

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 1 of 71

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

[1- Ken's Help Wanted Ad](#)

[2- April Students of the Month](#)

[3- 2022-2023 South Dakota State FFA Officers](#)

[Elected](#)

[4- Groton Senior Citizens](#)

[4- Groton Garden Club](#)

[4- The Pantry is opening](#)

[5- Sales and property tax refund program open to senior citizens and citizens with disabilities](#)

[5- Weber Landscaping Ad](#)

[6- Something new at GDILIVE.COM](#)

[7- Jumbo Graduation Cards](#)

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

[9- Graduation Balloons](#)

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

[11- Groton City Council Meeting Agenda](#)

[12- South Dakota electric cooperatives assist](#)

[North Dakota following snow storms](#)

[13- Weather Pages](#)

[18- Daily Devotional](#)

[19- 2022 Community Events](#)

[20- Subscription Form](#)

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

Tuesday, May 3

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin potatoes, 3-bean salad, fruit cobbler, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Hashbrowns, pizza.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fries.

9:30 a.m.: Methodist Bible Study

1 p.m.: Track meet at Milbank

7 p.m.: Elementary Spring Concert

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 4

Senior Menu: Chicken Tetrastini, peas, honey fruit salad, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake bites.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tater tots.

Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Noon: Chamber Meeting at City Hall

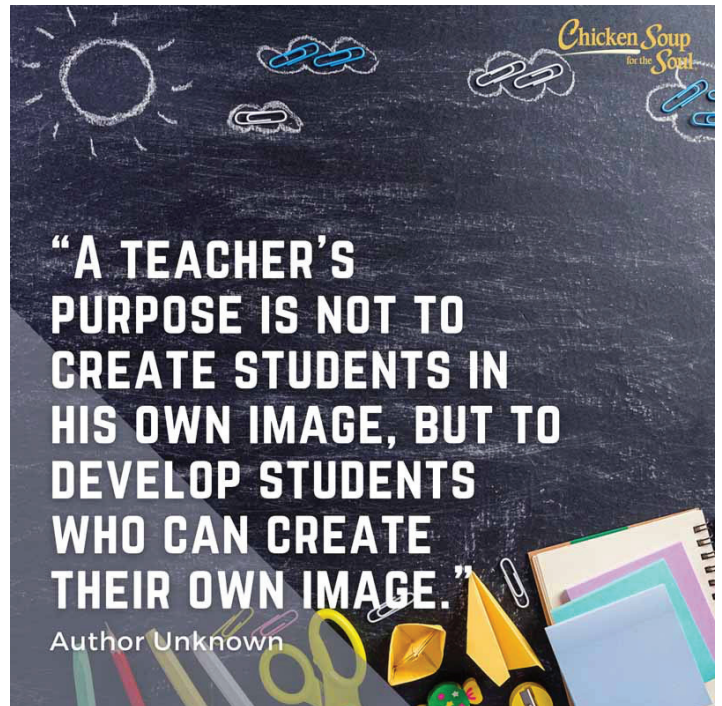
5 p.m.: Emmanuel Sarah Circle

6 p.m.: Emmanuel Confirmation

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Thursday, May 5 - National Day of Prayer

Senior Menu: Beef tips in gravy over noodles, peas, lettuce salad, fruit, whole wheat bread

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Taco burgers, spudsters

10 a.m.: Girls Golf at Moccasin Creek CC

2 p.m.: Emmanuel Nigeria Circle

7 p.m.: High School Spring Concert and Awards Night

Ken's HELP WANTED! Groton Store

**Part time cashier & part time deli.
Deli must be 18 years of age or older.
Apply at Ken's in Groton.**

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 2 of 71



April Students of the Month

The following have been selected as April MS/HS Student of the month for Groton Area.

Back left: Cadence Feist (10th), Trista Keith (12th), Andrew Marzahn (11th), Kaden Kampa (9th)

Front Left: Rylie Rose (6th), Mckenna Tietz (7th), Jerica Locke (8th)

Groton Area School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts, and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 3 of 71



2022-2023 South Dakota State FFA Officers Elected

To wrap up the 94th South Dakota State FFA Convention, six members were elected to serve as the 2022-2023 South Dakota State FFA officer team and two members were elected to serve as the 2022-2023 South Dakota State FFA ambassadors.

Candidates vied for the six South Dakota leadership roles and went through extensive interviews. The individuals elected to the South Dakota State FFA officer team will travel across the state throughout the next year presenting speeches, facilitating workshops, hosting camps, holding conferences and conducting business for the South Dakota FFA Association. They will also represent the state of South Dakota at the National FFA Convention.

2022-2023 State FFA Officers (pictured above, left to right)

- President – Ella Stiefvater, Salem
- Vice President – Megan Sanders, Oral
- Secretary – Kathryn Rausch, Hoven
- Treasurer – Jacob Olson, Aberdeen
- Reporter – Sidney Peterson, Sturgis
- Sentinel – Caleb McGregor, Webster

State FFA Ambassadors assist State Officers in hosting events throughout the year and are a crucial part of the South Dakota FFA Association.

2022-2023 State FFA Ambassadors (pictured in the right photo, left to right)

- Christina Zoellner, Groton
- Ella Monroe, Rapid City



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 4 of 71

Groton Senior Citizens

April 11 Groton Senior met for a meeting. Thirteen members were present. President Sarge Likness opened the meeting with Allegiance to the flag. Minutes and treasures report were read and accepted. Marilyn Thorson thanked for her get well card. Ruby Donovan volunteered to get the flowers for the center and plant them. Sarge Likness and Darlene Daly volunteered to help her plant them, Bev Sombke had a short quiz to answer, cards were played The winners of Pinochle- Elda Stange, Whist- Darlene Fischer, Canasta- Marilyn Thorson and Eunice McColister. Door prizes Ruby Donovan, Darlene Daly, and Elda Stange . Lunch was served by Elda Stange and Darlene Fischer.

April 18-22

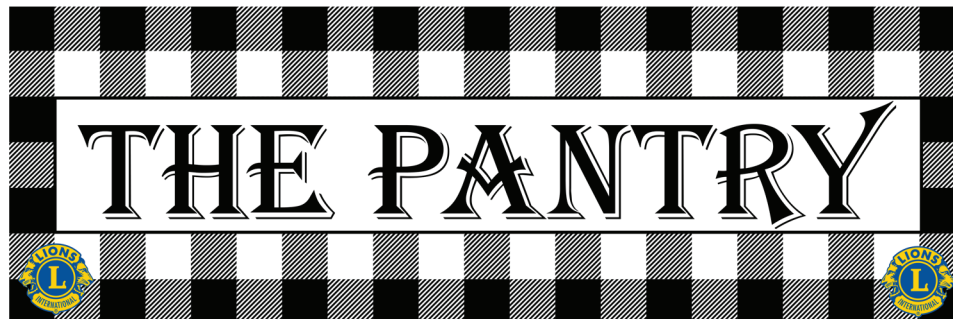
Groton Seniors met April 18 with 11 members were present. Cards were played, the winners of Pinochle- Ruby Donovan, Canasta - Pat Larson, Hearts- Darlene Fischer. Door prizes- Tony Goldade, Ruby Donovan, Balinda Nelson. Sarge Likness served cake before going home.

April 22-25

Groton seniors met for their pot luck dinner with 14 members were present. President Sarge Likness had the flag pledge and table prayer. Bingo and cards were played after dinner. Dick Donovan won blackout. Door prizes went to Arlys Kluess, Bev Sombke, and Tony Goldade. Before going home we celebrated Eunice McColister birthday with cake and ice cream. Bev Sombke made the cake.

Groton Garden Club

The Groton Garden Club met at the Community Center with Linda Anderson hosting. The pledge were recited in unison and role call was answered by nine members with what they did for Easter. Plans were made for a yard tour on June 25, with people in town volunteering their yards. Arbor Day will be celebrated in May or April 22, Arbor Day will be too cold. The next meeting will be May 16, at the home of Laurie Mitchell. Eunice McColister will have the program. Linda Anderson gave the program following the meeting "How to wake up your Garden."



Opening May 9th at the Groton Community Center

Mondays: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuesdays: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 5 of 71

Sales and property tax refund program open to senior citizens and citizens with disabilities

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota senior citizens and citizens with disabilities have until July 1 to apply for sales or property tax refunds under South Dakota's Tax Refund Program.

Under the program, certain individuals are able to receive a portion of the sales or property taxes they paid from the previous year if they meet the eligibility requirements.

To be eligible for the sales tax refund, individuals must meet the following qualifications:

Have incomes of less than \$13,653.00 for a single-member household (only one individual in the household) or less than \$18,465.00 for a multiple-member household

Be a South Dakota resident during all of 2021

Be 65 years of age on or before January 1, 2021, or disabled anytime during 2021

To be eligible for the property tax refund on their home, individuals must meet the sales tax requirements above along with the following qualifications:

Owned the house they are currently living in for at least 3 years

Owned their house for fewer than 3 years, but have been a South Dakota resident for 5 years or more

Deadline to apply for the program is July 1, 2022, and applications must be submitted by mail to the Tax Refund Office, 445 E Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3185.

[Applications are available at local county treasurer offices and on the Department of Revenue's website at https://dor.sd.gov/media/1ykdtbxi/2021-sales-property-tax-refund-elderly-disabled.pdf.](https://dor.sd.gov/media/1ykdtbxi/2021-sales-property-tax-refund-elderly-disabled.pdf)

For additional information on the tax refund program or other tax relief programs, please contact the Department of Revenue at 1-800-829-9188.

Weber Landscaping Greenhouse

204 N State St., Groton

Opening for the season on Friday, May 6th!



We have tons of hanging baskets, vegetables, annuals, garden seeds, gift cards and much more!



Livingston garden seeds!!!!

New products!
New Planters!

Hours: M-F 10-6, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-4
Look for the green flags! Questions? Call 605-380-6587

We're Trying Something New at

GDILIVE.COM

We know that it is sometimes hard to hear the kids at the concerts, so we're trying something new which has worked with our test events. If you have an FM headset, bring it to the concert and tune in to 89.3 FM.

You will be surprised at how well the audio is. We have a couple of microphones in front of the students to help enhance the audio. We will also have a few headsets available for you to use during the elementary concert. It's just another way to enhance the experience of GDILIVE.COM!

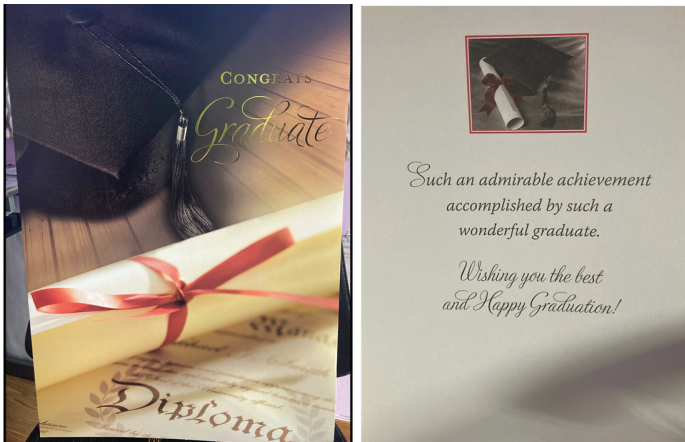
Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 7 of 71

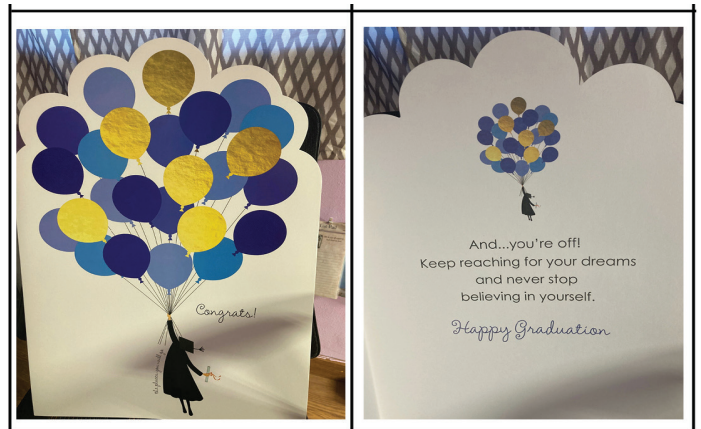
Jumbo Graduation Cards

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

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 8 of 71

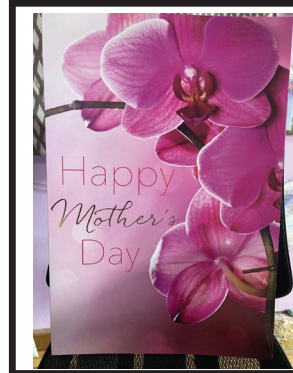
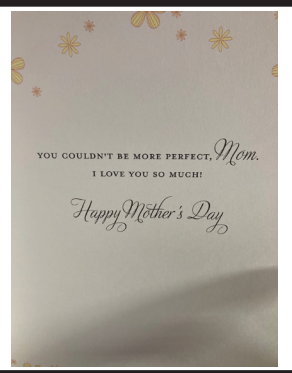
M
O
T
H
E
R
'
S
D
A
Y

J
U
M
B
O

C
A
R
D
S



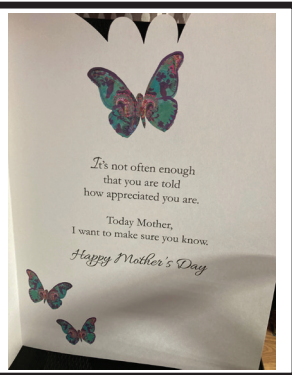
26477-75031



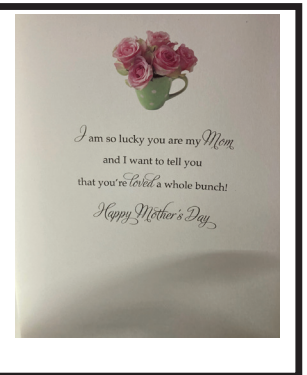
26477-74832



26477-74833



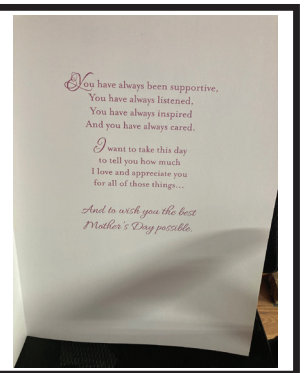
26477-75397



26477-75568



26477-73609



26477-75579



26477-75402



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 9 of 71



- NEWS
- LIVE
- FIT
- CLEAN
- RENT

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

Scan Code Below for
More Details



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"



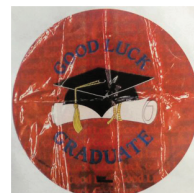
#14 - \$5



#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!

That's Life by Tony Bender

The boys of summer. Again

I fell asleep content, thinking about one of the things that makes America uniquely American—baseball. The Minnesota Twins, who stumbled out of the gate last season into a brick wall, were a bigger disappointment than you are to your in-laws, but as of Monday, they'd won 8 of 9.

I don't know... I don't know why we live vicariously through our favorite teams. I'm not going to psychoanalyze, but it probably goes back to our uncluttered childhoods. I adopted the Baltimore Orioles in grade school about the time I was learning the game myself, and I appreciated the way they played. Brooks Robinson, the human vacuum cleaner at third base. Boog Powell, the masher at first base. Four 20-game winners one year—Jim Palmer, Mike Cuellar, Dave McNally, and Pat Dobson—and that won't happen again. Plus, the O's had a banty rooster of a manager in Earl Weaver, who espoused a strategy of pitching and two-run homers. I clipped every box score.

I suppose one reason we fall in love with these games is that they're accessible and occasionally achievable. Once in a while, a hard-hit ball finds a hapless outfielder's glove even if his eyes are closed. Any duffer has a shot at a hole-in-one on a par 3. We've all bowled a strike.

I'd like to believe that I had more shining moments than my coach, Bob Fuhrman, ever acknowledged—he was a tough grader—but I remember ever *atta-boy*. Like the time I charged a sinking line drive in right field, caught it on one bounce, and threw the runner out, which in Babe Ruth Baseball counts as a minor miracle. Each time that batter came up the rest of the game, Bob reminded me, "Hey, you got him last time, Tony." Yeah, that felt pretty good.

And I remember the times he goaded me. In one tight game, after a particularly pathetic-looking swing, Bob called time-out, requiring me to make the embarrassing trek, the bleachers filled with fans, to third base where he was coaching.

"Well, can you hit him," he asked, adding derisively, "or should we bunt?"

"I can hit him," I snapped. And I did.

It's curious, the things we remember—the things that encourage us—and those memories serve as a reminder to be thoughtful in our interactions with others. Did Bob imagine that he was making memories? Nah, but he was trying to make us better, encouraging us.

He was old school. I was a smart-aleck. "Let's hear some chatter from the dugout," he yelled once. In response, I led the team in a mournful moan, something akin to a death rattle, really. Like we all had the same stomach ache. But we were pretty good and therefore, a lot cocky.

As I drifted off, I thought about my dad coming home bone-weary from his job at the Frederick Equity Exchange Elevator, but still mustering the energy from time-to-time to hit me fly balls up the street behind the Methodist Church. Or him teaching me to throw a knuckle ball.

Doug Krueger had developed a wicked knuckler by the time we were playing Legion ball, and he was a such a turd. He delighted in throwing this dancing, insane 85-mph Wiffle ball of a pitch... at batting practice! It's the only time I ever charged the mound. When was I ever going to see that pitch in a game? I guess it's funny now. I guess.

It's memories. It's the renewal of hope each spring; it comes in the season of hope. Everyone's a potential champion in May.

It's hard to give up. I played softball into my 30's, most memorably in Juneau, AK, where it rained. A lot. No game was ever called because of rain. I made one diving grab that nearly drowned me in right-center field as I hydroplaned almost to second base.

I never saw it, but my teammates swore it was true that during one deluge, the team pitcher, outfitted like the Gorton's fisherman in a slicker and waders, protested the game's continuance in the Great Flood. He glumly walked to his car between innings, came back and floated a duck decoy on pitcher's mound the next inning.

Look, I don't know if Babe Ruth really pointed at centerfield before homering there, either, but it's a good story and I'm going to keep telling it.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

May 3, 2022 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Minutes
3. Adjourn the 134th City Council
4. Convene the 135th City Council – Oath of Office
 - Election of Officers: President and Vice President
 - Appoint Advisory Committees
5. Appoint Attorney
6. Oath of Office – GPD Officer Tom Strickland
7. Motion to approve bills each meeting & authorize the Finance Officer to pay payroll and all regular monthly bills in a timely manner to avoid penalties and take advantage of discounts
8. Approval of Electricity Installation at Airport
9. Bills
10. Department Reports
11. 2021 Annual Report
12. Community Garden Discussion
13. Approval of Amended ARPA Funding Resolution
14. 2nd Reading of Ordinance No. 760 – Amending Rates for Municipal Utility Customers
15. Approval for Douglas Heinrich to attend Budget Training in Sioux Falls – June 29, 2022
16. Announcement – Regular garbage routes have resumed
17. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
18. Hiring of Summer Baseball Employees
19. Adjournment

South Dakota electric cooperatives assist North Dakota following snow storms



Four linemen from Northern Electric (Bath, SD) joined 22 other electric cooperative linemen from South Dakota to assist Burke Divide Electric Cooperative (Columbus, ND) after two snow storms swept through the region last week. Shown left to right are Collin Gades, Riley Whitley, Ben Peterson and Brian Hansen. (Courtesy Photo)

PIERRE – Several South Dakota electric cooperatives answered the call for assistance to restore power after a pair of late winter storms dumped up to five feet of snow in western and north central North Dakota last week.

A team of 26 linemen and their equipment were dispatched Monday morning from West River Electric, Grand Electric, Northern Electric, Lacreek Electric, Butte Electric and West Central Electric. The linemen were assigned to help repair the infrastructure of Burke Divide Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Columbus, ND.

The co-op reported that more than 1,700 poles and roughly 80 miles of power lines were damaged in the blizzard conditions. As of Monday afternoon, more than 800 BDEC members were still without power, and officials estimated that full restoration would likely take several weeks.

Supply shortages, logistical challenges and thick mud created by rain and melting snow could impact the timeline of the recovery effort.

fort.

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA), is assisting in coordinating the state's emergency response as the system honors its mutual aid agreement with cooperatives in North Dakota and throughout the region.

"We're always on standby to help a fellow cooperative in need. It's one of the things that sets cooperatives apart," Patterson said. "This has been an unusual weather event, but we're always prepared to respond. We never let our guard down because you never know what Mother Nature has in store. It's a privilege for us to be in a position to help the members of Burke Divide rebuild their system after this destructive blow to their power infrastructure and their community."

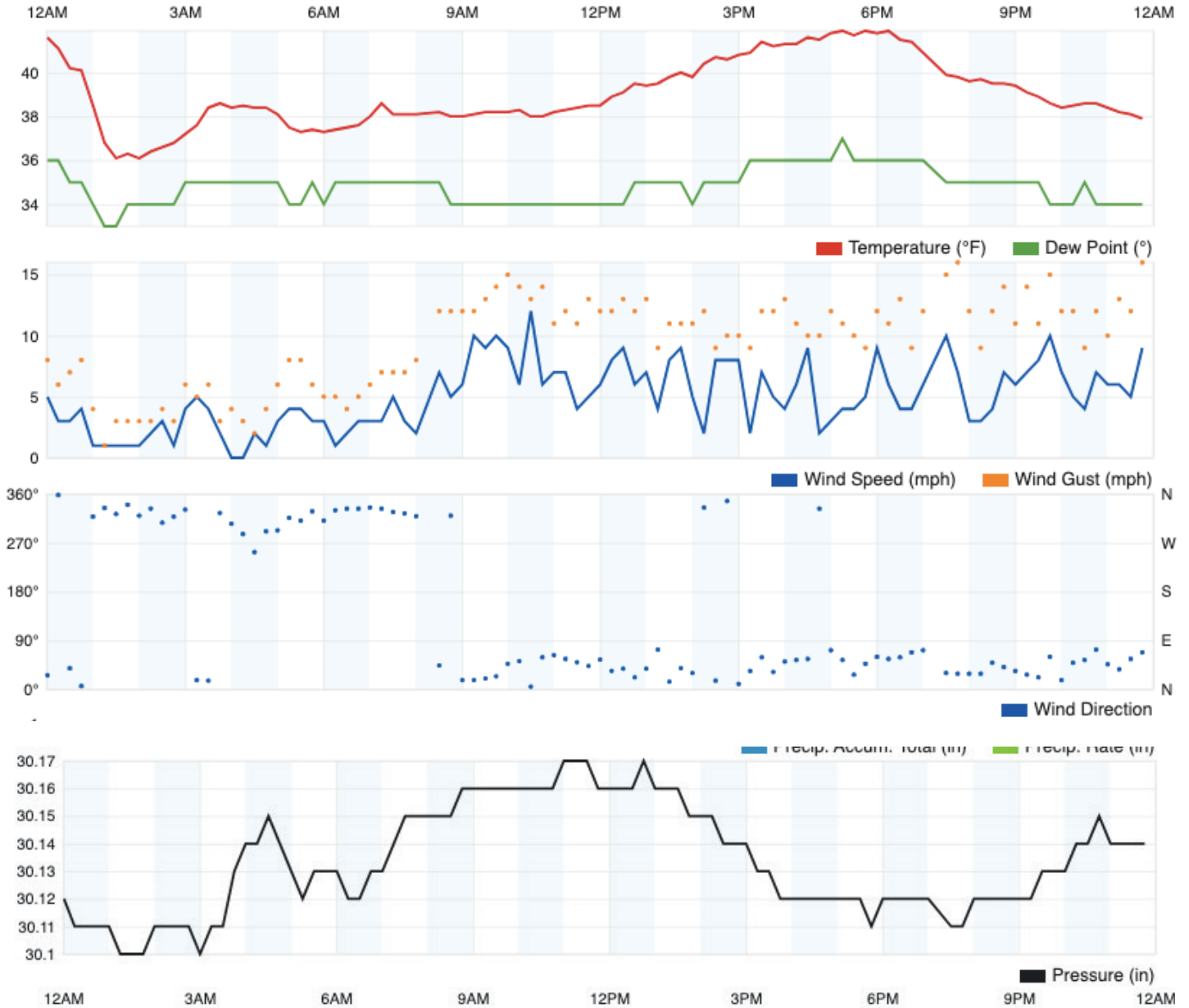
Overall, the storms impacted 14 electric cooperatives in the area and downed more than 4,000 poles and hundreds of miles of distribution and high-voltage transmission lines, as well as utility substations where snow drifts reached eight feet.

