoid I-95.

Virginia State Police officials, who have long noted staffing challenges, said they increased the number of troopers assigned solely to the interstate to 30 on Tuesday, after starting Monday with about 18 in the entire area.

Ron Maxey, VSP's deputy director of field operations, said many troopers set out on foot to check on stranded motorists, and shared some of their own food.

Natalie Simpson, a professor and expert on emergency services at the University at Buffalo School of Management, said she didn't see any immediate evidence that Virginia officials missed a step that could have mitigated the traffic jam earlier this week. But Simpson said governments everywhere need to do a better job planning to provide aid to stranded drivers.

"Once traffic stops on an interstate, an interstate becomes a prison," she said.

## Orthodox observe Christmas amid virus concerns

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Orthodox Christians in Russia, Serbia and other countries began Christmas observances Thursday amid restrictions aimed at dampening the spread of the coronavirus, but few worshipers appeared concerned as they streamed into churches.

The majority of Orthodox believers celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7, with midnight services especially popular. The churches in Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece mark it on Dec. 25 along with other Christian denominations.

The Russian Orthodox Church, the largest Orthodox congregation, said celebrants must wear masks and observe social distancing at services. But a live broadcast of the service from Moscow's huge Christ The Savior Cathedral indicated about half those attending had no masks or pulled them to their chins as they watched the pageantry of gold-robed priests, including church leader Patriarch Kirill, chant prayers and wave smoking containers of incense.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, also without a mask, attended a service at the Church of the Image of the Saviour Made Without Hands in Novo-Ogaryovo, outside Moscow.

Although Russia's daily tally of new infections has dropped by about half since a month ago, to about 15,000 Thursday, concern is strong that the highly contagious omicron variant may be getting a foothold in the country. Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Thursday officials have detected omicron infections in people who had not travelled outside Russia.

In Serbia's capital, Belgrade, hundreds of worshipers gathered outside St. Sava Temple, the largest Serbian Orthodox church, for the traditional burning of dried oak branches that symbolize the Yule log. The church also scheduled a midnight Christmas Eve liturgy.

No specific anti-virus measures were announced for Serbia's religious ceremonies despite a huge rise in infections apparently fueled by the omicron variant. Serbia on Thursday reported more than 9,000 new cases for the past 24 hours, which was the highest daily number since the start of the pandemic.

Health measures in Serbia include mandatory face mask use indoors and limits on gatherings, but the rules have not been fully respected. Vaccination passes are required for bars, restaurants and clubs in the evening but not for churches or other indoor venues.

Serbian Patriarch Porfirije in his Christmas message singled out medical workers fighting the virus and said that "I pray for the sick to get well as soon as possible and for the disease that has attacked the world

to pass.”

“The Church therefore calls during the pandemic for the respect of reasonable measures and recommendations of governments and other authorities in the states and regions in which our people live, but also reminds everyone to avoid exclusion and for respect of human freedom as the highest and most valuable God’s gift to men,” Porfirije added.

In Kazakhstan, the sizable Orthodox community could not observe Christmas in churches because all religious services were cancelled under a nationwide state of emergency imposed after violent clashes between protesters and police in several cities. About 20% of the people in the predominantly Muslim country identify as Orthodox.

## **New NYPD leader makes history after a strong 1st impression**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City’s new mayor says he picked Keechant Sewell as the city’s first female police commissioner partly because of her poise in handling a mock crisis he threw at her in the interview process.

Within hours of her Jan. 1 swearing-in, Sewell was confronted with a real one: an officer shot outside a police station while sleeping in his car between shifts.

“It was a whirlwind weekend, quite busy,” Sewell, 49, told The Associated Press in one of her first interviews as the leader of the nation’s largest police force, a department grappling with a recent rise in violent crime and continued fallout from a reckoning on police misconduct.

Sewell rushed to the hospital where Officer Keith Wagenhauser was in surgery to remove bullet fragments from his head. She told reporters the officer was lucky to be alive. In the mock scenario a few weeks earlier, she’d been asked to hold a news conference about a hypothetical police shooting.

Introducing Sewell as his choice last month, Mayor Eric Adams said the longtime Long Island police official was “calm, collected, confident” and had the “emotional intelligence needed to lead at this challenging and hopeful time in our city.”

“I think leadership prepares you to be able to tackle anything that comes your way,” Sewell told the AP. “I look forward to what I can learn from the NYPD and being able to bring what I already have to the table.”

Sewell’s baptism by fire continued with a Monday briefing at police headquarters on a planned gang takedown the next day — the first big arrest operation of her tenure — and a news conference Tuesday with Adams and the Brooklyn district attorney.

On Thursday, she and Adams were together again, joining Gov. Kathy Hochul to discuss putting more police in the subways. Adams, a former police captain, has given outside attention to his old department in his first week on the job, accompanying Sewell to events and addressing officers one morning at roll call.

Sewell spent her entire policing career in suburban Nassau County before becoming the NYPD’s first outside leader in more than two decades. She is also the third Black person to lead the department. Sewell said she brings “a fresh perspective” to the job while also acknowledging the department’s “incredible sense of tradition.”

Sewell said she spent the weeks leading up to her swearing-in speaking with everyone from street level officers to former top brass. She also named two NYPD veterans as her top deputies: Edward Caban, the new first deputy commissioner and Kenneth Corey, the new chief of department.

Sitting in the NYPD’s Theodore Roosevelt Room, with a bust of the former president and police commissioner to her right and portraits of him lining the walls, Sewell spoke about her priorities and the challenges of policing a city of 8.8 million people.

“First and foremost, I want the city to be safer,” Sewell said. “I want there to be a better quality of life. I want the police department to collaborate with the community, because they’re part of the community.”

Sewell started with the Nassau County Police Department as a patrol officer in 1997, then became a precinct commander, head of major cases, a top hostage negotiator and finally chief of detectives, where she oversaw a staff of about 350 — about 1% the size of the NYPD’s uniformed ranks.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 49 of 77

Adams promised during his campaign to hire a female commissioner, and in hiring Sewell vaulted her to the top of a list of notable women in policing that includes Philadelphia Commissioner Danielle Outlaw and former Seattle Chief Carmen Best. He said Sewell “carried with her throughout her career a sledgehammer, and she crushed every glass ceiling that was put in her way.”

As Sewell was being briefed Monday on the gang takedown, a work crew mounted her portrait next to her predecessors on a wall near her office at police headquarters. A woman walking by remarked that the addition was “a long time coming.”

Like the men who came before her, Sewell’s success will be measured largely in crime statistics and whether she’s able to rein in a pandemic-era increase in gun violence and homicides.

After reaching a low of 292 homicides in 2017, the city hit 468 in 2020 and more than 480 last year, the highest number since 2011.

Sewell this week endorsed Adams’ plan to reinstate a plainclothes anti-crime unit that was disbanded amid police misconduct protests in 2020 over concerns that it accounted for a disproportionate number of shootings and complaints. Sewell said this time around the unit will be more responsible and better behaved — an assurance critics view skeptically.

Mark Winston Griffith, of Communities United for Police Reform, said Sewell should abandon “failed policing strategies of the past.” He said the new commissioner should also commit to firing police officers who “abuse, harass, brutalize, and kill” and promote transparency by releasing more disciplinary records.

“Fair policing and responsible policing is not mutually exclusive to public safety,” Sewell told the AP. “When you have the people who have the temperament, the desire and the training to do these types of things, you get the results that you want. But the community should be a part of that, and they should understand what our role is and what we intend to do to make them safer.”

## Hunters kill 20 Yellowstone wolves that roamed out of park

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Twenty of Yellowstone National Park’s renowned gray wolves roamed from the park and were shot by hunters in recent months — the most killed by hunting in a single season since the predators were reintroduced to the region more than 25 years ago, according to park officials.

Fifteen wolves were shot after roaming across the park’s northern border into Montana, according to figures released to The Associated Press. Five more died in Idaho and Wyoming.

Park officials said in a statement to AP that the deaths mark “a significant setback for the species’ long-term viability and for wolf research.”

One pack — the Phantom Lake Pack — is now considered “eliminated” after most or all of its members were killed over a two-month span beginning in October, according to the park.

An estimated 94 wolves remain in Yellowstone. But with months to go in Montana’s hunting season — and wolf trapping season just getting underway — park officials said they expect more wolves to die after roaming from Yellowstone, where hunting is prohibited.

Park Superintendent Cam Sholly first raised concerns last September about wolves dying near the park border. He recently urged Republican Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte to shut down hunting and trapping in the area for the remainder of the season.

Sholly cited “the extraordinary number of Yellowstone wolves already killed this hunting season,” in a Dec. 16 letter to Gianforte released to AP under a freedom of information request.

Gianforte, an avid hunter and trapper, did not directly address the request to halt hunting in a Wednesday letter responding to Sholly.

“Once a wolf exits the park and enters lands in the State of Montana it may be harvested pursuant to regulations established by the (state wildlife) Commission under Montana law,” Gianforte wrote.

Gianforte last year received a warning from a Montana game warden after trapping and shooting a radio-collared wolf about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north of the park without taking a state-mandated trapper education course.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 50 of 77

In his response to Sholly, the governor said Montana protects against overhunting through rules adopted by the wildlife commission, which can review hunting seasons if harvest levels top a certain threshold.

For southwestern Montana, including areas bordering the park, that threshold is 82 wolves. Sixty-four have been killed in that region to date this season, out of 150 wolves killed statewide, according to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The most recent wolf killing along the Montana-Yellowstone border happened on New Year's Day.

Wolf trapping in the area opened Dec. 21. Under new rules, Montana hunters can use bait such as meat to lure in wolves for killing and trappers can now use snares in addition to leghold traps.

"Allowances for trapping and especially baiting are a major concern, especially if these tactics lure wolves out of the park," Yellowstone spokesperson Morgan Warthin said.

Urged by Republican lawmakers, Montana wildlife officials last year loosened hunting and trapping rules for wolves statewide. They also eliminated longstanding wolf quota limits in areas bordering the park. The quotas, which Sholly asked Gianforte to reinstate, allowed only a few wolves to be killed along the border annually.

The original quotas were meant to protect packs that draw tourists to Yellowstone from around the world for the chance to see a wolf in the wild.

Montana's efforts to make it easier to kill wolves mirror recent actions by Republicans and conservatives in other states such as Idaho and Wisconsin. The changes came after hunters and ranchers successfully lobbied to reduce wolf populations that prey on big game herds and occasionally on livestock.

But the states' increased aggression toward the predators has raised concerns among federal wildlife officials. In September, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said it would examine if federal endangered species protections should be restored for more than 2,000 wolves in northern U.S. Rockies states including Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

Protections for the region's wolves were lifted a decade ago, based in part on assurances the states would maintain viable wolf populations.

A representative of the hunting industry said outfitters and guides support the preservation of wolves inside Yellowstone. But once the animals cross the boundary, sustainable hunting and trapping should be allowed, said Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Executive Director Mac Minard.

Minard questioned whether the 20 wolves killed so far this year after leaving Yellowstone should even be considered "park wolves."

"That just doesn't make sense," he said. "Why aren't they 'Montana wolves' that happened to go into the park?"

Marc Cooke with the advocacy group Wolves of the Rockies predicted a backlash against Gianforte and the state for not doing more to shield wolves leaving Yellowstone.

"People love these animals and they bring in tons of money for the park," Cooke said. "This boils down to the commercialization of wildlife for a small minority of special interest groups."

## **Peter Bogdanovich, director of 'Paper Moon,' dead at 82**

By LINDSEY BAHR and JAKE COYLE AP Film Writers

Peter Bogdanovich, the ascot-wearing cinephile and director of 1970s black-and-white classics like "The Last Picture Show" and "Paper Moon," has died. He was 82.

Bogdanovich died early Thursday morning at his home in Los Angeles, said his daughter, Antonia Bogdanovich. She said he died of natural causes.

Considered part of a generation of young "New Hollywood" directors, Bogdanovich was heralded as an auteur from the start, with the chilling lone shooter film "Targets" and soon after "The Last Picture Show," from 1971. His evocative and melancholic portrait of teenage angst and middle age loneliness in small, dying town earned eight Oscar nominations, won two (for Ben Johnson and Cloris Leachman) and catapulted him to stardom at the age of 32. He followed "The Last Picture Show" with the screwball comedy "What's Up, Doc?," starring Barbra Streisand and Ryan O'Neal, and then the Depression-era road trip film "Paper

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 51 of 77

Moon," which won 10-year-old Tatum O'Neal an Oscar as well.

