

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 1 of 57

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Adult Mosquito Control done last night in Groton](#)
- [3- GFP Commission Holds June Meeting](#)
- [4- Memorial Day Severe Weather Summary](#)
- [5- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [6- Drought Monitor](#)
- [7- Weather Pages](#)
- [11- Daily Devotional](#)
- [12- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [13- Subscription Form](#)
- [14- News from the Associated Press](#)



Monday, June 6

Senior Menu: Hamburger on bun, oven-roasted potatoes, cucumber salad, ice cream sundae.
5:30 p.m.: Legion hosts Smithy's DH
6 p.m.: U12 at Webster, DH
5:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Britton, DH, (R/W), Nelson Field
5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Britton, DH, (R/W), Nelson Field

Tuesday, June 7

Elementary Library Open 9-11 (Reading time 10 a.m.)
Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, creamy coleslaw, fruit, whole wheat bread.
5:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion hosts Milbank, DH
5:30 p.m.: U12 vs. Hannigan in Aberdeen (north complex), DH
5:30 p.m.: U10 vs. Hannigan in Aberdeen (north complex), DH (W/B)
5:30 p.m.: U8 vs. Hannigan in Aberdeen (north complex), DH (W/B)
6 p.m.: U12 SB hosts Britton, Falk Field, DH
6 p.m.: T-Ball practice

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Saturday, June 4

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

Aberdeen U10 Tournament

Saturday

8:00 Groton vs Bath
10:00 Pheasants vs Jamestown
12:00 Groton vs Huron
2:00 Pheasants vs West Fargo
4:00 Huron vs Bath
6:00 Jamestown vs West Fargo

Sunday, June 5

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.