The South Dakota linemen will join more than 100 fellow co-op linemen in North Dakota, along with independent contractors, equipment suppliers and other emergency responders.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 13 of 71

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 14 of 71

Today



Decreasing
Clouds

High: 56 °F

Tonight



Increasing
Clouds

Low: 38 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 59 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 42 °F

Thursday



Partly Sunny

High: 63 °F

Warming through the Week

Today



50s

Wed



50s

Chance of
Rain, mainly
over central SD

Thu



60s

Fri



62 to 71°



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

NWS Aberdeen, South Dakota

Updated: 5/3/2022 5:15 AM Central

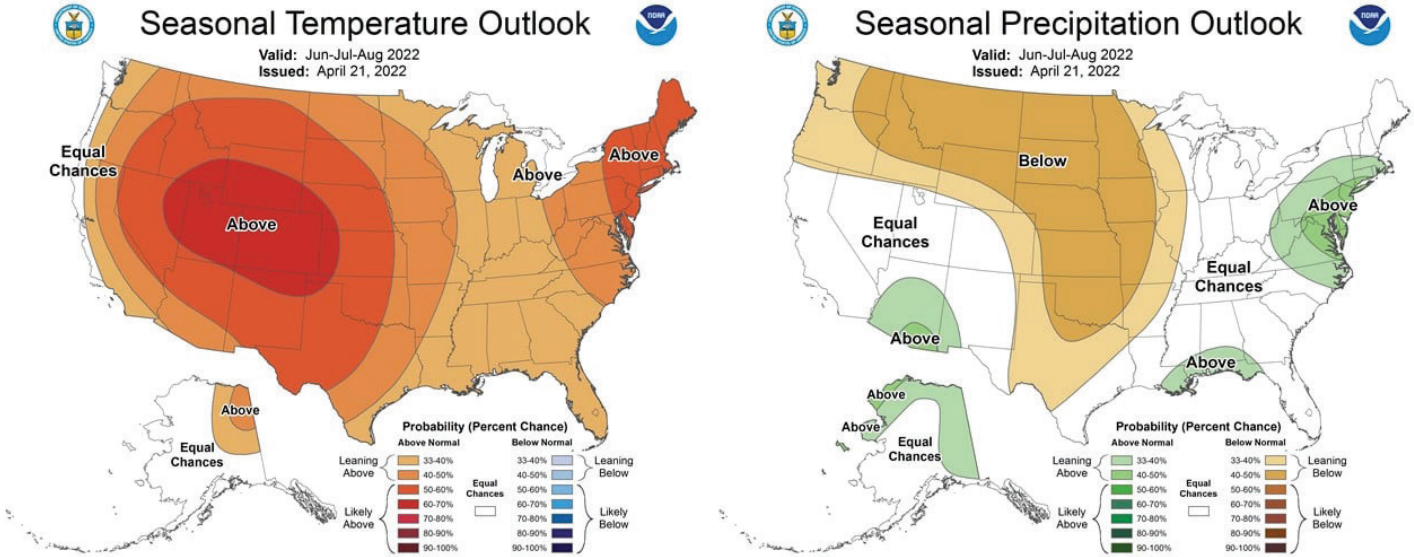
Temperatures will warm through the week. Expect highs in the 50s today and Wednesday, and mainly in the 60s by Friday. There is a chance of light rain over mainly central South Dakota Wednesday. Otherwise mainly dry weather will continue.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 15 of 71

Summer 2022 Outlook

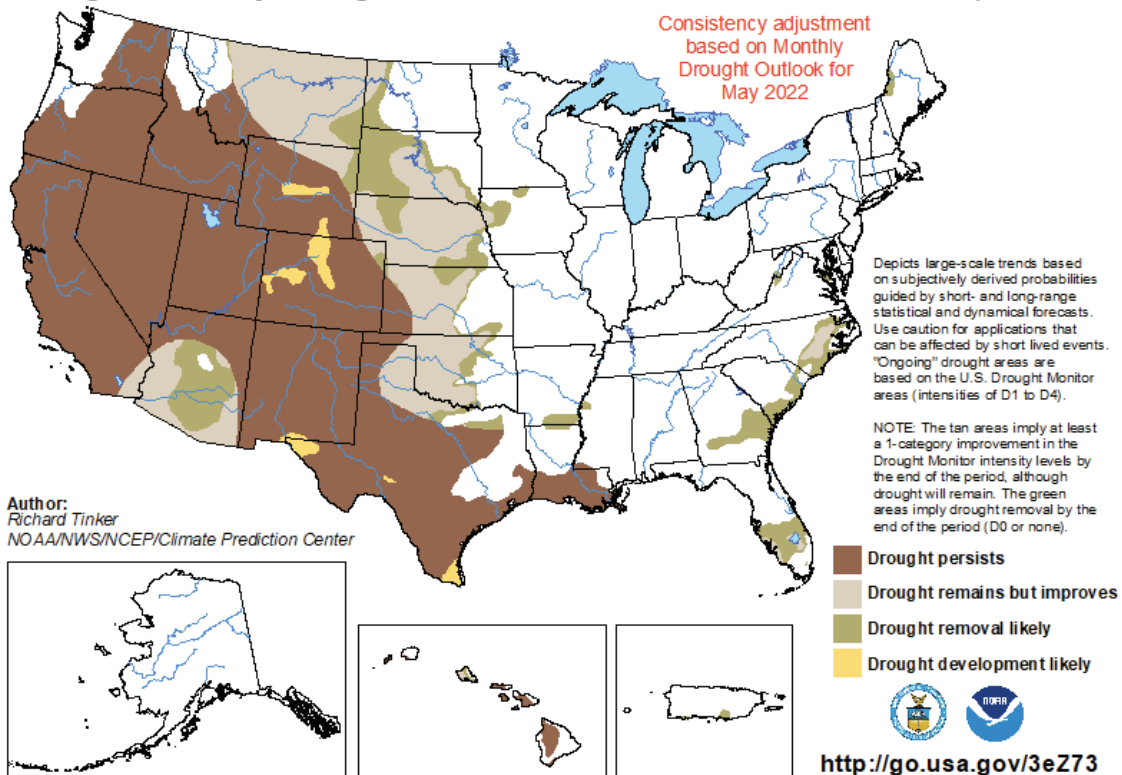
Meteorological summer, June, July and August, may be warmer and drier than normal across the region.



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook

Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for May 1 - July 31, 2022
Released April 30, 2022



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 16 of 71

Today in Weather History

May 3, 1895: A tornado moved northeast from 3 miles northwest of Redfield through Ashton. It was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles. Several homes were unroofed and barns destroyed. Tornadoes were spotted in Minnehaha and Bon Homme Counties in South Dakota.

May 3, 1907: The low temperature at Watertown fell to 16 degrees, making this coldest May temperature ever recorded Watertown.

May 3, 1960: Late season snowfall of 3 to 7 inches covered Perkins, Corson, and Campbell Counties. Lemmon reported 7 inches, and 6 miles SE of McIntosh had 6.5 inches. Main roads were very slippery and some rural roads impassable for about one day.

May 3, 1999: Two to four inches of rain fell across southeastern Dewey County causing flash flooding south of La Plant, mainly on Willow Creek. As a result of the flash flooding, several roads were underwater. Highway 212 south of La Plant was flooded for a few hours along with Highway 8, 15 miles south of La Plant. The flash flooding resulted in some road and bridge damage.

May 3, 2002: With low humidity, dry vegetation, and increasing South winds, embers from a day old controlled burn initiated a large grassland fire in the early afternoon hours west of Claremont. South winds of 30 to 40 mph gusting to 50 mph caused the fire to spread quickly. The fire extended to 4 miles wide and spread 4 miles north before it was contained late in the evening. Many trees along with a mobile home, an abandoned house, and an old barn burned. Seven miles of road had to be closed due to poor visibility from smoke. Eleven fire departments with nearly 150 firefighters extinguished the fire. The fire was completely put out during the afternoon hours of the 4th. This fire was one of the largest grassland fires in Brown County history.

1761: Large tornadoes swept through the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina when a British fleet of 40 sails was at anchor. The tornadoes raised a wave 12 feet high, leaving many vessels on their beam ends. Four people drowned.

1868: A tornado traveled 15 miles across Warren and Knox Counties, northwest of Galesburg, Illinois. The small town of Ionia, in Warren County, was destroyed. 16 homes and two churches in the city were leveled, along with 30 homes elsewhere. The tornado killed six people and injured 40 others. Many of the casualties occurred during a church service when the church roof was torn off and dropped onto the congregation.

1895: In Sioux County, Iowa an exceptionally violent tornado, at times 1,000 yards wide packing winds estimated at over 250 mph moved from three miles north of Ireton to two miles southwest of Hull hitting four schools. Two school houses several miles apart were leveled, killing teachers and students. Sibling teachers were killed at two different schools. Adjoining farms were also destroyed with several deaths in homes.

1999: There were 63 tornadoes in Oklahoma, making this the worst outbreak ever to strike the state. In Central Oklahoma alone, eight individual supercell thunderstorms produced 57 tornadoes. Bridge Creek, Moore and southern parts of the Oklahoma City Metro area were hit the hardest. When it was near Moore, Oklahoma, a truck-mounted Doppler radar measured a wind speed of 318 mph, the highest ever observed in a tornado. Forecasters at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK were faced with the unprecedented situation of a major tornado on the ground threatening their location. As a major F5 tornado was approaching the Oklahoma City metro area from the southwest, the SPC notified its backup, the Air Force Weather Agency at Offutt AFB in Omaha, Nebraska that they might have to assume operational responsibility if the tornado approached Norman. The storm remained several miles west of the facility but was visible from the SPC roof. Damage from this single tornado was around one billion dollars, making it the most costly tornado in history. Estimated damage from the entire tornado outbreak was \$1.485 billion, making this the most expensive tornado outbreak ever. 2,314 homes were destroyed, and another 7,428 were damaged. To the north in Kansas, an F4 tornado tracked 24 miles through Sumner and Sedgwick Counties, killing 6, injuring 154, and causing \$146 million in damages. Haysville and Wichita suffered severe damage. A total of 8,480 buildings and homes were damaged or destroyed with, 109 destroyed.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 17 of 71

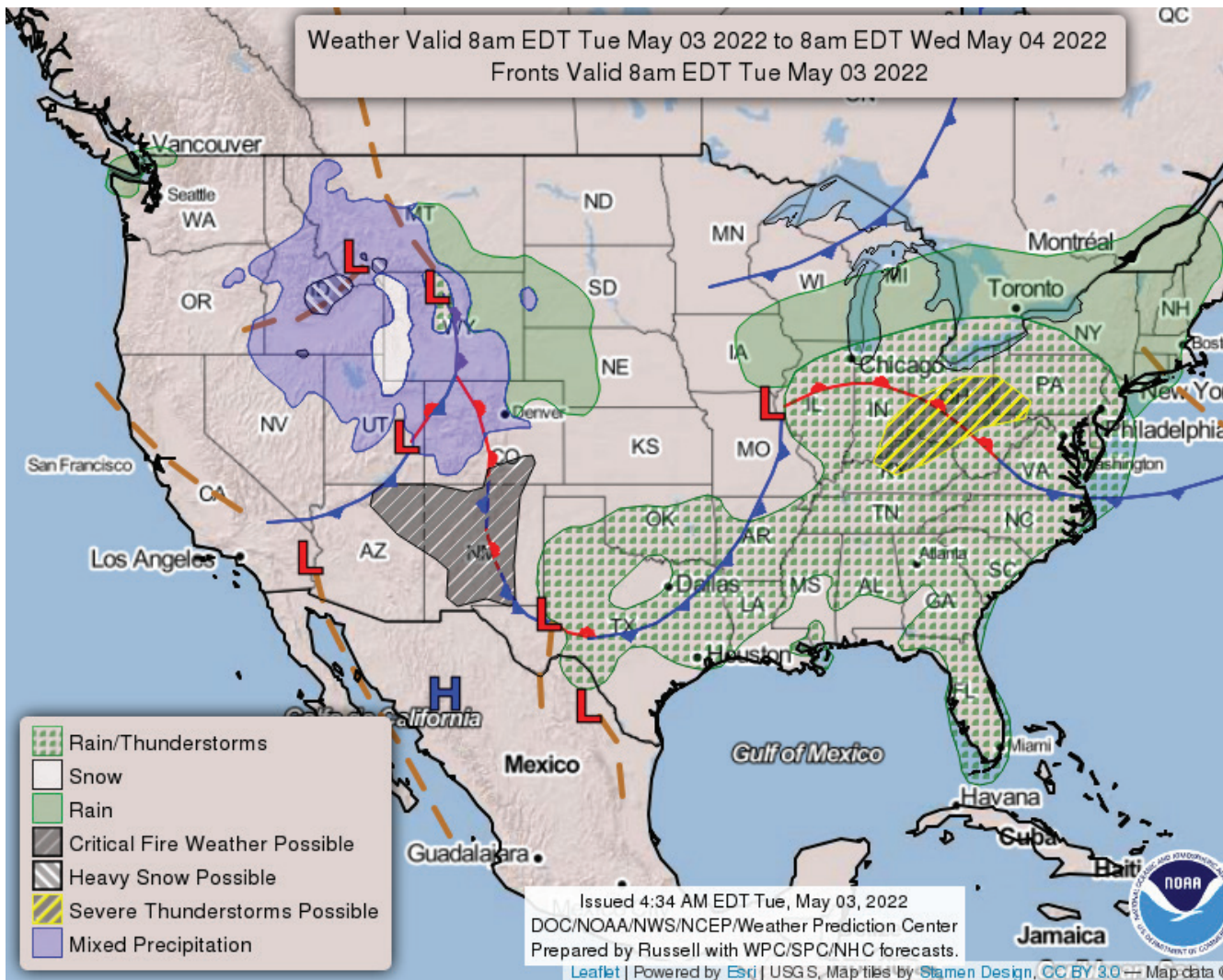
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 42 °F at 5:17 PM
Low Temp: 36 °F at 1:30 AM
Wind: 17 mph at 8:51 PM
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 27 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1952
Record Low: 13 in 2005
Average High: 65°F
Average Low: 39°F
Average Precip in May.: 0.33
Precip to date in May.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 4.30
Precip Year to Date: 6.50
Sunset Tonight: 8:43:02 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:14:00 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 18 of 71



UNSHAKEN!

Watching the occasional stories of the construction of the new World Trade Center in New York was a fascinating experience. Did you notice, however, that before they could go up, they had to go down - way down? It is an obvious law of gravity as well as one of construction: The only way to assure that a building will survive an earthquake or strong winds during a storm is to build it on a foundation that is firm. And only a life that has a firm foundation will be able to withstand the storms and tests of time and life.

Many of us, unfortunately, give little thought to this critical fact of life. We put all of our time and treasures into the "visible" parts of our life and neglect and ignore our foundation.

But storms and tests come to everyone. They are inevitable. They come in the form of troubles and tragedies, suffering and sickness, loss and grief. Regardless of the amount we invest in the "superstructure," life will collapse without a firm foundation.

So, we all face the same question: What is essential for the foundation of a life that will survive the storms and tests of life? A wise "builder" put it in one sentence: "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever!"

Those who put their "trust in the Lord" are not only secure and safe but guarded and grounded in the One who created Mount Zion. In emphasizing this fact, the Psalmist continued his explanation of this by adding, "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people both now and always."

What an incredible picture: The God who pushed mountains from the floor of the earth to surround and protect His children in Jerusalem is waiting to surround and protect us from the disasters of life. If we want a solid foundation, we have it: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid: Christ Jesus!"

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for the assurance of Your protection, presence, and power that guarantee our safety throughout life. You are a firm foundation. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. Psalm 125:1

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 19 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

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 20 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 Monday:

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$57 million

Powerball

18-27-33-39-44, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 5

(eighteen, twenty-seven, thirty-three, thirty-nine, forty-four; Powerball: eight; Power Play: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$27 million

South Dakota ethics board grinds forward on Noem complaints

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota ethics board on Monday moved to hire an outside attorney as it considers a pair of ethics complaints against Gov. Kristi Noem, delaying its decision on whether to investigate allegations the governor interfered in a state agency evaluating her daughter's application for a real estate appraiser license and misused state airplanes.

After meeting for roughly an hour in a closed-door executive session, the retired judges who sit on the Government Accountability Board decided they needed legal advice, but that it shouldn't come from the lawyer who usually advises the board because she works in the attorney general's office. That lawyer, Katie Mallery, has been recused from legal matters in the complaints.

Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, who is a Republican like Noem, initiated the complaints after media reports on Noem's actions in office. The board's decision Monday was a procedural move as it approaches a key juncture for the complaints.

The board requested in February that Noem respond to the complaints and will eventually decide whether they should dismiss or investigate them.

"We have not yet made an initial determination, and so we're going to consult with an attorney about that," said the board's chair Lori Wilbur, a retired Supreme Court justice.

The board's consideration of the complaints has stretched since last year and happened entirely in private meetings. Democratic Rep. Linda Duba, who was at Monday's meeting, expressed frustration at the laws governing the board, which was created in 2017 but has never handled high-profile allegations against the state's top official.

"For a law that was passed that was supposed to provide transparency, we're in the dark," she said.

The Associated Press reported that the governor took a hands-on role in the appraiser certification agency while it was evaluating her daughter's application for an appraiser license in 2020. Just days after the Department of Labor and Regulation moved to deny her daughter's application, Noem called a meeting with her daughter, the labor secretary and the then-director of the appraiser certification program.

The agency's director, Sherry Bren, told a legislative committee last year that she felt "intimidated" at the meeting, where she said Peters' unsuccessful application was discussed in detail and a plan was formulated that gave her another chance to apply. Noem's office, defending the governor's conduct, has said the plan was already in the works before the meeting.

The attorney general's other complaint was sparked by a report from Raw Story, an online news website. Noem in 2019 had used state airplanes to travel to events held by political organizations including the National Rifle Association and the Republican Jewish Coalition, even though South Dakota law bars their use for anything other than state business.

Noem, who faces reelection this year and has positioned herself as a 2024 White House aspirant, called the reports a political attack.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 22 of 71

In her daughter's case, she said she was working to "cut red tape" to solve a shortage of appraisers. She said she was acting as an ambassador for the state in her use of state airplanes.

Aid workers prep stretchers, toys for Mariupol evacuees

By CARA ANNA and YESICA FISCH Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine (AP) — Aid workers prepared hot food, wheelchairs and toys Tuesday for civilians slowly making their way to relative safety from the pulverized remnants of a steel plant in the city of Mariupol, besieged for months by Russian forces.

The plant is the last holdout of Ukrainian resistance in a city that is otherwise controlled by Moscow's forces and key to their campaign in Ukraine's east. A senior U.S. official warned that Russia is planning to annex much of the country's east later this month.

At a reception center, stretchers and wheelchairs were lined up, tiny children's shoes dangled from a shopping cart and a pile of toys waited for the first convoy of civilians whose evacuation is being overseen by the United Nations and Red Cross.

Their arrival would represent a rare glimmer of good news in the nearly 10-week war sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine that has killed thousands, forced millions to flee the country, laid waste to towns and cities, and shifted the post-Cold War balance of power in eastern Europe.

More than 100 people — including elderly women and mothers with small children — left Mariupol's rubble-strewn Azovstal steelworks over the weekend and set out in buses and ambulances.

At least some were apparently taken to a village controlled by Russia-backed separatists. The Russian military said some chose to stay in separatist areas. In the past, Ukraine has accused Moscow's troops of taking civilians against their will to Russia or Russian-controlled areas — something the Kremlin has denied.

Others left for the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia, some 140 miles (230 kilometers) northwest of Mariupol. It was not clear why the evacuees' journey was taking so long, but the convoy likely had to pass through heavily contested areas and many checkpoints.

Mariupol has come to symbolize the human misery inflicted by the war. A Russian siege has trapped civilians with little access to food, water and electricity, as Moscow's forces pounded the city to rubble. The plant — where about 1,000 civilians sought shelter along with some 2,000 fighters who have refused to surrender — has particularly transfixed the outside world.

Mariupol Deputy Mayor Sergei Orlov told the BBC that high-level negotiations were underway among Ukraine, Russia and international organizations on evacuating more people. But Russia resumed its bombardment of the sprawling plant by air, tank and ship after the partial evacuation, Ukraine's Azov Battalion, whose fighters are holed up in the mill, said Monday on the Telegram messaging app.

After failing to take Kyiv in the early weeks of the war, Russia withdrew some of its forces and then said it would switch its focus to Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of the Donbas. Mariupol lies in the region, and its capture would deprive Ukraine of a vital port, allow Russia to establish a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, and free up troops for fighting elsewhere in the Donbas.

Michael Carpenter, U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said Monday that the U.S. believes the Kremlin plans to annex much of eastern Ukraine and recognize the southern city of Kherson as an independent republic. Neither move would be recognized by the United States or its allies, he said.

Russia is planning to hold sham referendums in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the Donbas that would "try to add a veneer of democratic or electoral legitimacy" and attach the entities to Russia, Carpenter said. He also said there were signs that Russia would engineer an independence vote in Kherson.

Mayors and local legislators there have been abducted, internet and cellphone service has been severed and a Russian school curriculum will soon be imposed, Carpenter said. Ukraine's government says Russia has introduced its ruble as currency there.

Getting a full picture of the unfolding battle in the east has been difficult because airstrikes and artillery

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 23 of 71

barrages have made it extremely dangerous for reporters to move around. Both Ukraine and the Moscow-backed rebels fighting in the east have introduced tight restrictions on reporting.

But so far, Russia's troops and their allied separatist forces appear to have made only minor gains, taking several small towns as they try to advance in relatively small groups against staunch Ukrainian resistance.

In its daily Twitter statement on the war, the British military said Tuesday it believes the Russian military is now "significantly weaker" after suffering losses in its war on Ukraine.

"Recovery from this will be exacerbated by sanctions," the ministry said. "Failures both in strategic planning and operational execution have left it unable to translate numerical strength into decisive advantage."

Ukraine's resistance has been significantly bolstered by Western arms and other aid, and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was expected to announce hundreds of millions of pounds in new military support to Kyiv in a speech to Ukraine's parliament Tuesday.

In the remote address, he is expected to echo the words of Britain's World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill by calling Ukraine's defiant response to the Russian invasion the country's "finest hour."

Pope Francis was quoted Tuesday in an Italian newspaper as saying that he offered to travel to Moscow to meet President Vladimir Putin about three weeks into the invasion. The pontiff told Corriere della Sera that he has not received a response.

On Monday, Ukraine said Russia struck a strategic road and rail bridge west of Odesa, a major Black Sea port. The bridge was heavily damaged in previous Russian strikes, and its destruction would cut a supply route for weapons and other cargo from neighboring Romania.

A satellite image captured by Planet Labs PBC and analyzed by The Associated Press showed the bridge still standing as of noon Monday.

Another image, taken Monday, showed nearly 50 Russian military helicopters at Stary Oskol, a Russian base close to the Ukrainian border and some 175 kilometers (110 miles) northeast of the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv.

Highlighting the toll of the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday that at least 220 Ukrainian children have been killed by the Russian army since the war began, and 1,570 educational institutions have been destroyed or damaged. He also noted that some people trying to escape the fighting are afraid they'll be taken to Russia or Russian-controlled areas.

More than 1 million people, including nearly 200,000 children, have been taken from Ukraine to Russia, Russia's Defense Ministry said Monday, according to state-owned news agency TASS. Defense Ministry official Mikhail Mizintsev said that number included 11,550 people in the previous 24 hours, "without the participation of the Ukrainian authorities."

Zelenskyy said that the U.N. assured him people fleeing Mariupol would be allowed to go to areas his government controls.

Separate from the official evacuations, some Mariupol residents left on their own, often in damaged private cars.

As sunset approached Monday, Mariupol resident Yaroslav Dmytryshyn rattled up to a reception center in Zaporizhzhia in a car with a back seat full of youngsters and two signs taped to the back window: "Children" and "Little ones."

"I can't believe we survived," he said, looking worn but in good spirits after two days on the road.

"There is no Mariupol whatsoever," he said. "Someone needs to rebuild it, and it will take millions of tons of gold."

Missouri execution would be just fifth this year in the US

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

A man whose death sentence for killing a Missouri couple while robbing their home was overturned three times was scheduled to be executed on Tuesday.

Carman Deck, 56, would be just the fifth U.S. inmate to be executed this year if his lethal injection goes ahead. His hopes for a reprieve were all but dashed on Monday when the U.S. Supreme Court turned

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 24 of 71

aside an appeal and Republican Gov. Mike Parson declined Deck's clemency request, though he could file new appeals.

Deck, who was from the St. Louis area, was a friend of the grandson of James and Zelma Long and knew they kept a safe in their home De Soto, about 45 miles (72 kilometers) southwest of St. Louis, according to court records.

In July 1996, Deck and his sister stopped at the home under the guise of asking for directions. Deck told a detective that he wasn't surprised to be invited inside by the couple, who were in their late 60s.

"They're country folks," Deck said, according to court records. "They always do."

Once inside, Deck pulled a gun from his waistband. At Deck's command, Zelma Long opened the safe and removed jewelry, then got \$200 from her purse and more money hidden in a canister.

Deck ordered the couple to lie on their stomachs on their bed. Court records said Deck stood there for 10 minutes deciding what to do, then shot James Long twice in the head before doing the same thing to Zelma Long.

A tip alerted police to Deck and he was arrested later that night outside his sister's apartment building in St. Louis County. The decorative tin canister from the Long home was in his car.

Prosecutors said Deck later gave a full account of the killings. He was sentenced to death in 1998, but the Missouri Supreme Court tossed the sentence due to errors by Deck's trial lawyer.

He was condemned to death a second time, but the U.S. Supreme Court threw out the sentence in 2005, citing the prejudice caused by Deck being shackled in front of the jury.

