

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 1 of 75

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

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

[2- Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller](#)

[7- Johnson is 8th best in the state in the triple jump](#)

[8- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad](#)

[8- Pantry Opening Ad](#)

[9- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)

[10- Drought Monitor](#)

[11- Jumbo Graduation Cards](#)

[12- Graduation Balloons](#)

[13- Weather Pages](#)

[17- Daily Devotional](#)

[18- 2022 Community Events](#)

[19- Subscription Form](#)

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

Chicken Soup
for the Soul



"ENCOURAGE, LIFT AND STRENGTHEN ONE ANOTHER. FOR THE POSITIVE ENERGY SPREAD TO ONE WILL BE FELT BY US ALL. FOR WE ARE CONNECTED, ONE AND ALL."

Deborah Day

Saturday, May 14

SEAS Confession: 3:45-4:15 p.m., SEAS Mass: 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 15

2 p.m.: GHS Graduation

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Avantara worship, 3 p.m. (Choir to help); Choir, 7 p.m.

Methodist: Communion Sunday: Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Groton worship at 11 a.m.

St. John's: Bible Study, 8 a.m.; Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, May 16

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, broccoli, spinach salad, mandarin oranges, bread stick.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal with toppings.

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, cooked carrots.
6:30 a.m.: Emmanuel Bible Study
10 a.m.: NEC Girls Golf at Moccasin Creek CC
10 a.m.: JH Track Meet at Hamlin
1 p.m.: Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center
7:30 p.m.: St. John's Christian Literature Circle



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.

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

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

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 2 of 75

#535 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

New cases and hospitalizations are still increasing, but deaths are moving down again. You could say that's the most important number. Here are the details as of midday today: Seven-day, new-case average is 87,522, back up to where we were three months ago. Pandemic total passed 82 million Wednesday and is now at 82,260,752. The intervals between new millions are closing up again.

January 19 – 68 million – 1 day
January 20 – 69 million – 1 day
January 21 – 70 million – 1 day
January 24 – 71 million – 3 days
January 25 – 72 million – 1 day
January 27 – 73 million – 2 days
January 29 – 74 million – 1 day
February 1 – 75 million – 3 days
February 4 – 76 million – 3 days
February 9 – 77 million – 5 days
February 16 – 78 million – 7 days
March 3 – 79 million – 15 days
March 31 – 80 million – 28 days
April 27 – 81 million – 27 days
May 11 – 82 million – 14 days

At the moment, 51 of the 56 states and territories we're tracking show increases over the past two weeks, although some of those increases are at very low rates. Forty-eight of them are increasing by 20 percent or more over that time span. Twelve are at least doubling in two weeks. Hospitalizations have increased to 19,764. Seven-day average deaths number is at 321, a slight decline. Pandemic deaths total creeps ever closer to that one million mark; midday today, it's at 997,853. That's a lot of funerals.

I've seen some analysis of current trends, and I don't think it looks very good. Dr. Deborah Birx, former White House Coronavirus Task Force coordinator during the Trump administration, has been tracking South Africa's pattern and said in a Washington Post live discussion a few weeks ago, "I know that another surge is coming and will be coming across the world." She cited the fact that it's looking like "there's no long-lived natural immunity" that addresses new variants. That means every four to six months we could have another wave carried by unvaccinated people, of whom there are more than enough to keep outbreaks rolling across the world over and over and over again.

Dr. Peter Marks, director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the US Food and Drug Administration, told CNN on Monday that he is "a little concerned" about the trends. He thinks we'll have a "modest peak" in the next month. Other experts say that surge is already here. The only things we can do about that at this point are things we're manifestly not going to do—take precautions, mask, improve ventilation, get vaccinated and boosted. So we'll have another wave. The good news is that it's likely to be smaller than the Delta or Omicron waves with less pressure on the health care system and fewer deaths. We'll have to call that good enough.

I've read a paper in Science Advances that uses electron microscopy to map the binding sites on beta-human coronaviruses (β -HCoV) that are targeted by antibodies. A research team from the Scripps Research Institute and Vanderbilt University Medical Center compared coronavirus specificities of antibodies from pre-pandemic (PP) serum of eight individuals with those of antibodies in Covid convalescent serum (CS)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 3 of 75

from three recovered Covid-19 patients. Of course, any β -HCoV antibodies seen in the PP serum are going to be from a response to some other coronavirus, not SARS-CoV-2, which didn't exist yet at the time those specimens were drawn; this helps us draw a clear line between those who no-way have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2 and those who have certainly been exposed.

You may recall from long-ago conversations that human coronaviruses cause around a third of colds; the β -HCoVs, OC43 and HKU1, are endemic, and most of us have been infected with these by the age of 15 and therefore have antibodies against them. The antibody levels wane with time, but our immune systems have been exposed. The viruses that cause SARS (SARS-CoV) and MERS (MERS-CoV) are also β -HCoVs; these two have some characteristics in common with SARS-CoV-2, but none of these scarier coronaviruses have much in common antigenically with the β -HCoV that cause colds. Despite this, there are some weird cross-reactions that turned up in this work.

All eight PP sera had anti-OC43 spike antibodies and low levels of anti-HKU1 spike antibodies. This probably means they were repeatedly exposed to OC43, but not as frequently to HKU1, which is less prevalent around the world. Not surprisingly, none of them had any anti-SARS-CoV-2 spike antibodies. One had low levels of anti-SARS and anti-MERS antibodies.

The three SARS-CoV-2 CS sera had high levels of anti-SARS-CoV-2 spike antibodies, as well as antibodies to the other β -HCoVs that cause colds. In general, these levels were good, and the anti-HKU1 levels were considerably higher than seen in the PP sera; so apparently, exposure to SARS-CoV-2 enhances the antibody response to the other β -HCoVs as well. When the team mapped the amino-acid sequence of the antigen binding sites of the anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, they found patches in the S2 portion of the S protein which are conserved (that is, the same, not mutated into different forms) across at least three of the four other β -HCoVs and elicited cross-reactivity. CS sera neutralized OC43, SARS, and SARS-CoV-2. While preexisting immunity against β -HCoVs from our past do not protect against Covid-19, it does appear to predict antibody responses and disease severity in Covid-19, most likely due to this cross-reactivity. Additionally, the immune response to Covid-19 appears to back-boost some β -HCoV antibodies, and this cross-boosting offers some protection against those β -HCoVs too. There's plenty to think about here. I'm going to speculate that this sort of work will inform efforts currently underway to develop a pan-coronavirus vaccine, one that protects against a broad swath of β -HCoVs, including most particularly future variants.

A report on analysis from the UK shows that the risk for long-Covid varies according to which variant caused the infection. I was not able to access this paper, but the summary I read indicates Omicron's BA.1 subvariant was only half as likely to cause long-Covid as Delta, but that BA.2 increases that risk again. More than two-thirds of people who had reported having long-Covid said the condition affects their daily activities.

I also saw a handy round-up of much of the work that's been done to figure out just how likely long-Covid is to develop. The first thing we know is that the odds do not correlate with the severity of disease during the infection, so a person with mild Covid can develop it as well as someone who was very ill; the specific symptoms reported do track a little better with severity—primarily with respect to long-term pulmonary symptoms. It appears that anything from 10 to 30 percent of infected people will develop long-Covid; this is all over the map yet, I would guess largely because we haven't done that great a job of identifying all of the infected people at any point really. There is new evidence emerging that people may develop diabetes or have a heart attack months or even years after an infection; those can have even longer-term consequences. It isn't clear whether prior infection reduces risk, but we do know long-Covid can develop after a reinfection. We also know that vaccination reduces those risks. A VA analysis estimated a 13 percent reduction in risk; two British studies put that at 40 to 50 percent. A huge study involving close to a quarter of a million participants, and likely the best one of all, provided the estimate that

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 4 of 75

vaccination reduces the risk of long-Covid from 17 percent of cases in the unvaccinated to three percent in the vaccinated. With what I'm reading about long-Covid—what symptoms people are reporting, how severe they are, how significantly they interfere with normal living, and how long they last—I've made a personal decision that "might as well get it over with" is not a winning plan for me; so I'm still taking a lot of steps to avoid infection. Your mileage may vary.

I was able to access a NIH report on work it funded at Northwestern University, Washington University School of Medicine, and the University of Washington. The team designed synthetic "miniproteins," antibody-like in their specificity, that would bind the business end of the coronavirus's spike called the receptor-binding domains (RBD); this is the part that binds itself to your cell's ACE2 receptors and thereby effects entry into your cells, where it sets up housekeeping and causes no end of trouble. Spike actually has three distinct RBDs on it, and typically each of the monoclonal antibody therapeutics that have been developed for SARS-CoV-2 in the past has targeted just one of the three. A problem has been that, as the virus evolves, a modification in the target RBD means the virus manages to escape the monoclonal; we've watched as one after the other monoclonal fell out of use as it lost effectiveness against a new variant.

This team took a different approach, making a highly specific miniprotein that strongly binds each of these three RBDs and then testing two permutations from there. The first was to fuse those miniproteins into sort of a tripod-like structure that could bind to the spike, preventing cell-binding, and the second was to design the three separate miniproteins so that they can self-assemble on the RBDs into a similar tripod-like structure that blocks them in the same manner. The minibinder complexes in both permutations bound spike better than any single miniprotein alone, and the scientists were able to demonstrate with cryo-electron microscopy that these were getting that job done.

Lab testing showed the self-assembling miniprotein complexes more effectively neutralized virus than the fused version, and further testing showed this sort of arrangement is a great deal more difficult for the virus to escape through mutation. The best of them were better than any monoclonal devised thus far and were effective against all the variants tested, including Omicron.

The team also tested their system in mice and discovered that, delivered into the nose one day after exposure, the self-assembling version protected the mice against weight loss and reduced the amount of virus present. Next step will be human trials of a nasal spray containing these miniproteins.

It was after I read the NIH report above that I happened across another paper from a group at Harvard, Boston University, Boston Children's Hospital, and Massachusetts General Hospital that set out to characterize these three RBDs (creatively named RBD-1, RBD-2, and RBD-3) on Spike. The findings of interest in this paper are that RBD-2 is where binding occurs for the most potent neutralizing antibodies, but that these are also the ones with the greatest sensitivity to immune escape, whereas RBD-1 and RBD-3 are bound by antibodies with lower potency but greater breadth. They were able to ascertain what about the structure of the RBD-2 antibodies with their particular breadth of action enables them to retain neutralizing activity for BA.1, which is unlike most other commonly-produced antibodies. That particular specificity explains why vaccine efficacy has held for the most part to mitigate severity of BA.1 infections. This work also showed that, when you have antibodies that form complexes that react to RBD-1, -2, and -3, they show "the determinants of broad neutralization and showed that B cell repertoires can have specificities that avoid immune escape driven by widely distributed ('public') antibodies." In other words, if you have a set of antibodies that binds all three RBDs of Spike at once, you have a situation with high efficacy and resistance to immune escape—which sort of sounds like the self-assembling miniprotein complexes described above, doesn't it? I haven't figured out whether one of these pieces of research builds on the other or they sort of arrived at the same place independently; but the work here certainly seems to me to support the work reported above.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 5 of 75

Last time we talked, the topic of cryptic Delta variant circulation arose when we discussed a wastewater study from Israel which indicated this variant continues to circulate while Omicron is predominant across the world; this is clearly a matter for concern if Omicron gradually disappears from the population, leaving the field clear for Delta once again. I'm here to offer a bit of better news in the form of an early release of a paper to be published in Nature; early release means editing is not yet complete, but peer review has finished. That means this is solid, vetted research; it just might contain some typos.

The research team from the Africa Health Research Institute looked at neutralizing antibody in people infected with Omicron sublineage BA.1 when tested against the Delta variant. Testing was conducted on 39 individuals who have been infected with BA.1 from six to 23 days post-symptoms, which gives time to allow antibodies to develop. Fifteen of the participants were vaccinated with Pfizer/BioNTech or Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine and had breakthroughs, while 24 were unvaccinated.

Findings were that vaccinated persons showed an increase in BA.1 neutralization by 13.6-fold compared with a 6.0-fold increase in the unvaccinated. Delta neutralization increased by 5.7-fold in vaccinated and 3.0-fold in unvaccinated persons. While hybrid immunity (from both Omicron infection and vaccination) is quite protective, neutralizing immunity from BA.1 infection alone is quite low. Unvaccinated people aren't very likely to have cross-protection against current or new variants as time passes, but vaccinated-then-infected people will be far more protected.

I read a report published about a week ago in the New England Journal of Medicine of phase 3 clinical trials for a vaccine called ZF2001 from a research group at the Chinese Academy of Science. This is an aluminum-hydroxide-adjuvanted protein subunit vaccine that targets the dimeric receptor-binding domain (RBD) of the spike protein. (I surmise, but am not sure, that the dimer targeted is going to be RBD-1 and RBD-3.) If it proves to be effective, it has the advantage that it does not require a stringent cold chain for storage and transport. It is administered as a three-dose regimen (30-day intervals). The 25,193-participant trial was conducted between December 2020 and December 2021 while the Delta variant was dominantly circulating worldwide; trials were done in Ecuador, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. Safety trials were done in China.

Severe-to-critical infections occurred in six vaccinated and 43 placebo-receiving participants, which yields an efficacy against severe infection of 92.9 percent short-term and 87.6 percent long-term. There were two deaths among vaccinated and 12 deaths among placebo participants. There were no vaccine-related deaths, and most adverse reactions were minor. Overall efficacy was 81.4 percent short-term and 75.7 percent long-term (six months). The primary limitation of these trials is that they did not test the vaccine against the Omicron variant; of course, this is true for those vaccines currently in use as well. Still, as always, more vaccines is better.

Here's a non-Covid, but related, thing: This is a weird flu season. The good news is that we're well below pre-pandemic peaks at all stages in the season; so far, we've had only 5.7 million cases; 59,000 hospitalizations; and just 3600 deaths, well below what might have been considered a normal—or even a pretty good—flu season in the past. The other weird thing is that cases are peaking now, far later in the season than what we've seen historically; test positivity rates have recently spiked up to 17 percent, well above what is typical for May. This is most likely related to the rush to drop mitigation measures for Covid-19; suddenly no one's masking, distancing, or being the least bit careful. Since these two infections spread pretty much the same way, this was predictable. One of the problems in this pandemic has been to distinguish cases of influenza from cases of Covid-19; since we now have effective antivirals for each, it is important to figure out what people have so we can treat appropriately.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 6 of 75

On Monday, Moderna requested the FDA to issue an emergency use authorization (EUA) for its Covid-19 vaccine in the 6 to 11 age group. Data released on Wednesday from a phase 3 clinical trial involving 4000 children showed a strong response in this age group. Efficacy looks to be similar to earlier trials, as do side effects. If the EUA is granted, this vaccine will join the one made by Pfizer/BioNTech in being available to children 6 to 11. A decision is expected next month; this is already on the FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee's agenda for one of its June meetings.

I've read a paper in Science Translational Medicine that deals with oral and intranasal administration of Covid-19 vaccine and its effect on transmission. Vaxart has developed an adenovirus-vectored vaccine candidate and used it to vaccinate hamsters by oral or intranasal routes before inoculating them with virus. Then after some had developed infections, they were set up in situations where the air from their cages flowed into the cages of naïve (uninfected, unvaccinated) hamsters so likelihood of transmission from the vaccinated animals could be assessed.

Findings were that "oral- and intranasal-vaccinated hamsters had decreased viral RNA and infectious virus in the nose and lungs and experienced less lung pathology compared to mock-vaccinated (placebo) hamsters after SARS-CoV-2 challenge. Naïve hamsters exposed in a unidirectional air flow chamber to mucosally-vaccinated, SARS-CoV-2-infected hamsters also had lower nasal swab viral RNA and exhibited fewer clinical symptoms than control animals, suggesting that the mucosal-route reduced viral transmission." Promising work, for sure.

I read a paper on long-Covid from a team of Chinese researchers which was published Wednesday in The Lancet. They did a longitudinal cohort study of 1192 individuals who had survived hospitalization at Jin Yin-tan Hospital in Wuhan, China, between January 7 and May 29, 2020, measuring health outcomes at six months, 12 months, and 24 months using a six-minute walking distance test, lab tests, and a series of questionnaires on physical and mental health, as well as quality of life and health care usage. Some also had pulmonary function testing and chest imaging. A control group consisted of age-matched, sex-matched, and comorbidity-matched participants who did not develop Covid-19. This appears to be the longest-term study which has been completed on Covid-19 survivors, and given it's been just over two years since the pandemic began, it is pretty much as long-term a study as is possible at the moment.

Findings were that 68 percent of participants had at least one symptom at six months and, even after two years, 55 percent still had at least one symptom. The most frequent symptoms reported were fatigue or muscle weakness and sleep difficulties; many others were reported, for example, anxiety or depression, lowered exercise tolerance, PTSD, taste and smell disorders, difficulty breathing, pain. Most patients were able to return to work by the two-year mark, but there was a fair "burden of symptomatic sequelae" still reported. These individuals had "a remarkably lower health status than the general population at 2 years" and had increased use of health care. Most were continuing to improve throughout the two years of the study; it remains to be seen whether they will some day return to normal or this will remain a chronic condition. I'll say that two years is a very long time, even if things continue to get better from here.

And that's it for the day. Once again, there was simply too much information to wait out another couple of days. Weekend coming up generally means slow news; I hope so. Take care, and we'll talk again in a few days.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 7 of 75

Johnson is 8th best in the state in the triple jump

The Groton Area track meet took in one meet at the Northeast Conference Meet in Britton. The top 24 will advance to the state track meet. Aspen Johnson is Groton Area's top honor with a eighth place rating in the triple jump.

Here is a look at the changes for Groton Area as of Tuesday's posting.

Andrew Marzahn's time remained unchanged in the 100th dash and he dropped out of the top 24 to 26th. His time is 11.54.

Andrew Marzahn dropped five spots to 23rd place in the 200 dash with an unchanged time of 23.74.

Andrew Marzahn dropped eight places to 44th place in the 400m dash with an unchanged time of 54.14.

The boys 400m Relay Team's time improved from 46.14 to 45.86, and moved up three spots to 15th place.

The boys 800m Relay Team time is 1:35.70 and dropped one spot to 16th place.

The boys 1600m Relay Team's time improved from 3:45.10 to 3:43.21 as the team moved up one spot to 21st place.

The boys 3200m Relay Team dropped one spot to 21st place with an unchanged time of 8:58.10.

The boys Sprint Medley Relay Team dropped out of the top 24 to 27th place with a time of 3:58.61.

Jackson Cogley improved his height in the high jump from 5-8 to 5-9 and he moved up from 24th to 17th place.

Jackson Cogley's triple jump distance of 38-5.75 remained unchanged and he dropped two spots to 39th place.

The girls 400m Relay team remains at 30th place as its time remains unchanged at 54.64.

The girls 800m Relay Team's time remains unchanged and slipped two spots to 24th. Its time is 1:54.40.

The girls 1600m Relay team's time improved from 4:28.20 to 4:24.42 and went up four spots to 16th place.

The girls 3200m Relay Team went up six spots to 19th place with an improved time of 10:36.27. Their previous time was 10:50.50.

The Groton Area girls Sprint Medley Relay team improved its time from 4:40.90 to 4:38.83 as they hold on to 18th place.

Aspen Johnson drops one spot to eighth place with an unchanged distance of 34-1.75 in the triple jump.

Aspen Johnson is now in 32nd spot on the long jump with a distance of 15-04.50 .

- Paul Kosel

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 8 of 75

Weber Landscaping Greenhouse

204 N State St., Groton

Opening
for the
season
on Friday,
May 6th!



New products!
New Planters!



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



Livingston
garden seeds!!!!

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

THE PANTRY



Opening May 9th at the Groton Community Center

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

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

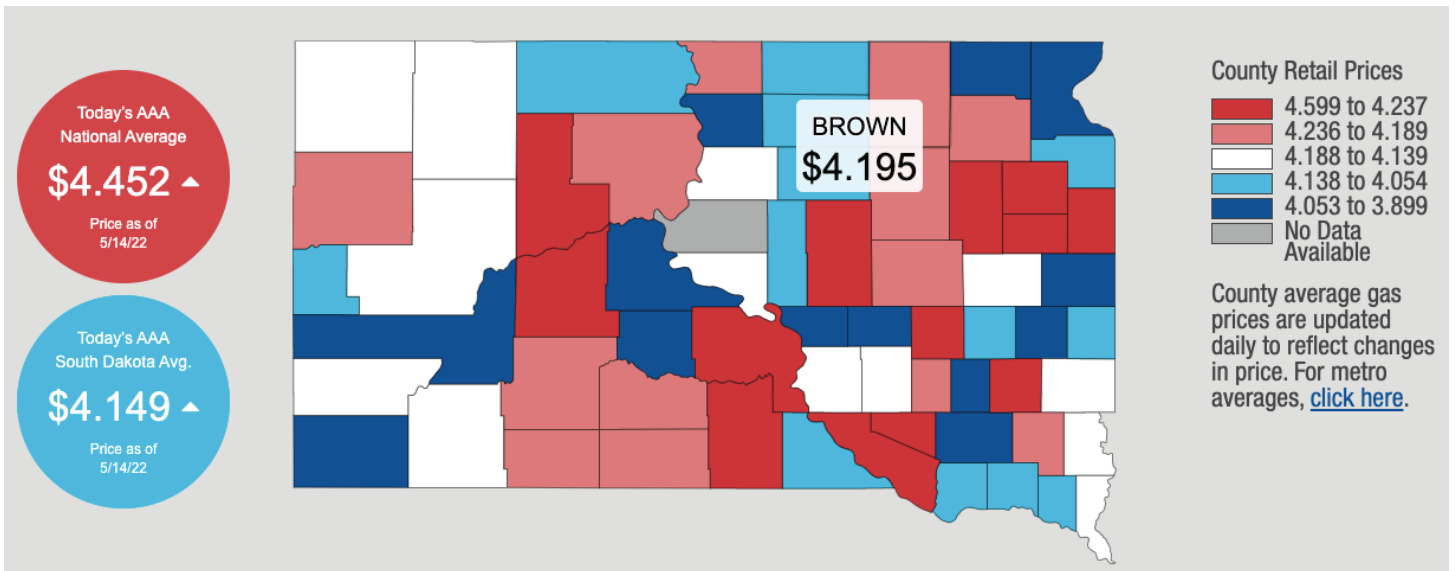
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 9 of 75

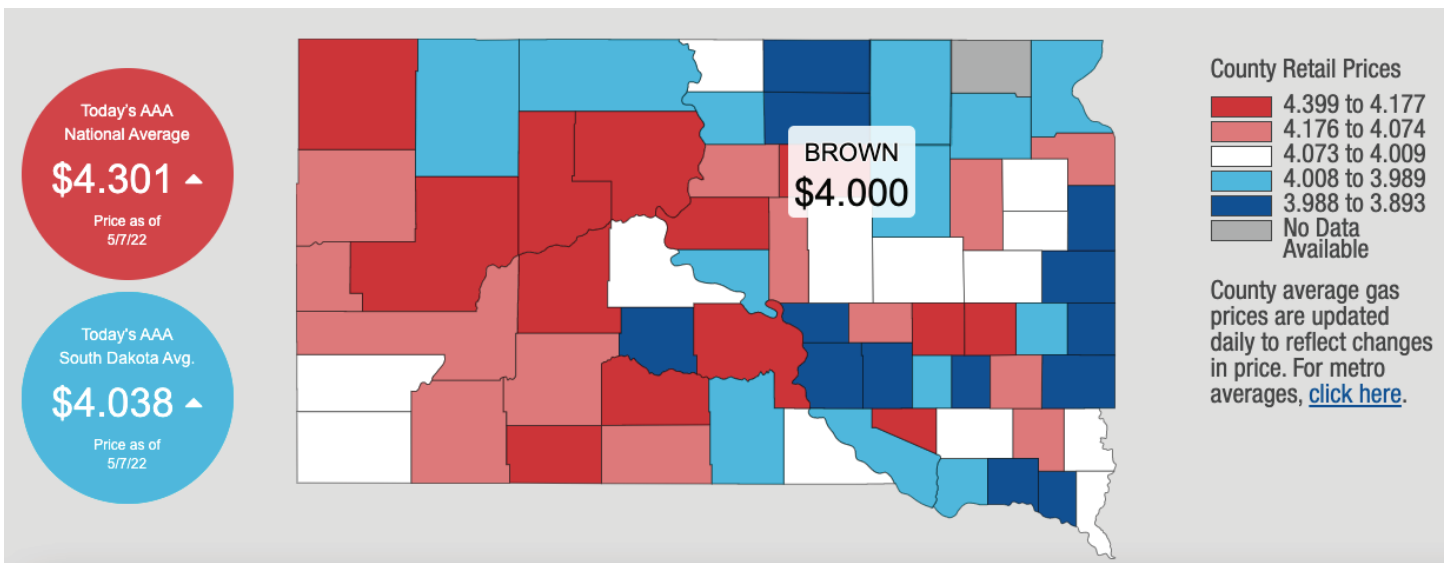
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.149	\$4.251	\$4.620	\$5.360
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.138	\$4.235	\$4.600	\$5.369
Week Ago Avg.	\$4.038	\$4.168	\$4.538	\$5.363
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.827	\$3.958	\$4.311	\$4.766
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.894	\$2.988	\$3.335	\$3.082

This Week



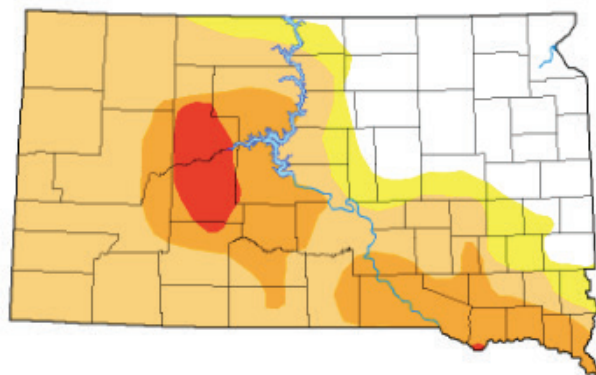
Last Week



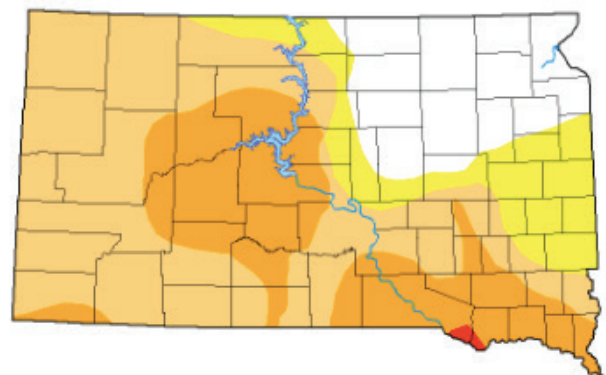
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



May 10



May 3

On this week's map, improvement in drought conditions continued on the map in areas of eastern Kansas, Nebraska and eastern South Dakota where another round of storms helped to alleviate short-term deficits as well as provide a modest boost to soil moisture levels and streamflows. However, the longer-term impacts of the drought in western portions of the region are still causing impacts including areas with poor pasture and rangeland conditions and low stock pond levels. In eastern Colorado, conditions degraded in response to continued dryness over the past several months with reports of little new growth of grasses, blowing sand and dust, and very dry soils as well as crops being abandoned in some areas, according to the Colorado Climate Center. For the week, average temperatures were above normal across most of the region with positive departures ranging from 2 to 8+ deg F and the greatest departures observed in eastern portions of Colorado and Montana. According to NOAA NCEI, North Dakota logged its 2nd wettest (+2.3-inch anomaly) April on record (as evidenced in severe flooding observed in eastern portions of the state). Likewise, precipitation in South Dakota and Montana was also both above normal (32nd wettest) for April. In contrast, April was very dry, with Kansas seeing its 3rd driest and Colorado its 5th driest on record.

