

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 1 of 71

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

[1- Truss Pros Help Wanted](#)

[1- Legion Coach Wanted](#)

[2- Photo Gallery Ad](#)

[2- Sirens to sound today](#)

[3- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)

[4- Death Notice: Lyle Cutler](#)

[5- That's Life by Tony Bender](#)

[6- Strickland is new Groton City police officer](#)

[6- Groton City Sump Pump Alert](#)

[7- Jumbo Graduation Cards](#)

[8- Jumbo Mother's Day Cards](#)

[9- Graduation Balloons](#)

[10- Weather Pages](#)

[14- Daily Devotional](#)

[15- 2022 Community Events](#)

[16- Subscription Form](#)

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

Wednesday, April 27

Emmanuel: 6 p.m. Confirmation, 6:30 p.m. League.
School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Sub sandwiches, chips.

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, sour cream apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

Thursday, April 28

10 a.m.: Girls Golf Meet in Redfield

7 p.m.: Middle School Spring Concert

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, smiley fries.

Senior Menu: Turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, cranberry sauce, pumpkin bar, whole wheat bread

Friday, April 29

1 p.m.: Track Meet at Webster School

Breakfast: French toast sticks.

School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.

Senior Menu: Salmon loaf, creamed peas, fruit, brownie, whole wheat bread.

OPEN: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Every time your heart is broken, a doorway cracks open to a world full of new beginnings, new opportunities.

-Patti Roberts

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

Senior Legion Coach Wanted

Groton Legion Post #39 is seeking qualified applicants for Head Coach for the Groton Legion Post #39 Senior Baseball Team. The applicant must have previous coaching experience. The application period will close on April 29, 2022.

Applications can be picked up at Groton City Hall and mailed to:

Doug Hamilton
411 N. 4th St.
Groton, SD 57445

Truss Pros Help Wanted

Truss Pros in Britton is looking to hire a CDL driver to deliver trusses in the tri-state area. Home every night. Competitive wage! Full benefit package!

To apply call 605-277-4937 or go to www.uslbm.com/careers and search for jobs in Britton, SD.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 2 of 71

GROTON WEATHER

GRADUATION

GDI LIVING HEART
FITNESS



SD PUBLIC NOTICES

PHOTO GALLERY

ABOUT US

Go to our photo gallery to order pictures.

www.397news.com

Click on Photo Gallery on the left hand side

Sirens to sound today

During the week Brown County will be testing our entire network of outdoor warning sirens across the county. This is scheduled to happen on Wednesday April 27, 2022.

Sirens will be activated at approx. 10:30am CDT

Please remember these are outdoor warning sirens and are only designed to alert those who are outside that something dangerous is happening in your area. Once you hear the siren activated you should go inside and turn to local media or NOAA weather radio to get more information.

If severe weather is in the area that day, we will not be doing the test.

Please take the time to review your severe weather awareness plans, evacuation plans, storm shelter location and supplies.

Schools and businesses are encouraged to take part in the tornado test and practice their drills.

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

First things first, I wanted to give thanks to Duane and Jack, who joined the team last year and have been providing excellent write-ups. I hope you all have enjoyed reading them as much as I have!

I decided to take over this week, however, since the draft is rapidly approaching. If you have been reading this column for the past few years, you know how much I love the NFL draft. It's like Christmas - we know the Vikings are going to get some shiny new toys to play with, we just don't know what they will be. To give you a better idea of who the Vikings could be targeting, let's do a quick roster breakdown by position.

Quarterback

The Vikings have four quarterbacks under contract. Kirk Cousins is under contract for the next two seasons, and with his high cap hit plus his no-trade clause, he isn't going anywhere. Behind Cousins, the Vikings have Sean Mannion, Kellen Mond, and Nate Stanley. It's unlikely the Vikings will use a high draft pick to get a QB.

Running Back/ Fullback

Just like QB, the Vikings are pretty set at running back and fullback. Dalvin Cook is one of the best RBs in the NFL, and likewise with C.J. Ham at FB. Mattison is a very good backup, with Kene Nwangwu and A.J. Rose providing depth. If the Vikings draft one, it'll likely be in the later rounds.

Wide Receiver

The Vikings have nine WRs on their roster. Justin Jefferson is one of the best WRs in the NFL, and Adam Thielen is a great number two. Behind those two, however, there isn't a lot of proven talent. K.J. Osborn, Ihmir Smith-Marsete, and Olabisi Johnson will all be battling for playing time, while Dan Chisena, Trishton Jackson, Blake Proehl, and Myron Mitchell will be battling for a roster spot. Because of the lack of WR depth, the age of Thielen (32), and this being a particularly good year for WRs in the draft, there's a possibility that the Vikings draft one in the first three rounds. Garrett Wilson (Ohio State), Drake London (USC), Jameson Williams (Alabama), and Chris Olave (Ohio State) are all receivers who are likely to be taken in the top 20 picks, while Jahan Dotson (Penn State), George Pickens (Georgia), Christian Watson (NDSU), and Skyy Moore (Western Michigan) are likely targets in the 2nd and 3rd rounds.

Tight End

The Vikings have four TEs on the roster - Irv Smith Jr., Johnny Mundt, Ben Ellefson, and Zach Davidson. Irv Smith Jr. was poised for a breakout season in 2021 before an injury derailed his season, and his backup, Tyler Conklin, is now with the Jets. If the Vikings draft a TE, it won't be until late in the draft.

Offensive Line

It's no surprise that the Vikings' offensive line is the weakest link on the offense. The team is set at offensive tackle, with last year's first-round pick Christian Darrisaw at left tackle and Brian O'Neill at right tackle. The interior of the offensive line has question marks, however. Garrett Bradbury and Ezra Cleveland are penciled in at center and left guard, respectively, while Wyatt Davis, Chris Reed, and Oli Udoh will battle it out at right guard. There is no interior offensive lineman worthy of the 12th overall pick, but if the Vikings trade down, three possibilities would be Tyler Linderbaum (Iowa), Zion Johnson (Boston College), and Kenyon Green (Texas A&M). If they elect to wait until day two, Jamaree Saylor (Georgia) and Dylan Parham (Memphis) are names to keep an eye on.

Defensive Line

The Vikings are transitioning from a 4-3 defense (four defensive linemen, three linebackers) to a 3-4 defense this season, so it wouldn't be surprising if the Vikings look to upgrade through the draft. If the Vikings choose to go this route in the first round, the two defensive tackles from Georgia (Jordan Davis and Devonte Wyatt) would be great picks to complement Dalvin Tomlinson and free-agent signee Harrison Phillips.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 4 of 71

Linebacker

Just like the defensive line, linebacker is another position that will need to be revamped due to the scheme change. Eric Kendricks and newcomer Jordan Hicks will be the two inside linebackers, while Danielle Hunter and Za'Darius Smith will be the outside linebackers. The Vikings will look to add depth here and could pounce if Devin Lloyd (Utah) or Nakobe Dean (Georgia) fall into the second round.

Cornerback

Cornerback is perhaps the Vikings' biggest need, which is ironic considering Mike Zimmer was a defensive guru who specialized in defensive backs. Since arriving in 2014, Zimmer (and the rest of the Vikings' front office) spent 12 picks on defensive backs - including three 1st rounders - and have almost nothing to show for it. Patrick Peterson will start, but his abilities are understandably diminishing with age. Beyond Peterson, however, there are a ton of question marks. Look for the Vikings to draft at least one CB in the early rounds of the draft. Ahmad "Sauce" Gardner (Cincinnati) is the top CB in the draft, but will likely be drafted in the top 10. Derek Stingley Jr. (LSU) could be available when the Vikings pick, and he has a ton of potential. If both of those players are gone, the Vikings will likely look to trade back to later in the 1st round and grab Trent McDuffie (Washington), Andrew Booth Jr. (Clemson), or Kaiir Elam (Florida).

Safety

Harrison Smith is still playing at a high level, but he'll be 33 this season. Xavier Woods was the other starting safety last year but he left in free agency. Camryn Bynum played well as the backup safety last season, so the Vikings may pencil him in as the other starter this year. However, the Vikings will likely look to add depth at this position later in the draft. One name to keep an eye on is Kyle Hamilton, who is clearly the best safety in this year's draft. Many draft experts say he is the best player in the draft, but because he plays safety he will likely fall down the draft board a bit. He will likely be gone by the Vikings' pick, but if he's still there I wouldn't be surprised to see the Vikings grab him as he'd be the perfect compliment to Harrison Smith.

Special Teams

The Vikings brought back Greg Joseph and Jordan Berry, and they are both adequate. I'd love to see the Vikings draft Matt Araiza (punter, San Diego State) in the seventh round. His nickname is "Punt God", and he has the potential to be a rare game-changer on special teams.

Death Notice: Lyle Cutler

Lyle Cutler, 90, of Claremont passed away April 26, 2022 at his home surrounded by family. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

That's Life by Tony Bender Rainstorms and old friends

"It was a dark and stormy night..." Those are words oft-mocked as a terrible way to begin a story, but in my case it was afternoon, with the low threatening rumble of thunder and closer crashes of lightning. Wind enough that you could almost feel the house lean into it. Thick clouds so that the world looked gray. A downpour with clicks of soft hail against the window. Blessed April showers.

The dreariness may have been the cause of my melancholy mood or maybe my mood summoned the weather. It was afternoon but it felt like dusk. It was just background noise but I heard the word "populist" on a news program, and it reminded me of my old friend Tom Secrest, a political animal who'd confessed to me once that he was a bit of populist. I'm not sure I even knew exactly what it was. I just knew that Huey Long, The Kingfish of Louisiana politics, had been one.

One definition is "a politician, who strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups." These days, the word suggests a manipulator of emotions and grievances.

When I met Tom in Hettinger, ND, some 30 years ago, he had a signed picture of Richard Nixon on the wall of his law office. Tom had once been the state GOP chairman. But he'd come out of Texas as an LBJ Democrat, an affliction that lasted through college, later brushed off as a remnant of puberty, something naturally discarded at adulthood. I guess I never grew up.

In spite of our differences or perhaps the discovery of many more commonalities, we became friends. I'd moved to town to rescue the Adams County Record, a newspaper in receivership, the only way I knew how and that was to actually report the news. This made the good old boys with all those skeletons in the closet nervous. They claimed I was just stirring things up. But from my office window on Main Street, I watched the populace scurry like ants to a picnic to the post office the minute the newspaper came out. I'd become a populist.

Hettinger and Reeder had fantastic basketball teams and folks gloried in the coverage. But I took some beatings when I reported on the trial of a local saint who wasn't as saintly as it seemed. I called an old newspaperman, Omar Forberg, who absolved me of my sin with a line I've used since with my reporters: "Hey, he committed news."

When Tom heard my lament, he smiled sanguinely. "I used to be a fair-haired boy, too." I learned more about politics from Tom than anyone, something that burst my bubble when I discovered it was more about strategy than idealism. And I suppose he opened my eyes to human nature and its frailties. We became loyal friends but I'm not convinced I'd have wanted him in my foxhole.

We appeared weekly with Al McIntyre on the local radio morning show, BS in the A.M., where we raised blood pressures by discussing hot-button issues. Ginger Arndorfer was substituting for Al the morning Tom and I began discussing a controversy in New England where a roadhouse was bringing in strippers much to the chagrin of the churchies. "Well, you'd have to pay a cover charge to be offended," I said, as Ginger tried to steer us off the topic. But in sophomoric fashion we steamrolled ahead, noting that when it fed an infant, it was "the good breast" but when it had pasties and tassels, it was bad. And why didn't men have to wear shirts at the beach if nipples had to be covered? Weighty topics, indeed.

The more flustered Ginger became the more we egged each other on, but when the show was over, Ginger's husband, Tom, tall and cowboy-tough, was waiting in the lobby. He demanded I march right back into the studio and apologize on the air but he seemed unprepared for my refusal. "You're going to be waiting a long time," I told him.

Meanwhile, Secrest was quietly donning his hat and overcoat. Why wasn't Tom Arndorfer yelling at him, I wondered. Secrest slipped out the door while the seething cowboy tried to figure out what to do with me. The confrontation eventually fizzled and I soon escaped myself, half-laughing at Secrest's retreat. I like to think that if I was getting pummeled he would have stepped in.

I miss the guy. The big chicken.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 6 of 71

Strickland is new Groton City police officer



Thomas Strickland is the new police officer in Groton. He started working this week.

Strickland has worked the past 10 years in Mo-bridge as a police officer and was also an officer at Sisseton. His previous work experience is being a park ranger in the southern Black Hills and was also a machinist.

Strickland is an Aberdeen Central graduate and he graduated from Southeast Tech in Sioux Falls for law enforcement science.

Strickland said he chose to apply in Groton to be closer to home. His parents live Aberdeen where he is currently staying until he can find housing in the area. He has two girls, Grace, 7, and Abi, 5.

He said, "I'm looking forward to getting to know the community and to interact with people." Strickland likes to hunt and fish and he is a certified D.A.R.E. instructor and a certified Hunt Safe instructor.

Groton City Sump Pump Alert



Sump pumps must be discharged outside (not in the sanitary sewer).



Thanks for your immediate compliance!

**Failure to comply will result in fines.
Groton City Council**

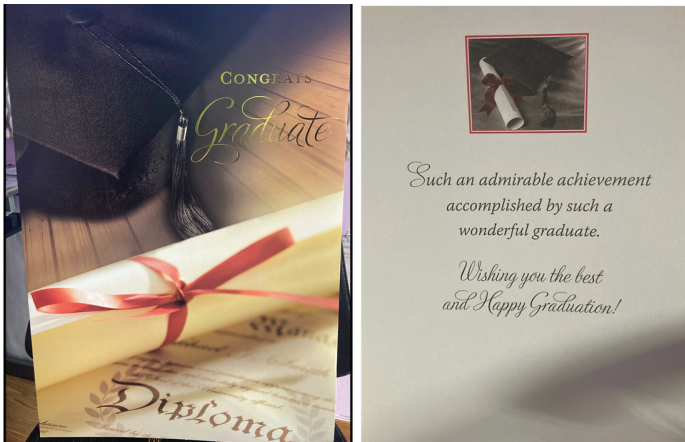
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 7 of 71

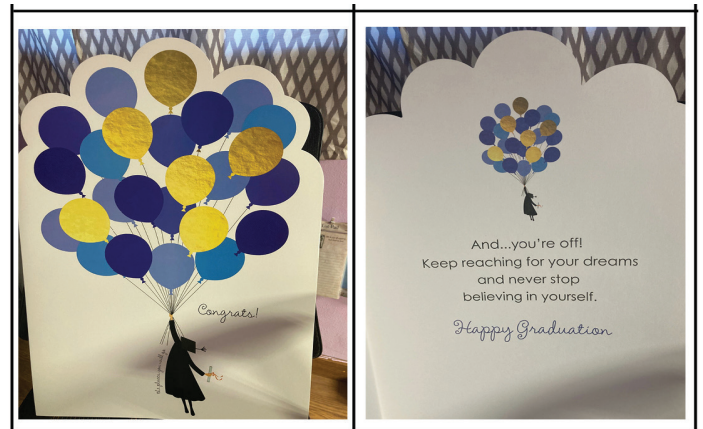
Jumbo Graduation Cards

Only \$7.99 each ~ Card Size: 16.25" x 24"

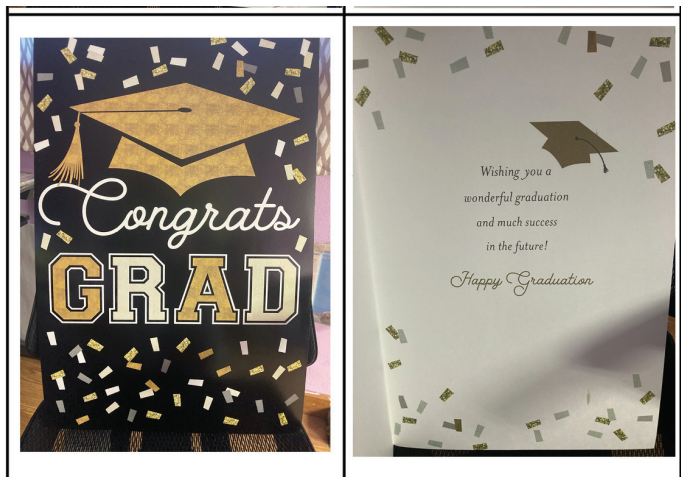
Can now be ordered on-line at 397news.com - Link on Black Bar
Or Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460 or Tina at 605-397-7285
to reserve your card(s)



50-9903-C
\$7.99



50-9666-C
\$7.99



50-10977JM-C
\$7.99



50-9360-C
\$7.99

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 8 of 71

M
O
T
H
E
R
'
S

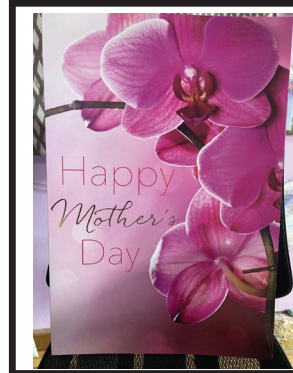
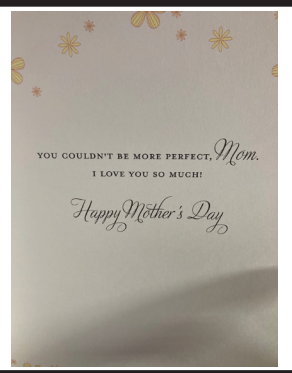
D
A
Y

J
U
M
B
O

C
A
R
D
S



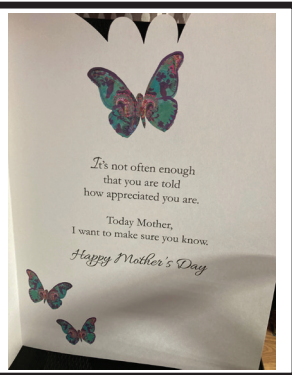
26477-75031



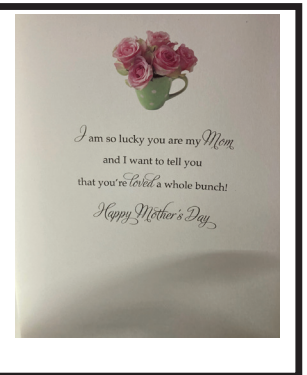
26477-74832



26477-74833



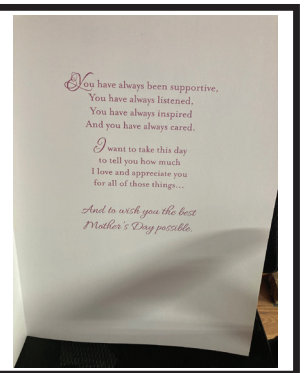
26477-75397



26477-75568



26477-73609



26477-75579



26477-75402



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 9 of 71



- NEWS
- LIVE
- FIT
- CLEAN
- RENT

Scan Code Below for More Details



15 N Main St., Groton
PO Box 34, Groton, SD
57445-0034
www.397news.com
Call/Text Paul: 605/397-7460
Call/Text Tina: 605/397-7285
paperpaul@grotonsd.net



New at the
GDI FIT
The Stairmaster
and Air Bike



Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460
or Tina at 605/397-7285
for membership info

Order your Graduation Balloons while we have a good supply!



#1 - \$5



#2 - \$5



#3 - \$6



#4 - \$10 - 45"



#5 - \$5



#6 - \$6



\$3.50 - 9" on a stick



#7 - \$10 - 36"



#8 - \$5



#9 - \$5



#10 - \$5



#11 - \$5



#12 - \$5



#13 - \$8 35"



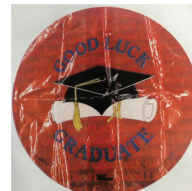
#14 - \$5



#15 - \$5



#16 - \$5



#17 - \$5



#18 - \$5



#19 - \$5



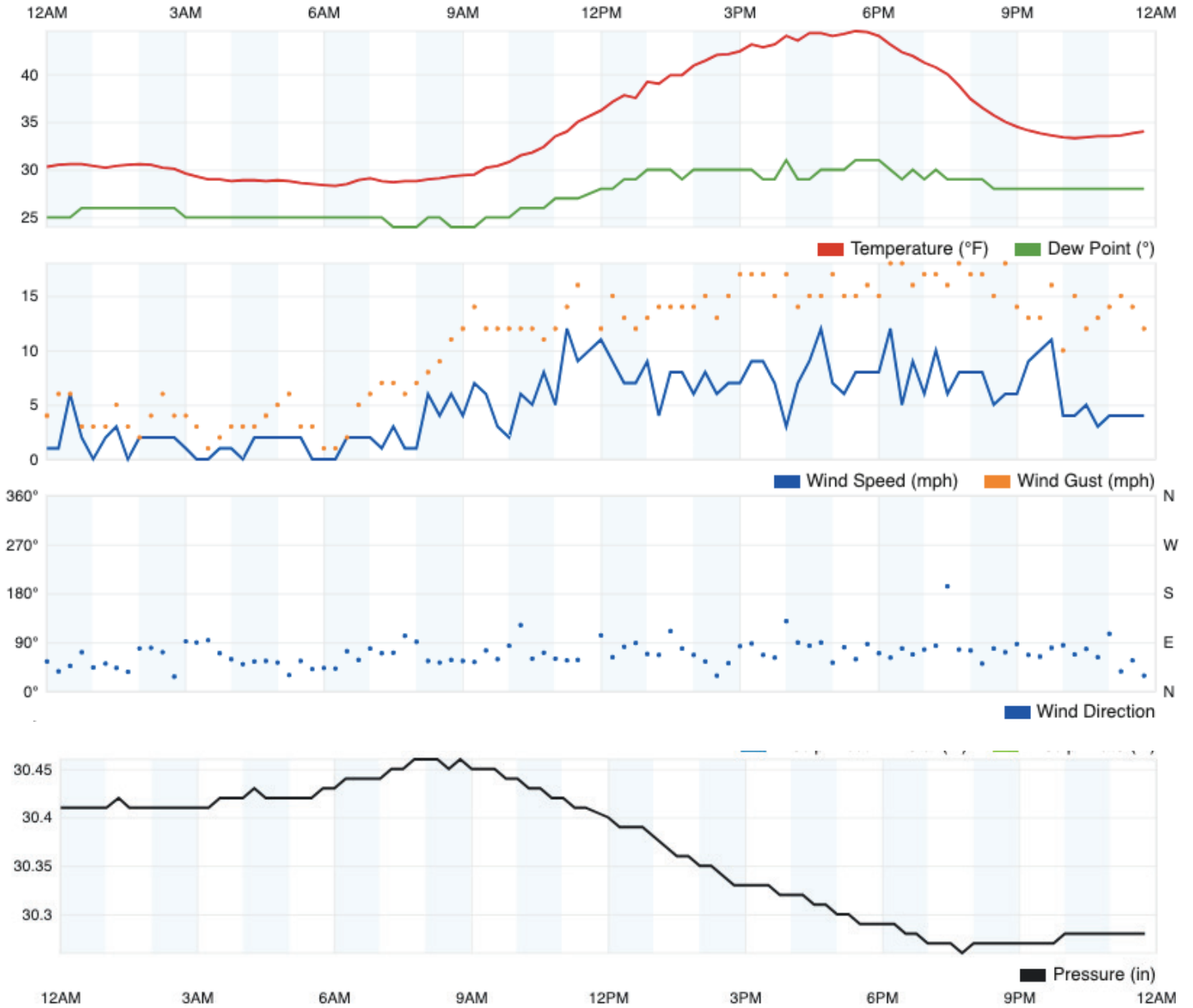
#20 - \$5

We have many other balloons available as well. We now offer locker pickup in the laundromat so you can pick up your order ANY TIME once the order is completed!

Groton Daily Independent






Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 10 of 71

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs






Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 11 of 71

Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Partly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Increasing Clouds	Slight Chance Rain then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Rain then Rain Likely and Breezy
High: 51 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 54 °F

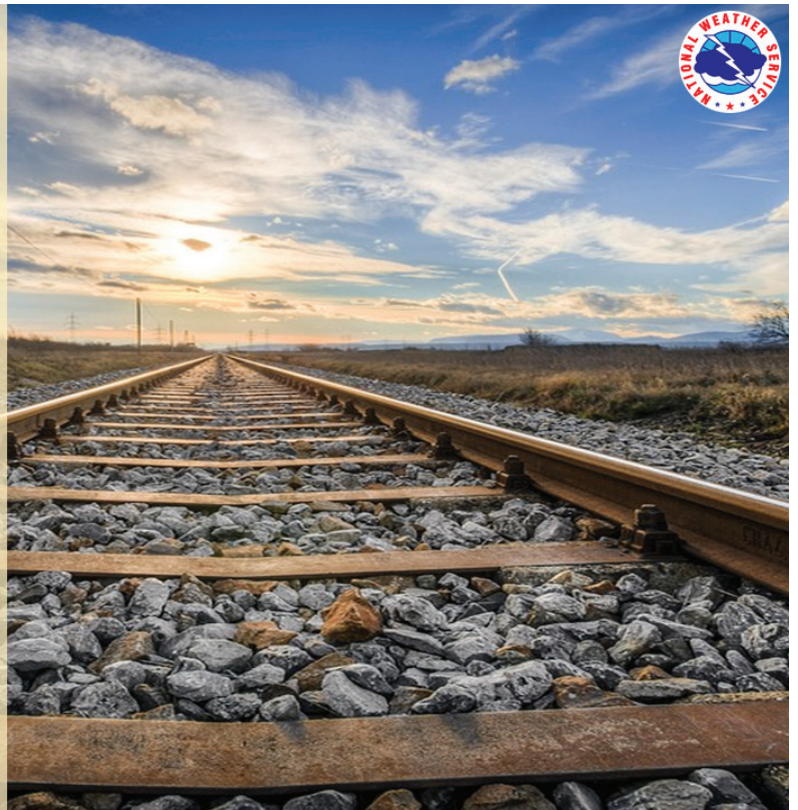
Cooler and Wetter by Friday

Today April 25 th , 2022	Thursday April 26 th , 2022	Friday April 27 th , 2022
		
44 to 61 °	45 to 66 °	46 to 58 °

Warmest across south central SD.