He was sentenced to death for a third time in 2008, but U.S. District Judge Catherine Perry overturned that sentence nine years later after she determined that "substantial" evidence arguing against the death penalty during Deck's first two penalty phases was unavailable for the third because witnesses had died, couldn't be found or declined to cooperate.

In October 2020, a three-judge panel of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals restored the death penalty, ruling that Deck should have raised his concern first in state court, not federal court. Appeals of that ruling were unsuccessful.

Deck's clemency petition said he suffered sexual abuse and beatings as a child, and that he and his siblings were often left alone without food.

But Parson wasn't swayed, explaining his rationale for rejecting the petition in a news release: "Mr. Deck has received due process, and three separate juries of his peers have recommended sentences of death for the brutal murders he committed."

The number of executions in the U.S. has declined significantly since peaking at 98 in 1998. The drop has coincided with a decline in public support for capital punishment that has fallen from a high of 80% in 1994 to 54% in 2021, according to Gallup polls. Since the mid-1990s, opposition to capital punishment has risen from under 20% to about 45%.

Just four people have been executed in 2022 — Donald Anthony Grant and Gilbert Ray Postelle in Oklahoma, Matthew Reeves in Alabama and Carl Wayne Buntion last month in Texas. All four were convicted killers who were put to death by injection. Eleven people were executed in the U.S. last year, which was the country's fewest executions since 1988.

Use of the death penalty has become concentrated mostly in a few Southern and Plains states. Last year, Texas executed three inmates, Oklahoma executed two, and one each were put to death in Alabama, Mississippi and Missouri. Three federal inmates were executed in January 2021, toward the end of President Donald Trump's administration.

On Monday, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee paused executions for the rest of the year to enable a review of lethal injection procedures after a testing oversight forced the state to call off the execution of Oscar Smith an hour before he was to die on April 21.

Report: Draft opinion suggests high court could overturn Roe

By MARK SHERMAN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 25 of 71

WASHINGTON (AP) — A draft opinion suggests the U.S. Supreme Court could be poised to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide, according to a Politico report.

A decision to overrule Roe would lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states and could have huge ramifications for this year's elections. But it's unclear if the draft represents the court's final word on the matter — opinions often change in ways big and small in the drafting process.

Whatever the outcome, the Politico report late Monday represents an extremely rare breach of the court's secretive deliberation process, and on a case of surpassing importance.

"Roe was egregiously wrong from the start," the draft opinion states. It was signed by Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the court's 6-3 conservative majority who was appointed by former President George W. Bush.

The document was labeled a "1st Draft" of the "Opinion of the Court" in a case challenging Mississippi's ban on abortion after 15 weeks, a case known as Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization.

The court is expected to rule on the case before its term ends in late June or early July.

The draft opinion in effect states there is no constitutional right to abortion services and would allow individual states to more heavily regulate or outright ban the procedure.

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled," it states, referencing the 1992 case Planned Parenthood v. Casey that affirmed Roe's finding of a constitutional right to abortion services but allowed states to place some constraints on the practice. "It is time to heed the Constitution and return the issue of abortion to the people's elected representatives."

A Supreme Court spokeswoman said the court had no comment and The Associated Press could not immediately confirm the authenticity of the draft Politico posted, which dates from February.

Politico said only that it received "a copy of the draft opinion from a person familiar with the court's proceedings in the Mississippi case along with other details supporting the authenticity of the document."

The draft opinion strongly suggests that when the justices met in private shortly after arguments in the case on Dec. 1, at least five voted to overrule Roe and Casey, and Alito was assigned the task of writing the court's majority opinion.

Votes and opinions in a case aren't final until a decision is announced or, in a change wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, posted on the court's website.

The report comes amid a legislative push to restrict abortion in several Republican-led states — Oklahoma being the most recent — even before the court issues its decision. Critics of those measures have said low-income women will disproportionately bear the burden of the new restrictions.

The leak jumpstarted the intense political reverberations that the high court's ultimate decision was expected to have in the midterm election year. Already, politicians on both sides of the aisle were seizing on the report to fundraise and energize their supporters on either side of the hot-button issue.

An AP-NORC poll in December found that Democrats increasingly see protecting abortion rights as a high priority for the government.

Other polling shows relatively few Americans want to see Roe overturned. In 2020, AP VoteCast found that 69% of voters in the presidential election said the Supreme Court should leave the Roe v. Wade decision as is; just 29% said the court should overturn the decision. In general, AP-NORC polling finds a majority of the public favors abortion being legal in most or all cases.

Still, when asked about abortion policy generally, Americans have nuanced attitudes on the issue, and many don't think that abortion should be possible after the first trimester or that women should be able to obtain a legal abortion for any reason.

Alito, in the draft, said the court can't predict how the public might react and shouldn't try. "We cannot allow our decisions to be affected by any extraneous influences such as concern about the public's reaction to our work," Alito wrote in the draft opinion, according to Politico.

People on both sides of the issue quickly gathered outside the Supreme Court waving signs and chanting on a balmy spring night, following the release of the Politico report.

Reaction was swift from elected officials in Congress and across the country.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 26 of 71

In a joint statement from Congress' top two Democrats, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said, "If the report is accurate, the Supreme Court is poised to inflict the greatest restriction of rights in the past fifty years — not just on women but on all Americans."

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, also a Democrat, said people seeking abortions could head to New York. "For anyone who needs access to care, our state will welcome you with open arms. Abortion will always be safe & accessible in New York," Hochul said in a tweet.

Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch said in a statement, "We will let the Supreme Court speak for itself and wait for the Court's official opinion." But local officials were praising the draft.

"This puts the decision making back into the hands of the states, which is where it should have always been," said Mississippi state Rep. Becky Currie.

Congress could act, too, though a bill that would write Roe's protections into federal law stalled in the Senate after passing the House last year with only Democratic votes.

At Supreme Court arguments in December, all six conservative justices signaled that they would uphold the Mississippi law, and five asked questions that suggested that overruling Roe and Casey was a possibility.

Only Chief Justice John Roberts seemed prepared to take the smaller step of upholding the 15-week ban, though that too would be a significant weakening of abortion rights.

Until now, the court has allowed states to regulate but not ban abortion before the point of viability, around 24 weeks.

The court's three liberal justices seemed likely to be in dissent.

It's impossible to know what efforts are taking place behind the scenes to influence any justice's vote. If Roberts is inclined to allow Roe to survive, he need only pick off one other conservative vote to deprive the court of a majority to overrule the abortion landmark.

Twenty-six states are certain or likely to ban abortion if Roe v. Wade is overturned, according to the pro-abortion rights think tank the Guttmacher Institute. Of those, 22 states already have total or near-total bans on the books that are currently blocked by Roe, aside from Texas. The state's law banning it after six weeks has already been allowed to go into effect by the Supreme Court due to its unusual civil enforcement structure. Four more states are considered likely to quickly pass bans if Roe is overturned.

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia, meanwhile, have protected access to abortion in state law.

This year, anticipating a decision overturning or gutting Roe, eight conservative states have already moved to restrict abortion rights. Oklahoma, for example, passed several bills in recent weeks, including one that goes into effect this summer making it a felony to perform an abortion. Like many anti-abortion bills passed in GOP-led states this year, it does not have exceptions for rape or incest, only to save the life of the mother.

Eight Democratic-leaning states protected or expanded access to the procedure, including California, which has passed legislation making the procedure less expensive and is considering other bills to make itself an "abortion sanctuary" if Roe is overturned.

The draft looked legitimate to some followers of the court. Veteran Supreme Court lawyer Neal Katyal, who worked as a clerk to Justice Stephen Breyer and therefore has been in a position to see drafts, wrote on Twitter: "There are lots of signals the opinion is legit. The length and depth of analysis, would be very hard to fake. It says it is written by Alito and definitely sounds like him."

Lawmakers in 19 states want legal refuge for trans youth

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Democratic lawmakers in more than a dozen states are following California's lead in seeking to offer legal refuge to displaced transgender youth and their families.

The coordinated effort being announced Tuesday by the LGBTQ Victory Institute and other advocates comes in response to recent actions taken in conservative states. In Texas, for example, Gov. Gregg Abbott has directed state agencies to consider placing transgender children in foster care, though a judge has temporarily blocked such investigations. And multiple states have approved measures prohibiting

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 27 of 71

gender-affirming health care treatments for transgender youth.

To combat such moves, lawmakers in both Minnesota and New York recently filed refuge state legislation modeled after the bill proposed in March by state Sen. Scott Wiener in California. Democrats in 16 other states plan to follow suit, though about half of their legislatures are out of session or not currently accepting new bills.

Wiener said he immediately began hearing from other states after coming forward with his bill, which would reject any out-of-state court judgments removing children from their parents' custody because they allowed gender-affirming health care. It also would make arrest warrants based on alleged violation of another state's law against receiving such care the lowest priority for California law enforcement.

"We're sick of just playing defense against what these red states are doing," Wiener said in an interview Monday. "We're going on offense, we're going to protect LGBTQ kids and their families and we're going to build a rainbow wall to protect our community."

Also joining the effort are LGBTQ lawmakers in Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia.

Annie Parker, president and CEO of the Victory Institute, acknowledged that the legislation likely will fail in some states but said it was time to stand against the onslaught of bills targeting the LGBTQ community.

"This is our opportunity to drive the conversation and the debate, and to call on our allies proactively to step up instead of allowing ourselves to be targeted," said Parker, who was the first openly LGBTQ mayor of a major American city when she led Houston for six years.

"We would love to see these bills in states where there are more progressive legislatures," she said. "But we also think it's important that trans kids and their families out there see and hear legislators from our community standing up and defending them."

Wiener said it is despicable that any family would have to consider moving to a new state to protect a child, but if that happens, he hopes as many states as possible will welcome them.

"When your kid is being threatened with removal from your home, families are going to consider a lot of different options, and we just want to be clear that if you decide that's the option for you, we're going to do everything we can do to welcome you and protect you," he said.

Court that rarely leaks does so now in biggest case in years

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court keeps secrets. Year after year, in major case after major case, there's little beyond what the justices say during oral arguments that suggests how they will rule until they actually do.

That is, apparently, until Monday evening when Politico published what it said is a draft of an opinion in a major abortion case that was argued in the fall. While there have, on very rare occasions, been leaks of the outcomes in cases, the publication of an apparent draft running nearly 100 pages was without an evident modern parallel.

The draft says that a majority of the court is prepared to overrule the landmark 1973 decision, *Roe v. Wade*, that legalized abortion nationwide. A decision in the case had been expected before the court begins its summer recess in late June or early July, so it could be more than a month before the court actually issues a final opinion. If the court does what the draft suggests, the ruling would upend a nearly 50-year-old decision; its advance publication would also disturb an almost unbroken tradition of secrecy at the court.

The document posted by Politico, which The Associated Press could not independently verify but which some court watchers said appeared legitimate, says the court's opinion is delivered by Justice Samuel Alito. It also says the draft was distributed to other members of the court in February. Alito is a member of the court's six-justice conservative majority.

Lawyers and others who watch the court closely were shocked. Neal Katyal, who has argued dozens of cases before the court and as a young lawyer worked for Justice Stephen Breyer, compared the appar-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 28 of 71

ent leak to The New York Times' 1971 publication of the government's secret history of the Vietnam War, known as the Pentagon Papers.

"This is the equivalent of the pentagon papers leak, but at the Supreme Court. I'm pretty sure there has never ever been such a leak. And certainly not in the years I've been following the Supreme Court," Katyal wrote on Twitter.

Part of the reason the Supreme Court has historically been so leak-proof is that only a handful of people have access to decisions before they're published. That includes the justices themselves and the small group of people who work for them. The justices' clerks, young lawyers who work for the justices for a year and who would be among those who could see a draft opinion, sign pledges of confidentiality.

Still, there have been leaks before, though not of the apparent magnitude of the document posted by Politico. In 1973, for example, Time magazine's David Beckwith reported on the outcome of Roe v. Wade before the decision was published. But because the magazine was a weekly, Beckwith's scoop arrived just hours before the decision was made public.

And in the late 1970s, ABC's Tim O'Brien had a half a dozen scoops on rulings. The reports both astonished and upset the justices, according to a book by Barrett McGurn, the court's former public information officer. It was unclear where O'Brien was getting his information, though then-Chief Justice Warren Burger suspected someone in the court's print shop, who would have had access to the rulings.

It was similarly unclear who might have leaked the apparent draft to Politico or what their motivations might be. The news outlet said only that it had "received a copy of the draft opinion from a person familiar with the court's proceedings ... along with other details supporting the authenticity of the document."

University of Georgia professor Jonathan Peters, who has written about leaks at the court, has noted that Roe isn't the only high-profile case where there's been a leak. The New York Tribune, for example, published a "running account of the court's deliberations in Dred Scott," the infamous 1857 decision that declared African Americans couldn't be citizens.

"Supreme Court leaks are rare, but they are hardly unprecedented," Peters wrote in 2012. "The court, just like our other public institutions, is made up of political animals. We shouldn't be shocked when they act that way."

Sydney man gets 12 years for murdering gay American in 1988

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — An Australian man was sentenced to 12 years and seven months in prison Tuesday for the 1988 murder of an American who fell off a Sydney cliff that was known as a gay meeting place.

The death of mathematician Scott Johnson was initially called a suicide, but his family pressed for further investigation. A coroner in 2017 found a number of assaults, some fatal, where the victims had been targeted because they were thought to be gay.

Scott White, 51, pleaded guilty in January and could have been sentenced to up to life in prison.

Justice Helen Wilson said she did not find beyond reasonable doubt that the murder was a gay hate crime, an aggravating factor that would have led to a longer sentence. She also said she applied more lenient sentencing patterns in place in New South Wales state in the late 1980s.

He must serve at least eight years and three months in prison before he can be considered for parole.

White was 18 and homeless when he met 27-year-old Los Angeles-born Johnson at a bar in suburban Manly in December 1988 and went with him to a nearby cliff top at North Head.

White's former wife Helen White told police in 2019 that her then-husband had bragged about beating gay men and had said the only good gay man was a dead gay man.

She told the court on Monday that her husband had told her Johnson had run off the cliff. Scott White told police that he was himself gay and frightened that his homophobic brother would find out.

Wilson said it was not possible to draw any conclusions beyond a reasonable doubt about what had happened at the clifftop.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 29 of 71

"The offender hit Dr. Johnson, causing him to stumble backwards and leave the cliff edge," Wilson said. "In those seconds when he must have realized what was happening to him, Dr. Johnson must have been terrified, aware that he would strike the rocks below and conscious of his fate," Wilson added. "It was a terrible death."

Wilson did not accept the defense lawyers' argument that Helen White had been motivated to report him to police by a reward.

Under cross-examination on Monday, Helen White denied she had been aware of a 1 million Australian dollar (\$704,000) reward for information on Johnson's murder when she went to police in 2019. She said she only became aware of a reward when the victim's brother, Steve Johnson, doubled the sum in 2020.

Outside court, Boston resident Steve Johnson thanked prosecutors and the judicial system for ensuring White was sent to prison.

"We didn't get compensation for Scott this week but what Scott got was dignity," the older sibling told reporters.

Younger sister Rebecca Johnson said she was satisfied with the sentence.

"Today I feel like we've had answers and we've had justice, and that's for our brother and that's for gay men who were bashed or killed in that era," she said.

White had a record of violent crime before and after the murder but had not committed any offense since 2008.

"It should be understood that the court is not sentencing a violent and reckless young man for a targeted attack on a gay man," Wilson said.

"Because of the lapse of time, the offender is no longer the same angry young man who raised his fists to another on the edge of a cliff. Neither is the court imposing a sentence for a crime motivated by hatred for a particular sector of society. The evidence is too slender to support that," Wilson added.

She said a sentence for the same crime today would be "much higher."

White's lawyers have appealed his conviction and hope he will be acquitted of the murder charge in a jury trial.

A coroner ruled in 2017 that Johnson "fell from the cliff top as a result of actual or threatened violence by unidentified persons who attacked him because they perceived him to be homosexual."

The coroner also found that gangs of men roamed various Sydney locations in search of gay men to assault, resulting in the deaths of some victims. Some men were also robbed.

A coroner had ruled in 1989 that Johnson had taken his own life, while a second coroner in 2012 could not explain how he died.

Johnson studied at universities in California and at Cambridge in Britain before moving to Australia in 1986 to live with his Australian partner Michael Noone.

They lived in Canberra where Johnson studied at the Australian National University which posthumously awarded him a Ph.D. He was staying at Noone's parents' Sydney home when he died.

Beijing preps COVID-19 hospital spaces, though new cases low

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing is preparing new hospital facilities to deal with a possible spike in COVID-19 cases, even though the numbers of new cases remain low.

State media reported Tuesday a 1,000-bed hospital at Xiaotangshan in the northeastern suburbs built for the 2003 SARS outbreak has been refurbished in case it's needed.

City officials on Saturday also announced they were setting up a 10,000-bed quarantine facility in the sprawling China National Exhibition Center to house those who have tested positive and their close contacts.

However, no more has been said about such plans and the reports have largely disappeared, a possible sign officials are seeking to avoid spreading additional fears in a city already on edge.

New cases in Beijing have remained steady, with another 62 reported on Tuesday, 11 of them showing no symptoms, up just slightly from about 50 per day over the weekend. Beijing has reported about 450

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 30 of 71

cases in the 2-week-old outbreak.

China has stuck to its strict "zero-COVID" approach that restricts travel, tests entire cities and sets up sprawling facilities to try to isolate every infected person. Lockdowns start with buildings and neighborhoods but become citywide if the virus spreads widely.

Beijing has isolated a few communities, but shied away from the sweeping citywide measures seen elsewhere.

That's a possible reflection of the desire to maintain an outward calm in the city that more than anything symbolizes the Communist Party's unopposed rule over the vast country. The urge is especially critical in a year when President Xi Jinping is seeking a groundbreaking third five-year term as party leader despite concerns about the return of single-man rule.

Xi has closely identified himself and the party with "zero-COVID," making it politically impossible to abandon the approach, even as many other countries relax their pandemic restrictions and experts question its usefulness, saying vaccines and new treatments for COVID-19 make it unnecessary.

Beijing has ordered restaurants and gyms closed for the May Day national holiday that runs through Wednesday, while major tourist sites in the city, including the Forbidden City and the Beijing Zoo, will close their indoor exhibition halls starting Tuesday. Schools are closed indefinitely, even while senior students prepare for crucial exams.

Three more rounds of testing have been ordered for most of the city's 21 million people starting Tuesday, following a similar requirement last week. A negative test result obtained within the previous 48 hours is required to gain entry to most public spaces.

Meanwhile, authorities in Shanghai are slowly beginning to ease lockdown restrictions that have confined most of the city's 26 million people to their apartments, housing compounds or immediate neighborhoods for close to a month, and in some cases longer.

Shanghai reported another 5,669 cases on Tuesday, all but 274 of them asymptomatic, along with an additional 20 deaths. China's largest city, home to its main stock market and biggest port, recorded a daily peak of 27,605 new cases nearly three weeks ago on April 13.

Shanghai's surprisingly low death toll amid an outbreak of more than 400,000 cases has sparked questions about how such deaths are tallied.

The severe lockdown conditions have led to massive disruptions including food shortages and a wider, though likely temporary, impact on the national economy. Desperate, outraged citizens have confronted authorities at barricades and online, screamed out of their windows and banged pots and pans in a sign of their frustration and anger.

In a development likely to lower confidence in public services, a video showing funeral parlor workers returning a body bag containing a live person to a retirement home has been circulating online.

A Shanghai district government confirmed the incident and said five officials have been punished and the license of a doctor revoked.

In the incident Sunday, two funeral parlor workers in full protective suits carried a yellow body bag out of a hearse. They then opened the bag and appeared to show a medical worker from the Xinchangzheng Nursing Home that the person was still alive. He or she was then swiftly returned inside the home.

The incident triggered outrage on Chinese social media, with people questioning the reliability of the social welfare system during the prolonged lockdown.

The government of Putuo district where the nursing home is located said in a statement Monday that the person in the video has been receiving treatment in a hospital and has stable vital signs.

New design, mission for site of Pittsburgh synagogue attack

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The caretakers of the Tree of Life synagogue intend to transform the site of the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history and expand its mission.

Newly released design plans show a revitalized complex housing a sanctuary, museum, memorial and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 31 of 71

center for fighting antisemitism -- unified symbolically and physically with a dramatic skylight running the length of the structure.

Organizers are also announcing plans Tuesday for a new Tree of Life nonprofit organization that would work with the similarly named congregation, oversee the building complex and offer education, museum exhibits and programming to counter hatred aimed at Jews and other groups.

The synagogue building — located in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood, the heart of Jewish Pittsburgh — has been vacant since Oct. 27, 2018. A gunman, who awaits trial on capital federal charges for what prosecutors say was a hate-motivated attack, killed 11 worshipers from Tree of Life and two other congregations — Dor Hadash and New Light — that shared the building.

The new design is by renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, whose previous works include Jewish museums, Holocaust memorials and the master plan for the redevelopment of the World Trade Center after 9/11.

Organizers said they don't have a cost estimate or a timetable yet for the construction project. And many of the details for the interior, including the design of a memorial, are still being determined. The organizers are raising funds locally and nationally.

But they see Tuesday's announcements as a big stride.

"We're eager to be back in our spiritual home," said Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, a survivor of the attack and rabbi of Tree of Life / Or L'Simcha Congregation, as it is formally known.

The plans call for retaining the synagogue's large, main sanctuary, which was unused on the day of the attack.

Other parts of the complex would be razed, including a separate chapel where most of the killings occurred, though its historic stained-glass windows would be preserved. A new addition — framed by dramatically angled exterior walls, a hallmark of previous Libeskind projects — would incorporate the museum, a memorial to the victims and space for education and other programs.

Unifying the complex — at about 45,000 square feet in all — would be a skylight that spans the entire length of the roof, according to Libeskind's design. The "Path of Light," as Libeskind titles it, would begin in the historic sanctuary and widen, ray-like, across the programming area toward a new, more secure entrance.

"The light is not only physical light, it's also spiritual light," he said.

Libeskind said he met with congregants and survivors of those killed as he prepared the design. He kept in mind the long history of the congregation — which was founded in 1864 and dedicated its current sanctuary a century later — as well as its present reality.

"The building has to be a response to the needs of the community, but it is also a response after the attacks," he said. "This is no longer the Tree of Life before the attacks. It's a different space."

The attacks targeted "Jews praying in a synagogue," he said, and the design had to reflect the building's new purpose.

"It's also about America, it's about American democracy," Libeskind added.

Libeskind said the project "means something very deep to me" as the child of Holocaust survivors who immigrated to the U.S. with his parents after facing communist-era antisemitism in Poland.

"We were able to be Jews in America," he recalled. "That was like another promised land. Who would have ever thought America would be a country where Jews would be targeted for being Jews?"

He said his family was even helped by the same Jewish refugee-aid organization the alleged gunman ranted against online.

All three congregations targeted in the attacks have been worshipping at nearby synagogues since then. While Dor Hadash and New Light plan to stay in their new locations for the foreseeable future, Tree of Life members look forward to returning, Myers said.

"It's an incredibly beautiful building," he said. "However, what's also important is what emanates from that. It provides a foundation for what we want to do."

Diane Rosenthal, whose brothers Cecil and David Rosenthal were among those slain at Tree of Life, said they "would want this place to be rebuilt in some shape and form."

The two men, who had intellectual disabilities, were faithful attendees and bonded closely with the congregants, she said.

"This was their home," she said. "They felt safe there. ... I'd like this to be a safe place again."

Rosenthal is helping plan the memorial. While no designs are under consideration yet, "What we've all agreed upon is we want something that is tasteful, that represents the lives we lost there," she said.

The new nonprofit organization overseeing the complex and educational programs will merge with The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, which had already announced plans to move into the renovated complex.

Programming would include exhibits telling the story of past and present manifestations of antisemitism, including the Holocaust and the 2018 attacks, along with programming on ways to counter antisemitism and other identity-based hate.

Barbara Shapira, chair of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, said the 2018 attacks caused her "to want to do something to stand up against these acts of hate that are becoming more prevalent in our world."

India's Muslims mark Eid al-Fitr amid community violence

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Muslims across India marked Eid al-Fitr on Tuesday by offering prayers outside mosques, even as the celebrations this year came in the backdrop of a series of recent attacks against the community during the month of Ramadan.

"We will not have the same kind of festivity" this time, said Mohammad Habeeb ur Rehman, a civil engineer in India's financial capital, Mumbai. "This is the most painful Eid with worst memories for Indian Muslims," he added.

Anti-Muslim sentiment and attacks have surged across the country in the last month, including stone throwing between Hindu and Muslim groups during religious processions and subsequent demolitions of a number of properties mostly belonging to Muslims by authorities.

The community, which makes up 14% of India's 1.4 billion population, is reeling from vilification by hard-line Hindu nationalists who have long espoused an anti-Muslim stance. Some leaders of India's ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party have tacitly supported the violence, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi has so far been silent about it.

Eid al-Fitr is typically marked with communal prayers, celebratory gatherings around festive meals and new clothes, but celebrations in India for the past two years have been marred by COVID-19 restrictions.