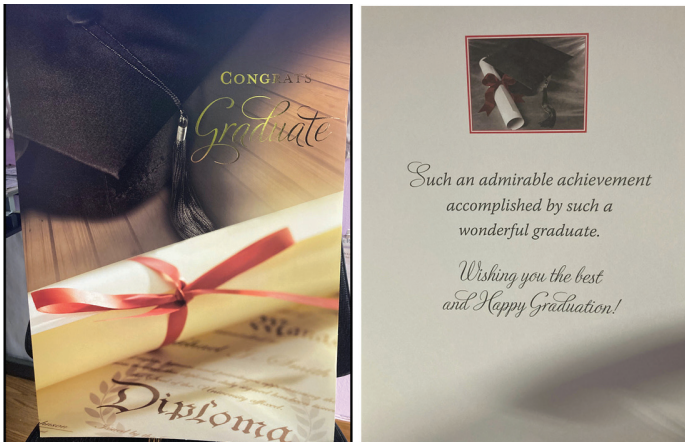
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 11 of 75

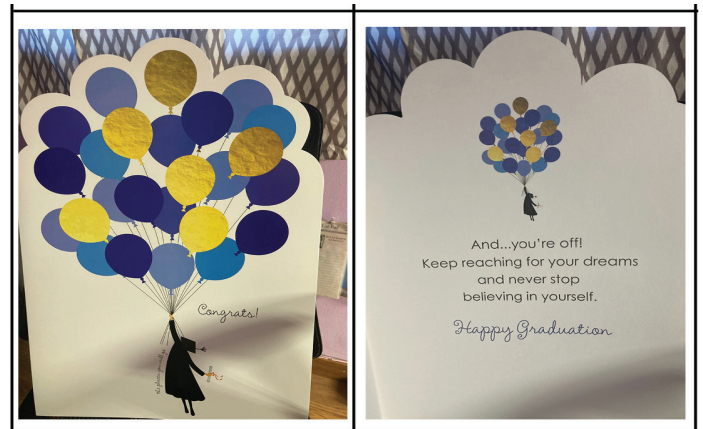
Jumbo Graduation Cards

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

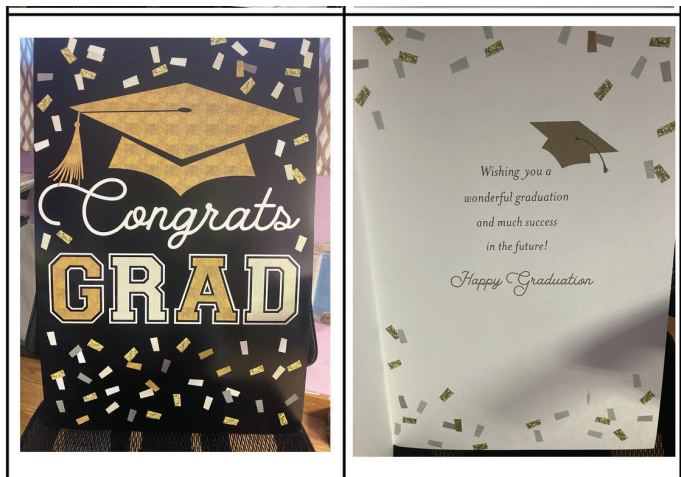
Can now be ordered on-line at 397news.com - Link on Black Bar
Or Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460 or Tina at 605-397-7285
to reserve your card(s)



50-9903-C
\$7.99



50-9666-C
\$7.99



50-10977JM-C
\$7.99



50-9360-C
\$7.99

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 12 of 75



- NEWS
- LIVE
- FIT
- CLEAN
- RENT

Scan Code Below for More Details



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



New at the
GDI FIT
The Stairmaster
and Air Bike



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

Order your Graduation Balloons while we have a good supply!



#1 - \$5



#2 - \$5



#3 - \$6



#4 - \$10 - 45"



#5 - \$5



#6 - \$6



\$3.50 - 9" on a stick



#7 - \$10 - 36"



#8 - \$5



#9 - \$5



#10 - \$5



#11 - \$5



#12 - \$5



#13 - \$8 35"



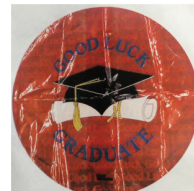
#14 - \$5



#15 - \$5



#16 - \$5



#17 - \$5



#18 - \$5



#19 - \$5



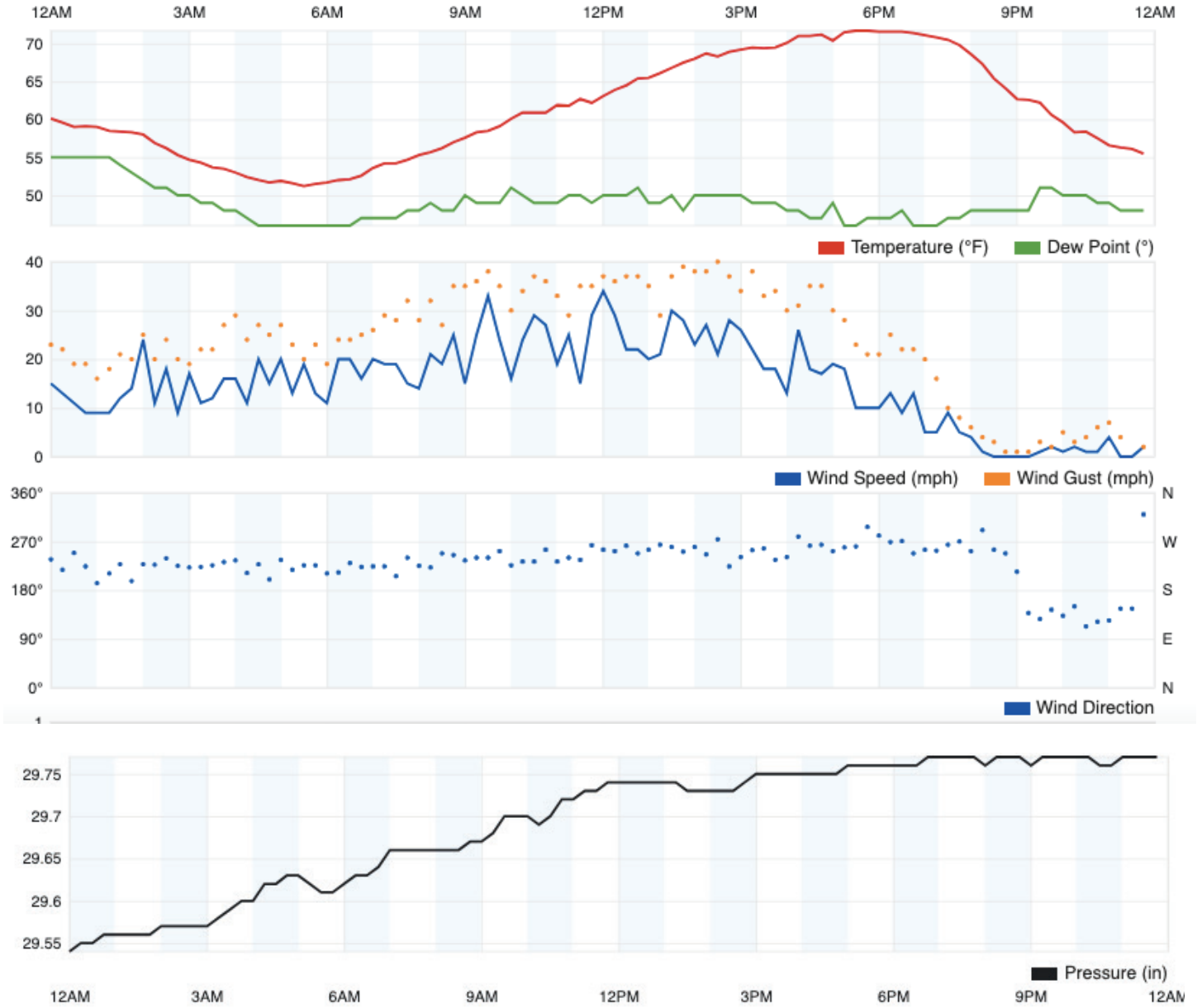
#20 - \$5

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

Groton Daily Independent


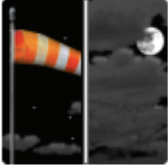



Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 13 of 75

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 14 of 75

Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Breezy. Slight Chance Showers then Sunny	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 67 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 69 °F

Breezy to Windy Conditions Once Again Today

- *Windy conditions, mainly across central and northern South Dakota*
- *Decreasing clouds this morning leading to a sunny day!*
- *Increasing clouds late with chances of rain (and a possible thunderstorm) mainly across parts of our western and south-central counties in SD through the overnight hours.*



Maximum Wind Gust Forecast

	5/14 Sat							Maximum
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	17	29	33	35	33	31	16	35
Britton	13	26	30	36	37	32	18	37
Eagle Butte	28	36	37	36	35	29	17	37
Eureka	21	30	39	40	38	32	17	40
Gettysburg	15	28	37	39	37	31	16	39
Kennebec	17	28	29	31	32	26	10	32
McIntosh	29	35	41	44	44	37	18	44
Milbank	10	20	24	28	29	25	14	29
Miller	16	28	29	30	31	25	10	31
Mobridge	23	28	33	35	35	30	17	35
Murdo	20	29	32	35	31	25	15	35
Pierre	16	24	31	32	32	28	13	32
Redfield	13	29	29	31	31	26	13	31
Sisseton	10	26	28	32	32	29	17	32
Watertown	13	21	25	31	31	26	14	31
Webster	14	26	30	37	37	31	18	37
Wheaton	16	22	24	29	28	25	15	29



Another breezy to windy day, mainly in the northern parts of South Dakota, with wind gusts as high as 40mph. Otherwise, some passing showers across northern/northeastern SD early this morning pushing east. Skies will clear leading to sunny skies! Clouds back on the increase tonight into the overnight hours with chances of rain showers (and a possible thunderstorm), mainly over our south-central counties. Winds decreasing late tonight.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 15 of 75

Today in Weather History

May 14, 1982: Torrential rains pushed the Bad River over the banks at Fort Pierre. One house four miles outside of Fort Pierre had to sandbag. Rainfall amount of 3.83 inches was recorded in Pierre.

1896 - The mercury plunged to 10 degrees below zero at Climax, CO. It was the lowest reading of record for the U.S. during the month of May. (David Ludlum)

1898 - A severe thunderstorm, with some hailstones up to 9.5 inches in circumference, pounded a four mile wide path across Kansas City MO. South-facing windows were broken in nearly every house in central and eastern parts of the city, and several persons were injured. An even larger hailstone was thought to have been found, but it turned out to be a chunk of ice tossed out the window of a building by a prankster. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac) (The Weather Channel)

1923: An early morning violent estimated F5 tornado cut a 45-mile path of destruction through Howard and Mitchell counties in Texas. 23 people lost their lives and 250 sustained injuries. The path width of the tornado reached 1.5 miles at one point, and entire farms were "wiped off the face of the earth." The First Baptist Church in Colorado City, Texas became an emergency hospital for tornado victims.

1987 - Seven cities across the western U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as unseasonably hot weather made a comeback. The record high of 103 degrees at Sacramento CA was their ninth in eleven days, and also marked a record seven days of 100 degree heat for the month. Their previous record was two days of 100 degree heat in May. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Sunny and dry weather prevailed across the nation. Temperatures warmed into the 80s and lower 90s in the Great Plains Region and the Mississippi Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced severe weather in south central Texas and the Southern High Plains Region during the afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms produced softball size hail at Spearman and Hitchcock, TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from northwest Texas to western Missouri. Severe thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes, including nine in Texas. Four tornadoes in Texas injured a total of nine persons. Thunderstorms in Texas also produced hail four inches in diameter at Shamrock, and hail four and a half inches in diameter near Guthrie. Thunderstorms over northeastern Kansas produced more than seven inches of rain in Chautauqua County between 9 PM and midnight. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 16 of 75

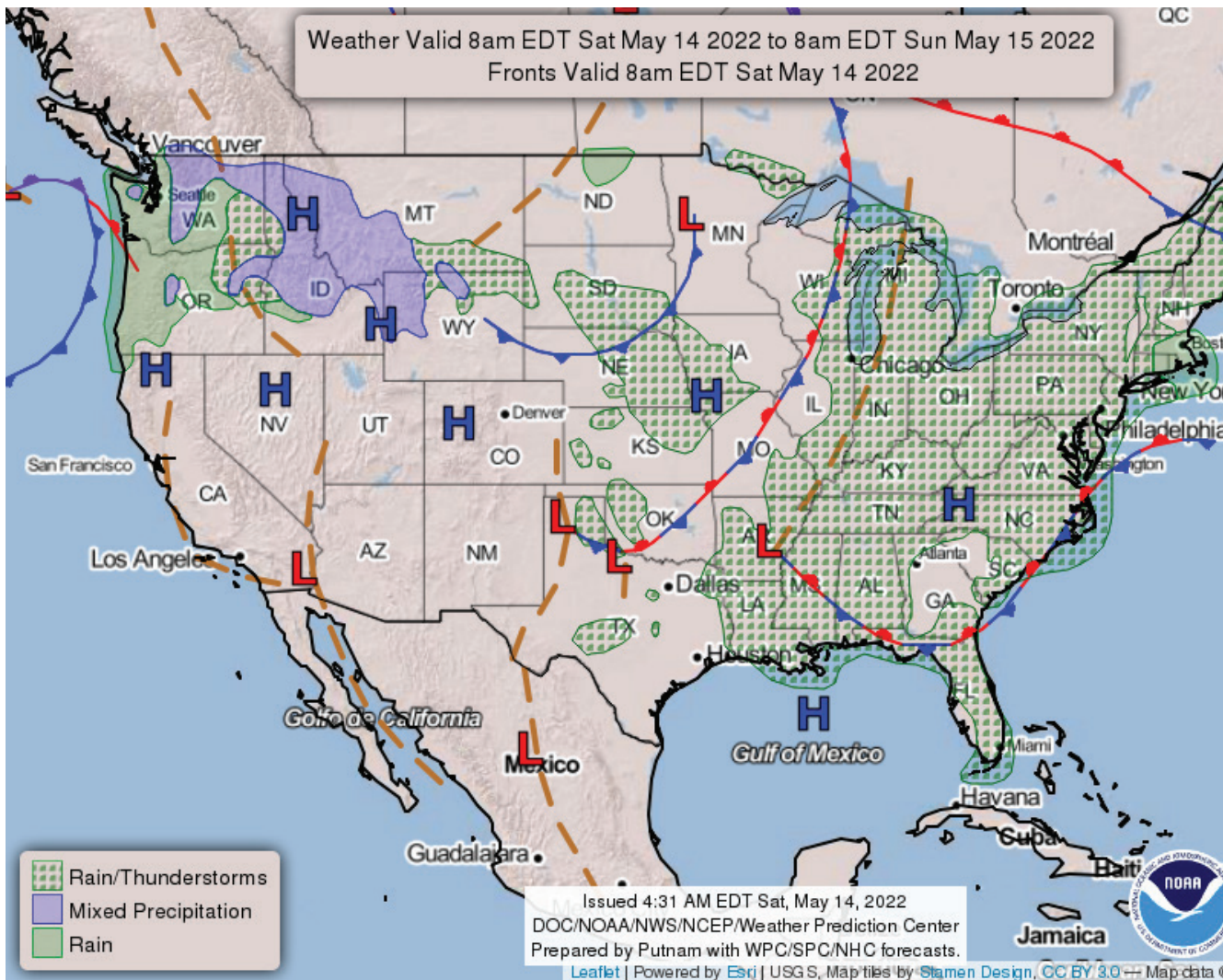
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 72 °F at 4:36 PM
Low Temp: 51 °F at 5:25 AM
Wind: 40 mph at 10:31 AM
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 55 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 94 in 2001
Record Low: 24 in 2004
Average High: 70°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in May.: 1.54
Precip to date in May.: 2.40
Average Precip to date: 5.51
Precip Year to Date: 8.90
Sunset Tonight: 8:56:32 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:59:47 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 17 of 75



AN UNUSUAL PRESCRIPTION

There was a physician in Wales who had an unusual remedy for some of his patients. If someone came to him with no specific symptoms other than being unhappy or unsatisfied, discouraged or disgruntled, he would give them his "Thank You Cure."

He would write on a prescription pad, "For the next six weeks I want you to get up in the morning say, 'Thank You God for this new day' ten times before doing anything else. And then before you get into bed at night, you are to say, 'Thank You God for being with me today.' And in between getting up in the morning and going to bed at night, whenever anyone does something for you, you are to pause and say, 'Thank you for...'"

When most of the patients returned after completing the "Thank You Cure," they were happier and healthier.

The "thank you cure" is a great prescription for each of us: not for six weeks or six months, but every day of our lives. Imagine a successful, powerful, wealthy king who said, "Every day I will praise You, and extol Your name forever and ever."

"Every day?" Yes, every day! Days could be filled with glory or gloom, sunshine or shadows, pleasure or pain, happiness or horror - it did not matter. The king would fill each day, every day, all day with words of praise to God for His blessings and goodness.

When we pause and thank someone for an act of kindness or a deed showing us thoughtfulness, we are, in fact, praising God for His blessing us through their deeds.

Prayer: Lord, You have given us far more than we ever deserved. However, we ask for one more thing: a thankful heart! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Every day I will praise You, and extol Your name forever and ever. Psalm 145:2

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 18 of 75

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

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 19 of 75

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 Friday:

Mega Millions

11-41-43-44-65, Mega Ball: 13, Megaplier: 3

(eleven, forty-one, forty-three, forty-four, sixty-five; Mega Ball: thirteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$112,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$83 million

Severe storms blamed for 3 deaths in South Dakota, Minnesota

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Strong winds and a tornado caused widespread damage in parts of the Midwest, where officials said another round of severe weather during a stormy week left three more people dead.

In Minnesota, a grain bin fell onto a car Thursday and killed a passenger near Blomkest, the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office said. And a person died Thursday in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as a result of severe weather, Mayor Paul TenHaken said, but details weren't released.

Also in South Dakota, Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead said Wendy Lape, 61, was traveling home to Wentworth with her husband in a vehicle about 5 p.m. Thursday when straight line-winds struck.

"The wall of dust and dirt and debris hit them. They slowed down to probably under 5 miles per hour because of the almost zero visibility from the blowing debris and a chunk of wood came through the window of the car," Milstead said at a briefing in Sioux Falls Friday.

Lape died of her injuries Friday morning, officials said.

Earlier in the week, storms brought damaging winds, heavy rain and a few reports of tornadoes to Minnesota, where a storm-chasing meteorologist from Mexico City died Wednesday in a car crash — underscoring the dangers of pursuing severe weather. More storms were forecast for Friday from the Upper Great Lakes to the southern Great Plains that could bring damaging winds and hail.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem issued an emergency declaration and ordered state personnel and resources to affected communities. Noem said damage reports were received from 28 counties.

"We have had many storms before, but the amount of communities that are impacted right now we just haven't seen in our state before," Noem said at the briefing.

The Department of Public Safety's Office of Emergency Management has opened an Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the response with local government authorities.

Winds gusted Thursday above 100 mph (161 kph) in parts of South Dakota. National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Heitkamp, in Sioux Falls, said Friday that a tornado formed around Castlewood, but elsewhere the damage was caused by the strong wind.

On Thursday, a nursing home in Salem, South Dakota, sustained extensive damage when part of the roof was torn off. Residents were evacuated. The storm knocked out power to thousands of customers, including the South Dakota State University campus in Brookings.

On Thursday night, Noem traveled to Castlewood, where a tornado ripped off the roof of a school and brought down walls.

Castlewood High School sophomore Erowyn Funge lives across the street from the school. She said that worst part of the storm lasted about 30 minutes, the Argus Leader reported.

"Our table went flying off our porch. It looked completely black outside," said Funge.

Uprooted trees, branches and debris were scattered around Castlewood. Power lines were down, including across highways leading to town.

In Minnesota's Stevens County, winds approaching 70 mph (113 kph) toppled grain silos and pushed

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 21 of 75

down storage sheds near Alberta. The Minnesota State Patrol closed eastbound Interstate 94 for several hours Thursday night after overturned trucks blocked the freeway.

US grappling with Native American boarding school history

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Deb Haaland is pushing the U.S. government to reckon with its role in Native American boarding schools like no other Cabinet secretary could — backed by personal experience, a struggle with losing her own Native language and a broader community that has felt the devastating impacts.

The agency she oversees — the Interior Department — released a first-of-its-kind report this week that named the 408 schools the federal government supported to strip Native Americans of their cultures and identities. At least 500 children died at some of the schools, but that number is expected to reach into the thousands or tens of thousands as more research is done.

“We are uniquely positioned to assist in the effort to uncover the dark history of these institutions that have haunted our families for too long,” she said Wednesday during a news conference. “As a pueblo woman, it is my responsibility and, frankly, it’s my legacy.”

The U.S. government hasn’t been open to investigating itself to uncover the truth about boarding schools that operated from the late 18th century to the late 1960s. It’s possible now because people who know first-hand the persistent trauma caused by the boarding school system are positioned in the U.S. government.

Still, the work to uncover the truth and create a path for healing will rely on having financial resources in Indian Country, which the federal government has chronically underfunded.

Tribes will have to navigate federal laws on repatriation to take Native children who died and are buried at former boarding school sites home, if desired, and might have no recourse to access burial sites on private land. The causes of death included disease, accidental injuries and abuse.

Boarding school survivors also might be hesitant to recount the painful past and trust a government whose policies were to eradicate tribes and, later, assimilate them under the veil of education. Some have welcomed the opportunity to share their stories for the first time.

Haaland, the first and only Native American Cabinet secretary, has the support of President Joe Biden to investigate further. Congress has provided the Interior Department with \$7 million for its work on the next phase of the report, which will focus on burial sites, and identifying Native children and their ages. Haaland also said a year-long tour would seek to gather stories of boarding school survivors for an oral history collection.

A bill that’s previously been introduced in Congress to create a truth and healing commission on boarding schools got its first hearing Thursday. It’s sponsored by two Native American U.S. representatives — Democrat Sharice Davids of Kansas, who is Ho-Chunk, and Republican Tom Cole of Oklahoma, who is Chickasaw.

“Working with the Interior, knowing that there are representatives in the federal government who understand these experiences not just on a historical record but deep within their selves, their own personal stories, really makes a difference,” said Deborah Parker, chief executive officer of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition and a member of the Tulalip Tribes.

More than two decades ago, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Kevin Gover issued an apology for the emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual violence committed against children at the off-reservation schools. Then in 2009, President Barack Obama quietly signed off on an apology of sorts for “violence, maltreatment and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States.” The language was buried deep in a multibillion-dollar defense spending bill.

The proposed commission would have a broader scope than the Interior’s investigation to seek records with subpoena power. It would make recommendations to the federal government within five years of its passage, possible in the U.S. House but more difficult in the U.S. Senate.

Starting with the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, the U.S. enacted laws and policies to establish and support Native American Boarding Schools. The goal was to civilize Native Americans, Alaska Natives and Na-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 22 of 75

tive Hawaiians. Religious and private institutions often received federal funding and were willing partners.

Capt. Richard Henry Pratt described the essence of the federal boarding schools in a speech he gave in 1892 where he said, "Kill the Indian and save the man."

Minnesota resident Mitch Walking Elk ran away multiple times from boarding schools he attended in the late 1950s and early '60s because "my spirit knew it wasn't a good place for me," he said.

Boarding schools aren't the only thing that has led him to distrust the federal government, even as it seems willing to uncover the past. In 1864, Walking Elk's ancestors from the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes were attacked in the Sand Creek Massacre. At least 200 people were killed, and victims' bodies were mutilated.

"I have reservations about what's going on right now because I don't trust them," said Walking Elk. "If Deb Haaland makes too many waves, the far right, the extremists will manufacture something to put the brakes on this."

Boarding school survivor Ramona Klein testified before Congress on Thursday, describing seeing her mother cry as her children got on a big, green bus for boarding school, being scrubbed with a stiff brush once there, and sleeping under a scratchy wool Army blanket. She put on a large rubber hand when she spoke of being touched at the school at night "like no child's body should be touched."

"Being in that boarding school was the loneliest time of my life," said Klein, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in North Dakota. "It has made it difficult for me to trust other people, including the people on this committee, with my emotions, my thoughts, my dreams and my physical being. And how could that not be the result?"

Republican Rep. Jay Obernolte of California said Congress would need to consider the financial investment in the proposed commission and whether those who serve would do so as a public service or be compensated.

"I'm not opposed to investing substantial taxpayer resources in this commission, but I think we need to be explicit about what those resources are," he said Thursday.

Huskers confirm suspended assistant coach Chuck Love resigns

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska associate head coach Chuck Love, who was suspended with pay three months ago, has left the program.

The university's athletic department on Friday confirmed Love's resignation.

Nebraska announced Feb. 19 that Love had been suspended but didn't disclose a reason, calling it a personnel matter.

Love was in his sixth season at Nebraska with head coach Amy Williams. He previously worked on Williams' staff at South Dakota.

"I could not be more proud to have been a part of such an amazing and supportive coaching staff. It has truly been an honor," he wrote on social media. "That said, I have come to the decision to move on and be with my family and explore other opportunities. I will never forget how amazing this fan base has been. Thank you NEBRASKA!"

Love's suspension coincided with the departure of sophomore guard Ashley Scoggin. Neither was on the bench for a Feb. 17 game at Penn State.

Williams has not said why Scoggin is no longer on the team. Scoggin started all 25 games she played, averaged 8.4 points and was the Big Ten's third-leading 3-point shooter (42%).

Williams had said Scoggin would be allowed to keep her athletic scholarship. Scoggin was still enrolled as of Friday, according to the university registrar.

Nebraska was 24-9 last season and lost to Gonzaga in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

Hezbollah weapons at the heart of Lebanon's elections Sunday

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BAALBEK, Lebanon (AP) — It was a sea of yellow as thousands of men, women and children waving Hezbollah flags and wearing the group's trademark yellow caps rallied on a giant plot of land in the ancient

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 23 of 75

eastern city of Baalbek in support of the heavily armed militant group.

One after another, many attendees vowed to vote Sunday for the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah and its allies in Lebanon's closely watched parliamentary elections, rejecting any attempt to disarm the powerful group.

Despite a devastating economic collapse and multiple other crises gripping Lebanon — the culmination of decades of corruption and mismanagement — the deeply divisive issue of Hezbollah's weapons has been at the center of the vote for a new 128-member parliament.

Disarming the group has dominated political campaigns among almost all of the group's opponents. Those include Western-backed mainstream political groups and independents who played a role in nationwide protests since the start of the economic meltdown in October 2019.

"This is the biggest misinformation campaign. Why? Because they are implementing America's policy against the resistance weapons," senior Hezbollah official Hussein Haj Hassan told The Associated Press on Friday ahead of the rally in Baalbek.

Hezbollah was the only group officially allowed to keep its weapons after the 1975-90 civil war because it was fighting Israeli forces occupying parts of south Lebanon. In 2000, Israel withdrew from Lebanon but Hezbollah and others in the small Mediterranean nation insisted its weapons were necessary to defend it against Israel, which has one of the strongest armies in the region.

Hezbollah has since fought a monthlong war with Israel in 2006 that ended in a draw and after the start of the conflict in neighboring Syria the Iran-backed group sent thousands of fighters to fight alongside President Bashar Assad's forces helping him tip the balance of power in his favor.