Best chances for rain on Thursday will be across the east.

Widespread rain chances return Friday through Sunday, along with cooler temperatures.



Breezy east winds will gradually diminish today. Chances for showers increase on Thursday, especially across eastern SD and west central MN, but widespread rain is expected on Friday.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 12 of 71

Today in Weather History

April 27, 1968: A significant snowstorm raged over the northern Black Hills blocking many highways near Gillette and Moorcroft with an estimated three to four feet of snow. Winds in the Sturgis area were nearly 90 mph.

1898: The first Weather Bureau kite was launched in Topeka, Kansas to report daily, early morning, atmospheric observations. By year's end, 16 additional launch sites would be in operation. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the Weather Doctor.

1899 - A tornado struck Kirksville, MO, killing 34 persons and destroying 300 buildings. (David Ludlum)

1912: The April 27-28, 1912 outbreak was the climax of a wild, week-long period of severe weather that occurred in Oklahoma. Strong to violent tornadoes struck portions of central and north-central Oklahoma on April 20, 1912. Also, a violent tornado hit Ponca City, OK on April 25, 1912. From the 27 through the 28th, 16 tornadoes rated F2 or greater touched down in the state with 6 of them rated F4. About 40 people were killed, and the storms injured 120 people.

1931: The temperature at Pahala, located on the main island of Hawaii, soared to 100 degrees to establish a state record.

1942 - A destructive tornado swept across Rogers County and Mayes County in Oklahoma. The tornado struck the town of Pryor killing 52 persons and causing two million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Forty-two cities in the western and south central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 87 degrees at Olympia WA was an April record, and highs of 92 degrees at Boise ID, 95 degrees at Monroe LA, and 96 degrees at Sacramento CA tied April records. (The National Weather Summary) More than 300 daily temperature records fell by the wayside during a two week long heat wave across thirty-four states in the southern and western U.S. Thirteen cities established records for the month of April. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1988 - Mount Washington NH reported seven feet of snow in ten days, pushing their snowfall total for the month past the previous record of 89.3 inches set in 1975. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower and Middle Mississippi Valley to Virginia and the Carolinas. Hail up to four and a half inches in diameter caused five million dollars damage around Omaha NE. Thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes, and there were 160 other reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in eastern Texas and the Lower Mississippi Valley. Severe thunderstorms spawned thirteen tornadoes in Texas and twelve in Louisiana. A tornado southwest of Coolidge TX injured eight persons and caused more than five million dollars damage. There were also eighty-five reports of large hail and damaging winds, with baseball size hail reported at Mexia TX and Shreveport LA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) Forty-three cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Records highs included 94 degrees at Charleston WV, 95 degrees at Baltimore MD and 96 degrees at Richmond VA. (The National Weather Summary)

2003: For only the 11th time since records began in 1871, hail was observed in Key West Florida. A severe thunderstorm produced hail to 1.75 inches in diameter which easily broke the previous record of a half an inch in diameter which was set on May 10, 1961.

2011 - An estimated 305 tornados between the 27th and 28th sets a record for the largest outbreak ever recorded, including two EF-5s, four EF-4s and 21 EF-3s. Arkansas through Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, southern Tennessee, Virginia to Pennsylvania and New York were all affected. An estimated 300 died including 210 in Alabama alone. This brought the April total past 600, the most in any month in recorded US weather history.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 13 of 71

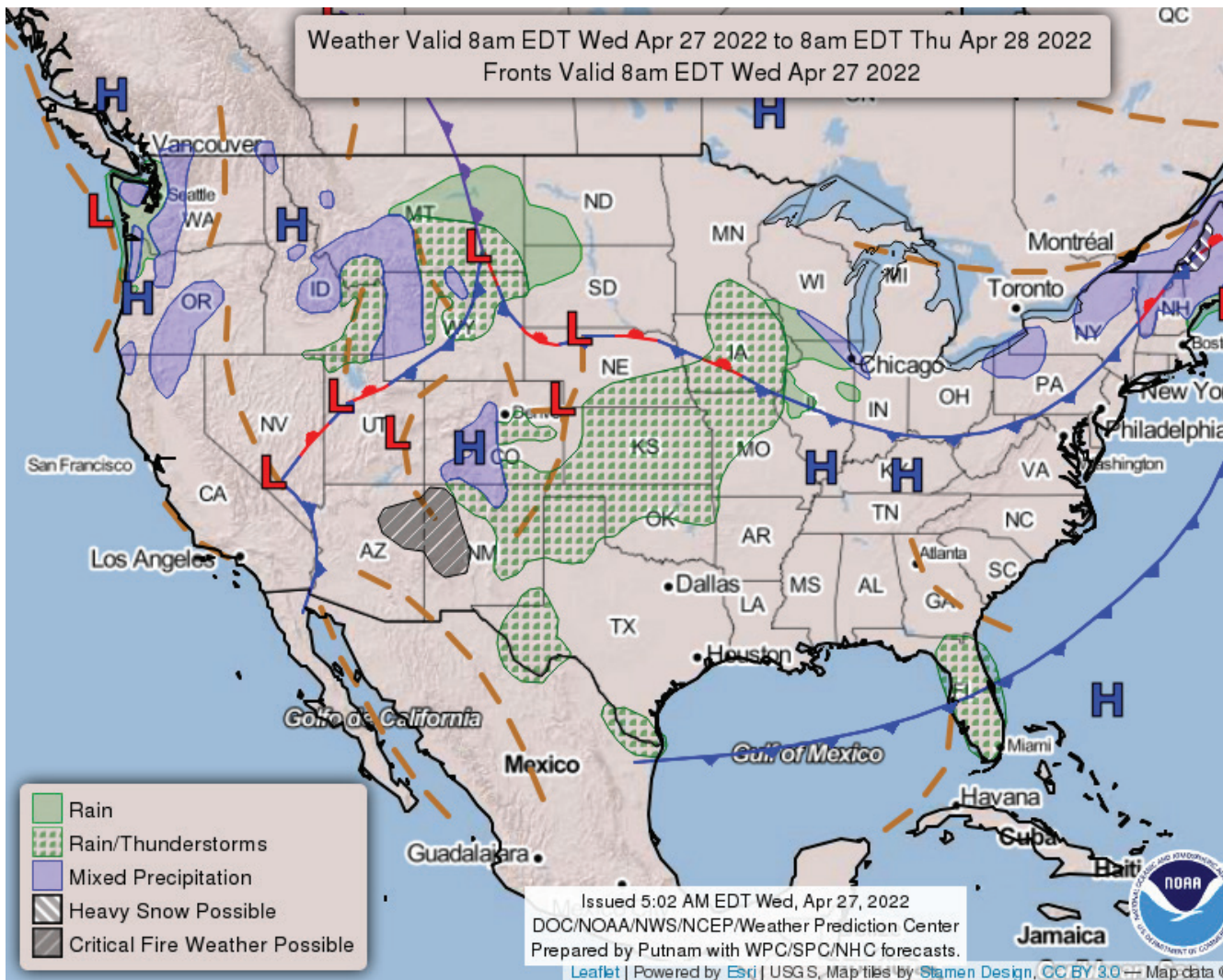
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 45 °F at 5:23 PM
Low Temp: 28 °F at 6:04 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 7:03 PM
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 10 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1897
Record Low: 17 in 2005
Average High: 63°F
Average Low: 36°F
Average Precip in April.: 1.63
Precip to date in April.: 3.15
Average Precip to date: 3.69
Precip Year to Date: 4.95
Sunset Tonight: 8:35:24 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:23:01 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 14 of 71



"GOD IS NOW HERE!"

A professor of biology, who was an atheist, wrote on the dry erase board, "God is nowhere!" A student raised his hand and asked, "Sir, may I try something?"

"Of course," said the professor.

Walking to the front of the class he moved the "w" from "where" to the end of the word "no," and the sentence read, "God is now here!"

Wherever anyone is, God is! There is no place, nor can there be any place, where He is not. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of the universe.

There are approximately seven billion people on our planet occupying seven billion different places. Each of them could, if they would, say with equal certainty, "God is now here." No one is closer to or further from God at any time in any place. Again, wherever anyone is, God is.

Do you remember the story of Jonah? God had a plan for him. It was to travel east – to Nineveh. But Jonah had his plan, and he decided to go west – to Tarshish. He crossed half of the world trying to get away from God, and when he got there, he found God waiting for him.

There was a king who made the same discovery. He said, "If I go up to the heavens, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast."

We may be above the clouds in an aircraft, or on the floor of the ocean in a submarine; but, He will be there waiting.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your presence in our lives knowing that "You will never leave us." Never! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: If I go up to the heavens, You are there. If I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast. Psalm 139:8-9

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 15 of 71

2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,
04/07/2022 Groton CDE
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/09/2022 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/23/2022 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/24/2022 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/07/2022 Lions Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
St John's Lutheran Church VBS 9-11am
05/30/2022 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
Transit Fundraiser at the Community Center 4-7pm (Thursday Mid-June)
06/17/2022 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Start
06/18/2022 Groton Triathlon
Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start
07/04/2022 Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start
(4th of July)
07/10/2022 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion
Baseball Tourney
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm
08/05/2022 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/12/2022 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
United Methodist Church VBS 5-8pm
Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot
09/10/2022 Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm
09/11/2022 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm
Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/14/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am (2nd Friday in October)
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2022 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2022 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/12/2022 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 16 of 71

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/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

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months \$26.63
- 6 Months \$31.95
- 9 Months \$42.60
- 12 Months \$53.25

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



News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

05-07-19-46-69, Mega Ball: 2, Megaplier: 4

(five, seven, nineteen, forty-six, sixty-nine; Mega Ball: two; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$31 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$454 million

South Dakota Senate approves 2-day impeachment trial for AG

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Senate on Tuesday approved the rules for an impeachment trial of the state's attorney general for his conduct surrounding a 2020 fatal car crash, laying out a two-day proceeding in June that gives just hours to either side to argue their case.

Attorney General Jason Ravensborg, a Republican, was impeached by the House this month over the crash in which he killed a pedestrian but initially said he may have struck a deer or other large animal. The Senate trial, which will decide whether he is guilty of the House impeachment charges, is historic since Ravensborg is the first official to be impeached in South Dakota.

The trial's rules received unanimous approval in the Republican-controlled Senate. They give both the impeachment prosecutors and Ravensborg's defense attorney one hour for an opening statement, four hours to present evidence and one hour to close their arguments. Senators may take additional time to ask additional questions, debate the articles of impeachment and hear directly from Ravensborg if he chooses to testify. The trial starts June 21.

"These rules were designed to be a very simple and fair process," said Republican Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, who presides over the Senate. He added that the files used in the impeachment investigation will be posted online and he expects senators to review those before the trial.

The Senate has appointed Pennington County State's Attorney Mark Vargo as the lead impeachment prosecutor. He assisted in the criminal prosecution but left the prosecutorial team before the local state's attorney charged Ravensborg with three traffic misdemeanors. Ravensborg has hired Sioux Falls attorney Mike Butler to present his defense, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

Ravnsborg last year pleaded no contest to two misdemeanors in exchange for the third being dropped by prosecutors. The 45-year-old Republican, who took office in 2019, was returning home from a Republican dinner in September 2020 when he struck and killed Joseph Boever, who was walking along a rural highway. A sheriff who responded after Ravensborg called 911 initially reported it as a collision with an animal. Ravensborg has said he did not realize he hit a man until he returned the next day and found the body.

Ravnsborg is facing two articles of impeachment: one for committing crimes that caused someone's death and the other for making "numerous misrepresentations" to law enforcement officers after the crash, as well as using his office to navigate the criminal investigation.

The Senate will vote on each impeachment article, as well as a separate vote on barring him from holding future office in the state. It will take a two-thirds majority to convict Ravensborg and bar him from holding future office.

The attorney general has stayed mostly silent during the political and legal aftermath of the crash. He did not answer an invitation to appear before a House impeachment investigation committee and did not appear at any of the criminal court hearings.

After his impeachment, Ravensborg said he is looking forward to the Senate trial as a chance to "be

vindicated." His attorney and spokesman did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday on the Senate rules and whether he will testify at the trial.

Ravnsborg has faced numerous calls to resign from within his own party, most prominently from Gov. Kristi Noem. But so far, he has refused, although the state constitution requires him to take a leave of absence from his official duties until the Senate trial concludes.

Schoenbeck said that even if Ravnsborg were to resign before the trial, he believes the Senate will still act on the House impeachment charges and vote on barring Ravnsborg from holding future office.

The South Dakota Republican Party's state convention, where the party's nominee will be selected, starts the day after the impeachment trial is set to conclude.

Wagner woman pleads guilty in connection with son's death

LAKE ANDES, S.D. (AP) — A Wagner woman has pleaded guilty to felony child abuse in connection with the death of her 2-year-old son.

Twenty-seven-year-old Calarina Drapeaux agreed to a plea deal and appeared in Charles Mix County court Monday. The felony charge carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison and a \$30,000 fine.

In exchange for Drapeaux's guilty plea, the prosecution dropped three counts of aggravated assault, the Yankton Press and Dakotan reported. Drapeaux had previously pleaded not guilty to all the charges and was scheduled for an August trial.

Judge Bruce Anderson has set a June 6 sentencing.

Anderson had previously agreed to the defense's request for a bond reduction. The judge lowered the \$30,000 bond to \$10,000 and allowed cash or surety.

Subsequently, Drapeaux, who is pregnant, was able to post bond and was no longer in the Charles Mix County Jail in Lake Andes, officials said.

Meanwhile, Drapeaux's live-in boyfriend, Leonard Sharpfish Jr., 31, has pleaded not guilty to felony abuse and two drug charges. He faces a May trial.

Madeleine Albright to be honored by world leaders, DC elite

BY MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — World leaders and a bevy of U.S. political and foreign policy elite are preparing to pay their respects to the late Madeleine Albright, the child refugee from war-torn Europe who rose to become America's first female secretary of state.

Led by President Joe Biden and predecessors Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, the man who picked Albright to be his top diplomat and the highest-ranking woman ever in the U.S. government at that time, some 1,400 mourners will gather Wednesday to celebrate her life and accomplishments at Washington National Cathedral.

Albright, 84, died of cancer last month, prompting an outpouring of condolences from around the world that also hailed her support for democracy and human rights. In addition to the current and former presidents, the service will be attended by at least three of her successors as secretary of state along with other current and former Cabinet members, foreign diplomats, lawmakers and an array of others who knew her.

Biden, Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are all scheduled to deliver tributes at the service, while the current secretary of state, Antony Blinken, and former secretaries Condoleezza Rice and John Kerry are slated to attend. Other top current officials expected to be present include Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, CIA Director Bill Burns and White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

Foreign dignitaries slated to attend include the presidents of Georgia and Kosovo and senior officials from Colombia, Bosnia and the Czech Republic.

Albright was born in what was then Czechoslovakia but her family fled twice, first from the Nazis and then from Soviet rule. They ended up in the United States, where she studied at Wellesley College and rose through the ranks of Democratic Party foreign policy circles to become ambassador to the United Nations. Clinton selected her as secretary of state in 1996 for his second term.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 19 of 71

Although never in line for the presidency because of her foreign birth, Albright was near universally admired for breaking a glass ceiling, even by her political detractors.

As a Czech refugee who saw the horrors of both Nazi Germany and the Iron Curtain, she was not a dove. She played a leading role in pressing for the Clinton administration to get involved militarily in the conflict in Kosovo. "My mindset is Munich," she said frequently, referring to the German city where the Western allies abandoned her homeland to the Nazis.

As secretary of state, Albright played a key role in persuading Clinton to go to war against the Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic over his treatment of Kosovar Albanians in 1999. As U.N. ambassador, she advocated a tough U.S. foreign policy, particularly in the case of Milosevic's treatment of Bosnia. NATO's intervention in Kosovo was eventually dubbed "Madeleine's War."

She also took a hard line on Cuba, famously saying at the United Nations that the 1996 Cuban shootdown of a civilian plane was not "cojones" but rather "cowardice."

In 2012, Obama awarded Albright the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, saying her life was an inspiration to all Americans.

Born Marie Jana Korbel in Prague on May 15, 1937, she was the daughter of a diplomat, Joseph Korbel. The family was Jewish and converted to Roman Catholicism when she was 5. Three of her Jewish grandparents died in concentration camps.

Albright was an internationalist whose point of view was shaped in part by her background. Her family fled Czechoslovakia in 1939 as the Nazis took over their country, and she spent the war years in London.

After the war, as the Soviet Union took over vast chunks of Eastern Europe, her father brought the family to the United States. They settled in Denver, where her father taught at the University of Denver. One of Korbel's best students was Rice, who would later succeed his daughter as secretary of state.

Albright graduated from Wellesley College in 1959. She worked as a journalist and later studied international relations at Columbia University, where she earned a master's degree in 1968 and a Ph.D. in 1976. She then entered politics and what was at the time the male-dominated world of foreign policy professionals.

Russia cuts off 2 EU nations from its gas in war escalation

By YESICA FISCH and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

POKROVSK, Ukraine (AP) — Russia opened a new front in its war in Ukraine on Wednesday, cutting NATO members Poland and Bulgaria off from its gas, a dramatic escalation in the conflict that is increasingly becoming a wider battle with the West.

One day after the United States and other Western allies vowed to speed more and better military supplies to Ukraine, the Kremlin upped the ante, using its most essential export as leverage. It then went even further, saying Russia could halt gas supplies to other European customers.

European gas prices shot up on the news that Poland and Bulgaria were cut off, a move that European leaders denounced as "blackmail."

In a memo, state-controlled Russian giant Gazprom said it was cutting Poland and Bulgaria off from its natural gas because they refused to pay in Russian rubles, as President Vladimir Putin had demanded. The company said it had not received any such payment since the beginning of the month.

The gas cuts do not immediately put the countries into dire trouble since they have worked on getting alternative sources for several years now and the continent is heading into summer, making gas not as essential for households.

Still, it sent shivers of worry through the 27-nation European Union, which immediately convened a special coordination group to limit the impact of the move. And Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov's ensuing warning was sure to worry them even more. He told reporters that other European customers may be cut off if they also refuse to pay in rubles.

On the ground too, the geopolitical fight intensified, with the Russian military claiming Wednesday that its missiles hit a batch of weapons that the U.S. and European nations delivered to Ukraine.

A day earlier, explosions rocked the separatist region of Trans-Dniester in neighboring Moldova, knock-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 20 of 71

ing out two powerful radio antennas and raising fears the war could spill over Ukraine's borders. No one claimed responsibility for the attacks — the second in as many days — but Ukraine all but blamed Russia.

And a Russian missile hit a strategic railroad bridge linking Ukraine's Odesa port region to neighboring Romania, a NATO member, Ukrainian authorities said.

Just across the border in Russia, an ammunition depot in the Belgorod region was burning early Wednesday after several explosions were heard, the governor, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said on the messaging app Telegram.

Gazprom's decision to cut gas to two European countries was another dark turn in the war, which has revived the geopolitical rifts of the Cold War, and it had an immediate impact. European gas prices spiked 25%, with benchmark Dutch futures jumping from around 100 euros per megawatt hour to around 125 euros.

Fatih Birol, the executive director of the Paris-based International Energy Agency, called the move a "weaponization of energy supplies" in a tweet.

"Gazprom's move to completely shut off gas supplies to Poland is yet another sign of Russia's politicization of existing agreements & will only accelerate European efforts to move away from Russian energy supplies," he wrote.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called the move "yet another attempt by Russia to use gas as an instrument of blackmail."

Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov also called the suspension of gas deliveries blackmail and said it was "a gross violation of their contract."

"We will not succumb to such a racket," he added.

The stoppage marked "an historical turning point in the bilateral energy relationship" between Russia and Europe, said Simone Tagliapietra, senior fellow at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels.

On Tuesday, the U.S. defense chief urged Ukraine's allies to "move at the speed of war" to get more and heavier weapons to Kyiv as Russian forces rained fire on eastern and southern Ukraine.

Poland, a historical rival of Russia, has been a major gateway for the delivery of weapons to Ukraine and confirmed this week that it is sending the country tanks. It said it was well prepared for Wednesday's gas cutoff.

Poland also has ample natural gas in storage, and it will soon benefit from two pipelines coming online, analyst Emily McClain of Rystad Energy said.

Bulgaria gets over 90% of its gas from Russia, and officials said they were working to find other sources, such as from Azerbaijan.

Both countries had refused Russia's demands that they pay in rubles, as have almost all of Russia's gas customers in Europe.

Two months into the fighting, Western arms have helped Ukraine stall Russia's invasion, but the country's leaders have said they need more support fast.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin convened a meeting Tuesday of officials from about 40 countries at the U.S. air base at Ramstein, Germany, and said more help is on the way.

"We've got to move at the speed of war," Austin said.

After unexpectedly fierce resistance by Ukrainian forces thwarted Russia's attempt to take Ukraine's capital, Moscow now says its focus is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking industrial area in eastern Ukraine.

In the gutted southern port city of Mariupol, authorities said Russian forces hit the Azovstal steel plant with 35 airstrikes over 24 hours. The plant is the last known stronghold of Ukrainian fighters in the city. About 1,000 civilians were said to be taking shelter there with an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian defenders.

Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to Mariupol's mayor, said Russia was using heavy bunker bombs. He also accused Russian forces of shelling a route they had offered as an escape corridor from the steel mill.

Ukraine also said Russian forces shelled Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city, which lies outside the Donbas but is seen as key to Russia's apparent bid to encircle Ukrainian troops in that region.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 21 of 71

Ukrainian forces struck back in the Kherson region in the south.

The attack Tuesday on the bridge near Odesa — along with a series of strikes on key railroad stations a day earlier — appeared to signal a major shift in Russia's approach. Until now, Moscow has spared strategic bridges, perhaps in hopes of keeping them for its own use in seizing Ukraine. But now it seems to be trying to thwart Ukraine's efforts to move troops and supplies.

The southern Ukraine coastline and Moldova have been on edge since a senior Russian military officer said last week that the Kremlin's goal is to secure not just eastern Ukraine but the entire south, so as to open the way to Trans-Dniester, a long, narrow strip of land with about 470,000 people along the Ukrainian border where about 1,500 Russian troops are based.

It was not clear who was behind the blasts in Trans-Dniester, but the attacks gave rise to fears that Russia is stirring up trouble so as to create a pretext to either invade Trans-Dniester or use the region as another launching point to attack Ukraine.

Live updates | Kremlin: other countries could see gas cut

By The Associated Press undefined

MOSCOW — The Kremlin says that Russia may halt gas supplies to other European customers following a cutoff to Poland and Bulgaria if they also refuse to switch to payment in rubles.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, argued that the Russian demand to switch to rubles in payments for gas resulted from the Western action to freeze Russian hard currency assets. He said those were effectively "stolen" by the West in an "unprecedented unfriendly action."

Speaking in a conference call Wednesday with reporters, Peskov warned that other European customers may see the taps turned off if they refuse to pay for gas in rubles by the time payment is due. Peskov argued that refusing to switch to rubles reflects a Western desire to "punish Russia at any cost to the detriment of their own consumers, taxpayers and producers."

He rejected the EU's description of the Russian move to halt supplies to Bulgaria and Poland starting Wednesday as blackmail, insisting that "Russia has remained a reliable supplier of energy resources" and stuck to its contractual obligations.

Peskov argued that the demand for payment in rubles is purely technical and doesn't change price or other contract conditions for consumers.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Russia says it's cutting gas to 2 EU nations in war escalation
- Poland, Bulgaria denounce Russian gas 'blackmail'
- UN chief and Russia's Putin agree on key Ukraine evacuation
- DJI halts Russia, Ukraine business to prevent drone misuse

Follow all AP stories on Russia's war on Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

BELGRADE, Serbia -- Serbia says that the Russian cutoff of gas supplies to Bulgaria does not affect the Balkan country.

Serbia receives some 6 million cubic meters of Russian gas daily via neighboring Bulgaria. Energy Minister Zorana Mihailovic in a statement on Wednesday that supplies have not been halted.

Mihailovic said authorities nonetheless were looking into backup options in case the situation becomes more complicated.

Serbia depends heavily on Russian gas and the country's main oil monopoly is owned by the Russian giant Gazprom. The country has refused to join sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine.

Mihailovic added that the Serbian government is already preparing plans for next winter. She said that "we have to secure energy stability in any possible way because at this moment it is every state for itself."

Serbia sold 51% of the Serbia Oil Industry company to Gazprom in 2008.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 22 of 71

STOCKHOLM -- The head of Sweden's domestic security agency says Russia has a "limited time window" to influence the Scandinavian country's position on whether to join NATO and attempt to take advantage of it.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to growing support in Sweden and eastern neighbor Finland, which has a long land border with Russia, for joining NATO.

Newspapers in both countries reported this week that the Swedish and Finnish governments have agreed to submit NATO applications at the same time and that they will do so in mid-May.

The head of Swedish security agency SAPO, Charlotte von Essen, said Wednesday that Russian influence on the debate in Sweden "could happen in many different arenas at the same time to influence the media, public opinion and decision-makers." She spoke during a meeting with her Finnish and Norwegian counterparts.

BERLIN — Climate activists have tried to shut down several oil pipelines in Germany to protest the use of fossil fuels and the war in Ukraine.

German news agency dpa quoted regional police on Wednesday confirming that a woman and a man had chained or glued themselves to a facility in Schwedt, northeast of Berlin.

The group Last Generation, which has staged highway blockades and other protests in recent months, also said its members entered a pipeline facility south of Cologne. Security staff prevented activists from disrupting a third facility in Breydin, also northeast of Berlin, dpa reported.

The group posted pictures showing activists placing sunflowers — a symbol of support for Ukraine — on the shutoff valves at two facilities. It was unclear whether any oil flows had actually been stopped.