His turbulent personal life was also often in the spotlight, from his well-known affair with Cybill Shepherd that began during the making of "The Last Picture Show" while he was married to his close collaborator, Polly Platt, to the murder of his Playmate girlfriend Dorothy Stratten and his subsequent marriage to her younger sister, Louise, who was 29 years his junior.

Reactions came in swiftly at the news of his death.

Streisand wrote on Twitter that, "Peter always made me laugh! He'll keep making them laugh up there, too."

Francis Ford Coppola wrote in an email that, "I'll never forget attending a premiere for 'The Last Picture Show.' I remember at its end, the audience leaped up all around me bursting into applause lasting easily 15 minutes. I'll never forget although I felt I had never myself experienced a reaction like that, that Peter and his film deserved it. May he sleep in bliss for eternity, enjoying the thrill of our applause forever."

Tatum O'Neal posted a photo of herself with him on Instagram, writing "Peter was my heaven & earth. A father figure. A friend. From 'Paper Moon' to 'Nickelodeon' he always made me feel safe. I love you, Peter."

And Martin Scorsese, in an email, wrote that, "In the '60s, at a crucial moment in the history of the movie business and the art of cinema, Peter Bogdanovich was right there at the crossroads of the Old Hollywood and the New... Peter's debut, 'Targets,' is still one of his very best films. With 'The Last Picture Show,' he made a movie that seemed to look backward and forward at the same time as well as a phenomenal success... In the years that followed, Peter had setbacks and tragedies, and he just kept going on, constantly reinventing himself."

Born in Kingston, New York, in 1939, Bogdanovich started out as an actor, a film journalist and critic, working as a film programmer at the Museum of Modern Art, where through a series of retrospectives and monographs, he endeared himself to a host of old guard filmmakers including Orson Welles, Howard Hawks and John Ford. He regaled them with knowledge of their films, took lessons for his own and kept their conversations for future books.

"I've gotten some very important one-sentence clues like when Howard Hawks turned to me and said 'Always cut on the movement and no one will notice the cut,'" he said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It was a very simple sentence but it profoundly effected everything I've done."

And Welles, in addition to being one of Bogdanovich's idols, became a close friend and occasional adversary. Though a generation apart, both experienced the highs of early success and all the complications and jealousies that come with it. In 1992, the younger director published the book "This is Orson Welles," based on conversations with the older director going back to 1969. Bogdanovich was also instrumental in finishing and releasing Welles' "The Other Side of the Wind," which was started in 1970, in 2018.

"Right up to the end, he was fighting for the art of cinema and the people who created it," Scorsese wrote.

His own Hollywood education started early: His father took him at age 5 to see Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton movies at the Museum of Modern Art. He'd later make his own Keaton documentary, "The Great Buster," which was released in 2018.

After marrying young, Bogdanovich and Platt moved to Los Angeles in the mid-1960s, where they attended Hollywood parties and struck up friendships with director Roger Corman and Frank Marshall, then just an aspiring producer, who helped get the film "Targets" off the ground. And the professional ascent continued for the next few films and years. But after "Paper Moon," which Platt collaborated on after they had separated, he would never again capture the accolades of those first five years in Hollywood.

Bogdanovich's relationship with Shepherd led to the end of his marriage to Platt, with whom he shared daughters Antonia and Sashy, and a fruitful creative partnership. The 1984 film "Irreconcilable Differences" was loosely based on the scandal. He later disputed the idea that Platt, who died in 2011, was an integral part of the success of his early films.

He would go on to make two other films with Shepherd, an adaptation of Henry James's "Daisy Miller" and the musical "At Long Last Love," neither of which were particularly well-received by critics or audiences.

And he also passed on major opportunities at the height of his successes. He told Vulture he turned down "The Godfather," "Chinatown" and "The Exorcist."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 52 of 77

"Paramount called and said, 'We just bought a new Mario Puzo book called "The Godfather." We'd like you to consider directing it.' I said, 'I'm not interested in the Mafia,'" he said in the interview.

Headlines would continue to follow Bogdanovich for things other than his movies. He began an affair with Playboy Playmate Dorothy Stratten while directing her in "They All Laughed," a romantic comedy with Audrey Hepburn and Ben Gazzara, in the spring and summer of 1980. Her husband, Paul Snider, murdered her that August. Bogdanovich, in a 1984 book titled "The Killing of the Unicorn: Dorothy Stratten, 1960-1980," criticized Hugh Hefner's Playboy empire for its alleged role in events he said ended in Stratten's death. Then, nine years later, at 49, he married her younger sister, Louise Stratten, who was just 20 at the time. They divorced in 2001, but continued living together, with her mother, in Los Angeles.

In the interview with the AP in 2020, Bogdanovich acknowledged that his relationships had an impact on his career.

"The whole thing about my personal life got in the way of people's understanding of the movies," Bogdanovich said. "That's something that has plagued me since the first couple of pictures."

Despite some flops along the way, Bogdanovich's output remained prolific in the 1980s and 1990s, including a sequel to "The Last Picture Show" called "Texasville," the country music romantic drama "The Thing Called Love," which was one of River Phoenix's last films, and, in 2001, "The Cat's Meow," about a party on William Randolph Hearst's yacht starring Kirsten Dunst as Marion Davies. His last narrative film, "She's Funny that Way," a screwball comedy starring Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston that he co-wrote with Louise Stratten, debuted to mixed reviews in 2014.

Over the years he authored several books about movies, including "Peter Bogdanovich's Movie of the Week," "Who the Devil Made It: Conversations with Legendary Film Directors" and "Who the Hell's in It: Conversations with Hollywood's Legendary Actors."

He acted semi-frequently, too, sometimes playing himself (in "Moonlighting" and "How I Met Your Mother") and sometimes other people, like Dr. Elliot Kupferberg on "The Sopranos," and also inspired a new generation of filmmakers, from Wes Anderson to Noah Baumbach.

"They call me 'Pop,' and I allow it," he told Vulture.

At the time of the AP interview in 2020, coinciding with a podcast about his career with Turner Classic Movies host Ben Mankiewicz, he was hard at work on a television show inspired by Dorothy Stratten, and wasn't optimistic about the future of cinema.

"I just keep going, you know. Television is not dead yet," he said with a laugh. "But movies may have a problem."

Yet even with his Hollywood-sized ego, Bogdanovich remained deferential to those who came before.

"I don't judge myself on the basis of my contemporaries," he told The New York Times in 1971. "I judge myself against the directors I admire — Hawks, Lubitsch, Buster Keaton, Welles, Ford, Renoir, Hitchcock. I certainly don't think I'm anywhere near as good as they are, but I think I'm pretty good."

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump sticks to election falsehoods on Jan. 6

By HOPE YEN and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump and his allies on Thursday clung to false claims about the 2020 election and the Jan. 6 Capitol riot as the nation marked the one-year anniversary of the violent insurrection.

Reacting to President Joe Biden, who blamed him for the deadly event, Trump issued statements repeating his assertions that the voting was rigged. Those claims have been thoroughly debunked.

In a speech marking the anniversary, Biden said Trump's falsehoods about the 2020 election fueled the riot. Biden said the election was the most scrutinized in U.S. history, and that the riot was an un-American attempt to derail democracy incited by a politician who couldn't accept the people's will.

A look at the claims:

TRUMP, on the Biden administration: "That's what you get when you have a rigged Election."

TRUMP: "In actuality, the Big Lie was the Election itself."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 53 of 77

THE FACTS: To be clear, no widespread corruption was found and no election was stolen from Trump. Biden earned 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232, the same margin that Trump had when he beat Hillary Clinton in 2016, which he repeatedly described as a "landslide." (Trump ended up with 304 electoral votes because two electors defected.) Biden achieved victory by prevailing in key battleground states.

Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, found no evidence of widespread election fraud. Trump's allegations of voting fraud also have been dismissed by a succession of judges and refuted by state election officials and an arm of his own administration's Homeland Security Department.

No case has established irregularities of a scale that would have changed the outcome.

An Associated Press review last month of every potential case of voter fraud in the six battleground states disputed by Trump found fewer than 475 — a number that would have made no difference in the presidential election.

Biden won Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and their 79 Electoral College votes by a combined 311,257 votes out of 25.5 million ballots cast for president. The disputed ballots represent just 0.15% of his victory margin in those states.

TRUMP: "Does anybody really think that Biden beat Obama with the Black population in select Swing State cities, but nowhere else? That he would ... somehow miraculously receive the most votes in American history with no coattails?"

THE FACTS: It's not unrealistic that Biden won 81 million votes in an election where turnout exceeded the mark set by the 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama. Voter participation in the Nov. 3, 2020, election, in fact, was the highest in more than a century, according to the Census Bureau.

The tallied votes accounted for over 66% of the eligible voting-age population in the U.S. That's the highest since 1900, before all women were allowed to vote, according to the United States Elections Project.

The sheer number of votes also set records, although that's a less remarkable milestone given the country's growing population. Biden's more than 81 million votes was the highest number for a presidential candidate in history. Trump received more than 74 million — the highest total for a losing candidate.

Biden's total surpasses the 2008 record of 69.5 million votes cast for Obama. Biden was also on that ticket as Obama's running mate.

Election experts and partisans point to various factors accounting for the rise in civic participation. Some note that higher turnout was expected after many states expanded the time and the ways voters could cast ballots during the coronavirus pandemic, while others cite the extraordinarily high passions Trump provoked — both for and against — in an election that amounted to a referendum on his leadership.

TRUMP: "Biden ... used my name today to try to further divide America."

THE FACTS: Biden did not cite Trump by name in the speech. Instead, he referred to him throughout as the "former president."

REP. MATT GAETZ: January 6 "may very well have been a fed-surrection. ... I do not believe that there would have been the same level of criminal acuity but for the involvement of the federal government." — news conference with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., in Washington that focused on the Capitol riot.

GAETZ: "What if those Capitol police officers are victims ... what if they are victims of an orchestrated effort by the FBI or other federal law enforcement to increase the criminal acuity of that day?"

THE FACTS: The suggestion by Gaetz, a Florida Republican, as well as other conservatives in recent weeks that the FBI may have orchestrated the Jan. 6 riot is baseless.

Gaetz appeared to be referring to an article in Revolver News, a fringe news site founded by a former speechwriter for Trump, that argued because many "unindicted co-conspirators" listed in the Jan. 6 federal charging documents were not charged, they could actually be undercover FBI agents or federal informants.

That theory doesn't hold up and there's no evidence the unnamed conspirators are FBI agents or informants. Legal experts and federal case rulings in fact have made clear that government agents and informants cannot be described under the law as conspirators to a crime.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 54 of 77

In truth the rioters are just who they said they were — Trump supporters.

During testimony last year before Congress, FBI Director Christopher Wray was asked whether there was any reason to believe the insurrection was organized by “fake Trump protesters.”

“We have not seen evidence of that,” said Wray, who was appointed by Trump.

## Schools sticking with in-person learning scramble for subs

By MICHAEL MELIA Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Principals, superintendents and counselors are filling in as substitutes in classrooms as the surge in coronavirus infections further strains schools that already had been struggling with staffing shortages.

In Cincinnati, dozens of employees from the central office were dispatched this week to schools that were at risk of having to close because of low staffing. The superintendent of Boston schools, Brenda Cassellius, tweeted she was filling in for a fifth grade teacher.

San Francisco’s superintendent, Vince Matthews, has called on all employees with teaching credentials to take a class.

“This is the most challenging time in my 36 years as an educator,” Matthews said Thursday during a break from filling in as a substitute sixth grade science teacher. “We’re trying to educate students in the middle of a pandemic while the sands around us are consistently shifting.”

Staff absences and the surge driven by the omicron variant have led some big districts including Atlanta, Detroit and Milwaukee to switch temporarily to virtual learning. Where schools are holding the line on in-person learning, getting through the day has required an all-hands-on-deck approach.

“It’s absolutely exhausting,” said history teacher Deborah Schmidt, who was covering other classes during her planning period at McKinley Classical Leadership Academy in St. Louis. On Thursday, she was covering a physics class.