Hezbollah's rivals say its weapons and its backing of regional forces such as Assad's and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have harmed Lebanon's relations with oil-rich Persian Gulf nations. Those nations have categorized the Lebanese group as a terrorist organization and withheld crucial financial support for the country.

Haj Hassan, a legislator since 1996 and a Cabinet minister three times, said claims that Hezbollah is responsible for Lebanon's collapse were "a big lie."

"They forgot the political system, economic system, corruption, the war in Syria and its effects on Lebanon and they forgot the American sanctions," he said at his home near Baalbek.

The bespectacled 62-year-old lost two brothers who fought for Hezbollah during Lebanon's civil war and a nephew in Syria.

Hezbollah maintains its weapons are to defend Lebanon and not for internal use. But the group used them against rivals in May 2008 in the worst fighting at the time in many years. The Hezbollah offensive came after the government of then-Hezbollah opponent Fouad Saniora decided to dismantle the group's military telecommunications network.

"No Lebanese group should have the right to be armed while other Lebanese are not," said Samy Gemayel, head of the right-wing Kataeb party, in comments to the local LBC station Friday night.

The vote this year is the first after the economic collapse, described by the World Bank as one of the worst the world has witnessed in more than 150 years. It is also the first since the August 2020 blast at Beirut's port that killed more than 200, injured thousands and caused largescale damage in the capital.

Three former Cabinet ministers allied with Hezbollah were charged in the port blast investigation but have refused to show up for questioning by the investigative judge. Hezbollah's leader has blasted the judge and called for his replacement, and the investigation has been suspended for months following legal challenges by politicians.

Parliamentary elections are held once every four years and the last vote in 2018 gave a majority of seats to Hezbollah and its allies with 71 legislators.

As Lebanon sinks deeper into poverty, many Lebanese have been more openly critical of Hezbollah. They blame the group — along with the ruling class — for the devastating, multiple crises plaguing the country, including a dramatic currency crash and severe shortages in medicine and fuel.

Some expect its main Christian ally, the Free Patriotic Movement founded by President Michel Aoun, to lose seats. Others have expressed disappointment at Hezbollah's unshakable alliance with Nabih Berri,

Lebanon's longtime parliament speaker seen by many as the godfather of Lebanon's corrupt sectarian-based and elite-dominated political system.

Still, a win by Hezbollah is not in doubt. The group has a solid base and masterfully maneuvers its alliances and the electoral system. Intimidation ensures no Shiite threat emerges: Three Shiite candidates allied with the Saudi-backed Lebanese Forces group withdrew from the race in the Baalbek region within days.

In a Shiite village in southern Lebanon, residents were attacked last month as they headed to attend a rally for candidates running against Hezbollah. Weapons were fired in the air to disrupt a gathering by a Shiite cleric running against the Hezbollah-led alliance in Baalbek.

Hezbollah was blamed for intimidating the Shiite candidates, a claim Haj Hassan denied.

"They don't want opposition within the (Shiite) sect. This is clear," said Hilal Khashan, political science professor at the American University of Beirut. Khashan added that Hezbollah and its Shiite ally the Amal group of Berri are trying to maintain control of the 27 seats allocated for the sect.

Little change is expected from the election as mainstream political parties and politicians remain strong while opposition candidates are fractured. Still, Western-backed mainstream parties are hoping to strip the parliamentary majority from Hezbollah, while many independents are hoping to break through traditional party lists and candidates.

The vote comes after a powerful Sunni leader, former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, suspended his work in politics. Some have warned this may help Hezbollah's Sunni allies to win more seats.

"I consider the ballot box as a line of defense for us," said nurse Hoda Falah during the rally in Baalbek. Falah said Hezbollah's weapons have defended eastern Lebanon from attacks by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida-linked militants over the years.

Top Hezbollah official Nabil Kaouk said in a speech last month that the elections will show that his group enjoys the most support in the small nation. He claimed that money flowing from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the U.S. to their "tools" in Lebanon will not change results.

"May 15 will prove that the American project to target the resistance is sterile and they will only harvest disappointments," Kaouk said.

20 injured in Milwaukee shootings after Bucks playoff game

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Twenty people were injured in two shootings in downtown Milwaukee near an entertainment district where thousands of people had been watching the Bucks play the Celtics in the NBA's Eastern Conference semifinals, authorities said.

None of the injuries from either shooting Friday night were believed to be life-threatening.

The first shooting, involving three victims, occurred adjacent to the Deer District — an entertainment district with numerous bars and restaurants where large crowds often assemble for major sporting events.

The Milwaukee Fire Department said authorities took two people to a hospital, a 30-year-old man and a 16-year-old girl, and a third person drove to a hospital. Police said a 29-year-old man was in custody.

Seventeen more people were injured in a second shooting about two hours later, which happened a few blocks away. Ten people were taken into custody and nine guns were recovered, WTMJ-TV reported.

There was no immediate indication whether the two shootings were related or involved fans who were watching the game.

Witnesses told WTMJ-TV that they saw a fight outside a bar following the basketball game.

Bill Reinemann, a parking attendant at lot adjacent to Deer District, said he heard gunshots but didn't see anyone get shot or see the shooter during the earlier shooting.

"It sounded like six to eight gunshots," he said "It was close."

After the shots were fired, scores of fans began running toward the Deer District, he said.

Reinemann, who has worked the lot for 18 years, remained at his post even as fearful Bucks fans ran past him.

"I sat in my chair here the whole while," he said.

"The incident took place outside of the Deer District area. We direct all questions to the Milwaukee Police

Department," Bucks spokesman Barry Baum said.

Boston defeated Milwaukee in the game to force a Game 7 in the series.

4 Air Force cadets may not graduate due to vaccine refusal

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four cadets at the Air Force Academy may not graduate or be commissioned as military officers this month because they have refused the COVID-19 vaccine, and they may be required to pay back thousands of dollars in tuition costs, according to Air Force officials.

It's the only military academy, so far, where cadets may face such penalties. The Army and Navy said that as of now, not one of their seniors is being prevented from graduating at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, or the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, due to vaccine refusals. The graduations are in about two weeks.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin last year made the COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for service members, including those at the military academies, saying the vaccine is critical to maintaining military readiness and the health of the force.

Military leaders have argued that troops for decades have been required to get as many as 17 vaccines in order to maintain the health of the force, particularly those deploying overseas. Students arriving at the military academies get a regimen of shots on their first day — such as measles, mumps and rubella - if they aren't already vaccinated. And they routinely get regular flu shots in the fall.

Members of Congress, the military and the public have questioned if the exemption reviews by the military services have been fair. There have been multiple lawsuits filed against the mandate, mainly centering on the fact that very few service members have been granted religious exemptions from the shots.

Until the COVID-19 vaccine, very few military members sought religious exemptions to any vaccines.

Lt. Col. Brian Maguire, an Air Force Academy spokesman, said that while vaccination status may hinder the graduation of the four seniors, "there are still two weeks until graduation, so their status could change as the cadets weigh their options."

According to Maguire, the four cadets — who are not named — have been informed of the potential consequences, and have met with the academy's superintendent. In addition to those four, there are two juniors, one sophomore and six freshmen at the academy who have also refused the vaccine.

The military academies for years have required students under certain circumstances to repay tuition costs if they leave during their junior or senior year. Often those involve students with disciplinary issues or similar problems. The costs can be as much as \$200,000, or more, and any final decision on repayment is made by the service secretary.

West Point said that there are no members of the Class of 2022 who have refused to get the vaccine.

Across the military, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps have discharged nearly 4,000 active duty service members for refusing the vaccine. According to recent data released by the services, more than 2,100 Marines, 900 sailors, 500 Army soldiers and 360 airmen have been thrown out of the military, and at least 50 were discharged during entry level training, before they moved into active duty service.

Those who flatly refuse the vaccine without seeking an exemption are still being discharged. But the courts have stalled additional discharges of service members who sought religious exemptions.

Last month, a federal judge in Texas barred the Navy from taking action for now against sailors who have objected to being vaccinated on religious grounds.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor had, in January, issued a preliminary injunction preventing the Navy from disciplining or discharging 35 sailors who sued over the Navy's vaccine policy while their case played out. In April, O'Connor agreed the case could go forward as a class action suit and issued a preliminary injunction covering about 4,000 sailors who have objected on religious grounds to being vaccinated.

Also last month, a federal judge in Ohio granted a preliminary injunction blocking the Air Force from disciplining a dozen officers and some additional airmen and reservists who were seeking religious exemptions. The officers, mostly from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, sued in February after

their exemption requests were denied.

According to the military, as many as 20,000 service members have asked for religious exemptions. Thousands have been denied.

As of recent data, the Air Force has approved 73 religious exemptions, the Marine Corps has approved seven, and the Army has approved eight. Before the injunction, the Navy conditionally approved one reservist and 26 active-duty requests for religious exemptions, and 10 requests from members of the Individual Ready Reserve. The IRR approvals mean that those sailors don't have to be vaccinated until they are actually called to serve.

About 99% of the active duty Navy and 98% of the Air Force, Marine Corps and Army have gotten at least one shot.

G7 warn of Ukraine grain crisis, ask China not to aid Russia

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

WEISSENHAUS, Germany (AP) — The Group of Seven leading economies warned Saturday that the war in Ukraine is stoking a global food and energy crisis that threatens poor countries, and urgent measures are needed to unblock stores of grain that Russia is preventing from leaving Ukraine.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who hosted a meeting of top G-7 diplomats, said the war had become a "global crisis."

Baerbock said up to 50 million people, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, would face hunger in the coming months unless ways are found to release Ukrainian grain, which accounts for a sizeable share of the worldwide supply.

In statements released at the end of the three-day meeting on Germany's Baltic Sea coast, the G-7 pledged to provide further humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable.

"Russia's war of aggression has generated one of the most severe food and energy crises in recent history which now threatens those most vulnerable across the globe," the group said.

"We are determined to accelerate a coordinated multilateral response to preserve global food security and stand by our most vulnerable partners in this respect," it added.

Canada's foreign minister, Melanie Joly, said her country, another major agricultural exporter, stands ready to send ships to European ports so Ukrainian grain can be brought to those in need.

"We need to make sure that these cereals are sent to the world," she told reporters. "If not, millions of people will be facing famine."

The G-7 nations also called on China not to help Russia, including by undermining international sanctions or justifying Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

Beijing should support the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, and not "assist Russia in its war of aggression," they said.

The G-7 urged China "to desist from engaging in information manipulation, disinformation and other means to legitimize Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine."

The grouping, which comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, also reiterated its stance that the territories seized by Russian forces need to be returned to Ukraine.

"We will never recognize borders Russia has attempted to change by military aggression," they said.

The meeting in Weissenhaus, northeast of Hamburg, was billed as an opportunity for officials to discuss the broader implications of the war for geopolitics, energy and food security, and ongoing international efforts to tackle climate change and the pandemic.

In a series of closing statements, the G-7 nations also addressed a wide range of global problems from the situation in Afghanistan to tensions in the Middle East.

On Friday, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba appealed to friendly countries to provide more military support to Kyiv and increase the pressure on Russia, including by seizing its assets abroad to pay for rebuilding Ukraine.

Kuleba said his country remains willing to talk to Russia about unblocking grain supplies stuck in Ukraine's

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 27 of 75

silos and also about reaching a political agreement to end the war itself, but had so far received “no positive feedback” from Moscow.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in an interview published Saturday that he had not detected any change in Putin’s stance recently.

Scholz, who spoke at length by phone with the Russian leader Friday, told German news portal t-online that Putin had failed to achieve the military objectives he set out at the start of the war while losing more Russian soldiers than the Soviet Union did during its decade-long campaign in Afghanistan.

“Putin should slowly begin to understand that the only way out of this situation is through an agreement with Ukraine,” Scholz was quoted as saying.

One idea discussed at the G-7 meeting was whether Russian state assets frozen abroad can be used to pay for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

“Russia bears responsibility for the massive damage resulting from this war,” Baerbock said. “And that’s why it’s a question of justice that Russia should have to pay for this damage.”

But she added that, unlike in Canada — where legislation allows for seized funds to be repurposed — the legal basis for doing so in Germany is uncertain.

“But that’s precisely what such meetings are for, to have an exchange about how to resolve these legal questions,” Baerbock said.

Many of the foreign ministers were due to attend an informal meeting of NATO diplomats in Berlin on Saturday and Sunday.

That gathering will consider moves by Finland and Sweden to join the military alliance amid concerns about the threat from Russia, as well as ways in which NATO can support Ukraine without being drawn into the conflict.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was unable to attend the G-7 meeting after recovering from a COVID-19 infection, was expected at the NATO gathering.

Show of support for abortion rights expected at US rallies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Demonstrators facing down a Supreme Court decision that could overturn the constitutional right to abortion planned rallies from coast to coast Saturday to express their outrage — and to mobilize for the fight ahead.

More than 380 events were set from Maine to Hawaii, with the largest gatherings expected in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and other big cities, organizers said.

In the nation’s capital, activists planned to gather at the Washington Monument before marching to the Supreme Court, which is now surrounded by a security fence.

Tens of thousands of people were expected at the “Bans off our Bodies” events, providing an outlet for anger and frustration for abortion rights activists after a leaked draft Supreme Court ruling suggested Roe v. Wade will be overturned.

“If it’s a fight they want, it’s a fight they’ll get,” said Rachel Carmona, executive director of the Women’s March.

Polls show that most Americans want to preserve access to abortion — at least in the earlier stages of pregnancy — but the Supreme Court appeared to be poised to let the states have the final say.

If that happens, roughly half of states, mostly in the South and Midwest, are expected to quickly ban abortion.

The upcoming ruling stands to energize voters, potentially shaping the upcoming midterm elections.

Saturday’s rallies were being held three days after the Senate failed to muster enough votes to codify Roe v. Wade. Sponsors included the Women’s March, Move On, Planned Parenthood, UltraViolet, MoveOn, SEIU and other organizations.

Carmona said the fight will continue at polling places, demonstrations and other venues “until we have a full restoration of our rights.”

“It’s no exaggeration to say that for the women of this country, this will be a summer of rage,” she said.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan becomes UAE's president

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Rulers in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday unanimously appointed Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as the autocratic nation's president, signaling both unity and stability in this key energy-rich country that hosts Western militaries.

The ascension of Sheikh Mohammed, 61, had been expected after the death Friday of his half-brother and the UAE's president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, at the age of 73. The transition of power marks only the third time this U.S.-allied nation of seven sheikhdoms has selected a president since becoming an independent nation in 1971.

Under Sheikh Mohammed, who has been the nation's de facto leader since Sheikh Khalifa suffered a stroke in 2014, the UAE had tried to project power militarily across the wider region as it joined a Saudi-led war in Yemen.

But since the lockdowns of the coronavirus pandemic, Sheikh Mohammed and the wider UAE has tried to recalibrate its approach by largely pulling out of the war and seeking diplomatic detentes with rivals. The UAE also diplomatically recognized Israel, which shares Sheikh Mohammed's longstanding suspicion of Iran. However, ties to the U.S. have strained in recent years.

The state-run WAM news agency described the vote at Al-Mushrif Palace in Abu Dhabi as unanimous among the rulers of the country's hereditarily ruled sheikhdoms, which includes the skyscraper-studded city of Dubai.

"We congratulate him, and we pledge allegiance to him, and our people pledge allegiance to him," Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, said on Twitter after the vote. "The whole country is led by him to take it on the paths of glory and honor, God willing."

There had been only one death of a president before Friday in the country's history, which saw Sheikh Khalifa take over for both his and Sheikh Mohammed's father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, after his death in 2004. Sheikh Zayed, whose name graces a major highway linking the Emirates and whose face appears everywhere in the nation, widely remains viewed as the country's founding father.

The UAE as a whole is observing a three-day mourning period, which will see businesses shut across the country and performances halted in Sheikh Khalifa's honor. Electronic billboards all showed the late sheikh's image in Dubai on Friday night as flags flew at half-staff. A wider mourning period of 40 days will go on beyond that.

Sheikh Mohammed had been serving as the UAE's de facto president since a 2014 stroke saw Sheikh Khalifa disappear from public view.

Known by the acronym MbZ, Sheikh Mohammed cultivated ties with the West that proved valuable for Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE that commands tens of billions of dollars in wealth funds from its oil and gas deposits. A U.S. diplomatic cable from 2004 released by WikiLeaks referred to him as "charismatic, savvy and very comfortable in the West." He hosted then-President George W. Bush in 2008 at his desert estate, a visit complete with Bedouin tents and falcons.

The country hosts some 3,500 U.S. troops, many at Abu Dhabi's Al-Dhafra Air Base, from where drones and fighter jets flew missions combating the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Dubai also is the U.S. Navy's busiest port of call abroad. Both France and South Korea also maintained a military presence here.

Sheikh Mohammed trained at the British military academy at Sandhurst and is a helicopter pilot. His military-first approach saw the UAE join Saudi Arabia in their bloody, yearslong war in Yemen that still rages to this day. Sheikh Mohammed has had a close relationship with neighboring Saudi Arabia's own upstart crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. However, the Emirates has largely withdrawn its troops from Yemen.

Sheikh Mohammed also long has been suspicious of both the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran, likely organizing a campaign targeting Islamists in the UAE after the 2011 Arab Spring and urging the West to take a harder line toward Tehran over concerns about its nuclear program and its support of paramilitary groups

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 29 of 75

throughout the region. The UAE's recognition of Israel in 2020, while opening new trade and tourism, also serves as a hedge in dealing with Iran.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, however, the UAE under Sheikh Mohammed has sought to rehabilitate ties to Iran and Turkey, which has backed Islamists in the region. A quartet of Arab nations including the UAE also dropped their boycott of Qatar over a diplomatic dispute regarding its support of Islamists, though relations remain icy between Abu Dhabi and Doha.

"The smooth transition of power in the UAE reflects the sobriety of institutional work and the advanced level of governance mechanisms and their stability," said Anwar Gargash, a senior Emirati diplomat.

But strains have emerged in recent years between Sheikh Mohammed and the U.S., long a guarantor of security in the wider Persian Gulf. Then-President Barack Obama and world powers reaching a nuclear deal with Iran in 2015 soured the Emirates. The chaotic American withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 under President Joe Biden worsened concerns about the U.S.'s pullback from the region.

Sheikh Mohammed found himself entangled in special counsel Robert Mueller's report on then-President Donald Trump and Russian interference in America's 2016 election. The chair of Trump's 2017 inaugural committee was arrested in 2021 on charges alleging he secretly conspired to influence U.S. policy to benefit the United Arab Emirates.

A planned U.S. sale of advanced F-35 fighter jets to the UAE also appears stalled in part over American concerns about the Emirates' relationship with China. Meanwhile, the UAE has been careful not to alienate Russia as Moscow wages war on Ukraine.

Ukraine favorite to win Eurovision Song Contest amid war

TURIN, Italy (AP) — Against the backdrop of a war in Europe, the hugely popular Eurovision Song Contest reaches its flamboyant climax Saturday night as 25 bands perform in front of a live audience in the northern Italian city of Turin, while millions more watch on television around the world.

The Ukrainian band Kalush Orchestra is heavily tipped to win by bookmakers, which are giving the group that mixes traditional Ukrainian rhythms, costumes and dance moves with contemporary hip hop a 60% chance of winning.

Their song, "Stefania," was written as a tribute to the frontman's mother, but has transformed since Russia's invasion on Feb. 24 into an anthem to the war-ravaged nation, as lyrics take on new meaning. "I'll always find my way home, even if all roads are destroyed," Kalush Orchestra frontman Oleh Psiuk wrote.

The six-member, all-male band received special permission to leave the country to represent Ukraine and Ukrainian culture at the music contest. One of the original members stayed to fight, and the others plan to return as soon as the contest is over.

The winner is chosen in equal parts by panels of music experts in each competing nation and votes by the viewing public, leaving room for an upset. Britain's Sam Ryder and Sweden's Cornelia Jakobs are each given a 10% shot while the Italian duo of Mahmood & Blanco have a 6% chance of winning.

The winner takes home a glass microphone trophy and a potential career boost.

The event is hosted by Italy after the Italian rock band Maneskin won last year in Rotterdam. The victory shot the Rome-based band to international fame, opening for the Rolling Stones and appearing on Saturday Night Live and numerous magazine covers in their typically genderless costume code.

Twenty bands have been chosen in two semifinals this week, and will compete along with the Big Five of Italy, Britain, France, Germany and Spain, which have permanent berths due to their financial support of the contest.

Russia was excluded this year after its invasion of Ukraine, a move organizers said was meant to keep politics out of the contest that promotes diversity and friendship among nations.

South Africa in new surge of COVID from versions of omicron

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South Africa is experiencing a surge of new COVID-19 cases driven by two

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 30 of 75

omicron sub-variants, according to health experts.

For about three weeks the country has seen increasing numbers of new cases and somewhat higher hospitalizations, but not increases in severe cases and deaths, said Professor Marta Nunes, a researcher at Vaccine and Infectious Diseases Analytics at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto.

"We're still very early in this increase period, so I don't want to really call it a wave," Nunes said. "We are seeing a slight, a small increase in hospitalizations and really very few deaths."

South Africa's new cases have gone from an average of 300 per day in early April to about 8,000 per day this week. Nunes says the actual number of new cases is probably much higher because the symptoms are mild and many who get sick are not getting tested.

South Africa's new surge is from two variations of omicron, BA.4 and BA.5, which appear to be very much like the original strain of omicron that was first identified in South Africa and Botswana late last year and swept around the globe.

"The majority of new cases are from these two strains. They are still omicron ... but just genomically somewhat different," said Nunes. The new versions appear to be able to infect people who have immunity from earlier COVID infections and vaccinations but they cause generally mild disease, she said. In South Africa, 45% of adults are fully vaccinated, although about 85% of the population is thought to have some immunity based on past exposure to the virus.

"It looks like the vaccines still protect against severe disease," Nunes said.

Nunes said that the BA.4 and BA.5 strains of omicron have spread to other countries in southern Africa and a few European countries, but it is too early to tell if they will spread across the globe, as omicron did.

The increase in COVID cases is coming as South Africa is entering the Southern Hemisphere's colder winter months and the country is seeing a rise in cases of flu.

At a COVID testing center in the Chiawelo area of Soweto, many people come in to be tested for COVID, but find out they have flu.

"Now we're in flu season ... so it's flu versus COVID-19," said Magdeline Matsoso, site manager at the Chiawelo vaccination center. She said people come for testing because they have COVID symptoms.

"When we do the tests, you find that the majority of them, they are negative when it comes to COVID, but they do have flu symptoms," said Matsoso. "So they get flu treatment and then they go home because the majority is related to flu and not COVID."

Vuyo Lumkwani was one of those who came to get tested.

"I wasn't feeling well when I woke up this morning. I woke up with body pains, a headache, blocked (nose), feeling dizzy, so I decided to come here," she said.

"I was terrified about my symptoms because I thought it might be COVID-19, but I told myself that I'd be OK because I have been vaccinated," said Lumkwani. She said she was relieved to be diagnosed with flu and advised to go home with some medications and rest.

Splash Brothers send Warriors to Western Conference Finals

By JANIE McCAULEY AP Sports Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green are cherishing this playoff run a little more given they spent the past two years watching the postseason instead of their familiar position chasing championships.

Now, with those experienced faces and a cast of new stars, the Warriors are headed to another Western Conference Finals and need just four more wins to give themselves a title chance again.

They will lean on the experience of Curry, Green, Thompson and Kevon Looney having been here so many times already.

"It's unbelievable knowing what we've been through these last two years and six of the last eight we have an opportunity to play for the finals," said Curry, who took his team to five straight finals from 2015-19. "I think me, Draymond, Klay, Loon, we've been in this position before. We understand the emotions, the adrenaline, how much you want it, how hard it is. ... Never take it for granted and understand this

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 31 of 75

is what it's all about, and then for us to have another opportunity to get four more wins and play for a trophy, that's special."

For Thompson, it means so much given he returned in January from more than 2 1/2 years spent recovering from surgeries on his left knee and right Achilles tendon.

Golden State grabbed 70 rebounds — 22 by Looney after Curry and Green pushed for him to be a starter again — on the way to eliminating the Memphis Grizzlies 110-86 on Friday night and now advances to face either the Suns or Mavericks in a best-of-seven battle for the West. Game 7 of that series is Sunday in Phoenix to determine who's next for the Warriors.

Thompson scored 30 points with eight 3-pointers in adding another Game 6 masterpiece to his long list of them.

"I have no idea. I have no clue," he said, "I love the moments. I love the pressure. I love playing basketball at the highest level."

Fresh faces like Andrew Wiggins and Jordan Poole are playing huge roles during this postseason run. Golden State suddenly also has a raucous home crowd at Chase Center, where the Warriors are 6-0 so far these playoffs.

And it feels a little like old Oracle Arena these days.

"I think these fans knew what we were up against," Green said. "We've all talked about the home-court advantage and how this isn't Oracle and you have to reestablish that home court, and I think we are doing a good job of it. But our fans were absolutely incredible tonight. It took everything we had to win that game, including the fan support and the noise that was in the arena."

This time, the Splash Brothers Curry and Thompson could let loose on their own floor, as their own fans chanted "Whoop that trick."

They loved every second of that. Golden State is going on, the Grizzlies are going home to Memphis for good.

The Warriors have certainly endured their share of drama and unforeseen stress to get this far.

Golden State contended with two-time reigning MVP Nikola Jokic over a five-game first-round series with the Nuggets, then got past Ja Morant and Memphis in a series full of back-and-forth chatter between the rivals. The Grizzlies eliminated the Warriors in a play-in game last season.

First, Gary Payton II went down for the rest of the postseason with a fractured left elbow on a hard foul by Dillon Brooks that led to the Memphis star's one-game suspension for the Flagrant 2 committed when he pounded Payton over the head as he drove for a layup in Game 2.

Morant got hurt in Game 3 and accused Poole of re-injuring his troublesome right knee by pulling on it as they fought for a loose ball.

Coach Steve Kerr caught COVID-19 and sat out Games 4, 5 and 6 with Mike Brown the acting head coach of two teams at once given he had just been named the new Sacramento Kings' choice last Sunday.

"What a heck of a series," Brown said.

While Kerr's return date remained uncertain, Brown has guided the Warriors to a 12-1 mark filling in during playoffs. That includes an 11-0 during their 2017 championship run with Kerr sidelined then dealing with debilitating symptoms that were a complication from back surgery two years earlier.

"Mike B. is one of a kind. He's a player's coach. He's a great leader. He loves the game," Thompson said. "We are going to miss him next year obviously. But we will welcome back Steve with open arms. He's our leader."

Green was joined on the postgame podium with son DJ as the do-everything forward shared a story of watching the playoffs from Cabo San Lucas at this time last year, acknowledging, "It feels good to be back."

"I used to take it for granted and just think that that's the way it's supposed to be, we're supposed to make the Western Conference Finals," Green said. "The reality is, I still think that but I have a much deeper appreciation for it. It's so hard. Feels like each time it gets tougher and tougher and tougher.

"And to miss the playoffs the last two years, I remember sitting in Cabo last year watching the playoffs and don't get me wrong, I love Cabo it, was great to be in that place watching the playoffs, but it was

brutal watching.”

Hungary’s military finds mission in life for abused dog

By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — Hungary’s military has found a new mission in life for a talented dog who was rescued from abusive owners, recruiting 2-year-old Logan to serve in counterterrorism operations for an elite bomb squad.

The Belgian shepherd is undergoing intensive training as an explosives detection dog for the explosive ordnance disposal and warship regiment of the Hungarian Defense Forces.

At the unit’s garrison on the Danube River in the capital Budapest, Logan receives daily socialization and obedience exercises, and is trained to recognize the smell of 25 different explosive substances.