KYIV, Ukraine — The Ukrainian Premier League soccer season has been officially declared over following the Russian invasion.

The league said after a video conference with clubs Tuesday that the standings as of Feb. 24, when the Russian invasion began and games were suspended, will be declared final "because the championship cannot be played to completion." Shakhtar Donetsk was the leader at that time but the league said no official award would be made.

The standings could potentially determine qualification for European competitions next season if Ukrainian clubs are deemed able to take part. The league's decision must be approved by the Ukrainian Football Association.

Of the 16 top-flight teams, FC Mariupol's home stadium is now in territory under Russian control and the stadium of Desna Chernihiv was wrecked by bombardments that collapsed part of a stand and left a deep crater in the field.

Ukraine's two biggest teams, Shakhtar and Dynamo Kyiv, are each touring Europe to play a series of charity games against clubs from around the continent and raise funds for people affected by the war.

BERLIN — Germany's influential ADAC auto club is calling on its 21 million members to help reduce the country's oil imports from Russia by driving less and taking their foot off the gas where possible.

In an open letter posted on its website Wednesday, the club's leadership said driving more slowly and anticipating stops were among the ways drivers could reduce fuel consumption by up to 20%.

They also urged drivers to consider whether they really need to take the car or could switch to walking, cycling or public transport instead.

The German government says it wants to wean the country off Russian oil imports by the end of the year.

BERLIN — Chemicals maker BASF says it will wind down most of its business in Russia and Belarus by the beginning of July.

The Ludwigshafen, Germany-based company said Wednesday that it "has not conducted new business" in the two countries in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has now decided to exit most of its exist-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 23 of 71

ing activities there.

It said that it is exempting business to support food production "as the war risks triggering a global food crisis."

BASF said it currently has 684 employees in Russia and Belarus and plans to "continue its support" for them until the end of this year. It said the two countries accounted for about 1% of its total sales last year.

WARSAW, Poland -- Poland's prime minister has lashed out at Russia for trying to "blackmail" his country with an abrupt cutoff of gas supplies. He says he believes the move was revenge for new sanctions that Warsaw imposed this week against Russia.

The sanctions announced Tuesday targeted 50 Russian oligarchs and companies, including Gazprom. Hours later Poland said it had received notice that Gazprom was cutting off supplies to Poland for failing to comply with new demands to pay in Russian rubles.

Speaking to the Polish parliament, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki vowed that Poland would not be cowed by the gas cutoff. He said Poland was safe thanks to years of efforts aimed at securing gas from other countries.

Lawmakers stood and applauded when he said that Russia's "gas blackmail" would have no effect on his country.

Russian made up some 45% of Poland's overall gas usage until the cutoff. But Poland is far more reliant on coal to heat homes and fuel industry, with gas accounting for only 9% of the country's overall energy mix.

Russian supplies were also due to end later this year in any case. Poland has made plans to get its supplies from other countries, including Norway. A new pipeline, "Baltic Pipe," is due to become operational in the fall.

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Hungary's foreign minister says his country's supply of Russian natural gas is unaffected by the decision of Russia's Gazprom to cut supplies to Poland and Bulgaria.

Peter Szijjarto said in a video on Facebook Wednesday that "the news that Gazprom's deliveries to Bulgaria have stopped may be worrying," but the transit of Russian gas to Hungary via Bulgaria would continue.

He said: "I would like to reassure everybody that the non-delivery of gas to Bulgaria does not mean the stop of transit through Bulgaria."

Gazprom said it would suspend gas deliveries to Bulgaria and Poland beginning on Wednesday after those countries refused to comply with Russian President Vladimir Putin's demand that European countries pay for gas in rubles.

Szijjarto said Hungary receives around 3.5 billion cubic meters of Russian gas per year via a pipeline that passes through Turkey, Bulgaria and Serbia. He added that supply was assured after Hungary reached an agreement with Russia whereby gas payments would be made to Gazprombank in euros and then converted into rubles.

LONDON — Britain's top diplomat says the West should send planes to Ukraine to bolster its fight against Russian invasion.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss says "the fate of Ukraine remains in the balance," and is calling for Western nations to increase military support to Kyiv.

In a speech in London on Wednesday, Truss will say: "Heavy weapons, tanks, aeroplanes – digging deep into our inventories, ramping up production."

She says that "if Putin succeeds there will be untold further misery across Europe and terrible consequences across the globe. We would never feel safe again. So we must be prepared for the long haul and double down on our support for Ukraine."

Truss is also calling for tougher economic sanctions on Russia, saying the West must cut off Russian oil and gas imports "once and for all."

Extracts of the speech were released in advance by the Foreign Office.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 24 of 71

NATO nations have supplied Ukraine with military gear including missiles and armored vehicles, but have been reluctant to send fighter planes out of concern about escalating the conflict.

MOSCOW — The Russian military says it has struck a batch of Western weapons delivered to Ukraine. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Wednesday that sea-launched Kalibr cruise missiles hit the weapons stored on the grounds of an aluminum plant in Zaporizhzhia. He said the batch of weapons contained equipment from the U.S. and European countries.

Konashenkov also said that the Russian warplanes struck 59 Ukrainian targets, including areas of concentrations of troops and equipment. He said Russian artillery hit 573 Ukrainian targets.

BRUSSELS — European Union officials are holding emergency gas talks following Russia's decision to abruptly turn off supplies to Poland and Bulgaria, according to the bloc's top official.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said the announcement by Gazprom "is yet another attempt by Russia to use gas as an instrument of blackmail."

Von der Leyen lashed out at what she described as an "unjustified and unacceptable" move underlining "the unreliability of Russia as a gas supplier." Von der Leyen, the head of the EU's executive branch, said a meeting of the gas coordination group was underway, adding that the region's 27 countries are prepared to weather Russia's cutoffs.

"Member States have put in place contingency plans for just such a scenario and we worked with them in coordination and solidarity," she said. "We are mapping out our coordinated EU response. We will also continue working with international partners to secure alternative flows."

LONDON — British military authorities say Ukraine retains control of a majority of the country's airspace as Russia has failed to destroy Ukraine's air force or suppress its air defenses.

The U.K. Ministry of Defense, in an intelligence update released Wednesday morning, says Russian air activity is focused on supporting ground forces in southern and eastern Ukraine.

The ministry says Russian air forces have "very limited" access to northern and western Ukraine, limiting them to long-range attacks with missiles and other "stand-off" weapons.

The ministry also says that the majority of air strikes on the southern city of Mariupol are probably being conducted with unguided bombs, which are difficult to target and increase civilian casualties.

SOFIA, Bulgaria — Energy Minister Alexander Nikolov said Wednesday that Bulgaria can meet the needs of users for at least one month, after the country was given a one-day notice by Russia's Gazprom that its gas supplies would be discontinued.

He said that gas is still flowing as he spoke.

"Alternative supplies are available, and Bulgaria hopes that alternative routes and supplies will also be secured at EU level," Nikolov said referring to an EU expert meeting due later Wednesday to plan the next steps. He added that Poland and Lithuania are in the same situation as Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian side has fully met its obligations and has made all payments required under its current contract in a timely manner, strictly and in accordance with its terms, Nikolov said, and Bulgaria has paid in advance for supplies in April, which shows that Gazprom has defaulted on its contract.

"Obviously gas is used as a political tool," he said. "As long as I am Minister, Bulgaria will not negotiate under pressure, Bulgaria is not for sale and does not succumb to any trade counterpart."

LVIV, Ukraine — European gas prices have spiked by as much as 24% following Gazprom's statement that it was suspending deliveries to Poland and Bulgaria starting Wednesday because it hasn't received any payments from them since April 1. Benchmark Dutch futures traded at one point around 125 euros per megawatt hour.

Fatih Birol, the executive director of the Paris-based International Energy Agency, called Russia's decision to cut off natural gas to Bulgaria and Poland the "weaponization of energy supplies."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 25 of 71

"Gazprom's move to completely shut off gas supplies to Poland is yet another sign of Russia's politicisation of existing agreements & will only accelerate European efforts to move away from Russian energy supplies," he tweeted Wednesday morning.

He said the Russia's decision "makes it clearer than ever that Europe needs to move quickly to reduce its reliance on Russian energy."

The spike comes even as the weather turns warmer in the Europe, lessening the demand for the natural gas for heating homes and businesses.

MOSCOW — Russia's state-controlled natural gas giant Gazprom says it has cut gas supplies to Poland and Bulgaria after they have refused to pay for the shipments in rubles.

It warned that if they siphon gas intended for other European customers, the deliveries to Europe will be reduced to that amount.

The move follows Russian President Vladimir Putin's order to switch to rubles in payments for the Russian gas supplied to Europe.

BEIJING — Drone company DJI Technology Co. said it will temporarily suspend business activities in Russia and Ukraine to ensure its products are not used during the hostilities.

"DJI is internally reassessing compliance requirements in various jurisdictions. Pending the current review, DJI will temporarily suspend all business activities in Russia and Ukraine," the company said in a statement.

The declaration makes it one of few Chinese companies who have publicly pulled out of Russia. While many Western brands and companies have withdrawn from the Russian market in protest of its invasion of Ukraine, many Chinese firms have continued operating in the country. China continues to refrain from directly criticizing Russia over the war.

The suspension comes over a month after vice prime minister of Ukraine Mykhailo Fedorov wrote an open letter appealing to DJI to block the sales of their drones in Russia, alleging that the Russians were using "DJI products in Ukraine in order to navigate their missile to kill civilians."

Musk's Twitter ambitions to collide with Europe's tech rules

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — A hands-off approach to moderating content at Elon Musk's Twitter could clash with ambitious new laws in Europe meant to protect users from disinformation, hate speech and other harmful material.

Musk, who describes himself as a "free speech absolutist," pledged to buy Twitter for \$44 billion this week, with European Union officials and digital campaigners quick to say that any focus on free speech to the detriment of online safety would not fly after the 27-nation bloc solidified its status as a global leader in the effort to rein in the power of tech giants.

"If his approach will be 'just stop moderating it,' he will likely find himself in a lot of legal trouble in the EU," said Jan Penfrat, senior policy adviser at digital rights group EDRi.

Musk will soon be confronted with Europe's Digital Services Act, which will require big tech companies like Twitter, Google and Facebook parent Meta to police their platforms more strictly or face billions in fines.

Officials agreed just days ago on the landmark legislation, expected to take effect by 2024. It's unclear how soon it could spark a similar crackdown elsewhere, with U.S. lawmakers divided on efforts to address competition, online privacy, disinformation and more.

That means the job of reining in a Musk-led Twitter could fall to Europe — something officials signaled they're ready for.

"Be it cars or social media, any company operating in Europe needs to comply with our rules — regardless of their shareholding," Thierry Breton, the EU's internal market commissioner, tweeted Tuesday. "Mr Musk knows this well. He is familiar with European rules on automotive, and will quickly adapt to the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 26 of 71

Digital Services Act.”

Musk’s plans for Twitter haven’t been fleshed out beyond a few ideas for new features, opening its algorithm to public inspection and defeating “bots” posing as real users.

France’s digital minister, Cedric O, said Musk has “interesting things” that he wants to push for Twitter, “but let’s remember that #DigitalServicesAct — and therefore the obligation to fight misinformation, online hate, etc. — will apply regardless of the ideology of its owner.”

EU Green Party lawmaker Alexandra Geese, who was involved in negotiating the law, said, “Elon Musk’s idea of free speech without content moderation would exclude large parts of the population from public discourse,” such as women and people of color.

Twitter declined to comment. Musk tweeted that “the extreme antibody reaction from those who fear free speech says it all.” He added that by free speech, he means “that which matches the law” and that he’s against censorship going “far beyond the law.”

The United Kingdom also has an online safety law in the works that threatens senior managers at tech companies with prison if they don’t comply. Users would get more power to block anonymous trolls, and tech companies would be forced to proactively take down illegal content.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s office stressed the need for Twitter to remain “responsible” and protect users.

“Regardless of ownership, all social media platforms must be responsible,” Johnson’s spokesman Max Blain said Tuesday.

Damian Collins, a British lawmaker who led a parliamentary committee working on the bill, said that if Musk really wants to make Twitter a free speech haven, “he will need to clean up the digital town square.”

Collins said Twitter has become a place where users are drowned out by coordinated armies of “bot” accounts spreading disinformation and division and that users refrain from expressing themselves “because of the hate and abuse they will receive.”

The laws in the U.K. and EU target such abuse. Under the EU’s Digital Services Act, tech companies must put in place systems so illegal content can be easily flagged for swift removal.

Experts said Twitter will have to go beyond taking down clearly defined illegal content like hate speech, terrorism and child sexual abuse and grapple with material that falls into a gray zone.

The law includes requirements for big tech platforms to carry out annual risk assessments to determine how much their products and design choices contribute to the spread of divisive material that can affect issues like health or public debate.

“This is all about assessing to what extent your users are seeing, for example, Russian propaganda in the context of the Ukraine war,” online harassment or COVID-19 misinformation, said Mathias Vermeulen, public policy director at data rights agency AWO.

Violations would incur fines of up to 6% of a company’s global annual revenue. Repeat offenders can be banned from the EU.

The Digital Services Act also requires tech companies to be more transparent by giving regulators and researchers access to data on how their systems recommend content to users.

Musk has similar thoughts, saying his plans include “making the algorithms open source to increase trust.”

Penfrat said it’s a great idea that could pave the way to a new ecosystem of ranking and recommendation options.

But he panned another Musk idea — “authenticating all humans” — saying that taking away anonymity or pseudonyms from people, including society’s most marginalized, was the dream of every autocrat.

SpaceX launches 4 astronauts for NASA after private flight

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — SpaceX launched four astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA on Wednesday, less than two days after completing a flight chartered by millionaires.

It’s the first NASA crew comprised equally of men and women, including the first Black woman making

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 27 of 71

a long-term spaceflight, Jessica Watkins.

"This is one of the most diversified, I think, crews that we've had in a really, really long time," said NASA's space operations mission chief Kathy Lueders.

The astronauts were due to arrive at the space station Wednesday night, 16 hours after a predawn liftoff from Kennedy Space Center that thrilled spectators.

"Anyone who saw it realized what a beautiful launch it was," Lueders told reporters. After an express flight comparable to traveling from New York to Singapore, the crew will move in for a five-month stay.

SpaceX has now launched five crews for NASA and two private trips in just under two years. Elon Musk's company is having an especially busy few weeks: It just finished taking three businessmen to and from the space station as NASA's first private guests.

A week after the new crew arrives, the three Americans and German they're replacing will return to Earth in their own SpaceX capsule. Three Russians also live at the space station.

Both SpaceX and NASA officials stressed they're taking it one step at a time to ensure safety. The private mission that concluded Monday encountered no major problems, they said, although high wind delayed the splashdown for a week.

SpaceX Launch Control wished the astronauts good luck and Godspeed moments before the Falcon rocket blasted off with the capsule, named Freedom by its crew.

"Our heartfelt thank you to every one of you that made this possible. Now let Falcon roar and Freedom ring," radioed NASA astronaut Kjell Lindgren, the commander. Minutes later, their recycled booster had landed on an ocean platform and their capsule was safely orbiting Earth. "It was a great ride," he said.

The SpaceX capsules are fully automated — which opens the space gates to a broader clientele — and they're designed to accommodate a wider range of body sizes. At the same time, NASA and the European Space Agency have been pushing for more female astronauts.

While two Black women visited the space station during the shuttle era, neither moved in for a lengthy stay. Watkins, a geologist who is on NASA's short list for a moon-landing mission in the years ahead, sees her mission as "an important milestone, I think, both for the agency and for the country."

She credits supportive family and mentors — including Mae Jemison, the first Black woman in space in 1992 — for "ultimately being able to live my dream."

Also cheering Watkins on was another geologist: Apollo 17's Harrison Schmitt, who walked on the moon in 1972. She invited the retired astronaut to the launch, along with his wife. "We sort of consider ourselves the Jessica team," he said, chuckling.

"Those of us who rode the Saturn V into space are a little bit jaded about the smaller rockets," Schmitt said after the SpaceX liftoff. "But still, it really was something and on board was a geologist ... I hope it will stand her in good stead for being part of one of the Artemis crews that go to the moon."

Like Watkins, NASA astronaut and test pilot Bob Hines is making his first spaceflight. It's the second visit for Lindgren, a physician, and the European Space Agency's lone female astronaut, Samantha Cristoforetti, a former Italian Air Force fighter pilot.

Cristoforetti turned 45 on Tuesday, "so she really celebrates and is very happy with a big smile in the capsule," said the European Space Agency's director general, Josef Aschbacher. "She's really a role model and she's doing an enormously fabulous job on doing exactly that."

The just-completed private flight was NASA's first dip into space tourism after years of opposition. The space agency said the three people who paid \$55 million each to visit the space station blended in while doing experiments and educational outreach. They were accompanied by a former NASA astronaut employed by Houston-based Axiom Space, which arranged the flight.

"The International Space Station is not a vacation spot. It's not an amusement park. It is an international laboratory, and they absolutely understood and respected that purpose," said NASA flight director Zeb Scoville.

NASA also hired Boeing to ferry astronauts after retiring the shuttles. The company will take another shot next month at getting an empty crew capsule to the space station, after software and other problems

fouled a 2019 test flight and prevented a redo last summer.

European nations accuse Russia of natural gas 'blackmail'

By VANESSA GERA and VESELIN TOSHKOV Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Polish and Bulgarian leaders accused Moscow of using natural gas to blackmail their countries after Russia's state-controlled energy company said it would stop supplying the two European nations Wednesday.

The gas cutoff came after Russian President Vladimir Putin said last month that "unfriendly" countries would need to start paying for gas in rubles, Russia's currency, which Bulgaria and Poland refused to do.

Russian energy giant Gazprom said in a statement that it hadn't received any payments from Poland and Bulgaria since April 1 and was suspending their deliveries starting Wednesday.

If the countries siphon off gas intended for other European customers, deliveries to Europe will be reduced by that amount, the company said.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki told Poland's parliament that he thinks the suspension was revenge for new sanctions against Russia that Warsaw imposed over the war in Ukraine.

Morawiecki vowed that Poland would not be cowed by the cutoff. He said the country was safe from an energy crisis thanks to years of efforts to secure gas from other countries.

Lawmakers stood and applauded when he said that Russia's "gas blackmail" would have no effect on Poland.

The new sanctions, announced Tuesday, targeted 50 Russian oligarchs and companies, including Gazprom. Hours later, Poland said it had received notice that Gazprom was cutting off its gas supplies for failing to adhere to the demand to pay in Russian rubles.

Poland's gas company, PGNiG, said the gas supplies from the Yamal pipeline stopped early Wednesday, as Gazprom had warned they would.

Bulgaria said Tuesday that it also was informed by Gazprom that the country's gas supplies would end at the same time.

Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov called Gazprom's suspension of gas deliveries to his country "a gross violation of their contract" and "blackmail."

"We will not succumb to such a racket," he added.

Russia's move raised wider concerns that other countries could be targeted next as Western countries increase their support for Ukraine amid a war now in its third month.

European Union officials were holding emergency talks on Wednesday. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the announcement by Gazprom "is yet another attempt by Russia to use gas as an instrument of blackmail."

The Greek government was to hold its own emergency meeting in Athens. Greece's next scheduled payment to Gazprom is due on May 25, and the government must decide whether it will comply with the demand to complete the transaction in rubles.

Greece is ramping up its liquefied natural gas storage capacity, and has contingency plans to switch several industry sectors from gas to diesel as an emergency energy source. It has also reversed a program to reduce domestic coal production over the next two years.

Europe is not without leverage in the dispute; at current prices, it pays Russia some \$400 million a day for gas, money Putin would lose with a complete cutoff.

Russia can in theory sell its oil elsewhere, such as to India and China, because oil primarily moves by ship. But the gas pipeline network that carries gas from the huge deposits in northwestern Siberia's Yamal Peninsula does not connect with pipelines that run to China. And Russia only has limited facilities to export super chilled liquefied gas by ship.

Russian gas made up some 45% of Poland's overall gas usage until the cutoff. But Poland is far more reliant on coal to heat homes and fuel industry, with gas making up around 7% of the country's overall energy mix.

Russian supplies to Poland already were expected to end later this year anyway. Poland has worked for many years to secure supplies from other countries.

Several years ago, the country opened its first terminal for liquefied natural gas, or LNG, in Swinoujscie, on the Baltic Sea coast. A pipeline from Norway is to due to start operating this year.

In Bulgaria, the main consumers of gas are district heating companies, and only about 120,000 households rely on gas.

Bulgaria's energy minister said his country can meet the needs of users for at least one month.

"Alternative supplies are available, and Bulgaria hopes that alternative routes and supplies will also be secured at the EU level," Energy Minister Alexander Nikolov said.

Fatih Birol, the head of the Paris-based International Energy Agency, described Russia's move as a "weaponization of energy supplies."

He said Russia's decision "makes it clearer than ever that Europe needs to move quickly to reduce its reliance on Russian energy."

Shanghai seeks 'societal zero COVID' with rounds of testing

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Shanghai city authorities said Wednesday they will start rounds of COVID-19 testing over the next few days to determine which neighborhoods can safely be allowed a limited amount of freedom of movement, as residents in Beijing watch carefully on word for whether the capital city will lock down.

On Wednesday, China reported 14,222 new cases, the vast majority of which were asymptomatic. The country is battling its largest outbreak since the pandemic was first reported in Wuhan in late December 2019.

Shanghai's vice head of its health committee, Zhao Dandan, announced Wednesday that the city would begin another round of testing for city residents over the next few days to determine which districts were lower risk. Areas that have been declared to have achieved "societal zero COVID" could see some measure of limited freedom.

The phrase, used by Chinese health authorities, refers to when new positive cases are only discovered in people who are already under surveillance, such as in centralized quarantine or those considered to be close contacts. At this point, they are considered to have broken off chains of transmission at the community level.

Shanghai's total lockdown has been in place for near a month, taking a toll on residents who have been confined to their homes. While a small, lucky portion of people have been allowed to leave their homes in the past week, the vast majority of people remain confined.

The flow of industrial goods has also been disrupted by the suspension of access to Shanghai, home of the world's busiest port, and other industrial cities including Changchun and Jilin in northeast China.

Officials reported 48 deaths on Wednesday, bringing the total to at least 238 in the city.

Meanwhile, the capital city Beijing is in the middle of mass testing millions of residents after cases were discovered over the weekend. The city reported 34 new cases Wednesday, 3 of which were asymptomatic.

In the last couple of days, nervous Beijing residents had started stockpiling food and supplies, following Shanghai's troubles where residents struggled to get a continuous and reliable supply of food while under lockdown.

Beijing city officials were quick to promise that they were ensuring grocery stores would be well-stocked. They said they were monitoring the Xinfadi wholesale market, where the city gets the vast majority of its supply from, at a press conference Tuesday night.

Demand has soared, with city residents sharing online lists of what to stock. Farms on the outskirts of Beijing told the official Beijing Daily News that April and May are typically when demand peaks. Compared to the same period last year, the number of orders rose 20%, owing to the demand generated by the epidemic, according to one major farm the paper interviewed.

Another farm said it was even more. "Starting from yesterday, the number of orders we've received have clearly increased, roughly double the amount at this time last year," supply chain manager Zhang Xinming told Beijing Daily News.

It is unclear whether the entire city will be forced under lockdown. For now, officials have locked down only specific areas where positive cases were found. On Wednesday, Beijing's Tongzhou district suspended classes for all its schools from kindergarten through high school.

Given that China for now remains committed to its "zero-COVID" approach, "I do think we will continue to see the use of these lockdowns across the country," said Karen Grepin, a public health expert at the University of Hong Kong. "If anything, the omicron variant has made it more challenging to control the virus and thus more stringent measures are needed if the goal is to continue to strive for local elimination."

The "zero-COVID" strategy has worked well against previous versions of the virus, ensuring that for most of the past two years, people in China were able to live a mostly virus-free life.

Older people fret less about aging in place: AP-NORC Poll

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The older you are, the less you fret about aging in place.

That's a key insight from a new Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll, which found that U.S. adults ages 65 or older feel much better prepared to age in their own homes than those 50-64, who are mostly still in the final stretches of their working years.

The poll also documented greater insecurity around aging in place for older Black and Latino Americans, the likely result of a deep-rooted wealth gap that markedly favors white people.

Aging in one's own home, or with family or a close friend, is a widely held aspiration, with 88% of adults 50 and older saying it's their goal in an earlier AP-NORC poll.

The outlook among those 65 or older is upbeat, with nearly 8 in 10 saying they're extremely or very prepared to stay in their current home as long as possible.

But doubts creep in for those ages 50-64. Among that group, the majority who rate themselves as extremely or very prepared shrinks to about 6 in 10, according to the poll.

This relatively younger group is especially likely to say their financial situation is the main reason they don't feel very prepared to age in place. And they're also more likely to feel anxious about being able to stay in their communities, get care from medical providers and receive backup from family members or close friends, the poll found.

Part of it may be due to fear of the unknown among people who've relied on a paycheck all their lives.

"When you've never done it before, and you are only going to do it once, you're sort of flying by the seat of your pants," said Leigh Gerstenberger, in his late 60s and retired from a career in financial services. "I spent a lot of time talking to people ahead of me in the journey," says the Pittsburgh-area resident.

Also, people approaching their 60s may question if Social Security and Medicare will truly be there for them. Stacy Wiggins, an addiction medicine nurse who lives near Detroit, figures she'll probably work at least another 10 years into her late 60s — and maybe part-time after that. Older friends are already collecting Social Security.

"In my group, you wonder if it's going to be available," Wiggins said of government programs that support older people. "Maybe it's not. You will find people who are less apt to have a traditional pension. Those are things that leave you with a lot of trepidation toward the future."