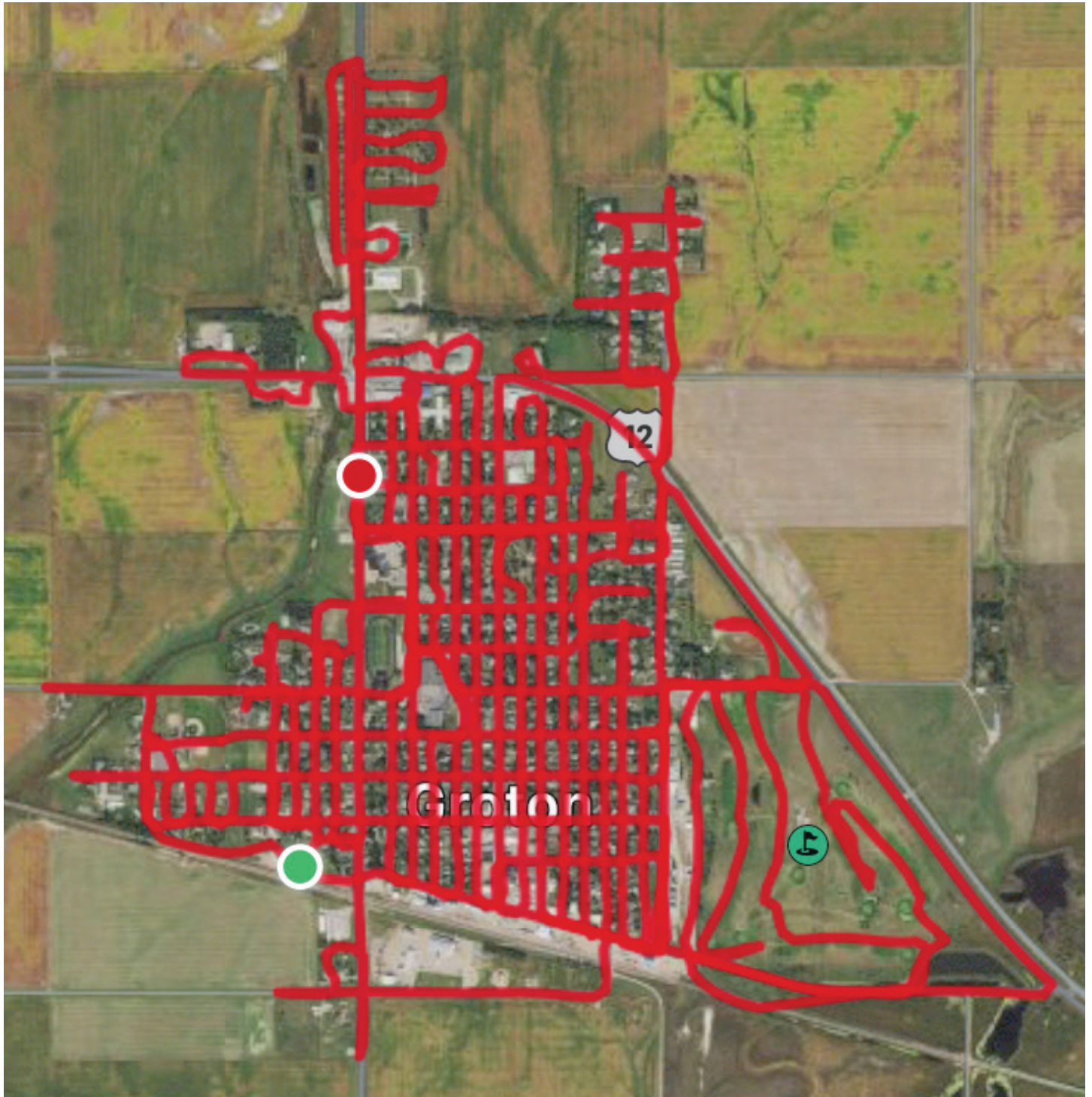
Aberdeen U10 Tournament

8:00 #3 pool A vs #3 Pool B
10:00 #1 pool A vs #2 pool B
12:00 #1 pool B vs #2 pool A
2:00 championship game

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 2 of 57



Adult Mosquito Control done last night in Groton

The City of Groton performed an adult mosquito control last night. Twelve gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used. Wind was SW at 2-5 mph and the temperature started at 65 degrees and dropped to 57 degrees by the time the three-hour control was completed. A total of 39 miles was driven.

GFP Commission Holds June Meeting

PIERRE, S.D.—The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission held their June meeting at the Aberdeen Ramkota, June 2-3.

WILDLIFE PROPOSALS

The Commission continued discussions on several proposals from previous meetings. To view them in their entirety, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information/.

Turkey Hunting Recruitment Licenses

The Commission continued their discussion on the proposal to establish 10 Turkey Hunting Recruitment licenses to be used statewide except for Custer State Park. The benefit of a statewide license includes increasing the areas that can be hunted as not all counties or units have a spring turkey hunting season.

These licenses would be eligible for non-governmental organizations (NGO) that promote wildlife conservation and the recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters. Up to two licenses could be allocated to an individual NGO.

A mentored youth turkey recruitment license sponsored by an NGO would be available to those youth 15 years of age and younger that do not already possess any type of spring turkey hunting license. The sponsoring NGO would cover the cost of the \$5 mentor tag, while assisting the youth through the licensing process.

Fall Turkey Hunting Season

The Commission continued discussions on the proposed the 2022 and 2023 fall turkey hunting seasons. Proposed season dates would be November 1 – January 31. 200 resident and 16 nonresident single tag “any turkey” licenses would be available for the Black Hills and 1,700 single tag and 50 double tag “any turkey” resident licenses and 72 single and 4 double tag “any turkey” nonresident licenses would be available for the prairie units.

Archery and Muzzleloader Deer

The Commission continued discussions on the proposed adjustment to administrative rule and would allow for 1 “antlerless whitetail deer” muzzleloader or archery deer license in only those units that offer firearm antlerless deer licenses. This proposal would also exclude Custer State Park from the archery and muzzleloader deer hunting seasons.

CWD Regulations

The Commission continued discussions on the proposed clean-up of administrative rule, clarifying that wildlife processors must dispose of all cervid (deer and elk) parts with a waste manager provider or permitted landfill.

Mourning Dove Season

The Commission continued their discussions on their proposal to allow for mourning dove hunting at Shadehill State Recreation Area in Perkins County. This would provide additional hunting opportunities without compromising the objectives and services provided of the recreation area.

Firearm and Archery Antelope Hunting Seasons

The Commission continued discussions on their proposal for the 2022-2023 antelope hunting seasons with dates of October 1-16, 2022 and September 30 – October 15, 2023. Proposed tag numbers for the two coming seasons are 2,335 “buck only” licenses and 50 special antelope licenses.

The Commission also proposed the 2022-2023 archery antelope hunting seasons by changing the license types from a license that would allow for the take of a buck or doe antelope, to a license that only allows the harvest of a buck. This season is set with season dates of August 20 – October 31, 2022 (closed during firearm season) and August 19 – October 31, 2023 (closed during firearm season).