“He has already started to learn how to smell explosives in a completely homogeneous environment, and he has also started to learn how to search motor vehicles and ships,” said Logan’s trainer, Sgt. 1st Class Balazs Nemeth.

Logan’s new role as a bomb sniffer came only after an early life full of hardships. In 2021, animal welfare officers received a tip that a dog was being abused and held in inhumane conditions at a rural residence in northeastern Hungary. During an on-site inspection, the officers found Logan confined to a one-meter (3-foot) chain and suffering from malnourishment.

Several weeks later, Nemeth, the regiment’s training officer, visited the shelter where Logan was housed and began assessing his suitability for becoming a professional bomb sniffer.

“The moment we met him the first impressions were very positive. We saw a well-motivated dog in relatively good condition and we immediately had confidence in him,” Nemeth said.

In a demonstration at the unit’s garrison, Nemeth opened a case containing two dozen vials of mock explosive materials like C-4, TNT, ammonium nitrate and others, which Logan is trained to detect.

After concealing a small package of explosive in a hidden crevice on one of the regiment’s river boats, Nemeth brought Logan to the training area where he went immediately to work sniffing for the package, which he found within seconds. The dog’s body tensed as he pointed with his nose at the source of the smell, alerting his handler.

The regiment’s commanding officer, Col. Zsolt Szilagyi, said that the increased use of improvised explosive devices by extremist cells since the turn of the millennium have made it necessary to employ new methods for detecting potential bombs.

“This was a challenge to which the military had to respond, and one of the best ways to detect these devices is to use explosive detection dogs,” Szilagyi said. “These four-legged comrades have been supporting the activities of our bomb disposal soldiers.”

Logan, he said, will serve as an inspector of important sites in Hungary, and could be sent along with the country’s military to NATO missions abroad.

While rescued dogs often present challenges in training given their often traumatic backgrounds, Nemeth said he is confident that Logan will be successful and make a valuable addition to the unit.

“Logan is very valuable because about one out of 10,000 rescued dogs is fit for military service, both medically and psychologically,” he said.

Recruiting rescued dogs often reveals their undiscovered capabilities, and allows for them to find a new home where they can thrive, Szilagyi said.

“There are dogs that have great potential but for some reason they have been pushed to the margins,” he said. “We can give these dogs a new opportunity to be placed in a family, so to speak, where they can live a proper life in loving, competent hands and be useful.”

Emmanuel who? Far-right fighting hard-left for French vote

By ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 33 of 75

PARIS (AP) — The stakes are high, the fight nasty and the party of centrist President Emmanuel Macron is the one to beat. But to a visitor from outer space, June's parliamentary election in France could look like a contest between the far right and the hard-left.

A month before the first round of voting, the campaign for the 577 seats in France's lower house of parliament has been brutal. Pressure has been mounting since the April presidential election when Macron won a second mandate, beating far-right leader Marine Le Pen in the run-off to quash her third bid for the job.

The pot bubbled over when Le Pen's political nemesis, hard-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon, clinched alliances with a swath of leftist parties, positioning himself to outdo both her and, he hopes, Macron, in June.

So for now, Le Pen sees Melenchon as her main opponent, as she seeks to keep her National Rally party politically relevant with a good showing in parliament.

Her party's campaign slogan, "The Only Opposition to Macron," attests to her rivalry with the hard-left leader.

Melenchon himself, bolstered by his alliances, has set his sights higher, declaring that he will steal Macron's majority to become France's next prime minister — an appointment made by the president alone.

Le Pen's hopes are less grandiose: to create a "powerful" parliamentary group — at least 15 lawmakers — that would accord her anti-immigration party more speaking time and other privileges so it can be heard, and harass the powerful.

Le Pen mocks Melenchon as the "court jester" who will never be prime minister. But with enough votes, she told RTL radio this week, Melenchon could transform the National Assembly into a squatters' heaven of leftist causes, "with defenders of (anarchist) Black Blocs, defenders of burkinis, those who want to disarm the police, those who want to open up prisons because prisons aren't nice."

For her party's interim president, Melenchon represents "a threat to the Republic."

"I think that extremism today is located on the side of Mr. Melenchon," Jordan Bardella said at a news conference, using the precise label the French press favors for his own far-right party.

Le Pen and Melenchon are longstanding political enemies. But for Le Pen the animosity has clearly deepened with the leftist alliance Melenchon concluded with Socialists, Communists and Greens that strengthens his hand. Le Pen's party refused an alliance with the upstart far-right presidential candidate Eric Zemmour, who stole some of her party's known figures but finished with only 7% of the vote.

Paradoxically, while Le Pen placed second in the presidential race, compared to Melenchon's third place, and lifted the far-right to an unprecedented electoral performance, her party goes into the June 12 and 19 legislative elections in a weaker position than Melenchon, backed by his alliances.

France's legislative voting system favors the president and all but prevents Le Pen's party from clawing deeply into the majority. Only eight National Rally lawmakers won seats in the last election. Le Pen, looking to renew her seat, is among the 569 candidates her party is fielding around France.

"It's a very brutal campaign ... At the same time, it's a campaign where you don't see a real debate, where lots of French have the impression that their daily problems aren't addressed," said far-right expert Jean-Yves Camus. It is also, he added, "a rather surreal campaign with Mr. Melenchon saying, 'Me, prime minister.'"

Macron's party and its centrist allies hold over 300 seats in the outgoing parliament. Still, his Republic on the Move has changed its name to Renaissance and allied with other centrists.

"This will be the toughest campaign," the president warned his party's candidates this week. "Our country is divided."

Divisions, drama, and tough rhetoric aren't new to French elections.

"France is a country where the political tradition is extremely divisive," Camus said. "You have the impression of two parts of the country that have a hard time talking."

Clarence Thomas says abortion leak has changed Supreme Court

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Clarence Thomas says the Supreme Court has been changed by the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 34 of 75

shocking leak of a draft opinion earlier this month. The opinion suggests the court is poised to overturn the right to an abortion recognized nearly 50 years ago in *Roe v. Wade*.

The conservative Thomas, who joined the court in 1991 and has long called for *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned, described the leak as an unthinkable breach of trust.

"When you lose that trust, especially in the institution that I'm in, it changes the institution fundamentally. You begin to look over your shoulder. It's like kind of an infidelity that you can explain it, but you can't undo it," he said while speaking at a conference Friday evening in Dallas.

The court has said the draft does not represent the final position of any of the court's members, and Chief Justice John Roberts has ordered an investigation into the leak.

Thomas, a nominee of President George H.W. Bush, said it was beyond "anyone's imagination" before the May 2 leak of the opinion to Politico that even a line of a draft opinion would be released in advance, much less an entire draft that runs nearly 100 pages. Politico has also reported that in addition to Thomas, conservative justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett had voted with the draft opinion's author, Samuel Alito, to overrule *Roe v. Wade* and a 1992 decision, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, that affirmed *Roe's* finding of a constitutional right to abortion.

Thomas said that previously, "if someone said that one line of one opinion" would be leaked, the response would have been: "Oh, that's impossible. No one would ever do that."

"Now that trust or that belief is gone forever," Thomas said at the Old Parkland Conference, which describes itself as a conference "to discuss alternative proven approaches to tackling the challenges facing Black Americans today."

Thomas also said at one point: "I do think that what happened at the court is tremendously bad...I wonder how long we're going to have these institutions at the rate we're undermining them."

Thomas also touched in passing on the protests by liberals at conservative justices' homes in Maryland and Virginia that followed the draft opinion's release. Thomas argued that conservatives have never acted that way.

"You would never visit Supreme Court justices' houses when things didn't go our way. We didn't throw temper tantrums. I think it is ... incumbent on us to always act appropriately and not to repay tit for tat," he said.

Protests at the Supreme Court and around the nation are also expected Saturday.

Thomas was speaking before an audience as part of a conversation with John Yoo, who is now a Berkeley Law professor but worked for Thomas for a year in the early 1990s as a law clerk.

Each justice generally has four law clerks every year and the current group of law clerks has been a focus of speculation as a possible source of the draft opinion's leak. They are one of a few groups along with the justices and some administrative staff that has access to draft opinions.

Thomas also answered a few questions from the audience, including one from a man who asked about the friendships between liberal and conservative justices on the court, such as a well-known friendship between the late liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and the late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia. "How can we foster that same type of relationship within Congress and within the general population?" the man asked.

"Well, I'm just worried about keeping it at the court now," Thomas responded. He went on to speak in glowing terms about former colleagues. "This is not the court of that era," he said.

Despite his comments, Thomas seemed in good spirits — laughing heartily at times. Yoo, who is known for writing the so-called "torture memos" that the George W. Bush administration used to justify using "enhanced interrogation" techniques after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, said at one point that he had taken pictures of notes Thomas had taken during the conference.

"You're going to leak them?" Thomas asked, laughing.

Yoo responded: "Well, I know where to go...Politico will publish anything I give them now."

Transgender medication law in Alabama blocked by judge

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 35 of 75

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — A federal judge on Friday blocked part of an Alabama law that made it a felony to prescribe gender-affirming puberty blockers and hormones to transgender minors.

U.S. District Judge Liles Burke issued a preliminary injunction to stop the state from enforcing the medication ban, which took effect May 8, while a court challenge goes forward. The judge left in place other parts of the law that banned gender-affirming surgeries for transgender minors, which doctors had testified are not done on minors in Alabama. He also left in place a provision that requires counselors and other school officials to tell parents if a minor discloses that they think they are transgender.

The Vulnerable Child Compassion and Protection Act made it a felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, to prescribe or administer gender-affirming medication to transgender minors to help affirm their new gender identity.

Burke ruled that Alabama had produced no credible evidence to show that transitioning medications are “experimental” while, “the uncontradicted record evidence is that at least twenty-two major medical associations in the United States endorse transitioning medications as well-established, evidence-based treatments for gender dysphoria in minors.”

“Enjoining the Act upholds and reaffirms the ‘enduring American tradition’ that parents—not the states or federal courts—play the primary role in nurturing and caring for their children,” Burke wrote in the opinion.

The legislation was part of a wave of bills in Republican-controlled states regarding transgender minors, but was the first to levy criminal penalties against the doctors who provide the medications. In Arkansas, a judge blocked a similar law before it took effect. The U.S. Department of Justice and four families with transgender children challenged the Alabama law as discriminatory, an unconstitutional violation of equal protection and free speech rights and an intrusion into family medical decisions.

“This is a huge relief for transgender children and their families,” Dr. Morissa Ladinsky, a pediatrician who founded a Birmingham medical team that treats children with gender dysphoria, said late Friday.

“The court’s decision recognizes that this is well established care that has been endorsed by 22 major medical associations. This decision will ensure transgender children in Alabama, and beyond, can continue to receive this evidence-based well-known life-saving care.”

Representatives for Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and Attorney General Steve Marshall could not immediately be reached for comment late Friday night.

The state attorney general’s office argued that the use of the medications is unsettled science, and thus the state has a role in regulation to protect children. During a court hearing before Burke, state attorneys argued European countries take a more conservative approach to the medications. Alabama lawmakers, who approved the bill this spring, said decisions on the medications should wait until adulthood. “I believe very strongly that if the Good Lord made you a boy, you are a boy, and if he made you a girl, you are a girl,” Ivey said when she signed the legislation last month.

The judge said Alabama’s evidence was not persuasive. He noted a psychologist who testified that most children grow out of gender dysphoria had never provided care to a transgender minor under the age of sixteen. The state’s other witness was a woman who testified that she regretted taking testosterone at age 19.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Pediatric Endocrine Society both endorse the treatments that clinics here and in other states are providing for transgender youth. More than 20 medical and mental health organizations urged Burke to block the law.

GOP’s new midterm attack: Blaming Biden for formula shortage

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Republicans aiming to retake control of Congress have already sharpened a message centering around blaming Democrats for high inflation, expensive gas, migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border and violent crime in some cities.

But GOP leaders landed on an issue this week that it hopes could prove even more potent: tying Presi-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 36 of 75

dent Joe Biden to a shortage in baby formula.

Parents are suddenly running into bare supermarket and pharmacy shelves in part because of ongoing supply disruptions and a recent safety recall. But in an election year that was already shaping up to be rocky for Democrats, Republicans sense that the shortage could prove to be an especially tangible way to argue that Biden is incapable of quickly solving problems confronting the U.S.

"This is not a Third World country," said GOP Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, the chair of the House Republican conference. "This should never happen in the United States of America."

The administration has sometimes been slow in responding to sudden political threats, perhaps most notably when signs of inflation began to surface last year. The White House appears determined not to repeat that mistake, announcing on Friday that formula maker Abbott Laboratories committed to give rebates through August for a food stamp-like program that helps women, infants and children called WIC.

Biden insisted there's "nothing more urgent we're working on" than addressing the shortage.

Asked if his administration had responded as quickly as it should have, Biden said, "If we'd been better mind readers, I guess we could've. But we moved as quickly as the problem became apparent."

But the defense by the White House illustrates how finger-pointing at the Biden administration has already spread far and wide among Republicans in Washington, on television and on social media. It's a new issue for the GOP to hammer at and a way to address families at a time when Democrats believe outrage over the U.S. Supreme Court possibly ending the right to an abortion could galvanize women and other key voters, and thwart or at least lessen a Republican wave in November.

The full-court press by Republicans included linking the formula shortage with the rising number of migrants coming into the U.S. — one of the biggest issues they have sought to lay at the feet of an unpopular president. On Thursday, Rep. Kat Cammack, R-Florida, shared an image of a shelving unit at a U.S. Border Patrol facility in Texas that showed a single shelf with four boxes full of baby formula containers, and a half-dozen more baby formula containers on that shelf.

Cammack said Thursday that a border patrol agent sent her the image. The AP has not independently verified the photo's authenticity or when exactly it was captured. Some conservative pundits and news outlets have since spun even greater tall tales from the photo, with some claiming that they show Biden is shipping "thousands" of pallets of baby formula to the border while parents in the U.S. struggle to find formula. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott called the images "shameful."

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that Border Patrol is "following the law" that requires the government to provide adequate food, specifically formula for children under the age of one, who are detained at the border.

GOP political consultants nonetheless call it a ready-made issue that resonates with voters.

"It's just another one of those consumer issues that pop up from time to time that are very easy for people understand," said Matt Mackowiak, a Republican strategist based in Texas. "They've got to figure out a solution and they've got to do it soon."

In Washington, lawmakers are responding to the shortage by scheduling hearings and demanding information from the FDA and formula makers as part of sweeping investigations. Democratic leaders of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform wrote formula makers seeking information that includes what steps they are taking to increase supplies and prevent price gouging.

"The national formula shortage poses a threat to the health and economic security of infants and families in communities across the country—particularly those with less income who have historically experienced health inequities, including food insecurity," said a letter to Chris Calamari, the president of Abbott Nutrition.

The letter seeks all documents related to the closure of Abbott Nutrition's plant in Sturgis, Michigan. Abbott Nutrition recalled several major brands of powdered formula and shut down the factory when federal officials began investigating four babies who suffered bacterial infections after consuming formula from the facility.

Abbott is one of only a handful of companies that produce the vast majority of the U.S. formula supply, so their recall wiped out a large segment of the market.

Democrats are framing the shortage as an example of how Americans are harmed when a few big com-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 37 of 75

panies control the market. But like inflation or high gas prices, their challenge is explaining the contributing factors to the public.

Sen. Mark Kelly of Arizona, one of the most vulnerable Democrats up for reelection this year, said the supply chain problems with formula, microchips, gasoline and other products have complex roots, many that stretch back to the pandemic.

"It's up for us in Congress to address these, to try to figure out where to go, how do we overcome these bottlenecks in the supply chains," Kelly said. "But not because of an election. Because this affects people's lives."

Israeli police beat pallbearers at journalist's funeral

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli riot police on Friday pushed and beat pallbearers at the funeral for slain Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, causing them to briefly drop the casket in a shocking start to a procession that turned into perhaps the largest display of Palestinian nationalism in Jerusalem in a generation.

The scenes of violence were likely to add to the sense of grief and outrage across the Arab world that has followed the death of Abu Akleh, who witnesses say was killed by Israeli troops Wednesday during a raid in the occupied West Bank. They also illustrated the deep sensitivities over east Jerusalem — which is claimed by both Israel and the Palestinians and has sparked repeated rounds of violence.

Abu Akleh, 51, was a household name across the Arab world, synonymous with Al Jazeera's coverage of life under Israeli rule, which is well into its sixth decade with no end in sight. A 25-year veteran of the satellite channel, she was revered by Palestinians as a local hero.

Late Friday, the Palestinian public prosecutor said preliminary findings show Abu Akleh was killed by deliberate fire from Israeli troops. The prosecutor said the investigation would continue. Israel's military said earlier Friday that she was killed during an exchange of fire with Palestinian militants, and that it could determine the source of the shot that killed her.

At the funeral, thousands of people, many waving Palestinian flags and chanting: "Palestine! Palestine!" It was believed to be the largest Palestinian funeral in Jerusalem since Faisal Hussein, a Palestinian leader and scion of a prominent family, died in 2001.

Ahead of the burial, a large crowd gathered to escort her casket from an east Jerusalem hospital to a Catholic church in the nearby Old City. Many of the mourners held Palestinian flags, and the crowd began shouting, "We sacrifice our soul and blood for you, Shireen."

Shortly after, Israel police moved in, pushing and clubbing mourners. As the helmeted riot police approached, they hit pallbearers, causing one man to lose control of the casket as it dropped toward the ground. Police ripped Palestinian flags out of people's hands and fired stun grenades to disperse the crowd.

Abu Akleh's brother, Tony, said the scenes "prove that Shireen's reports and honest words ... had a powerful impact."

Al Jazeera correspondent Givara Budeiri said the police crackdown was like killing Abu Akleh again. "It seems her voice isn't silent," she said during a report.

East Jerusalem, home to the city's most important Jewish, Muslim and Christian holy sites, was captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war. It claims all of the city as its eternal capital and has annexed the eastern sector in a move that is not internationally recognized.

The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of a future independent state. Israel routinely clamps down on any displays of support for Palestinian statehood. The conflicting claims to east Jerusalem often spill over into violence, helping fuel an 11-day war between Israel and Gaza militants last year and more recently sparking weeks of unrest at the city's most sensitive holy site.

Outside of prayers at the Al Aqsa Mosque, Israel rarely allows large Palestinian gatherings in east Jerusalem and routinely clamps down on any displays of support for Palestinian statehood.

Police said the crowd at the hospital was chanting "nationalist incitement," ignored calls to stop and threw stones at them. "The policemen were forced to act," police said. They issued a video in which a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 38 of 75

commander outside the hospital warns the crowd that police will come in if they don't stop their incitement and "nationalist songs."

Shortly before midnight, the Israeli police issued a second statement claiming that they had coordinated plans with the family for the casket to be placed in a vehicle, but that a "mob threatened the driver of the hearse and then proceeded to carry the coffin on an unplanned procession." It said police intervened "so that the funeral could proceed as planned in accordance with the wishes of the family."

The police claims could not be immediately verified. Earlier this week, Abu Akleh's brother had said the original plans were to move the casket in a hearse from the hospital to the church, and that after the service, it would be carried through the streets to the cemetery.

Al Jazeera said in a statement that the police action "violates all international norms and rights."

"Israeli occupation forces attacked those mourning the late Shireen Abu Akhleh after storming the French hospital in Jerusalem, where they severely beat the pallbearers," it said. The network added that it remains committed to covering the news and will not be deterred.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki called the images "deeply disturbing."

The focus should be "marking the memory of a remarkable journalist who lost her life," Psaki said. "We regret the intrusion into what should have been a peaceful procession."

During a Rose Garden event, U.S. President Joe Biden was asked whether he condemns the Israeli police actions at the funeral, and he replied: "I don't know all the details, but I know it has to be investigated."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "was deeply disturbed by the confrontations between Israeli security forces and Palestinians gathered at St. Joseph Hospital, and the behavior of some police present at the scene," according to a statement from his deputy spokesman, Farhan Haq.

Israeli police eventually escorted the casket in a black van, ripping Palestinian flags off the vehicle as it made its way to the church.

"We die for Palestine to live!" crowds chanted. "Our beloved home!"

Later, they sang the Palestinian national anthem and chanted "Palestine, Palestine!" before her body was buried in a cemetery outside the Old City.

Her grave was decorated with a Palestinian flag and flowers. The Palestinian ambassador to the U.K., Husam Zomlot, and Al Jazeera's bureau chief, Walid Al-Omari, placed flowers on the grave.

Salah Zuheika, a 70-year-old Palestinian, called Abu Akleh "the daughter of Jerusalem," and said the huge crowds were a "reward" for her love of the city.

"We already miss her, but what had happened today in the city will not be forgotten," he said.

Abu Akleh was a member of the small Palestinian Christian community in the Holy Land. Palestinian Christians and Muslims marched alongside one another Friday in a show of unity.

She was shot in the head Wednesday morning during an Israeli military raid in the West Bank town of Jenin.

In preliminary findings released late Friday, the Palestinian public prosecutor disputed the military's claim that Abu Akleh was caught in crossfire. The prosecutor said that at the time she was shot, Israeli troops were the only ones firing, with the nearest forces about 150 meters (yards) away.

The report said Abu Akleh was shot deliberately, citing traces on the tree next to where she was hit which, the prosecutor argued, indicated that the shots were fired directly at her. It said the shooting continued after she was hit, hindering first aid attempts.

Earlier Friday, the Israeli military said it could not determine who was responsible for her death without a ballistic analysis.

"The conclusion of the interim investigation is that it is not possible to determine the source of the fire that hit and killed the reporter," the military said.

Israel has called for a joint investigation with the Palestinian Authority and for it to hand over the bullet for forensic analysis to determine who fired the fatal round. The PA has refused, saying it will conduct its own investigation and send the results to the International Criminal Court, which is already investigating possible Israeli war crimes.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 39 of 75

Reporters who were with Abu Akleh, including one who was shot and wounded, said there were no clashes or militants in the immediate area. All of them were wearing protective equipment that clearly identified them as reporters.

The PA and Al Jazeera, which has long had a strained relationship with Israel, have accused Israel of deliberately killing Abu Akleh. Israel denies the accusations.

Rights groups say Israel rarely follows through on investigations into the killing of Palestinians by its security forces and hands down lenient punishments on the rare occasions when it does. This case, however, drew heavy scrutiny because Abu Akleh was well-known and also a U.S. citizen.

Palestinians from in and around Jenin have carried out deadly attacks in Israel in recent weeks, and Israel has launched near daily arrest raids in the area, often igniting gunbattles with militants.

Israeli troops pushed into Jenin again early Friday, sparking renewed fighting.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said 13 Palestinians were wounded. The Israeli military said that Palestinians opened fire when its forces went in to arrest suspected militants. Police said a 47-year-old member of a special Israeli commando unit was killed.

House subpoenas its own, sets new norm after Jan. 6 attack

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Jan. 6 committee's remarkable decision to subpoena House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and other congressional Republicans over the insurrection at the Capitol is as rare as the deadly riot itself, deepening the acrimony and distrust among lawmakers and raising questions about what comes next.

The outcome is certain to reverberate beyond the immediate investigation of Donald Trump's unfounded efforts to overturn Joe Biden's presidential election victory. Fuming Republicans vow to use the same tools, weaponizing congressional subpoena powers if they wrest control of the House in November's midterm elections to go after Democrats, even at the highest levels in Congress.

"It's setting a very jarring and dangerous precedent," said Rep. Peter Meijer of Michigan, who was among the handful of Republicans who voted to impeach Trump over the insurrection.

On Friday, the subpoenas for McCarthy and the four other Republican lawmakers were served as the committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol is wrapping up its initial phase. Public hearings are expected to begin in June, and the panel is still determining whether to call Republican senators to testify.

While the summons for McCarthy and the other Republican lawmakers was not wholly unexpected, it amplified concerns over the new norm-setting in Congress.

McCarthy, in line to become House speaker, brushed past reporters Friday, declining to say whether he would comply with the committee's summons for testimony. Asked repeatedly for comment, McCarthy was mum.

The other Republicans — Andy Biggs of Arizona, Mo Brooks of Alabama, Jim Jordan of Ohio and Scott Perry of Pennsylvania — have decried the investigation as illegitimate, and it is unclear whether any of them will comply. The four all had conversations with the Trump White House about challenging the election, and McCarthy tried unsuccessfully to convince Trump to call off the Capitol siege that day as rioters broke windows near his own office.

"They have a duty to testify," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

"I mean, we're investigating an insurrection against the United States government," Nadler said. "An insurrection. Treason."

The next steps are highly uncertain as the House, with its Democratic majority, weighs whether to take the grave, if unlikely, action of holding its own colleagues in contempt of Congress by voting to send a criminal referral to the Department of Justice for prosecution.

While other lawmakers have voluntarily come forward to talk to the committee, a move to force the subpoenaed members to share information would be certain to become tangled in broader constitutional

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 40 of 75

questions — among them, whether the executive branch should be intervening in the governance of the legislative branch that tends to make its own rules. Action would drag for months, or longer.

Instead, the House could take other actions, including a vote of public censure of McCarthy and the four GOP lawmakers, a referral to the Ethics Committee, the imposition of fines or even the stripping of their committee assignments.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declined to answer any questions Friday.

"I don't talk about what happens in the Jan. 6 committee," she said in the halls, deferring to the panel as she typically does.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., who chairs the bipartisan Jan. 6 panel, said it has options after the five GOP lawmakers refused its request for voluntary interviews and now face the summons.

"Look, all we're saying is, these are members of Congress who've taken an oath," he said. "Our investigation indicated that January 6 did actually happen, and what people saw with their own eyes did, in fact, happen."

It's a volatile time for Congress, with an intensified political toxicity settling into a new normal since the Capitol insurrection left five dead. That included a Trump supporter shot by police and a police officer who died later after battling the mob.

The Capitol is slowly reopening to tourists this spring after being shuttered over security concerns and the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, but unease remains. Tensions run high and at least one lawmaker on the panel, Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., a vocal Trump critic, is flanked daily by security guards, a jarring sign of how America has changed.

Trump's influence over the Republican Party remains strong, leaving many GOP lawmakers unwilling to publicly accept Biden's election victory, some promulgating their own false claims of a fraudulent 2020 election. Courts across the nation have rejected claims the election was rigged.

If Republicans win power this fall, they are almost certain to launch investigations into Biden, Jan. 6 and other topics, now armed with the tool of subpoenas for fellow lawmakers.

"It's a race to the bottom, is what it is," said Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., who won Trump's endorsement last week for his own reelection, despite having sparred with him in the past.

"I mean, I hope when we get in power, we don't do the same things that they're doing," he said. "But you know, turnabout is fair play."

While Democratic leaders say they would happily testify if summoned by newly empowered Republicans next year, more rank-and-file lawmakers privately express unease with what comes next, worried about being drawn into the fray.

Congress issuing a subpoena to one of its own would be rare, but not a first.

The ethics committees have subpoenaed individual lawmakers over potential wrongdoing. That includes the Senate voting in 1993 to subpoena the diary of Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., during an investigation into allegations of sexual harassment. Facing expulsion, he resigned first.

But traditionally, congressional subpoenas are pointed outward. Shortly after the country's founding the first congressional subpoena was issued not to a lawmaker but to a real estate speculator who tried to purchase what is now Michigan and attempted to bribe members of Congress, according to the House history website.

The Jan. 6 panel has wrestled privately for weeks over whether to subpoena fellow lawmakers, understanding the gravity of the action it would be taking.

Once the members of the committee made their choice to issue the subpoenas, Pelosi was informed of their decision.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the panel, suggested the decision was justified based on the seriousness of the Jan. 6 attack.

"People have asked, 'Does this set a precedent for the issuance of subpoenas for members of Congress in the future?' If there are coups and insurrections, then I suppose that it does," Raskin said.