Some people now in their 50s and early 60s may still be dealing with the overhang of the 2007-09 recession, when unemployment peaked at 10% and foreclosures soared, said Sarah Szanton, dean of the Johns Hopkins University nursing school. For an aging society, the U.S. does relatively little to prepare older adults to navigate the transition to retirement, she observed.

"As Americans, we've always idolized youth and we're notoriously underprepared for thinking about aging," Szanton said. "It often comes as a surprise to people." Her involvement with aging-in-place issues started early in her career, when she made house calls to older people.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 31 of 71

In the poll, people 50 and older reported that their communities do an uneven job of meeting basic needs. While access to health care, healthy food and high-speed internet were generally rated highly, only 36% said their community does a good job providing affordable housing. Just 44% were satisfied with access to transportation and to services that support older people in their homes.

Kym Harrelson-Pattishall is hoping that as more people retire to her coastal North Carolina community, health care facilities and other services will follow. As it stands now, a major medical issue can involve a car trip of up to an hour to the hospital.

A real estate agent in her early 50s, Pattishall shares the goal of aging at home, but her confidence level is not very high. "I think it would just eat away what savings I have," she said.

It's all about adjusting, says another small-town resident, about 20 years older than Pattishall. Shirley Hayden lives in Texas, near the Louisiana border and on the track of hurricanes from the Gulf of Mexico. She says she has no investments and only modest savings, but she rates herself as very prepared to continue aging in place.

"You have to learn to live within your means," Hayden said. "I don't charge things I can't afford to pay for.

"My biggest thing I have to work around as far as expenses is insurance," she added. "I don't really need any new clothes. In Texas, you live in jeans and T-shirts and they don't go out of style. Yeah, your shoes wear out, but how often do you buy a pair of shoes?"

Not so easy to work around is the well-documented racial wealth gap that constrains older Black people in particular. A Federal Reserve report notes that on average Black and Latino households own 15% to 20% as much net wealth as white households.

In the poll, 67% of Black Americans and 59% of Latino Americans ages 50 and older said they felt extremely or very prepared to stay in their homes as long as possible, compared with the 73% share of white Americans saying they feel confident.

Wiggins, the Detroit area nurse, is Black and says it's a pattern she's familiar with. "Part of it is generational wealth," she said. "I have friends who are white, whose dad died and left them settled. I have friends who are Black whose parents died, and they left enough to bury them, but nothing substantial."

Myanmar court sentences Suu Kyi to 5 years for corruption

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country's former leader Aung San Suu Kyi of corruption and sentenced her to five years in prison Wednesday in the first of several corruption cases against her.

Suu Kyi, who was ousted by an army takeover last year, had denied the allegation that she had accepted gold and hundreds of thousands of dollars given her as a bribe by a top political colleague.

Her supporters and independent legal experts consider her prosecution an unjust move to discredit Suu Kyi and legitimize the military's seizure of power while keeping the 76-year-old elected leader from returning to an active role in politics.

The daughter of Aung San, Myanmar's founding father, Suu Kyi became a public figure in 1988 during a failed uprising against a previous military government when she helped found the National League for Democracy party. She spent 15 of the next 21 years under house arrest for leading a nonviolent struggle for democracy that earned her the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. When the army allowed an election in 2015, her party won a landslide victory and she became the de facto head of state. Her party won a greater majority in the 2020 polls.

She has already been sentenced to six years' imprisonment in other cases and faces 10 more corruption charges. The maximum punishment under the Anti-Corruption Act is 15 years in prison and a fine. Convictions in the other cases could bring sentences of more than 100 years in prison in total.

"These charges will not have credibility other than in the eyes of the junta's stacked courts (and the military's supporters)," said Moe Thuzar, a fellow at the Yusof Ishak Institute, a Southeast Asian studies center in Singapore. "Even if there were any legitimate concerns or complaints about corruption by any

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 32 of 71

member of an elected government, a coup and enforced military rule are certainly not the way to pursue such concerns."

News of Wednesday's verdict came from a legal official who asked not to be identified because he is not authorized to release such information. Suu Kyi's trial in the capital, Naypyitaw, was closed to the media, diplomats and spectators, and her lawyers were barred from speaking to the press.

Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won a landslide victory in the 2020 general election, but lawmakers were not allowed to take their seats when the army seized power on Feb. 1, 2021, arresting Suu Kyi and many senior colleagues in her party and government. The army claimed it acted because there had been massive electoral fraud, but independent election observers didn't find any major irregularities.

The takeover was met with large nonviolent protests nationwide, which security forces quashed with lethal force that has so far led to the deaths of almost 1,800 civilians, according to a watchdog group, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

As repression escalated, armed resistance against the military government grew, and some U.N. experts now characterize the country as being in a state of civil war.

Suu Kyi has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was detained and is being held in an undisclosed location. However, at last week's final hearing in the case, she appeared to be in good health and asked her supporters to "stay united," said a legal official familiar with the proceedings who asked not to be named because he is not authorized to release information.

In earlier cases, Suu Kyi was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on convictions of illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions and sedition.

In the case decided Wednesday, she was accused of receiving \$600,000 and seven gold bars in 2017-18 from Phylo Min Thein, the former chief minister of Yangon, the country's biggest city and a senior member of her political party. Her lawyers, before they were served with gag orders late last year, said she rejected all his testimony against her as "absurd."

The nine other cases currently being tried under the Anti-Corruption Act include several related to the purchase and rental of a helicopter by one of her former Cabinet ministers. Violations of the law carry a maximum penalty for each offense of 15 years in prison and a fine.

Suu Kyi is also charged with diverting money meant as charitable donations to build a residence, and with misusing her position to obtain rental properties at lower-than-market prices for a foundation named after her mother. The state Anti-Corruption Commission has declared that several of her alleged actions deprived the state of revenue it would otherwise have earned.

Another corruption charge alleging that she accepted a bribe has not yet gone to trial.

Suu Kyi is also being tried on a charge of violating the Official Secrets Act, which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years, and on a charge alleging election fraud, which carries a maximum sentence of three years.

"The days of Aung San Suu Kyi as a free woman are effectively over. Myanmar's junta and the country's kangaroo courts are walking in lockstep to put Aung San Suu Kyi away for what could ultimately be the equivalent of a life sentence, given her advanced age," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of Human Rights Watch. "Destroying popular democracy in Myanmar also means getting rid of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the junta is leaving nothing to chance."

Reelection bolsters France's Macron as powerful player in EU

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Soon after his victory was announced, French President Emmanuel Macron took the stage to the sound of the European Union's anthem, the "Ode to Joy." The symbolism was strong: The 44-year-old centrist's election to a second term bolsters his standing as a senior player in Europe.

Macron is now expected to push for strengthening the 27-nation bloc and throw all his weight behind efforts to put an end to the war in Ukraine.

In his victory speech Sunday evening, he thanked the majority of French voters who chose him and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 33 of 71

vowed to lead a project for "a stronger Europe."

"Europe is a framework for peace and stability. It's our safer asset for today and tomorrow," he said at a campaign rally in Strasbourg, home to the European Parliament. "Europe is what's protecting us from crisis and war."

Angela Merkel's departure in December after 16 years as Germany's chancellor, in addition to the United Kingdom's exit from the bloc in 2020, positioned Macron to play a dominant role in the EU, where the Franco-German relationship is key.

Boosted by his victory, Macron figures to be in the spotlight when he pays an expected visit to Berlin in the coming days to meet with new Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who has had a low-profile debut on the international stage. French presidents traditionally make their first post-election trip abroad to Germany as a celebration of the countries' friendship after multiple wars.

Ukraine will be at the top of the agenda for the encounter with Scholz, whose spokesman, Steffen Hebestreit, praised Macron's victory over far-right, nationalist rival Marine Le Pen as "a good day for Europe." Hebestreit added: "The French people made a good choice."

France holds the rotating presidency of the European Council until June 30. Macron is scheduled to make a speech on Europe on May 9 in Strasbourg.

At some point, he may also travel to Kyiv to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Macron has long advocated for the EU to take more responsibility for its own defense, something he sees as complementary to the NATO alliance, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine has only further strengthened that argument.

His victory "means the pursuit of an ambitious project for Europe," said Tara Varma, who heads the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank.

"He will be advocating to double down on the European sovereignty agenda: on tech, on defense, on fighting economic coercion," she said.

Varma added that an upcoming conference on the Western Balkans to be organized in June will provide "an opportunity to start rethinking the EU's enlargement policy."

Georgina Wright, director of the Europe Program at the Paris-based think tank Institut Montaigne, said that "Europe will obviously continue to be a key and central pillar to Macron's mandate. I suspect he wants to go further and faster than he has in the past five years."

However, he may encounter "tricky discussions" ahead, she said.

The introduction of a bloc-wide minimum wage, a carbon tax on imports and fiscal reform are among the main policies France wants to promote. France also wants to accelerate talks on a stalled overhaul of the EU's asylum system.

To achieve such progress on touchy topics, Macron will need to seek international consensus among his counterparts.

"His challenge would be to get others to follow him," Wright said. "He really needs to get Germany on board."

But challenges loom. The leaders of Hungary and Poland, at loggerheads with Brussels over their rule of law standards, have expressed strong disagreement with Macron in the past. Tensions with Britain over the post-Brexit deal and migrants crossing the English Channel, meanwhile, are unlikely to calm down.

"Macron won't have everything his own way," said Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform. "Some Central and Eastern European member states will oppose French policies, the British will remain a headache and the Germans may thwart some French ideas."

Areas of Franco-German divergence include key topics such as energy strategy. Macron is pushing to promote nuclear power as a way of becoming greener and more energy-independent, while Scholz's government plans to shut down Germany's last nuclear plants this year.

Germany is also expected to oppose a French proposal involving the use of shared EU debt for an investment plan aimed at coping with the impact of the war in Ukraine. The proposal is modeled on the unprecedented plan launched to get the bloc through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Macron may find a key ally in Italian Premier Mario Draghi, who has been pushing for tighter ties with

Paris, including a pact signed with Macron in Rome last fall that was meant to establish Italy and France as the new motor of EU cooperation.

In congratulatory remarks following Macron's reelection, Draghi emphasized the role of both countries, "working side by side with all of the other partners" to construct a stronger EU.

Lebanon vote holds little hope for change despite disasters

By AJ NADDAFF Associated Press

SIDON, Lebanon (AP) — Running for parliament for the first time, independent Hania Zaatari walks down the meandering alleyways of the old souk in the port city of Sidon, telling impoverished workers and traders that fixing Lebanon's devastating economic crisis is her top priority.

"The economic plan needs to consider marginalized people like you and give them a chance for revival," she said to 70-year-old Ahmed Abu Dhahr, one of two carpenters remaining on a street that just two years ago boasted roughly 50.

The engineer-turned-candidate exuded confidence and hope. Yet her enthusiasm was met by shrugs and resignation, reflecting widespread fears that the mid-May vote will only perpetuate the grim status quo.

With Lebanon in free-fall for more than two years, it should be a make-or-break vote for the country's ruling class. Their decades-long grip on power has driven one of the Middle East's most spirited countries to ruin.

The May 15 elections for parliament are the first since Lebanon's economic meltdown began in late 2019. The government's factions have done virtually nothing to address the collapse, leaving Lebanese to fend for themselves as they plunge into poverty, without electricity, medicine, garbage collection or any other semblance of normal life.

These are also the first elections since the August 4, 2020, catastrophic explosion at Beirut port that killed more than 215 people and wrecked large parts of the city. The destruction sparked widespread outrage at the traditional parties' endemic corruption and mismanagement.

A new generation of political opposition activists, like Zaatari, emerged after mass waves of protests that began in October 2019, a historic moment when Lebanese temporarily dropped their confessional identities and chanted shoulder-to-shoulder for the toppling of the ruling elite.

The activists are trying to build off that political engagement and awareness in Lebanon to enact change.

Yet instead of uniting, self-declared opposition groups are divided along ideological lines on virtually every issue, including over how to revive the economy.

As a result, there are an average of at least three different opposition lists in each of the 15 electoral districts, a 20% increase from the 2018 elections. A total of 103 lists with 1,044 candidates are vying for the 128-seat legislature, which is equally divided between Christians and Muslims.

Many are dreading the prospective outcome.

Lebanon's rulers, many of them warlords and militia holdovers from the days of the 1975-90 civil war, have proven extremely resilient.

They hang on to their seats from one election to the next and can behave with impunity in power, largely because the sectarian power-sharing system and an antiquated electoral law virtually guarantee their spots in parliament.

Their parties can rally followers who remain fiercely loyal for sectarian or ideological reasons despite outrage over the state of the country. The economic crisis has only made people more dependent on the patronage and cash that parties hand out.

For many, the elections are an exercise in futility.

"I am extremely disappointed and to be honest this is the last card before immigrating from Lebanon," said Carmen Geha, an associate professor of political studies at the American University of Beirut. She said she was moving to Spain in the summer and that she no longer felt safe in the country.

"It is unacceptable that they wasted the momentum that was on the streets and the suffering that people have," she said. In the past two years, over 250,000 people have left the country of nearly 7 million.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 35 of 71

In the lead-up to the vote, streets have been festooned with giant billboards and posters of candidates with improbable promises of change. It's a jarring sign of the money being spent on campaigns as the currency continues to slide and inflation, poverty and hunger grow.

Even the mainstream factions have tried to use anger over the port explosion for gain in the election, claiming to be on the side of reform. The Christian Lebanese Forces party has put out campaign messages insisting it pushed for better oversight at the port before the blast.

The explosion was caused by hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate haphazardly stored at a port warehouse. The ruling class united to block the investigation into the blast. Nevertheless, the militant Hezbollah group, which dominates the political landscape and the government, touts in its campaign messages that it wants an investigation.

In an act of blatant defiance, two former ministers wanted for questioning on criminal negligence in connection to the port explosion are running in the elections. The two, Ali Hassan Khalil and Ghazi Zeaiter, belong to the Hezbollah-allied Shiite Amal party.

"If they are to be elected again, I would find it a direct insult to all of the country and all of the victims of the blast, to every normal human being left in this country," said Paul Naggar, the father of one of the youngest victims of the blast, 3-year-old Alexandra.

Naggar, director of the newly formed political advocacy group Kulluna Irada, said the election was a historic opportunity but expressed frustration at the opposition's failure to unite.

"We don't have the luxury to think of right and left and center and socialism or liberalism, we are in a state of survival. It is either we survive or we leave," he said.

In the northern city of Jounieh, candidate Jad Ghosn, a journalist who recently decided to run for elections with the leftist group Citizens in a State, said the divisions have been obvious from the start.

"We have 300 political groups claiming to be of the opposition and of the revolution, and we don't have any structure for having a discussion or of trying to coordinate between all of these opposition groups."

Ghosn is running on a list in the Metn district with the youngest candidate, 25-year-old Verena al-Amil and three others.

Outside a Starbucks, al-Amil approached a man who said he was voting for the Lebanon Forces, one of the main traditional Christian parties. He said he was open to change, but he had not heard of many other parties.

Minutes before, a group of teenagers swarmed flashing hand gestures referring to another Christian party, founded by President Michel Aoun, which is politically allied with Hezbollah. It was a potent sign of the mainstream parties' power over constituents.

The new independent lists are "non-sectarian so they lack communitarian support, which is the dominant discourse in Lebanese politics," said Imad Salameh, a professor of political science at the Lebanese American University.

"If the groups had been well-financed, or backed by foreign powers like traditional parties, they might have had a better chance."

Column: Draft cements the marriage of Las Vegas and NFL

By TIM DAHLBERG AP Sports Columnist

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The NFL brings the traveling circus that is its draft to a city where nothing — including 300-pound football players posing with showgirls and circus clowns above the Bellagio hotel fountains — is too outlandish.

As the draft begins Thursday, the marriage between the league and the gambling town it demonized for so long is nearly complete, with only a Super Bowl in 2024 remaining to formally complete the partnership.

The masses who will gather to see where their team might be heading in the next year will find the usual draft day theatrics amid the bright lights of the casinos. Commissioner Roger Goodell will be on hand to announce and greet the first-rounders — dressed in their best suits and new team hats — and everyone watching will party like their team has just made the playoffs.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 36 of 71

Interestingly enough, in a city built on betting, there will be little of it on the draft itself — and little at all on draft day. And, no, it's not because the NFL objected to the idea of fans screaming in glee because they got good odds on the No. 5 pick.

Blame it on the caution of Nevada gambling authorities, who have never liked the idea of allowing betting on anything other than actual sporting contests at the sports books that line the Strip. While other states new to sports betting offer more to bet on, Nevada has only allowed bets on the draft since 2017 — and all bets that include the name of a player must be made at least 24 hours before the draft.

Also, good luck finding a bookie willing to take more than a couple hundred bucks on an event where inside information could potentially give a bettor a big edge.

"It might be my least favorite event to book," said Jay Kornegay, a longtime oddsmaker who runs the Westgate SuperBook. "We've only done it a few years but we haven't fared well on it at all."

That's largely, Kornegay said, because the so-called "sharps" in the past have gotten tips on picks before bookies themselves found out — the one thing every sports book operator fears most.

The guess is that, even in Las Vegas, betting on the draft isn't the top priority for most of the tens of thousands of fans who will gather over three days for the annual spectacle. They're there mostly to see who their team lands that might change its fortunes, and to be part of a scene that is becoming increasingly familiar since the NFL decided to take the draft on the road in 2015.

More than 600,000 showed up in Nashville in 2019 for the biggest draft party ever. Last year, Cleveland hosted a smaller but still respectable crowd of 140,000 over three days.

What happens in Vegas, though, will be tough for any future site to match. A city long used to hosting big events won't have any trouble making this a glittering spectacle.

The future stars of the NFL will be introduced on a stage adjacent to the Caesars High Roller observation wheel, where each night free concerts will feature acts like Weezer, Ice Cube and Marshmello. The red carpet walk will take place on a stage built over the spectacular fountains of the Bellagio resort, where performers from Cirque du Soleil, and Blue Man Group will also do their thing.

There will even be a pop-up sports book on site, though fans will have to be content with betting baseball and the NBA playoffs because they won't be able to bet the number of quarterbacks taken in the first round.

Indeed, the draft highlights how the NFL and Las Vegas are intertwined so tightly that it's easy to forget the Supreme Court ruling that opened the path to legalized sports betting across the nation came just four years ago.

At that point, the NFL wouldn't even allow players inside casinos for events. Now fans not only can bet on their team but go inside a casino and play a slot machine emblazoned with their team's helmet.

The hypocrisy of the NFL for so many years about sports betting remains head shaking, though there was nothing surprising about how the league embraced it once the floodgates opened.

Caesars, the de facto sponsor of the draft, is a prime NFL sponsor and one of three gambling companies who jumped on board when the league added sports betting as a sponsor category. There are sports books being built at NFL stadiums and there isn't an NFL game that goes by without reminders to viewers about the point spread or odds on either team winning.

It's easy money for the NFL. But it's also payback for a city that helped build the league to what it is today by offering easily understandable point spreads for years that were used by fans and their favorite illegal bookies across the nation.

Now Las Vegas and the NFL are joined together for good in the common pursuit of the fan dollar. The only real surprise is how normal it all seems.

Major Japan railway now powered only by renewable energy

By YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Tokyo's Shibuya is famed for its Scramble Crossing, where crowds of people crisscross the intersection in a scene symbolizing urban Japan's congestion and anonymity. It may have added an-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 37 of 71

other boasting right.

Tokyu Railways' trains running through Shibuya and other stations were switched to power generated only by solar and other renewable sources starting April 1.

That means the carbon dioxide emissions of Tokyu's sprawling network of seven train lines and one tram service now stand at zero, with green energy being used at all its stations, including for vending machines for drinks, security camera screens and lighting.

Tokyu, which employs 3,855 people and connects Tokyo with nearby Yokohama, is the first railroad operator in Japan to have achieved that goal. It says the carbon dioxide reduction is equivalent to the annual average emissions of 56,000 Japanese households.

Nicholas Little, director of railway education at Michigan State University's Center for Railway Research and Education, commends Tokyu for promoting renewable energy but stressed the importance of boosting the bottom-line amount of that renewable energy.

"I would stress the bigger impacts come from increasing electricity generation from renewable sources," he said. "The long-term battle is to increase production of renewable electricity and provide the transmission infrastructure to get it to the places of consumption."

The technology used by Tokyu's trains is among the most ecologically friendly options for railways. The other two options are batteries and hydrogen power.

And so is it just a publicity stunt, or is Tokyu moving in the right direction?

Ryo Takagi, a professor at Kogakuin University and specialist in electric railway systems, believes the answer isn't simple because how train technology evolves is complex and depends on many uncertain societal factors.

In a nutshell, Tokyu's efforts are definitely not hurting and are probably better than doing nothing. They show the company is taking up the challenge of promoting clean energy, he said.

"But I am not going out of my way to praise it as great," Takagi said.

Bigger gains would come from switching from diesel trains in rural areas to hydrogen powered lines and from switching gas-guzzling cars to electric, he said.

Tokyu paid an undisclosed amount to Tokyo Electric Power Co., the utility behind the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, for certification vouching for its use of renewables, even as Japan continues to use coal and other fossil fuels.

"We don't see this as reaching our goal but just a start," said Assistant Manager Yoshimasa Kitano at Tokyu's headquarters, a few minutes' walk from the Scramble Crossing.

Such steps are crucial for Japan, the world's sixth-biggest carbon emitter, to attain its goal of becoming carbon-neutral by 2050.

Only about 20% of Japan's electricity comes from renewable sources, according to the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies, a Tokyo-based independent non-profit research organization.

That lags way behind New Zealand, for instance, where 84% of power used comes from renewable energy sources. New Zealand hopes to make that 100% by 2035.

The renewable sources driving Tokyu trains include hydropower, geothermal-power, wind power and solar power, according to Tokyo Electric Power Co., the utility that provides the electricity and tracks its energy sourcing.

Tokyu has more than 100 kilometers (64 miles) of railway tracks serving 2.2 million people a day, including commuting "salarymen" and "salarywomen" and schoolchildren in uniforms.

Since the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, when a tsunami set off by a massive earthquake sent three reactors into meltdowns, Japan has shut down most of its nuclear plants and ramped up use of coal-fired power plants.

The country aims to have 36%-38% of its energy come from renewable sources by 2030, while slashing overall energy use.

Tokyu Railways has sought to publicize its effort with posters and YouTube clips.

Still, Ryuichi Yagi, who heads his own company that used to make neckties but has switched to wallets appeared surprised to learn he was riding on a "green train."

"I had no idea," he said.

Yagi switched his business because of Japan's "cool biz" movement. It encourages male office workers to doff their suits for open-necked short-sleeve shirts to conserve energy by keeping air conditioning to a minimum in hot summer months.

In a sense, he said, "I lead a very green life."

SUPREME COURT NOTEBOOK: Breyer's last chance to hypothesize

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fertile mind of Justice Stephen Breyer has conjured a stream of hypothetical questions through the years that have, in the words of a colleague, "befuddled" lawyers and justices alike.

Breyer, 83, was at it once again Tuesday, inventing a prison inmate named John the Tigerman in a case involving transporting an inmate for a medical test. Breyer called him "the most dangerous prisoner they have ever discovered."

The justice has one more chance Wednesday, the last of more than 2,000 arguments in which he has taken part during 28 years on the high court. The case is about Oklahoma's authority to prosecute people accused of crimes on Native American lands, following a 2020 Supreme Court decision.

Just since Breyer announced in late January that he was retiring, he has asked lawyers to answer questions involving spiders, muskrats and "4-foot-long cigars smoked through hookahs" — none of which, it's fair to say, had any actual links to the cases at hand.

Breyer once granted an interview to The Associated Press in which he acknowledged that his questions sometimes stretch the bounds of credulity.

That's by design.

"The point is to try to focus on a matter that is worrying me. Sometimes it's easier to do that with an example," he said in 2008.

He's also not above a joke at his own expense. "I mean, we could stay here a long time, which we won't, listing things I don't know," he said in court last week.

On the bench, Breyer's questions will sometimes elicit a laugh from Clarence Thomas or a grin from Brett Kavanaugh. Other justices have affectionately needled Breyer about the queries, which can go on and on. "I can never equal my colleague's evocative hypotheticals," Justice Samuel Alito said during arguments in February.

In that same case, about the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to combat climate change, lawyer Beth Brinkmann actually thanked Breyer for the cigar question, which she said helped her.

Brinkmann's comment prompted Justice Elena Kagan to observe: "You know, it's not always the case, Ms. Brinkmann, that a lawyer responds to one of Justice Breyer's hypotheticals by saying that's really helpful."

The topics range far and wide, but animals often play a featured role, as happened last week in a case involving a workers compensation law for federal contractors at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington state.

"The new law applies to workers who work at any structure and its lands. So, when I read that, I think maybe there are several federal workers who are busy on a river at Hanford cleaning out muskrat nets — nests, OK, and they are nowhere near a structure where particular forms of waste are disposed of, except — except by the muskrats, which have nothing to do with this, OK?" he asked.

In March arguments about arbitration, Breyer said, "Now suppose instead of saying you can't arbitrate it, what they do — and this is ridiculous, but you'll see why I do it this way for simplification — they put a spider next to it, and there's a rule saying you can't ever arbitrate anything with a spider, OK?"

Eventually Breyer told the lawyer, Scott Nelson, he was free to ignore the question "because it's too weird."

Many lawyers would welcome the invitation, but Nelson was game. "I'm going to take a stab at it anyway because, you know, I don't think these cases are any fun without a little bit of zoology involved," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 39 of 71

A plain black robe makes it easy to get dressed for court. But this term, amid a roller coaster of COVID-19 concerns, justices have weighed whether to add masks to their courtroom attire, with on again, off again results.

When they returned to the courtroom in October following more than a year and a half of pandemic-inspired arguments by phone, the justices were unmasked. The lone exception was Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a diabetic since childhood, who has consistently worn a mask in court. Everyone else in the courtroom was required to wear masks, but lawyers removed theirs when they made their arguments.