In a school year when teachers are being asked to help students recover from the pandemic, some say they are dealing with overwhelming stress just trying to keep classes running.

“I had a friend say to me, ‘You know, three weeks ago we were locking our doors because of school shootings again, and now we’re opening the window for COVID.’ It’s really all a bit too much,” said Meghan Hatch-Geary, an English teacher at Woodland Regional High School in Connecticut. “This year, trying to fix everything, trying to be everything for everyone, is more and more exhausting all the time.”

Labor tensions have been highest in Chicago, where classes were canceled after the teachers union voted to refuse in-person instruction, but union leaders in many school systems have been clamoring for more flexibility on virtual learning, additional testing and other protections against the virus.

In New Haven, Connecticut, where hundreds of teachers have been out each day this week, administrators have helped to cover classrooms. When her classroom aide did not show up for work Wednesday, special education teacher Jennifer Graves borrowed paraprofessionals from other classrooms for short stretches to get through the day at Dr. Reginald Mayo Early Childhood School — an arrangement that was difficult and confusing for her young students with disabilities.

“It’s very difficult to get through my lesson plans when somebody doesn’t know your students, when somebody is not used to working with students with disabilities,” Graves said. “Some students need sensory inputs, some students need to be spoon-fed. So it’s very hard to train someone on the spot.”

Even before infection rates took off around the holidays, many districts were struggling to keep up staffing levels, particularly among substitutes and other lower-paid positions. As a result, teachers have been spread thin for months, said Becky Pringle, president of the National Education Association.

“All of these additional burdens and stresses on top of being worried about getting sick, on top of being stressed like all of us are to after a two-year pandemic ... it just compounded to put us in a place that we are now,” Pringle said in an interview.

Some administrators have already been helping for months in classrooms and cafeterias to fill in for sick and quarantining staff.

“We’re not in love with the circumstances, but we’re happy to do the work because the work is making

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 55 of 77

sure that we're here for our kids," said Mike Cornell, superintendent of the Hamburg Central School District in New York, who spent time this fall on cafeteria duty poking straws into juice pouches and peeling lids off chips to fill staffing gaps.

In San Francisco, 600 of the district's 3,600 teachers were out Thursday. Even with administrators, curriculum developers and teacher coaches filling in, there were not enough substitutes to cover all classrooms and some classes needed to be combined, said Matthews, the superintendent.

Among the schools that went virtual this week because of staffing shortages was second grade teacher Anna Tarka-DiNunzio's school of roughly 200 students in Pittsburgh. Some taught their students despite being sick with the virus, said Tarka-DiNunzio, who was disappointed to hear some characterize staffing shortages as the result of teachers arbitrarily taking off work.

"It's not just people calling off. It's people who are sick or who have family members who are sick," she said.

The strains on schools this week might have been even tougher if not for large numbers of students being absent themselves. In New Haven, teachers say classes have been only about half full.

Jonathan Berryman, a music teacher, said some of his students haven't shown up for weeks. He worries what that will mean for the performance targets set for students and their teachers.

"Before omicron came along, there was fairly smooth sailing. Now the ship has been rocked," he said. "We get to make midyear adjustments in our evaluation system. And some I'm sure are wondering whether we should even be concerned about that academic progress piece."

Graves, who is in her 12th year of teaching in New Haven, said that she is grateful for administrators who have been helping out in classrooms and the aides who have pitched in, but that her students have struggled with the lack of consistency in staffing.

She also has been frustrated with quickly changing health protocols, and worried about the health of herself and her extended family. Most of her young students are not able to tolerate wearing masks for long stretches, and many have been coughing lately.

"This is the hardest year I've had," she said.

## Environmental justice in spotlight as WH official departs

BY DREW COSTLEY AP Science Writer

The White House's top official on environmental justice is stepping down a year after President Joe Biden took office with an ambitious plan to help disadvantaged communities and overhaul policies that have historically hurt them.

The departure Friday of Cecilia Martinez, senior director for environmental justice at the Council for Environmental Quality, puts a spotlight on both the administration's successes and promises yet to be fulfilled.

"It was a hard decision," Martinez told the Associated Press in an interview Wednesday. She said that after many months of working on Biden's environmental policy, she needed time to rest and be with her family.

Colleagues at the White House and in Congress say her departure is a loss since she played a pivotal role in centering disadvantaged communities in President Biden's environmental and climate policies.

"Her credibility in terms of environmental issues — in particular environmental justice issues — is going to be missed," said Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz, said.

Martinez helped develop then-candidate Joe Biden's environmental justice agenda while he was campaigning by setting up meetings between Biden's team and key environmental justice leaders from around the country. She went on to oversee a review of the Council on Environmental Quality as part of Biden's transition team and was eventually appointed as the top ranking official on environmental justice in the administration.

"Cecilia has been the heart, soul, and mind of the most ambitious environmental justice agenda ever adopted by a President," Brenda Mallory, chair of the Council of Environmental Quality, said in a statement. "She is an unwavering and effective champion for the communities that, for far too long, have been overburdened by pollution and left out of government decisions that affect them."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 56 of 77

Through executive orders and legislation, the administration has tried to direct resources toward disadvantaged communities, develop tools to monitor climate and economic justice and pass regulations to clean up the environment.

Some of that was accomplished. The White House's Justice40 initiative mandated that 40% of benefits from federal investments in sustainable and green infrastructure, such as clean energy, pollution cleanup and water improvements, go to disadvantaged communities.

The administration also created a mapping tool that will help identify communities most in need of such investments.

And the Biden administration has restored dozens of environmental regulations rolled back during the Trump administration, including rules that limit the amount of toxic waste coming from coal plants, require extensive environmental reviews of major infrastructure projects, and protect endangered wildlife.

Martinez was central to much of that progress, but she and others in the White House say much more work remains to be done. She said everyone she has worked with on the federal level is "very much interested in communities holding us accountable."

Reflecting on year one of Biden's administration, environmental justice leaders around the country expressed disappointment and frustration at what they call a lack of progress and failure to protect communities most vulnerable to climate change, most exposed to pollution and that have the least access to environmental benefits such as clean water.

"I would say that overall there was some progress made in advancing environmental justice priorities more through executive actions than legislation," said Juan Jhong-Chung, climate justice director at the nonprofit Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition. "But our communities are still waiting for the results on the ground."

Some money from the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill will be spent on projects like cleaning up toxic waste sites.

But a lot more investment that would have gone toward environmental and climate justice initiatives in frontline communities likely will not be part of Biden's "Build Back Better" bill, a signature policy of the administration. Moderate Democrats have demanded cuts and it's unclear what, if any, part of the bill may eventually pass.

Dallas Goldtooth, campaign organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Biden's promises on environmental justice were an "over-commitment" and that the administration "has not been sincere in actualizing its ambitions."

He also said the Biden administration has failed to protect indigenous communities from projects such as the Line3 and Dakota Access pipelines. Both oil pipelines were met with protests and legal challenges from indigenous and environmental groups who said that construction and operation of the pipelines could threaten the water and air quality in their communities.

But the Biden administration decided not to cancel the Line3 pipeline's permits and to keep the Dakota Access pipeline open while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted an environmental review.

Based on the mixed results of the first year of Biden's environmental justice agenda, many environmental justice advocates are skeptical that the administration can deliver on its ambitious promises.

"It has been disappointing," Goldtooth said. "I've got friends who are in the administration and ... I'm cheering them on, but I also feel for them when their hands are tied."

The White House has not said who might replace Martinez, a longtime environmental justice advocate from New Mexico whose research centered on effects of radiation poisoning and who founded the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit.

## Omicron surge vexes parents of children too young for shots

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

Afternoons with Grammy. Birthday parties. Meeting other toddlers at the park. Parents of children too young to be vaccinated are facing difficult choices as an omicron variant-fueled surge in COVID-19 cases

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 57 of 77

makes every encounter seem risky.

For Maine business owner Erin Connolly, the most wrenching decision involves Madeleine, her 3-year-old daughter, and Connolly's mother, who cares for the girl on the one day a week she isn't in preschool.

It's a treasured time of making cookies, going to the library, or just hanging out. But the spirited little girl resists wearing a mask, and with the highly contagious variant spreading at a furious pace, Connolly says she's wondering how long that can continue "and when does it feel too unsafe."

Connolly, of West Bath, said she worries less about Madeleine and her 6-year-old vaccinated son getting the virus than about the impact illness and separation would have on the grandparents. But she's also concerned about her vaccinated parents contracting breakthrough cases.

Although health experts say omicron appears to cause less severe disease and lead to fewer hospitalizations, its rapid spread indicates that it is much more contagious than other variants. Nearly 718,000 COVID cases were reported Tuesday, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Omicron is currently the culprit in more than 90% of U.S. cases, a dizzying rise from less than 10% two weeks ago.

"The sheer volume of infections because of its profound transmissibility will mean that many more children will get infected," Dr. Anthony Fauci said Wednesday at a White House briefing.

COVID cases in U.S. children and teens nearly doubled in the last two weeks of December, totaling nearly 326,000 in the final week alone, according to a report from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association.

The omicron-fueled surge has also put children in the hospital in record numbers: During the week of Dec. 27, 2021, to Jan. 2, 2022, an average of 672 children 17 and under were admitted per day to hospitals with the coronavirus — more than double the number from the previous week. Children still represent a small percentage of those being hospitalized, however.

Fauci, the country's top infectious disease doctor, said surrounding children with vaccinated adults is one way to keep them from contracting the virus. Health officials also reiterate that face masks prevent transmissions, and putting them on children 2 and older in public and group settings can help keep them safe.

Connolly, 39, and her mother had a difficult conversation Tuesday morning about the dilemma.

"Will Madeleine be masked?" her mother asked. "I said, 'We're trying, but I don't know if she will,'" Connolly recalled. "I said, 'Does that mean that Thursdays with Grammy will go away?' She said, 'I'm not sure yet,'" Connolly said, choking back tears.

Parents who had hoped the new year might bring a COVID vaccine for young children had a setback when Pfizer announced last month that two doses didn't offer as much protection as hoped in youngsters ages 2 to 4.

Pfizer's study has been updated to give everyone under age 5 a third dose, and data is expected around the end of March or beginning of April, a company scientist told U.S. officials Wednesday.

Researchers were disappointed by the setback, said Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, who is leading Stanford University's Pfizer vaccine studies in children under 12.

Maldonado said she understands the frustration of parents with young children, but that she advises them to avoid unnecessary travel during this current surge, and to make sure their day care centers, preschools and other care providers are requiring masks and taking other recommended precautions.

Watching omicron's spread, Honolulu resident Jacob Aki is contemplating forgoing a first birthday party for his 10-month-old son. Celebrating the milestone is important in his native Hawaiian culture. The tradition stems from a time before the measles vaccine was available, when it was a feat to reach one's first birthday. The family also canceled plans to experience snow in Canada. Meanwhile, every cough and sniffle is provoking anxiety.

"Babies normally get sick at this age," Aki said. "But with everything with COVID ... anxiety is high."

Heather Cimellaro, a technology teacher from Auburn, Maine, says she worries more than ever about keeping her 3-year-old identical twin boys healthy. One has had medical issues related to their premature birth and the family makes regular trips to Boston to see a specialist.

"COVID can really throw a wrench in those plans," Cimellaro said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 58 of 77

Cimellaro, 33, says omicron has her rethinking running errands with the twins, library storytime visits, even preschool, located in a health center for the elderly. She worries the boys could catch COVID and spread it to their "grand-buddies."

"It's just a lot of worry: 'Am I doing the right thing?'" she said. "That's the thing. I'm not an epidemiologist. I don't know how dangerous it is for them. So it's kind of like that debate with myself."

Erin Stanley of Berrien Springs, Michigan, said she and her husband have curtailed their social lives because of omicron to help protect their 3-year-old son, Ralph. They are both vaccinated and boosted, but they worry about Ralph getting sick and spreading illness to his younger cousin, preschool classmates, grandparents and a beloved great-grandmother.

They didn't see the great-grandmother over Christmas and skipped a holiday get-together with other relatives too.

"That was upsetting," Stanley said. "We all really wanted to. It just seemed risky."

Stanley, 35, a cook at a popular organic farm, used to take Ralph grocery shopping, a trip he looked forward to and that represented one of his few social interactions outside preschool. But few shoppers wear masks, she said, and now that seems too risky as well.