In Indian-controlled Kashmir, the Muslim festival has been subdued for the past three years because of an unprecedented military lockdown after India stripped the region's semi-autonomy in 2019, followed by the pandemic. The region also saw a rise in violence during Ramadan, with at least 20 militants, two civilians and five police and soldiers killed.

"As we prepare to celebrate Eid, a strong sense of collective loss jars at us," said Bashir Ahmed, a businessman in Srinagar.

Kashmir is the Muslim-majority disputed region where a violent insurgency against Indian rule and New Delhi's brutal crackdown has raged for over three decades. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict.

Meanwhile in the capital, New Delhi, hundreds assembled in the Jama Masjid, one of India's largest mosques, while offering Eid prayers there for the first time in over two years due to pandemic restrictions. Families came together early on Tuesday morning while many people shared hugs and wishes.

Mohammed Hamid, a software engineer, said he was grateful to be offering prayers at the mosque again. "It's a good feeling because there was a lockdown for the past two years. With the grace of God, we are able to offer Eid prayers here with the children and we are thankful," Hamid said.

The mood was cheerful in neighboring Bangladesh as millions traveled from the cities to towns and villages over the weekend to celebrate Eid. Huge crowds were seen in capital Dhaka's main Kamalapur Railway Station and bus terminals.

Like in India, Eid celebrations in Bangladesh for the last two years have been muted due to the pan-

demic. But this year, the government hasn't imposed restrictions, instead advising people to follow basic health protocols.

Khaleda Akter, a garment worker in Dhaka, said she was going to be traveling to her village and was excited to celebrate with her parents.

"I am very glad that this year we can travel without any trouble," she said.

Heat wave sparks blackouts, questions on India's coal usage

By KRUTIKA PATHI and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — An unusually early and brutal heat wave is scorching parts of India, with acute power shortages affecting millions as demand for electricity surges to record levels.

Supplies of coal at many thermal power plants are running perilously low, spawning daily power outages in several states. The shortages are sparking scrutiny of India's long reliance on coal, which produces 70% of the country's electricity.

The situation highlights India's pressing need to diversify its energy sources, as demand for electricity is expected to increase more than anywhere else in the world over the next 20 years as the densely populated country develops, according to the International Energy Agency.

The shortages hit as blisteringly high temperatures are sweeping over parts of the country, prompting authorities to close schools, sparking fires at gigantic landfills and shriveling crops as a cool spring turned suddenly into unrelenting heat.

India recorded its hottest March since 1901, and average temperatures in April in northern and central pockets of the country were the highest in 122 years, the Indian Meteorological Department said. Temperatures breached 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in 10 cities last week, although cloudy skies and rain could bring some relief soon.

Climate change is making severe temperatures hotter and more frequent, with heat waves likely to strike India about once every four years instead of every five decades in the past, said Friederike Otto, a climate scientist at Imperial College London. India urgently needs to prepare for record increases in power consumption as a result.

Current power cuts are hurting economic activity, which had been rebounding after pandemic shutdowns, and could disrupt essential services such as hospitals, experts warn. Many states including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan are experiencing blackouts of up to seven hours.

On Friday, the railways ministry canceled more than 750 passenger train services to allow more freight trains to move coal from mines to the power plants.

Out of India's 165 coal plants, 94 are facing critically low coal supplies while 8 are not operational as of Sunday, according to data from the Central Electricity Authority. This means stocks have dropped below 25% of normal levels.

Government rules mandate that power plants maintain 24 days' worth of coal stocks, but many routinely don't, said Vibhuti Garg, an energy economist at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

Much of India had a cool spring this year before temperatures rose quickly and dramatically. "Then suddenly the demand started picking up and the inventories started declining much, much faster than anticipated," Garg said. "And this becomes a kind of panic situation that they'll start running out of coal pretty soon."

But the power outages are less the result of a dearth of coal than inadequate forecasts of demand and plans for transporting it in time, experts said.

"We don't have enough resources to do proper forecasting. The hike in demand should not have come as a surprise," Garg said.

"There is enough coal, but a lack of anticipation and planning" caused problems, said Sunil Dahiya, an analyst at the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air. "This could have been avoided."

Some of the shortfall could also have been met with imported coal, Garg said. But global prices have shot up since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, reaching \$400 per ton in March, putting it out of reach for

perennially cash-strapped power distribution companies.

Analysts expect demand to dip in the coming weeks, especially if the heat subsides, but it is likely to surge again in July and August, driven by rising humidity and the planting season in some Indian states. It is also the start of the monsoon, when heavy rains can flood coal mines and disrupt both mining and supply.

A similar energy crisis occurred last October following unusually heavy rains that flooded several mines. The freeing up of freight trains to transport coal is likely to ease the situation and provide some relief, but it isn't a long-term solution, experts said.

With climate change exacerbating heat waves, energy shortfalls will become more routine and demand will only rise further. But the answer is not to open new mines or add more coal to India's energy mix, because that will increase greenhouse gases that in turn will trap more heat, experts said.

"We need to aggressively focus on bolstering renewable energy and making it more reliable. Otherwise, the same issues will keep occurring, because we are too reliant on this one source of fuel," Dahiya said.

Aid worker held in Israel for 6 years insists he's innocent

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Nearly six years after Israel accused Mohammed el-Halabi of diverting tens of millions of dollars from an international charity to Gaza's militant Hamas rulers, he has yet to be convicted in an Israeli court and is still being held in detention.

World Vision — a major Christian charity that operates around the world — as well as independent auditors and the Australian government have found no evidence of any wrongdoing. El-Halabi's lawyer says he has rejected multiple plea bargains that would have allowed him to walk free years ago. Closing arguments ended in September.

The prosecution has requested another hearing Monday to extend his detention.

The explosive allegations resemble those made against six Palestinian rights groups last year. In each case, Israel publicly accused organizations of ties to militant groups without providing much evidence, sending shudders through their donors and partners and leading some to cut ties.

Critics say Israel often relies on questionable informants. They allege that Israel smears groups that provide aid or other support to Palestinians in order to shore up its nearly 55-year military occupation of lands the Palestinians want for a future state.

Lior Haiat, a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said Israel stands by the allegations against el-Halabi, which are "well established and rely on concrete evidence." He said the defense had deliberately prolonged the trial after the prosecution rested in May 2018, allegations rejected by el-Halabi's lawyer.

"Israel does not aim to intimidate (non-governmental organizations), nor to keep them from operating in Gaza," Haiat said. "But we definitely aim to prevent transfer of NGO money that should be helping the people of Gaza in to the hands of a terror organization like Hamas."

After el-Halabi's arrest, World Vision suspended its activities in Gaza, where over 2 million Palestinians live under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade imposed when Hamas seized power nearly 15 years ago. Israel says the restrictions are needed to contain Hamas, while critics view them as a form of collective punishment.

World Vision said its entire Gaza budget over the previous 10 years was \$22.5 million, making the alleged diversion of \$50 million "hard to reconcile." El-Halabi had been appointed manager of its Gaza operations in October 2014, less than two years before he was arrested.

World Vision worked with several Western donor countries to construct an independent audit. World Vision declined to name the auditors because of a non-disclosure agreement, but last year the Guardian reported that it was undertaken by the international accounting firm Deloitte and DLA Piper, a global law firm.

Brett Ingerman, a lawyer with DLA Piper who headed the investigation, confirmed its role in the audit. He said a team of around a dozen lawyers, including several former assistant U.S. attorneys, reviewed nearly 300,000 emails and conducted over 180 interviews. A forensic accounting firm scoured nearly every financial transaction at World Vision from 2010 until 2016, he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 35 of 71

In July 2017, they submitted an over 400-page report of their findings to World Vision, which shared it with donor governments. World Vision said it offered the report to Israel, but Israeli authorities refused to sign the non-disclosure agreement. The Foreign Ministry declined to comment on the audit.

The report found no evidence that el-Halabi was affiliated with Hamas or had diverted any funds. In fact, Ingerman said it revealed the opposite.

"We had story after story of el-Halabi enforcing controls at World Vision and encouraging employees not to interact or transact with organizations that were even suspected of being affiliated with Hamas," he said.

The Australian government conducted its own review, saying it found no evidence any of its funding to World Vision in the Palestinian territories was diverted to Hamas. Australia was the biggest single donor to World Vision's humanitarian work in Gaza, providing some \$4.4 million in the previous three fiscal years, according to its Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

World Vision, which operates in nearly 100 countries and annually distributes some \$2.5 billion in aid, said it fully supports el-Halabi. "We're waiting here for an acquittal because it's the only logical outcome," said Sharon Marshall, a spokeswoman for the organization.

"It's far past time for him to be home with his family."

Maher Hanna, el-Halabi's defense lawyer, said Israeli authorities have offered him multiple plea bargains that would have allowed him to walk free in exchange for pleading guilty to lesser charges, a routine tactic in trials of Palestinians.

"He is not willing to admit to things he didn't do," Hanna said. The defense lawyer was allowed to see the classified evidence, which he declined to discuss, saying only that it was "extremely unreliable and problematic, and does not prove anything."

Hanna also rejected any allegations of foot-dragging as "beyond unfair," saying the court scheduled sessions months apart and made it difficult for him to call witnesses, including individuals named in the charge sheet.

He blamed Israel for the delay, saying it hoped to avoid the embarrassment of top officials having publicized explosive false allegations. Then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had released a video address repeating the charges at the time, saying they proved he cared more about the Palestinians than their own leaders.

"If facts matter, he will be cleared. If facts don't matter, he will be convicted," Hanna said.

Closing arguments wrapped up last September. El-Halabi is still being held in a prison in southern Israel.

"It makes a mockery of due process and the most basic fair trial notions to hold someone for nearly six years in pretrial detention based largely on secret evidence," said Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine director at the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

Even if el-Halabi is acquitted, the ordeal may deter other aid organizations from operating in the Palestinian territories.

"We haven't been able to respond to major needs in Gaza, and that's where some of the world's most vulnerable children are," said Marshall, the World Vision spokeswoman. "Other organizations that don't have the organizational resources that we have to absorb a hit like this, they just can't risk that kind of problem."

Election 2022: Voters to decide Ohio's heated Senate primary

By JILL COLVIN and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio Republicans will vote Tuesday in one of the most contentious and closely watched Senate primaries in the U.S., deciding a race that is an early referendum on former President Donald Trump's hold on the GOP as the midterm primary season kicks into high gear.

Author and venture capitalist JD Vance is well positioned in the Republican race to replace retiring Sen. Rob Portman after receiving Trump's late-stage support, capping a bitter and expensive contest that, at one point, saw two candidates nearly come to blows on a debate stage. The winner is likely to face 10-term Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan, who has distanced himself from the progressive wing of his party ahead

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 36 of 71

of what is expected to be a brutal year for Democrats seeking to hold their congressional majorities.

Incumbent Republican Gov. Mike DeWine appears on track to secure his party's nomination for another term, despite backlash from conservatives over COVID-19 shutdowns and mandates. Meanwhile, in Indiana, more than a dozen state House members are trying to hold off Republican primary challengers who want to push the Legislature further to the right.

Tuesday's primary races mark the first multistate contest of the 2022 midterm season and will serve as the most clarifying test to date of Trump's ongoing influence in his party more than a year after leaving office under the cloud of two impeachments and the Jan. 6 insurrection. A Vance victory would likely embolden Trump to keep asserting himself in primary campaigns ahead of another potential presidential run. A setback, however, would raise questions about whether GOP voters are seeking a new direction, especially in a state he won twice by margins of 8 percentage points.

"A lot of people want to know whether or not Donald Trump's endorsement means something," said Mark R. Weaver, a longtime state GOP strategist.

Vance was trailing in the polls until the former president backed the "Hillbilly Elegy" author and one-time Trump critic in a contest that revolved largely around him. While the timing of Trump's endorsement — less than three weeks before Election Day and as early voting was already underway — may have dulled its impact, it was a major blow to former Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel, Cleveland investment banker Mike Gibbons and former Ohio Republican Party Chair Jane Timken, who had all gone to elaborate lengths to court Trump and his voters.

State Sen. Matt Dolan, the only major candidate who did not aggressively court Trump, has seen a late-stage surge in momentum, suggesting there may still be appetite in the state for a non-Trump alternative.

While the race laid bare how dramatically Trump has transformed the party, with candidates running in his image and on his "America first" platform, it also exposed deep divisions. His decision to endorse Vance was met with fierce opposition from those who'd backed Vance's rivals, including the conservative Ohio Value Voters, which urged supporters to boycott a rally Trump held last month.

The race will also go down as the most expensive in state history, with more than \$66 million in TV and radio spending alone, according to the Columbus-based Medium Buying firm.

Ohio, once a bellwether state, is now decidedly Republican, posing a challenge for Ryan, who is heavily favored to win his three-way Democratic primary against progressive Morgan Harper, a former consumer protection attorney, and Columbus activist and tech exec Traci Johnson. The longtime congressman and 2020 presidential candidate has fashioned himself as a blue-collar crusader fighting for working families as he has campaigned dressed in sweatshirts and baseball caps.

"He's passionate about fighting for the people of Ohio," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, who leads the Democrats' Senate campaign arm. "The only person that Republican candidate(s) seem to care about is Donald Trump and whether or not Donald Trump will endorse them."

Buoyed by historical trends and Democratic President Joe Biden's deep unpopularity, Republicans are optimistic about retaking the House and Senate come November. A new president's party almost always loses in seats in subsequent midterm elections and Republicans hope soaring inflation, high energy prices and lingering frustrations over the country's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic will further boost their prospects.

Democrats, meanwhile, are banking the GOP — with Trump's help — will elect candidates so extreme they prove unelectable come November.

"By all rights, history tells us that the Democrats are going to lose control of the House," said Dale Butland, a Democratic strategist in Ohio. "By all rights, we should lose control of the Senate, too. However, the only thing that could save us is if the Republicans nominate a bunch of far-right crazies that are unacceptable in a general election."

But David Niven, a University of Cincinnati political science professor said that, either way, the Ohio GOP has fundamentally transformed, with moderates like Portman and former Ohio governor turned Trump critic John Kasich being gradually pushed aside by candidates who have mocked the separation between

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 37 of 71

church and state, accused Biden of trying to “kill” Trump voters with fentanyl, and parroted lies about the 2020 election.

“Win or lose, this represents the last stand of the traditional Ohio Republican,” Niven said.

While DeWine is strongly positioned to win a second term, he is expected to face considerable conservative backlash for the aggressive COVID-19 mandates he imposed during the first year of the pandemic. DeWine’s three opponents — former U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, former state Rep. Ron Hood and farmer Joe Blystone — have all tapped into that anger, but they are likely to split the far-right vote. Still, DeWine isn’t taking chances and has poured millions into advertising during the race’s final weeks. Trump-backed Secretary of State Frank LaRose is also considered well positioned to win.

On the Democratic side, Nan Whaley, the former mayor of Dayton, is vying to become Ohio’s first woman elected governor in her race against ex-Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley. Whaley has the support of U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, a popular household name and the state’s top Democrat. Cranley has the backing of feminist icon Gloria Steinem.

In the House, Republican Max Miller, a former Trump campaign and White House aide, is expected to cruise to the GOP nomination in the sprawling new 7th District in northeast Ohio, despite allegations from his ex-girlfriend, former White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham, that he grew violent with her as their relationship deteriorated. He has denied the charges.

Miller was initially recruited to challenge Republican Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, one of the 10 House Republicans who voted in favor of Trump’s impeachment. But Gonzalez chose to retire instead.

For Democrats, a rematch pitting one of the left’s rising stars against a new House incumbent will provide another litmus test of the progressive movement’s rustbelt clout. Rep. Shontel Brown is again facing progressive activist and former state Sen. Nina Turner, whom she defeated in a special election last year.

In Ohio, US House rematch again tests progressive clout

By WILL WEISSERT and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — A rematch pitting one of the left’s rising stars against a new House incumbent backed by the more moderate Democratic establishment will provide another key litmus test of the progressive movement’s Rust Belt clout during Tuesday’s congressional primaries in Ohio and Indiana.

Democratic Rep. Shontel Brown is facing progressive activist and former state Sen. Nina Turner for the second time since August. Brown, who campaigned with South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, the most senior Black member of Congress, beat Turner in last summer’s special election primary seen nationally as a showdown between the party’s traditional powerbrokers and its left flank.

Brown now has the advantage of incumbency but has only been in Congress a matter of months. A leading surrogate for Bernie Sanders’ 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns, Turner is endorsed by the Vermont senator and many top progressive groups, who are hoping for a second-try upset.

Stretching from Cleveland to Akron, the district where Brown and Turner are competing is heavily African American and solidly Democratic, meaning the primary winner is heavily favored in November’s general election.

“I’m running for this office for the same reason that I ran the last time: Greater Cleveland deserves a champion and not much has changed in changing the material conditions of the poor, the working poor and the barely middle class,” Turner said.

Brown, who says she has been an ally to the Biden administration in Congress, counters that “you don’t have to be loud to fight.”

Another potentially vulnerable Ohio incumbent is Republican Rep. Warren Davidson. He has been endorsed by former President Donald Trump and represents a district once held by former House Speaker John Boehner, encompassing the suburbs between Cincinnati and Dayton. Davidson is facing Hamilton County Commissioner Phil Heimlich, son of the famous doctor known for the anti-choking maneuver, and a Trump critic.

It remains to be seen whether the former president’s endorsement will lift Davidson. But two Trump picks

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 38 of 71

for open House seats in the northeastern part of the state, Max Miller and Madison Gilbert, are looking to cruise to GOP nominations.

Miller, a former Trump aide, is expected to lock up the Republican nomination in a new district in north-east Ohio. He's been accused of assaulting his ex-girlfriend, former White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham.

The Akron-area district where Gilbert, a conservative commentator, will be competing, meanwhile, should be one of the likely competitive House seats in November's general election. Its Republican nominee is set to face state Rep. Emilia Sykes, a former Ohio House Democratic leader and a daughter of a powerful political family in the area.

Another tough congressional race could be coming to Cincinnati in November, when Republican Rep. Steve Chabot will face Democratic Cincinnati City Council member Greg Landsman.

Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur, the longest-serving woman in the House, is unopposed Tuesday. Four Republicans — including two sitting state lawmakers — are competing to take her on in the fall, however, in a newly drawn district that hugs Lake Erie, encompasses Toledo and could be a toss-up.

In neighboring Indiana, nine Republicans are vying for the state's only open House seat. GOP Rep. Trey Hollingsworth isn't seeking reelection in a southern Indiana district as he hints at running for governor in 2024.

Hollingsworth's would-be replacements include trucking company owner Mike Sodrel, who ran five times between 2002 and 2010 and won a single term in Congress in 2004. Trump hasn't endorsed in the primary, but his former secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, is backing business consultant and Army combat veteran Stu Barnes-Israel.

2022 midterms: What to know about Ohio, Indiana primaries

By JULIE CARR SMYTH and TOM DAVIES Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The first multistate contest of the 2022 midterm election season unfolds on Tuesday, as Ohio voters pick nominees for governor and the U.S. Senate while Indiana voters consider whether their Legislature should become even more conservative.

The races, particularly in Ohio, could provide a fresh window into former President Donald Trump's sway among the party faithful. He has been especially involved in Ohio's Senate primary, which has been marred by Republican divisions, along with campaigns for the U.S. House and secretary of state.

For Democrats, a potential threat to incumbent U.S. Rep. Shontel Brown in Cleveland is of keen interest. Brown is locked in a rematch against progressive challenger Nina Turner, a former state senator and surrogate for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns. Turner is trying again after losing to Brown in last year's special election.

Voting in Ohio comes against the backdrop of a chaotic and still unresolved redistricting battle.

What to watch as the Ohio and Indiana primaries unfold:

WHO WILL SURVIVE OHIO'S NASTY SENATE PRIMARY?

Seven candidates are on the ballot in Tuesday's Republican faceoff for the coveted open U.S. Senate seat of retiring Republican Rob Portman. They are Trump-endorsed "Hillbilly Elegy" author JD Vance, former Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel, Cleveland investment banker Mike Gibbons, former Ohio Republican Chair Jane Timken, state Sen. Matt Dolan, whose family owns the Cleveland Guardians baseball team, and entrepreneurs Mark Pukita and Neil Patel.

The campaign has featured months of jockeying among top contenders for Trump's endorsement, more than \$65 million in TV and radio spending, dozens of debates and candidate forums, and one highly publicized physical confrontation between two candidates.

As Vance rides high on the Trump endorsement, other candidates who campaigned on their loyalty to the former president are hoping that heavy ad spending or a strong ground game can help them win. Dolan is the only candidate who ran as a Portman-like centrist, but Timken landed Portman's endorsement.

Whoever prevails will face the winner of a three-way Democratic primary between 10-term U.S. Rep.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 39 of 71

Tim Ryan, former consumer protection attorney Morgan Harper and Columbus activist and tech exec Traci Johnson.

IS A TRUMP ENDORSEMENT A SLAM-DUNK IN OHIO?

Trump twice won Ohio by more than 8 percentage points, so many viewed getting his nod in the Senate race as critical to winning the crowded Senate primary. Instead, when he finally chose Vance, it divided the state.

That's because Vance opponents, including Mandel, Gibbons and their allies, had aired months of ads highlighting Vance's past anti-Trump statements. Some tea party Republicans protested an April 23 Trump rally featuring Vance, and one conservative group, Ohio Value Voters, urged its supporters to boycott — or boo Vance when he walked on stage. The deep-pocketed Club for Growth, a conservative group backing Mandel, has taken to TV with ads directly attacking Trump for his choice.

Trump also has backed candidates in two Republican congressional primaries: Max Miller, his former White House and campaign aide, in the sprawling new 7th District in northeast Ohio, and Madison Gesiotto Gilbert in the Akron-area 13th District. He also is backing Secretary of State Frank LaRose in his primary against former state Rep. John Adams, a conservative Trump supporter.

WILL A WOMAN BREAK THROUGH IN OHIO'S GUBERNATORIAL RACE?

Democrat Nan Whaley is seeking to be the first woman in Ohio to get a major party's nomination for governor. The former Dayton mayor is locked in a tight race with ex-Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley, who is endorsed by feminist icon Gloria Steinem.

They see eye-to-eye on most major issues — guns, abortion rights, social justice — but Whaley has repeatedly pointed out that Cranley only recently said he was pro-choice. She also has the backing of the state's top Democrat, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Neither candidate is a household name across Ohio. Both have struggled to draw attention as much of the state is focused on the contentious U.S. Senate race and ongoing redistricting fight.

The big question for first-term Republican Gov. Mike DeWine is just how many conservative voters will punish him for pushing aggressive mandates and shutdowns during the pandemic.

DeWine is widely known from a 40-year career in Ohio politics and in a solid position to win the GOP's nomination for another four-year term. His two main challengers have tapped into the anger over the governor's COVID-19 policies, but they're likely to split those far-right voters.

DeWine isn't taking any chances, pouring millions into advertising during the weeks leading into the primary. The concern will be whether those same conservative voters who were furious with DeWine will come back to him in November.

WILL CONFUSION OVER OHIO'S PRIMARY CALENDAR AFFECT RESULTS?

A protracted battle over Ohio's congressional and legislative maps has played havoc with the state's 2022 election calendar. For a long time, it looked like the May 3 primary wouldn't go forward amid all the legal wrangling. Then suddenly it did.

Voter advocates, campaigns and political parties have stepped up efforts to get the word out as participation in early voting showed a 40% decline from four years ago.

Tuesday's ballots will not list state legislative races, which are expected to be decided in a second primary later this year. The Ohio Redistricting Commission faces a deadline next week to try for a fifth time to draw district lines that don't represent a partisan gerrymander and can meet constitutional muster. If the panel fails, a federal court has said it will force an Aug. 2 primary using one of the previously invalidated maps.

Congressional races have gone forward using a map that has also been invalidated by the Ohio Supreme Court. Ongoing litigation could result in a new map before 2024 elections.

IS INDIANA'S LEGISLATURE CONSERVATIVE ENOUGH?

More than a dozen Indiana House members are trying to hold off Republican primary challengers who argue that the GOP-dominated Legislature hasn't been aggressive enough on issues from attempting to ban abortion to overturning COVID-19 restrictions that were ordered by the state's Republican governor.

Those challengers say they are tapping into frustration among conservative voters and want to push

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 40 of 71

the Legislature further to the right in a state where Republicans control all statewide offices and have had legislative supermajorities for the past decade.

Whether the challengers can defeat incumbents backed by Republican leaders' multimillion-dollar campaign fund should be answered in Tuesday's primary.

Republican legislative leaders argue the "no compromise" stances adopted by many challengers aren't practical and tout the state's low taxes and unemployment and broad private school voucher program among its conservative successes.

Challengers like Brittany Carroll, a family law attorney running for a central Indiana seat, maintain Indiana lawmakers should be aggressively pushing issues such as the Texas ban on abortions after roughly six weeks of pregnancy.

"Indiana could be leading in terms of liberty, like Florida, like Texas," Carroll said.

Push to arm Ukraine putting strain on US weapons stockpile

By BEN FOX, AAMER MADHANI, JAY REEVES and DAN HUFF Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The planes take off almost daily from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware — hulking C-17s loaded up with Javelins, Stingers, howitzers and other material being hustled to Eastern Europe to resupply Ukraine's military in its fight against Russia.