In January, as coronavirus cases were spiking, seven justices wore masks for the first time while hearing arguments in cases about the Biden administration's authority to require vaccines for health care workers and impose a vaccine-or-testing requirement on the nation's large employers. Neil Gorsuch was the lone unmasked justice, while Sotomayor, his seatmate, stayed out of the courtroom altogether and took part in arguments from her office. They denied a media report that they were at odds over masks.

Sotomayor returned for February arguments, but everyone else was unmasked as the omicron surge waned. The court soon dropped the mask requirement for everyone else in the courtroom.

Then for the term's final arguments this week, Justice Elena Kagan showed up wearing a mask. The court said she had been exposed to someone with the virus and while repeatedly testing negative had decided to wear one out of an abundance of caution.

While masking was a choice, judicial modesty prevailed — only solid colors, white, black or dark blue.

Trump drawn to celebrity in weighing midterm endorsements

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Republicans hoping to emerge from crowded primaries this year stacked up on operatives with ties to former President Donald Trump, betting those connections would give them a leg up on landing critical endorsements that would help them win.

But as Trump wades into some of the most competitive primaries, the strategy is proving a bust.

In Ohio and Pennsylvania, two states that will kick off a more frenzied phase of the midterm campaign next month, the former president passed over candidates who hired some of his most prominent aides and allies. He instead endorsed contenders including Mehmet Oz and JD Vance, who were relatively new to politics but boasted high-wattage profiles tied to television and books.

As Trump seeks to assert himself this election year as the GOP's undisputed kingmaker, the endorsements are a reminder of the traits that are often most important to him. While he demands loyalty of those around him, he rarely returns it in equal measure. And the former reality television star-turned-president remains dazzled by the power of celebrity in politics.

"Obviously Donald Trump is very mercurial about how he does things, right? So we might know now, with 20/20 hindsight, that that was not the best bet to make," said longtime GOP strategist Doug Heye of the campaigns' Trump hires. "But at the time," he said, the hiring "made the most sense."

The dynamic is especially clear in Pennsylvania, where Trump endorsed Oz, the celebrity heart surgeon best known as the host of daytime TV's "The Dr. Oz Show," over former hedge fund manager David McCormick.

McCormick hired two of Trump's most trusted aides: domestic policy adviser and speechwriter Stephen Miller and longtime communications aide and counselor Hope Hicks. (Miller dropped McCormick as soon as Trump announced his support for Oz.) McCormick is also married to Trump's former deputy national security adviser, Dina Powell, and had the backing of other allies, including former Trump campaign adviser David Urban and press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who is running for governor in Arkansas.

Kellyanne Conway, who managed Trump's 2016 campaign and served as White House counselor, also works for McCormick's super PAC, Honor Pennsylvania, which paid her firm \$15,000 last month.

Trump's alliance with Oz sparked deep frustration among some on his team who signed on with McCormick and believed the former president would, at worst, stay neutral in the primary. But Oz shared a longstanding relationship with Trump, having known him for years and having similarly risen to fame with

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 40 of 71

a television show. In announcing his endorsement, Trump noted Oz “has lived with us through the screen.” “He’s somebody that had great success on television, which is like the ultimate poll,” Trump told supporters at a teletownhall last week. He noted Oz had the support of Fox News host Sean Hannity, and made the case that Oz, who also had the backing of former first lady Melania Trump, was simply best positioned to win the general election this fall.

Trump gave a similar rationale in Ohio, where he ultimately chose to back Vance, the “Hillbilly Elegy” author and venture capitalist who became a fixture on Fox News and conservative podcasts. He impressed Trump with his performance in a recent GOP debate.

At a rally Saturday night, Trump said he studied the race “very closely” and “liked a lot of other candidates.” But, he said, “we have to pick the one that’s going to win.”

For now, the power of Trump’s endorsement is unclear. His backing opens his chosen candidates to a flood of money, attention and, sometimes, an appearance with the former president at one of his signature rallies. In Ohio, it might have helped lift Vance ahead of the May 3 primary. A Fox News poll released Tuesday found Vance slightly ahead of rivals Josh Mandel and Mike Gibbons after trailing them in March.

Polls in Pennsylvania conducted in late March and early April suggested Oz was locked in a tight race, though there’s been little recent polling to detect if Trump’s endorsement has made a difference.

But in Georgia, another state where Trump has invested heavily, his chosen candidate for governor, David Perdue, is lagging in polls and fundraising. An Atlanta Journal-Constitution poll released Tuesday found incumbent Republican Gov. Brian Kemp leading Perdue 53% to 27% among likely voters. That just barely puts Kemp above the 50% threshold he would need to avoid a runoff.

Any major loss could deflate Trump’s image as the most powerful force in the party as he weighs a 2024 presidential run.

But such concerns do little to temper efforts among Republicans to win over Trump. Vance and his Ohio rivals, for instance, spent months traveling to Mar-a-Lago, mimicking his style, and running ads that painted each other as insufficiently loyal. They also brought on a coterie of Trump aides to help with their efforts.

Former Ohio Republican Chair Jane Timken, in particular, invested big, hiring Conway as well as two longtime Trump allies, Corey Lewandowski and Dave Bossie. Lewandowski was hired even though he was accused of making unwanted sexual advances toward a GOP donor, leading to his brief excommunication from Trump’s circle.

Records show Timken paid Lewandowski \$20,000 in March and also paid thousands to another Trump ally, former New York City Police Commissioner Bernie Kerik. When Trump was president he pardoned Kerik, who had pleaded guilty to federal tax fraud and other charges that put him behind bars for three years.

Hiring Lewandowski and Kerik briefly became a campaign issue when Timken was pressed on the decision during a debate.

Meanwhile, investment banker Mike Gibbons, who fashioned himself as a Trump-style businessman, also tapped into Trump’s network, hiring the firm run by Trump’s 2020 campaign manager, Bill Stepien, which was paid \$20,000 earlier this month.

Mandel, the former Ohio state treasurer who most aggressively adopted Trump’s shock jock tactics, has been campaigning with Trump’s former national security adviser, Michael Flynn. He was pardoned by Trump after pleading guilty to lying to the FBI.

While Vance brought on some in Trump’s orbit and had the backing of Trump-allied megadonor Peter Thiel, he also had the support of Fox News host Tucker Carlson, along with Trump’s eldest son, Donald Trump Jr.

At an event last week in Ohio, Trump Jr. noted those working for rival candidates.

“Trump person, speaks really favorably about someone that JD is opposing. Yeah, because they’re being paid \$20,000 a month to do that. That’s their job. Doesn’t mean they actually believe it,” he quipped.

Trump has endorsed more than 100 candidates for offices up and down the ballot. Allies say he’s driven by a long list of factors — sometimes spite, sometimes personal rapport or even an appealing television appearance. After leaving the White House, he was eager to back those who offered to challenge GOP incumbents who voted for his impeachment, and also backed those who have parroted his election lies.

Trump has, at times, expressed frustration with former aides profiting from perceptions that they can sell his endorsement, and has made clear that those lobbying him needed to disclose their clients, according to a person familiar with his recent comments who requested anonymity to discuss them.

But allies say that anyone who believed they could buy a Trump endorsement was fundamentally mistaken. "You hire consultants to coach you, to guide you on how to get the Trump endorsement," said Bryan Lanza, a former Trump adviser who helped launch a pro-Vance super PAC but is no longer involved in any of the contests. "They help explain Trump, how he processes information, what he looks for, what he's looking for in candidates."

Still, Lanza said, those hires don't guarantee Trump's favor.

While there are advantages to hiring Trump whisperers, Lanza said, "I wouldn't hire two. I'd certainly hire one."

What Musk's past tweets reveal about Twitter's next owner

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Three days before Elon Musk agreed to buy Twitter, the world's richest man tweeted a photo of Bill Gates and used a crude sexual term to make fun of his belly.

Playful, aggressive and often juvenile, Musk's past tweets show how he has used social media to craft his public image as a brash billionaire unafraid to offend. They may also reveal clues as to how Musk will govern the platform he hopes to own.

"Look at the feed: It's all over the place. It's erratic. At times it's pretty extreme," said Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University professor who studies social media and who recently assigned Musk's tweets as reading material for their students. "It paints him as some sort of rebel leader who will take control of the public square to save it. That is a myth he has constructed."

Musk joined Twitter in 2010 and now has more than 85 million followers — the seventh most of any account and the highest for any business leader. He had mused about buying the site before he agreed on Monday to pay \$44 billion for Twitter, which he said he hopes to turn into a haven where all speech is allowed.

"I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means," Musk wrote in a tweet.

As the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, Musk uses his Twitter account to make business announcements and promote his enterprises. He muses about technology and trade, but has also posted jokes about women's breasts and once compared Canada's prime minister to Hitler. He regularly weighs in on global events, as he did in March 2020 when he tweeted that "The coronavirus pandemic is dumb."

He's also used the account to punch back at critics, such as when he called a diver working to rescue boys trapped in a cave in Thailand a "pedo," short for pedophile. The diver had previously criticized Musk's proposal to use a sub to rescue the boys. Musk, who won a defamation suit filed by the diver, later said he never intended "pedo" to be interpreted as "pedophile."

A few years ago, after software engineer Cher Scarlett criticized Musk's handling of the cave incident, the tech billionaire fired back and she was soon being harassed by dozens of Musk's online fans. He later deleted the posts, but not before Scarlett had to lock down her account because she was receiving so many hateful messages.

"It's ironic to me that somebody who claims they want to buy Twitter to protect free speech has such thin skin," she said. "He's a very smart man, and when he replies to people that criticize him, he knows what he's doing. To me that's not championing free speech, it's weaponizing free speech, and I think that's what he'll do owning this platform."

Nineteen-year-old Jack Sweeney got Musk's attention when he created an automated Twitter account that tracked the movements of Musk's jet. Musk responded by offering Sweeney \$5,000 to pull the account. When Sweeney refused, Musk blocked him on Twitter.

Sweeney said he's worried he may get kicked off the site entirely if Musk's takeover is approved. But he said he likes Musk's free speech absolutism, and hopes he sees it through.

"He'll make it more open, and I think that's a good thing," Sweeney said.

Musk's use of Twitter has also led to problems for his own companies. In one August 2018 tweet, for instance, Musk asserted that he had the funding to take Tesla private for \$420 a share, although a court has ruled that it wasn't true. That led to an SEC investigation that Musk is still fighting.

More recently, Musk appeared to have violated SEC rules that required him to disclose that he'd acquired a 5% stake in Twitter; instead he waited until he had more than 9%. Experts say these issues aren't likely to affect his Twitter acquisition.

Last year another federal agency, the National Labor Relations Board, ordered Musk to delete a tweet that officials said illegally threatened to cut stock options for Tesla employees who joined the United Auto Workers union.

Those tweets helped cement Musk's reputation as a brash outsider, a workingman's billionaire, Grygiel said. But that doesn't mean he is equipped to run a social media platform with more than 200 million users, the professor added.

"Maybe he wants to burn it down," Grygiel said. "I don't know. But I do know that it shows that no one person should have this kind of power."

Poland, Bulgaria say Russia suspending natural gas supplies

By VANESSA GERA and MONIKA SCISLOWSKA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Polish and Bulgarian officials said Tuesday that Moscow is cutting off natural gas deliveries to their countries due to their refusal to pay in Russian rubles, a demand made by President Vladimir Putin after sanctions were levied against his nation over the invasion of Ukraine.

Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom informed the two EU and NATO member nations that gas supplies will be suspended starting Wednesday, their governments said.

The suspensions would be the first since Putin's announcement last month that "unfriendly foreign buyers" would have to transact with Gazprom in rubles instead of dollars and euros. Only Hungary has agreed to do so, with other countries rejecting the demand as an unacceptable, one-sided breach of contracts and a violation of sanctions.

If deliveries are halted to other countries as well, it could cause economic pain in Europe, driving natural gas prices up and possibly leading to rationing — but it would also deal a blow to Russia's own economy.

Wednesday's cutoffs will affect deliveries of Russian gas to Poland through the Yamal-Europe pipeline, according to Polish state gas company PGNiG, and to Bulgaria via the TurkStream pipeline, that country's Energy Ministry said.

The Yamal-Europe line carries gas from Russia to Poland and Germany, via Belarus. Poland has been receiving some 9 billion cubic meters annually, fulfilling some 45% of the country's need.

PGNiG said it was considering legal action over Moscow's payment demand.

But Climate Minister Anna Moskwa said Poland is prepared to make do after having worked to reduce its reliance on Russian energy sources. Several years ago the country opened its first terminal for liquefied natural gas, or LNG, in Swinoujscie, on the Baltic Sea coast, and later this year a pipeline from Norway is to become operational.

"There will be no shortage of gas in Polish homes," Moskwa tweeted.

Analyst Emily McClain of Rystad Energy concurred, saying that Poland has ample natural gas in storage and has the capacity to ramp up imports.

Bulgaria said it was working with state gas companies to find alternative sources and that no restrictions on domestic consumption would be imposed for now, even though the Balkan country of 6.5 million people meets over 90% of its gas needs with Russian imports.

One feasible and relatively immediate option available to the Bulgarian government would be to increase their imports of Azeri gas.

Poland has been a strong supporter of neighboring Ukraine during the Russian invasion and has acted as a transit point for weapons the United States and other Western nations have provided to Kyiv.

Warsaw said this week that it, too, was sending weaponry to Ukraine's army, in the form of tanks. On Tuesday it announced sanctions targeting 50 Russian oligarchs and companies, including Gazprom.

Bulgaria, once one of Moscow's closest allies, has cut many of its ties with Russia after a new, liberal government took the reins last fall and also in the wake of the invasion. It has supported sanctions against Russia and sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

Bulgaria has been hesitant to provide military aid, but Prime Minister Kiril Petkov and members of his coalition government were expected in Kyiv on Wednesday for talks about further assistance.

Europe buys large amounts of Russian natural gas for residential heating, electrical generation and the fuel industry, with Germany particularly dependent on it. The imports have continued despite the war.

Around 60% of imports are paid in euros, and the rest in dollars. Putin's demand was apparently intended to help bolster the Russian currency against Western sanctions.

In Washington, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the U.S. had been preparing for such a cutoff by Russia.

"Some of that has been asking some countries in Asia who have excess supply to provide that to Europe," Psaki said. "We've done that in some cases, and it's been an ongoing effort."

US urges more arms for Ukraine amid fears of expanding war

By YESICA FISCH and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TORETSK, Ukraine (AP) — The U.S. pressed its allies Tuesday to move "heaven and earth" to keep Kyiv well-supplied with weapons as Russian forces rained fire on eastern and southern Ukraine amid growing new fears the war could spill over the country's borders.

For the second day in a row, explosions rocked the separatist region of Trans-Dniester in neighboring Moldova, knocking out two powerful radio antennas close to the Ukrainian border. No one claimed responsibility for the attacks, but Ukraine all but blamed Russia.

In other developments, Poland and Bulgaria said the Kremlin is cutting off natural gas supplies to the two NATO countries starting Wednesday, the first such actions of the war. Both nations had refused Russia's demands that they pay in rubles.

Poland has been a major gateway for the delivery of weapons to Ukraine and confirmed this week that it is sending the country tanks.

The potential effect of the gas cutoff was not immediately clear. Poland said it was well-prepared for such a move after working for years to reduce its reliance on Russian energy.

Poland also has ample natural gas in storage, and it will soon benefit from two pipelines coming online, analyst Emily McClain of Rystad Energy said.

Bulgaria gets over 90% of its gas from Russia, and officials said they were working to find other sources. McClain cited a Bulgarian deal to purchase gas from Azerbaijan.

Two months into the fighting, Western arms have helped Ukraine stall Russia's invasion, but the country's leaders have said they need more support fast.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin convened a meeting Tuesday of officials from about 40 countries at the U.S. air base at Ramstein, Germany, and said more help is on the way.

"This gathering reflects the galvanized world," Austin said, adding that he wanted officials to leave the meeting "with a common and transparent understanding of Ukraine's near-term security requirements because we're going to keep moving heaven and earth so that we can meet them."

After unexpectedly fierce resistance by Ukrainian forces thwarted Russia's attempt to take Ukraine's capital, Moscow now says its focus is the capture of the Donbas, the mostly Russian-speaking industrial region in eastern Ukraine.

In the small city of Toretsk in the Donbas, residents are struggling to survive, collecting rainwater for washing up and fervently hoping for an end to the fighting.

"It's bad. Very bad. Hopeless," said Andriy Cheromushkin. "You feel so helpless that you don't know what you should do or shouldn't do. Because if you want to do something, you need some money, and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 44 of 71

there is no money now.”

Russian advances and heavy fighting were reported in the Donbas, with one town, Kreminna, apparently falling after days of street-by-street fighting, according to the British military.

In the gutted southern port city of Mariupol, authorities said Russian forces hit the Azovstal steel plant with 35 airstrikes over the past 24 hours. The plant is the last known stronghold of Ukrainian fighters in the city. About 1,000 civilians were said to be taking shelter there with an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian defenders.

“Russia has drastically intensified strikes over the past 24 hours and is using heavy bunker bombs,” said Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to Mariupol’s mayor. “The number of those wounded will be clear once the rubble is cleared.”

He also accused Russian forces of shelling a route it had offered as an escape corridor from the steel mill.

Beyond Mariupol, local officials said at least nine people were killed and several more wounded in Russian attacks on towns and cities in the east and south. Pavlo Kyrylenko, governor of the Donetsk region of the Donbas, said on the Telegram messaging app that Russian forces “continue to deliberately fire at civilians and to destroy critical infrastructure.”

Russian missile fire also knocked out a strategic railroad bridge along a route that links southern Ukraine’s Odesa port region to neighboring Romania, a NATO member, Ukrainian authorities said. No injuries were reported.

Ukraine also said Russian forces shelled Kharkiv, the country’s second-largest city, which lies in the northeast, outside the Donbas, but is seen as key to Russia’s apparent bid to encircle Ukrainian troops in the Donbas from the north, east and south.

Ukrainian forces struck back in the Kherson region in the south.

The attack on the bridge near Odesa — along with a series of strikes on key railroad stations a day earlier — appears to mark a major shift in Russia’s approach. Until now, Moscow has spared strategic bridges, perhaps in hopes of keeping them for its own use in seizing Ukraine. But now it seems to be trying to thwart Ukraine’s efforts to move troops and supplies.

The southern Ukraine coastline and Moldova have been on edge since a senior Russian military officer said last week that the Kremlin’s goal is to secure not just eastern Ukraine but the entire south, so as to open the way to Trans-Dniester, a long, narrow strip of land with about 470,000 people along the Ukrainian border where about 1,500 Russian troops are based.

It was not clear who was behind the blasts in Trans-Dniester, but the attacks gave rise to fears that Russia is stirring up trouble so as to create a pretext to either invade Trans-Dniester or use the region as another launching point to attack Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the explosions were carried out by Russia and were “designed to destabilize,” with the intention of showing Moldova what could happen if it supports Ukraine.

Austin, the U.S. defense secretary, said the U.S. was still looking into blasts and trying to determine what was going on, but added: “Certainly we don’t want to see any spillover” of the conflict.

With the potentially pivotal battle for the east underway, the U.S. and its NATO allies are scrambling to deliver artillery and other heavy weaponry in time to make a difference.

German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht said her government will supply Gepard self-propelled armored anti-aircraft guns to Ukraine. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has faced mounting pressure to send heavy weapons such as tanks and other armored vehicles.

Austin noted that more than 30 allies and partners have joined the U.S. in sending military aid to Ukraine and that more than \$5 billion worth of equipment has been committed.

The U.S. defense secretary said the war has weakened Russia’s military, adding, “We would like to make sure, again, that they don’t have the same type of capability to bully their neighbors that we saw at the outset of this conflict.”

A senior Kremlin official, Nikolai Patrushev, warned that “the policies of the West and the Kyiv regime controlled by it would only be the breakup of Ukraine into several states.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov cautioned that if the Western flow of weapons continues, the

talks aimed at ending the fighting will not produce any results.

Diplomatic efforts to end the fighting also continued. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the U.N. said they agreed in principle that the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross should be involved in the evacuation of civilians trapped in the steel plant in Mariupol. Putin said Ukrainian troops were using civilians in the plant as shields and not allowing them to leave.

Harris positive for COVID-19, Biden not a 'close contact'

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday, the White House announced, underscoring the persistence of the highly contagious virus even as the U.S. eases restrictions in a bid to return to pre-pandemic normalcy.

Neither President Joe Biden nor first lady Jill Biden was considered a "close contact" of Harris in recent days, said the vice president's press secretary, Kirsten Allen. Harris had been scheduled to attend Biden's Tuesday morning Presidential Daily Brief but was not present, the White House said.

She had returned Monday from a weeklong trip to the West Coast. The last time she saw Biden was the previous Monday, April 18.

"I have no symptoms, and I will continue to isolate and follow CDC guidelines," Harris tweeted. "I'm grateful to be both vaccinated and boosted."

After consulting with her physicians, Harris, 57, was prescribed and is taking Paxlovid, the Pfizer antiviral pill, her office said late Tuesday. The drug, when administered within five days of symptoms appearing, has been proven to bring about a 90% reduction in hospitalizations and deaths among patients most likely to get severe disease.

Biden phoned Harris Tuesday afternoon to make sure she "has everything she needs" while working from home, the White House said.

Harris, received her first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine weeks before taking office and a second dose just days after Inauguration Day in 2021. She received a booster shot in late October and an additional booster on April 1. Fully vaccinated and boosted people have a high degree of protection against serious illness and death from COVID-19, particularly from the most common and highly transmissible omicron variant.

Harris' diagnosis comes a month after her husband, Doug Emhoff, recovered from the virus, as a wave of cases of the highly transmissible omicron subvariant has spread through Washington's political class, infecting Cabinet members, White House staffers and lawmakers including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Sens. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Chris Murphy, D-Conn., tested positive on Tuesday.

Allen said Harris would follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines "and the advice of her physicians." It was not immediately clear whether she is being prescribed any antiviral treatments.

The White House has put in place strict COVID-19 protocols around the president, vice president and their spouses, including daily testing for those expected to be in close contact with them. Biden is tested regularly on the advice of his physician, the White House has said, and last tested negative on Monday.

"We have a very very contagious variant out there," said White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Aashish Jha on Tuesday. "It is going to be hard to ensure that no one gets COVID in America. That's not even a policy goal." He said the administration's goal is to make sure people don't get seriously ill.

Jha added that despite the precautions it is possible that Biden himself will come down with the virus at some point.

"I wouldn't say it's just a matter of time, but of course it is possible that the president, like any other American, could get COVID," he said. "There is no 100% anything."

Psaki said she "would not expect" any changes to White House protocols.

After more than two years and nearly a million deaths in the U.S., the virus is still killing more than 300 people a day in the U.S., according to the CDC. The unvaccinated are at a far greater risk, more than

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 46 of 71

twice as likely to test positive and nine times as likely to die from the virus as those who have received at least a primary dose of the vaccines, according to the public health agency.

Harris' diagnosis comes as the Biden administration is taking steps to expand availability of the life-saving Paxlovid, reassuring doctors that there is ample supply for people at high risk of severe illness or death from the virus.

In addition to her husband's diagnosis, Harris was identified as a "close contact" after her communications director tested positive on April 6.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines "close contact" with an infected person as spending 15 minutes or more with them over a 24-hour period. The CDC says people with "close contact" do not need to quarantine if they are up to date on their vaccines but should wear well-fitting masks around other people for 10 days after the contact.

Videos show aftermath of film-set shooting, Baldwin reaction

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — The New Mexico sheriff investigating the fatal film-set shooting of a cinematographer by actor Alec Baldwin described complacency, disorganization and neglected safety measures in the making of the low-budget movie "Rust."

Santa Fe County Sheriff Adan Mendoza said Tuesday that he is waiting on a forensic analysis of the weapon, projectile, fingerprints and more from the FBI and state medical examiners before turning the 6-month-old case over to prosecutors to decide whether criminal charges will be filed.

"There is a degree of neglect. Whether that reaches the criminal level, that will be up to the district attorney to determine," the sheriff told "Good Morning America." On Monday, he released virtually the entire case file of the investigation after a live round of ammunition killed Halyna Hutchins and wounded director Joel Souza during rehearsal on Oct. 21, 2021. Filming for the Western took place at a ranch on the outskirts of the city of Santa Fe.

The vast trove of newly released law enforcement files includes lapel camera video of the mortally wounded Hutchins slipping in and out of consciousness as an evacuation helicopter arrives. Witness interrogations, email threads, text conversations, inventories of ammunition and hundreds of photographs round out the collection of evidence.

In one newly released video, a sheriff's deputy arrives as medics attempt to attend to Hutchins inside a small wooden church where she was shot during a rehearsal in preparation for filming.

"Halyna, deep breath. There you go, good girl," says a medic, urging Hutchins to take in air through an oxygen mask.

Outside, a medical evacuation helicopter lands in the desert. A law enforcement officer keeps watch over Baldwin, still in 19th century costume, as the actor smokes cigarettes from other members of the film cast.

The evidence was made public in response to media requests for records and as an effort toward transparency in the investigation. Mendoza, a Democrat, is running for reelection this year, with a competitive June primary.

Newly published documents show authorities have scraped cellphone accounts for text messages, images and audio files created by the cast, crew and munitions suppliers for "Rust." Text messages recount two firearms misfires on the set prior to the deadly shooting, though none involved live ammunition.

Other videos show investigators as they debrief Baldwin within hours of the fatal shooting, talking with him inside a compact office — and rehearsal clips that show Baldwin in costume as he practices a quick-draw maneuver with a gun.

An attorney for Baldwin says the newly released files corroborate that the actor and "Rust" co-producer was careful with guns on the set.

"Mr. Baldwin welcomes this investigation," said attorney Luke Nikas in a statement. "The information that has been revealed by the authorities demonstrates, once again, that Mr. Baldwin acted responsibly."