The shy little boy has had three recent scares and three negative COVID tests.

"Getting the swab test was really traumatic for him," said Stanley, who added that "virus" and "swab" are now part of his vocabulary.

"He keeps saying, 'I don't want to get a swab!'" she said. "If a vaccine comes for him, we'll definitely get it."

## Video shows cop shoot without warning at man firing into air

By MARK GILLISPIE Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — Police in Ohio released body camera footage Thursday showing an officer firing multiple rounds through a wooden privacy fence without warning at someone shooting gunfire into the air on the other side.

James Williams, 46, of Canton, was shot in the chest minutes into the new year and pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. The video was released by the Canton Police Department.

The video shows the officer approach the tall privacy fence in a residential area as the sound of multiple gunshots ring out. Smoke from what appears to be a gun can be seen spurting into the air above the fence.

The officer then fires multiple shots through the fence. After firing, he yells, "Police, get down now! Police, Get down now!"

Marquetta Williams, James' wife, told The Canton Repository her husband had been using her AR-15 rifle to fire celebratory rounds that she said were a New Year's tradition in their neighborhood.

After the shooting, the video shows another officer taking cover behind a cruiser and yelling, "Show me your (expletive) hands" after Marquetta Williams steps onto the front porch of the home.

The officer who fired then shouts, "Everyone on the ground. Out here, on the sidewalk, on the ground."

Marquetta Williams and others, including several children, can be seen gathering on the home's front porch steps with their hands raised as the officer steps inside the home and finds James Williams lying on the living room floor, shot in the chest.

The video confirms what Marquetta Williams told The Canton Repository. Her husband was shot without warning.

Canton Police Chief Jack Angelo said Saturday the officer was outside his cruiser and confronted someone firing a weapon. He said the officer feared for his life.

Police spokesperson Lt. Dennis Garren said Thursday the department had no additional comments and that the shooting is being investigated by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

The officer, who has not been identified, has been placed on administrative leave.

Williams was the father of four daughters and a step-father to two more children.

## Dozens of protesters, 12 police dead in Kazakhstan protests

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Security forces in Kazakhstan killed dozens of protesters and 12 police officers died in an eruption of violence that saw demonstrators storm government buildings and set them on fire, authorities said Thursday.

One police officer was found beheaded in the unrest, which poses a growing challenge to authoritarian rule in the former Soviet republic.

Despite the severe response by authorities, protesters took to the streets again Thursday in the country's largest city, Almaty, a day after breaking into the presidential residence and the mayor's office there.

Police were also out in force, including in the capital of Nur-Sultan, which was reported quiet, and a Russian-led force of peacekeeping troops was on its way.

Video from the Russian news agency Tass showed police firing intensely on a street near Republic Square, where demonstrators had gathered, though they could not be seen in the footage. Late Thursday, Tass said protesters had been swept from the square but that sporadic gunfire in the area continued.

Earlier, Russia's Sputnik news service reported that shots were fired as police surrounded a group of about 200 protesters in the city.

In the unrest on Wednesday, "dozens of attackers were liquidated," police spokeswoman Saltanat Azirbek told state news channel Khabar-24. Twelve police officers were killed and 353 injured, the channel reported, citing city officials. The Interior Ministry said 2,000 people were arrested.

Tens of thousands of people, some reported to be carrying clubs and shields, have taken to the streets in recent days in the worst protests the country has seen since gaining independence from the Soviet Union three decades ago.

The demonstrations began over a near-doubling of prices for a type of vehicle fuel, but seemed to reflect wider discontent in the country, which has been under the rule of the same party since independence.

In a concession, the government on Thursday announced a 180-day price cap on vehicle fuel and a moratorium on utility rate increases. It was unclear what effect the moves would have.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has vacillated between trying to mollify the protesters, including accepting the resignation of his government, and promising harsh measures to quell the unrest, which he blamed on "terrorist bands."

Severe interruptions to internet and cellphone service made it difficult and sometimes impossible for news of what was happening inside Kazakhstan to get out. The airports in Almaty and one other city were shut down.

Worries that a broader crackdown could be on the horizon grew after Tokayev called on a Russia-led military alliance for help.

The alliance, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, includes the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The operation is its first military action, an indication that Kazakhstan's neighbors, particularly Russia, are concerned that the unrest could spread.

Russia and Kazakhstan share close relations and a 4,700-mile (7,600-kilometer) border, much of it along open steppes. Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome space center is in Kazakhstan.

The CSTO's general secretary, Stanislav Zas, told Russia's RIA-Novosti news agency that the full contingent to be sent as peacekeepers would number about 2,500.

He rejected as "complete stupidity" suggestions that the troops would act as occupiers rather than peacekeepers. "The sincere wish of our states is real help for Kazakhstan in the difficult situation," he said.

However, White House press secretary Jen Pasaki said the U.S. has "questions about the nature of this request and whether it was a legitimate invitation or not."

"The world will, of course, be watching for any violation of human rights and actions that may lay the predicate for the seizure of Kazakh institutions," she said.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric called on security forces from within and without to "show restraint and protect people's rights."

Tokayev has imposed a nationwide state of emergency and banned religious services. That is a blow to Kazakhstan's sizable Orthodox Christian population, which observes Christmas on Friday.

## Rights group verifies Polish senator was hacked with spyware

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Amnesty International said Thursday it has independently confirmed that powerful spyware from the Israeli surveillance software maker NSO Group was used to hack a Polish senator multiple times in 2019 when he was running the opposition's parliamentary election campaign.

The Associated Press reported last month that Citizen Lab, an internet watchdog group at the University of Toronto, found that the senator, Krzysztof Brejza, and two other Polish government critics were hacked with NSO's Pegasus spyware.

Dozens of high-profile cases of Pegasus abuse have been uncovered since 2015, many by a global media consortium last year, with the NSO Group malware employed to eavesdrop on journalists, politicians, diplomats, lawyers and human rights activists from the Middle East to Mexico.

The Polish hacks are considered particularly egregious because they occurred not in a repressive autocracy but a European Union member state.

The revelations have rocked Poland, drawing comparisons to the 1970s Watergate scandal in the United States and eliciting calls for an investigation and accountability. Although neither Citizen Lab nor Amnesty International determined who was behind the hacks, the victims all blame Poland's right-wing ruling party, Law and Justice.

Law and Justice leaders have denied knowledge of the hacks and at times mocked the reported findings while refusing to open an investigation.

NSO Group does not identify its customers but says it only sells Pegasus to governments to fight terrorism and other serious crimes. The spyware allows its operators to vacuum up everything from instant messages and contacts to photos and to turn microphones and cameras into real-time spy tools.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has called the Citizen Lab-AP findings "fake news" and suggested a foreign intelligence service could have done the spying -- an idea dismissed by critics who say no other government would have any interest in the three Polish targets.

John-Scott Railton, a senior researcher at Citizen Lab, said that "if (Polish government leaders) really believe this could be the action of a foreign service, it would be the height of irresponsibility not to investigate."

The senator's mobile phone was hacked with Pegasus 33 times in 2019, mostly while Brejza ran the opposition's campaign to unseat the Law and Justice-led government, Citizen Lab determined last month.

Text messages stolen from Brejza's phone were doctored and aired by state-controlled TV as part of a smear campaign in the heat of the race, which the populist ruling party went on to narrowly win. Brejza has compared the actions to the tactics used in Russia against Kremlin critic and opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Donncha O' Cearbhaill, an expert with Amnesty International's Security Lab, said he confirmed Citizen Lab's finding after receiving raw backups of Brejza's phone from the Canadian researchers. Amnesty uses independently developed tools and methods for its forensic analysis.

Brejza told the AP he thinks the real victims of the hacking are Polish voters who were "deceived" by Law and Justice and "deprived of the right to fair elections."

The other two Polish targets confirmed by Citizen Lab were Roman Giertych, a lawyer who represents opposition politicians in a number of politically sensitive cases, and Ewa Wrzosek, an independent-minded prosecutor.

Wrzosek formally asked the District Prosecutor's Office in Warsaw last month to investigate the hacking of her phone. The office refused, justifying its decision by saying that Wrzosek refused to hand over her phone.

She said she did not relinquish the phone because she doesn't trust the prosecutor's office and wanted to participate in the evaluation of the device. "This is my right according to the law," Wrzosek told the AP.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 61 of 77

In November, Israeli financial newspaper Calcalist reported that the country's Defense Ministry had significantly cut the list of countries to which Israeli-produced spyware could be exported. The newspaper did not say that Poland was one of the nations removed from the list, but it was not among the approved countries noted in the report.

Hungary, another European Union member where NSO Group's Pegasus is confirmed to have been used against non-criminals, also was not on the shortened list.

The Israeli Defense Ministry has said called the Calcalist report inaccurate, without elaborating.

## US had 5 rabies deaths last year, highest total in a decade

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Five Americans died of rabies last year — the largest number in a decade — and health officials said Thursday that some of the people didn't realize they had been infected or refused life-saving shots.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report on three of the deaths, all stemming from contact with bats. CDC officials said the deaths were tragic and could have been prevented.

One, an 80-year-old Illinois man, refused to take life-saving shots because of a longstanding fear of vaccines. An Idaho man and a Texas boy did not get shots because of a belief that no bat bite or scratch broke their skin.

In all three cases, people "either trivialized the exposure (to bats) or they didn't recognize the severity of rabies," said Ryan Wallace, a CDC rabies expert who co-authored the report.

Two other deaths occurred earlier in 2021. One was a Minnesota man bitten by a bat. He got the shots, but an undiagnosed immune system problem hampered their effectiveness, CDC officials said. The other victim was bitten by a rabid dog while traveling in the Philippines and died in New York after returning to the U.S.

Rabies is caused by a virus that invades the central nervous system and is usually fatal in animals and humans. It's most commonly spread through a bite from an infected animal, with most U.S. infections in recent years traced to bat encounters.

Infection can cause insomnia, anxiety, confusion, paralysis, salivating, hallucinations, difficulty swallowing and fear of water.

Death can occur only a couple of weeks after symptoms begin. But it can be prevented through a series of five shots given within two weeks of exposure.

An estimated 60,000 Americans are treated each year after possible exposure to rabies, the CDC says.

There were no rabies deaths reported in 2019 or 2020. The last time five U.S. rabies deaths were reported in a single year was 2011, CDC officials said.

## As Broadway fights virus surge, unsung heroes find spotlight

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The theatrical magic keeping Broadway going during the latest coronavirus surge has been the unheralded performers ready to step into any role in an emergency. Then there's Carla Stickler, who had actually left show business but returned to rescue "Wicked."

Stickler, who had launched a new career as a software engineer in Chicago three years ago, canceled her winter vacation and returned to New York to star as the green-skinned Elphaba while the cast was ravaged by illness. She may have been playing a wicked witch, but Stickler's effort was all good.

"It was like riding a bike," she says. "I got out there and I was like, 'Oh, I remember this. This is really special, and I'm just going to try to enjoy every second of it.'"

Her effort is just an extreme example of the work Broadway's understudies, standbys and fill-ins have made to keep shows open, often learning multiple roles with little formal rehearsals.

The stress on companies has been enormous, with many shows kept open by the skillful folk listed deeper in the Playbill. Hugh Jackman, who before he contracted COVID-19, took a moment at a curtain

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 62 of 77

call to honor the multiple understudies who kept his revival of "The Music Man" open for as long as it did.

"It's been such a really exciting moment to see understudies and standbys and swings get this kind of recognition for the hard work that they do," Stickler says. "I think they sometimes get overlooked. And so it's been really emotional to see the outpouring of love for all what they do."

Stickler wasn't the only former performer pressed into service. At one point over the holidays, eight of the 12 actors in Broadway's "Come From Away" were substitutes, including two — Pearl Sun and Holly Ann Butler — who had left the show, as well as Marika Aubrey who was drafted from the national tour.

"Everybody kind of had to come together — the music department, hair, wardrobe, stage management, lighting, sound. Everybody to make this baby work," says Josh Breckenridge, the show's dance captain who wrangles all 12 roles and is a standby for five of the six male roles, who each involve multiple parts.

"It really took a village and it was a beautiful village and it delivered. So I'm very proud of us for nailing it. And the audiences were wonderful and with us every second. It really was a beautiful triumph."