Tatum's huge effort helps Celtics win 108-95 to force Game 7

By STEVE MEGARGEE AP Sports Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Jayson Tatum wouldn't let it happen again.

With the defending champion Milwaukee Bucks attempting to complete a fourth-quarter comeback for the second straight game and close out their Eastern Conference semifinal, Tatum made sure the Boston Celtics instead kept their season alive and forced a decisive seventh game.

Tatum scored 46 points and the Celtics withstood a brilliant performance from Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo to win 108-95 on Friday night, the third straight victory for a road team in this thrilling series.

"I wasn't going to leave anything out there and have any regrets," Tatum said. "Just trying to do what it took."

After the Bucks reduced a 14-point deficit to four with just under 9 minutes left, Tatum took over the game. He scored 16 of Boston's 26 fourth-quarter points.

"He was unbelievable," said Antetokounmpo, who was pretty extraordinary in his own right with 44 points, 20 rebounds and six assists.

Tatum's effort set up a winner-take-all matchup Sunday in Boston. The victor heads to Miami to begin an East finals matchup with the top-seeded Heat on Tuesday.

"I don't think anybody's won two games in a row in this series," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "Now, it's the finality. You've got to go and find a way to get that fourth win and win the series. I think everybody in sport looks for that game. That college feel. That NCAA feel, where if you lose your season's done, if you win, you keep going. It's exciting."

The Bucks had won all eight of their potential series clinchers in Budenholzer's four-year tenure before Friday. This marked the first time the Bucks had lost a possible clincher since a Game 7 defeat at Boston in a 2018 first-round series.

Boston showed its grit by bouncing back two nights after blowing a 14-point, fourth-quarter lead in a 110-107 Game 5 home loss. The Bucks tried to rally again after trailing by 14 in the final period, but this time the Celtics stayed in front.

"Tonight will be the first night since that game that I'll get some sleep," said Marcus Smart, who had 21 points, seven assists and no turnovers.

Jaylen Brown added 22 points for the Celtics, who capitalized on their superiority from 3-point range. The Celtics were 17 of 43 and the Bucks 7 of 27 from beyond the arc.

Antetokounmpo tried to lead the Bucks to a second straight improbable comeback.

Boston led 84-70 in the opening minute of the fourth quarter and was up 84-73 when officials ruled Grant Williams had drawn a charge for Antetokounmpo's fifth foul. But the Bucks challenged the call and it was overturned on replay, instead sending Antetokounmpo to the line with four fouls.

Antetokounmpo made both free throws to start an 8-0 run that got the Bucks back into the game. The Bucks trimmed the margin to 85-81 on Antetokounmpo's 3-pointer with 8:42 left.

Tatum said he was thinking about that Game 5 collapse as the Bucks started to rally. He wanted to make sure the Bucks didn't win the 50-50 balls and dominate the glass the way they did down the stretch on Wednesday.

"They were tougher than us in that fourth quarter of Game 5," Tatum said. "That was in the back of my mind. That was in the back of everybody's mind, that we couldn't get beat on those kind of plays. Our season was on the line."

Tatum wouldn't let the Bucks get any closer.

After that 8-0 Bucks spurt, Tatum scored the Celtics' next 11 points. That included a fadeaway jumper as the shot clock expired to get the lead back to six plus a couple of 3-pointers.

"He went into another mode right there," Smart said. "We'd seen it in his eyes."

Tatum and Brown each hit a 3-pointer during an 8-0 spurt that closed with Smart's jumper that made it 100-87 with 4:20 remaining.

Boston maintained a double-digit edge the rest of the way.

"We had the right resolve," Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. "We talked about it after that game. We let

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 42 of 75

an opportunity slip away (Wednesday) but we still had a chance to make it a better story, I guess."

MISSING PLAYERS

The Celtics played without forward/center Robert Williams for a third straight game. Udoka said Williams suffered a bone bruise in his left knee while colliding with Antetokounmpo in Game 3.

Milwaukee was missing three-time All-Star forward Khris Middleton for a ninth consecutive game. Middleton sprained the medial collateral ligament in his left knee during Game 2 of the Bucks' first-round series with the Chicago Bulls.

GAME 7 HISTORY

The Celtics own a 24-9 Game 7 record, while the Bucks are just 3-8.

But the Bucks can lean on some recent successful history in winner-take-all games. Their title run last year included a Game 7 overtime victory at Brooklyn in the East semifinals.

TIP-INS

Celtics: Tatum has scored at least 30 points in three straight games. ... After going a combined 5 of 27 on 3-point attempts in Games 3-5, Tatum was 7 of 15 on Friday. ... The Celtics were 10 of 17 from 3-point range in the game's first 14 1/2 minutes.

Bucks: Antetokounmpo, Jrue Holiday (17) and Pat Connaughton (14) combined for 75 of the Bucks' 95 points. The other Bucks shot a combined 9 of 33 overall and 0 of 13 from 3-point range. ... Antetokounmpo was 14 of 15 on free-throw attempts. ... A moment of silence was held before the game to honor Hall of Famer Bob Lanier, who died Tuesday at the age of 73. Lanier played for the Bucks from 1980-84, and his No. 16 jersey hangs from the Fiserv Forum rafters.

CREW CHIEF CHANGE

Scott Foster, the scheduled crew chief for Game 6, couldn't officiate because of an illness unrelated to COVID-19. Eric Lewis took over as crew chief with Ben Taylor working as the referee and Tre Maddox as the umpire.

Actor Fred Ward, of 'Tremors,' 'The Right Stuff' fame, dies

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fred Ward, a veteran actor who brought a gruff tenderness to tough-guy roles in such films as "The Right Stuff," "The Player" and "Tremors," has died. He was 79.

Ward died Sunday, his publicist Ron Hofmann said Friday. No cause or place of death was disclosed per the family's wishes.

Ward earned a Golden Globe and shared the Venice Film Festival ensemble prize for his performance in Robert Altman's "Short Cuts," and played the title character in "Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins." He also reached new heights playing Mercury 7 astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom in 1983's Academy Award-nominated film "The Right Stuff."

"Devastated to learn about the passing of my friend, Fred Ward," tweeted actor Matthew Modine, who co-starred with Ward in "Short Cuts" and Alan Rudolph's "Equinox." "A tough façade covering emotions as deep as the Pacific Ocean. Godspeed amigo."

A former boxer, lumberjack in Alaska and short-order cook who served in the U.S. Air Force, Ward was a San Diego native who was part Cherokee. One early big role was alongside Clint Eastwood in 1979's "Escape From Alcatraz."

"I mourn the loss of Fred Ward, who was so kind to me when we worked together on 'Remo Williams,'" actor Kate Mulgrew tweeted. "Decent and modest and utterly professional, he disarmed with a smile that was at once warm and mischievous."

Ward's other roles included a rumpled cop chasing a psychotic criminal played by Alec Baldwin in George Armitage's "Miami Blues." He was a formidable and intimidating father to both Freddie Prinze Jr.'s character in "Summer Catch" and David Spade's title character in "Joe Dirt."

Ward played President Ronald Reagan in the 2009 Cold War espionage thriller "Farewell" and had a supporting role in the 2013 action flick "2 Guns," starring Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 43 of 75

In the horror-comedy "Tremors," Ward paired with Kevin Bacon to play a pair of repairmen who end up saving a hardscrabble Nevada desert community beset by giant underground snakes.

With the sexually charged, NC-17 "Henry & June," Ward showed more than just grit. Based on the book by Anais Nin and directed by Philip Kaufman, Ward played novelist Henry Miller, opposite Nin and his wife, June. "My rear end seemed to have something to do with (that rating)," he told The Washington Post.

He also reteamed with Altman for the part of a studio security chief in the director's 1992 Hollywood satire "The Player," and played a union activist and Meryl Streep's workmate in Mike Nichols' "Silkwood" in 1983.

Ward demonstrated his comedy chops playing a terrorist intent on blowing up the Academy Awards in "Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult" in 1994.

On the small screen, he had recurring roles on NBC's "ER" playing the father of Maura Tierney's Abby Lockhart in 2006-2007 and guest starred on such series as "Grey's Anatomy," "Leverage" and "United States of Tara." Ward most recently appeared in the second season of HBO's "True Detective" as the retired cop father of Colin Farrell's Detective Ray Velcoro.

Ward is survived by his wife of 27 years, Marie-France Ward and his son, Django Ward.

Dallas police: Shooting at Koreatown salon may be hate crime

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas' police chief said Friday that a shooting that injured three women in a hair salon in the city's Koreatown might have been a hate crime as he announced that it could be connected to two other shootings at businesses run by Asian Americans.

Chief Eddie Garcia had previously said police didn't have any indication the shooting Wednesday at Hair World Salon was motivated by hate, but he said that had changed as of Friday afternoon.

"The possibility that we are dealing with a violent gunman who is motivated by hate is chilling and deeply disturbing," Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson said in a statement Friday.

Authorities are still searching for a man dressed all in black who opened fire at the salon, then drove off in a maroon minivan. Garcia said investigators found that a similar vehicle was reported to be involved in two other recent shootings, including an April 2 drive-by in the area where the salon is located. No one was injured in either of those shootings.

"We are turning to every resident of the city of Dallas to keep an eye out and safeguard our city," Garcia said. "Hate has no place here."

"We need to get this person in custody," Garcia said.

He said the vehicle was also linked to a drive-by shooting on Tuesday about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southeast of the shopping center where Wednesday's shooting happened.

Garcia said police would be increasing patrols, and they were reaching out to other police departments in North Texas to see if there have been any similar incidents in their area. He said Dallas police have also reached out to the FBI to let them know of the possible connection.

The three women who were shot at the salon were taken to a hospital with injuries that weren't life-threatening.

The daughter of one of the injured women said her mother told her that the man, whom she didn't recognize, calmly walked in, opened fire and left.

John Jun, a founding member of the Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of the Korean American Coalition, said he'd hoped that the shooting at the salon was an isolated incident.

"Now we're a little more concerned because it seems like they are targeting for sure Asian Americans and most likely Korean American businesses in the area," Jun said.

He said the salon is in the heart of Koreatown, which is in a part of the city that was transformed in the 1980s from an industrial area to a thriving district with shopping, dining, markets, medical offices and salons.

"The people are obviously shaken and they are on the edge right now," Jun said.

Anti-Asian violence has risen sharply in recent years. Last year, six women of Asian descent were among the eight killed in a shooting at massage businesses in and near Atlanta, heightening anger and fear among Asian Americans.

Russia takes losses in failed river crossing, officials say

By OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI and DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces suffered heavy losses in a Ukrainian attack that destroyed a pontoon bridge they were using to try to cross a river in the east, Ukrainian and British officials said in another sign of Moscow's struggle to salvage a war gone awry.

Ukrainian authorities, meanwhile, opened the first war crimes trial of the conflict Friday. The defendant, a captured Russian soldier, stands accused of shooting to death a 62-year-old civilian in the early days of the war.

The trial got underway as Russia's offensive in the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, seemed to turn increasingly into a grinding war of attrition.

Ukraine's airborne command released photos and video of what it said was a damaged Russian pontoon bridge over the Siversky Donets River in Bilohorivka and several destroyed or damaged Russian military vehicles nearby — the Ukrainians said they destroyed at least 73 tanks and other military equipment during the two-day battle earlier this week. The command said its troops "drowned the Russian occupiers."

Britain's Defense Ministry said Russia lost "significant armored maneuver elements" of at least one battalion tactical group in the attack. A Russian battalion tactical group consists of about 1,000 troops.

"Conducting river crossings in a contested environment is a highly risky maneuver and speaks to the pressure the Russian commanders are under to make progress in their operations in eastern Ukraine," the ministry said in its daily intelligence update.

In other developments, a move by Finland and, potentially, Sweden to join NATO was thrown into question when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country is "not of a favorable opinion" toward the idea. He accused Sweden and other Scandinavian countries of supporting Kurdish militants and others Turkey considers terrorists.

Erdogan did not say outright that he would block the two nations from joining NATO. But the military alliance makes its decisions by consensus, meaning that each of its 30 member countries has a veto over who can join.

An expansion of NATO would be a blow to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who undertook the war in what he said was a bid to thwart the alliance's eastward advance. But in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine, other countries along Russia's flank fear they could be next.

With Ukraine pleading for more arms to fend off the invasion, the European Union's foreign affairs chief announced plans to give Kyiv an additional 500 million euros (\$520 million) to buy heavy weapons.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov welcomed the heavy weapons making their way to the front lines but admitted there is no quick end to the war in sight.

"We are entering a new, long-term phase of the war," he wrote in a Facebook post. "Extremely difficult weeks await us. How many there will be? No one can say for sure."

The battle for the Donbas has turned into a village-by-village, back-and-forth slog with no major breakthroughs on either side and little ground gained. In his nightly address Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said no one can predict how long the war will last but that his country's forces have been making progress, including retaking six Ukrainian towns or villages in the past day.

Fierce fighting has been taking place on the Siversky Donets River near the city of Severodonetsk, said Oleh Zhdanov, an independent Ukrainian military analyst. The Ukrainian military has launched counterattacks but has failed to halt Russia's advance, he said.

"The fate of a large portion of the Ukrainian army is being decided — there are about 40,000 Ukrainian soldiers," he said.

The Ukrainian military chief for the Luhansk region of the Donbas said Friday that Russian forces opened fire 31 times on residential areas the day before, destroying dozens of homes, notably in Hirske and Popasnianska villages. He said Russian troops have taken nearly full control of Rubizhne, a city with a prewar population of around 55,000.

In the ruined southern port of Mariupol, Ukrainian fighters holed up in a steel plant faced continued

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 45 of 75

Russian attacks on the last stronghold of resistance in the city. Sviatoslav Palamar, deputy commander of Ukraine's Azov Regiment, said his troops will hold out "as long as they can" despite shortages of ammunition, food, water and medicine.

Justin Crump, a former British tank commander who is now a security consultant, said Moscow's losses have forced it to downsize its objectives in Ukraine. He said the Russians have had to use hastily patched-together units that haven't trained together.

"This is not going to be quick. So we're settled in for a summer of fighting at least. I think the Russian side is very clear that this is going to take a long time," he said.

In the first war crimes case brought to trial, Russian Sgt. Vadim Shyshimarin, 21, could get life in prison if convicted of shooting a Ukrainian man in the head through an open car window in a village in the north-eastern Sumy region on Feb. 28, four days into the invasion.

Ukrainian Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova said she is readying war crimes cases against 41 Russian soldiers for offenses including bombing civilian infrastructure, killing civilians, rape and looting. It was not immediately clear how many of the suspects are in Ukrainian hands and how many would be tried in absentia.

In a small Kyiv courtroom, scores of journalists witnessed the start of the wartime proceedings, which will be closely watched by international observers to make sure the trial is fair.

The defendant, dressed in a blue and gray hoodie and gray sweatpants, sat in a small glass cage during the proceedings, which lasted about 15 minutes and will resume on Wednesday.

Shyshimarin was asked a series of questions, including whether he understood his rights and whether he wanted a jury trial. He declined the latter.

His Ukraine-assigned attorney, Victor Ovsyanikov, has acknowledged that the case against Shyshimarin is strong and has not indicated what the soldier's defense will be.

Shyshimarin, a member of a tank unit that was captured by Ukrainian forces, admitted that he shot the civilian in a video posted by the Security Service of Ukraine, saying he was ordered to do so.

As the war grinds on, teachers are trying to restore some sense of normalcy after the fighting shuttered Ukraine's schools and upended the lives of millions of children.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, lessons are being given in a subway station that has become home for many families. Children joined their teacher Valeriy Leiko around a table to learn about history and art, with youngsters' drawings lining the walls.

"It helps to support them mentally. Because now there is a war, and many lost their homes. ... Some people's parents are fighting now," Leiko said. In part because of the lessons, he said, "they feel that someone loves them."

An older student, Anna Fedoryaka, monitored a professor's online lectures on Ukrainian literature, admitting: "It is hard to concentrate when you have to do your homework with explosions by your window."

Records: 2 people in execution knew drugs hadn't been tested

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — At least two people connected to a Tennessee execution that was abruptly put on hold last month knew the night before that the lethal injection drugs the state planned to use hadn't undergone some required testing, newly released records show.

Citing an "oversight," Gov. Bill Lee had called off the execution of 72-year-old Oscar Smith barely an hour before the planned lethal injection April 21 for Smith's conviction in the 1989 killings of his estranged wife and her two teenage sons. The governor's office later disclosed that the drugs had not been tested for endotoxins.

The Republican governor's administration declined to release much information, saying the issue was "technical." Instead, Lee recently appointed a former U.S. attorney to lead an independent investigation and also paused four other executions scheduled this year.

On April 21, there were no signs the lethal injection would not take place until about an hour before-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 46 of 75

hand, when the governor's office issued a news release calling it off. Just before learning of his reprieve, Smith had received communion from his spiritual adviser, who was going to be allowed in the execution chamber. He had eaten a last meal, and media witnesses and relatives of the families were gathered and waiting. The U.S. Supreme Court had also denied Smith's last-hour bid for a stay.

On Friday, the Department of Correction released 20 pages of heavily redacted emails and text messages to The Associated Press through a public records request.

In them, experts say testing was not performed for so-called endotoxins, which usually come from bacteria. Such testing is considered vital because it could be an indication of problems with the manufacture of the drugs. However, the endotoxins themselves likely wouldn't cause a problem in an execution setting because endotoxins typically are not immediately fatal, according to Frank Romanelli, professor of pharmacy at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy.

The Department of Correction declined to respond to questions surrounding when the state knew the execution drugs had not been properly tested.

"As you know the governor has announced an independent review of these matters which we fully support. We are unable to offer further information until the review is complete," said a spokesperson, Dorinda Carter, in a statement.

Tennessee's execution protocols require any compounded drugs to be independently tested for potency, sterility and endotoxins. It wasn't known from the records provided if the other testing had been conducted.

At last week's news conference announcing the independent investigation, Lee said the testing problem was noticed shortly before the execution was to have been carried out. The records provided to AP imply that some people knew almost a day before.

Almost all names, email addresses, phone numbers and any other identifiable information was removed from the records. Even the name of the governor's communication team, which is regularly distributed to media and the public, was stripped out. According to the correction agency's general counsel, the state redacted the names of those who had been, or may in the future, be directly involved in the execution process.

Tennessee uses a three-drug series to put inmates to death: midazolam, a sedative to render the inmate unconscious; vecuronium bromide, to paralyze the inmate; and potassium chloride, to stop the heart.

The records did contain a text exchange between two unidentified individuals whose names had been blacked out in the records, the night before Smith's scheduled execution starting at around 8 p.m. with one person asking for the lab results on the midazolam and potassium chloride.

The Department of Correction redacted the response, but when that same person asked for the results of the endotoxin test, the response from a separate person stated that it "isn't required" based on the amount they make.

"Sorry, I didn't have it tested," the text reads.

"It's been done on prior ones," the exchange states.

Later that morning, a separate text message asks if it would be possible to test for endotoxins on the day of the execution.

"Honestly doubt it," the response states.

Tennessee and many other states have passed exemptions to open records laws in recent years, shrouding the identity of drug suppliers and other information about executions in secrecy.

"The failure to ensure that the lethal injection chemicals were produced in accordance with .. standards is disturbing," said Smith's attorney Kelley Henry in an emailed statement. "Compounded high risk sterile injectables such as those used in the Tennessee lethal injection protocol are extremely risky."

Smith was sentenced to death for fatally stabbing and shooting estranged wife Judith Smith and her sons, Jason and Chad Burnett, at their Nashville home on Oct. 1, 1989. Tennessee had planned for five executions this year, including Smith's. It had been seeking to resume its quick, pre-pandemic pace of putting inmates to death.

Smith has maintained he is innocent. He earlier declined to choose between the electric chair and lethal

injection, Tennessee's two execution means, so lethal injection became the default method. An initial June 2020 execution date for Smith was delayed because of the pandemic.

Former national security adviser Robert McFarlane dies at 84

By BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former White House national security adviser Robert C. McFarlane, a top aide to President Ronald Reagan who pleaded guilty to charges for his role in an illegal arms-for-hostages deal known as the Iran-Contra affair, has died. He was 84.

McFarlane, who lived in Washington, died Thursday from complications of a previous illness at a hospital in Michigan, where he was visiting family, according to a family statement.

"As his family we wish to share our deep sadness at the loss of our beloved husband, father and grandfather, and note his profound impact on our lives," the family said in the statement. "Though recognized as a strategic political thinker, we remember him for his warmth, his wisdom, his deep belief in God, and his commitment to serving others."

McFarlane, a former Marine lieutenant colonel and Vietnam combat veteran, resigned his White House post in December 1985. He was later pressed into service by the administration as part of secret — and illegal — plan to sell arms to Iran in exchange for the freedom of Western hostages in the Middle East and pass along proceeds to the contra rebels in Nicaragua for their fight against the Marxist Sandinista government.

He played a major role in the affair, leading the secret delegation to Tehran, then as now a U.S. adversary, to open contact with so-called moderate Iranians who were thought to hold influence with kidnappers of American hostages. He brought with him a cake and a Bible signed by Reagan.

The scheme began to unfold after a cargo plane carrying a CIA-arranged shipment of arms was shot down in October 1986 by the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, setting off what eventually became one of the biggest modern political scandals.

McFarlane was rushed to a Washington-area hospital in February 1987 after taking an overdose of Valium the day before he was scheduled to testify before a presidential commission investigating the Iran-Contra scheme.

He pleaded guilty in March 1988 to four misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress. His lawyer said he was unfairly singled out because he, unlike other key figures, testified willingly before investigative panels. He also admitted his role.

"I did indeed withhold information from the Congress," he told reporters at the time. "I believe strongly that, throughout, my actions were motivated by what I believed to be in the foreign policy interest of the United States."

He was pardoned by President George H.W. Bush, along with five other figures from the scandal.

McFarlane, a career Marine known as "Bud" to his friends, had risen to lieutenant colonel and to positions in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He served as national security special assistant to Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford during their presidencies.

During the Carter administration, he was on the Republican staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He returned to the executive branch with Reagan's election, serving as a State Department counselor until moving to the White House as national security adviser William Clark's deputy in January 1982. He was appointed to the top national security post in 1983.

McFarlane, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, was the son of a former Democratic congressman from Texas, William Doddridge McFarlane, who served from 1932 to 1938. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, two daughters and a son.

US, Russian defense chiefs speak for 1st time since invasion

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu spoke with U.S. Defense Secretary

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 48 of 75

Lloyd Austin on Friday after months of refusing direct contact with his American counterpart. But officials said the call didn't appear to signal any change in Moscow's war in Ukraine.

A senior Defense Department official said Friday that while Austin believes the hour-long conversation was important in the effort to keep lines of communication open, it didn't resolve any "acute issues" or lead to any change in what the Russian are doing or saying as the war enters week 12.

The call — initiated by Austin — marked the highest level American contact with a Russian official since the war began in late February. Over the past several months, Pentagon officials have repeatedly said that Russian leaders declined to take calls from Austin and Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

This is the first conversation between Austin and Shoigu since Feb. 18, a week before the war started. Another senior official said Friday that Milley is expected to also reach out to his counterpart, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, Russian chief of the general staff.

In a statement, the Pentagon said that Austin "urged an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and emphasized the importance of maintaining lines of communication."

Several officials described the call as a positive step, but said there was no clear reason why the Russians decided to go ahead with the conversation Friday. The defense official said that the U.S. hopes it will serve as a springboard for future conversation and that it appeared that Austin's request for future communication was received. The official characterized the tenor of the call as "professional" but provided no other details on its content.

Direct communications between the U.S. and Russian defense and military leaders is considered crucial in order to avoid any misunderstandings or unwarranted escalation in hostilities. The U.S. and Russia have also set up a so-called deconfliction line that can be used by the militaries in the event of any emergency or perceived threat to NATO allies around Ukraine. It has not been used, but U.S. officials say that the Russians have answered the phone during tests to ensure it works.

U.S. and other Western officials have described Russia's fight in Ukraine, particularly the effort to wrest greater control over the eastern Donbas region as more than two weeks behind schedule, and failing to make consistent progress.

On Friday, Russian forces suffered heavy losses in a Ukrainian attack that destroyed a pontoon bridge they were using to try to cross a river in the east, in what Ukrainian, British and U.S. officials said is another sign of Moscow's struggle to salvage a war gone awry.

Ukraine's airborne command released photos and video of what it said was a damaged Russian pontoon bridge over the Siverskyi Donets River and several destroyed or damaged Russian military vehicles nearby. The command said its troops "drowned the Russian occupiers."

The battle for the Donbas, which has heated up since Russia's bid to take Kyiv failed, has become a daily grind, as towns and villages change hands.

Mickelson decides not to defend title at PGA Championship

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

Phil Mickelson withdrew Friday from the PGA Championship, electing to extend his hiatus from golf following his incendiary comments he made about a Saudi-funded rival league he supports and the PGA Tour he accused of greed.

Mickelson authored one of the most stunning victories last year when he won the PGA at Kiawah Island, at age 50 becoming the oldest champion in 161 years of the majors.

Now, the popular phrase from a decade ago — "What will Phil do next?" — carries more intrigue than sheer excitement.

The PGA of America announced his decision on social media. The PGA Championship starts Thursday at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Mickelson has not played since Feb. 6 at the Saudi International, where he accused the PGA Tour of "obnoxious greed" in an interview with Golf Digest.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 49 of 75

Two weeks later, in an excerpt from Alan Shipnuck's unauthorized biography to be released next week, Mickelson revealed how he had been working behind the scenes to promote the rival league funded by the Public Investment Fund and run by Greg Norman.

Mickelson dismissed Saudi Arabia's human rights atrocities, including the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, by saying it was worth it if it meant gaining leverage to get the changes he wanted on the PGA Tour.

Mickelson met the deadline to sign up for the PGA Championship on April 25, though his manager said it was more about keeping his options opened. He also entered the U.S. Open, and said he would ask for a conflicting event release to play the LIV Golf Invitational in London, the first of Norman's \$20 million tournaments.

The tour said earlier this week it would not grant any releases.

Mickelson is the first major champion not to defend his title since Rory McIlroy at St. Andrews in 2015 because of a knee injury from playing soccer.

He is only the third PGA champion not to defend his title in the last 75 years. Tiger Woods missed in 2008 while recovering from reconstructive knee surgery, and Ben Hogan couldn't play in 1949 while recovering from his car getting struck by a bus.

Mickelson's issues were self-inflicted.

"I personally think it's an unbelievable mental challenge to come back and play after what he's put himself through," six-time major champion and CBS analyst Nick Faldo said on Wednesday. "I don't think it's as easy as just getting back on the bike and arriving at a golf tournament and playing. The attention is going to be monumental."

Now the attention shifts to whether Mickelson will defy the tour by playing in London in three weeks, or if he would go to the U.S. Open, the only major he has never won.

His last time playing in America was at Torrey Pines on Jan. 28. He missed the cut.

Shipnuck's book is scheduled to be released on Tuesday. Among the excerpt he already has published on his "Firepit Collective" site included Mickelson saying he recruited players to pay attorneys to write the operating agreement of a new league.

"We know they killed Khashoggi and have a horrible record on human rights. They execute people over there for being gay. Knowing all of this, why would I even consider it? Because this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape how the PGA Tour operates," Mickelson said.

He referred to the PGA Tour and Commissioner Jay Monahan as a "dictatorship."

"I'm not sure I even want it to succeed," he said of the Saudi league. "But just the idea of it is allowing us to get things done with the tour."

Mickelson swiftly lost corporate sponsors such as KPMG and Amstel Light, while Workday said it would not be renewing its deal with him. Mickelson released a statement in which he described his comment as "reckless" and apologized for his choice of words.