The game-changing impact of those arms is exactly what President Joe Biden hopes to spotlight as he visits a Lockheed Martin plant in Alabama on Tuesday that builds the portable Javelin anti-tank weapons that have played a crucial role in Ukraine.

But Biden's visit is also drawing attention to a growing concern as the war drags on: Can the U.S. sustain the cadence of shipping vast amounts of arms to Ukraine while maintaining the healthy stockpile it may need if a new conflict erupts with North Korea, Iran or elsewhere?

The U.S. already has provided about 7,000 Javelins, including some that were delivered during the Trump administration, about one-third of its stockpile, to Ukraine, according to an analysis by Mark Cancian, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies international security program. The Biden administration says it has committed to sending about 5,500 to Ukraine since the Russian invasion more than two months ago.

Analysts also estimate that the United States has sent about one-quarter of its stockpile of shoulder-fired Stinger missiles to Ukraine. Raytheon Technologies CEO Greg Hayes told investors last week during a quarterly call that his company, which makes the weapons system, wouldn't be able to ramp up production until next year due to parts shortages.

"Could this be a problem? The short answer is, 'Probably, yes,'" said Cancian, a retired Marine colonel and former government specialist on Pentagon budget strategy, war funding and procurement.

He said that Stingers and Javelins were where "we're seeing the most significant inventory issues," and production of both weapons systems has been limited in recent years.

The Russian invasion offers the U.S. and European defense industry a big opportunity to bolster profits as lawmakers from Washington to Warsaw are primed to increase defense spending in response to Russian aggression. Defense contractors, however, face the same supply chain and labor shortage challenges that other manufacturers are facing, along with some others that are specific to the industry.

Military spending by the U.S. and around the world was rising even before Russia's Feb. 24 invasion. Biden's proposed 2023 budget sought \$773 billion for the Pentagon, an annual increase of about 4%.

Globally, total military spending rose 0.7% to more than \$2 trillion for the first time in 2021, according to an April report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Russia ranked fifth, as its spending on weapons increased ahead of its invasion of Ukraine.

The war will mean increased sales for some defense contractors, including Raytheon, which makes the Stinger missiles Ukrainian troops have used to knock out Russian aircraft. The company is also part of a joint venture with Lockheed Martin that makes the Javelins.

Biden will visit Lockheed Martin's facility in Troy, Ala., which has the capacity to manufacture about 2,100

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 41 of 71

Javelins per year. The trip comes as he presses Congress to quickly approve his request for an additional \$33 billion in security and economic assistance for Kyiv, Western allies and restocking weapons the U.S. has sent to those countries.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Monday he hoped quick bipartisan agreement on the security package could be reached so the Senate could begin considering it "as early as next week."

The president is expected to use his remarks to highlight the importance of the Javelins and other U.S. weaponry in helping Ukraine's military put up a vigorous fight as he makes the case to keep security and economic assistance flowing.

A White House official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity, said the Pentagon is working with defense contractors "to evaluate the health of weapons systems' production lines and examine bottlenecks in every component and step of the manufacturing process." The administration is also considering a range of options, if needed, to boost production of both Javelins and Stingers, the official said.

Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said Monday that America's military readiness is not dependent on one system, such as the Javelin. He said that every time the Pentagon develops a package of weapons to send to Ukraine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the department assesses the broader impact.

"It's not about counting say Javelins and being able to say that when you reach a certain level then all your readiness is gone," Kirby said. "The Javelin is an anti-armor capability, so we judge it all as a conglomerate of what's our ability to meet this particular mission set, realizing that a Javelin isn't the only capability you have against armor."

Cancian, the former government specialist on defense budget strategy, said the fact that Stingers and Javelins were not included in the most recent tranche of weapons the Biden administration announced it was sending to Ukraine could be a sign that Pentagon officials are mindful about inventory as they conduct contingency planning for other possible conflicts.

"There's no question that whatever war plan they're looking at there is risk associated with the depleting levels of Stingers and Javelins, and I'm sure that they're having that discussion at the Pentagon," he said.

The U.S. military effort to move weaponry to Eastern Europe for Ukraine's fight has been Herculean. From Dover Air Base in Delaware, U.S. airmen have carried out nearly 70 missions to deliver some 7 million pounds of Javelins, Stingers, 155mm howitzers, helmets and other essentials to Eastern Europe since February. Col. Matt Husemann, commander of the 436th Airlift Wing, described the mission as a "whole of government approach that's delivering hope."

"It is awesome," said Husemann, after providing AP with a recent tour of the airlift operation.

The lightweight but lethal Javelin has helped the Ukrainians inflict major damage on Russia's larger and better-equipped military. As a result, the weapon has gained almost mythic regard, celebrated with a Javelin song and images of Mary Magdalene carrying a Javelin becoming a meme in Ukraine.

Lockheed Martin CEO James Taiclet said in a recent CNBC interview that demand for the Javelin and other weapon systems would increase broadly over time because of the Russian invasion. He said the company was working "to get our supply chain ramped up."

"We have the ability to meet current production demands, are investing in increased capacity and are exploring ways to further increase production as needed," Lockheed Martin said in a statement.

Pentagon officials recently sat down with some of the leading defense contractors, including Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, General Dynamics, BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman to discuss efforts to ramp up production.

The big defense contractors face some serious challenges.

Raytheon, for example, can't simply crank out Stingers to replace the 1,400 that the U.S. sent to Ukraine. Hayes, the Raytheon CEO, said in a recent conference call with analysts that the company has only limited supplies of components to make the missile. Only one undisclosed country has been buying them in recent years, and the Pentagon hasn't bought any new ones in nearly 20 years.

Sanctions further complicate the picture. Companies must find new sources of important raw materials such as titanium, a crucial component in aerospace manufacturing that is produced in Russia.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 42 of 71

Concerns about the Stinger stockpile have been raised by House Armed Services Committee chairman Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., and the top Republican on the committee, Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama. The two in March wrote to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley, describing the stockpile issue as one of "urgency."

Rogers said he remains concerned that the matter hasn't been properly addressed.

"I've been asking the DoD for almost two months for a plan to replenish our Stinger stockpile as well as our Javelin launch units," Rogers said. "I worry that without a readily available replacement or fully active production lines, we could leave Ukraine and our NATO allies in a vulnerable position."

Ukrainian refugees at camp in Mexico City await US action

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — On a dusty field on the east side of Mexico's sprawling capital, some 500 Ukrainian refugees are waiting in large tents under a searing sun for the United States government to tell them they can come.

The camp has only been open a week and 50 to 100 people are arriving every day. Some have already been to the U.S. border in Tijuana where they were told they would no longer be admitted. Others arrived at airports in Mexico City or Cancun, anywhere they could find a ticket from Europe.

"We are asking the U.S. government to process faster," said Anastasiya Polo, co-founder of United with Ukraine, a nongovernmental organization, that collaborated with the Mexican government to establish the camp. She said that after a week's time none of the refugees there "are even close to the end of the program."

The program, Uniting for Ukraine, was announced by the U.S. government April 21. Four days later, Ukrainians showing up at the U.S.-Mexico border were no longer exempted from a pandemic-related rule that has been used to quickly expel migrants without an opportunity to seek asylum for the past two years.

Instead, they would have to apply from Europe or other countries such as Mexico. To qualify people must have been in Ukraine as of Feb. 11; have a sponsor, which could be family or an organization; meet vaccination and other public health requirements; and pass background checks.

Polo said U.S. government officials had told her it should take a week to process people, but it appeared like it was just beginning. Some of the first arrivals had received emails from the U.S. government acknowledging they received their documents and the documents of their sponsors, but she had heard of no sponsors being approved yet.

"These people cannot stay in this camp, because it is temporary," Polo said. More than 100 of the camp's residents are children.

Nearly 5.5 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded its smaller neighbor on Feb. 24, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Giorgi Mikaberidze, 19, is among the waiting. He arrived in Tijuana April 25 and found the U.S. border closed. He complained that the U.S. government had given so little notice, because many people like himself were already in transit. He went from being just yards from the United States to some 600 miles (966 kilometers) now.

When the U.S. government announced in late March that it would accept up to 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, hundreds entered Mexico daily as tourists in Mexico City or Cancun and flew to Tijuana to wait for a few days – eventually only a few hours – to be admitted to the U.S. at a San Diego border crossing on humanitarian parole. Appointments at U.S. consulates in Europe were scarce, and refugee resettlement takes time, making Mexico the best option.

Traveling through Mexico was circuitous, but a loose-knit group of volunteers, largely from Slavic churches in the western United States, greeted refugees at the Tijuana airport and shuttled them to a recreation center that the city of Tijuana made available for several thousand to wait. A wait of two to four days was eventually shortened to a few hours as U.S. border inspectors whisked Ukrainians in.

That special treatment ended the day Mikaberidze arrived in Tijuana.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 43 of 71

"We want to go to America because (we're) already here, some don't have even money to go back," he said.

Mikaberidze was visiting relatives in Georgia, south of Ukraine, when the Russian invasion occurred and was not able to return. His mother remains in their village near Kharkhov in eastern Ukraine, afraid to leave her home because Russian troops indiscriminately shoot up cars traveling in the area, he said.

"She said it's a very dangerous situation," said Mikaberidze, who traveled to Mexico alone.

The Mexico City camp provides a safe place to wait. It was erected inside a large sports complex, so Ukrainians could be seen pushing strollers with children along sidewalks, playing soccer and volleyball, even swimming.

However, the refugees have been warned that while they are free to leave the complex, no one is responsible for their safety. Iztapalapa, the capital's most populated borough, is also one of its most dangerous.

The Mexican government was providing security at the camp with about 50 officers, Polo said. The Navy had also set up a mobile kitchen to provide meals.

She said they felt safe inside the camp, but were asking the government about the possibility of moving the camp to a safer area.

Mykhailo Pasternak and his girlfriend Maziana Hzyhozyshyn, waited at the entrance to the complex Monday afternoon. Both suffering from an apparent head cold, they planned to move to a hotel for a day or two to try to get some sleep and recover before returning to the camp.

Pasternak had left the U.S. to help Hzyhozyshyn get in. The two had spent several days in Tijuana before flying to Mexico City and arriving at the camp Sunday.

The couple stood out on the streets of Iztapalapa and appeared to be withering under the relentless sun. The couple had known each other for six years.

"She's my love," Pasternak said.

AP source: WNBA to honor Griner with decal on teams' floor

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

The WNBA will honor Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner with a floor decal, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press on Monday night.

The league's Board of Governors also approved Phoenix paying Griner's \$228,000 salary — the WNBA max — and not have it count against the Mercury's salary cap, a different person familiar with the decision told the AP. Both people spoke on condition of anonymity because the decisions haven't been announced publicly.

The All-Star center remains in Russia after being detained following her arrival at a Moscow airport on Feb. 17. Russian authorities said a search of her luggage revealed vape cartridges that allegedly contained oil derived from cannabis, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. She has a hearing set for May 19.

Before the board's decision, the Mercury would have been left with the decision of whether to suspend Griner without pay or keep her on the roster and have her salary count against the cap and cost the team a roster spot.

The decal will feature Griner's initials "BG" as well as her No. 42. All 12 teams will have the decal on their home courts starting with the season opener Friday night. The Mercury open their season at home that night against the Las Vegas Aces.

ESPN first reported the news of the decal.

Commissioner Cathy Engelbert announced at the WNBA Draft that there would be a league-wide charity initiative spearheaded by the Mercury to support Griner's philanthropic project, called BG's Heart and Sole Shoe Drive.

Griner had one of her best seasons last year — the league's second leading scorer and sixth in rebounds to help the Mercury reach the WNBA Finals, where they lost to the Chicago Sky.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 44 of 71

Civilians rescued from Mariupol steel plant head for safety

By CARA ANNA and INNA VARENYTSIA Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine (AP) — Russia resumed pulverizing the Mariupol steel mill that has become the last stronghold of resistance in the bombed-out city, Ukrainian fighters said Monday, after a brief cease-fire over the weekend allowed the first evacuation of civilians from the plant.

Meanwhile, a senior U.S. official warned that Russia is planning to annex large portions of eastern Ukraine this month and recognize the southern city of Kherson as an independent republic.

Michael Carpenter, U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said that those suspected actions are “straight out of the Kremlin’s playbook” and will not be recognized by the United States or its allies.

In Mariupol, more than 100 people — including elderly women and mothers with small children — left the rubble-strewn Azovstal steelworks on Sunday and set out in buses and ambulances for the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia, about 140 miles (230 kilometers) to the northwest, according to authorities and video released by the two sides.

Mariupol Deputy Mayor Sergei Orlov told the BBC that the evacuees were making slow progress and would probably not arrive in Zaporizhzhia on Monday as hoped. Authorities gave no explanation for the delay.

At least some of the civilians were apparently taken to a village controlled by Russia-backed separatists. The Russian military said some chose to stay in separatist areas, while dozens left for Ukrainian-held territory.

In the past, Ukraine has accused Moscow’s troops of taking civilians against their will to Russia or Russian-controlled areas. The Kremlin has denied it.

The Russian bombardment of the sprawling plant by air, tank and ship picked up again after the partial evacuation, Ukraine’s Azov Battalion, which is helping to defend the mill, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Orlov said high-level negotiations were underway among Ukraine, Russia and international organizations on evacuating more people.

The steel-plant evacuation, if successful, would represent rare progress in easing the human cost of the almost 10-week war, which has caused particular suffering in Mariupol. Previous attempts to open safe corridors out of the southern port city and other places have broken down, with Ukrainian officials accusing Russian forces of shooting and shelling along agreed-on evacuation routes.

Before the weekend evacuation, overseen by the United Nations and the Red Cross, about 1,000 civilians were believed to be in the plant along with an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian defenders. Russia has demanded that the fighters surrender; they have refused.

As many as 100,000 people overall may still be in Mariupol, which had a prewar population of more than 400,000. Russian forces have pounded much of the city into rubble, trapping civilians with little food, water, heat or medicine.

Some Mariupol residents got out of the city on their own, often in damaged private cars.

As sunset approached, Mariupol resident Yaroslav Dmytryshyn rattled up to a reception center in Zaporizhzhia in a car with a back seat full of youngsters and two signs taped to the back window: “Children” and “Little ones.”

“I can’t believe we survived,” he said, looking worn but in good spirits after two days on the road.

“There is no Mariupol whatsoever,” he said. “Someone needs to rebuild it, and it will take millions of tons of gold.” He said they lived just across the railroad tracks from the steel plant. “Ruined,” he said. “The factory is gone completely.”

Anastasiia Dembytska, who took advantage of the cease-fire to leave with her daughter, nephew and dog, said she could see the steelworks from her window, when she dared to look out.

“We could see the rockets flying” and clouds of smoke over the plant, she said.

With most of Mariupol in ruins, a majority of the dozen Russian battalion tactical groups that had been around the city have moved north to other battlefronts in eastern Ukraine, according to a senior U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the Pentagon’s assessment.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had said he hoped more people would be able to leave Mari-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 45 of 71

upol in an organized evacuation on Monday. The city council told residents wanting to leave to gather at a shopping mall to wait for buses.

Zelenskyy told Greek state television that remaining civilians in the steel plant were afraid to board buses because they feared they would be taken to Russia. He said he had been assured by the U.N. that they would be allowed to go to areas his government controls.

Also Monday, Zelenskyy said that at least 220 Ukrainian children have been killed by the Russian army since the war began, and 1,570 educational institutions have been destroyed or damaged.

In other developments, European Union energy ministers met Monday to discuss new sanctions against the Kremlin, which could include restrictions on Russian oil. Some Russia-dependent members of the 27-nation bloc, including Hungary and Slovakia, are wary of taking tough action.

Thwarted in his bid to seize Kyiv, the capital, Russian President Vladimir Putin has shifted his focus to the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, where Moscow-backed separatists have been battling Ukrainian forces since 2014.

Carpenter, the U.S. ambassador to the OSCE, cited information that Russia is planning "sham referenda" in the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" that would attach the entities to Russia. He also said there were signs that Russia would engineer an independence vote in Kherson.

He noted that local mayors and legislators there have been abducted, that internet and cellphone service had been severed and that a Russian school curriculum is soon to be imposed. Ukraine's government has said Russia also has introduced the ruble as currency there.

Russia said Monday it struck dozens of military targets in the region in the past day. It said it hit concentrations of troops and weapons and an ammunition depot near Chervone in the Zaporizhzhia region, west of the Donbas.

Ukrainian and Western officials say Moscow's troops are raining fire indiscriminately, taking a heavy toll on civilians while making only slow progress.

The governor of the Odesa region along the Black Sea Coast, Maksym Marchenko, said on Telegram that a Russian missile strike Monday on an Odesa infrastructure target caused deaths and injuries. He gave no details. Zelenskyy said the attack destroyed a dormitory and killed a 14-year-old boy.

Ukraine said Russia also struck a strategic road and rail bridge west of Odesa. The bridge was heavily damaged in previous Russian strikes, and its destruction would cut a supply route for weapons and other cargo from neighboring Romania.

The attack on Odessa came eight years to the day after deadly clashes between Ukrainian government supporters and protesters calling for autonomy in the country's east. The government supporters in 2014 firebombed a trade union building containing pro-autonomy demonstrators, killing over 40 people.

Also Monday, Ukraine claimed to have destroyed two small Russian patrol boats in the Black Sea.

Mariupol, which lies in the Donbas, is key to Russia's campaign in the east. Its capture would deprive Ukraine of a vital port, allow Russia to establish a land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which it seized from Ukraine in 2014, and free up troops for fighting elsewhere.

Britain's Defense Ministry said it believes more than a quarter of all the fighting units Russia has deployed in Ukraine are now "combat ineffective" — unable to fight because of loss of troops or equipment.

As wildfire closes in, New Mexico residents prepare to flee

By CEDAR ATTANASIO and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

LAS VEGAS, N.M. (AP) — Wind-whipped flames raced across more of New Mexico's pine-covered mountainsides on Monday, closing in on a town of 13,000 people where some residents hurried to pack their cars with belongings, others hustled to clear brush from around their homes, and police were called in to help evacuate the state's psychiatric hospital.

Firefighting crews battled on several fronts to keep the fire, the largest burning in the U.S., from pushing into more populated areas as it fed on the state's drought-parched landscape. The fire has charred more than 217 square miles (562 square kilometers) and flames could be seen from the small northeastern New Mexico city of Las Vegas just a couple miles away.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 46 of 71

Fire officials said they were encouraged by a forecast for Tuesday of improving humidity and shifting winds. Still the blaze is expected to keep growing, putting it on track to possibly be one of the largest and most destructive in the state's recorded history.

The sky above the city's historic plaza, made famous as a backdrop in several movies and television series, was a sickly tinge of yellow and gray as thick smoke blotted out the sun. As ash fell around them, Chris Castillo and his cousins were cutting down trees and moving logs away from a family member's home.

"We're all family here. We're trying to make a fire line," he said

Other family members were driving around with cattle trailers, waiting to help anyone who calls to move livestock.

Wildfires have become a year-round threat in the drought-stricken West and they are moving faster and burning hotter than ever due to climate change, scientists and fire experts say. In the last five years, California for example has experienced the eight largest wildfires in state history, while Colorado saw a destructive blaze tear through suburban neighborhoods last December.

The fire in northern New Mexico — fanned by an extended period of hot, dry and windy conditions — ballooned in size Sunday, prompting authorities to issue new evacuation orders for the small town of Mora and other villages.

"This is a long-term event, and we don't anticipate having 'control' of this fire any time soon," fire officials said in an update Monday.

Residents in some outlying neighborhoods of the town of Las Vegas were told to be ready to leave their homes as the smoke choked the economic hub for the farming and ranching families who have lived for generations in the rural region. Still no evacuations had been ordered within the city as of Monday evening.

Las Vegas is also home to New Mexico Highlands University and is one of the most populated stops along Interstate 25 before the Colorado state line.

Operations Section Chief Todd Abel said crews were busy using bulldozers to build fire lines to keep the flames from pushing into neighborhoods.

Fire information officer Mike De Fries said crews got a bit of a break Monday afternoon as the wind diminished and helicopters were able to make water drops in key locations. Still, flames running along the ridges above town could be seen from the discount store, an empty baseball field and other vantage points.

The county jail, the state's psychiatric hospital and more than 200 students from the United World College have evacuated and what businesses remained open were having a hard time finding workers as more people were forced from their homes.

"We're trying to house and feed people with skeleton crews. Hundreds of people have lost their homes. It's an extraordinary tragedy," said Allan Affeldt, a hotelier in Las Vegas. He said most of his staff were evacuated from their homes and he canceled guest reservations to accommodate firefighters and emergency crews.

The 197 patients at the Behavioral Health Institute were being sent to other facilities around the state, with some being transported in secured units and others escorted by police.

State environmental authorities and officials in Las Vegas also were asking people to conserve water to ensure fire crews have enough to fight the blaze.

Across New Mexico, officials and groups were collecting food, water and other supplies for the thousands of people displaced by the fires. Offers of prayers and hope flooded social media as residents posted photos of the flames torching the tops of towering ponderosa pines near their homes. Some of those living close to the fires described the week that the fire has raged nearby as gut wrenching.

On the northern flank of the fire, evacuees streamed uphill Monday out of the Mora River valley over passes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. State Rep. Roger Montoya, from the mountain hamlet of Chacon, said neighbors were putting what they couldn't carry with them into metal containers and leaving them in irrigating fields, hoping the moisture would offer some protection.

Officials have said the northeastern New Mexico fire has damaged or destroyed 172 homes and at least 116 structures.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 47 of 71

It merged last week with another blaze that was sparked in early April when a prescribed fire escaped containment after being set by land managers to clear brush and small trees in hopes of reducing the fire danger. The cause of the other fire is still under investigation.

Jesus Romero, the deputy manager of San Miguel County, on Monday was helping family monitor their home amid smoky ash-laden air. He cut down trees around his garage as a fire-prevention measure and talked with other residents who were undecided about whether to leave. He called the situation serious.

Another New Mexico wildfire burning in the mountains near Los Alamos National Laboratory also prompted more evacuations over the weekend and other communities were told to get ready to evacuate if conditions worsen. It has reached the burn scars of wildfires that blackened the region a decade ago when New Mexico had one of its worst and most destructive seasons.

A wildfire in 2000 forced the closure of the laboratory and left about 400 people homeless. The community was threatened again in 2011 when another blaze caused by a downed power line blackened more of the surrounding forest.

In the southern New Mexico community of Ruidoso, two people were killed in a wildfire that destroyed more than 200 homes in April. That mountain community saw similar destruction from a 2012 fire.

And new wildfires were reported over the weekend — three in Texas, two in New Mexico and one each in Oklahoma and Tennessee, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. More than 3,100 wildland firefighters and support personnel are fighting fires across the country, with about one-third of them trying to prevent the big blaze in New Mexico from spreading.

More than 4,400 square miles (11,400 square kilometers) have burned across the U.S. so far this year.

Lawmakers seek police boss' journals in Ronald Greene probe

By JAKE BLEIBERG and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Lawmakers investigating the deadly arrest of Black motorist Ronald Greene are preparing to hold the former head of the Louisiana State Police in contempt for refusing to turn over his journals after talks broke down Monday in a dispute over an entry mentioning police brutality and Gov. John Bel Edwards.

The bipartisan committee will move "as soon as possible" to charge Kevin Reeves with contempt and begin legal proceedings to force him to turn over three handwritten journals he kept while leading the embattled agency, state Rep. Tanner Magee, who chairs the panel, told The Associated Press.

Holding the former head of the state's premier law enforcement agency in contempt would mark a drastic escalation by the committee, which already has elicited explosive testimony from current police officials that they believe Greene's 2019 death was covered up and that his beating by troopers after a high-speed chase amounted to "torture and murder."

Reeves' lawyer, Lewis Unglesby, said he had prepared photocopies of nearly a dozen journal entries to give to Magee during a meeting but the lawmaker "got excited and took off" without the materials.

"Col. Reeves isn't in contempt of anything," Unglesby told AP. "He has done nothing but be cooperative."

The committee formed in February after an AP report that Edwards was informed within hours that troopers arresting Greene had engaged in a "violent, lengthy struggle." Yet the Democrat stayed mostly silent on the case for two years as state troopers told Greene's family and wrote in reports that he died as the result of a car crash after a high-speed chase outside Monroe.

The governor has said that he held off on speaking out about the troopers' actions — even after privately watching graphic body camera footage of the arrest — because of an ongoing federal investigation. He's since called the actions of the troopers involved criminal and racist.

AP last year obtained and published the long-withheld body-camera video that showed what really happened: troopers jolting Greene with stun guns, punching him in the face and dragging him by his ankle shackles as he wailed, "I'm your brother! I'm scared! I'm scared!"

The eight-member legislative panel for weeks has been interviewing state police and other officials in a bid to reconstruct the agency's handling of the case. Last week, one senior state police official told law-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 48 of 71

makers he was “mystified” that no troopers have yet faced criminal charges in Greene’s death. Another ranking official offered an extraordinary apology to Greene’s family, describing the 49-year-old’s fatal arrest as “a complete disregard for the sanctity of human life.”

Lawmakers have said they intend to investigate what Edwards knew and when he knew it, but no one on his staff has yet been called to testify.