Breckenridge, who has been on Broadway with "The Scottsboro Boys" and "The Ritz" as well as toured with "The Book of Mormon," hopes Broadway's latest harrowing experience will lead to structural changes, like investing in more standbys and fill-ins during vacations.

"I hope that producers out there notice and start to hire more coverage so that we can avoid moments like this and be ready and not have to cancel on audiences," he says. "We're literally the reason for the phrase 'the show must go on,' right?"

Stickler was one reason "Wicked" could go on this holiday season. She was driving with her husband and dog on Dec. 27 for a week's vacation in Michigan with friends when she got an urgent request to return to Oz. The cast was stretched and they needed her skills.

She had last performed the role on Broadway in 2015 but had been a swing — someone who covers a show's ensemble roles — up until 2019. She had spent a decade in the Broadway company of "Wicked" and starred in a national tour, too.

"Elphaba is just kind of something that lives in my body, and I think a lot of other understudies will say the same thing," she says. "You build up those neural pathways and they're super strong, and all you have to do is kind of recall them."

While her husband continued driving on, she flew to New York during a long, treacherous travel day dodging flight cancellations. She saw the show that night and then rehearsed over the next few days. She went on as Elphaba on Saturday night and the Sunday matinee.

"I think everybody is really doing the best they can," she says. "I do think the fact that the show has been able to stay open is a testament to how devoted the actors are to the show and how great and talented the group of people that they have hired over the years are."

While casts and backstage personnel up and down Broadway are all vaccinated, wear masks when not onstage and get tested daily, breakthrough infections have still spread. Several productions, including "Aladdin," "Hamilton," "Dear Evan Hansen" "The Lion King" and "Six," suspended performances due to breakthrough cases.

Stickler is sticking around this week just in case "Wicked" needs her help. She'll then fly back to Chicago, but she won't ever rule out a return if the show needs her again.

"I've gone and done a lot of things last minute for the show in my life, and I would not put it past myself to do it again. I would do it again in a heartbeat. I love the show," she says.

"I swear I'm going to be able to do this role on my grave. She's so ingrained in my body. If I turn 100, I'll do it at my 100th birthday party."

## Serbia in shock over Australia's refusal to let Djokovic in

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Serbia is nervously awaiting the outcome of what increasingly looks like a soap opera with the country's most famous sports idol in the lead role.

The world's top-ranked men's tennis player, Novak Djokovic, faces the prospect of deportation from Australia, where he had hoped to win his 21st Grand Slam title at this month's Australian Open, which

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 63 of 77

would set the men's record for major championship victories.

The 34-year-old Serb's ability to compete in Melbourne and overtake rivals Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer has been in limbo since the Australian Border Force canceled Djokovic's visa because he failed to meet requirements for a COVID-19 vaccination exemption. A court hearing on the case has been set for Monday.

Djokovic's fans at home are in shock, and Serbian politicians have seized on the opportunity to get a popularity boost ahead of this year's elections as protesters gathered in downtown Belgrade calling for the tennis star's release.

Populist Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's government summoned the Australian ambassador in protest over Djokovic's "detention."

Vucic said he had spoken to Djokovic and blasted Australian authorities for keeping the tennis star in an "infamous hotel," referring to the secure facility where Djokovic is being housed along with asylum seekers and refugees.

"I'm afraid that this overkill will continue," Vucic said. "When you can't defeat someone on the court, then you do such things."

Most of Djokovic's fans at home agree, reflecting the anti-Serb conspiracy theories that are pervasive in the Balkans.

"It is historically evident that the world has something against the Serbs," said Darko Ikonc, a Belgrade resident.

"I'm not saying that Serbs are heavenly people or anything similar, that is a nonsense," he added. "But it is obvious that they do not want him to be the best tennis player in history because they like other tennis players, such as Nadal or Federer, better."

The odds that a player from Serbia, a Balkan country bombarded by NATO in 1999 while Djokovic was a boy, economically crippled, with few tennis courts and little tennis pedigree, would become the world's No. 1 were close to zero.

However, Djokovic did it, creating a huge following in Serbia as well as neighboring Balkan states despite being heavily criticized abroad for his frequent on court theatrics and outbursts, as well as his approach to the COVID-19 pandemic and refusing to disclose whether he has been vaccinated or not.

He has had a fraught relationship with some spectators around the world, perhaps because he is seen by supporters of Federer and Nadal as an interloper, the third member of the sport's so-called Big Three. He is the youngest of the trio — Federer is 40; Nadal 35 — and came along after the "Fedal" rivalry had captured so much attention.

At the beginning of the 2011 season, Federer owned 16 major titles, Nadal nine and Djokovic one. Over the next decade, Djokovic kept gaining on them, helped in part by compiling a winning record against each.

And while he does tend to hear plenty of support from crowds otherwise, Djokovic always has seemed to receive less support when his opponent was Federer or Nadal. In terms of endorsements, Djokovic earned less than half of what Federer did from May 2020 to May 2021, according to Forbes.

On and off the court, Djokovic says and does what he wants, whether it is his anti-vaccine stance, his attempt to start a players' association outside of the official channels supported by Nadal and Federer or occasional flashes of temper while playing. That included throwing and smashing his racket during the Tokyo Olympics and other matches or, most infamously, when he was disqualified from the 2020 U.S. Open after accidentally hitting a line judge in the throat with a ball after dropping a game.

In the midst of the pandemic in 2020, and with professional tennis shut down, Djokovic organized the Adria Tour, a series of exhibition events without social distancing in his native Serbia and neighboring Croatia.

The tournament was abandoned after several participants tested positive for coronavirus. Djokovic and his wife Jelena went on to reveal positive tests.

Djokovic's father, Srdjan Djokovic, said Thursday that his son is the symbol of a "free world" and an attack on him amounted to an attack on Serbia.

He accused Australia and the West in general of "mistreating" Djokovic because he is a Serb and evoked the 1999 bombing by NATO of Serbia over its breakaway province of Kosovo.

"Novak is Serbia and Serbia is Novak," he said. "They are trampling on Novak and thus they are trampling

on Serbia and the Serbian people.”

“Shame on them, the entire freedom-loving world should rise together with Serbia,” Srdjan Djokovic said. “They crucified Jesus and now they are trying to crucify Novak the same way and force him on his knees.”

## Some still don't know fate of pets after Colorado wildfire

By COLLEEN SLEVIN and BRITTANY PETERSON Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — When Lisa Young evacuated her home as a fast-moving Colorado wildfire burned, it looked like firefighters were going to be able to stop what appeared then to just be a grass fire in a field behind her home. She just took her purse, turned off her slow cooker and television and made sure her two cats had enough food and water to drink, thinking she would be back home soon.

Later that night staying with relatives, she watched images of her home outside of Denver burning on television, her driveway recognizable because of her father's old Corvette on fire. Her house was one of nearly 1,000 destroyed in the blaze, leading her to fear that her calico cats, Joy and Noelle, 5-year-old sisters, died in the fire.

Most people safely evacuated from the wildfire that was propelled by 105 mph (169 kph) winds, but Young is among dozens of homeowners who either had pets who died, had to scramble to find them or still don't know the fate of their dogs or cats.

If the windows in her home broke in the fire's heat, there's a chance the cats, who were feral as kittens and cannot be held unless they are willing, may have escaped, she said.

“There's that one little hope,” said Young, who has been comforted by daily visits to take care of her horse, who was safe from the flames in his boarding stable.

There have been some happy endings. The neighbors of one police officer who was at work when the fire broke out were able to rescue his family's three dogs before his family's home was destroyed. Another man who was away at work when his home burned was reunited with his cat, who had a burned face, after someone heard it meowing outside a home that survived nearby.

The Humane Society of Boulder Valley has reunited over 25 pets with their owners since the fire destroyed homes in the communities of Louisville and Superior, including a dog who had spent two days outside and had some burned paws, the group's CEO Jan McHugh-Smith said. The organization has also been taking care of about a dozen animals, including a tortoise and a cockatiel, in its shelter who cannot live with their owners in their temporary living situations, she said.

Like Young, many pet owners have posted messages and photos of their pets on a Facebook page set up to help find missing animals. Others trying to help have also been posting photos of pets, mainly cats, sighted in their areas and offering to take in pets who can't live with their owners in temporary housing.

The page's organizer, Katie Albright, a missing animal recovery specialist from the area who now lives in Oregon, is careful not to draw any conclusions about the likelihood of still finding a pet after the fire. While working to recover pets after the Holiday Farm fire in Oregon in 2020, some were skeptical any would be found but the last cat trapped there was not captured until a year later, she said.

However, people are so eager to help though that they may end up harming other animals not affected by the fire, Albright said.

While dogs have been known to wander far from disasters, cats tend to stay within about a mile of home. Despite that, there have been some reports of people finding cats in communities beyond the fire zone and taking them to their local shelters, thinking they are missing cats from the fire area. However, they are more likely outdoor cats that live in those areas and, unless they have a microchip to identify their owners, they likely will never get back to their homes, she said.

Some owners also want to set up traps to capture missing cats but Albright instead recommends first setting out some food in an area with some kind of cover, like vegetation, and using a trail camera — the kind hunters use to scout out areas for wildlife — to check on what animals, if any, may be in the area before deciding to set up a trap to avoid capturing a cat who is not missing or a wild animal. Any traps must also be checked at least every hour to avoid having a panicked trapped animal hurt itself, she said.

People returning to newly reopened neighborhoods can also just walk around and check places where

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 65 of 77

cats tend to hide such as culverts, vehicles and garages, keeping an eye out especially for injured cats, she said.

Code 3 Associates, an organization hired by authorities to rescue animals after natural disasters around the United States that is based in Longmont, Colorado, not far from the fire, set out traps in hopes of catching missing cats near neighborhoods that were burned but they did not catch any, said Janeé Boswell, the group's director of education and partnerships. That combined with a community typically diligent in reporting stray animals to authorities makes her think there are not many missing animals out there and that the fire was a "mass casualty event" for pets who were in homes that burned.

"I am guessing they probably perished in those residences and those few who got out have been located and returned," she said.

While people have time to pack up some belongings and their pets in slower moving disasters such as hurricanes or floods and even more typical wildfires in mountain areas, many people not at home when the Colorado fire started never had a chance to get back home to rescue their pets, she said.

Young said she will not have closure until she is able to go back to her home and find any remains of her cats.

For now, her visits to Foxy, a 20-year-old quarter horse, gives her a bit of normalcy and comfort in her upended life. The horse is so in tune with her, he is tense because he feels how stressed she is now, she said.

On a visit Wednesday, she gave him an apple, supplements, hay, a brush-down, a vibrating back massage, a stall cleaning and a final pat on the back.

"I can still hug him. I can still kiss him and love on him. He's needy like I am," Young said, with a laugh.

## Scientists explore Thwaites, Antarctica's 'doomsday' glacier

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

A team of scientists is sailing to "the place in the world that's the hardest to get to" so they can better figure out how much and how fast seas will rise because of global warming eating away at Antarctica's ice.

Thirty-two scientists on Thursday are starting a more than two-month mission aboard an American research ship to investigate the crucial area where the massive but melting Thwaites glacier faces the Amundsen Sea and may eventually lose large amounts of ice because of warm water. The Florida-sized glacier has gotten the nickname the "doomsday glacier" because of how much ice it has and how much seas could rise if it all melts — more than two feet (65 centimeters) over hundreds of years.

Because of its importance, the United States and the United Kingdom are in the midst of a joint \$50 million mission to study Thwaites, the widest glacier in the world by land and sea. Not near any of the continent's research stations, Thwaites is on Antarctica's western half, east of the jutting Antarctic Peninsula, which used to be the area scientists worried most about.

"Thwaites is the main reason I would say that we have so large an uncertainty in the projections of future sea level rise and that is because it's a very remote area, difficult to reach," Anna Wahlin, an oceanographer from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, said Wednesday in an interview from the Research Vessel Nathaniel B. Palmer, which was scheduled to leave its port in Chile hours later. "It is configured in a way so that it's potentially unstable. And that is why we are worried about this."

Thwaites is putting about 50 billion tons of ice into the water a year. The British Antarctic Survey says the glacier is responsible for 4% of global sea rise, and the conditions leading to it to lose more ice are accelerating, University of Colorado ice scientist Ted Scambos said from the McMurdo land station last month.