Under questioning by two investigators, Baldwin says that as the gun went off, he was unaware initially

that Hutchins would die and shocked to learn that he had been holding a gun loaded with live ammunition. Baldwin said in a December interview with ABC News that he was on set pointing the gun at Hutchins at her instruction when it went off without his pulling the trigger.

Baldwin told the investigators that the gun should have been empty for a rehearsal with no filming. "There should have been nothing. It should have been a cold gun with no rounds inside or dummy rounds," Baldwin says. "I take the gun out slowly. I turn, I cock the pistol. Bang, it goes off. She (Hutchins) hits the ground."

Baldwin repeatedly says there were no prior problems of any kind with firearms on the set of "Rust." Those statements conflict with more recent findings by state occupational safety regulators, who last week issued the maximum possible fine of nearly \$137,000 against the "Rust" film production company.

New Mexico's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau delivered a scathing narrative of safety failures in violation of standard industry protocols, including testimony that production managers took limited or no action to address the two other misfires.

The bureau also documented gun safety complaints from crew members that went unheeded and said weapons specialists were not allowed to make decisions about additional safety training. Rust Movie Productions has indicated it will dispute the findings and sanction.

At least five lawsuits have been filed over the shooting, including a wrongful death lawsuit brought by Hutchins' family against Baldwin and the movie's other producers. The lawsuit on behalf of widower Matt Hutchins and his 9-year-old son alleges a "callous" disregard in the face of safety complaints on the set.

What Musk's past tweets reveal about Twitter's next owner

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Three days before Elon Musk agreed to buy Twitter, the world's richest man tweeted a photo of Bill Gates and used a crude sexual term to make fun of his belly.

Playful, aggressive and often juvenile, Musk's past tweets show how he has used social media to craft his public image as a brash billionaire unafraid to offend. They may also reveal clues as to how Musk will govern the platform he hopes to own.

"Look at the feed: It's all over the place. It's erratic. At times it's pretty extreme," said Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University professor who studies social media and who recently assigned Musk's tweets as reading material for their students. "It paints him as some sort of rebel leader who will take control of the public square to save it. That is a myth he has constructed."

Musk joined Twitter in 2010 and now has more than 85 million followers — the seventh most of any account and the highest for any business leader. He had mused about buying the site before he agreed on Monday to pay \$44 billion for Twitter, which he said he hopes to turn into a haven where all speech is allowed.

"I hope that even my worst critics remain on Twitter, because that is what free speech means," Musk wrote in a tweet.

As the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, Musk uses his Twitter account to make business announcements and promote his enterprises. He muses about technology and trade, but has also posted jokes about women's breasts and once compared Canada's prime minister to Hitler. He regularly weighs in on global events, as he did in March 2020 when he tweeted that "The coronavirus pandemic is dumb."

He's also used the account to punch back at critics, such as when he called a diver working to rescue boys trapped in a cave in Thailand a "pedo," short for pedophile. The diver had previously criticized Musk's proposal to use a sub to rescue the boys. Musk, who won a defamation suit filed by the diver, later said he never intended "pedo" to be interpreted as "pedophile."

A few years ago, after software engineer Cher Scarlett criticized Musk's handling of the cave incident, the tech billionaire fired back and she was soon being harassed by dozens of Musk's online fans. He later deleted the posts, but not before Scarlett had to lock down her account because she was receiving so many hateful messages.

"It's ironic to me that somebody who claims they want to buy Twitter to protect free speech has such thin skin," she said. "He's a very smart man, and when he replies to people that criticize him, he knows what he's doing. To me that's not championing free speech, it's weaponizing free speech, and I think that's what he'll do owning this platform."

Nineteen-year-old Jack Sweeney got Musk's attention when he created an automated Twitter account that tracked the movements of Musk's jet. Musk responded by offering Sweeney \$5,000 to pull the account. When Sweeney refused, Musk blocked him on Twitter.

Sweeney said he's worried he may get kicked off the site entirely if Musk's takeover is approved. But he said he likes Musk's free speech absolutism, and hopes he sees it through.

"He'll make it more open, and I think that's a good thing," Sweeney said.

Musk's use of Twitter has also led to problems for his own companies. In one August 2018 tweet, for instance, Musk asserted that he had the funding to take Tesla private for \$420 a share, although a court has ruled that it wasn't true. That led to an SEC investigation that Musk is still fighting.

More recently, Musk appeared to have violated SEC rules that required him to disclose that he'd acquired a 5% stake in Twitter; instead he waited until he had more than 9%. Experts say these issues aren't likely to affect his Twitter acquisition.

Last year another federal agency, the National Labor Relations Board, ordered Musk to delete a tweet that officials said illegally threatened to cut stock options for Tesla employees who joined the United Auto Workers union.

Those tweets helped cement Musk's reputation as a brash outsider, a workingman's billionaire, Grygiel said. But that doesn't mean he is equipped to run a social media platform with more than 200 million users, the professor added.

"Maybe he wants to burn it down," Grygiel said. "I don't know. But I do know that it shows that no one person should have this kind of power."

Deputies protect school killer after potential juror threat

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Deputies protecting Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz had to pull him aside and surround him Tuesday after a member of a jury pool mouthed possible threats toward him and caused others to become "excited," leading them to fear a potential brawl, officials said.

A 70-member pool of potential jurors was filing into the courtroom and taking their seats when one of the first to enter, a man in his 30s, began "mouthing expletives" toward Cruz, Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer said. Cruz, 23, is facing a possible death sentence for murdering 17 at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Feb. 14, 2018.

Bailiffs moved in quickly to remove the man, who shook his head vigorously and muttered "that's horrible" repeatedly as he walked past reporters seated toward the back of the courtroom.

At this point, several other jurors became "excited" and were saying something that could not be heard, Scherer said. The first man then started looking back over his shoulder toward Cruz. The half-dozen armed deputies who always stand just behind Cruz then grabbed and surrounded him, fearing that the first juror was about to run toward them and would be joined by others.

"The sheriff's office observed all of that and determined they needed to protect Mr. Cruz," Scherer said.

"One instigates and then there are many followers," explained Broward Sheriff's Capt. Osvaldo Tianga, the head of courthouse security.

Melisa McNeill, Cruz's lead public defender, told Scherer she understands that the deputies' first priority is to protect Cruz and everyone in the courtroom but didn't realize that would require him being physically moved.

"I appreciate that is the job. I am not challenging" their actions, McNeill said. But she wondered if the deputies could simply stand between Cruz and the threat if something similar happens again.

Tianga said each situation is different, but he would consider her suggestion.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 49 of 71

Cruz pleaded guilty in October. A 12-member, eight-alternate jury is being selected in a two-month, three-step process to decide whether he receives a death sentence or life in prison without parole. More than 1,800 jurors have come through the courtroom, mostly without incident since the process began April 4.

One panel of 60 had to be dismissed on April 12 after eight became obviously emotional upon seeing Cruz, possibly influencing the others. About a dozen others have been quietly removed from various panels because they started crying.

The panels are not told they are being brought up as potential Cruz jurors, although it is widely known throughout South Florida that the process has started. At this point, the potential jurors are only being asked if they could serve from June through September, the trial's expected length. Those who can will be brought back next month for further questioning.

Tuesday had been a boring, routine day. It was a marked difference from Monday when Scherer announced she was dismissing 250 potential jurors who had passed initial screening because of a possible error she made and starting the selection process over. Two panels of 70 had been brought through with no significant incidents. A few potential jurors had been quietly taken out for crying.

But that changed as the first panel after lunch was brought in. With most eyes focused on the jurors filing in, Cruz's attorneys got the attention of the bailiffs, pointing them to Juror No. 19. They moved in to remove him, starting the sequence that led to Cruz being pulled aside for protection.

After he left the courtroom, the man told deputies that he wasn't trying to cause problems but was emotional and wanted to curse out Cruz, using an obscenity to make his point, according to a reporter who was in the hallway.

Inside the courtroom, Scherer and the attorneys quickly conferred and the judge then dismissed the entire panel, who she said became "belligerent" as they waited for the elevator to take them back to the lobby and "got mouthy" toward deputies.

The juror who started it all told the deputies that they — or perhaps the system — had traumatized the potential jurors, according to the reporter.

Scherer said deputies followed the group out of the courthouse to make sure they didn't say anything to prospective jurors waiting to be brought to her courtroom.

Jury selection will resume Wednesday.

TSA: Airport security finds loaded gun in Cawthorn's bag

By SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

A loaded gun was found in North Carolina U.S. Rep. Madison Cawthorn's carry-on bag at an airport security checkpoint Tuesday — the second time he has been stopped with a gun at an airport in the past 14 months, officials said.

When Cawthorn went through checkpoint D at Charlotte Douglas International Airport with the gun, a 9 mm Staccato C2, around 9 a.m., Transportation Security Administration officers notified Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police officers on standby in the area, TSA spokesperson R. Carter Langston said.

Responding officers identified the 26-year-old Republican as the owner of the bag where the gun was found, police said in a statement. Cawthorn acknowledged that the gun was his and cooperated with officers, authorities said. He was issued a citation for possession of a dangerous weapon on city property, a misdemeanor. Cawthorn was released but police held on to the firearm, as is routine.

The infraction is punishable by civil penalties, including a fine of up to \$13,900 depending on certain factors, such as whether a firearm is loaded and multiple offenses, Langston said. In this case the firearm was loaded.

Langston said this was the second time in recent history that a gun was found in Cawthorn's carry-on bag. The first was at an Asheville Regional Airport checkpoint in February 2021.

TSA officers have intercepted more than 1,800 firearms at checkpoints so far this year, Langston said.

A spokesperson for Cawthorn's office and his campaign didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

After winning a GOP congressional primary runoff in 2020 over then-President Donald Trump's pick, Cawthorn won the general election at age 25 and has become one of Trump's strongest supporters. Trump recently featured Cawthorn as a rally speaker and endorsed him for reelection.

Fellow Republicans in North Carolina have spoken out against his reelection, however, including U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, who has endorsed a state legislator for the seat. Cawthorn has drawn criticism for recent incendiary comments, including one in which he called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a "thug."

The airport checkpoint incidents haven't been Cawthorn's only brushes with law enforcement. Last month, for the third time in five months, he was cited by state troopers for a traffic violation, including driving with a revoked license. He is scheduled to appear in court on May 6.

Oklahoma governor signs ban on nonbinary birth certificates

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt signed a bill Tuesday explicitly prohibiting the use of nonbinary gender markers on state birth certificates, a ban experts say is the first of its kind in the nation.

The bill followed a flap last year over the Oklahoma State Department of Health's agreement in a civil case allowing a nonbinary option. The birth certificate in that case was issued to an Oklahoma-born Oregon resident who sued after the agency initially refused the request. People who are nonbinary do not identify with traditional male or female gender assignments.

News of the settlement prompted outrage among Republicans, including Stitt, who along with fellow conservatives in a number of GOP-led states have been engaged in a culture war over issues like restricting LGBTQ and abortion rights that drive the party's base in an election year. Stitt's appointee to lead the agency abruptly resigned the next day, and the governor then promptly issued an executive order prohibiting any changes to a person's gender on birth certificates, despite the settlement agreement. A civil rights group has challenged the executive order in federal court, but the state has not yet responded.

Many states only offer male or female gender options on birth certificates, but Oklahoma is the first to write the nonbinary prohibition into law, according to Lambda Legal, the civil rights group suing Oklahoma.

Currently, 15 states and the District of Columbia specifically allow a gender marker designation outside of male or female, according to the National Center for Transgender Equality. That number will increase on July 1 when Vermont's new statute goes into effect.

"People are free to believe whatever they want about their identity, but science has determined people are either biologically male or female at birth," said Oklahoma Rep. Sheila Dills, the House sponsor of the bill, in a statement after the bill passed the House last week. "We want clarity and truth on official state documents. Information should be based on established medical fact and not an ever-changing social dialogue."

Oklahomans in 2020 elected the nation's first openly nonbinary legislator in the country, Oklahoma City Democrat Rep. Mauree Turner, who said it was painful to have colleagues single out those who are gender diverse.

"I find it a very extreme and grotesque use of power in this body to write this law and try to pass it — when literally none of them live like us," Turner tweeted the day the bill was debated.

Republicans in conservative states across the country have introduced several bills this year targeting transgender and nonbinary people. Oklahoma's governor earlier this year signed a bill prohibiting transgender girls from playing on female sports teams, one of many such bans being signed into law across the country. Other conservative states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas, have passed laws prohibiting gender-confirming treatments for minors.

The U.S. State Department recently announced it had issued its first passport with an "X" gender designation, marking a milestone in the recognition of the rights of people who do not identify as male or female, and expects to be able to offer the option more broadly next year.

Doctors and scientists say sex and gender are not the same thing. While sex typically refers to anatomy, gender identity is more an inner sense of being male, female or somewhere in between, regardless of

physical anatomy, according to Dr. Jason Rafferty, a pediatrician and child psychiatrist at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Rhode Island and a lead author of the American Academy of Pediatrics' transgender policy.

Brainard wins Senate confirmation to be Fed's vice chair

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Tuesday confirmed the nomination of Lael Brainard to a four-year term as vice chair of the Federal Reserve, elevating her to the Fed's No. 2 post in the midst of the central bank's toughest fight against inflation in four decades.

Her confirmation came in a 52-43 vote in the Senate, with seven Republicans and all Democrats who were present voting in favor. President Joe Biden had nominated Brainard in November.

The relatively close vote reflects the increasingly partisan atmosphere in Congress and nationally that is now engulfing the nomination process for the Fed, an independent institution that has sought to remain above politics. The last time that Brainard, a longtime Democratic official, came before the Senate in 2014, her nomination to the Fed's Board of Governors was approved 61-31.

In another sign of the divide, a procedural vote on whether to consider Biden's nomination of Lisa Cook, an economics professor, to a position on the Fed's board, was voted down Tuesday on partisan lines, delaying a final Senate vote on her nomination.

The delay in considering Cook, who, if confirmed, would become the first Black woman to serve on the Fed's board, prompted angry recriminations by senators from both parties, including statements suggesting racial bias by Senate Republicans.

"Republicans in my committee have a consistent record voting against Black women," said Sen. Sherrod Brown, the Ohio Democrat who leads the Senate Banking Committee.

Brown cited Republicans' overwhelming opposition to the nominations of Sandra Thompson to direct the agency that regulates mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and to Biden's Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Sen. Pat Toomey from Pennsylvania, the senior Republican on the committee, countered that it was "sad and shameful" to suggest "that there is some kind of racial bias against Black women" among Senate Republicans. Toomey noted that Republicans on the committee have voted in favor of five women of color, including Cecilia Rouse, one of Biden's top economic advisers.

Biden and the Senate have struggled to fill three vacancies on the Fed's seven-member board just as the central bank is grappling with the delicate challenge of raising interest rates enough to clamp down on inflation — but not so much as to plunge the economy into recession.

Brainard's rise to a leading policymaking role follows an extensive career as an economic official during previous Democratic administrations. She was an adviser to President Bill Clinton in the late 1990s before becoming the top Treasury official for international affairs during President Barack Obama's administration, from 2009 to 2013.

Brainard, 60, the lone Democrat on the board for now, has generally supported keeping interest rates low to support growth and hiring, which makes her a "dove" in Fed parlance. "Hawks," by contrast, generally support higher rates to control inflation.

Three other Fed nominees are also awaiting confirmation for the Fed's board, including Jerome Powell for a second four-year term as Fed chair. Powell has been serving in a temporary capacity since his first term expired in early February and has broad bipartisan support in the Senate.

In addition to Cook, an economics professor at Michigan State University, Biden has nominated Philip Jefferson, an economist and academic dean at Davidson College in North Carolina. If confirmed, Jefferson would be the fourth Black man on the board. Jefferson was endorsed unanimously last month by the Senate Banking Committee.

Cook has drawn nearly unified opposition from Senate Republicans, who argue that she lacks sufficient experience in researching interest rate policy. They have also expressed concern she isn't dedicated to fighting inflation. During an earlier procedural vote in the Senate that was 50-49 in her favor, Cook needed

every Democratic senator's vote.

Brown sought Tuesday to delay a procedural vote on Cook's nomination because two Democrats had tested positive for COVID and weren't able to vote. Republicans objected, forcing the vote to proceed. The vote failed, 47-51, which means that Senate Democrats will have to try to confirm Cook later when all their members are healthy.

Cook, who earned a doctorate in economics from the University of California, Berkeley, was a staff economist on the White House Council of Economic Advisers from 2011 to 2012. She was also an adviser to Biden's transition team on the Fed and bank regulatory policy.

Previously, Biden tapped Sarah Bloom Raskin as his choice to be the Fed's top bank regulator. Raskin later withdrew from consideration after Republicans and one Democrat, Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, lined up against her. Biden has since nominated Michael Barr, a former Treasury Department official, for that post. Brown said Tuesday that he hoped to hold a hearing on Barr as early as mid-May.

If confirmed, Cook and Jefferson aren't likely to alter the Fed's policymaking in the coming months, economists say, though they will help balance the hawkish views that now dominate the board. Fed governors often defer to the chair and are much less likely to cast dissenting votes at Fed meetings, in contrast to some of the regional bank presidents.

"Even the most dovish current members (of the Fed) are recognizing that inflation is so visibly too high, it's a tax on households, it has to be dealt with," said Ellen Gaske, lead economist at PGIM Fixed Income.

Many economists think the Fed will raise its benchmark short-term interest rate by a sharp half-percentage point at each of its next three meetings, in May, June and July, to try to rein in accelerating price increases.

Such rate hikes would be larger than the Fed's typical quarter-point increases and would likely lead to higher borrowing costs for home mortgages, auto loans and credit cards. Those higher costs could, in turn, slow consumer spending and weaken the overall economy.

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

That framework has been blamed by some critics for contributing to the Fed's delay in raising rates as high inflation erupted last year — an assertion disputed by Powell.

Brainard has also said the Fed could more directly take account of climate change in bank supervision, a stance that has drawn opposition from many Senate Republicans.

Delta to begin paying flight attendants during boarding

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

Delta Air Lines, which is facing another attempt to unionize its flight attendants, will begin paying cabin crews during boarding, a first for a major U.S. airline.

Across the airline industry in the United States, hourly pay for flight attendants starts when all the passengers are seated and the plane's doors close.

Delta said the change will start June 2 on all flights.

In a memo to flight attendants, Delta's senior vice president of in-flight service, Kristen Manion Taylor, said the new pay "further recognizes how important your role is on board to ensuring a welcoming, safe and on-time start to each flight."

The rate of pay during boarding will be 50% of regular wages.

The change comes as Delta plans to increase the boarding time for single-aisle or "narrow-body" planes from 35 minutes to 40 minutes, which the airline expects will increase the percentage of flights that depart on time.

Manion Taylor said that after a test last fall, and getting comments from flight attendants, she promised not to impose the new boarding times without providing additional pay for the cabin crews.

Delta said the new boarding pay would be on top of 4% raises for flight attendants that it announced in March and which take effect later this week.

Atlanta-based Delta has successfully campaigned to defeat several attempts to organize its 20,000 flight attendants. The Association of Flight Attendants — which has been gearing up its latest organizing effort at Delta for more than two years but has not yet amassed enough support to force a vote — took credit for the boarding pay.

“This new policy is the direct result of our organizing,” the union said in a statement posted on its website. “As we get closer to filing for our union vote, management is getting nervous.”

The union represents flight attendants at United, Alaska, Spirit and about a dozen smaller airlines. Delta said none of those airlines pay their cabin crews for boarding time.

Unions represent between 82% and 86% of workers at American, United and Southwest, but only 20% of Delta’s 83,000 employees, according to a regulatory filing. Delta’s 13,000 pilots are represented by the Air Line Pilots Association. Flight attendants at Delta’s Endeavor Air regional-flying subsidiary are unionized.

Nuclear chief: Russia’s Chernobyl seizure risked accident

OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI and CARA ANNA Associated Press

CHERNOBYL, Ukraine (AP) — Thirty-six years after the world’s worst nuclear disaster, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said Tuesday that Russian troops risked causing an accident with their “very, very dangerous” seizure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine.

Standing under an umbrella during a rain shower outside the damaged plant, agency Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi said that while radiation levels are normal, the situation is still “not stable.” Nuclear authorities have to “keep on alert.”

Russian troops moved into the radiation-contaminated Chernobyl exclusion zone in February on their way toward the Ukrainian capital. They withdrew late last month as Russia pulled its forces from areas near Kyiv and switched its focus to fighting in eastern Ukraine.

The site has been back in Ukrainian hands since then, and disrupted communications have been restored.

Ukrainian officials have said the Russian occupiers held plant workers at gunpoint during a marathon shift of more than a month, with employees sleeping on tabletops and eating just twice a day.

Grossi congratulated the workers on mitigating potential risks during the occupation, including power disruptions.

“I don’t know if we were very close to disaster, but the situation was absolutely abnormal and very, very dangerous,” he said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, noting the Chernobyl anniversary on Twitter, said that “not everyone realized” the dangers of nuclear energy.

“Now Russia’s actions at Ukrainian nuclear power plants threaten humanity with a new catastrophe.”

An April 26, 1986, explosion and fire at Chernobyl sent radioactive material into the atmosphere, and the plant became a symbol of the Soviet Union’s stumbling final years. The international community, including Russia, spent billions to stabilize and secure the area.

The unit where the explosion and fire took place was sheathed in a state-of-art encasement. The dangers at the plant are ongoing, however, because spent nuclear fuel rods require round-the-clock maintenance. The fuel is from the plant’s four reactors, all now shut down.

Russian forces continue to hold a working nuclear power plant, Europe’s largest, in southern Ukraine. Fighting damaged the training facility of the Zaporizhzhia plant in early March.

Zelenskyy said in a Kyiv news conference with Grossi that peacekeepers should be sent to protect the Zaporizhzhia plant because “the risk of disaster exists also from missiles launched from Russia which fly over nuclear plants.”

In his nightly video address to his nation, Zelenskyy added that Russian forces had fired missiles just over Zaporizhzhia and two other Ukrainian nuclear power plants on Tuesday, and called for international control over Russian nuclear technology and facilities.

An Associated Press reporter who visited Chernobyl this month saw evidence that Russian soldiers dug trenches in the forested Chernobyl exclusion zone in the earliest hours of the invasion, churning up highly contaminated soil.

IAEA team members who were at the site Tuesday to make repairs and do assessments carried black suitcases from their vans into Chernobyl's buildings. They were bringing dosimeters and other radiation monitoring equipment, Grossi said.

"There is a lot of work to be done after the occupation of this plant," he said. "We have to do some repair work so we can restore the connectivity that we have with Vienna, so we can provide good information to the Ukrainian people, to the rest of the world."

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the world's nuclear watchdog, is based in Austria's capital.

During the Russian occupation, Chernobyl lost its normal electricity supply. Plant workers relied on diesel generators to support the critical work of circulating water to cool the spent nuclear fuel.

Asked whether the dangers posed by the Russian occupation were similar to the ones following the original Chernobyl accident, Grossi replied: "On that occasion, you had an explosion, you had an operating reactor. The situation was completely different. In this case, what we had was a nuclear safety situation which was not normal, that could have developed into an accident."

Responding to public concerns about the risks of nuclear power during wars, Grossi told reporters the problem was "not nuclear energy. The problem is the war."

CDC estimates 3 in 4 kids have had coronavirus infections

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Three out of every four U.S. children have been infected with the coronavirus and more than half of all Americans had signs of previous infections, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention researchers estimated in a report Tuesday.

The researchers examined blood samples from more than 200,000 Americans and looked for virus-fighting antibodies made from infections, not vaccines. They found that signs of past infection rose dramatically between December and February, when the more contagious omicron variant surged through the U.S.

For Americans of all ages, about 34% had signs of prior infection in December. Just two months later, 58% did.

"I did expect it to increase. I did not expect it to increase quite this much," said Dr. Kristie Clarke, co-leader of a CDC team that tracks the extent of coronavirus infections.

The news came as Pfizer sought permission to offer a booster dose to kids ages 5 to 11, just like people 12 and older can get.

In the CDC report, the most striking increase was in children. The percentage of those 17 and under with antibodies rose from about 45% in December to about 75% in February.

The older people were, the less likely they had evidence of past infections. That may be because older adults have higher vaccination rates and they may be more likely to take other COVID-19 precautions, such as wearing masks and avoiding crowds, Clarke said.

Reported COVID-19 cases had a huge surge in December and January, then fell almost as dramatically as they had risen. But daily case counts have been trending up again in recent weeks.

The case numbers are believed to be an undercount, but officials do think recent increases reflect a true rise in infections. Many COVID-19 infections are mild enough that patients do not seek care or confirmatory lab tests. CDC officials say they plan to release a study soon that estimates that in recent months there were three infections for every reported case.

Another recent trend: U.S. health officials say they have seen two weeks of increases in COVID-19 hospitalizations, though the numbers remain relatively low. Hospital admissions number about 1,600 per day, a 9% increase in the prior week, the CDC reported.

Available evidence nevertheless offers reason to be hopeful about how the pandemic is going, officials suggested.

"We are not anticipating more severe disease from some of these subvariants, but we are actively studying them," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Tuesday.

The tests that showed how many people had previous infections can detect antibodies for one to two

years after infection, and possibly longer. Studies have shown previous infection can protect some people against severe disease and hospitalization, but CDC officials stressed that the previously infected should still get COVID-19 vaccines.

The study looked for any detectable level of antibodies; it did not distinguish how many people had antibody levels that might be protective. Scientists are still trying to understand what role these kinds of antibodies play in protection from future virus exposures.

Officials continue to urge Americans to get vaccines and boosters, which offer additional protection against COVID-19 for all, including those who were previously infected.