Reeves, who described Greene’s death as “awful but lawful” and stepped down in late 2020 amid criticism, has sought to downplay his own involvement in the case. He told lawmakers in March that he had a follow-up conversation with Edwards about Greene’s death — concerning the initial coroner’s findings — but said the two did not discuss the case “in any depth” until late 2020, when word of Greene’s mistreatment and a federal civil rights investigation surfaced in media accounts.

In his testimony, Reeves also revealed he kept a journal with contemporaneous notes even after retiring as superintendent but would not commit to providing them to the committee.

“My journal is my personal business,” he said, “and I’m not here to discuss it.”

Lawmakers issued a subpoena for the journals in April, days after Reeves’ lawyer declined by letter to turn them over voluntarily, citing privacy and security concerns.

Magee, a Republican, said he sat down at Unglesby’s office Monday to discuss which portions of the “three small, moleskin journals” were relevant to the committee’s inquiry. During the meeting, the lawyer was willing to provide entries that mentioned Greene by name but resisted even showing Magee other portions without justification, the lawmaker said.

Talks broke down over a June 17, 2020, entry that Magee said mentioned the governor by name along with notes about how to handle body camera footage and police brutality in the future.

Magee said he thought the entry — which was made around the time protests over George Floyd’s killing were erupting across the country — could be related to Greene’s death. But he said Unglesby denied this and refused to turn it over, describing it as “just a random discussion on police brutality.”

“So I told him we’re going to proceed with going through with contempt charges,” Magee said.

Unglesby said he later emailed and faxed the entries he initially prepared for release to Magee, but withheld certain entries that involve “names and events” not related to the scope of the committee. He declined to release the materials to AP.

A spokesperson for the governor said Edwards likely saw Reeves on June 17, 2020, but they did not discuss Greene. She noted that a legislative committee had a hearing on policing issues on that date and said the governor only learned of the “serious allegations surrounding Mr. Greene’s death in September 2020.”

Magee said the way Reeves journal was written — “like a to-do list” — made it hard to say what the entries mean and that he only saw a fraction of them.

“I think it’s premature to make any accusations,” he said. “But I think it’s important we get the documents to put it into its proper context.”

Amazon workers in NYC reject union in a reversal of fortune

By HALELUYA HADERO and ANNE D’INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon workers at a warehouse on New York City’s Staten Island overwhelmingly rejected a union bid on Monday, dealing a blow to organizers who last month pulled off the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the e-commerce giant’s history.

This time around, warehouse workers cast 618 votes — or about 62% — against the union, giving Amazon enough support to fend off a second labor win and raise questions as to whether the first victory was just a fluke.

According to the National Labor Relations Board, which oversees the process, 380 workers — or 38% — voted in favor of the grassroots union. Turnout was 61%, with about 1,600 workers eligible to vote, according to a voter list provided by Amazon.

The few ballots that were challenged by either the company or the nascent Amazon Labor Union, which led the organizing effort, were not enough to sway the outcome. Both parties have until next Monday to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 49 of 71

file objections. The ALU is weighing whether to object, said Seth Goldstein, a union attorney who provides pro-bono legal assistance to the group.

Amazon spokesperson Kelly Nantel said the company was glad workers at the warehouse "were able to have their voices heard."

"We look forward to continuing to work directly together as we strive to make every day better for our employees," Nantel said.

A separate election held last month gave the ALU a surprise victory when workers at a different Staten Island facility voted in favor of unionizing. That was a first for Seattle-based Amazon in the U.S.

For the union, Monday's defeat will surely sting. A second labor win was expected to fuel more organizing at the nation's second largest employer, and cement the power and influence of the ALU.

But despite the momentum after the first win, it was unclear whether the group would be able to replicate its success. Organizers said they had lost some support at the warehouse after filing for an election in February because they directed more energy to the nearby facility that voted to unionize last month. There were also fewer organizers working at the warehouse — roughly 10 compared with the nearly 30 employed at the other warehouse.

Some experts believed part-time workers, who organizers say the smaller facility relies on heavily, would potentially offer less union support because they might have other sources of income outside Amazon.

Kate Andrias, professor of law at Columbia University and an expert in labor law, said it can also be harder to organize part-time workers because they "have less of a stake in improving the workplace" and "may be less likely to have strong relationships with co-workers."

Despite the loss, Chris Smalls, the fired Amazon worker who leads the ALU, wrote on Twitter Monday that he was proud of the organizers who participated, saying they had a tougher challenge after the group's prior win.

"Nothing changes we organize!" Smalls tweeted. "do not be discouraged or sad be upset and talk to your coworkers"

The same obstacles that plagued the effort the first time, including Amazon's aggressive anti-union tactics, were at play again. In the lead-up to the election, Amazon continued to hold mandatory meetings to persuade its workers to reject the union effort, posted anti-union flyers and launched a website urging workers to "vote NO."

Goldstein, the attorney working with the ALU, argues Amazon stepped up its "union-busting" campaign after the last election, disciplined organizers for engaging in union activities and barred them from displaying a pro-union sign in the breakroom. The union is also taking issue with the retailer's use of mandatory anti-union meetings for its workers. The NLRB has allowed companies to mandate such meetings, but the labor board's top prosecutor is currently trying to get them outlawed.

Kent Wong, the director of the UCLA Labor Center, anticipated that there will be setbacks and victories in organizing Amazon. He contrasted it to Starbucks, where several stores have voted to unionize. Wong noted Amazon's famously high turnover rate makes it hard to organize and unlike individual Starbucks locations, with 15 to 20 workers, there are far more workers at each Amazon warehouse who must be persuaded to form a union.

"This one setback is not going to stall the momentum," Wong said. "But if Amazon can block three or four or five in a row, it will be a message to other Amazon workers, it is going to be really hard."

John Logan, director of labor and employment studies at San Francisco State University, said he wasn't entirely surprised by the union's loss. He said he believes that the ALU was stretched thin. A second union victory would have solidified the union's position, he said, but the results in many ways were more important to Amazon than the fledgling labor group.

"A second defeat could have proved fatal to the company's efforts to stop the organizing from spreading like wildfire, just as it has done at Starbucks," Logan said. But he noted there's no question that "the ALU's organizing campaign will continue and that labor activism at Amazon will continue to spread across the country."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 50 of 71

Andrias said she believes the loss “highlights the fundamental problems with labor law and the extent to which employers are able to exercise coercive power over workers during the course of these union campaigns.”

Even after a victory is secured, it’s still an uphill battle. Amazon has disputed the first election organized by the ALU, arguing in a filing with the NLRB that the vote was tainted by organizers and by the board’s regional office in Brooklyn that oversaw the election. The company says it wants a new election, but union supporters believe it’s an effort to delay contract negotiations and potentially blunt some of the organizing momentum. A separate NLRB regional office in the Southwest will hold a hearing later this month over the company’s objections.

Meanwhile, the final outcome of a separate union election in Bessemer, Alabama, is still up in the air with 416 outstanding challenged ballots hanging in the balance. Hearings to review those ballots are expected to begin in the coming weeks.

Amazon tribes turn the tables on intruders with social media

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — It was dusk on April 14 when Francisco Kuruaya heard a boat approaching along the river near his village in Brazil’s Amazon rainforest. He assumed it was the regular delivery boat bringing gasoline for generators and outboard motors to remote settlements like his. Instead, what Kuruaya found was a barge dredging his people’s pristine river in search of gold.

Kuruaya had never seen a dredge operating in this area of the Xipaia people’s territory, let alone one this massive; it resembled a floating factory.

Kuruaya, 47, motored out to the barge, boarded it and confronted the gold miners. They responded in harsh voices and he retreated for fear they were armed. But so was he — with a phone — the first he’d ever had. Back in his village Karimaa, his son Thaylewa Xipaia forwarded the photos of the mining boat to the tribe’s WhatsApp chat groups.

“Guys, this is urgent!” he said to fellow members of his tribe in an audio message The Associated Press has reviewed. “There’s a barge here at Pigeons Island. It’s huge and it’s destroying the whole island. My dad just went there and they almost took his phone.”

Several days’ voyage away, in the nearest city of Altamira, Kuruaya’s daughter Juma Xipaia received the frantic messages. She recorded her own video with choked voice and watery eyes, warning that armed conflict was imminent -- then uploaded it to social media.

In a matter of hours, word was out to the world.

The episode illustrates the advance of the internet into vast, remote rainforest areas that, until recently, had no means of quickly sharing visual evidence of environmental crime. A fast-expanding network of antennae is empowering Indigenous groups to use phones, video cameras and social media to galvanize the public and pressure authorities to respond swiftly to threats from gold miners, landgrabbers and loggers.

Until now Indigenous communities have relied on radio to transmit their distress calls. Environmental and Indigenous rights groups then relayed these to the media and the public. But the non-profits have been maligned by Brazil’s far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who advocates legalizing mining and land leasing in protected Indigenous territories. He has castigated the organizations as unreliable actors, out of touch with Indigenous people’s true desires and on the payroll of global environmental do-gooders.

Video and photos coming directly from Indigenous people are harder to dismiss and this is forcing authorities as well as the public to reckon with the reality on the ground.

“When used properly, technology helps a lot in real-time monitoring and denouncing,” said Nara Baré, head of the group Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon, in a telephone interview. “The external pressure to make the federal government act in the Xipaia territory was very important. Technology has been the main tool for that.”

Connectivity is not only enabling whistle-blowing on social media. Brazil’s Federal Prosecutor’s Office has set up a website to register reported crimes and receive uploaded visual material. Previously people in

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 51 of 71

remote communities have had to make the long and expensive trip to the nearest city that has a federal prosecutor's office.

Xipaia territory is part of a pristine rainforest area known as Terra do Meio (Middle Earth) that is dotted with dozens of Indigenous and traditional river communities. Internet connection there was rare until mid-2020, when a group of non-profits, including Health in Harmony and the Socio-Environmental Institute, financed installation of 17 antennae throughout the vast region.

Priority was given to communities with either health centers or market hubs for the production and sale of forest products, such as Brazil nuts. Signal can be painfully slow, especially on rainy days, yet it has connected people who were previously off the grid, and is enough for photos and videos to trickle out of the forest.

"The strategy was to improve communication and avoid unnecessary trips to the city," said Marcelo Salazar, Health in Harmony's Brazil program coordinator. "The internet makes it easier for health, education, and forest economy issues." Fighting environmental crime was an added benefit, he added.

Four out of five Xipaia communities are now connected. Karimaa, the village where the barge was first spotted, has had internet since July 2020. Just three days after installation, when a teenager injured his head, a city doctor was able to assess his condition using photos sent over WhatsApp. That avoided a costly, complicated medevac during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the case of the mining dredge marked the first time the Xipaia used the internet to protect their territory. In addition to sounding the alarm, four villages used WhatsApp to quickly organize a party of warriors to confront the miners. Painted with urucum, a local fruit that produces a red ink, and armed with bows, arrows and hunting rifles, they crammed into a small boat, according to Juma Xipaia. By the time they reached the location where the barge had been, however, it was gone.

Some 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) to the west, in the Amazonian state of Rondonia, internet access enabled the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people to take classes in photography and video online so they could chronicle deforestation by landgrabbers. The three-day training in 2020 was held via Zoom.

That effort produced the documentary "The Territory," which won awards at this year's Sundance Film Festival, Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival and others. Throughout its production, American director Alex Pritz relied on WhatsApp to communicate with his newly trained camera operators.

Tangaïi Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau is a teacher-turned-cameraman who traveled to the Danish festival and later spoke with the AP via WhatsApp from his remote village. He said the film is changing people's perception of Brazil's indigenous people. "In Copenhagen... I received many questions. They knew about Brazil's natural wonders, but didn't know about Indigenous peoples who fight for their territories."

Elsewhere in the Amazon, the internet has yet to arrive. So when illegal gold miners killed two Yanomami tribe members in June 2020, news of the crime took two weeks to arrive due to the area's remoteness. To avoid a repeat of that, Yanomami organizations have been seeking better connectivity. After Palimiu village along the Uraricoera River suffered a series of attacks committed by miners in May 2021, the Yanomami managed to install an antenna there. Since then, the violence has eased.

Bolsonaro's repeated promises to legalize mining and other activities on Indigenous lands have fueled invasions of territories, which are often islands of forest amid sprawling ranches. Indigenous and environmental groups estimate there are some 20,000 illegal miners in Yanomami territory, which is roughly the size of Portugal. Bolsonaro's government claims that there are 3,500.

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon surged 76% in 2021 compared to 2018, the year before Bolsonaro took office, according to official data from Brazil's space agency, which uses satellites to monitor forest loss.

Most internet connections in the Amazon remain slow, even in mid-sized cities. That may soon change. Last November, Brazil's Communications Minister Fábio Faria held a meeting with billionaire Elon Musk to discuss a partnership to improve connectivity in rural areas of the world's largest tropical rainforest.

The communications ministry, however, says the talks have not evolved and no progress has been made. Musk's company SpaceX did not respond to emailed requests for comment.

Some worry that Indigenous groups like the Xipaia won't be the only beneficiaries of greater internet

penetration in the Amazon region. Illegal miners often co-opt local Indigenous leaders, communicating surreptitiously on messaging apps. The conversations, sometimes aided by clandestine networks, can enable miners to hide heavy machinery, or tip them off to impending raids by authorities, allowing them to flee.

In Roraima state, which is where most of the Yanomami territory lies, the AP contacted one internet provider that offers wifi to an illegal gold mine for \$2,600, plus \$690 per month. Clandestine small craft fly the equipment in for installation.

"It's a double-edged sword," said Salazar, of Health in Harmony, speaking of increased connectivity.

But for Juma Xipaia, the new connection means added protection and visibility for her people. After she posted her tearful video, it racked up views and was picked up by local and international media. Within two days, an airborne operation involving the Federal Police, the national guard and environmental agencies swooped in. They located the dredge hidden behind vegetation on the banks of the Iri River with seven miners aboard.

In a country where environmental crime in the Amazon usually goes unchecked, the speedy, successful response underscored the power of Indigenous networks.

"After making a lot of calls for help, I decided to do the video. Then it worked. The telephone didn't stop ringing," Juma Xipaia said by phone. "It was very fast after the video."

Arrest warrant issued in Alabama for missing jail official

FLORENCE, Ala. (AP) —

Authorities on Monday continued the hunt for an "extremely dangerous" murder suspect and issued an arrest warrant for the Alabama jail official they now believe helped him escape.

Inmate Casey Cole White, 38, was shackled and handcuffed when he and Vicky White, the facility's assistant director of corrections, left the Lauderdale County Detention Center in Florence, Alabama, on Friday morning. They have not been seen since, although the patrol vehicle that the pair used when leaving the detention center was found at a nearby shopping center parking lot after their absence was discovered.

Authorities have no idea where they are, although the inmate should be recognizable by his size. He stands 6 feet, 9 inches (2.06 meters) tall and weighs about 260 pounds (118 kilograms). Authorities warned that anyone seeing the pair should not approach them.

"We consider both of them dangerous and, in all probability, both individuals are armed," U.S. Marshal Marty Keely said at a press conference Monday. He noted that Casey White "will stand out" because of his size, even if he has changed his appearance.

Lauderdale County Sheriff Rick Singleton said Monday that they had issued an arrest warrant for Vicky White, 56, on charges of permitting or allowing an escape. She is not related to Casey White, who was serving a 75-year prison sentence and awaiting trial on a capital murder charge.

Vicky White told co-workers she was taking him to the courthouse for a mental health evaluation. But Singleton later said no such evaluation was scheduled. She also violated a policy that required more than one official to be involved in transporting inmates, a rule that officials emphasized for White because he had previously tried to escape, Singleton said. The sheriff said video showed the pair left the jail and went straight to that parking lot.

"We know she participated, whether she did that willingly or if she was coerced, threatened somehow to participate, not really sure. We know for sure she did participate," Singleton said.

"Casey White, as you've heard me say over and over and over is an extremely dangerous person and we need to get him located and get him off the street," Singleton said.

Casey White was serving time for a string of crimes that included attempted murder, robbery and burglary. While in prison, he had confessed to the 2015 stabbing death of a 58-year-old woman, authorities said, which caused him to be brought to the Lauderdale County jail for court proceedings. The sheriff said they believe White plotted an earlier escape from the jail in 2020 when they found a makeshift knife.

He could face the death penalty if convicted of the capital murder charge. The U.S. Marshals Service is offering up to \$10,000 for information.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 53 of 71

Singleton said Vicky White had been an exemplary employee and jail employees are "just devastated." "This is not the Vicky White we know, by any stretch of the imagination," the sheriff said.

Vicky White had planned to retire and Friday was to be her last day. He said she had sold her home about a month ago and "talked about going to the beach."

The sheriff said they had no leads at this point on where the two are located.

"If we knew where they were at, we would be there and not here," Singleton said.

As an assistant director for corrections, Vicky White moved throughout the county detention facility and had multiple opportunities every day to be in contact with any given inmate, the sheriff said. Her job duties also included coordinating transport of inmates.

Vicky White's mother, Pat Davis, told WAAY she was in shock and scared for her daughter.

"As a mother, I didn't know how to act because I thought at first it was a mistake. And then when I found out for sure it was, it was just disbelief," says Pat Davis. She told the station that "we just want her back" and found it difficult to believe her daughter would help an inmate escape.

"She's never done anything, I bet she's never even had a speeding ticket," Pat Davis said.

Lauderdale County District Attorney Chris Connolly said he was also shocked. He last spoke to Vicky White on Thursday about transporting an inmate with a broken ankle to get medical care, and nothing seemed unusual.

"She is somebody I would have trusted with most anything. She was one of those people you could call if you needed something to happen at that jail. She was the go-to person," Connolly said.

The U.S. Marshals Service said anyone with information about Casey White's location or Vicky White's disappearance can call the service at 1-800-336-0102. Anonymous tips may also be submitted through the U.S. Marshals Tip App.

Death in Ukraine's Kharkiv is everywhere, rarely explained

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — The outskirts of Kharkiv have the feel of an open-air morgue, where the dead lie unclaimed and unexplained, sometimes for weeks on end, as Ukrainian and Russian forces fight for control of slivers of land.

There is the charred body of a man, unidentifiable, propped on an anti-tank barrier made of crossed I-beams outside a town that has been under the control of both sides in recent days. There are the dead soldiers, apparently Russian, four of them arranged in a Z like the military symbol found on Russian armored vehicles, visible to the Russian drones that continuously buzz overhead. The door to an apartment opens to three bodies inside.

Precisely how any of this happened will likely never be known.

Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, has been under sustained Russian attack since the beginning of the war in late February. With the Russian offensive intensifying in the east, the Russian onslaught has grown fiercer.

Considered a strategic and industrial prize, territory on the eastern city's outskirts has gone back and forth between Russian and Ukrainian forces for weeks now as the fighting shifts from village to village. Many, but by no means all, of Kharkiv's 1 million residents have fled.

Associated Press journalists saw the bodies formed into a Z, wearing the white arm bands commonly used by Russian soldiers, and with some Russian medical kits alongside them. They were found on a front line where fighting had been taking place for days. They, along with the burned man, were taken to a morgue on Monday. There was no explanation for the Z formation — a symbol of the Russian invasion — nor the burned body propped on the barrier. Either could be considered a war crime, for disrespecting the dignity of the dead.

Next will come the investigation into their identities, maybe an attempt to notify family.

But even that is hard to untangle. The body of a man with Ukrainian insignia turned out to have the identity papers of a Russian soldier. The apartment where the three bodies were found had been badly

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 54 of 71

shelled, but it wasn't clear what killed them.

Shelling and airstrikes are a daily threat everywhere here, to everyone. And, as long as that remains true, death can come at anytime, without anyone around to answer why.

It was a rare glimpse into the death and atrocities of the war. Getting a full picture of the unfolding battle in eastern Ukraine has been difficult because airstrikes and artillery barrages have made it extremely dangerous for journalists to move around. Russia has severely restricted reporting in the combat zone; Ukraine's government has imposed fewer limits, mostly on how quickly material can be published or about military installations.

In Washington on Monday, a senior U.S. defense official said Ukrainian forces had over the last 48 hours succeeded in pushing Russian forces further away from Kharkiv, even as it came under Russian aerial bombardment. The Russians have now been pushed some 40 kilometers (25 miles) to the east of the city, further into the Donbas region, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the U.S. military assessment.

According to the Red Cross, mutilating dead bodies in international armed conflicts is covered by the war crime of "committing outrages upon personal dignity" under the Statute of the International Criminal Court, which according to the Elements of Crimes also applies to dead persons.

Body in barrel exposed as level of Nevada's Lake Mead drops

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A body inside a barrel was found over the weekend on the the newly exposed bottom of Nevada's Lake Mead as drought depletes one of the largest U.S. reservoirs — and officials predicted the discovery could be just the first of more grim finds.

"I would say there is a very good chance as the water level drops that we are going to find additional human remains," Las Vegas police Lt. Ray Spencer told KLAS-TV on Monday.

The lake's level has dropped so much that the uppermost water intake at drought-stricken Lake Mead became visible last week. The reservoir on the Colorado River behind Hoover Dam has become so depleted that Las Vegas is now pumping water from deeper within Lake Mead, which also stretches into Arizona.

Personal items found inside the barrel indicated the person died more than 40 years ago in the 1980s, Spencer said.

He declined to discuss a cause of death and declined to describe the items found, saying the investigation is ongoing.

Police plan to reach out to experts at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to analyze when the barrel started eroding. The Clark County coroner's office will try to determine the person's identity.

Boaters spotted the barrel Sunday afternoon. National Park Service rangers searched an area near the lake's Hemenway Harbor and found the barrel containing skeletal remains.

Lake Mead and Lake Powell upstream are the largest human-made reservoirs in the U.S., part of a system that provides water to more than 40 million people, tribes, agriculture and industry in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and across the southern border in Mexico.

Biden restores celebration of Eid al-Fitr at White House

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden celebrated Eid al-Fitr on Monday, restoring celebrations of the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan at the White House after his predecessor scrapped them.

Muslims around the world typically abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan. Its end often means gathering for prayers, visiting family and friends and holding festive meals.

Addressing hundreds of attendees in the East Room, Biden said he'd promised as a presidential candidate to bring back marking Eid al-Fitr at the White House — but was forced to hold a virtual celebration last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Today, around the world, we've seen so many Muslims that have been targeted by violence. No one, no one should discriminate against or be oppressed, or be repressed, for their religious beliefs," Biden

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 55 of 71

said. "We have to acknowledge that an awful lot of work remains to be done, abroad and here at home. Muslims make our nation stronger every single day, even as they still face real challenges and threats in our society, including targeted violence and Islamophobia."

Presidents have held Eid al-Fitr celebrations since the Clinton administration, until Donald Trump, who didn't hold formal events. He instead released statements marking the holiday, including one in 2020 when Trump said of Muslims "we hope they find both comfort and strength in the healing powers of prayer and devotion."

Biden said Monday that he'd recently nominated the first Muslim woman to the federal bench as part of a commitment to build an administration that values diversity and "looks like America." He also jokingly compared fasting for Ramadan to his Catholic faith, which he said mandates that he make major sacrifices for Lent including having to "go 40 days" with "no sweets and no ice cream."

Talib Shareef, Imam of Masjid Muhammad in Washington, known to some as "The Nation's Mosque," said of the White House gathering, "Being hosted here is an important statement for our nation and for the world."

"A statement that Islam is a welcome part of our nation together with all the other faith traditions," Shareef said. "And that the highest office in this land is committed to our nation's foundational values and laws protecting religious freedom."

Also addressing the event was first lady Jill Biden, who drew applause by saying that the holiday embodies above all "a joy born from love. Love for our families and for our communities, and for THIS community."

NYPD veteran convicted of assaulting officer in Capitol riot

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal jury on Monday convicted a New York Police Department veteran of assaulting an officer during the U.S. Capitol riot, rejecting his claim that he was defending himself when he tackled the officer and grabbed his gas mask.

Thomas Webster, a 20-year NYPD veteran, was the first Capitol riot defendant to be tried on an assault charge and the first to present a jury with a self-defense argument.

Jurors deliberated for less than three hours before they convicted Webster of all six counts in his indictment, including a charge that he assaulted Metropolitan Police Department officer Noah Rathbun with a dangerous weapon, a metal flagpole. The assault charge alone is punishable by up to 20 years in prison, although sentencing guidelines likely will recommend a significantly shorter prison term.

Webster, 56, testified that he was trying to protect himself from a "rogue cop" who punched him in the face. He also accused Rathbun of instigating the confrontation.

Rathbun testified that he didn't punch or pick a fight with Webster as a violent mob attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, disrupting Congress from certifying Joe Biden's 2020 presidential election victory over then-President Donald Trump.

Two jurors who spoke to reporters after the verdict said videos capturing the officer's assault from multiple angles were crucial evidence rebutting Webster's self-defense argument.

"I guess we were all surprised that he would even make that defense argument," said a juror who spoke on condition of anonymity. "There was no dissent among us at all. We unanimously agreed that there was no self-defense argument here at all."

Another juror, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said Webster's self-defense claim "just didn't stack up."

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta is scheduled to sentence Webster on Sept. 2.

Webster's jury trial was the fourth for a Capitol riot case. The first three defendants to get a jury trial also were convicted of all charges in their respective indictments. A judge decided two other cases without a jury, acquitting one of the defendants and partially acquitting the other.

Webster, who wore a mask in court, showed no obvious reaction to the verdict.