Oregon State University ice scientist Erin Pettit said Thwaites appears to be collapsing in three ways:

- Melting from below by ocean water.
- The land part of the glacier "is losing its grip" to the place it attaches to the seabed, so a large chunk can come off into the ocean and later melt.
- The glacier's ice shelf is breaking into hundreds of fractures like a damaged car windshield. This is what Pettit said she fears will be the most troublesome with six-mile (10-kilometer) long cracks forming

in just a year.

No one has stepped foot on the key ice-water interface at Thwaites before. In 2019, Wahlin was on a team that explored the area from a ship using a robotic ship but never went ashore.

Wahlin's team will use two robot ships — her own large one called Ran which she used in 2019 and the more agile Boaty McBoatface, the crowdsource named drone that could go further under the area of Thwaites that protrudes over the ocean — to get under Thwaites.

The ship-bound scientists will be measuring water temperature, the sea floor and ice thickness. They'll look at cracks in the ice, how the ice is structured and tag seals on islands off the glacier.

Thwaites "looks different from other ice shelves," Wahlin said. "It almost looks like a jumble of icebergs that have been pressed together. So it's increasingly clear that this is not a solid piece of ice like the other ice shelves are, nice smooth solid ice. This was much more jagged and scarred."

## **WHO: Record weekly jump in COVID-19 cases but fewer deaths**

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization said Thursday that a record 9.5 million COVID-19 cases were tallied over the last week as the omicron variant of the coronavirus swept the planet, a 71% increase from the previous 7-day period that the U.N. health agency likened to a "tsunami." However, the number of weekly recorded deaths declined.

"Last week, the highest number of COVID-19 cases were reported so far in the pandemic," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. He said the WHO was certain that was an underestimate because of a backlog in testing around the year-end holidays.

In its weekly report on the pandemic, the agency said the weekly count amounted to 9,520,488 new cases — with 41,178 deaths recorded last week compared to 44,680 in the week before that.

WHO officials have long cited a lag between case counts and deaths, with changes in the death counts often trailing about two weeks behind the evolution of case counts. But they have also noted that for several reasons — including rising vaccination rates in some places, and signs that omicron affects the nose and throat more than the lungs -- omicron has not appeared as deadly as the delta variant that preceded it.

Any rise in hospitalizations or deaths in the wake of the latest surge in cases isn't likely to show up for about two weeks.

While omicron seems less severe than delta, especially among people who have been vaccinated, the WHO chief cautioned: "It does not mean it should be categorized as mild. Just like previous variants, omicron is hospitalizing people, and it's killing people."

"In fact, the tsunami of cases is so huge and quick that it is overwhelming health systems around the world," the WHO chief told a regular news briefing.

The WHO said the rises in case counts over the last week varied, doubling in the Americas region, but rising only 7% in Africa.

The WHO emergencies chief, Dr. Michael Ryan, said speculation that omicron might be the last variant of the outbreak was "wishful thinking" and cautioned: "There still is a lot of energy in this virus."

Added Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead on COVID-19: "I think it's very unlikely that omicron will be the last variant that you will hear us discussing."

WHO officials called on the public to step up measures to fight the pandemic like getting vaccinated, ventilating rooms, maintaining proper physical distancing and wearing masks — but properly.

"I'm struck by how people actually are wearing masks" Van Kerkhove said.

"Wearing a mask below your chin is useless. And it gives you a false sense of security that you have something on that is protecting you. It will not ... Basically, we are asking everyone to play a part in this."

Separately, Ryan said the WHO's work with the International Olympic Committee and China — which is set to host the 2022 Winter Games — led him to be "confident" that the measures that games organizers have put in place were "very strict and very strong."

"We don't at this point see any increased risk of disease transmission in that context," Ryan said.

## Music: 2021 was a good year for Wallen, Adele — and vinyl

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — New data from the music industry confirms what a lot of people long suspected — 2021 was a very good year for Morgan Wallen, Adele and vinyl.

MRC Data's year-end report, presented in collaboration with Billboard, showed that Wallen's "Dangerous: The Double Album" ended 2021 as both the top country album of the year and the most popular album across all genres, with 3.2 million equivalent album units earned during the year.

That's despite Wallen being rebuked by the music industry after a video surfaced showing him blurting out a racial slur. The singer was dropped by his label, disqualified from the Academy of Country Music Awards, and his music was temporarily pulled by radio stations and streaming services.

Other top albums in 2021 include Olivia Rodrigo's "SOUR," Pop Smoke's "Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon" and Doja Cat's "Planet Her." Dua Lipa's single "Levitating" was unstoppable, with 804.7 million on-demand audio and video streams, the top hit of the year.

Adele's album "30" arrived late last year and she recorded the highest album sales debut in four years, with first-week sales of 839,000 equivalent units. It was the biggest-selling album debut since Taylor Swift's "Reputation" in 2017. Adele's previous album, 2015's "25," still holds the record for most albums sold in a single week, with 3.38 million copies.

Drake's "Certified Lover Boy" was 2021's most popular rap album in the U.S., with 1.97 million equivalent album units earned. Masked Wolf's "Astronaut in the Ocean" was the most-consumed rap song of 2021. Bad Bunny's "El Último Tour Del Mundo" was the top Latin album.

And in this digital age — audio on-demand streaming set a single-year high with 988.1 billion streams — there was also a big step into the past: Vinyl sales surpassed CDs as the most-sold physical format for the first time since MRC Data started measuring music sales in 1991.

Vinyl's share of physical sales accounted for less than 2% in 2011, but finished 2021 with more than half of all physical album sales, totaling a whopping 41.7 million albums.

The data also showed that streaming of new music declined in volume year-over-year, an acceleration of a trend that picked up steam during the first waves of COVID-19 lockdowns, "as music fans turned to old favorites for nostalgia listening," the report said.

## Trump maintains grip on GOP despite violent insurrection

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As a raging band of his supporters scaled walls, smashed windows, used flagpoles to beat police and breached the U.S. Capitol in a bid to overturn a free and fair election, Donald Trump's excommunication from the Republican Party seemed a near certainty, his name tarnished beyond repair.

Some of his closest allies, including Fox News Channel hosts like Laura Ingraham, warned that day that Trump was "destroying" his legacy. "All I can say is count me out. Enough is enough," said his friend and confidant Sen. Lindsey Graham. Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader who worked closely with Trump to dramatically reshape the judiciary, later denounced him as "morally responsible" for the attack.

But one year later, Trump is hardly a leader in exile. Instead, he is the undisputed leader of the Republican Party and a leading contender for the 2024 presidential nomination.

Trump is positioning himself as a powerful force in the primary campaigns that will determine who gets the party's backing heading into the fall midterms, when control of Congress, governor's offices and state election posts are at stake. At least for now, there's little stopping Trump as he makes unbending fealty to his vision of the GOP a litmus test for success in primary races, giving ambitious Republicans little incentive to cross him.

"Let's just say I'm horrendously disappointed," said former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, a longtime Republican who now serves on the advisory committee of the Renew America Movement, a group trying to wrest the party away from Trump's control.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 68 of 77

"His ego was never going to let him accept defeat and go quietly into the night," she added. "But what I am surprised by is how deferential so many of the Republican elected officials" have been.

Rather than expressing any contrition for the events of Jan. 6, Trump often seems emboldened and has continued to lie about his 2020 election loss. He frequently — and falsely — says the "real" insurrection was on Nov. 3, the date of the 2020 election when Democrat Joe Biden won in a 306-232 Electoral College victory and by a 7 million popular vote margin.

Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed.

Undaunted, Trump is preparing for another run for the White House in 2024, and polls suggest that, at the moment, he would easily walk away with the GOP nomination.

For Trump, the extraordinary outcome is the product of sheer will and a misinformation campaign that began long before the election, when he insisted the only way he could lose was if the election was "rigged" and wouldn't commit to accepting defeat. His refusal to accept reality has flourished with the acquiescence of most Republican leaders, who tend to overlook the gravity of the insurrection for fear of fracturing a party whose base remains tightly aligned with Trump and his effort to minimize the severity of what happened on Jan. 6.

"Here is the truth: The former president of the United States of America has created and spread a web of lies about the 2020 election," Biden said in a speech Thursday at the Capitol that did not mention Trump by name. "He's done so because he values power over principle, because he sees his own interest as more important than his country's interest and America's interest. And because his bruised ego means more to him than our democracy or our Constitution. He can't accept he lost."

Trump responded, accusing Biden of using his name "to try to further divide America."

"This political theater is all just a distraction for the fact Biden has completely and totally failed," he said in a statement.

At least nine people who were at the Capitol died during or after the rioting, including a woman who was shot and killed by police as she tried to break into the House chamber. But less than half of Republicans recall the attack as violent or extremely violent, according to a poll released this week by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs. About 3 in 10 Republicans said the attack was not violent.

The situation has stunned and depressed critics in both political parties who were convinced the insurrection would force Republicans to abandon the Trump era once and for all. He became the first president in U.S. history to be impeached twice. The second impeachment centered on his role in sparking the insurrection, but Trump was acquitted in a Senate trial, a clear indication that he would face few consequences for his actions.

"There was this hope when we were in the safe room that we would go back and the Republicans would see how crazy this was, how fragile our democracy was, what President Trump had done, and that they would renounce that and we would all come together," said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., describing the events that day. Instead, she said, "there were people defending the insurrectionists and defending Trump and continuing with the challenge and the Big Lie."

Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, a Republican who, with Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, has emerged as one of the few GOP anti-Trump critics in Congress, had predicted Trump's hold on the party would "be gone" by the summer. But Kinzinger, who recently announced his decision not to run for reelection, blamed House Republican leader and Trump ally Kevin McCarthy for proving him wrong.

"What I underestimated was the impact that one person would have on that, and that is Kevin McCarthy and his visit to Mar-a-Lago," Kinzinger said, referring to a trip McCarthy took to Florida in late January 2021 as the party was on the verge of disarray. With their eyes on retaking the House in 2022, Trump and McCarthy agreed to work together and released a photograph showing them smiling side by side.

"Kevin McCarthy is legitimately, singlehandedly the reason that Donald Trump is still a force in the party," Kinzinger said. "That full-hearted embrace, I saw firsthand in members, made them not just scared to take

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 69 of 77

on Trump but in some cases also full-heartedly embrace him.”

Aides to McCarthy didn't respond to a request for comment on Kinzinger's characterization.

Others, however, point to fractures that suggest Trump's power is waning.

Banned from Twitter and denied his other social media megaphones, Trump no longer controls the news cycle like he did in office. He canceled a news conference that was scheduled for Thursday following pressure from some Republican allies, who warned that such an event was ill-advised.

During last year's most prominent elections, Republicans like Virginia gubernatorial nominee Glenn Youngkin strategically kept Trump at arm's length. Youngkin's victory created a possible model for candidates running in battleground states where suburban voters uncomfortable with the former president are a key bloc.

While Trump's endorsement remains coveted in many midterm primary races, it has also failed to clear the field in some key races. Trump has similarly struggled to prevent other Republicans from eyeing the 2024 presidential nomination. His former vice president, secretary of state and a handful of Senate allies have made frequent trips to early voting states, preparing for potential campaigns and refusing to rule out running against Trump.

“When somebody walks out of the most powerful office in the world, the Oval Office, to sit by the swimming pool at Mar-a-Lago, his influence declines,” said John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser. Bolton has funded extensive national and state-level polling on the subject over the last year that has found Trump's sway and the power of his endorsement waning considerably since he left office.

“I really think that the evidence is clear that the people are done with Trump,” Bolton said. “He still has support, but it is declining. Honestly, it's not declining as fast as I would like to see and it's not down to zero. But among real people, it is declining.”

Trump is also facing a flurry of investigations, including in New York, where prosecutors are investigating whether his real estate company misled banks and tax officials about the value of his assets, inflating them to gain favorable loan terms or minimizing them to reap tax savings. New York Attorney General Letitia James' office confirmed this week that it has subpoenaed Trump and his two eldest children, Ivanka and Donald Trump Jr., as part of an investigation into the family's business practices. Both children have been prominent political surrogates for Trump.

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, the Jan. 6 committee continues to investigate the Trump White House's involvement in the deadly insurrection.