Currently the U.S. offers a booster dose starting at age 12 but Pfizer and BioNTech on Tuesday asked the Food and Drug Administration to allow healthy elementary-age kids to also get one -- about six months after their last shot. The companies cited a small study showing the extra shot for kids ages 5 to 11 revved up antibodies capable of fighting the super-contagious omicron variant. Pfizer's kid-size shots are a third of the dose given to anyone 12 or older.

What do we know about the new omicron mutant?

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

What do we know about the new omicron mutant?

It's a descendant of the earlier super-contagious "stealth omicron" and has quickly gained ground in the United States.

BA.2.12.1 was responsible for 29% of new COVID-19 infections nationally last week, according to data reported Tuesday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And it caused 58% of reported infections in the New York region.

The variant has been detected in at least 13 other countries, but the U.S. has the highest levels of it so far. Scientists say it spreads even faster than stealth omicron.

Cases are rising in places with increasing levels of the BA.2.12.1 variant, such as central New York, suggesting something about it is causing it to out-compete others, says Eli Rosenberg of New York state's health department.

It appears a similar pattern will likely play out nationally, says Kirsten St. George, director of virology at New York state's Wadsworth Center Laboratory.

Scientists are trying to figure out other aspects of BA.2.12.1, including whether vaccines are as effective against it as previous variants.

Incandescent light bulbs being phased out to save energy

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is scrapping old-fashioned incandescent light bulbs, speeding an ongoing trend toward more efficient lighting that officials say will save households, schools and businesses billions of dollars a year.

Rules finalized by the Energy Department will require manufacturers to sell energy-efficient light bulbs, accelerating a longtime industry practice to use compact fluorescent and LED bulbs that last 25 to 50 times longer than incandescent bulbs. The Trump administration had slowed an earlier phaseout of incandescents, saying it was targeting rules that burden businesses.

Once the new rules are fully in place next year, consumers should save nearly \$3 billion per year on their utility bills, the Energy Department said. The rules are projected to cut planet-warming carbon emissions by 222 million metric tons over the next 30 years, an amount equivalent to emissions generated by 28 million homes in one year, officials said.

"By raising energy efficiency standards for lightbulbs, we're putting \$3 billion back in the pockets of American consumers every year and substantially reducing domestic carbon emissions," Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said in a statement Tuesday. "The lighting industry is already embracing more energy

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 56 of 71

efficient products, and this measure will accelerate progress to deliver the best products to American consumers and build a better and brighter future.”

The new rules expand energy-efficiency requirements to more types of light bulbs and ban sale of bulbs that produce less than 45 lumens per watt — a measure of how much light is emitted for each unit of electricity.

The Trump administration in 2019 had slowed a years-long push by Congress and past administrations to switch Americans to LED bulbs and other lighting that uses less electricity. Former President Donald Trump said in September 2019 that the Energy Department canceled a pending phaseout of incandescent bulbs because “what’s saved is not worth it.”

Advocates hailed the latest rule change, saying it would ensure that commonly used light bulbs meet an easily achieved efficiency standard.

“This is a victory for consumers and for the climate — one that’s been a long time coming,” said Steven Nadel, executive director of the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, a nonprofit organization that seeks to reduce energy waste and combat climate change.

LED bulbs “have become so inexpensive that there’s no good reason for manufacturers to keep selling 19th-century technology that just isn’t very good at turning electrical energy into light,” Nadel said. The new standards “will finally phase out energy-wasting bulbs across the country.”

Andrew deLaski, executive director of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, said that while retailers will be able to sell inefficient bulbs until July 2023, “responsible chains ought to get them off their shelves as soon as possible and certainly by the end of this year.”

In 2020, about 30% of light bulbs sold in the United States were incandescent or halogen incandescent bulbs, according to industry groups. The new rule bars manufacture or importation of incandescent bulbs as of Jan. 1.

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association said in statement that LED lighting, “spurred by research scientists and lighting manufacturers,” has been fully embraced by consumers and is “an unqualified success.”

The manufacturers group “appreciates the administration’s recognition of the challenges industry faces in complying” with the new rule and its “adoption of a more manageable compliance timeframe” than earlier proposals, said spokesman Spencer Pederson.

High court could free Biden to end Trump asylum policy

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday questioned lower-court orders that have blocked the Biden administration from ending a controversial Trump-era immigration program for asylum-seekers.

Questions from conservative and liberal justices during nearly two hours of arguments suggested that the court could free the administration to end the “Remain in Mexico” policy that forces some people seeking asylum in the U.S. to wait in Mexico for their hearings.

President Joe Biden suspended the program on his first day in office. After Texas and Missouri sued, lower courts required immigration officials to reinstate it, though the current administration has sent far fewer people back to Mexico than its predecessor.

The heart of the legal fight is whether, with far less detention capacity than needed, immigration authorities must send people to Mexico or have the discretion under federal law to release asylum-seekers into the United States while they await their hearings.

Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, Biden’s top Supreme Court lawyer, told the justices the law does not contain a provision requiring migrants to be returned to Mexico and that there is a “significant public benefit” to releasing migrants who pass criminal background and other checks into the U.S., keeping detention beds free for more dangerous people.

Justices Amy Coney Barrett and Brett Kavanaugh, at least one of whom the administration needs to win the case, suggested that the administration had a better argument than the states.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 57 of 71

"You lose, right, if the government is right about what significant public interest is," Barrett said in an exchange with Texas Solicitor General Judd Stone II.

Several justices also picked up on Prelogar's point that no administration, including Trump's, fully complied with the requirement to make migrants wait in Mexico.

If the states are reading the law correctly, Justice Clarence Thomas asked, "Wouldn't it be odd for Congress to leave in place a statute that's impossible to comply with?"

Justice Elena Kagan was among members of the court who wondered whether the lower courts were dipping impermissibly into international relations since reinstating the program depends on Mexico's willingness to accept the migrants and close coordination between the countries.

"What are we supposed to do, drive truckloads of people to Mexico and leave them in Mexico?" Kagan asked Stone.

Justice Samuel Alito appeared to be the strongest voice on the states' side, questioning the administration's assertion that it assesses migrants on a case-by-case basis before releasing them.

Border agents stopped migrants 221,000 times in March 2022 and nearly 66,000 migrants were released in the United States, according to a government court filing.

Alito said the situation seemed akin to people waiting to get into a Washington Nationals game. If they have a ticket and no alcohol or guns, they're admitted, Alito said.

"That's basically what you're doing. You've got a little checklist and you go, boom, boom, boom," Alito said.

About 70,000 people were enrolled in the program, formally known as Migrant Protection Protocols, after President Donald Trump launched it in 2019 and made it a centerpiece of efforts to deter asylum-seekers.

After Biden's suspension of the program, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas ended it in June 2021. In October, DHS produced additional justifications for the policy's demise, to no avail in the courts.

The program resumed in December, but barely 3,000 migrants had enrolled by the end of March, during a period when authorities stopped migrants about 700,000 times at the border.

The high court pondered what to make of the limited nature of the challenged program. Chief Justice John Roberts said he was sympathetic with the administration's position that it can't detain everyone or possibly comply with the law. "But where does that leave us?" he asked.

Those being forced to wait in Mexico widely say they are terrified in dangerous Mexican border cities and find it very hard to find lawyers to handle their asylum hearings.

Democratic-led states and progressive groups are on the administration's side. Republican-led states and conservative groups have sided with Texas and Missouri. Those include the America First Legal Foundation, led by former Trump aides Stephen Miller and Mark Meadows.

As the court is weighing the asylum policy, the administration is expected to end another key Trump-era border policy that was put in place because of the coronavirus pandemic. It allows authorities to expel migrants without a chance to seek asylum. The decision to end Title 42 authority, named for a 1944 public health law, on May 23 is being legally challenged by 22 states and faces growing division within Biden's Democratic Party.

A decision in *Biden v. Texas*, 21-954, is expected by late June.

Why was death row inmate Melissa Lucio's execution delayed?

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The execution of Melissa Lucio is off. At least for now.

Lucio, 52, had been set to be executed by lethal injection Wednesday for the death of her 2-year-old daughter Mariah in Harlingen, a city of about 75,000 in Texas' southern tip.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals intervened Monday, granting Lucio's lawyers' request for a stay of execution so a lower court can review claims that new evidence would show Mariah's injuries, including a blow to the head, were caused by a fall down a steep staircase.

Nearly half of the jurors who sentenced her to die for the 2007 death of one of her 14 children had called for her execution to be halted and for her to get a new trial. Many lawmakers and celebrities such

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 58 of 71

as Kim Kardashian, an advocate for criminal justice reform, and Amanda Knox — an American whose murder conviction in the death of a British student in Italy was overturned — have rallied to Lucio's cause. Prosecutors, though, maintain that the girl was the victim of child abuse.

Lucio's lawyers had filed various legal appeals seeking to stop her execution. She also had a clemency application before the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, which had been set to consider her case Monday. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott could have also played a role this week in deciding Lucio's fate. If ultimately put to death, Lucio would be the first Latina executed by Texas since 1863, and the first woman the state has put to death since 2014.

Here's what to know about the case:

WHAT ISSUES ARE BEING DEBATED?

Lucio's attorneys say her capital murder conviction was based on an unreliable and coerced confession that was the result of relentless questioning and her long history of sexual, physical and emotional abuse. They say Lucio wasn't allowed to present evidence questioning the validity of her confession.

Her lawyers also contend that unscientific and false evidence misled jurors into believing Mariah's injuries only could have been caused by physical abuse and not by medical complications from a severe fall.

"I knew that what I was accused of doing was not true. My children have always been my world and although my choices in life were not good I would have never hurt any of my children in such a way," Lucio wrote in a letter to Texas lawmakers.

Cameron County District Attorney Luis Saenz, whose office prosecuted the case, has said he disagrees with Lucio's lawyers' claims that new evidence would exonerate her. Prosecutors say Lucio had a history of drug abuse and at times had lost custody of some of her 14 children.

During a sometimes contentious Texas House committee hearing on Lucio's case this month, Saenz initially pushed back on requests to use his power to stop the execution, before later saying he would intervene if the courts didn't act.

"I don't disagree with all the scrutiny this case is getting. I welcome that," Saenz said.

Armando Villalobos was the county's district attorney when Lucio was convicted in 2008, and Lucio's lawyers allege that he pushed for a conviction to help his reelection bid. In 2014, Villalobos was sentenced to 13 years in federal prison for a bribery scheme related to offering favorable prosecutorial decisions.

WHO IS CALLING FOR LUCIO'S EXECUTION TO BE STOPPED?

More than half the members of the Texas Legislature have asked that her execution be halted. A bipartisan group of Texas lawmakers traveled this month to Gatesville, where the state houses female death row inmates, and prayed with Lucio.

Five of the 12 jurors who sentenced Lucio and one alternate juror have questioned their decision and asked she get a new trial.

Lucio's cause also has the backing of faith leaders and was featured on HBO's "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver."

Lucio's family and supporters have been traveling throughout Texas and holding rallies and screenings of a 2020 documentary about her case, "The State of Texas vs. Melissa."

Before the court decision Monday, Lucio's supporters held a prayer vigil inside the state Capitol in Austin as they waited for word from the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles on her clemency application. On Saturday, supporters held rallies in 16 U.S. cities, including Houston, Boston, and Columbus, Ohio.

WHERE DO EFFORTS TO HALT HER EXECUTION STAND?

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles had been set Monday to consider a request to either commute her death sentence to life imprisonment or grant her a 120-day execution reprieve, but that hearing was put off by the appeals court's order. Lucio also had an appeal pending in federal court to stop her execution. The federal appeal and the clemency petition are now put aside as the case returns to the trial judge in Brownsville.

It was not immediately known when the lower court would begin reviewing her case. Tivon Schardl, one of Lucio's lawyers, said they hope to convince the trial judge to recommend that the appeals court grant her a new trial.

If the board had taken up her case and decided to recommend commutation of her sentence or a reprieve, that would have needed Abbott's approval. The governor has granted clemency to only one death row inmate since taking office in 2015. Abbott commuted a death sentence to life without parole for Thomas "Bart" Whitaker, who was convicted of fatally shooting his mother and brother. Whitaker's father was also shot but survived and led the effort to spare his son's life.

HOW FREQUENTLY ARE WOMEN EXECUTED?

It's rare in the U.S., according to the Washington-based Death Penalty Information Center, a nonprofit that takes no position on capital punishment but has criticized the way states carry out executions. Women have accounted for only 3.6% of the more than 16,000 confirmed executions in the U.S. dating back to the colonial period in the 1600s, according to the group's data.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, 17 women have been executed throughout the nation, according to the data. Texas has put more women to death — six — than any other state. Oklahoma is next, with three, and Florida has executed two.

The federal government has executed one woman since 1976. Lisa Montgomery, of Kansas, received a lethal injection in January 2021 after the Trump administration resumed executions in the federal system following a 17-year hiatus. The Justice Department has halted executions again under the Biden administration.

Activist's self-immolation stirs questions on faith, protest

By DEEPA BHARATH and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

Wynn Bruce, a 50-year-old climate activist and Buddhist, set himself on fire in front of the U.S. Supreme Court last week, prompting a national conversation about his motivation and whether he may have been inspired by Buddhist monks who self-immolated in the past to protest government atrocities.

Bruce, a photographer from Boulder, Colorado, walked up to the plaza of the Supreme Court around 6:30 p.m. Friday — on Earth Day — then sat down and set himself ablaze, a law enforcement official said. Supreme Court police officers responded immediately but were unable to extinguish the blaze in time to save him.

Investigators, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said they did not immediately locate a manifesto or note at the scene and that officials were still working to determine a motive.

On Saturday, Kritee Kanko, a Zen Buddhist priest who described herself as Bruce's friend, shared an emotional post on her public Twitter account saying his self-immolation was "not suicide" but "a deeply fearless act of compassion to bring attention to climate crisis."

She added that Bruce had been planning the act for at least a year. She wrote: "#wynnbruce I am so moved." She got sympathetic responses as well as backlash.

Kanko and other members of the Rocky Mountain Ecodharma Retreat Center in Boulder, released a statement Monday saying "none of the Buddhist teachers in the Boulder area knew about (Bruce's) plans to self-immolate on this Earth Day," and that had they known about his plan, they would have stopped him. Bruce was a frequent visitor to the Buddhist retreat center in the mountains near Boulder where he meditated with the community, Kanko said.

"We have never talked about self-immolation, and we do not think self-immolation is a climate action," the statement said. "Nevertheless, given the dire state of the planet and worsening climate crisis, we understand why someone might do that."

On Facebook, Bruce wrote about following the spiritual tradition of Shambhala, which combines Tibetan Buddhism with the principles of living "an uplifted life, fully engaged with the world," according to the Boulder Shambhala Center. Bruce also posted praise for Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, a leader of engaged Buddhism, around the time of his death in January.

Bruce's act of sitting down and setting himself on fire was reminiscent of the events of June 11, 1963, when Thich Quang Duc, a Vietnamese monk, seated cross-legged, burned himself to death at a busy Saigon intersection. He was protesting the persecution of Buddhists by the South Vietnamese government

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 60 of 71

led by Ngo Dinh Diem, a staunch Catholic.

In a letter to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whom Hanh counted as a friend, Hanh wrote that he drew inspiration from the Vietnamese monk's self-sacrifice, saying: "To burn oneself by fire is to prove what one is saying is of the utmost importance. There is nothing more painful than burning oneself. To say something while experiencing this kind of pain is to say it with utmost courage, frankness, determination and sincerity."

In Tibet, anti-Chinese activists have employed self-immolation as a form of protest. The International Campaign for Tibet says 131 men and 28 women – monks, nuns and laypeople among them – have self-immolated since 2009 to protest against Beijing's strict controls over the region and their religion.

Buddhism as a religion does not unilaterally condone the act of self-immolation or taking one's life, said Robert Barnett, a London-based researcher of modern Tibetan history and politics.

"Killing yourself is considered damaging in Buddhism because life is precious," he said. "But if a person self-immolates because of a higher motivation and it's not out of a negative emotion such as depression or sadness, then the Buddhist position becomes far more complex."

If self-immolation is done to help the world, it might be accepted as a positive action, Barnett said. He cited a story from the "Jataka Tales," a body of South Asian literature concerning the prior incarnations of the Buddha in human and animal form. In that particular tale, an incarnation of the Buddha, in an act of selfless compassion, offers himself to an emaciated tigress who was so hungry that she was ready to devour her own cubs.

"But that kind of self-sacrifice is not encouraged, developed or talked about for normal people (other than the Buddha)," he said, adding that this is because of "the immense difficulty of cultivating positive motivation in any situation, let alone maintaining it under stress or in conditions of extreme pain."

Buddhism emphasizes emotional balance, inclusiveness, kindness, compassion and wisdom, said Roshi Joan Halifax, an environmental activist and abbot of the Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"What we're seeing today among many people is hopelessness," she said. "What we are called to do is not to be disabled by that sense of futility, but to transform our moral suffering into wise hope and courageous action."

Despite the pessimism that some climate activists may feel, there is reason to remain hopeful, Halifax said.

"You see that people are waking up to the magnitude of the climate catastrophe," she said, noting that countries and corporations are moving away from damaging practices and toward clean energy.

"I feel inspired and hopeful by our ability to change and adapt in this ever-changing world," she said. "My heart is heavy that (Bruce) did not have that kind of optimism."

Those who knew Bruce saw a man who was kind, playful and idealistic – an avid dancer who participated in weekly events. He was also known for biking and embracing public transportation.

Bruce, who enjoyed the outdoors, brought an intensity to whatever he did, said his friend Jeffry Buechler. On Buechler's wedding day in 2014, Bruce, on a whim, decided to go for a dip in a cold mountain lake early in the morning, he said.

Bruce also suffered lasting effects from a brain injury he sustained in a car wreck that killed his best friend about 30 years ago, Buechler said.

Marco DeGaetano, who met Bruce in the 1990s when they both attended a Universalist church in Denver, said "Wynn seemed to have an affinity for people who needed help."

He recalled Bruce being kind to a church member with a mental illness when others distanced themselves.

DeGaetano said he last saw Bruce about a month ago, and he seemed outgoing and friendly as always – every time he saw Bruce, "he had a smile on his face."

Housing shortage, soaring rents squeeze US college students

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — UC Berkeley sophomore Terrell Thompson slept in his car for nearly two weeks at the start of the school year last fall, living out of a suitcase stashed in the trunk and texting dozens of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 61 of 71

landlords a day in a desperate search for a place to live.

The high-achieving student from a low-income household in Sacramento, California, was majoring in business administration at one of the most prestigious universities in the world. Yet, Thompson folded his 6-foot frame into the back seat of his Honda Accord at night, wondering how he would ever find a home in the exorbitantly expensive San Francisco Bay Area city.

"Academically it was hard, because I'm worried about finding housing and I'm worried about my clothes and I'm worried about getting my car broken into all the time," said the 19-year-old Thompson, who now lives in a studio apartment he found last September. "I was anxious 24/7."

College students across the U.S. are looking for housing for the 2022-23 school year and if 2021 was any indication, it won't be easy. Students at colleges from California to Florida were denied on-campus housing last fall and found themselves sitting out the year at home or living in motel rooms or vehicles as surging rents and decades of failing to build sufficient student housing came to a head.

For some colleges, the housing crunch was related to increased demand by students who had been stuck at home during the pandemic. For others, including many in California, the shortage reflects a deeper conflict between the colleges and homeowners who don't want new housing built for students who they say increase congestion and noise.

In March, the University of California, Berkeley, said it would have to cap student enrollment because of a lawsuit brought by irate neighbors over the school's growth. State lawmakers fast-tracked a fix to allow the campus to enroll as many students as planned for the 2022 fall semester, but the legislation does nothing to produce more housing.

Nationally, 43% of students at four-year universities experienced housing insecurity in 2020, up from 35% in 2019, according to an annual survey conducted by The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University. Students reported being unable to pay utilities, rent or mortgage, living in overcrowded units, or moving in with others due to financial difficulties.

And for the first time since it began tracking basic needs in 2015, the survey found an equal percentage — 14% — of students at both four-year and two-year colleges who had experienced homelessness in the last year, said Mark Huelsman, the center's director of policy and advocacy.

"This is a function of rents rising, the inability of communities and institutions to build enough housing for students and other costs of college going up that create a perfect storm for students," he said.

For some students, the lack of affordable housing could mean the difference between going to college or not. Others take on massive debt or live so precariously they miss out on all the extracurricular benefits of higher education.

Jonathan Dena, a first-generation college student from the Sacramento area, almost rejected UC Berkeley over the lack of housing, even though it was his "dream program." He found a studio at the heavily subsidized Rochdale Apartments for under \$1,300 a month, but he might have to move because the bare-bones units may close for a seismic renovation.

Dena, 29, wants to continue living within walking distance of campus for a robust college experience.

But the urban studies major and student government housing commission officer said "it's kind of scary" how high rents are near campus. Online listings showed a newer one-bedroom for one person at \$3,700, as well as a 240-square foot (22 square-meter) bedroom for two people sharing a bathroom for nearly \$1,700 per person a month.

"If I go to school in Berkeley, I would love to live in Berkeley," he said.

Nationally, rents have increased 17% since March 2020, said Chris Salvati, senior economist with Apartment List, but the increase has been higher in some popular college towns. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, saw a 24% jump in rents and Tempe, Arizona, saw a 31% hike.

In some cases, the rental increases have been exacerbated by a lack of on-campus housing.

Last fall, demand for on-campus housing was so high that the University of Tampa offered incoming freshmen a break on tuition if they deferred until fall 2022. Rent in the Florida city has skyrocketed nearly 30% from a year ago, according to Apartment List.

Rent in Knoxville has soared 36% since March 2020, and it could get worse after the University of Ten-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 62 of 71

nessee announced a new lottery system for its dorms this fall, saying it needs to prioritize housing for a larger freshman class.

Even two-year community colleges, which have not traditionally provided dorms, are rethinking student needs as the cost of housing rises.

Last October, Long Beach City College launched a pilot program to provide up to 15 homeless students space in an enclosed parking garage. They sleep in their cars and have access to bathrooms and showers, electrical outlets and internet while they work with counselors to find permanent housing.

Uduak-Joe Ntuk, president of the college's Board of Trustees, hesitated when asked if the program will be renewed.

"I want to say no, but I think we will," he said. "We're going to have new students come fall semester this year that are going to be in a similar situation, and for us to do nothing is untenable."

California prides itself on its robust higher education system, but has struggled with housing at its four-year colleges. Berkeley is notoriously difficult, with cut-throat competition for the few affordable apartments within walking distance to campus.

"I definitely was not prepared to be this stressed about housing every year," said Jennifer Lopez, 21, a UC Berkeley senior from Cudahy, in southeastern Los Angeles County, and the first in her family to attend college.

She imagined she would spend all four years on campus in dorms, but found herself in a scramble for a safe, affordable place to sleep. The urban studies major currently splits an attic space in what is technically a one-bedroom apartment shared by four undergraduates, one of whom sleeps in the dining room.

The total monthly rent is nearly \$3,700 — laughably high in most U.S. cities — but she's grateful for it.

"If I hadn't heard about this place, I was either going to end up living in a basement, or in this other apartment I know (where) the girls are struggling with leaks and mold," Lopez said.

The Basic Needs Center at UC Berkeley, which operates a food pantry for students and faculty, found in a snapshot survey that a quarter of undergraduates reported they "lacked a safe, regular and adequate nighttime place to stay and sleep" at some point since October.

"That's huge," said Ruben Canedo, co-chair of UC's systemwide Basic Needs Committee. "This generation of students is navigating the most expensive cost-of-living market while at the same time having the least amount of financial support accessible to them."

Thompson, the business administration major, started looking for an apartment last May, after spending his first year at home taking classes remotely to save money. He quickly realized that his rental budget of \$750 was wildly inadequate and as a second-year student, he no longer qualified for priority in the dorms.

By the time classes began in late August, he was in a panic. He tried commuting from his home in Sacramento, leaving before 6 a.m. for the 80-mile (130-kilometer) drive to Berkeley and returning home around midnight to avoid traffic.

But that was grueling so he took to sleeping in his car. Initially he parked far away in a spot without parking limits. Then he parked at a lot between two student dorm complexes closer to campus, where exuberant partying kept him up at night.

He attended classes, studied and ate sparingly to save on ballooning food costs. He looked at apartments where five people were squeezed into two bedrooms with pared-down belongings stored under beds.

He slept in his car for almost two weeks until a sympathetic landlord who had also grown up in a low-income home reached out, offering a studio within walking distance of campus. The rent is \$1,000 a month, and he hopes to stay until he graduates.

"I think I have a little bit of a PTSD factor," he said.

Most students have no idea of the housing situation when they choose to attend UC Berkeley, said 19-year-old freshman Sanaa Sodhi, and the university needs to do more to prepare students and support them in their search.

The political science major is excited to move out of the dorms and into a two-bedroom apartment where she and three friends are taking over the lease. The unit is older but a bargain at \$3,000 a month, she said. The housemates were prepared to pay up to \$5,200 for a safe place close to campus.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 63 of 71

"You don't honestly know the severity of the situation before you're in it," she said, adding that landlords hold all the cards. "They know that whatever price they charge, we'll inevitably have to pay it because we don't really have a choice except maybe to live out of our cars."

Corgis and Cars: Queen's pageant to be parade of the people

BY DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — During a long weekend of royal pageantry devoted to Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne, the British people will take center stage in at least one event.

More than 10,000 performers, including schoolchildren, community groups and military bands, are expecting to troop to Buckingham Palace on June 5 to cap four days of celebrations marking the queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The event on the Mall, the tree-lined road that leads to the palace, will feature pop star Ed Sheeran, dancers, acrobats, vintage cars and depictions of the queen's favorite corgis and horses in performances highlighting the changes in British society during Elizabeth's long reign.

"It will be all about how, through the recollections and stories and experiences we share, we can see how we are all connected through time to each other, and to the queen," the show's director, David Zolkwer, said Tuesday.