"We're disappointed," defense attorney James Monroe said after the verdict, "but we recognized from

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 56 of 71

the beginning that folks here (in Washington, D.C.) were quite traumatized by what transpired on Jan. 6. And I think we saw some of this expressed today.”

Prosecutors asked for Webster to be detained, but the judge agreed to let him remain free until his sentencing. He'll continue to be monitored with an ankle bracelet. The judge said it was a “close call” whether to jail him immediately but noted that he has complied with current conditions of release and doesn't have any prior convictions.

Webster drove alone to Washington from his home near Goshen, New York, on the eve of the Jan. 6 “Stop the Steal” rally. He was wearing a bulletproof vest and carrying a U.S. Marine Corps flag on a metal pole when he approached the Capitol, after listening to Trump address thousands of supporters.

Webster said he went to the Capitol to “petition” lawmakers to “relook” at the results of the 2020 presidential election. But he testified that he didn't intend to interfere with Congress' joint session to certify the Electoral College vote.

Rathbun's body camera captured Webster shouting profanities and insults before they made any physical contact. Webster said he was attending his first political protest as a civilian and expressing his free speech rights when he yelled at officers behind a row of bike racks.

The body camera video shows that Webster slammed one of the bike racks at Rathbun before the officer reached out with an open left hand and struck the right side of Webster's face. Webster said it felt as though he had been hit by a freight train.

“It was a hard hit, and all I wanted to do was defend myself,” Webster said.

Rathbun said he was trying to move Webster back from a security perimeter that he and other officers were struggling to maintain.

After Rathbun struck his face, Webster swung a metal flag pole at the officer in a downward chopping motion, striking a bike rack. Rathbun grabbed the broken pole from Webster, who charged at the officer, tackled him to the ground and grabbed his gas mask.

Rathbun testified that he started choking as the chin strap on his gas mask pressed against his throat. Webster said he grabbed Rathbun by the gas mask because he wanted the officer to see his hands.

Rathbun reported a hand injury from a separate encounter with a rioter inside the Capitol. He didn't report any injuries caused by Webster, but jurors saw photos of leg bruises that Rathbun attributed to his confrontation with the retired officer.

Webster faced counts of assaulting, resisting or impeding an officer using a dangerous weapon; civil disorder; entering and remaining in restricted grounds with a dangerous weapon; disorderly and disruptive conduct in restricted grounds with a dangerous weapon; engaging in physical violence in restricted grounds with a dangerous weapon; and engaging in an act of physical violence on Capitol grounds.

Webster retired from the NYPD in 2011 after 20 years of service, which included a stint on then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg's private security detail. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1985 to 1989 before joining the NYPD in 1991.

More than 780 people have been charged with riot-related federal crimes. The Justice Department says more than 245 of them have been charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement. More than 100 officers were injured.

Two other defendants testified at their trials. Dustin Byron Thompson, an Ohio man who was convicted by a jury of obstructing Congress from certifying Biden's presidential victory, said he was following orders from Trump. A judge hearing testimony without a jury acquitted Matthew Martin, a New Mexico man who said outnumbered police officers allowed him and others to enter the Capitol through the Rotunda doors.

Two riot defendants didn't testify at their trials before jurors convicted them of all charges, including interfering with officers. One of them, Thomas Robertson, was an off-duty police officer from Rocky Mount, Virginia. The other, Texas resident Guy Wesley Reffitt, also was convicted of storming the Capitol with a holstered handgun.

U.S. District Judge Trevor McFadden, a Trump nominee who acquitted Martin of all charges, also presided over a bench trial for New Mexico elected official Couy Griffin. McFadden convicted Griffin of illegally entering restricted Capitol grounds but acquitted him of engaging in disorderly conduct.

Trump election probe special grand jury selected in Atlanta

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A special grand jury was selected Monday for the investigation into whether former President Donald Trump and others illegally tried to influence the 2020 election in Georgia.

The investigation has been underway since early last year, and Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis took this unusual step of requesting the special grand jury to help it along. She noted in a letter to the chief judge that the special grand jury would be able to issue subpoenas to people who have refused to cooperate otherwise.

The chief judge ordered the special grand jury to be seated for a period of up to a year, beginning Monday. Of the pool of about 200 people called from the county master jury list, 26 were chosen to serve — 23 grand jurors and three alternates. Special grand juries focus on investigating a single topic and making recommendations to the district attorney, who then decides whether to seek an indictment from a regular grand jury.

Because of the intense public interest in this case, the court made arrangements for parts of Monday's selection process to be broadcast live. Now that the special grand jury has been selected, however, everything it does will happen in secret.

Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney, who's been tasked with overseeing the special grand jury, told the people summoned to the jury pool that they would not be hearing a trial, but would instead be serving on an investigative special grand jury looking into actions surrounding the 2020 general election.

"Now it's time for 26 members of our community to participate in that investigation," McBurney said.

Willis has confirmed that her team is looking into a January 2021 phone call in which Trump pushed Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" the votes needed for him to win the state. She has also said they are looking at a November 2020 phone call between U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham and Raffensperger, the abrupt resignation of the U.S. attorney in Atlanta on Jan. 4, 2021, and comments made during December 2020 Georgia legislative committee hearings on the election.

It's not clear exactly what charges Willis could choose to pursue against Trump or anyone else. In a letter she sent to top-ranking state officials last year, she said she was looking into "potential violations of Georgia law prohibiting the solicitation of election fraud, the making of false statements to state and local government bodies, conspiracy, racketeering, violation of oath of office and any involvement in violence or threats related to the election's administration."

McBurney said the grand jurors won't begin meeting until June and won't meet every week. They will be notified in advance of when they need to be there, and there's some wiggle room if they can't make it to every session as only 16 are needed for a quorum, he said.

McBurney then led the 200 potential grand jurors in swearing an oath to give truthful answers about their qualifications.

He explained that grand jurors must be at least 18, must be U.S. citizens and must have lived in Fulton County for the past six months. Anyone who's an elected official or has been for the last two years, anyone convicted of a felony or anyone who's served on a Fulton County jury or grand jury in the last year is not qualified to serve, McBurney said.

The investigation involves actions surrounding the 2020 general election, and it is important that grand jurors "bring an open mind to the process," the judge said. Anyone who is already convinced that a crime did or did not happen should say they have a conflict when asked, McBurney said.

After identifying other potential conflicts — for example, plans to be out of the country for an extended time, having to care for someone after a major surgery — McBurney went through the first 100 potential jurors and asked them individually — addressing them only by number — to say whether they have a conflict. A quarter of the grand jurors said they had a conflict and the judge and prosecutors began questioning them privately to determine whether they could be excused. Then he closed the courtroom so he and prosecutors could speak privately with those selected.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 58 of 71

While the district attorney's office will generally be steering the investigation, grand jurors will be able to question witnesses who appear before them. If they believe there are other witnesses they would like to hear from or documents they would like to see, they have the power to issue subpoenas.

Jill Biden: Resilience of Ukrainian refugees 'inspires me'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden said she is heading to Romania and Slovakia later this week to visit with Ukrainian families who fled for their lives after Russia invaded their country in hopes of sending the message, despite language barriers, "that their resilience inspires me."

The White House announced late Sunday that the first lady will spend Mother's Day meeting Ukrainian refugees, most of whom are women and children.

The May 8 meeting will take place in Slovakia. Biden is scheduled to depart Washington late Thursday on a five-day trip that will also take her to Romania. Both countries share borders with Ukraine, which has spent the past two months fighting off Russia's military invasion. Romania and Slovakia also are NATO members.

She discussed the trip Monday while touring a costume exhibit at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, saying she would spend the U.S. holiday dedicated to honoring mothers with Ukrainian families who have been displaced by Russian President Vladimir Putin's war.

"As a mother myself, I can only imagine the grief families are feeling," said Biden, a mother of three. "I know that we might not share a language, but I hope that I can convey, in ways so much greater than words, that their resilience inspires me, that they are not forgotten, and that all Americans stand with them still."

The trip will mark Biden's latest show of solidarity with Ukraine.

Nearly 5.5 million Ukrainians, mostly women and children, have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded its smaller neighbor on Feb. 24, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Many have resettled in neighboring countries or relocated elsewhere in Europe.

Throughout the trip, Biden will also meet with U.S. service members, U.S. Embassy personnel, humanitarian aid workers and educators, the White House said.

After arriving in Romania on Friday, she is scheduled to meet with U.S. service members at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, a U.S. military installation near the Black Sea.

The schedule then takes her to the Romanian capital of Bucharest on Saturday to meet with government officials, U.S. Embassy staff, humanitarian aid workers and educators who are helping teach displaced Ukrainian children. The first lady will travel to Slovakia to meet with staff at the U.S. Embassy in Bratislava, the capital.

On May 8, Biden will travel to Kosice and Vysne Nemecke in Slovakia to meet with refugees, humanitarian aid workers and local Slovaks who are supporting Ukrainian families that have sought refuge in Slovakia.

She plans to meet with members of Slovakia's government on May 9 before returning to the United States. President Joe Biden visited with Ukrainian refugees during a stop in Poland in March.

The trip will be the first lady's second overseas to represent the United States by herself, following her journey to Tokyo last year for the opening of the delayed 2020 Olympic Games. The trip also will mark her latest gesture of solidarity with Ukraine.

Four days after Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, Biden appeared at a White House event wearing a face mask embroidered with a sunflower, Ukraine's national flower.

She also invited Ukraine's ambassador to the United States, Oksana Markarova, to sit with her during President Biden's State of the Union address in March and had a sunflower sewn into the sleeve of the cobalt blue dress she wore for the occasion.

Jill Biden spoke Monday at the Met about fashion as a means of communication. She said she had the sunflower applique sewn onto the cuff of her dress because she knew the only thing that would be written about her for the president's big speech was what she wore.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 59 of 71

"And that night, sitting next to the Ukrainian ambassador, I knew that I was sending a message without saying a word, that Ukraine was in our hearts and that we stood with them.," she said.

Trump's bid to shape GOP faces test with voters in May races

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's post-presidency enters a new phase this month as voters across the U.S. begin weighing the candidates he elevated to pursue a vision of a Republican Party steeped in hardline populism, culture wars and denial of his loss in the 2020 campaign.

The first test comes on Tuesday when voters in Ohio choose between the Trump-backed JD Vance for an open U.S. Senate seat and several other contenders who spent months clamoring for the former president's support. In the following weeks, elections in Nebraska, Pennsylvania and North Carolina will also serve as a referendum on Trump's ability to shape the future of the GOP.

In nearly every case, Trump has endorsed only those who embrace his false claims of election fraud and excuse the deadly U.S. Capitol insurrection he inspired last year.

"The month of May is going to be a critical window into where we are," said Maryland Republican Gov. Larry Hogan, a Trump critic defending incumbent GOP governors in Georgia, Ohio and Idaho against Trump-backed challengers this month. "I'm just concerned that there are some people trying to tear the party apart or burn it down."

Few states may be a higher priority for Trump than Georgia, where early voting begins on Monday ahead of the May 24 primary. He's taken a particularly active role in the governor's race there, recruiting a former U.S. senator to take on the incumbent Republican for failing to go along with his election lie. For similar reasons, Trump is also aiming to unseat the Republican secretary of state, who he unsuccessfully pressured to overturn President Joe Biden's victory.

While the primary season will play out deep into the summer, the first batch of races could set the tone for the year. If Republican voters in the early states rally behind the Trump-backed candidates, the former president's kingmaker status would be validated, likely enhancing his power as he considers another bid for the presidency. High-profile setbacks, however, could dent his stature and give stronger footing to those who hope to advance an alternate vision for the GOP.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz predicted a strong month of May for Trump and his allies.

"The voices in Washington that want him to fade into obscurity or to be silenced are engaged in their own form of wishful thinking," Cruz said in an interview. "That's not going to happen. Nor should he."

As Republicans grapple with Trump, Democrats are confronting their own set of revealing primaries.

Candidates representing the Democrats' moderate and progressive wings are yanking the party in opposing directions while offering conflicting messages about how to overcome their acute political shortcomings, Biden's weak standing chief among them. History suggests that Democrats, as the party that controls Washington, may be headed for big losses in November no matter which direction they go.

But as Democrats engage in passionate debates over policies, Republicans are waging deeply personal and expensive attacks against each other that are designed, above all, to win over Trump and his strongest supporters.

Florida Sen. Rick Scott, who leads the GOP's effort to retake the Senate, described the month of May as a brutal sorting period likely to be dominated by Republican infighting instead of the policy solutions or contrasts with Democrats he'd like to see.

"The primaries too often become sort of character assassinations," Scott said in an interview. "That's what has happened."

He added, "Hopefully, people come together."

No race may be messier than the Republican primary election for Georgia's governor. Trump has spent months attacking Republican incumbents Gov. Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. He blames both men for not working hard enough to overturn his narrow loss in the 2020 presidential election.

The results in Georgia were certified after a trio of recounts, including one partially done by hand. They

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 60 of 71

all affirmed Biden's victory.

Federal and state election officials and Trump's own attorney general have said there is no credible evidence the election was tainted. The former president's allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges Trump appointed.

Georgia Republican Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan, a frequent Trump critic who is not running for reelection, described Trump's decision to back former Sen. David Perdue against Kemp as an "embarrassing" waste of time that could undermine the GOP's broader goals this fall.

Duncan predicted Trump would ultimately win some races and lose others this month, but he was especially optimistic about Kemp's chances to beat back Trump's challenge.

"If a sitting governor is able to defeat that whole Donald Trump notion by a huge amount — and others down the ticket — I think we're gonna send a message that it's gonna take more than a Donald Trump endorsement to call yourself a Republican," he said.

For now, however, Trump is unquestionably the nation's most powerful Republican as even those who find themselves on opposite sides of the former president are careful to note their loyalty to him. Cruz, who is backing opponents of Trump-endorsed Senate candidates in Ohio and Pennsylvania, downplayed any disagreement with him in an interview. Cruz noted he made his picks long before Trump did.

"For the four years he was president, Donald Trump had no stronger ally in the Senate than me," Cruz said.

Six months before the general election, the Republican candidates in key primaries have already spent mountains of campaign cash attacking each other as Democrats largely save their resources — and sharp-est attacks — for the November.

With early voting already underway in Ohio, a half-dozen Republican candidates in the state's high-profile Senate primary and their allied outside groups have spent more than \$66 million this year combined on television advertising as of last week, according to Democratic officials tracking ad spending. The vast majority of the ads were Republican-on-Republican attacks.

Mike Gibbons, a Cleveland real estate developer and investment banker, spent \$15 million alone on television advertising as of last week. That includes an advertising campaign attacking Vance highlighting his past description of Trump as "an idiot."

The pro-Vance super PAC known as Protect Ohio Values, meanwhile, has spent \$10 million on the primary so far, including a recent barrage of attack ads casting Cruz-backed candidate Josh Mandel as "another failed career politician squish."

On the other side, the leading Senate Democratic hopeful, Rep. Tim Ryan, has spent less than \$3 million so far in positive television ads promoting his own push to protect Ohio manufacturing jobs from China.

The spending disparities in high-profile Senate primaries in Pennsylvania and North Carolina were equally stunning.

In Pennsylvania, where Trump-backed Dr. Mehmet Oz and former hedge fund executive David McCormick are locked in a fierce fight for the GOP nomination, the candidates and allied outside groups have spent more than \$48 million on television advertising so far. Democrats spent just over \$10 million.

And in North Carolina, Republican forces have spent more than \$15 million on a divisive primary pitting Trump-backed Rep. Ted Budd against former Gov. Pat McCrory. Democrats, who have united behind former state Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, spent just over \$2 million.

Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, who leads the effort for Democrats to keep the Senate majority, said Republicans are essentially creating the Democrats' general election ads for them. He described the intensity of the Republican infighting in several states as "toxic for the character of the Republican candidates."

"They're trying to compete to see who is the Trumpiest of the Trumpsters," Peters said. "They're not talking about issues that people care about."

At the same time, Peters acknowledged his own party's challenges, particularly Biden's low popularity. He said it would be up to every individual candidate to decide whether to invite the Democratic president to campaign on their behalf.

"I think the president can be helpful," Peters said of Biden. But "this is about the candidates. They're

running to represent their state in the United States Senate. And they have to rise and fall by who they are as individuals.”

Fired officer charged with murder in shooting of boy, 12

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A fired Philadelphia police officer has been charged with murder in the shooting of a fleeing 12-year-old boy, who prosecutors said Monday was on the ground and unarmed when the officer fired the fatal shot.

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner announced first- and third-degree murder charges against former Officer Edsaul Mendoza in the shooting of Thomas “T.J.” Siderio on March 1, saying video showed to the grand jury contradicts the officer’s version of events. Police say the youth had first fired a shot at an unmarked police car, injuring one of four plainclothes officers inside.

Mendoza, 26, was also charged with voluntary manslaughter and other charges, according to a grand jury presentment unsealed Monday. He had been suspended from his job March 8 with intent to fire.

Court records show Mendoza surrendered Sunday and was denied bail, rare treatment for former law enforcement officers facing charges.

A spokesperson for the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 5 said the union plans to provide an attorney for the officer. Court records showed the public defender’s office represented Mendoza at his bail hearing Monday. The defender’s association declined to comment on the case.

New details were revealed in the grand jury documents, including that Siderio had thrown a gun down about 40 feet (12 meters) before he was shot and that he had dropped to the ground, either tripping or obeying a command to get down. Krasner said the officer crossed between two parked cars and, from about half a car length away, fired the fatal shot from the sidewalk behind the youth.

Krasner said much of the evidence was based on the video, which has not been publicly released. According to grand jury documents, prosecutors created a composite video from two cameras, one that recorded clear visuals of the foot chase and another that recorded a different visual angle but caught sound.

“It is certain that (Siderio) had stopped running and he was possibly surrendering ... and he was essentially facedown on the sidewalk,” Krasner said, saying the youth was in a pushup position looking back toward the officer when he was shot.

Krasner called the entire foot chase “tactically unsound” and said the video was “disturbing and very difficult to watch.”

There is no indication that race was a factor in the shooting of Siderio, who was white.

Police said the four plainclothes officers were in an unmarked car the night of March 1, looking for a teenager they wanted to interview related to a firearm investigation. They saw two youths, Siderio and an unnamed 17-year-old, and maneuvered the car around the block and next to them to initiate a stop.

Prosecutors said Monday that almost at the same time the officers turned the red and blue lights on, a shot came through the back passenger window and ricocheted around the car. Prosecutors said it was unclear from video whether the boy knew it was a police vehicle when he fired, but the investigation is ongoing.

One officer was treated for injuries to his eye and face caused by broken glass.

Mendoza and another officer on the passenger side got out and fired one shot each. Mendoza then chased Siderio down the block, firing twice and striking the boy once in the back from what prosecutors say was “relatively close range.”

Krasner said Mendoza immediately told another officer that Siderio had thrown his gun and pointed to an area down the street, signaling to prosecutors that he knew the boy was unarmed. Krasner said the video also shows the officer changing his approach and that he was able to see Siderio was on the ground when he fired the fatal shot.

Police recovered a firearm that had been reported stolen, and noted in the days after the shooting that another bullet was in the chamber.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 62 of 71

An attorney representing Siderio's father in a lawsuit against the city and officer would not comment. Mary Siderio, the boy's great-grandmother, told KYW-TV she was happy with the news.

"I'm so heartbroken," she said. "I can't sleep. None of us can sleep. It's horrible."

The presentment notes a handful of contradictions to Mendoza's account that the boy pointed a gun at him and that he was standing in the street when he fired, rather than almost over Siderio on the sidewalk.

It also raises questions about whether the officers were initiating a traffic stop against the two boys for riding their bikes the wrong way on a one-way street in order to talk to them about the firearm investigation. It notes neither was the target of that investigation. Unmarked cars and plainclothes officers are supposed to make traffic stops only in dangerous circumstances, according to department directives.

"It's certainly a situation that might have had a very different outcome if there had been a marked police car," Krasner said.

Met Gala returns: A guide to fashion's big night

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It started in 1948 as a society midnight supper, and it wasn't even at the Met.

Fast forward 70-plus years, and the Met Gala is something totally different, one of the most photographed events in the world for its head-spinning red carpet — though the famous carpeted steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art aren't always red. We're talking Rihanna as a bejeweled pope. Zendaya as Cinderella with a light-up gown. Katy Perry as a chandelier morphing into a hamburger. Also: Beyoncé in her "naked dress." Kim Kardashian in a face-covering bodysuit. Billy Porter as an Egyptian sun god, carried on a litter by six shirtless men. And Lady Gaga's 16-minute striptease.

Not to forget, the Met Gala is still a fundraiser — last year the evening earned more than a whopping \$16.4 million for the Met's Costume Institute. Let's also not forget that it launches the annual spring fashion exhibit that brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to the museum.

But it's the carpet itself (now watchable for everyone, on livestream) that draws the world's eyes, with the guest list strategically withheld until the last minute — a collection of stars from movies, music, fashion, sports, politics and elsewhere that probably makes for the highest celebrity wattage-per square foot of any party in the world.

Herewith, a primer for the 2022 Met gala, which is on May 2:

AGAIN, ALREADY?

Yes, we just did this in the fall. The annual fundraiser for the Met's Costume Institute is traditionally held the first Monday in May, but because of the pandemic, a postponed gala was held in September.

WHO'S HOSTING THE 2022 MET GALA?

This year's hosts are Regina King, power couple Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds, and Lin-Manuel Miranda. Of course, Vogue's Anna Wintour is supervising the whole shebang as she has since the '90s. Her fellow honorary co-chairs are designer Tom Ford and Instagram head Adam Mosseri. Ford, also a film director, is one of nine directors whose work is featured in the new spring exhibit.

IS THERE A THEME?

Of course. The Met Gala theme for this year is "Gilded glamour, white-tie," guests have been told.

As usual, the sartorial theme comes from the exhibit the gala launches: "In America: An Anthology of Fashion," which is the second installment of star curator Andrew Bolton's two-part show exploring the roots of American style.

This exhibit showcases overlooked figures in fashion history, many of them women and people of color, through the talents of some top film directors, including Sofia Coppola, Martin Scorsese, host King, and last year's Oscar winner Chloé Zhao. Their work will be displayed in the period rooms of the American Wing, so expect some grand fashion related to the theme — like those gowns from HBO's "The Gilded Age." Artfully ripped jeans, this time? Not so much.

DOES EVERYONE FOLLOW THE THEME?

Not really. Some eschew it and just go for big and crazy. But expect some guests to have carefully

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 63 of 71

researched the theme and to come in perfect sync with the exhibit. It was hard to beat the carpet, for example, when the theme was "Catholic imagination" and Rihanna came as the pope, Zendaya channeled Joan of Arc, and Perry navigated the crowd with a set of enormous angel wings.

HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR A MET GALA TICKET?

Wrong question. You cannot just "buy" a ticket. The right question is, IF I were famous or powerful and got invited, how much would it cost?

IF I WERE FAMOUS AND POWERFUL AND GOT INVITED, HOW MUCH WOULD IT COST?

Well, you might not pay yourself. Generally companies buy tables. A fashion label — Michael Kors, for example — would then host its desired celebrities, or fashion muses. But each paid seat reportedly costs around \$35,000, though some guests are invited for free.

SO WHO GETS INVITED TO THE MET GALA?

This year, there will be 400 guests — similar to the September gala, and lower than pre-pandemic highs of 500-600. Trying to predict? Take out your pen and jot down some of your favorite names, the buzzer the better.

Newly minted Oscar or Grammy winners, for example, are a good bet — or perennial fashion favorites like former host Timothée Chalamet, who wore white Converse shoes last year. Do the same with pop music, sports, politics, fashion of course ... and Broadway, a special favorite of Wintour's (and remember, Miranda's a host this year). Now, cross everyone off your list except the very top.

At the Met Gala, everybody's A-list.

THAT MUST BE AN EXAGGERATION.

Not really. Ask Tina Fey. She went in 2010 and later described walking around trying to find somebody "normal," e.g. not too famous, to sit and talk with. That ended up being Barbara Walters.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN THE MET GALA?

Well, these days you can watch the whole carpet unfold on livestream. And really, the carpet is the party. (Ask Gaga!)

If you're in New York City you can also join fans across the street from the museum on Fifth Avenue, and even further away on Madison Avenue, pressed up against police barricades. You might get lucky: Last year, Chalamet ran over to greet his admirers.

DO WE KNOW WHO'S COMING? AND WHO ISN'T?

Like we said, it's secret. But reports slip out, often about who is not coming. Fashion favorite Zendaya has confirmed she has other plans. And Rihanna is about to give birth, so we'd assume she'll skip, but then again, she's Rihanna so let's not assume anything. A fair assumption would be a heavy Kardashian presence. New York's mayor, Eric Adams, will be attending — very happily, according to the New York Post. Also happily, Perry has said she's going, and indicated her hamburger-chandelier days may be receding in favor of more traditional garb.

Another thing remains true: Nobody can come who isn't vaccinated. In addition to vaccine proof, guests had to take a PCR test. Masks are not likely to make much of an appearance since people will be eating and drinking the whole night.

WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE THE MET GALA?