Trump still has his eyes on 2024, even as he continues to obsess over the 2020 election. After spending 2021 raising money and announcing his endorsements of candidates who have parroted his election lies up and down the ballot, Trump's team is preparing to pivot to helping those candidates win with a stepped-up rally schedule and financial support, including transfers to candidate accounts and targeted advertising.

Trump, according to allies, sees the midterms as a foundation for his next campaign, and intends to use the cycle to position himself for his party's nomination.

Voting rights advocates, meanwhile, are increasingly worried as states with Republican legislatures push legislation that would allow them to influence or overrule the vote in future elections. They fear what might happen if Trump-endorsed candidates for secretary of state and attorney general who say the election was stolen find themselves in positions that could sway the outcome in 2024.

“It's a concerted effort to undermine our public's confidence in the electoral system, so in 2022 and 2024, if they don't like the elections — and this is Republicans — they can overturn it,” said Whitman, who also serves as co-chair of States United Action, a nonpartisan nonprofit that aims to protect the integrity of future elections. “We are in a very, very fragile place.”

## **A year after Jan. 6, Congress more deeply divided than ever**

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — A deeply divided Congress is showing the world a very unsettled view from the U.S. Capitol: Rather than a national crisis that pulls the country together, the deadly riot on Jan. 6, 2021,

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 70 of 77

only seems to have pushed lawmakers further apart.

Some members are planning to mark the anniversary of the Capitol insurrection with a moment of silence. Others will spend the day educating Americans on the workings of democracy.

And still others don't think the deadliest domestic attack on Congress in the nation's history needs to be remembered at all.

Where they stand on remembrance can be largely attributed to their political party, a jarring discord that shows the country's lawmakers remain strikingly at odds over how to unify a torn nation.

The president who had been fairly and legitimately defeated, Donald Trump, told his followers to "fight like hell" to stop the certification of Joe Biden's election and said he would march with them to the Capitol, though he did not. The result was violence and mayhem that left five people dead in the immediate aftermath, hundreds facing charges and millions of dollars in property damage.

But the lack of bipartisan resolve to assign responsibility for the siege or acknowledge the threat it posed has eroded trust among lawmakers, turned ordinary legislative disputes into potential crises and left the door open for more violence after the next disputed election.

It all sets Congress adrift toward a gravely uncertain future: Did Jan. 6 bring the end of one era or the start of a new one?

"One thing that people should consider when thinking about Jan. 6 is ... people should think about the fragility of democracy," said Joanne Freeman, a professor of history and American studies at Yale, whose book "Field of Blood" chronicles violence and bloodshed in Congress in the years before the Civil War.

Seeing few historical parallels, Freeman warned, "We're at a moment where things that people have taken for granted about the working of a democratic politics can't be taken for granted anymore."

The aftermath of Jan. 6 hangs heavy over snow-covered Capitol Hill, in the relationships that deepened between lawmakers who feared for their lives that day and those that have frayed beyond repair.

The Capitol, before the riot a symbol of the openness of American democracy, remains closed to most visitors in part because of the coronavirus pandemic public health concerns, but also because of the escalated number of violent threats against lawmakers. Representatives are required to pass through metal detectors because Democrats say they cannot trust their Republican colleagues not to bring firearms to the House during floor proceedings.

Rep. Jamaal Bowman, D-N.Y., said every time he leaves his office he scans the hallways for potential threats — a feeling he said that, as a Black American, is familiar, but one that he never expected as a member of Congress.

"The lack of freedom of movement — without fear — is not there at the Capitol. And I'm a member of Congress," Bowman said.

Bowman has asked Biden to declare Jan. 6 a National Day of Healing.

But Sen. John Cornyn of Texas has no plans to memorialize the day, and he doesn't think others should, either.

"This thing has already become way too politicized, and that would just further exacerbate it," he said.

Trump's false claims of voter fraud have continued to foment division, met mostly with silence from Republicans in Congress unwilling to contradict his version of events.

Some two-thirds of House Republicans and more than a handful of GOP senators voted against certifying the election results that night, after police had battled the rioters for hours, sometimes in hand-to-hand combat. That the Republicans would carry on with their objections, after all that, stunned Democratic colleagues. Views hardened.

Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican who went forward with efforts to block the certification after the riot, brushed off questions about it, saying he's talked about it enough.

Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas said he had no second thoughts about his vote to block certification.

"I am proud of leading the effort to defend voter integrity," Cruz said. He decried the siege as "unacceptable," a "terrorist attack." But he also said the insistence by Democrats and the media of no mass voter fraud "only inflamed the divisions we have."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 71 of 77

An investigation by The Associated Press found fewer than 475 cases of voter fraud among 25.5 million ballots cast in the six battleground states disputed by Trump, a minuscule number in percentage terms.

Unlike past national traumas — including the 2001 terror attacks — the country has emerged from Jan. 6 without an agreed upon road map for what comes next.

Democratic Rep. Mikie Sherrill, a former Navy helicopter pilot whose New Jersey-area district recently marked the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, said people have repeatedly recalled “in these sort of bewildered tones” how united the country was that day — compared to now.

“It feels like a huge break from our history,” Sherrill said.

The result is not just a breakdown in trust among colleagues, but also a loss of common national commitment to the rules and norms of democracy.

Routine disputes over ordinary issues in Congress can quickly devolve into menacing threats — as happened when several Republican lawmakers started receiving violent messages, including a death threat, after voting for an otherwise bipartisan infrastructure bill that Trump opposed.

The two Republicans on the House panel investigating the attack, Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, face calls to be banished from their party.

Despite dozens of court cases and published reports showing no widespread voter fraud, Trump’s baseless claims have become the party standard and led to what some call a “slow-motion insurrection” as his supporters work the machinery of local elections in ways that are alarming voting rights advocates.

Democrats are redoubling efforts to approve stalled election legislation that seeks to bolster ballot access and protect election officials from harassment. But to pass the bill in the evenly split Senate, they are considering dramatic rules changes to overcome a Republican filibuster.

Many of Trump’s supporters have argued they are the ones fighting to save democracy. Two-thirds of Americans described the siege as very or extremely violent, according to an AP-NORC poll, but only 4 in 10 Republicans recall the attack that way.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said the false story that the election was rigged or stolen has just continued “to be spun and spun and spun.”

She said, “The danger is when people act on it.”

Yet unlike the hundreds of Americans being prosecuted for their roles in Jan. 6, many members of Congress face no reprimand — and could be rewarded for their actions.

Hawley and Cruz are both considered potential 2024 presidential candidates.

GOP Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, who rushed to Mar-a-Lago to patch things up with Trump after initially being critical of the insurrection, remains on track to become the next House speaker if Republicans — with Trump’s help — win control in the November election.

And GOP Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia has seen her profile — and fundraising — skyrocket as she shares Trump’s baseless theories and decries the treatment of defendants jailed for their role in the attack.

“We’re in this no man’s land, where basically anything goes, and that’s a very unsettling place to be in a legislative body,” said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt. “And it’s really a very unsettling place for the country to be.”

## November trade deficit hits near record-high \$80.2 billion

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit surged to a near-record high of \$80.2 billion in November as exports slowed at the same time that imports jumped sharply.

The November deficit was 19.3% higher than the October deficit of \$67.2 billion and was just below the all-time monthly record of \$81.4 billion set in September, the Commerce Department reported Thursday.

November imports, goods Americans bought from other countries, jumped 4% to \$304.4 billion in November while exports, those the U.S. sends overseas, edged up a scant 0.2% to \$224.2 billion.

Through the first 11 months of 2021, the U.S. trade deficit is 28.6% higher than during the same period last year with the economic recovery in the United States outpacing other nations, as is the readiness of

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 72 of 77

Americans to spend.

For all of 2020, the U.S. trade deficit stood at \$676.7 billion, a slight 0.1% above the 2019 figure.

The politically sensitive deficit with China in goods rose 2.9% to \$32.3 billion in November and is up 12.8% for the first 11 months of this year compared to the same period in 2020

The United States and China, the world's two largest economies, engaged in a contentious trade battle under former President Donald Trump, who accused China of unfair trade practices that had cost millions of American jobs. Each country imposed tit-for-tat punitive tariffs on its economic rival.

So far, the Biden administration has taken a more cautious approach in its economic dealings with China.

Michael Pierce, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics, said that the sharp jump in November's trade deficit means that trade will be a small drag on the overall U.S. economy in the October-December quarter.

Pierce forecast growth, as measured by the gross domestic product, would be around 4.5% in the fourth quarter, an improvement from the modest 2.3% in the third quarter but below expectations for much stronger growth before the omicron variant hit.

Other economists are more optimistic, predicting growth will come in between 6% and 7% in the October-December period. The government will release its first look at fourth quarter GDP on Jan. 27.

## Near-empty flights crisscross Europe to secure landing slots

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Europe's sky is filling up with near-empty polluting planes that serve little other purpose than safeguarding airlines' valuable time slots at some of the world's most important airports.

The highly contagious omicron variant of COVID-19 has put many off flying, and because of it, getting people and goods from point A to point B has become an afterthought for thousands of flights. It has created strange bedfellows, with environmentalists and major airlines united to cut down on empty or near-empty flights by pressuring the European Union — a pledged global leader in combating climate change — to tweak the rules on airport slots.

"The EU surely is in a climate emergency mode," activist Greta Thunberg tweeted sarcastically this week, linking to a story about Brussels Airlines making unnecessary flights.

The company has said that if the EU doesn't take action, it would have to fly some 3,000 journeys this winter primarily to safeguard its network rights.

German giant Lufthansa said it would have to fly an additional 18,000 "unnecessary" flights through the winter to hold on to landing slots. Even if the holidays brought a big increase in passengers — marked by thousands of flight cancellations that left travelers stranded — the rest of the winter period could be slow as omicron surges worldwide.

Landing and departure slots for popular routes in the biggest airports are an extremely precious commodity in the industry, and to keep them, airlines have to guarantee a high percentage of flights. It is why loss-making flights have to be maintained to ensure companies keep their slots.

It was an accepted practice despite the pollution concerns, but the pandemic slump in flying put that in question. Normally, airlines had to use 80% of their given slots to preserve their rights, but the EU has cut that to 50% to ensure as few empty or near-empty planes crisscross the sky as possible.

In the U.S., the Federal Aviation Administration has waived similar minimum slot-use rules through March 26, citing the pandemic. Slots are limited at only a handful of U.S. airports, including Kennedy and LaGuardia in New York and Reagan Washington National outside Washington.

Just last month, when there were still some hopes the pandemic might finally wane, the European Commission confirmed the 50% rule but said it would be increased to 64% at the end of March.

However, major airlines like Lufthansa, Air France and KLM say they are counting on further flexibility, including further decreasing the threshold level on the time slots.

"More flexibility in the short term is required, not just in summer but also in the current winter schedule," a Lufthansa statement said. "Without this crisis-related flexibility, airlines are forced to fly with planes almost empty, just to secure their slots."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 73 of 77

KLM agreed.

"So if the remainder of the season is very disappointing, as an airline you can find yourself in the situation of either losing slots because you cancel flights or flying with half-empty aircraft. Both situations are not desirable," the Dutch company said.

It puts the EU in a bind. On one hand, it needs to ensure that airport slots are open to fair competition, allowing newcomers to vie for them if they are not used sufficiently, and on the other, it wants to keep polluting planes from flying as much as possible.

EU Transport Commissioner Adina Valean last month acknowledged the threat of omicron to the travel industry, but as of Thursday, she had not announced any new regulations.

Belgian Transport Minister Georges Gilkinet wrote her a stinging letter and was lobbying his EU counterparts to join the initiative and increase pressure.

"The high-level pollution created by these flights runs totally counter to the EU's climate objectives," according to the letter obtained by The Associated Press.

## Christian world marks Epiphany with series of celebrations

By FRANCES D'EMILIO and MEHMET GUZEL Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Christians around the world on Thursday marked Epiphany, known as Three Kings Day for Catholics and the Baptism of Christ for the Orthodox, with a series of celebrations.

Pope Francis used a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica to decry consumerism, parades were held in Spain the night before, and Orthodox believers watched swimmers plunge into icy waters despite the pandemic to retrieve crosses.

Francis encouraged people to shake off consumeristic "tyranny" and crises of faith in lives and societies and instead find the courage to work for justice and brotherhood in societies dominated by what he called the "sinister logic of power."