Mickelson said in his statement he has felt pressure and stress affecting him at a deeper level over the last 10 years and he needs time away.

But he did not say if he would be taking a break from golf. He has not played since the Saudi International on Feb. 6. He is not playing this week. His statement concluded, "I know I have not been my best and desperately need some time away to prioritize the ones I love most and work on being the man I want to be."

"I know I have not been my best and desperately need some time away to prioritize the ones I love most and work on being the man I want to be," he said in February.

Mickelson was replaced in the field by former Masters champion Charl Schwartzel.

Fatal boat trip highlights Haitians fleeing violence

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Haitians are fleeing in greater numbers to the neighboring Dominican

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 50 of 75

Republic, where they board rickety wooden boats painted sky blue to blend with the ocean to try to reach Puerto Rico — a trip in which 11 Haitian women drowned this week, with dozens of other migrants believed missing.

It was the latest fatal trip as U.S. authorities said they have detained twice the number of migrants in and around U.S. jurisdictions in the Caribbean in the past year compared with a year earlier.

"We've seen our Haitian numbers explode," Scott Garrett, acting chief patrol agent for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Puerto Rico, told The Associated Press.

Garrett and others say Haiti's political instability, coupled with brutal gang violence and a crumbling economy, have prompted people to flee, with more doing so via the Dominican Republic. Both countries share the island of Hispaniola, which lies west of Puerto Rico, with a treacherous area known as the Mona Passage separating the two.

In the most recent capsizing, spotted on Thursday, 11 bodies of Haitian women were found and 38 people rescued — 36 of them Haitians and two from the Dominican Republic. Authorities say one of those rescued was charged with human smuggling. The boat capsized about 11 miles (18 kilometers) north of the uninhabited island of Desecheo, west of Puerto Rico. Dozens are believed missing.

Garrett said it's unclear exactly how many migrants were aboard the boat, but said survivors provided authorities with their own estimates. "The numbers we're hearing are somewhere between 60 and 75," he said.

The search continued Friday, with the U.S. Coast Guard scouring the open waters northwest of Puerto Rico via boat, plane and helicopter.

Rescue efforts began on Thursday after a U.S. Customs and Border Protection helicopter saw people clinging to the capsized boat, said U.S. Coast Guard spokesman Ricardo Castrodad, adding that crews worked through the night.

"We always look for the possibility of finding survivors," he said.

Authorities released images showing migrants desperately holding onto the boat in open waters as they awaited rescue. Once ashore, the migrants were escorted down a pier, with at least one wearing nothing but underwear. Some were taken to ambulances, and eight Haitians remained hospitalized on Friday.

The trips aboard rickety boats, known as yolas, which Garrett said often have only small motors to avoid detection, have long been the cheapest way for migrants to flee their country despite ongoing warnings about the danger. The smaller motors mean a longer trip, which in turn makes it more dangerous.

He said 30 to 40 migrants are usually on the boats, but those on board said nearly twice that number were on this one.

On Saturday, 68 migrants were rescued in the Mona Passage, and one woman, believed to be from Haiti, died. On May 7, Customs and Border Protection detained 60 Haitian migrants the agency said were smuggled through southwest Puerto Rico. On May 4, another 59 Haitian migrants were detained in northwest Puerto Rico. In late March, officials said they detained more than 120 migrants in three separate maritime smuggling incidents.

From October 2021 to March, 571 Haitians and 252 people from the Dominican Republic were detained in waters around Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Of the Haitians, 348 landed on Puerto Rico's uninhabited Mona Island and were rescued.

Tom Homan, who was acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement during much of the Trump administration, said the migrants in the latest incident may have gotten lost, taking them farther from the U.S. mainland, or they may have been trying to reach Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory where they can attempt to seek asylum. Both scenarios are common.

It's unusual to have so many women on board, he said, referring to the 11 who died.

"These migrants are placing their lives in the hands of people that don't see them as people," Garrett said. "They see the migrants as commodities to be traded and to make money off of."

Pierre Espérance, executive director of the Haitian National Human Rights Defense Network, said he expects the trips to continue despite ongoing warnings about the danger.

"It's more risky for Haitian people to stay in Haiti than to try to leave Haiti to have a better life," he said. A United Nations report noted that kidnappings in the country of more than 11 million people have increased 180% and homicides are up 17% in the past year. Dozens of people, including women and children, have been killed in recent weeks amid new clashes between gangs fighting over territory as their power grows following the July 7 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. The United Nations said last week that civilians are being burned alive and that children as young as 10 are being gang raped.

Haiti also has been hit with double-digit inflation, severe gas shortages and gang violence that has shuttered hundreds of schools and businesses and prompted some hospitals and clinics to temporarily close. In addition, the Biden administration has deported more than 20,000 Haitians in recent months amid heavy criticism given the country's downward spiral.

"Even if it's dangerous to get into a boat, it's more dangerous for people to stay in Haiti," Espérance said. "There is no rule of law in Haiti."

Sandy Hook lawsuits against Alex Jones on track to resume

VICTORIA, Texas (AP) — The Sandy Hook families' lawsuits against Infowars host and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones for calling the 2012 Newtown school shooting a hoax appear poised to resume soon, based on agreements revealed Friday in the bankruptcy cases of some of Jones' companies.

The bankruptcy filings of Infowars, Prison Planet TV and IW Health last month delayed the lawsuits filed in Texas and Connecticut. Jones has already lost the defamation lawsuits, and the filings came a week before a jury in Texas was set to begin considering how much money Jones should pay the families of victims in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

On Friday, lawyers in the bankruptcy case said the families will be removed as creditors, and Infowars and Prison Planet TV will be removed as defendants in the Texas and Connecticut defamation cases.

The state cases would then continue against Jones and his largest money-making company, Free Speech Systems, neither of which filed for bankruptcy. It was not immediately clear when those cases will resume.

The lawyers' comments came during a hearing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Texas. Kyung Lee, a lawyer for Jones' companies, said the bankruptcy case will continue because they have other creditors.

A hearing, however, remains scheduled for May 27 on whether the bankruptcy case should be dismissed. The Sandy Hook families have questioned the legitimacy of the filings, saying they were meant only to delay the defamation lawsuits — claims Jones' lawyers deny.

The shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, killed 20 children and six educators.

The families of eight of the victims and an FBI agent who responded to school sued Jones, Infowars and others, saying they have been subjected to harassment and death threats from Jones' followers because of the hoax conspiracy. Jones has since said he believes the shooting did occur.

New York AG lawyer: Evidence could support action vs. Trump

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As a federal judge weighs Donald Trump's lawsuit seeking to halt a civil investigation into his business practices, a lawyer for the New York attorney general's office said Friday that evidence found throughout the three-year probe could support legal action against the former president, his company, or both.

The lawyer, Andrew Amer, said at a hearing in Trump's lawsuit against Attorney General Letitia James that "there's clearly been a substantial amount of evidence amassed that could support the filing of an enforcement proceeding," although a final determination on filing such an action has not been made.

Amer, a special litigation counsel in James' office, said the office is "nearing the end" of the civil investigation, which James has said uncovered evidence Trump's company misstated the value of assets like skyscrapers and golf courses on financial statements for more than a decade.

James could decide to bring a lawsuit and seek financial penalties against Trump or his company, or

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 52 of 75

even a ban on them being involved in certain types of businesses, as happened in January when a judge barred ex-drug company CEO Martin Shkreli from the pharmaceutical industry for life.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg has said that a parallel criminal investigation into Trump is continuing, although the term of a grand jury hearing evidence in that matter expired last month.

Mark Pomerantz, who was leading the criminal probe, said in a February resignation letter that he believed there was "evidence sufficient to establish Mr. Trump's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt" for falsifying financial statements.

Trump has denied wrongdoing. His lawyers contend James is using her civil investigation to gain access to information that could then be used against him in the criminal matter.

Trump's lawyer, seeking to halt the civil investigation, argued at Friday's hearing that James' probe is a politically motivated fishing expedition and that by targeting him, she is violating Trump's constitutional right to equal protection under the law.

Trump, a Republican, is seeking an injunction to stop the civil investigation. James, a Democrat, has filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit. U.S. District Judge Brenda Sannes said she would consider both requests and deliver a decision in writing. She did not give a timetable for a ruling.

Sannes listened to arguments from Amer and Trump lawyer Alina Habba for about an hour via video and asked probing questions about recent legal battles over subpoenas for Trump's testimony and evidence, and the role of federal courts intervening in a state matter.

Trump sued James in federal court in upstate New York in December after her office issued subpoenas requiring him and his two eldest children — Ivanka and Donald Trump Jr. — to answer questions under oath. A state appeals court heard arguments Wednesday as the Trumps seek to reverse a lower-court judge's ruling enforcing the subpoenas.

Habba argued at Friday's hearing that James was investigating Trump to make good on promises she made during her campaign for attorney general in 2018, using the office to harass him and his company with myriad subpoenas and evidence requests.

"We've produced millions and millions and millions of pages" of evidence, Habba told Sannes. "We keep getting subpoenas. They keep looking for things. If they don't find it, they look again."

Amer countered that the investigation is on solid legal ground, noting that the state judge overseeing legal fights over subpoenas issued by the attorney general's office has found there is a "sufficient basis for continuing its investigation."

James' office started investigating Trump in 2019 after his former personal lawyer Michael Cohen told Congress that Trump had a history of misrepresenting the value of assets to gain favorable loan terms and tax benefits. Amer said the probe, now "nearly concluded," has uncovered ample evidence that could support a civil enforcement action.

All of that, Amer said, "really shuts the door on any argument" by Trump's lawyers that the attorney general's office was proceeding in bad faith.

Habba also took issue with the way the investigation and state court battles over subpoenas for Trump's business records and testimony unfolded, telling Sannes: "We are sitting with our hands tied. We are simply dodging subpoenas at this point."

James' office and Trump's lawyers have made several agreements extending the deadline for a potential decision, writing in one court filing that doing so "is in their mutual benefit and interest." One agreement posted to the state court docket set an April 30 deadline, but Habba said Trump's lawyers recently agreed to another extension.

Trump's appeals could further delay the end of the probe. The mid-level state appeals court that heard arguments Wednesday in Trump's testimony fight isn't expected to take up his appeal of a recent contempt-of-court finding until the fall.

Judge Arthur Engoron agreed Wednesday to lift the contempt finding and a \$10,000-a-day fine for being slow to respond to James' subpoena for documents and other evidence if Trump meets certain conditions by May 20. Those include paying \$110,000 in fines racked up so far, and submitting paperwork detailing

efforts to search for the subpoenaed records and explaining his and his company's document retention policies.

Storm chasers face host of dangers beyond severe weather

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The deaths of four storm chasers in car crashes over the last two weeks have underscored the dangers of pursuing severe weather events as more people clog back roads and highways searching for a glimpse of a lightning bolt or tornado, meteorologists and chasers say.

Martha Llanos Rodriguez of Mexico City died Wednesday when a semitrailer plowed into her vehicle from behind on Interstate 90 in southwestern Minnesota. The car's driver, Diego Campos, told the Minneapolis Star Tribune that he and Rodriguez and two other weather experts had been chasing violent weather and were hit after he stopped for downed power lines on the road.

More people are hopping into their cars and racing off after storms, jamming up roads, running stop signs and paying more attention to the sky than traffic, said Marshall Shepherd, director of the atmospheric sciences program at the University of Georgia.

"There is such a volume of chasers out there on some storms sometimes that it creates potential traffic and other hazards," Shepherd said. "Seeing storms within their natural context has scientific and broader value so I am not anti-chasing, however, there are elements that have become a little wild, wild West-ish."

Popularized in the 1996 movie "Twister," storm chasing involves pursuing severe weather events such as electrical storms and tornadoes, often in cars or on foot.

Some are researchers looking to gather data, such as verifying computer models predicting storm behavior. Some are looking to get in touch with nature. Others are photographers. And still others are just looking for a rush, said Greg Tripoli, an atmospheric and oceanic sciences professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who taught a class on storm chasing.

"Seeing a tornado is a life-changing experience," Tripoli said. "You want to see one instead of just talking about them. It's really just one of the excitements of life. You've got to take chances and go out there and go after your passions. It's no different from rock-climbing or deep-sea diving."

The storms themselves present dangers to inexperienced chasers who get too close. They can get hit by debris, struck by lightning or worse. Tripoli said he decided to stop teaching his storm chaser class and taking students into the field in the early 1990s after university officials stopped insuring the trips.

Nature isn't the only threat. Storm chasers spend long hours on the road traveling from state to state like long-haul truckers, inviting fatigue. When they catch up to the storms, they can often keep their eyes on the skies instead of the road, sometimes with deadly consequences. Tripoli said he would warn students in his storm chaser class that the most likely way they would get hurt is in a car crash.

Three University of Oklahoma students were killed on April 30 after traveling to Kansas to chase a tornado. According to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, the students' car hydroplaned on the interstate in Tonkawa, about 85 miles (137 kilometers) north of Oklahoma City. They slid off and back onto the interstate before a semitrailer hit them.

The University of Oklahoma has a policy stating that anyone who chases storms does so at their own risk and that storm chasing isn't part of the school's meteorology curriculum.

The mother of one of the students, 19-year-old Gavin Short of Grayslake, Illinois, told WMAQ-TV that her son loved to chase storms.

"He loved it, and we were so happy for him," Beth Short said. "And it just, this is just the worst nightmare for us and two other sets of parents."

Chaser traffic jams are becoming more common, said Kelton Halbert, a University of Wisconsin atmospheric and oceanic sciences doctoral student. He said he's been chasing storms since he was 16 because he wants to feel closer to nature's beauty and verify his forecast modeling, mostly by taking video of storms' behavior.

"Unless you're with one of these research institutions, storm chasers don't have the ability to collect a

lot of hard data," he said. "For most ... it's the beauty, it's the photography and then obviously the thrill seekers and adrenaline seekers. You can have people tailgating you, people in the middle of the road. If you're in Texas, Oklahoma or Kansas on a high-risk day, yeah, you can see hundreds of them. Given the recent couple weeks, I've definitely felt more apprehensive. It brings back to the forefront that every time you do this you're taking a risk."

Wednesday's storm in the Upper Midwest left tens of thousands of homes and businesses without power into Thursday. More potentially severe weather was forecast into Thursday evening that could bring hail, high winds and tornadoes from the Dakotas and Minnesota into other parts of the Midwest, the Storm Prediction Center said.

Treasury: Russia war bolsters need to combat illicit finance

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Treasury Department laid out recommendations Friday for tightening laws to guard against money laundering and illicit threats to the U.S. financial system, citing the conduct of Russians backing the invasion of Ukraine as evidence of how loopholes are being exploited.

Treasury's 32-page strategy document outlines recommendations to close loopholes in anti-money laundering laws, combat the use of real estate for money laundering schemes and enhance information-sharing between the government and private sector financial firms.

"Illicit finance is a major national security threat and nowhere is that more apparent than in Russia's war against Ukraine, supported by decades of corruption by Russian elites," said Elizabeth Rosenberg, Treasury's assistant secretary for terrorist financing.

Sanctioned individuals and entities can remove identifying information from, or simply hide, their bank accounts, the department said. They can also use cryptocurrency to a limited degree or hide behind shell companies to evade financial sanctions.

"We need to close loopholes, work efficiently with international partners, and leverage new technologies to tackle the risks posed by corruption, an increase in domestic violent extremism and the abuse of virtual assets," Rosenberg said.

Every two years, Treasury releases a report with recommendations on how to close gaps that could facilitate terrorist and illicit finance. Russia's invasion of Ukraine "demonstrates that those seeking to undermine global security and stability are exploiting these same gaps," the report stated.

The department pointed to the number of sanctions imposed on people and entities due to the war and the potential for sanctioned individuals to evade sanctions. Earlier this month, Treasury barred individuals in the U.S. from providing accounting, legal and consulting services to anyone located in Russia.

The U.S. has worked closely with allied governments in Europe, Asia and elsewhere to impose thousands of sanctions on Russian elites, oligarchs and banks.

Earlier this year, Treasury, the Justice Department and other agencies convened a task force known as REPO — short for Russian Elites, Proxies and Oligarchs — to work with other countries to investigate and prosecute oligarchs and individuals allied with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Pricey tortillas: LatAm's poor struggle to afford staples

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ, MAURICIO SAVARESE and DANIEL POLITI Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — No item is more essential to Mexican dinner tables than the corn tortilla. But the burst of inflation that is engulfing Latin America and the rest of the world means that people like Alicia García, a cleaner at a restaurant in Mexico City, have had to cut back.

Months ago, García, 67, would buy a stack of tortillas weighing several kilograms to take home to her family every day. Now, her salary doesn't go so far, and she's limiting herself to just one kilogram (2.2 pounds).

"Everything has gone up here," she told The Associated Press while standing outside a tortilla shop. "How am I, earning minimum wage, supposed to afford it?"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 55 of 75

Just as inflation isn't limited to tortillas, whose prices in the capital have soared by one-third in the past year, Mexico is hardly alone. Latin America's sharpest price spike in a generation has left many widely consumed local products suddenly hard to attain. Ordinary people are reckoning with day-to-day life that has become a more painful struggle, without any relief in sight.

Countries had already been absorbing higher prices because of supply chain bottlenecks related to the COVID-19 pandemic and government stimulus programs. Then Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February sent fertilizer prices sharply higher, affecting the cost of agricultural products including corn. Global fuel prices jumped, too, making items transported by truck to cities from the countryside costlier.

In Chile, annual inflation was 10.5% in April, the first time in 28 years the index has hit double digits. Colombia's rate reached 9.2%, its highest level in more than two decades. In Argentina, whose consumers have coped with double-digit inflation for years, price increases reach 58%, the most in three decades.

In beef-crazy Buenos Aires, some households have started seeking alternatives to that staple.

"We never bought pork before; now, we buy it weekly and use it to make stew," Marcelo Gandulfo, a 56-year-old private security guard, said after leaving a butcher's shop in the middle-class neighborhood of Almagro. "It's quite a bit cheaper, so it makes a difference."

Last year, the average Argentine consumed less than 50 kilograms of beef for the first time since annual data were first collected in 1958, according to the Argentine Beef Promotion Institute. Over the past few months, prices have been "increasing a lot more than normal," said Daniel Candia, a 36-year-old butcher.

"I've been in this business for 16 years, and this is the first time I've seen anything like this," he said.

Latin America as a whole is suffering from "sudden price spikes for necessities," the World Bank's President David Malpass said during an online conference Thursday. He noted that energy, food and fertilizer prices are rising at a pace unseen in many years.

Across the world, central banks are raising interest rates to try to slow inflation. Brazil's central bank has undertaken one of the world's most aggressive rate-raising cycles as inflation has topped 12% — its fastest pace since 2003. Besides the factors that are stoking regional inflation, Brazil's agricultural products have become costlier because of drought and frost. The price of tomatoes, for example, has more than doubled in the past year.

Higher rates are a government's primary tool to fight high inflation. But jacking up rates carries the risk of weakening an economy so much as to cause a recession. Last year, the World Bank estimated that the region's economy grew 6.9% as it rebounded from the pandemic recession. This year, Malpass said, it's projected to grow only 2.3%.

"That's not enough to make progress on poverty reduction or social discontent," he added.

Brazilian newspapers are telling their readers which foods they can substitute for their usual products to help stretch family budgets further. But some items, like coffee, are irreplaceable — especially in the nation that produces more of it than any other in the world.

Ground coffee has become so expensive that shoplifters have started focusing their sights on it, said Leticia Batista, a cashier at a Sao Paulo supermarket.

"It breaks my heart, but I told many of them to give the powder back," Batista said in the upscale neighborhood of Pinheiros.

In her own humbler neighborhood, she said, the cost of coffee "is a big problem."

On the more upscale end of the java spectrum, Marcelo Ferrara, a 57-year-old engineer, used to enjoy a daily espresso at his local bakery. Its cost has shot up 33% since January, to 8 reais (\$1.60). So he's cut his intake to two each week.

"I just can't afford too many of these," Ferrara said as he gulped one down.

It has been decades since the region's countries simultaneously suffered soaring inflation. A key difference now is that the global economies are much more interconnected, said Alberto Ramos, head of Latin America macroeconomic research at Goldman Sachs.

"Interest rates will need to go up; otherwise, inflation will run wild and the problem will get even worse," Ramos said. "Governments cannot be afraid of using rates. It is a proven medicine to bring inflation down."

So far, though, higher rates aren't providing much hope that inflation will decline significantly in the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 56 of 75

near term. The International Monetary Fund last month projected that average inflation in the region, excluding Venezuela, will slow to 10% by year end. That's not much below the 11.6% rate registered at end-2021 and still more than twice the 4.4% expected for advanced economies, according to the IMF's World Economic Outlook.

"It will take at least a couple of years of relatively tight monetary policy to deal with this," Ramos said.

That means belt-tightening and going without some consumer staples, for now, is likely the new norm for the poorest members of society in the notoriously unequal region. More than one-quarter of Latin America's population lives in poverty — defined as living on less than \$5.50 a day — and that's expected to remain unchanged this year, according to a World Bank study published last month.

Sara Fragosa, a 63-year-old homemaker in Mexico City, didn't hide her anger at rising prices during an interview at one market's stall.

"Those who are the poorest are the worst off, while the rich only rise," said Fragosa, who said she has replaced her regular beef purchases with quinoa and oats.

"You're not used to it," she said, "but you don't have a choice."

Madison Cawthorn tries to survive primary as slip-ups mount

By GARY D. ROBERTSON Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Madison Cawthorn's prominent role as the youngest pro-Donald Trump agitator in Congress can rub people on the right and the left the wrong way in his North Carolina district.

That's made the 26-year-old culture warrior a social media political celebrity and successful fundraiser. He's near the top of the list of the former president's most vocal allies on Capitol Hill.

But a series of unforced political and personal errors has brought both the force of big-name state Republicans and traditional enemies to bear against Cawthorn's reelection bid. Some blunders have been headline-grabbing, like one that rankled GOP colleagues who believe he insinuated they were holding orgies and snorting cocaine. Others have been salacious, like recently released videos showing him in sexually suggestive poses.

But at home, the most consequential may have been when he decided to run for a different U.S. House seat, only to return to the mountainous 11th Congressional District that he now represents when redistricting litigation shifted the lines again.

The two top Republican leaders in the General Assembly have thrown their support to a Cawthorn rival — state Sen. Chuck Edwards, one of seven challengers in the May 17 primary. With Trump winning North Carolina twice and endorsing Cawthorn this year, his reelection in a Republican-leaning seat in a strong GOP year would have seemed likely.

Now, after just one term in office, the upstart congressman faces a tough primary challenge, with a difficult general election fight if he survives.

"I don't know what has happened to him, but I do know this: The people of western North Carolina have not been represented in Washington, D.C.," said Michele Woodhouse, who was once a Cawthorn ally but is now running against him.

U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., endorsed Edwards in the race in late March, saying, "Cawthorn has fallen well short of the most basic standards western North Carolina expects from their representatives." A super PAC aligned with Tillis is taking the unusual action of spending \$1.5 million in the district on mailers and TV ads, one of which calls Cawthorn a "reckless embarrassment" and "dishonest disaster."

Cawthorn is fighting back, accusing the Washington establishment and Tillis of trying to shut him down.

"I have never folded in Washington and the swamp hates me for it," he says in an ad. "They want someone who will make backroom deals to sell out our values and someone who will abandon America First principles."

The 11th District field became crowded with well-known or well-funded challengers after Cawthorn decided in the fall to run in another district closer to Charlotte under boundaries retooled during redistricting that would have made his path to reelection much easier.

But the statewide House map was struck down by state courts, and its reshaping ultimately forced

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 57 of 75

Cawthorn in late February to return to what is largely the 11th District he currently represents. Meanwhile, Edwards, Woodhouse and other Republicans had been running there for months.

"It's clear that his interest was to move somewhere else and seek a political career someplace else after we, including myself in this district, worked to get him elected," Edwards said in an interview. "He turned his back on us."

Cawthorn's campaign said he wasn't available for an interview. Campaign spokesperson Luke Ball wrote in an email that the congressman is "focused on moving forward, uniting the NC-11 GOP, and winning the November election, not relitigating the redistricting process."

Cawthorn infuriated his fellow Republicans in Congress when he alleged on a podcast that he had been invited to an orgy in Washington and that he had seen leaders in the movement to end drug addiction use cocaine. House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy reprimanded him publicly for the remarks.

He's been stopped by police three times since October — two in which he was cited for speeding and one for driving with a revoked license. He's been caught with guns at airport checkpoints twice in the past year, including two weeks ago. He called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a "thug" after Russia invaded the country.

"It was analogous to ripping Santa Claus on Christmas Eve," said Chris Cooper, a Western Carolina University political science professor.

In a nearly eight-minute video posted on social media last week, Cawthorn apologized for speeding and acknowledged that carrying a gun through airport security was a mistake: "I have to own this one."

But he pushed back against other allegations made in news articles, calling them "outlandish." And he later described two videos depicting him in sexually suggestive poses as part of a "drip campaign" by his enemies to flood the district with negative stories in the race's final days.

"I was being crass with a friend, trying to be funny," he tweeted about one video. "We were acting foolish, and joking, that's it. I'm NOT backing down."

In 2020, many conservatives saw Cawthorn as a rising star who could bring young people into the party. He turned 25 — the constitutionally mandated minimum age to serve in the House — during the campaign.

Cawthorn, who uses a wheelchair after being partially paralyzed from a car accident as a teenager, vaulted to prominence by winning a primary runoff for the seat being vacated by Mark Meadows, Trump's chief of staff. Both Meadows and Trump had endorsed Cawthorn's primary rival, but the former president soon became an ally.

"I love him because he's never controversial," Trump joked at a rally last month with Cawthorn. "There's no controversy. But you know what? He loves this country. He loves this state and I'll tell you, he is respected all over the place. He's got a big voice."

Some constituents believe he's more interested in inflaming the culture wars or striking a pose on Instagram than helping the district.

Dairy farmer Bradley Johnston, 59, an unaffiliated voter from Henderson County, said Cawthorn seemed like a "smart young man" who "we all thought would go to Washington and represent the values that we liked."

"He just, in my opinion, has not conducted himself in the ways that he's going to be able to be much of a representative down the road," Johnston said. Registered independents can vote in the GOP primary, and Johnston is supporting hotel operator Bruce O'Connell.

Early in-person voting ends Saturday. If the top vote-getter after Tuesday doesn't receive more than 30% of the votes cast, the two leading candidates will go to a July runoff. In the six-candidate Democratic primary, minister and LGBTQ activist Jasmine Beach-Ferrara has been the top fundraiser.

Even if Cawthorn wins the primary, he's not yet fully avoided a formal challenge of his candidacy by voters who say he should be disqualified over his involvement in the "Stop the Steal" rally that preceded the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Cawthorn got a federal judge to block the state board of elections from examining the challenge. That ruling is on appeal.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 58 of 75

While the 11th District, which stretches 160 miles from east of Asheville to the north Georgia border, is a haven for retirees, it could be new voters who decide the race.

"Madison is a very flashy person and a character himself," said Brian Penland, 22, of Franklin, a Western Carolina University student who declined to give his preference in the race. "Whether people like him or not ... he is here and he has made his stamp in western North Carolina. And the rest of it is up to the voters."

Moon goes blood red this weekend: 'Eclipse for the Americas'

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A total lunar eclipse will grace the night skies this weekend, providing longer than usual thrills for stargazers across North and South America.

The celestial action unfolds Sunday night into early Monday morning, with the moon bathed in the reflected red and orange hues of Earth's sunsets and sunrises for about 1 1/2 hours, one of the longest totalities of the decade. It will be the first so-called blood moon in a year.