Entering the museum, guests walk past an impossibly enormous flower arrangement in the lobby (one was over 250,000 white roses) and over to cocktails. Or, they head to view the exhibit. Two changes this year, per the museum: The dramatic lobby centerpiece will remain up for regular visitors to see for a few days. And cocktails will take place in the American Wing, making it very easy for guests to slip in and out of the exhibit.

Around 8 p.m., they're summoned to dinner — perhaps by a team of buglers ("Are they going to do that between every course?" actor Gary Oldman asked aloud one year.) We can't personally describe anything beyond that, either dinner or the musical performance, but you can find clips of Rihanna singing on the table tops in the documentary "The First Monday in May," and it looks fun.

IS IT FUN FOR EVERYONE?

Occasionally, someone says no. Fey, in a comic rant to David Letterman in 2015, described the gala as

a “jerk parade” and said it included everyone you’d ever want to punch, if you had millions of arms.

Amy Schumer said she felt awkward and left “earlier than should be allowed.” But most profess to having fun.

Then there was Joan Collins, who arrived channeling her imperious “Dynasty” character, Alexis, in 2018, ready to have a blast, but seeking liquid sustenance. “I’m having a great time,” she told The Associated Press. “I’d be even better if I had a drink.”

Israel lashes out at Russia over Lavrov’s Nazism remarks

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel on Monday lashed out at Russia over “unforgivable” comments by its foreign minister about Nazism and antisemitism — including claims that Adolf Hitler was Jewish. Israel, which summoned the Russian ambassador in response, said the remarks blamed Jews for their own murder in the Holocaust.

It was a steep decline in the ties between the two countries at a time when Israel has sought to stake out a cautious position between Russia and Ukraine and remain in Russia’s good stead for its security needs in the Middle East.

Asked in an interview with an Italian news channel about Russian claims that it invaded Ukraine to “de-nazify” the country, Sergey Lavrov said that Ukraine could still have Nazi elements even if some figures, including the country’s president, were Jewish.

“So when they say ‘How can Nazification exist if we’re Jewish?’ In my opinion, Hitler also had Jewish origins, so it doesn’t mean absolutely anything. For some time we have heard from the Jewish people that the biggest antisemites were Jewish,” he said, speaking to the station in Russian, dubbed over by an Italian translation.

In some of the harshest remarks since the start of the war in Ukraine, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid called Lavrov’s statement “unforgivable and scandalous and a horrible historical error.”

“The Jews did not murder themselves in the Holocaust,” said Lapid, the son of a Holocaust survivor. “The lowest level of racism against Jews is to blame Jews themselves for antisemitism.”

Later, Lapid said Israel makes “every effort” to have good relations with Russia. “But there’s a limit and this limit has been crossed this time. The government of Russia needs to apologize to us and to the Jewish people,” he said.

An Israeli official confirmed late Monday that Russia’s ambassador, Anatoly Viktorov, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a diplomatic matter, said that Israel “stated its position” and that the sides agreed not to elaborate.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who has been more measured in his criticism of Russia’s invasion, also condemned Lavrov’s comments.

“His words are untrue and their intentions are wrong,” he said. “Using the Holocaust of the Jewish people as a political tool must cease immediately.”

Israel’s Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem called the remarks “absurd, delusional, dangerous and deserving of condemnation.”

“Lavrov is propagating the inversion of the Holocaust — turning the victims into the criminals on the basis of promoting a completely unfounded claim that Hitler was of Jewish descent,” it said in a statement.

“Equally serious is calling the Ukrainians in general, and President (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy in particular, Nazis. This, among other things, is a complete distortion of the history and an affront to the victims of Nazism.”

In Germany, government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said the Russian government’s “propaganda” efforts weren’t worthy of comment, calling them “absurd.”

Nazism has featured prominently in Russia’s war aims and narrative as it fights in Ukraine. In his bid to legitimize the war to Russian citizens, President Vladimir Putin has portrayed the battle as a struggle against Nazis in Ukraine, even though the country has a democratically elected government and a Jewish

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 65 of 71

president whose relatives were killed in the Holocaust.

Ukraine also condemned Lavrov's remarks.

"By trying to rewrite history, Moscow is simply looking for arguments to justify the mass murders of Ukrainians," Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Lavrov's remarks exposed the "deeply-rooted antisemitism of the Russian elites."

World War II, in which the Soviet Union lost an estimated 27 million people and helped defeat Nazi Germany, is a linchpin of Russia's national identity. Repeatedly reaching for the historical narrative that places Russia as a savior against evil forces has helped the Kremlin rally Russians around the war.

Israel gained independence in the wake of the Holocaust and has served as a refuge for the world's Jews. Over 70 years later, the Holocaust remains central to its national ethos and it has positioned itself at the center of global efforts to remember the Holocaust and combat antisemitism. Israel is home to a shrinking population of 165,000 Holocaust survivors, most in their 80s and 90s, and last week the country marked its annual Holocaust memorial day.

But those aims sometimes clash with its other national interests. Russia has a military presence in neighboring Syria, and Israel, which carries out frequent strikes on enemy targets in the country, relies on Russia for security coordination to prevent their forces from coming into conflict with one another. That has forced Israel to tread lightly in its criticism of the war in Ukraine.

While it has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine and expressed support for its people, Israel has been measured in its criticism of Russia. It has not joined international sanctions against Russia or provided military aid to Ukraine.

That paved the way for Bennett to be able to try to mediate between the sides, an effort which appears to have stalled as Israel deals with its own internal unrest.

The Holocaust and the constant manipulation of its history during the conflict has sparked outrage in Israel before.

In a speech to Israeli legislators in March, Zelenskyy compared Russia's invasion of his country to the actions of Nazi Germany, accusing Putin of trying to carry out a "final solution" against Ukraine. The comparisons drew an angry condemnation from Yad Vashem, which said Zelenskyy was trivializing the Holocaust.

Fed to fight inflation with fastest rate hikes in decades

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve is poised this week to accelerate its most drastic steps in three decades to attack inflation by making it costlier to borrow — for a car, a home, a business deal, a credit card purchase — all of which will compound Americans' financial strains and likely weaken the economy.

Yet with inflation having surged to a 40-year high, the Fed has come under extraordinary pressure to act aggressively to slow spending and curb the price spikes that are bedeviling households and companies.

After its latest rate-setting meeting ends Wednesday, the Fed will almost certainly announce that it's raising its benchmark short-term interest rate by a half-percentage point — the sharpest rate hike since 2000. The Fed will likely carry out another half-point rate hike at its next meeting in June and possibly at the next one after that, in July. Economists foresee still further rate hikes in the months to follow.

What's more, the Fed is also expected to announce Wednesday that it will begin quickly shrinking its vast stockpile of Treasury and mortgage bonds beginning in June — a move that will have the effect of further tightening credit.

Chair Jerome Powell and the Fed will take these steps largely in the dark. No one knows just how high the central bank's short-term rate must go to slow the economy and restrain inflation. Nor do the officials know how much they can reduce the Fed's unprecedented \$9 trillion balance sheet before they risk destabilizing financial markets.

"I liken it to driving in reverse while using the rear-view mirror," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at the consulting firm Grant Thornton. "They just don't know what obstacles they're going to hit."

Yet many economists think the Fed is already acting too late. Even as inflation has soared, the Fed's

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 66 of 71

benchmark rate is in a range of just 0.25% to 0.5%, a level low enough to stimulate growth. Adjusted for inflation, the Fed's key rate — which influences many consumer and business loans — is deep in negative territory.

That's why Powell and other Fed officials have said in recent weeks that they want to raise rates "expeditiously," to a level that neither boosts nor restrains the economy — what economists refer to as the "neutral" rate. Policymakers consider a neutral rate to be roughly 2.4%. But no one is certain what the neutral rate is at any particular time, especially in an economy that is evolving quickly.

If, as most economists expect, the Fed this year carries out three half-point rate hikes and then follows with three quarter-point hikes, its rate would reach roughly neutral by year's end. Those increases would amount to the fastest pace of rate hikes since 1989, noted Roberto Perli, an economist at Piper Sandler.

Even dovish Fed officials, such as Charles Evans, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, have endorsed that path. (Fed "doves" typically prefer keeping rates low to support hiring, while "hawks" often support higher rates to curb inflation.)

Powell said last week that once the Fed reaches its neutral rate, it may then tighten credit even further — to a level that would restrain growth — "if that turns out to be appropriate." Financial markets are pricing in a rate as high as 3.6% by mid-2023, which would be the highest in 15 years.

Expectations for the Fed's path have become clearer over just the past few months as inflation has intensified. That's a sharp shift from just a few months ago: After the Fed met in January, Powell said, "It is not possible to predict with much confidence exactly what path for our policy rate is going to prove appropriate."

Jon Steinsson, an economics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, thinks the Fed should provide more formal guidance, given how fast the economy is changing in the aftermath of the pandemic recession and Russia's war against Ukraine, which has exacerbated supply shortages across the world. The Fed's most recent formal forecast, in March, had projected seven quarter-point rate hikes this year — a pace that is already hopelessly out of date.

Steinsson, who in early January had called for a quarter-point increase at every meeting this year, said last week, "It is appropriate to do things fast to send the signal that a pretty significant amount of tightening is needed."

One challenge the Fed faces is that the neutral rate is even more uncertain now than usual. When the Fed's key rate reached 2.25% to 2.5% in 2018, it triggered a drop-off in home sales and financial markets fell. The Powell Fed responded by doing a U-turn: It cut rates three times in 2019. That experience suggested that the neutral rate might be lower than the Fed thinks.

But given how much prices have since spiked, thereby reducing inflation-adjusted interest rates, whatever Fed rate would actually slow growth might be far above 2.4%.

Shrinking the Fed's balance sheet adds another uncertainty. That is particularly true given that the Fed is expected to let \$95 billion of securities roll off each month as they mature. That's nearly double the \$50 billion pace it maintained before the pandemic, the last time it reduced its bond holdings.

"Turning two knobs at the same time does make it a bit more complicated," said Ellen Gaske, lead economist at PGIM Fixed Income.

Brett Ryan, an economist at Deutsche Bank, said the balance-sheet reduction will be roughly equivalent to three quarter-point increases through next year. When added to the expected rate hikes, that would translate into about 4 percentage points of tightening through 2023. Such a dramatic step-up in borrowing costs would send the economy into recession by late next year, Deutsche Bank forecasts.

Yet Powell is counting on the robust job market and solid consumer spending to spare the U.S. such a fate. Though the economy shrank in the January-March quarter by a 1.4% annual rate, businesses and consumers increased their spending at a solid pace.

If sustained, that spending could keep the economy expanding in the coming months and perhaps beyond.

Greyhound racing nearing its end in the US after long slide

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 67 of 71

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE Associated Press

DUBUQUE, Iowa (AP) — Vera Rasnake laughed as she led a trio of barking, jostling dogs into the Iowa Greyhound Park, but her smile faded when she acknowledged that after 41 years of being around the sleek animals, her sport was teetering on extinction.

After the end of a truncated season in Dubuque in May, the track here will close. By the end of the year there will only be two tracks left in the country.

"It's very hard for me to see this," Rasnake said.

It's been a long slide for greyhound racing, which reached its peak in the 1980s when there were more than 50 tracks across 19 states. Since then, increased concerns about how the dogs are treated along with an explosion of gambling options have nearly killed a sport that gained widespread appeal about a century ago.

A racing association found that betting on greyhounds plunged from \$3.5 billion in 1991 to about \$500 million in 2014. Since then, many more tracks have closed.

In some states like the dog-racing mecca of Florida in 2021, it was voter initiatives that ended the sport at the state's dozen tracks. In others like Iowa, state officials allowed casinos to end subsidies that had kept greyhound racing alive as interest declined.

"Do I think the industry is dying? Yes," said Gwyneth Anne Thayer, who has written a history of greyhound racing. But "it's happening way faster than I thought it would."

The Dubuque track closure and the end of racing in West Memphis, Arkansas, this December will leave racing only in West Virginia, where tracks in Wheeling and near Charleston operate with subsidies from casino revenue.

For some animal welfare groups, the industry's collapse is the culmination of decades of work to publicize allegations of greyhound mistreatment. The group GREY2K was formed in 2001 and Carey Theil, the organization's executive director, said he feels a sense of accomplishment now that the sport's end seems within reach.

"This has become one of the signature animal welfare debates of our time," Theil said.

GREY2K, the Humane Society and other groups have long argued that greyhound racing was cruel, including its longtime practice of killing dogs that weren't deemed top racers, using drugs to enhance their performance, confining them for long periods and subjecting animals to the risk of injury on the racetrack.

Industry supporters note there now is a huge demand to adopt retired racers and deny that the other problems are widespread. They also contend that some don't understand the love greyhounds have for running.

On opening day at the Iowa Greyhound Park in Dubuque, spectators packed into a spacious room that overlooked the track, sipping beers and mixed drinks as they pored over racing statistics before placing bets at kiosks or with attendants. They expressed disappointment that the track would close, lamenting the loss of an entertainment option in Dubuque, a city of about 60,000 known for its stately brick buildings and church steeples built on hills overlooking the Mississippi River.

Peggy Janiszewski and her friend Robin Hannan have for years been driving about three hours from the Chicago area to Dubuque to watch the racing. They typically bet only a few dollars on each race but are more interested in watching the dogs than counting their winnings.

"They're beautiful. Like works of art," Janiszewski said.

Bruce Krueger said he has been making the 170-mile (274-kilometer) drive from Milwaukee to Dubuque. He doesn't believe the dogs are mistreated.

"I know some trainers, and they treat them like kings and queens," Krueger said.

General Manager Brian Carpenter was 16 when he started working at the track in its second year and has remained 36 seasons until this, its final year.

He recalls the excitement when the track opened in 1985, a time when Iowa was mired in farm bankruptcies and much of Dubuque was struggling. Back then, thousands of people would attend the races, with buses of gamblers arriving every weekend from Chicago and Milwaukee.

"It was an exciting time and the track offered good jobs," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 68 of 71

Opening day this year drew at least 1,000 people but smaller crowds are typical, especially on weeknights. The Dubuque track was helped along by city and state funding, and after Iowa and other states began allowing casinos, the Dubuque operation was expanded to include its own casino.

Thayer's book, "Going to the Dogs — Greyhound Racing, Animal Activism, and American Popular Culture," describes a sport with a colorful and often tumultuous history. From its beginning in the 1920s following development of the mechanical lure — typically a stuffed bone or stuffed animal that swiftly clatters around the track ahead of the dogs to attract them — the industry was continually pushing to allow for legalized betting state-by-state and to attract attention, with help from Hollywood celebrities, athletes and beauty pageant competitors.

At times, the sport drew more spectators than its more prominent rival horse racing. While considered seedy by some, it was mainstream entertainment for decades, Thayer said.

"People don't realize how normalized it was in American culture for a long time," she said.

Greyhound racing also is held in other countries, including Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, Mexico and Vietnam, but it is facing some of the same problems apparent in the U.S.

Although greyhound racing in the U.S. will be confined only to West Virginia, that state seems intent on retaining the sport, said Steve Sarras, president of the West Virginia Kennel Owners Association. The state's two tracks run races five-days a week year-round.

Sarras said West Virginia legislators made repeated visits to his kennel and others to inspect conditions, and ultimately were confident the dogs are well treated.

"When you see it firsthand, you cannot fake how happy a dog is," he said.

MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell gets banned from Twitter, again

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell was banned from Twitter for a second time after attempting to use a new account to access the social media platform.

Lindell set up a new account Sunday on Twitter under @MikeJLindell. The account was quickly suspended.

Twitter said Monday that Lindell's new account was permanently suspended for violating its rules on ban evasion.

Lindell's original Twitter account was permanently banned in January 2021 after Lindell continued to perpetuate the baseless claim that Donald Trump won the 2020 U.S. presidential election. At the time Twitter said that it decided to ban Lindell due to "repeated violations" of its civic integrity policy.

Lindell, a Trump supporter, has continued to insist that the presidential election was rigged even after U.S. President Joe Biden's administration had begun.

Trump has also had his account permanently suspended by Twitter. The former president posted on Truth Social, his own platform, on Thursday. He had not made any appearance on the platform, save for one quick post before the platform was opened to the public in late February. He has said that he has no intention of rejoining Twitter even if his account is reinstated following Elon Musk's agreement to buy the social media giant for roughly \$44 billion.

While it remains to be seen if Musk will reinstate accounts that are banned on Twitter, the Tesla CEO calls himself a free speech absolutist who believes in allowing any content that doesn't run afoul of the law.

What happens if I get COVID-19 while traveling?

By VICTORIA MILKO AP Science Writer

What happens if I get COVID-19 while traveling?

Depending on your destination, it could result in an unexpected change in plans, such as being required to stay isolated in a hotel.

It's why the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you have backup plans ready if you're traveling abroad. You might have to stay longer than planned if you test positive.

In some places, you won't be able to board flights until you test negative. In others, you might also be

required to stay in a quarantine facility.

Since results from a PCR test can remain positive for weeks after an infection, those who have had COVID-19 might have to get documentation from a doctor or health authorities saying they've recovered. Some travel only requires an antigen test.

If you end up needing medical treatment, check with your embassy for suggested health care providers. Keep in mind that some countries still have overwhelmed health care systems due to the pandemic.

Plan time for recovery since some countries — including the U.S. — require a negative test for reentry. Exceptions to this policy may be granted on an "extremely limited" basis, such as in the event of an emergency medical evacuation or humanitarian crisis, says the CDC.

It also helps to be financially prepared to pay unexpected bills. While it varies country to country, travelers are often responsible for costs associated with any isolation or medical treatments needed.

Travel companies suggest getting insurance that will cover the cost of treatment, isolation or rescheduled travel plans. Some countries require that you have insurance before you're allowed to enter.

Want to contact CIA from Russia? Agency points to darknet

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The CIA says Russians disaffected by Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine may be trying to get in touch with U.S. intelligence — and it wants them to go to the darknet.

The agency on Monday began a new push to promote its presence on a part of the internet accessible only through specialized tools that provide more anonymity. The CIA has a darknet site that has the same features as its regular homepage but accessible only through the Tor internet browser, which has encryption features not available on most regular browsers.

Instructions in English and Russian on how to access the darknet site appeared Monday on the CIA's social media channels. The agency hopes Russians living abroad can share the instructions with contacts inside the country.

While many Russians appear to support what the Kremlin officially calls a "special military operation," longtime Russia watchers think Putin's management of the war may push away some powerful people who disagree with him. Even with immense capabilities to capture communications and satellite imagery, it remains critical for Western intelligence agencies to recruit human sources who can offer insight into the Kremlin and conditions inside Russia.

"Our global mission demands that individuals can contact us securely from anywhere," the agency said in a statement.

A CIA official speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence matters says the agency knows "there are concerned Russians who are desperately trying to reach CIA." The official declined to say how many people had tried to reach out since the war began.

"It's not safe to directly engage Americans physically or virtually" in Russia, the official said. "For those people that want to engage with us securely, this is the way to do it."

Launched in 2019, the CIA's darknet site is accessible through the Tor browser. Tor, short for "The Onion Router," routes internet traffic through multiple third parties to mask a user's identity and destination. After downloading the Tor browser, the user typically inputs a long string of characters followed by ".onion."

Using Tor strips away cookies and many other means of tracking the typical internet user. And while no form of communication is completely secure at all times, intelligence officers say a potential tipster will be better protected on the darknet from Russian snooping.

Tor was originally created with support from the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory and run by a nonprofit since 2006. It has long been used by those seeking extra privacy: dissidents in authoritarian countries and people seeking to circumvent firewalls and censors, law enforcement and intelligence officers, and journalists including at The Associated Press, which operates its own tips drop box on Tor. It can be used by anyone seeking extra privacy. It has also been exploited by criminals.

Russians have long had to find ways to circumvent government blocks on the internet. In response to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 70 of 71

the Kremlin's crackdown since the war began, some media outlets and Twitter have promoted usage of their own ".onion" sites or the use of virtual private network software.

While officials would not disclose specifics, U.S. intelligence can be safely assumed to be working inside Russia. Calling attention to the darknet site now promotes to prospective contacts that the CIA is paying attention to their safety, said Mark Kelton, who retired from the CIA in 2015 after serving as chief of counterintelligence.

"When people decide to reach out, they're very well aware of what they're doing and what the risks are," Kelton said. "The issue here is to reassure them that on the other end, there are people concerned with protecting them."

Watershed events like the fall of the Berlin Wall have often presented recruiting opportunities for intelligence services in both Washington and Moscow. Putin's war in Ukraine and its spiraling consequences for Russia — thousands of soldiers killed, sanctions that have crippled the Russian economy, and a failure to meet basic military aims while images of apparent war crimes spread worldwide — could become another of those inflection points, some observers believe.

Two well-respected Russian journalists, Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, wrote in a recent piece that the war failures have provoked "a vicious blame game" inside Russia's security establishment, known generally as the "siloviki." Russia's military blames Putin for requiring a "new and curtailed strategy" that it believes has tied its hands against the Western-backed Ukrainian forces, Soldatov and Borogan wrote.

Some of the "siloviki" who refused to take the journalists' calls when the war began are speaking up more now.

"This is the very first time the siloviki are putting distance between themselves and the president. Which opens up all sorts of possibilities," they wrote.

Personal ideology or disappointment in Putin's regime are more likely drivers of someone turning to spy against Russia than any financial rewards they might receive, Kelton said.

"Crisis is always a good time for espionage," he said. "People in autocratic societies often are content to go along until they're confronted with the moral and political necessity to make a choice. That historically has been a ripe opportunity for people to reach out to the United States."

Today in History: May 3, Margaret Thatcher elected

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, May 3, the 123rd day of 2022. There are 242 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 3, 1979, Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher was chosen to become Britain's first female prime minister as the Tories ousted the incumbent Labour government in parliamentary elections.

On this date:

In 1802, Washington, D.C., was incorporated as a city.

In 1937, Margaret Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for her novel, "Gone with the Wind."

In 1947, Japan's postwar constitution took effect.

In 1948, the Supreme Court, in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, ruled that covenants prohibiting the sale of real estate to Blacks or members of other racial groups were legally unenforceable.

In 1960, the Harvey Schmidt-Tom Jones musical "The Fantasticks" began a nearly 42-year run at New York's Sullivan Street Playhouse.

In 1987, The Miami Herald said its reporters had observed a young woman spending "Friday night and most of Saturday" at a Washington townhouse belonging to Democratic presidential candidate Gary Hart. (The woman was later identified as Donna Rice; the resulting controversy torpedoed Hart's presidential bid.)

In 2006, a federal jury in Alexandria, Virginia, rejected the death penalty for al-Qaida conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE'-uhs moo-SOW'-ee), deciding he should spend life in prison for his role in 9/11; as he was led from the courtroom, Moussaoui taunted, "America, you lost."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 3, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 300 ~ 71 of 71

In 2009, Mexican President Felipe Calderon told state television that a nationwide shutdown and an aggressive informational campaign appeared to have helped curtail an outbreak of swine flu in Mexico.

In 2011, Chicago's Derrick Rose became at age 22 the NBA's youngest MVP.

In 2015, two gunmen were shot and killed by a police officer in Garland, Texas, after they opened fire outside a purposely provocative contest for cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad.

In 2016, in a stunning triumph for a political outsider, Donald Trump all but clinched the Republican presidential nomination with a resounding victory in Indiana that knocked rival Ted Cruz out of the race.

In 2018, a federal grand jury in Detroit indicted former Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn on charges stemming from the company's diesel emissions cheating scandal. (Under Germany's constitution, he could not be extradited to the U.S. to face charges.)

Ten years ago: U.S. officials published online a selection of letters from Osama bin Laden's last hideaway; the documents portrayed a network that was weak, inept and under siege — and its leader seemingly near wit's end about the passing of his global jihad's supposed glory days.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump met at the White House with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas (mahk-MOOD' ah-BAHS'), promising "to do whatever is necessary" to forge an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

One year ago: An elevated section of the Mexico City metro collapsed as subway cars were passing over it, killing 26 people; investigations found that the failure was caused by construction defects. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that the New York City subways would begin 24-hour service again in mid-May; they'd been shut down for cleaning during overnight hours since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. Bill and Melinda Gates said they were divorcing after 27 years of marriage; the Microsoft co-founder and his wife said they would continue to work together at the world's largest private charitable foundation. Singer-songwriter Lloyd Price, an early rock 'n roll star and rock Hall of Fame member whose hits included "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," died in suburban New York at the age of 88.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Frankie Valli is 88. Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, is 79. Sports announcer Greg Gumbel is 76. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., is 73. Pop singer Mary Hopkin is 72. Singer Christopher Cross is 71. Rock musician David Ball (Soft Cell) is 63. Country singer Shane Minor is 54. Actor Amy Ryan is 54. Actor Bobby Cannavale (ka-nuh-VAL'ee) is 52. Music and film producer-actor Damon Dash is 51. Country musician John Driskell Hopkins (Zac Brown Band) is 51. Country-rock musician John Neff is 51. Actor Marsha Stephanie-Blake is 47. TV personality Willie Geist (TV: "Today") is 47. Actor Christina Hendricks is 47. Actor Dule (doo-LAY') Hill is 47. Country singer Eric Church is 45. Actor Tanya Wright is 44. Dancer Cheryl Burke is 38. Soul singer Michael Kiwanuka is 35. Actor Zoe De Grand Maison is 27. Rapper Desiigner is 25.