The Catholic feast day of Epiphany recalls the visit of three Magi, or wise men, to the infant Jesus, and their sense of wonder at the encounter.

In his homily, Francis urged people to move past the "barriers of habit, beyond banal consumerism, beyond a drab and dreary faith, beyond the fear of becoming involved and serving others and the common good."

He said that "we find ourselves living in communities that crave everything, have everything, yet all too often feel nothing but emptiness in their hearts."

Decrying what he defined as "the tyranny of needs," Francis said: "Let us not give apathy and resignation the power to drive us into a cheerless and banal existence."

In remarks from an Apostolic Palace window overlooking St. Peter's Square, Francis later also noted holiday celebrations by other Christians and praised various Epiphany traditions.

"Today thoughts go to the brothers and the sisters of the Eastern churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, who tomorrow celebrate the birthday of the Lord," the pontiff said.

In Istanbul, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, held an Epiphany Mass before leading a traditional Blessing of the Waters ceremony during which swimmers competed to retrieve a floating cross thrown into the sea.

Bartholomew, who recently recovered from COVID-19 and underwent heart surgery in November, threw a wooden cross into the Golden Horn, before 10 men jumped into the waterway to retrieve it. Members of Istanbul's small Greek Orthodox community, wearing masks, looked on.

This year, the cross was recovered by 36-year-old Galip Yavuz, who said it was his fifth attempt at retrieving it.

Bartholomew is considered first among equals among Orthodox patriarchs, although only a few thousand Greeks now live in Turkey. He also directly controls several Greek Orthodox churches around the world, including the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

His patriarchate in Istanbul dates from the Orthodox Greek Byzantine Empire, which collapsed when the Muslim Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, today's Istanbul, in 1453.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 74 of 77

Similar blessing of the waters ceremonies were held in predominantly Orthodox Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania, with swimmers competing against each other to grasp a floating cross thrown into seas, rivers or lakes.

Thousands of Orthodox Christian worshippers in Bulgaria neglected restrictions on mass gatherings due to the pandemic and stuck to their centuries-old Epiphany traditions, plunging into icy rivers and lakes.

Celebrations were canceled or scaled back in many parts of Greece as the country struggles with a huge surge in COVID-19 infections driven by the omicron variant.

In Cyprus, spectators were kept off the pier in line with coronavirus restrictions as a couple of dozen hearty souls dived into the chilly waters of Larnaca Bay on the island nation's southern coast to retrieve the cross thrown by the leader of the Greek Orthodox Church Archbishop Chrysostomos II. Most people watched the traditional blessing of the waters ceremony from nearby vantage points.

In Spain, a military band played the national anthem outside the royal palace in Madrid and King Felipe VI watched a 21-gun salute before reviewing troops on a wintry day. Indoors, in the Throne Room, the monarch handed medals to 16 members of the armed forces, in a ceremony that dates from 1782. Attendance at the event was limited for the second straight year due to pandemic restrictions on gatherings. Royal family, dignitaries and troops all wore face masks.

The country traditionally holds "cabalgata" parades the day before Epiphany in which the "Reyes Magos," or Three Wise Men, ride on floats through major cities and towns across Spain. Children and adults alike leave their shoes out the night before and receive gifts from the three kings on Jan. 6.

## **EXPLAINER: Why was Novak Djokovic not let into Australia?**

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP National Writer

Novak Djokovic came within one victory of sweeping all four of last year's Grand Slam tennis tournaments and entered 2022 needing one title to set the men's record of 21 major championships.

He might not get the chance to pursue that mark at the Australian Open when play begins in Melbourne on Jan. 17.

That's because, even though Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia, was granted a medical exemption to get around a COVID-19 vaccine requirement for all players and their support teams at the hard-court tournament, his visa for entry into Australia was revoked in the early hours of Thursday, local time, after he was detained at the airport for about eight hours. He was put into an immigration detention hotel and faces deportation. His lawyers have challenged the visa ruling in court.

Here's a look at some of the issues surrounding Djokovic's attempt to play in the Australian Open:

### **WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR DJOKOVIC'S EXEMPTION? WAS ANYONE ELSE GRANTED ONE?**

The state government for Victoria, where Melbourne Park is located, mandated full vaccinations for all players, staff and fans at the Australian Open unless there is a genuine medical reason. Victoria state Deputy Premier James Merlino said medical exemptions would not be "a loophole for privileged tennis players" and would only be possible in "exceptional circumstances if you have an acute medical condition." Tennis Australia said Djokovic's request for an exemption "was granted following a rigorous review process involving two separate independent panels of medical experts." Neither Tennis Australia nor Djokovic revealed the reason he sought an exemption. Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley said a total of 26 players or support staff applied for exemptions and a "handful" were granted. Among the acceptable grounds were acute major medical conditions, serious adverse reaction to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or evidence of a COVID-19 infection within the previous six months.

### **IF HE HAD AN EXEMPTION, WHY WAS DJOKOVIC PREVENTED FROM ENTERING AUSTRALIA?**

When he landed at the airport, the Australian Border Force canceled Djokovic's visa, saying he "failed to provide appropriate evidence to meet the entry requirements." Prime Minister Scott Morrison tweeted, "No one is above these rules," and later said at a news conference that Djokovic's exemption wasn't valid

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 75 of 77

but did not explain the details.

## WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION IN AUSTRALIA? AND IN SERBIA?

The news that Djokovic was on his way to Australia with an exemption — announced first by him via social media, then by Tennis Australia via press release — was not exactly greeted warmly in Melbourne, where most people endured months of strict lockdowns and harsh travel restrictions at the height of the pandemic. More than 90% of Victoria state residents aged 12 and over are fully vaccinated. The about-face on Djokovic's status upon his arrival was, not surprisingly, objected to by Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, who called it "harassment."

## IS DJOKOVIC VACCINATED? HAS HE HAD COVID-19?

While Djokovic has steadfastly refused to explicitly say whether or not he received any shots to protect against the coronavirus, he would not have needed an exemption to enter Australia if he were fully vaccinated. In April 2020, he issued a statement saying: "Personally I am opposed to the vaccination against COVID-19 in order to be able to travel. But if it becomes compulsory, I will have to make a decision whether to do it, or not." Two months later, he and his wife tested positive for the illness caused by the coronavirus after a series of exhibition matches he organized with no social distancing or masking.

## WHY IS THIS AUSTRALIAN OPEN IMPORTANT FOR DJOKOVIC? AND WHY IS HE IMPORTANT FOR THE TOURNAMENT?

Djokovic is on the precipice of history, one Grand Slam trophy away from finally overtaking rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal for the most in the history of men's tennis. Entering the 2011 season, Federer owned 16 major titles, Nadal nine and Djokovic one. Now each has 20. Djokovic, who last year eclipsed Federer's mark for the most career weeks at No. 1 in the men's rankings, already owns nine Australian Open championships, the men's record.

## MUST TENNIS PLAYERS BE VACCINATED TO PLAY IN ALL TOURNAMENTS?

No. In tennis, such mandates come from national, state or local governments, and this is the first time it's come into play at a tournament. At the last Grand Slam event, for example, the U.S. Open in New York in August and September, players and their team members did not need to be vaccinated (but, after prompting from the mayor's office, the U.S. Tennis Association did require that spectators show they had at least one shot).

## ARE MOST TENNIS PLAYERS VACCINATED?

At least two others, Tennys Sandgren and Pierre-Hugues Herbert, are sitting out the Australian Open because they are not vaccinated. A spokeswoman for the women's professional tennis tour said Wednesday that 85% of the WTA's top 100 players are fully vaccinated; a spokesman for the men's professional tour tweeted late last month that the ATP's top 100 vaccination figure was 95%.

## SO IS THIS WHOLE EPISODE OVER?

Doubtful. Djokovic has launched legal action in Australia's Federal Circuit Court against the cancellation of his visa, and that has so far prevented his deportation. He is staying in an immigration detention hotel ahead of a scheduled hearing on Monday.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Jan. 7, the seventh day of 2022. There are 358 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 76 of 77

On Jan. 7, 1953, President Truman announced in his State of the Union message to Congress that the United States had developed a hydrogen bomb.

On this date:

In 1608, an accidental fire devastated the Jamestown settlement in the Virginia Colony.

In 1789, America held its first presidential election as voters chose electors who, a month later, selected George Washington to be the nation's first chief executive.

In 1927, commercial transatlantic telephone service was inaugurated between New York and London.

In 1955, singer Marian Anderson made her debut with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, in Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera."

In 1959, the United States recognized the new government of Cuba, six days after Fidel Castro led the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

In 1963, the U.S. Post Office raised the cost of a first-class stamp from 4 to 5 cents.

In 1979, Vietnamese forces captured the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, overthrowing the Khmer Rouge government.

In 1989, Emperor Hirohito of Japan died in Tokyo at age 87; he was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince Akihito.

In 1999, for the second time in history, an impeached American president went on trial before the Senate. President Bill Clinton faced charges of perjury and obstruction of justice; he was acquitted.

In 2004, President George W. Bush proposed legal status, at least temporarily, for millions of immigrants improperly working in the U.S.

In 2015, masked gunmen stormed the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo, a French newspaper that had caricatured the Prophet Mohammad, methodically killing 12 people, including the editor, before escaping in a car. (Two suspects were killed two days later.)

In 2019, Amazon eclipsed Microsoft as the most valuable publicly traded company in the U.S. For the first time in more than 25 years, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was absent from oral arguments as she recuperated from cancer surgery.

Ten years ago: Three days before the New Hampshire primary, Mitt Romney brushed aside rivals' criticism in the opening round of a weekend debate doubleheader that left his Republican presidential campaign challengers squabbling among themselves and unable to knock the front-runner off stride. Record-shattering Drew Brees threw for 466 yards and three touchdowns, and the New Orleans Saints poured it on in the second half for a 45-28 NFC wild-card victory over the Detroit Lions.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump, in a series of tweets, said "only 'stupid' people or fools" would dismiss closer ties with Russia, and he seemed unswayed after his classified briefing on an intelligence report that accused Moscow of meddling on his behalf in the election that catapulted him to power. Nat Hentoff, an eclectic columnist, critic, novelist and agitator dedicated to music, free expression and defying the party line, died in New York at age 91.

One year ago: Hours after Congress certified Joe Biden's victory, President Donald Trump acknowledged in a video that a "new administration will be inaugurated" and said he'd focus on "ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power"; Trump condemned the violence from his supporters who stormed the Capitol but did not address his role in inciting the violence. Lawmakers of both parties spoke of ousting Trump from office, possibly through the action of his own Cabinet under the 25th Amendment. President-elect Joe Biden denounced the rioters at the Capitol as "domestic terrorists" and blamed Trump for the violence. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao resigned; in a resignation letter, DeVos blamed Trump for inflaming tensions in the assault on the Capitol. The head of the U.S. Capitol Police, Steven Sund, resigned. Facebook and Instagram said they would silence Trump's accounts for the rest of his presidency. The U.S. topped 4,000 daily deaths from the coronavirus for the first time. Former Los Angeles Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda died at 93.

Today's Birthdays: Magazine publisher Jann Wenner is 76. Singer Kenny Loggins is 74. Singer-songwriter Marshall Chapman is 73. Actor Erin Gray is 72. Actor Sammo Hung is 70. Actor Jodi Long is 68. Actor David Caruso is 66. Talk show host Katie Couric is 65. Country singer David Lee Murphy is 63. Rock musician

# Groton Daily Independent

**Friday, Jan. 07, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 184 ~ 77 of 77**

Kathy Valentine is 63. Actor David Marciano is 62. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., is 61. Actor Hallie Todd is 60. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., is 59. Actor Nicolas Cage is 58. Singer-songwriter John Ondrasik (on-DRAH'-sik) (Five for Fighting) is 57. Actor Rex Lee is 53. Actor Doug E. Doug is 52. Actor Kevin Rahm is 51. Actor Jeremy Renner is 51. Country singer-musician John Rich is 48. Actor Reggie Austin is 43. Singer-rapper Aloe Blacc is 43. Actor Lauren Cohan is 40. Actor Brett Dalton is 39. Actor Robert Ri'chard is 39. Actor Lyndsy Fonseca is 35. Actor Liam Aiken is 32. Actor Camryn Grimes is 32. Actor Max Morrow is 31. Actor Marcus Scribner is 22.