Observers in the eastern half of North America and all of Central and South America will have prime seats for the whole show, weather permitting. Partial stages of the eclipse will be visible across Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Left out: Alaska, Asia and Australia.

"This is really an eclipse for the Americas," said NASA's Noah Petro, a planetary geologist who specializes in the moon. "It's going to be a treat."

All you need, he noted, are "patience and eyeballs."

A total eclipse occurs when Earth passes directly between the moon and the sun, and casts a shadow on our constant, cosmic companion. The moon will be 225,000 miles (362,000 kilometers) away at the peak of the eclipse — around midnight on the U.S. East Coast.

"This is this gradual, slow, wonderful event that as long as it's clear where you are, you get to see it," Petro said.

If not, NASA will provide a livestream of the eclipse from various locations; so will the Slooh network of observatories.

There'll be another lengthy total lunar eclipse in November, with Africa and Europe lucking out again, but not the Americas. Then the next one isn't until 2025.

Launched last fall, NASA's asteroid-seeking Lucy spacecraft will photograph this weekend's event from 64 million miles (103 million kilometers) away, as ground controllers continue their effort to fix a loose solar panel.

NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins, a geologist, plans to set her alarm clock early aboard the International Space Station.

"Hopefully, we can be up in time and be at the right place at the right time to catch a good glimpse," she told The Associated Press earlier this week.

Turkey's leader opposes letting Finland, Sweden join NATO

By JARI TANNER and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Friday that his country is "not favorable" toward Finland and Sweden joining NATO, indicating Turkey could use its membership in the Western military alliance to veto moves to admit the two countries.

"We are following developments concerning Sweden and Finland, but we are not of a favorable opinion," Erdogan told reporters.

The Turkish leader explained his opposition by citing Sweden and other Scandinavian countries' alleged support for Kurdish militants and others whom Turkey considers to be terrorists.

He said he also did not want to repeat Turkey's past "mistake" from when it agreed to readmit Greece into NATO's military wing in 1980. He claimed the action had allowed Greece "to take an attitude against Turkey" with NATO's backing.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 59 of 75

Erdogan did not say outright that he would block any accession attempts by the two Nordic nations. However, NATO makes all its decisions by consensus, meaning that each of the 30 member countries has a potential veto over who can join.

Russia's aggression in Ukraine prompted Finland and Sweden to reconsider their traditions of military nonalignment. Public opinion in the two countries quickly started to shift toward favoring NATO membership after Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Should the two countries proceed on that path, it would represent a blow to Russia since President Vladimir Putin cited NATO's expansion near Russian territory as one of his justifications for invading Ukraine.

U.S. President Joe Biden held a call Friday with Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and President Sauli Niinistö of Finland.

The White House said in a statement that Biden "underscored his support for NATO's Open Door policy and for the right of Finland and Sweden to decide their own future, foreign policy and security arrangements."

Niinistö's office said the three leaders "shared a deep concern over Russia's war on Ukraine."

"President Niinistö went through Finland's next steps toward NATO membership. President Niinistö told (Biden) that Finland deeply appreciates all the necessary support from the U.S.," the office said in a brief statement.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that Washington is "working to clarify Turkey's position" and believes there is "broad support" among NATO members for Finland and Sweden to join the alliance.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken is scheduled to meet his NATO counterparts, including the Turkish foreign minister, this weekend in Germany.

The top American diplomat for Europe, Karen Donfried, told reporters ahead of Blinken's trip that the United States remains supportive of Finland and Sweden's prospective NATO membership bids. She said the U.S. remains convinced the alliance is more united than ever before because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Finland's president and prime minister said Thursday that they were in favor of rapidly seeking NATO membership, paving the way for the country to announce a decision in the coming days. Sweden's governing Social Democratic Party, led by Andersson, is expected to reveal its decision Sunday.

Asked about Erdogan's comments during a press conference in Helsinki, Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said: "We need some patience in this type of process. It's not happening in one day. This is all what I can say at the moment. Let's take issues step by step."

The Finnish minister said he was likely to hold discussions with his Turkish counterpart, Mevlut Cavusoglu, at the NATO meeting in Berlin over the weekend. Cavusoglu spoke Friday with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, but Turkey's Foreign Ministry did not provide details.

Stoltenberg has said that Finland and Sweden, should they formally apply to join the world's biggest security organization, would be welcomed with open arms.

The accession procedure could be done in "a couple of weeks," several NATO officials have said, although it could take around six months for member countries to ratify the accession protocol.

Meanwhile, a report by the Swedish government on the changed security environment facing the Nordic country after Russia's invasion of Ukraine says Moscow would react negatively to Sweden joining NATO and launch several counter-measures.

The Swedish government's security policy analysis, which will be used as a basis for Andersson's Cabinet to decide whether to seek membership in the Western military alliance, was presented to Swedish lawmakers Friday.

The report did not include a recommendation on whether or not Sweden should try to join NATO. But it pointed to NATO membership carrying a number of advantages for Sweden - above all the collective security provided by the 30-member military alliance.

At the same time, it lists numerous tactics Russia is likely to take in retaliation, including cyber-attacks, violations of Swedish airspace and threatening to use nuclear weapons.

Biden reaffirms Jordan's role overseeing Temple Mount

Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday reaffirmed his administration's support for Jordan's long-running role as the custodian of Muslim holy sites at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem following a meeting with King Abdullah II at the White House.

Biden met with Jordan's Abdullah after several rounds of clashes in recent weeks at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the third holiest site for Muslims. It is built on a hilltop that is also the holiest site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount.

The White House said in a statement following the meeting that Biden reiterated "his strong support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and cited the need to preserve the historic status quo at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount," using the names for the holy site used by Muslims and Jews.

"The President also recognized the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's crucial role as the custodian of Muslim holy places in Jerusalem," the White House added in statement.

Palestinians have long feared that Israel plans to eventually take over the site or partition it.

Meanwhile, White House press secretary Jen Psaki called images of Israeli riot police pushing and beating pallbearers at Friday's funeral in Jerusalem for slain Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh "deeply disturbing."

Witnesses said Abu Akleh was killed by Israeli troops Wednesday during a raid in the occupied West Bank.

Thousands of people, many waving Palestinian flags, attended the funeral. It was believed to be the largest Palestinian funeral in Jerusalem since Faisal Hussein, a Palestinian leader and scion of a prominent family, died in 2001.

Israel police were seen pushing and clubbing mourners. At one point in the chaos, a pallbearer lost control of the casket and it dropped toward the ground. Police ripped Palestinian flags out of people's hands and fired stun grenades to disperse the crowd.

"Today in Jerusalem we regret the intrusion into what should have been a peaceful possession," Psaki said.

Qatar, key US ally, faces new accusations of terror funding

By ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

Qatar, a key U.S. ally in the Persian Gulf, is facing increased scrutiny over its alleged financial ties to terrorism in a lawsuit from relatives of a slain American journalist and a separate federal investigation into a member of the country's royal family.

The family of Steven Sotloff alleged in a federal lawsuit Friday that prominent Qatari institutions wired \$800,000 to an Islamic State "judge" who ordered the murder of Sotloff and another American journalist, James Foley. The two were beheaded in Syria in 2014, their killings filmed and published in grisly propaganda videos.

"We want to do everything we can to make sure no other family has to suffer what we have suffered," the Sotloff family said in a statement explaining their lawsuit.

Separately, federal prosecutors have been investigating potential ties between terror groups and Khalid bin Hamad Al-Thani, the half-brother of Qatar's ruling emir, according to documents reviewed by The Associated Press and interviews with two people familiar with the investigation.

A grand jury investigation, run out of the Southern District of New York, has focused in part on whether Khalid Al Thani provided money and supplies to Al Nusra, al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, said the two people. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Qatar has enjoyed a strong relationship with the Biden administration. The world's wealthiest country per capita played a key role in evacuations from Afghanistan and its huge supplies of natural gas could help sustain Europe's energy markets amid Russia's war in Ukraine. Qatar could also play a critical role in President Joe Biden's bid to revive a nuclear deal with Iran.

The Qatari Embassy said it needed more information before it could comment about the reported investigation, and did not immediately comment on the lawsuit.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 61 of 75

Earlier this year, Biden designated Qatar a major non-NATO ally, a move that could be helpful in the country's bid to get U.S. approval for a more than \$500 million sale of MQ-9 Reaper drones. Qatar is home to the largest U.S. Air Force base in the Gulf.

"Qatar is a good friend and a reliable partner," Biden said in January while hosting Qatar's ruling emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, at the White House.

But Qatar, which was one of the strongest international backers of the rebellion against Syrian President Bashar Assad, has long faced criticism from some U.S. officials for allowing or encouraging funding of extremists groups in Syria, as well as for its direct and indirect support of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

Qatar has said it condemns terrorism, but officials have also conceded its efforts may have helped the wrong people.

"Look, in Syria, everybody did mistakes, including your country," Hamad bin Jassim Al-Thani, Qatar's former prime minister and foreign minister, said in a 2017 interview with American journalist Charlie Rose. He added that Qatar had never intentionally funded extremists groups in Syria and had cut off funding to any group it learned had another "agenda."

Lawyers for the Sotloff family said in the lawsuit that Qatari officials either "knew or recklessly ignored" the fact that the Islamic State terrorists they were allegedly funding would target Americans for kidnapping, torture and murder.

Foreign countries and government officials cannot typically be sued in U.S. courts. But the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act allows terror victims to seek damages from private entities connected to governments. The Sotloff suit's defendants, Qatar Charity and Qatar National Bank, are alleged to have knowingly facilitated funding to terror groups.

Specifically, the lawsuit says the charity and the bank provided \$800,000 to Fadel al Salim, which he allegedly smuggled into Syria from Turkey and then used to form a "brigade of Islamic State fighters" and become a "sharia judge."

The Sotloff complaint said al Salim signed the "Legal Retribution Verdict" ordering the deaths of Foley and Sotloff as well as led a convoy that transported the pair from one prison in Raqqa, Syria, to the town where they were slain.

Representatives for Qatar Charity and Qatar National Bank did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The current whereabouts of al Salim are unknown. But U.S. prosecutors have made significant progress in separate criminal cases against two of the British Islamic State militants responsible for the killings of Sotloff and three other American captives.

Alexanda Kotey was sentenced recently in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, to life in prison. El Shafee Elsheikh, who was convicted in a jury trial last month, also faces life imprisonment when he is sentenced in August.

Kotey and Elsheikh were part of a cell of British militants known by their captors as "the Beatles" because of their accents. They were captured in Syria in 2018 and transferred to the U.S. in 2020 for criminal prosecution after Attorney General William Barr agreed to take the death penalty off the table.

Another militant, Mohammed Emwazi — known as "Jihadi John" — was killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2015 and a fourth was arrested in Turkey.

Sotloff, Foley and Peter Kassig were beheaded as part of propaganda videos released by IS in 2014 while Kayla Mueller was tortured and raped by Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi before she was killed. The hostage-taking also resulted in the killings of British and Japanese captives, officials have said.

"We are forever broken by the loss of our beloved son, and defined as the people from a horror movie," mother Shirley Sotloff said at the Kotey sentencing hearing.

The Sotloff lawsuit, filed in West Palm Beach, Florida, does not disclose how information in the complaint was obtained. But it does include a high-level of detail, such as a specific bank account number, passages from a handwritten statement acknowledging payments and Islamic State judicial records.

The lawsuit also alleges Qatari royal family members and government officials worked with the Muslim Brotherhood and Turkish intelligence to fund extremist groups in Syria with the aim of undermining the

Assad regime.

Similar allegations of prominent Qataris funding terrorist groups have been made in two ongoing lawsuits filed in London on behalf of Syrian refugees.

Ben Emmerson, a London-based lawyer representing the refugees, said there's clear evidence American officials have chosen to turn a blind eye to Qatar's terror financing in Syria because the U.S. needs Qatar's help in other areas.

"This is realpolitik in action," he said.

One of the London lawsuits alleges that Qatar National Bank board members made hawala payments -- an informal money transfer system -- directly to Al Nusra, al-Qaeda's branch in Syria. Those include transfers, according to the lawsuit, by the emir's half-brother, Khalid Al Thani. He previously served on the board of Qatar National Bank.

It's unclear if those payments are part of the grand jury investigation involving Khalid Al-Thani, which is at least a year old. Prosecutors from the Southern District of New York declined to comment.

Mixed Texas ruling allows trans youth parent investigations

By PAUL J. WEBER and ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court on Friday allowed the state to investigate parents of transgender youth for child abuse while also ruling in favor of one family that was among the first contacted by child welfare officials following an order by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

The court did not rule on the merits of the investigations — which were the first of its kind in the U.S. — only that lower courts in Texas overstepped by trying to block all cases from going forward.

The mixed ruling by Texas' highest civil court, which is made up of nine elected Republican justices, comes at a moment when GOP lawmakers across the U.S. are accelerating efforts to impose restrictions on transgender rights. Both parties in the lawsuit called the decision a victory.

Lambda Legal, which helped bring the lawsuit against Texas on behalf of the parents of the 16-year-old girl, called the decision a win because it put the state's investigation into their family on hold. Although the ruling does not prevent Texas from launching investigations into other families, the state would be foolish to do so now because those families could also seek an injunction, said Omar Gonzalez-Pagan, counsel and health care strategist for Lambda Legal.

"It would be both futile and a complete waste of resources for them to do so," Gonzalez-Pagan said.

Texas went farther than any state in February when Abbott issued a first-of-its-kind order that instructed child welfare officials to investigate reports of gender-confirming care for kids as abuse.

A judge in Austin put that order on hold after a lawsuit brought on behalf of the 16-year-old girl whose family said the state was already investigating their family. It was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Lambda Legal.

The lawsuit marked the first report of parents being investigated following Abbott's directive and an earlier nonbinding legal opinion by Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton labeling certain gender-confirming treatments as "child abuse." The Texas Department of Family and Protective Service has said it opened nine investigations following the directive and opinion.

Brian Klosterboer, a staff attorney with the ACLU leading the case, said the court's decision was "largely good news," citing the relief for his clients as well as the finding that Paxton's opinion and Abbott's directive are nonbinding and do not have a legal effect. Klosterboer said the court's decision clarifies that the governor does not have the authority to change Texas law and though the state's family services agency can decide whether to investigate, it is up to the courts whether the agency can take action against any family reported under this directive.

"His directive is I think what caused the most harm because it created a lot of fear and panic across the state" Klosterboer said.

According to Klosterboer, Paxton's office filed an appeal within minutes of the decision.

In a social media post following the ruling, Paxton said he had "just secured a win." Abbott's office did

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 63 of 75

not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Across the country, Republicans have leaned into the debates over transgender rights as LGBTQ Americans have grown increasingly visible in society and pop culture.

In March, the Arizona Legislature passed bills to prohibit gender confirmation surgery for minors and ban transgender athletes from playing on girls sports teams, and Republican Gov. Doug Ducey signed them.

Two other GOP governors, in Indiana and Utah, bucked their party and vetoed legislation to ban transgender players from girls sports.

In Texas, the groups bringing the lawsuit also represent a clinical psychologist who has said the governor's directive forces her to choose between reporting clients to the state or losing her license and other penalties.

The governor's directive and Paxton's opinion go against the nation's largest medical groups, including the American Medical Association, which have opposed Republican-backed restrictions on transgender people filed in statehouses nationwide.

Americans bet \$125B on sports in 4 years since legalization

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Americans have bet more than \$125 billion on sports with legal gambling outlets in the four years since a U.S. Supreme Court ruling cleared the way for all 50 states to offer it.

On Saturday's anniversary of the decision in a case brought by New Jersey, two-thirds of the states in the country have legalized sports betting.

In just four years, the industry has worked itself into the daily lives of millions of Americans — from those who plunk down money hoping for a certain outcome to those who watch TV broadcasts with odds calculations to those struggling with gambling problems.

You don't have to be a gambler — or even a sports fan — to be affected: The industry tsunami of advertising is practically impossible to avoid, particularly on TV and radio but in other media as well. For example, FanDuel is the official odds provider for The Associated Press.

On May 14, 2018, the Supreme Court decided a case that had begun 10 years earlier in New Jersey as the longest of long shots: a bid to overturn a federal law, the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, that restricted sports betting to just four states that met a 1991 deadline to legalize it.

Ray Lesniak, the now-retired state senator who filed the first lawsuit against the federal government over the issue, said he acted to provide money for states, protection for consumers and to attract experienced European betting companies to expand to the U.S. — all of which he said have come to pass.

"I made a good bet for New Jersey and for America," he said, metaphorically speaking. (Lesniak also placed the first winning legal sports bet in his state, correctly picking France to win soccer's World Cup, winning \$400 on a \$50 bet at 8-to-1 odds.)

"When PASPA was repealed, I don't think any of us would have expected how big the (industry) would be just four short years later," said Karol Corcoran, general manager of FanDuel's online sportsbook.

DraftKings president and co-founder Matt Kalish said: "I got into this industry because I was always the kind of kid who liked to predict things, to compete with my friends and make predictions. For people that like to do that, sports betting has become far and away the No. 1 thing."

To comprehend just how much \$125 billion is, consider this: It's a bit more than the amount that was spent on pet food, supplies and veterinary care in the entire country last year, and more than the net income for America's farmers last year.

Of course, much of that money was paid out to people who won bets. After expenses, the sportsbooks generally keep less than 10% of the total amount of bets they handle. Over the first four years of legal betting, their revenue figure is \$8.8 billion, according to the American Gaming Association, the gambling industry's national trade group.

A major rationale for the push to legalize sports betting was to protect customers from being victimized by unlicensed bookmakers, many operating as part of organized crime. State regulations include robust

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 64 of 75

consumer protections, with watchdog regulators ready to pounce when they see violations.

But making sports betting legal has not succeeded in wiping out illegal gambling. Just look at any of the numerous sports betting Facebook groups, where unlicensed books in other countries tout their offerings; one aggrieved bettor complained Wednesday that after he won a big bet, he asked his bookie to pay him, only to have the man disappear.

Sports betting has been, and still is, pitched to state lawmakers as a source of new tax revenue, a particularly tempting option in trying financial times. It has generated \$1.3 billion in state and local taxes since 2018 according to the AGA, but the amount many states keep is a mere drop in the bucket compared with their overall budget. Some states, like New York, tax mobile sports betting revenue at 51% — a rate that operators say is not sustainable in the long run.

As of Friday, 35 states plus Washington, D.C., have legalized sports betting, with 30 of those up and running, according to the AGA. (Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly signed a bill in her state Thursday). Competing measures will be on the November ballot in a state that has been the Holy Grail for sports betting: California, where wrangling between tribal casinos and commercial gambling companies has made the potential outcome unclear.

Turn on a television and no matter what you're watching, the odds are good that you will be bombarded with ads for sports betting. FanDuel, DraftKings, BetMGM, PointsBet, Bet365 and particularly Caesars Entertainment are flooding the airwaves to promote their sports betting products.

In December, Bill Miller, president and CEO of the American Gaming Association, called the level of sports betting advertising "an unsustainable arms race." There are calls in some quarters for voluntary industry self-regulation of advertising in order to head off the possibility of the type of strict government regulation that exists in England.

Already, Massachusetts lawmakers are considering banning sports betting ads immediately before, during and immediately after live broadcasts of sporting events. New Jersey Assemblyman Ralph Caputo, himself a former casino marketing executive, said "the over-marketing of this industry is obscene."

Kalish, the DraftKings president, said the current level of ads is necessary for "the onboarding of customers" and compared it to the level of advertisements for other new products such as cryptocurrency.

"I don't think that's necessarily a forever state," he said of the current ad levels.

FanDuel's Corcoran said the company is content with its current advertising levels, noting "the industry is still in growth mode."

Felicia Grondin, executive director of The Council on Compulsive Gambling of New Jersey, cited a report in Barron's that said \$292 million was spent on sports betting ads in the U.S. in 2020. A year later, it had grown to \$725 million.

With the added exposure and the easier availability of betting on a mobile phone (more than 80% of sports bets are placed this way in the U.S.) came an increase in people seeking help for gambling problems related to sports betting, Grondin said.

In 2018, the New Jersey council's 1-800-GAMBLER telephone helpline received 9,490 calls, 5% of which were primarily due to a sports betting problem. By 2021, the line received 23,977 calls, 23% of which dealt with sports betting.

"It is disturbing, it is alarming and it is intensifying every day," Grondin testified before New Jersey lawmakers this week. "It's very easy to gamble today. You can just take out your phone and sit on your couch."

Four years ago, sports bettors had few options, including predicting the outcome of a game or player performance before the event started. Since then, the array of potential bets, or "markets," has exploded, due in large part to a surge in in-game betting, where gamblers can react to events as a game unfolds and bet accordingly. It has become the fastest-growing segment of a fast-growing industry. Many sportsbooks now offer and encourage, through free bets or refunds of losing wagers, multievent bets called parlays.

And while the more established sportsbooks look to increase their share of the market, the amount of money it takes to enter the industry and compete continues to grow, to the point where many executives of leading companies say they expect some lesser competitors to either merge or stop doing business.

FanDuel's Corcoran said the near-term future is about growing the industry and its individual companies.

"We feel fortunate to have access to about 38% of the American population," he said. "But there are still millions of people that don't yet have legal sports betting. We'd love to be able to operate where they are."

Unionists block new N Ireland govt over Brexit trade rules

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Northern Ireland's second-biggest political party on Friday blocked the formation of a working legislature in Belfast, and said it would keep up the boycott until the U.K. government tears up post-Brexit trade rules it accuses of destabilizing the region.

The Democratic Unionist Party's move deepens Northern Ireland's political deadlock, which is fueling a U.K.-EU feud that could balloon into a trade war between Britain and the 27-nation European Union.

The DUP came second in a Northern Ireland Assembly election last week that saw Irish nationalist party Sinn Fein win the most seats — the first time a party that seeks union with the Republic of Ireland has won an election in the bastion of Protestant power.

Under Northern Ireland's mandatory power-sharing rules, that gives Sinn Fein the post of first minister, with the DUP taking the deputy first minister job. A government can't be formed unless both roles are filled, and the DUP says it won't take part unless border checks on goods moving to Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K. are scrapped.

It stymied attempts to elect a speaker for the assembly when they met for the first time on Friday, leaving the assembly unable to function.

"The DUP received a mandate to remove the Irish Sea border and our mandate will be given respect," assembly member Paul Givan told legislators. "Our message is now clear: It is time for action, words will no longer suffice."

DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson said the party's concerns over the new trade rules, known as the Northern Ireland Protocol, "are not merely some political squabble."

"The protocol is a direct challenge to the principles that have underpinned every agreement reached in Northern Ireland over the last 25 years" of Northern Ireland's peace process, he said. "It erodes the very foundations that devolution has been built upon."

Sinn Fein leader Michelle O'Neill accused the DUP of "disgracefully holding the public to ransom for their Brexit mess."

Naomi Long, leader of the centrist Alliance Party, the third largest in the assembly, said it was "a shameful day for the DUP."

"We want to serve the public but are prevented from doing so," she said.

Arrangements for Northern Ireland — the only part of the U.K. that shares a land border with an EU nation — have been the thorniest subject of contention in the U.K.'s divorce from the bloc, which became final at the end of 2020.

A deal was agreed to keep the Irish border free of customs posts and other checks, because an open border is a key pillar of the peace process that ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland. Instead, there are checks on some goods, such as meat and eggs, entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the U.K.

The arrangement is opposed by the DUP and other unionists in Northern Ireland, who say the new checks have created a barrier with the rest of the U.K. that is hurting businesses and undermines unionists' British identity.

Sinn Fein and the other nationalist and nonaligned parties, which collectively got a majority of votes in the election, want to keep the Protocol.

Many people and businesses in Northern Ireland just want a functioning government.

"The uncomfortable truth is, while this continues, the reputational damage to Northern Ireland as a place to invest and work grows daily," said Paul Murnaghan, president of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government says the political deadlock in Belfast is proof the regulations — which it agreed to — are destabilizing Northern Ireland's peace agreement, which relies on support

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 66 of 75

from both Protestant unionist and Catholic nationalist communities. The U.K. says it will act unilaterally to suspend some of the rules if the EU won't agree to major changes.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said the U.K. will have "no choice but to act" if the EU does not show enough "flexibility." The U.K. could introduce legislation giving it the power to override the treaty as soon as next week.

The EU accuses Johnson's government of threatening to break international law by breaching a binding treaty.

"Don't forget this treaty was designed and ratified and agreed by the British government under this prime minister," Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney told the BBC. "He stood for election and got a huge mandate from the British people on the back of that deal and now is blaming the deal for the problems in Northern Ireland."

Amid growing signs the U.K. is planning to scrap at least part of its Brexit divorce deal, Johnson week sent a government minister, Conor Burns, to Washington to try to allay fears among U.S. officials about potential risks to Northern Ireland peace. President Joe Biden has warned that no side should do anything to undermine the Good Friday Accord, the 1998 deal that laid the foundations of peace.

'From crisis to death': Probing teen's last, desperate hours

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — "Y'all here to protect me," the youth asked the officers, beseechingly. "Right?"

The 17-year-old's foster father, unable to deal with a teen who seemed to be in the throes of schizophrenia, had called Wichita police. When they arrived, Cedric "C.J." Lofton refused to leave the porch and go with them; he was obstinate but afraid, meek but frantic.

After an hourlong stalemate, the police lost patience. It was time to take him away -- by force, if necessary.

And so began the last two days of a life plagued by family dysfunction, brushes with the law, years in foster care and, finally, mental illness. The events leading to C.J.'s death, just a day short of his 18th birthday, would be captured on video; the result would be litigation, pleas for reform, cries that the system had failed yet another Black youth.

Authorities would decide against any prosecutions in connection with his death. But there were crucial errors, and vital holes in the safety net that had fatal consequences.

Owing to the hour, a team that included a mental health worker was unavailable to respond on that night last September; police alone responded. And C.J. was taken not to a mental hospital but to the county Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center, where for about 40 minutes he was held face down, resulting in his death.

C.J. "went from crisis to death because we got involved," said Sedgwick County Commissioner Jim Howell.

"We all need to own what we did right and what we did wrong," he added. "And the reality is there's things that happened that were wrong."

Friends who met C.J. in foster care described him as a goofball, fun loving, with a dark childhood that he hinted at but never talked about much.

"He would dance everywhere, just wiggly, just you know, no coordination at all. Just dancing just to dance," said Skylar Mannie, 16, of Wichita.

But under the surface, she sensed anxieties. "He worried about making sure that he was safe, making sure everybody around him was safe and that they were good at all times."

He was raised with the help of his grandmother. His father, Chadrick Lofton, racked up multiple convictions for domestic assault; one case sent him to prison for a year and a half when C.J. was 2, and after that, C.J. told friends, his father wasn't around. His mother, Sarah Harrison, also had a criminal record, including a theft conviction in Texas that carried a 400-day sentence.

As he entered his teen years, C.J. was living with his mother in Junction City, a Kansas town of about 22,000 near the Fort Riley military base. In the summer of 2018, at age 14, he began to get in trouble.

He was accused first of using a stolen debit card, then with stealing a car and tools, court records show.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 67 of 75

At a football game that fall, he was caught with a BB gun and suspended from school; he was truant often, the court filings show.

Then, in November, he was accused of battery and stealing a video game from a Walmart and was sent to a juvenile detention facility. Court records noted that his "behavior is escalating and there is no parental control," but he was released to his mother that December.

He broke curfew again and again. Ultimately, a judge signed an order removing Lofton from his home, noting there was "no parent/guardian present." By August 2019, a court filing found that he was doing "very well" in foster care.

C.J. moved around at first, friends said. But in December 2020, he was placed in Wichita with a foster father that his friend, Marquez Patton, described as "one of the good ones."