Elizabeth, the longest-ruling monarch in British history, assumed the throne when she was 25 years old. In the next seven decades, the U.K. navigated the end of its empire, the Cold War, the economic tensions of the 1980s and the challenges of an increasingly multicultural society.

Now 96, the queen who was a constant presence through it all remains a symbol of stability.

The jubilee pageant seeks to celebrate that legacy with a spectacle that will begin with the ringing of Westminster Abbey's bells, just like on Elizabeth's coronation day.

The first of four "acts" will be a parade featuring military bands and service personnel from the U.K. and Commonwealth nations including Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan, Ghana, Belize, Jamaica and Sri Lanka.

Some 2,500 volunteers are expected to take part in the second act, which will be devoted to creativity, dance, fashion and music during the queen's reign.

This part of the program will also feature 150 "national treasures" who have shaped British culture over the past 70 years, including singer Cliff Richard, chef Heston Blumenthal and figure skating gold medalists Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean.

The third section will celebrate the queen's reign and personal interests with quirky British humor. The acts include a 20-foot-tall puppet of a young woman, surrounded by a pack of mischievous corgi puppets.

The event will end in front of Buckingham Palace, where Sheeran will perform and the public will be asked to join in singing "God Save the Queen."

Organizers declined to comment on whether or not the monarch might be persuaded to appear on the palace balcony.

The U.K. is marking the queen's jubilee June 2-June 5.

Putin gets what he didn't want: Ukraine army closer to West

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The longer Ukraine's army fends off the invading Russians, the more it absorbs the advantages of Western weaponry and training — exactly the transformation President Vladimir Putin wanted to prevent by invading in the first place.

The list of arms flowing to Ukraine is long and growing longer. It includes new American battlefield aerial drones and the most modern U.S. and Canadian artillery, anti-tank weapons from Norway and others, armored vehicles and anti-ship missiles from Britain and Stinger counter-air missiles from the U.S., Denmark and other countries.

If Ukraine can hold off the Russians, its accumulating arsenal of Western weapons could have a trans-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 64 of 71

formative effect in a country that has, like other former Soviet republics, relied mainly on arms and equipment from the Soviet era.

But sustaining that military aid won't be easy. It is costly and, for some supplier nations, politically risky. It also is being taken out of Western stockpiles that at some point will need to be replenished. That is why U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin convened a meeting Tuesday at Germany's Ramstein air base to work out ways to keep it going, now and for the long run. Defense ministers and top military leaders from approximately 40 countries participated.

After the meeting, Austin told a news conference at Ramstein that Germany had agreed to send 50 Cheetah anti-aircraft weapons to Ukraine and that the meeting had served to unify the West's efforts to help Ukraine "win today and build strength for tomorrow." He said the participating nations had agreed to continue similar consultations through monthly meetings, either in person or virtually.

"We've got to move at the speed of war," Austin said.

The goal, Austin said ahead of the conference, is not just to support Ukrainian defenses but to help them prevail against a larger invading force. In opening remarks to the meeting, he said Ukraine's allies will "keep moving heaven and earth" to meet Ukraine's near-term security requirements.

"We believe they can win if they have the right equipment, the right support," Austin said on Monday in Poland after returning from a visit to Kyiv with Secretary of State Antony Blinken that included discussion of Ukraine's military needs. He also said the goal is to "see Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things it has done in invading Ukraine."

Despite its early failings, the Russian military still holds some advantages that will be put to the test in the eastern Donbas region, where they are assembling more combat troops and firepower even as the U.S. and its NATO allies scramble to get artillery and other heavy weaponry to that area in time to make a difference.

With the war's outcome in doubt after two months of fighting, the Pentagon is providing 90 of the U.S. Army's most modern howitzers, along with 183,000 rounds of artillery — and other sophisticated weaponry that could give the Ukrainians an important edge in looming battles. The U.S. also is arranging more training for Ukrainians on key weaponry, including howitzers and at least two kinds of armed drone aircraft.

On Monday, Austin and Blinken announced \$713 million in foreign military financing for Ukraine and 15 allied and partner countries in Europe; some \$322 million is earmarked for Kyiv, in part to help Ukraine transition to more advanced weapons and air defense systems. The remainder will be split among NATO members and other nations that have provided Ukraine with critical military supplies since the war with Russia began, officials said.

Such financing is different from previous U.S. military assistance for Ukraine. It is not a donation of weapons and equipment from Pentagon stockpiles but rather cash that countries can use to purchase supplies that they might need.

The Ukrainians say they need even more, including long-range air defense systems, fighter jets, tanks and multiple-launch rocket systems.

"It will be true to say that the United States now leads the effort in ensuring this transition of Ukraine to Western-style weapons, in arranging training for Ukrainian soldiers," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said, adding, "and I only regret that it didn't happen a month or two months ago from the very beginning of the war."

Philip Breedlove, a retired U.S. general who led NATO in Europe from 2013 to 2016, says his shorthand summary of what Putin wants in Ukraine and elsewhere on the Russian periphery is, "Weapons out, NATO back, and no America."

"What has happened is, Mr. Putin is getting exactly what he did not want. He's getting more weapons forward, he's getting more NATO forward, and he's getting more America in Europe," Breedlove said in an interview.

The complexities of keeping up Western military aid to Ukraine, even as its troops are fully occupied with a brutal war, are a reminder of what is at stake. Putin said before launching the invasion that Moscow could not tolerate what he saw as a Western effort to make Ukraine a de facto member of NATO.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 65 of 71

He argued that Ukraine's interest in westernizing and in remaining outside of Russia's orbit was due to "external forces" such as U.S. pressure.

Putin has demanded that Ukraine forswear membership in the NATO alliance, and beyond that he has insisted on turning back the clock to 1997, before NATO had begun adding former Soviet and Soviet-allied nations to its ranks.

There is little prospect of Ukraine joining NATO, but Russia's war has in fact brought NATO closer to Ukraine. The result has been a boost to Ukraine's prospects for mounting a successful defense, even in the eastern Donbas region where the Russians hold certain advantages and where Russian-backed separatists have been fighting since 2014.

Russia removed as host of 2023 worlds in men's ice hockey

ZURICH (AP) — Russia was removed Tuesday as host of the 2023 world championship in men's ice hockey that was to be played in Vladimir Putin's home city St. Petersburg.

Citing "concern for the safety and well-being of all participating players, officials, media, and fans," the International Ice Hockey Federation announced the decision after its ruling council met.

The latest blow to Russia in its favored winter sports follows one day after its signature annual international figure skating competition was pulled by the International Skating Union in the fallout from the country's war on Ukraine.

The IIHF said its officials "expressed significant concerns over the safe freedom of movement of players and officials to, from, and within Russia."

Similar reasons were given last month for stripping the 2023 world juniors event from Russia. That championship was to be played in Omsk and Novosibirsk.

Russia had committed to build a new 23,000-seat arena for the men's worlds that was scheduled for May 2023.

A new host will be picked during the men's world championships which starts next month in Finland, the governing body said.

US consumers still confident in April, but slightly less so

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumer confidence dampened slightly in April but remains high even as inflation continues to cloud their optimism about the rest of the year.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index — which takes into account consumers' assessment of current conditions and their outlook for the future — edged down to 107.3 in April, from 107.6 in March.

The business research group's present situation index, which measures consumers' assessment of current business and labor conditions, also dipped modestly this month to 152.6 from 153.8 in March.

The expectations index, based on consumers' six-month outlook for income, business and labor market conditions, ticked up to 77.2 in April from 76.7 in March. It stood at 80.8 in February and remains a weak spot in the survey.

"Purchasing intentions are down overall from recent levels as interest rates have begun rising," said Lynn Franco, the Conference Board's senior director of economic indicators. "Meanwhile, concerns about inflation retreated from an all-time high in March but remained elevated."

Franco added that inflation and the war in Ukraine will continue to eat into confidence and may further curb consumer spending through this year.

Inflation soared over the past year at its fastest pace in more than 40 years, with costs for food, gasoline, housing and other necessities squeezing American consumers and negating their pay raises.

According to the index Americans have scuttled some vacation plans, but slightly more intended to make big purchases like a car or major appliance.

The Federal Reserve raised its main borrowing rate by a quarter point last month, the main mechanism for

combatting inflation. Multiple rate hikes, with the possibility of half-point increases, are expected this year. The Labor Department said earlier this month that its consumer price index jumped 8.5% in March from 12 months earlier, the sharpest year-over-year increase since 1981. Prices have been driven up by bottlenecked supply chains, robust consumer demand and disruptions to global food and energy markets worsened by Russia's war against Ukraine.

Consumers were slightly less optimistic about the labor market, even as U.S. employers have added at least 400,000 jobs for 11 straight months, pushing the unemployment rate down to 3.6%. That's the lowest rate since the pandemic erupted two years ago and just above the half-century low of 3.5% that was reached two years ago.

Housing shortage, soaring rents squeeze US college students

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — College students squeezed by a massive housing shortage and surging rents are paying too much for moldy apartments, commuting long distances or sleeping in their cars to get an education — and that doesn't appear to be changing anytime soon.

For some colleges, the housing crunch was related to the pandemic, which muddied projections for who might want on-campus dorms when classes resumed in person last fall. But the lack of housing both on-campus and off has been a longstanding problem at other schools, including many in California, where homeowners and communities have sued to curb new student housing construction.

Nationally, 43% of students at four-year universities experienced housing insecurity in 2020, up from 35% in 2019, according to an annual survey conducted by The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University. Students reported being unable to pay their rent or mortgage, living in overcrowded units, or moving in with others due to financial difficulties.

For the first time since it began tracking basic needs in 2015, the survey found an equal percentage — 14% — of students at both four-year and two-year colleges who had experienced homelessness in the last year.

"This is a function of rents rising, the inability of communities and institutions to build enough housing for students and other costs of college going up that create a perfect storm for students," said Mark Huelsman, the center's director of policy and advocacy.

Terrell Thompson, a sophomore at the University of California, Berkeley, slept in his car for nearly two weeks at the start of the school year last fall, unable to find an apartment in his price range. The university has limited dorms and competition is fierce for nearby off-campus units, which can start at \$1,600 for a 300-square-foot (28-square-meter) studio.

"Academically it was hard, because I'm worried about finding housing and I'm worried about my clothes and I'm worried about getting my car broken into all the time," said the 19-year-old Thompson, who now lives in an apartment he found last September. "I was anxious 24/7."

Nationally, rents have increased 17% since March 2020, said Chris Salviati, senior economist with Apartment List, but the increase has been higher in some popular college towns. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, saw a 24% jump in rents and Tempe, Arizona, saw a 31% hike.

In some cases, the rental increases have been exacerbated by a lack of on-campus housing. Last fall, the demand for on-campus housing was so high that the University of Tampa offered incoming freshmen a break on tuition if they deferred until fall 2022. Rent in the Florida city has skyrocketed nearly 30% from a year ago, according to Apartment List.

Rent in Knoxville has soared 36% since March 2020, and it could get worse after the University of Tennessee announced a new lottery system for its dorms this fall, saying it needs to prioritize housing for a larger freshman class.

Even two-year community colleges, which have not traditionally provided dorms, are rethinking student needs as the cost of housing rises.

Last October, Long Beach City College outside of Los Angeles launched a pilot program to provide up

to 15 homeless students space in an enclosed parking garage.

They sleep in their cars and have access to bathrooms and showers, electrical outlets and internet while they work with counselors to find permanent housing. Uduak-Joe Ntuk, president of the college's Board of Trustees, hesitated when asked if the program will be renewed.

"I want to say no, but I think we will," he said. "We're going to have new students come fall semester this year that are going to be in a similar situation, and for us to do nothing is untenable."

UC Berkeley and other UC campuses are fighting homeowners who oppose campus expansion plans, even as the schools accept more students.

Most students have no idea of the housing situation when they choose to attend UC Berkeley, said 19-year-old freshman Sanaa Sodhi, and the university needs to do more to prepare students and support them in their search.

The political science major is excited to move out of the dorms and into a two-bedroom apartment where she and three friends are taking over the lease. The unit is older but a bargain at \$3,000 a month, she said. The housemates were prepared to pay up to \$5,200 for a safe place close to campus.

"You don't honestly know the severity of the situation before you're in it," she said, adding that landlords hold all the cards. "They know that whatever price they charge, we'll inevitably have to pay it because we don't really have a choice except maybe to live out of our cars."

Son of famed American artist charged in Jan. 6 Capitol riot

By STEVE LeBLANC and BEN FOX Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — For years, Vincent Gillespie waged a legal battle to try to gain control of hundreds of paintings by his father — renowned postwar American artist Gregory Gillespie.

On Jan. 6, 2021, prosecutors say, Gillespie engaged in a very different kind of battle, joining rioters as they tried to wrest control of the U.S. Capitol from the federal government in one of the most violent confrontations of the riot.

Gillespie, who investigators say was identified by half a dozen sources from images taken that day, was among a mob trying to force its way through a tunnel at the Lower West Terrace of the Capitol — an assault that almost succeeded by his own description.

"We were almost overpowering them," Gillespie, blood visible on his scalp from the clash, told an Associated Press journalist at the scene that day. "If you had like another 15, 20 guys behind us pushing I think we could have won it."

The AP video that captured a flushed Gillespie that day milling about outside the Capitol speaking defiantly about his role in the attack — and his lament that more like-minded individuals didn't join the fight — reveal both the depth of resolve of many of the rioters, and the uncertainty others felt about just what they would do once inside the building.

What is clear, federal investigators said, is that Gillespie participated in a violent struggle against law enforcement officials trying to prevent rioters from entering the building as a joint session of Congress was engaged in certifying Electoral College votes.

The Athol, Massachusetts, resident was spotted outside the Capitol pouring water into his eyes apparently to combat the effects of chemical spray used to try to control the crowd.

Gillespie told the AP at the scene that day that he was among those attempting to storm the building. Gillespie said he and others tried to burst through an opening.

"I was with some other guys. And then we were starting to push against them and they were beating us and putting that pepper spray stuff in your eyes. But there were a bunch of people pushing behind us," Gillespie told the AP.

"What you guys need to know, and no one is going to listen to this, we were very (expletive) close." If more people had been behind him, he said, "then there's that second set of doors we would have just burst through it."

What was apparently less clear to Gillespie that day was what he and the others with him would do if

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 68 of 71

they had been able to take control of the Capitol.

"I would hope they would flood in so there's nothing they can do. That's what I would hope they would do. Take it over. Take it over. Own it for a few days. I'm not an anarchist, but you can't let stand what happened in this election," he said, an apparent reference to former President Donald Trump's claims of a stolen election.

Although he was quick to offer up his name when asked by the AP reporter, Gillespie hesitated before saying where he was from.

"They'll come after me, man," he said, hesitating before adding, "I'm in Massachusetts."

Gillespie ultimately faced seven criminal counts including civil disorder, assaulting officers and disorderly conduct in the Capitol. He has pleaded not guilty.

He's one of more than 775 people arrested in nearly all 50 states and the District of Columbia in connection with the Jan. 6 assault in which the pro-Trump mob sought to stop the certification of Joe Biden's 2020 election victory. Rioters smashed windows, broke through doors and beat and bloodied law enforcement officers who were vastly underprepared for the mob.

Vincent Gillespie is the son of Gregory Gillespie, the artist whose self-portraits, fantasy landscapes and geometric abstractions are included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and other museums.

His paintings are also at the center of a long-running and so far unsuccessful legal battle waged by Gillespie against his stepmother and her lawyers in an effort to contest control of the paintings. In a court filing from 2020, Vincent Gillespie described his father as a renowned artist who left more than 400 valuable paintings when he died.

Gillespie's participation in the events of Jan. 6, 2021, appears well documented, including in photos and videos that helped tipsters identify him, investigators said.

Open-source video and security cameras captured multiple images of Gillespie participating in the riot, according to the Justice Department.

Investigators were tipped off by a former neighbor, the manager of a local hardware store and employees of the town of Athol, where Gillespie attends meetings and pays his tax bills at the town hall. In all, six witnesses independently identified him from images taken from the riot.

In the chaos of the insurrection, Gillespie shoved, yelled and pushed and fought with police, the FBI said. Images included in his court papers show him struggling through the crowd, eventually maneuvering through the rioters to the line of police officers and getting control of a police shield.

He's seen and heard on the body camera of a Metropolitan Police Department officer pushing his way through the crowd, using a police shield to ram officers and screaming "traitor" and "treason" as he points to a law enforcement officer, officials said.

After his arrest, Gillespie, 60, was ordered by a judge to stay away from Washington, except for court-related business. He was ordered not to possess a firearm or other weapons.

Gillespie's next court appearance is scheduled for April 29 before U.S. District Chief Judge Beryl Howell of the District of Columbia.

Contacted by the AP following his arrest, Gillespie declined to comment.

"My attorney advised against it. He said there's only downsides to it," he told the AP. "I'd like to talk. There's a lot of stuff out there that's wrong."

It's not the first time Gillespie has been in court.

Years earlier, Gillespie made local headlines by contesting a \$15 parking ticket — despite having to pay \$250 in filing fees. He ended up fighting the filing fee, which was not refundable, all the way to the state's highest court in 2011.

He did not receive a refund.

Musk's 'free speech' push for Twitter: Repeating history?

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 69 of 71

Elon Musk, the world's richest man, is spending \$44 billion to acquire Twitter with the stated aim of turning it into a haven for "free speech." There's just one problem: The social platform has been down this road before, and it didn't end well.

A decade ago, a Twitter executive dubbed the company "the free speech wing of the free speech party" to underscore its commitment to untrammelled freedom of expression. Subsequent events put that moniker to the test, as repressive regimes cracked down on Twitter users, particularly in the wake of the short-lived "Arab Spring" demonstrations. In the U.S., a visceral 2014 article by journalist Amanda Hess exposed the incessant, vile harassment many women faced just for posting on Twitter or other online forums.

Over the subsequent years, Twitter learned a few things about the consequences of running a largely unmoderated social platform — one of the most important being that companies generally don't want their ads running against violent threats, hate speech that bleeds into incitement, and misinformation that aims to tip elections or undermine public health.

"With Musk, his posturing of free speech — just leave everything up — that would be bad in and of itself," said Paul Barrett, the deputy director of the Center for Business and Human Rights at New York University. "If you stop moderating with automated systems and human reviews, a site like Twitter, in the space of a short period of time, you would have a cesspool."

Google, Barrett pointed out, quickly learned this lesson the hard way when major companies like Toyota and Anheuser-Busch yanked their ads after they ran ahead of YouTube videos produced by extremists in 2015.

Once it was clear just how unhealthy the conversation had gotten, Twitter co-founder and former CEO Jack Dorsey spent years trying to improve what he called the "health" of the conversation on the platform.

The company was an early adopter of the "report abuse" button after U.K. member of parliament Stella Creasy received a barrage of rape and death threats on the platform. The online abuse was the result of a seemingly positive tweet in support of feminist campaigner Caroline Criado-Perez, who successfully advocated for novelist Jane Austen to appear on a British banknote. Creasy's online harasser was sent to prison for 18 weeks.

Twitter has continued to craft rules and invested in staff and technology that detect violent threats, harassment and misinformation that violates its policies. After evidence emerged that Russia used their platforms to try to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election, social media companies also stepped up their efforts against political misinformation.

The big question now is how far Musk, who describes himself as a "free-speech absolutist," wants to ratchet back these systems — and whether users and advertisers will stick around if he does.

Even now, Americans say they're more likely to be harassed on social media than any other online forum, with women, people of color and LGBTQ users reporting a disproportionate amount of that abuse. Roughly 80% of users believe the companies are still doing only a "fair or poor" job of handling that harassment, according to a Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults last year.

Meanwhile, terms like "censorship" and "free speech" have turned into political rallying cries for conservatives, frustrated by seeing right-leaning commentators and high-profile Republican officials booted off Facebook and Twitter for violating their rules.

Musk appeared to criticize Twitter's permanent ban of President Donald Trump last year for messages that the tech company said helped incite the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol last year.

"A lot of people are going to be super unhappy with West Coast high tech as the de facto arbiter of free speech," Musk tweeted days after Trump was banned from both Facebook and Twitter.

Trump's allies, including his son Donald Trump Jr., have even pleaded for Musk to buy out the company.

"If Elon Musk can privately send people into space I'm sure he can design a social network that isn't biased," Trump Jr. said in the caption of a video posted to Instagram last April.

Kirsten Martin, a professor of technology ethics at the University of Notre Dame, said Twitter has consistently worked at being a "responsible" social media company through its moderation system, its hires in the area of machine learning ethics and in whom they allow to do research on the platform. The fact

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 70 of 71

that Musk wants to change that, she added, suggests that he's focused on "irresponsible social media." Twitter declined to comment for this story. A representative for Musk did not immediately respond to a message for comment.

New social media apps targeted at conservatives, including Trump's Truth Social, haven't come remotely close to matching the success of Facebook or Twitter. That's partly because Republican politicians, politicians and causes already draw large audiences on existing, and much better established, platforms.

It's also partly due to floods of inflammatory, false or violent posts. Last year, for example, right-wing social media site Parler was nearly wiped off the internet when it became evident that rioters had used the app to promote violent messages and organize the Jan. 6 siege of the U.S. Capitol. Apple and Google barred its app from their online stores, while Amazon stopped providing web-hosting services for the site.

Musk himself regularly blocks social media users who have criticized him or his company and sometimes bullies reporters who have written critical articles about him or Tesla. He regularly tweets at reporters who write about his company, sometimes mischaracterizing their work as "false" or "misleading."

His popular tweets typically send a swarm of his social media fans directly to the accounts of the reporters to harass them for hours or days.

"I only block people as a direct insult," Musk tweeted in 2020, responding to a tweet from a reporter.

Evan Greer, a political activist with Fight for the Future, said Musk's lack of experience in moderating an influential social media platform will be a problem if he successfully takes over the company.

"If we want to protect free speech online, then we can't live in a world where the richest person on Earth can just purchase a platform that millions of people depend on and then change the rules to his liking," Greer said.

Today in History: April 27, deadly Alabama tornadoes

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, April 27, the 117th day of 2022. There are 248 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 27, 1994, former President Richard M. Nixon was remembered at an outdoor funeral service attended by all five of his successors at the Nixon presidential library in Yorba Linda, California.

On this date:

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan was killed by natives in the Philippines.

In 1810, Ludwig van Beethoven wrote one of his most famous piano compositions, the Bagatelle in A-minor.

In 1813, the Battle of York took place in Upper Canada during the War of 1812 as a U.S. force defeated the British garrison in present-day Toronto before withdrawing.

In 1865, the steamer Sultana, carrying freed Union prisoners of war, exploded on the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee; death toll estimates vary from 1,500 to 2,000.

In 1941, German forces occupied Athens during World War II.

In 1973, acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray resigned after it was revealed that he'd destroyed files removed from the safe of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt.

In 1978, 51 construction workers plunged to their deaths when a scaffold inside a cooling tower at the Pleasants Power Station site in West Virginia fell 168 feet to the ground.

In 1992, Russia and 12 other former Soviet republics won entry into the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

In 2010, former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega was extradited from the United States to France, where he was later convicted of laundering drug money and received a seven-year sentence.

In 2011, powerful and deadly tornadoes raked the South and Midwest; more than 60 tornadoes crossed parts of Alabama, leaving about 250 people dead and thousands of others injured in the state.

In 2015, rioters plunged part of Baltimore into chaos, torching a pharmacy, setting police cars ablaze

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 294 ~ 71 of 71

and throwing bricks at officers hours after thousands attended a funeral for Freddie Gray, a Black man who died from a severe spinal injury he'd suffered in police custody; the Baltimore Orioles' home game against the Chicago White Sox was postponed because of safety concerns.

In 2019, a gunman opened fire inside a synagogue near San Diego as worshippers celebrated the last day of Passover, killing a woman and wounding the rabbi and two others. (John Earnest, a white supremacist, has been sentenced to both federal and state life prison terms.)

Ten years ago: The space shuttle Enterprise, mounted atop a jumbo jet, sailed over the New York City skyline on its final flight before becoming a museum piece aboard the USS Intrepid.

Five years ago: David Dao, the airline passenger who was violently dragged off a flight after refusing to give up his seat, settled with United for an undisclosed sum; cellphone video of the April 9 confrontation aboard a jetliner at Chicago's O'Hare Airport had sparked widespread public outrage over the way Dao was treated. About 20 hours after he fatally shot a state trooper, a Delaware man was shot to death following an overnight standoff with police. Texas A&M defensive end Myles Garrett was picked first overall by the Cleveland Browns in the NFL Draft.

One year ago: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eased its guidelines on the wearing of masks outdoors, saying fully vaccinated Americans didn't need to cover their faces anymore unless they were in a big crowd of strangers; those who were unvaccinated could also go outside without masks in some situations. President Joe Biden signed an executive order to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for federal contractors, providing a pay bump to hundreds of thousands of workers.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Anouk Aimee is 90. Rock musician Jim Keltner is 80. Rock singer Kate Pierson (The B-52's) is 74. R&B singer Herb Murrell (The Stylistics) is 73. Actor Douglas Sheehan is 73. Rock musician Ace Frehley is 71. West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice is 71. Pop singer Sheena Easton is 63. Actor James Le Gros (groh) is 60. Rock musician Rob Squires (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 57. Singer Mica (MEE'-shah) Paris is 53. Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., is 53. Actor David Lascher is 50. Actor Maura West is 50. Actor Sally Hawkins is 46. Rock singer Jim James (My Morning Jacket) is 44. Rock musician Patrick Hallahan (My Morning Jacket) is 44. Rock singer-musician Travis Meeks (Days of the New) is 43. Country musician John Osborne (Brothers Osborne) is 40. Actor Francis Capra is 39. Actor Ari Graynor is 39. Rock singer-musician Patrick Stump (Fall Out Boy) is 38. Actor Sheila Vand is 37. Actor Jenna Coleman is 36. Actor William Moseley is 35. Singer Lizzo is 34. Actor Emily Rios is 33. Singer Allison Iraheta is 30.