By all accounts, they got along. C.J.'s foster father told investigators that he had been doing fine in school and that there were no major issues until their final weeks together, according to a report by Sedgwick County District Attorney Marc Bennett.

The foster father, whose name hasn't been released, declined an interview request through DCCCA Inc., a private foster care agency that contracts with the state's Department of Children and Families.

During the pandemic-disrupted 2020-21 school year, C.J. became a favorite of Traci Kallhoff, a zoology teacher at Wichita Southeast High School. He was always asking questions, sometimes tossing a blanket over his head to liven up virtual instruction.

"Some of those kids, like when they're kind of like that, you know, like a little ornery, but really just so full of life, they just kind of grab your heart," she said, adding that they grew so close that he emailed over summer break and hugged her when classes resumed in the fall.

Patton, 22, met C.J. when they worked at the same McDonald's. He said among other things, the pair bonded over music -- C.J. posted his own classic gangster rap on YouTube, full of references to shootings and bloodshed.

Indeed, C.J. had been part of a Junction City gang, friends said. "Gangs are like a family," Patton said, but C.J. had vowed to leave that behind and "do better." The lyrics were merely what sold, he told friends.

He started dating Kyanya Hardyway in June 2021. Her family "loved him," she said, because he was so respectful. They went to the mall, the YMCA and church together.

Eventually, though, he started telling her and other friends that he was hearing things, that the world was going to end soon. It worried her. But she added: "I was just glad that he was just telling me stuff."

Friends said C.J. planned to remain in foster care until he finished high school. But he was growing restless as he prepared to age out of the system. Two friends had already been forced from the foster placement after getting in trouble, Patton said.

Then, last August, his grandmother died in Texas. Cassandra Harrison's death was a blow.

His foster father said when Cedric returned from the funeral in September, "it got progressively worse," according to the prosecutor's report. He described him as "paranoid."

Friends saw the difference, too.

"He was really sad. He felt like he didn't really have anybody," said Angelee Phillips, an 18-year-old who also had spent time in foster care.

She said she knew he was smoking weed. His foster brothers also suspected he was doing drugs, possibly the synthetic marijuana known as K2, although none had witnessed it firsthand. Partly, their suspicions stemmed from his strange behavior; one foster brother heard C.J. saying that his classmates were robots intent on hurting him.

Tests conducted as part of the autopsy report came up positive for marijuana, nothing else.

By Sept. 22, the situation was escalating. C.J. walked away from school that day and his foster father called police to report him as a runaway.

"He has been telling people not to look in the mirror because it takes your soul," he told a dispatcher, adding that C.J. thought security guards were secret agents that were spying on him and that he doesn't want anyone to come into his room because he says the house is bugged.

Hardyway said he called her around 2 the next morning. She could tell he was outside, but he refused

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 68 of 75

to tell her where.

"He was just telling me like he loved me and stuff and then he just hung up because his phone was about to die," she recalled. They never spoke again.

When C.J. returned home around 11:30 a.m. that Friday morning, the foster father immediately took him to the county's mental health provider for an evaluation. But they never made it inside.

"He started freaking out and then ran off on me again," the foster father told police.

He said C.J. had mentioned "he can get access to a gun." He suspected the teen had schizophrenia. Although C.J. hadn't been diagnosed, a cousin had told the foster father that the condition ran in the family.

It was all too much. The foster father told a caseworker he couldn't handle C.J. anymore.

C.J. didn't realize that when he returned around 1 a.m. on Sept. 24. His foster father told C.J. to stay on the porch, that he was worried about him. He called police.

The community operates a program in which a mental health professional, a law enforcement officer and a paramedic respond to emergent mental health crisis. But it only operates from noon to 10 p.m., Tuesdays through Fridays.

That meant the unit was not available when the foster father called, and police had to go instead -- one of the first big missteps, said Sedgwick County Commissioner Lacey Cruse: "We're expecting law enforcement to do way too much."

Officers approached the house. What followed plays out on body camera video:

While the foster father attempts to reach the after-hours foster care contacts, officers try to persuade C.J. -- who was also sick with COVID-19 -- to let them take him to a mental hospital.

"Hell no," C.J. says.

Over and over, for nearly an hour, they beg him to submit. C.J. offers to sleep outside. He points at things he alone sees, things that do not exist.

C.J., who had told his foster father that he feared police would shoot him, empties his pockets at one point -- apparently, to show the officers he is unarmed. Change clatters to the ground.

"We don't want your stuff," an officer tells him.

An officer asks him again about the hospital.

"The hospital," C.J. says. "I thought you was talking about jail."

The officer responds: "Not jail, just the hospital. ... I promise you we would go there."

But C.J. will have none of it. At 2:15 a.m., officers call for assistance. The 5-foot-10, 135-pound teenager is still refusing to budge.

The sergeant who responded to the scene would later explain that he wasn't willing to just leave C.J. alone outside, according to the prosecutor's report: "We can't walk away."

They decide to take C.J. forcibly.

This was another mistake, said Cruse and fellow commissioner Howell. "Where is this impatience coming from?" Howell asked.

In the video, C.J. screams and yells "help" over and over again as officers grab for his arms.

"This is illegal," C.J. says. "Isn't it?"

Breathing heavily, the officers order C.J. not to bite, they are there to help.

Eventually the officers restrain him in something called the WRAP, a device comprised of a locking shoulder harness, leg restraints and ankle straps. The sheriff's office describes it as a way to restrain a person who is out of control so that they don't hurt themselves or others.

C.J. is frantic. "They are going to kill me," he screams, biting at the straps.

As the teen is carried to the police cruiser, he can be heard muttering, repeatedly, "Kill yourself."

The destination was no longer the mental hospital. The sergeant later explained that he believed C.J. was too combative to take there, according to the prosecutor's report.

Instead, the vehicle headed for the juvenile intake center. C.J. was accused of multiple counts of battering law enforcement officers.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 69 of 75

"It shocks me how this child is telling you they are seeing things that don't exist and an alternate decision, aside from taking him to the hospital, was made," said Brittany Brest, a community psychologist who is overseeing a grant from the National Alliance on Mental Illness to better support Kansas inmates.

Even one of the officers can be heard questioning the change of destination during the drive, arguing that C.J. would fare better at the mental hospital.

"It fixes whatever is wrong with him," the officer says. The officers C.J. bit, he said, were "putting themselves in positions of being battered" because they were putting their hands in front of his mouth.

A second officer responds, simply, "It is not our call."

They pull into the juvenile center at 2:44 a.m. and multiple officers carry him inside. C.J. continues repeating "kill yourself" when he was removed from the WRAP restraint around 3:40 a.m. Officers cautiously back out of the holding cell, leaving C.J. alone inside.

A juvenile worker later opened the door to the cell and told C.J. he "won't be here that long" if he cooperated with being weighed and fingerprinted.

C.J., though, was still agitated. He walked out of his holding cell and tried to grab a computer monitor from the intake counter, the prosecutor's report said.

Surveillance video from inside the facility shows him resisting attempts to place him back in the cell. At one point, he can be seen punching one of the juvenile detention employees in the head, knocking his glasses to the ground.

The video, which contains no audio, shows detention workers wrestling him into the cell. The camera angle doesn't offer a clear view of what happened next.

But the prosecutor's office said staff shackled Lofton's ankles around 4:29 a.m. and put him on his stomach on the floor a few minutes later. One worker held C.J.'s ankles, another his thighs and two others held down his arms.

C.J. struggled, saying he would "hex" staff and that he was Jesus, according to the report.

A worker can be heard calling dispatch: The teen needed to be taken to a hospital for mental evaluation.

Around 5:08 a.m., the workers managed to put C.J. in handcuffs so he would be ready to be transported when police arrived, according to the prosecutor's report. He remained face down. The workers then heard what sounded like snoring; they assumed he had tired himself out and fallen asleep.

But C.J. was far from fine. The snoring was likely agonal breathing, a common sign of cardiac arrest, explained Dr. Michael Freeman, a forensic epidemiologist who testified in the George Floyd case.

"I think the biggest problem here is that the people who do the restraint don't understand how dangerous what they're doing is," he said.

C.J.'s COVID-19 infection also would "contribute and make it even more dangerous," said Dr. Victor Weedn, a forensic science professor at George Washington University. Weedn said the problem is that people can't breathe fast enough or deep enough when they are restrained face down to get rid of carbon dioxide, especially if they are under stress.

But the workers knew none of this, insisting later that they were using restraints that they had been taught. It took them about 5 minutes longer to notice something was wrong, roll C.J. on his back and start chest compressions, according to the prosecutor's report.

They called for help. When the emergency crew arrived, he had no pulse. "I have one 17-year-old male post code red coming to you," a paramedic called in, after the crew managed to restart his heart.

But his condition was grave, his blood pressure just 62 over 24. And two days later, he was dead. He never regained consciousness.

The final autopsy, released in December, listed C.J.'s cause of death as "complications of cardiopulmonary arrest sustained after physical struggle while restrained in the prone position." The death was declared a homicide.

Andrew M. Stroth, the family's attorney, said he is preparing a "robust legal filing," describing what happened as "tragic on so many levels."

Sedgwick County Corrections Director Glenda Martens also described what happened as "tragic" in a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 70 of 75

news conference but said that the corrections workers "acted well within the policy and the requirements of that policy" in restraining the teen.

Meanwhile, interim Wichita Police Chief Lem Moore said his department is looking into the actions of officers took when booking the teen. The FBI also is investigating, and Kansas' governor ordered a review of how the foster care system handled the case.

A task force assembled jointly by the city and county reviewed C.J.'s death. Its members, who include a local NAACP official and a 20-year-old youth organizer, recommended a series of changes, including improving training and mental health services.

Bennett, the district attorney, said he struggled with whether an involuntary manslaughter charge was justified, but concluded in January that the state's "stand-your-ground" law prevented him from pursuing it because staff members were protecting themselves.

Robert Spitzer, author of "Guns Across America: Reconciling Gun Rules and Rights," said Bennett's interpretation is a "perfectly logical application" of a law that he described as "deeply problematic."

Bennett agrees, calling on the Legislature to change the law and raising questions about nearly everyone involved in C.J.'s care, from the juvenile workers to the foster care system.

"This," he said, "should never have happened."

No sea serpents, mobsters but Tahoe trash divers strike gold

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

STATELINE, Nev. (AP) — They found no trace of a mythical sea monster, no sign of mobsters in concrete shoes or long-lost treasure chests.

But scuba divers who spent a year cleaning up Lake Tahoe's entire 72-mile (115-kilometer) shoreline have come away with what they hope will prove much more valuable: tons and tons of trash.

In addition to removing 25,000 pounds (11,339 kilograms) of underwater litter since last May, divers and volunteers have been meticulously sorting and logging the types and GPS locations of the waste.

The dozens of dives that concluded this week were part of a first-of-its-kind effort to learn more about the source and potential harm caused by plastics and other pollutants in the storied alpine lake on the California-Nevada line.

It's also taken organizers on a journey through the history, folklore and development of the lake atop the Sierra Nevada that holds enough water to cover all of California 14 inches (36 centimeters) deep.

The Washoe Tribe fished the turquoise-blue Tahoe for centuries before westward expansion in the mid-1800s brought railroads, timber barons and eventually Gatsby-like decadence to what became a playground for the rich and famous.

Tahoe's first casino was built in 1902 by Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin, who owned a big chunk of east Los Angeles and built the prominent Santa Anita horse track in 1907. Massive lakefront estates followed for decades, including one used for the filming of "Godfather II."

Cleanup organizers say one of the things locals ask most is whether they've found any gangsters' remains near the north shore. That's where Frank Sinatra lost his gaming license for allegedly fraternizing with organized crime bosses at his Cal-Neva hotel-casino in the 1960s.

The recovered debris mostly has consisted of things like bottles, tires, fishing gear and sunglasses.

But Colin West, founder of the nonprofit environmental group that launched the project, Clean Up the Lake, said there have been some surprises.

Divers think they spotted shipwreck planks near Dead Man's Point, where tribal tales tell of a Loch-Ness-Monster-like creature — later dubbed "Tahoe Tessie"— living beneath Cave Rock.

They've also turned up a few "No Littering" signs, engine blocks, lamp posts, a diamond ring and "those funny, fake plastic owls that sit on boats to scare off birds," West said.

"It's shocking to see how much trash has accumulated under what appears to be such a pristine lake," said Matt Levitt, founder and CEO of Tahoe Blue Vodka, which has contributed \$100,000 to the cleanup.

His businesses is among many — including hotels, casinos and ski resorts — dependent on the 15 million-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 71 of 75

plus people who visit annually to soak up the view Mark Twain described in "Roughing It" in 1872 as the "fairest picture the whole earth affords."

"It is our economic engine," Levitt said.

And while most contributors and volunteers were motivated primarily to help beautify the lake, it's what happens once the litter is piled ashore that excites scientists.

Shoreline cleanups have occurred across the nation for years, from Arizona to the Great Lakes, Pennsylvania and Florida. But that litter goes into recycle bins and garbage bags for disposal.

Each piece from 189 separate Tahoe dives to depths of 25 feet (8 meters) was charted by GPS and meticulously divided into categories including plastic, metal and cloth.

Plastics are key because international research increasingly shows some types can break down into smaller pieces known as microplastics.

Scientists are still studying the extent and human harm from the tiny bits. But the National Academy of Sciences said in December the U.S. — the world's top plastics-waste producer — should reduce plastics production because so much winds up in oceans and waterways.

Zoe Harrold, a biochemist, led scientists at the Desert Research Institute in Reno that first documented microplastics in Tahoe in 2019. She was the lead author of Clean Up the Lake's 2021 report on a 6-mile (10-kilometer) pilot project.

"If left in place, the ongoing degradation of submerged litter, particularly plastic and rubber, will continue to slowly release microplastics and leachates into Lake Tahoe's azure waters," Harrold wrote.

The cleanup comes a half-century after scientists started measuring Tahoe's waning clarity as the basin began to experience explosive growth.

Most credit, or blame, completion of the interstate system for the 1960 Winter Olympics near Tahoe City. The first ever televised, it introduced the world to the lake surrounded by snow-covered peaks.

From 1960-80, Tahoe's population grew from 10,000 to 50,000 — 90,000 in the summer, the U.S. Geological Survey said. Peak days now approach 300,000.

"The majority of what we're pulling out is a result of basically just the human impact of recreating, living and building a community here in the Lake Tahoe region," West said.

His group plans dives this year at other Sierra lakes, including June Lake east of Yosemite National Park, and will expand future Tahoe searches to deeper depths.

The non-profit Tahoe Fund, which also helped raise \$100,000 for the cleanup effort, is commissioning artists to create a sculpture made from Tahoe's trash at an events center being built in Stateline, on the lake's south shore.

"Our hope is that it will inspire greater environmental stewardship and remind those who love Lake Tahoe that it's up to all of us to take care of it," Tahoe Fund CEO Amy Berry said.

Some Catholic abortion foes are uneasy about overturning Roe

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Top leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops called on the faithful to pray and fast Friday, in hopes the Supreme Court is on track to overturn the constitutional right to abortion. Yet even among Catholics who oppose abortion, there is some unease about the consequences of such a ruling.

A recently leaked Supreme Court draft opinion suggests that a majority of the nine justices are poised to reverse the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision — a move that would allow individual states to outlaw abortion.

Some anti-abortion Catholics say such an outcome would be the answer to their prayers. Others caution that Catholic leaders should distance themselves from the politically partisan wing of the anti-abortion movement and expand their concept of "pro-life" by supporting broad policies that set up safety nets for unwed mothers and low-income families.

Madison Chastain, a Catholic blogger and disability advocate, describes herself as anti-abortion, yet opposes overturning Roe and criminalizing abortions.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 72 of 75

Factors that cause abortion, she wrote in the National Catholic Reporter, include lack of comprehensive sex education, inadequate health care, and workplace inequalities.

"Making abortion illegal before addressing these injustices is going to kill women, because women will continue to have abortions, secretly and unsafely," she wrote.

Sam Sawyer, a journalist and Jesuit priest, says he is a "dedicated pro-life advocate" who favors Roe's reversal. Yet he responded to the leak with an essay listing reasons why abortion rights supporters are so alarmed by that prospect.

"The pro-life movement and its political alliances are perceived as a threat not just to abortion itself but also to democratic norms, to judicial commitments to civil rights, and to women's health and economic security," Sawyer wrote in *America*, the Jesuit magazine for which he is a senior editor.

Republican politicians, backed by anti-abortion leaders, "have used the lives of the unborn as moral cover for ignoring other calls for justice," Sawyer wrote. "The pro-life movement's political allies have gutted social safety net programs that would make it easier for women to carry pregnancies to term."

The call for a day of fasting and prayer came from Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, the president of the U.S. bishops conference, and Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

They requested prayers for the overturning of Roe and for "the conversion of the hearts and minds of those who advocate for abortion."

The archbishops echoed the calls of other Catholic leaders who, after the Supreme Court leak, suggested that a reversal of Roe should be coupled with expanded outreach and support for pregnant women and new mothers.

Lori highlighted a USCCB program called Walking With Moms in Need, saying the church should redouble its efforts "to accompany women and couples who are facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies, and during the early years of parenthood."

The bishops conference has designated the "threat of abortion" as its preeminent priority – a viewpoint that many lay Catholics don't share. According to Pew Research Center surveys, 56% of U.S. Catholics say abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

Professor O. Carter Snead, who teaches law and political science at the University of Notre Dame, said via email that most Catholics engaging in anti-abortion activism "are not hard political partisans but rather people seeking to care for moms and babies by whatever means are available."

As an example, Snead cited Notre Dame's de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture – which he directs – and one of its initiatives, called "Women and Children First: Imagining a Post-Roe World." Through teaching, research and public engagement, the initiative seeks to strengthen support for "women, children (born and unborn), and families in need."

However, achieving broad bipartisan collaboration on such initiatives may not come soon, Snead acknowledged.

"It is true, regrettably, that the only political party that has been willing to partner to provide legal protection for the unborn is the Republicans," he said.

Chad Pecknold, a theology professor at The Catholic University of America, also doubted there could be a post-Roe surge of bipartisanship on abortion.

"So long as Democrats insist on abortion for all nine months of a pregnancy, and as long as Republicans recognize that abortion runs contrary to the 14th Amendment, this will remain a partisan issue," he said via email.

"But the goal of the pro-life movement has never been partisan," Pecknold added. "The goal is justice for pre-born persons who have a right to live, to be loved, to be raised in a family."

Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas – an outspoken critic of Catholic politicians who support abortion rights – said abortion opponents "must continue to provide support and care for the mothers who find themselves in difficult situations."

"I pray that we may move to a place where mother and child are both held as sacred and society sup-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 73 of 75

ports both lives in every way possible," he said via email.

David Gibson, director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University, questioned the significance of recent promises by Catholic bishops and other anti-abortion leaders to boost support for unwed mothers.

"Can this movement that is so tied to the Republican Party and the conservative movement suddenly pivot to mobilizing its people for socially liberal policies?" Gibson asked, referring to programs such as subsidized child care and paid maternity leaves.

Steven Millies, a professor of public theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, says the bishops bear partial responsibility for the entrenched polarization over abortion, which he expects to continue even if Roe is overturned.

"It's unrealistically hopeful to think that the habits of division will be abandoned," said Millies, suggesting that the bishops could have done more to reduce abortions over the years by pressing hard for stronger, better-funded social programs.

Rebecca Bratten Weiss, a writer and the digital editor of U.S. Catholic magazine, said she no longer labels herself "pro-life" — though she was active in that movement for many years and believes all life is worthy of protection.

"The people who are working to overturn Roe have made it quite clear they have zero interest in expanding safety nets," she said. "They either haven't thought through the consequences, or they are OK with the consequences — a higher rate of infant mortality, more women seeking unsafe abortions, more families driven to desperate measures."

Thomas Reese, a Jesuit priest who writes for Religion News Service, suggested in a column that reversal of Roe should be an occasion for reassessment by the many bishops who embraced the Republican Party because of its anti-abortion stance.

"Catholic bishops will celebrate this victory for which they have worked for decades, but ironically it should lead to a divorce between the bishops and Republicans," Reese wrote. "The GOP has nothing else to offer them. In fact, except for abortion, its proposals are the opposite of Catholic social teaching."

Assuming Roe is overturned, Reese added, "the bishops can declare victory on abortion and turn their focus to social programs ... that help women have and raise children so they are not forced to have abortions."

Yet Reese doubts this will happen.

"My guess is they will continue to fight as long as there is no consensus in America on abortion," he wrote. "This will mean sticking with the Republicans and sacrificing all their other priorities."

Film Review: 'Firestarter' remake fails to ignite

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

For a movie about a girl with pyrokinetic powers, "Firestarter" is lacking a certain spark.

This new adaptation of Stephen King's 1980 novel is not scary or thrilling, nor is it emotionally resonant or particularly moving. No, this outing is a dull slog, even with its cool, synth John Carpenter score and the should've-been-inspired decision to cast Zac Efron as the father of the flame-throwing preteen.

But "Firestarter" might not have had much to live up to in the first place. The 1984 film, which starred Drew Barrymore and David Keith as the daughter-father pair, was not exactly well-received. Roger Ebert wrote that its "crucial flaw is the lack of a strong point to the story. A little girl has her dangerous power, some government agents want to examine her, others want to destroy her, and things catch on fire. That's about it." The original source material isn't one of King's most beloved either.

Why anyone would want to resurrect this particular property is a bit of a mystery, beyond the fact that some might have a misplaced fondness for it because they saw it at an impressionable age. One of the best things that can be said about this iteration, written by Scott Teems and directed by Keith Thomas, is that it neither adds nor subtracts anything from "Firestarter's" lackluster history (though it does jettison the pedophile undertones of a crucial character). But on the whole, it just once again takes something

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 74 of 75

that should be creepy and thrilling and makes it dreary.

Ryan Kiera Armstrong takes on the role of Charlie, who is a bit of an introvert and a social outcast in her school. She's not allowed to have a phone or the Internet, and she's been told by her father to simply repress her scary fire-starting powers. But questions are rising (hormones too) and there's jerks and bullies around too and the fire comes out at inopportune times. The mom, Vicky, played by Sydney Lemmon (who is Jack Lemmon's granddaughter), thinks it'd be better to teach the kid how to use the powers instead of abstaining completely, but she's overruled and pretty soon, it's just Andy (Efron) and Charlie on the run.

Andy and Vicky aren't just befuddled parents of a fire-starting 11-year-old, either: They have personal experience too. A grainy reel at the start informs us that they were subjected to some secret government testing while in college and came out with powers of their own. And it's these officials, led by Captain Hollister (played by Gloria Reuben, who is given the worst lines in the script), who are interested in acquiring Charlie. So Hollister calls a former test subject, Rainbird (Michael Greyeyes), to go find her.

Armstrong has a great scream and a nice presence, but she isn't given much of a character to latch on to. Based on how pristine her inexplicably barrel-curved hair looks for most of the film, though, it seems that those in charge might have been more concerned with the aesthetics than the performance.

The same could be said for the rest of the movie, which feels like mummified homage. There is nothing to latch on to that might make us care even the tiniest bit about the plight of this family, the poor souls caught in the crossfire, or even the bureaucrats who fancy themselves the good guys.

Perhaps we've just seen too many better homages at this point, "Stranger Things" among them. There wasn't a great reason to take another shot at "Firestarter." Besides, even if it's lacking in originality, it's also lacking something even more important: A personality.

"Firestarter," a Universal Pictures release now in theaters and on Peacock+, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "violent content." Running time: 96 minutes. One star out of four.

Today in History: May 14, Freedom Riders attacked

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, May 14, the 134th day of 2022. There are 231 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 14, 1940, the Netherlands surrendered to invading German forces during World War II.

On this date:

In 1643, Louis XIV became King of France at age 4 upon the death of his father, Louis XIII.

In 1796, English physician Edward Jenner inoculated 8-year-old James Phipps against smallpox by using cowpox matter.

In 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the Louisiana Territory as well as the Pacific Northwest left camp near present-day Hartford, Illinois.

In 1948, according to the current-era calendar, the independent state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv by David Ben-Gurion, who became its first prime minister; U.S. President Harry S. Truman immediately recognized the new nation.

In 1955, representatives from eight Communist bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, signed the Warsaw Pact in Poland. (The Pact was dissolved in 1991.)

In 1961, Freedom Riders were attacked by violent mobs in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama.

In 1988, 27 people, mostly teens, were killed when their church bus collided with a pickup truck going the wrong direction on a highway near Carrollton, Kentucky. (Truck driver Larry Mahoney served 9 1/2 years in prison for manslaughter.)

In 1998, singer-actor Frank Sinatra died at a Los Angeles hospital at age 82. The hit sitcom "Seinfeld" aired its final episode after nine years on NBC.

In 2001, the Supreme Court ruled 8-0 that there is no exception in federal law for people to use marijuana for medical purposes.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 14, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 311 ~ 75 of 75

In 2003, more than 100 immigrants were abandoned in a locked trailer at a Texas truck stop; 19 of them died. (Truck driver Tyrone Williams was later sentenced to nearly 34 years in prison for his role in the deaths.)

In 2008, the Interior Department declared the polar bear a threatened species because of the loss of Arctic sea ice.

In 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned doctors about a serious rare inflammatory condition in children linked with the coronavirus.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama sought to tarnish Republican Mitt Romney as a corporate titan who got rich by cutting rather than creating jobs; Romney's campaign responded that the former Massachusetts governor alone helped spur more public and private jobs than Obama had.

Five years ago: Emmanuel Macron (eh-mahn-yoo-EHL' mah-KROHN') swept into office as France's new president, pledging to fortify the European Union, redesign French politics and glue together his divided nation. Five days after South Korea elected a president who expressed a desire to reach out to North Korea, Pyongyang sent a challenge to its rival's new leader by test-firing a ballistic missile.

One year ago: Turmoil from the battle between Israel and Hamas spilled over into the West Bank, sparking the most widespread Palestinian protests in years; hundreds of young demonstrators in multiple towns clashed with Israeli troops, who shot and killed at least 11 people, including one who had tried to stab an Israeli soldier. Israel barraged the northern Gaza Strip with tank fire and airstrikes; a Gaza family of six was killed when an airstrike crushed their home in what Israel said was an effort to clear militant tunnels. Demonstrating allegiance to Donald Trump, Republicans elected Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, a Trump stalwart, to a House leadership post that had been held by Trump critic Liz Cheney until she was tossed from that post days earlier.

Today's Birthdays: Photo-realist artist Richard Estes is 90. Actor Dame Sian Phillips is 89. Former Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., is 80. Movie producer George Lucas is 78. Guitarist Gene Cornish is 78. Actor Meg Foster is 74. Movie director Robert Zemeckis is 71. Rock singer David Byrne is 70. Actor Tim Roth is 61. Rock singer Ian Astbury (The Cult) is 60. Rock musician C.C. (aka Cecil) DeVille is 60. Actor Danny Huston is 60. Rock musician Mike Inez (Alice In Chains) is 56. Fabrice Morvan (ex-Milli Vanilli) is 56. R&B singer Raphael Saadiq is 56. Actor Cate Blanchett is 53. Singer Danny Wood (New Kids on the Block) is 53. Movie writer-director Sofia Coppola (KOH'-pah-lah) is 51. Former Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen is 50. Actor Gabriel Mann is 50. Singer Natalie Appleton (All Saints) is 49. Singer Shanice is 49. Actor Carla Jimenez is 48. Rock musician Henry Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 44. Alt-country musician-singer Ketch Secor is 44. Rock singer-musician Dan Auerbach is 43. Rock musician Mike Retondo (Plain White T's) is 41. Actor Amber Tamblyn is 39. Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg is 38. Actor Lina Esco is 37. NFL player Rob Gronkowski is 33. Actor Miranda Cosgrove is 29.