Mentored Antelope Hunting Season

The Commission proposed some changes to this season for the licenses to be valid in any open firearm hunting unit west of the Missouri River for private land only.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 4 of 57

Public Comments Currently Being Accepted

If you would like to comment on any of these proposals, visit gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions. Comments can also be mailed to 523 E. Capitol Ave Pierre, SD

To hear the discussion on these proposals, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these proposals in their entirety, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information.

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on July 3.

The next GFP Commission meeting will be held July 7-8 in Spearfish.

Memorial Day Severe Weather Summary

A strong low pressure system tracked from Nebraska northward into eastern South Dakota during the morning and afternoon on Memorial Day, Monday May 30th, 2022. An intense line of severe thunderstorms developed across eastern South Dakota in response, and then tracked northeast into western Minnesota. In addition to damaging straight-line winds and large hail, several fast-moving and/or rain-wrapped tornadoes were produced. The strongest tornado was rated an EF3 in Deuel County with an estimated peak wind speed of 140 mph after it destroyed a transmission tower. Additionally, heavy rains fell on already saturated soils across northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota.

Significant property and tree damage, power outages, river and overland flooding including across many county and secondary roads, and other impacts resulted across the same area that was hit hard by a derecho and tornadoes just two and a half weeks earlier on May 12th.

Seven tornado tracks have been confirmed, however the damage investigation continues. Information remains preliminary and subject to change.

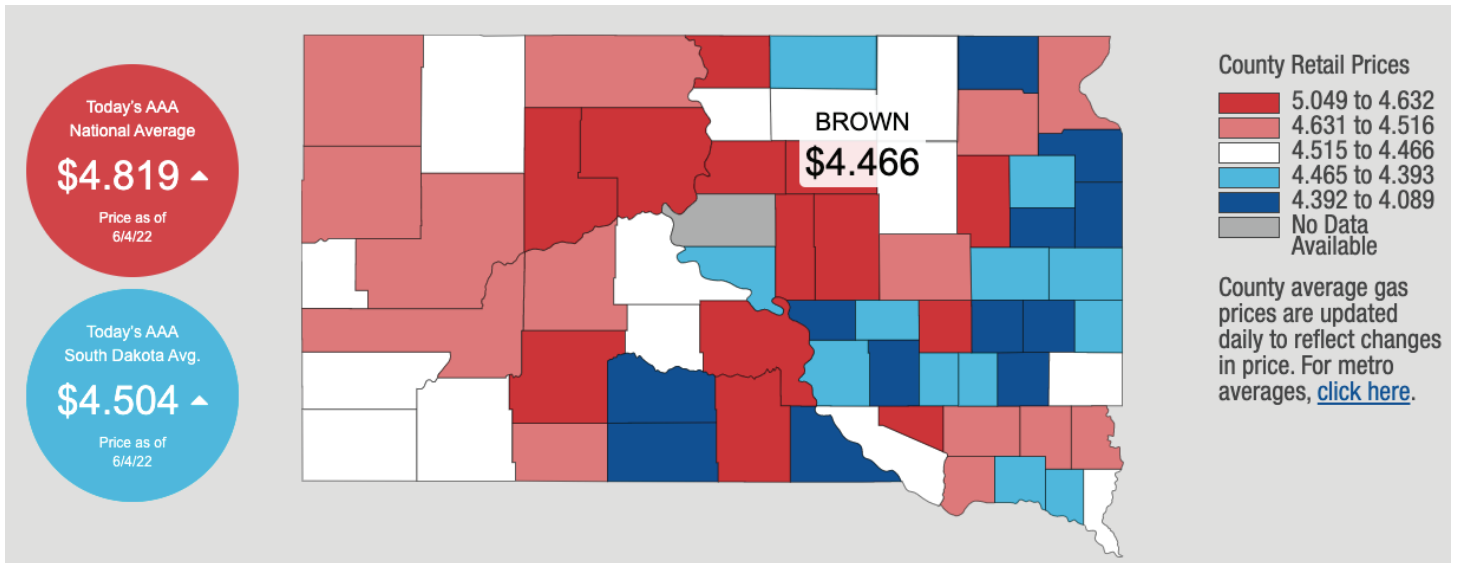
Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 5 of 57

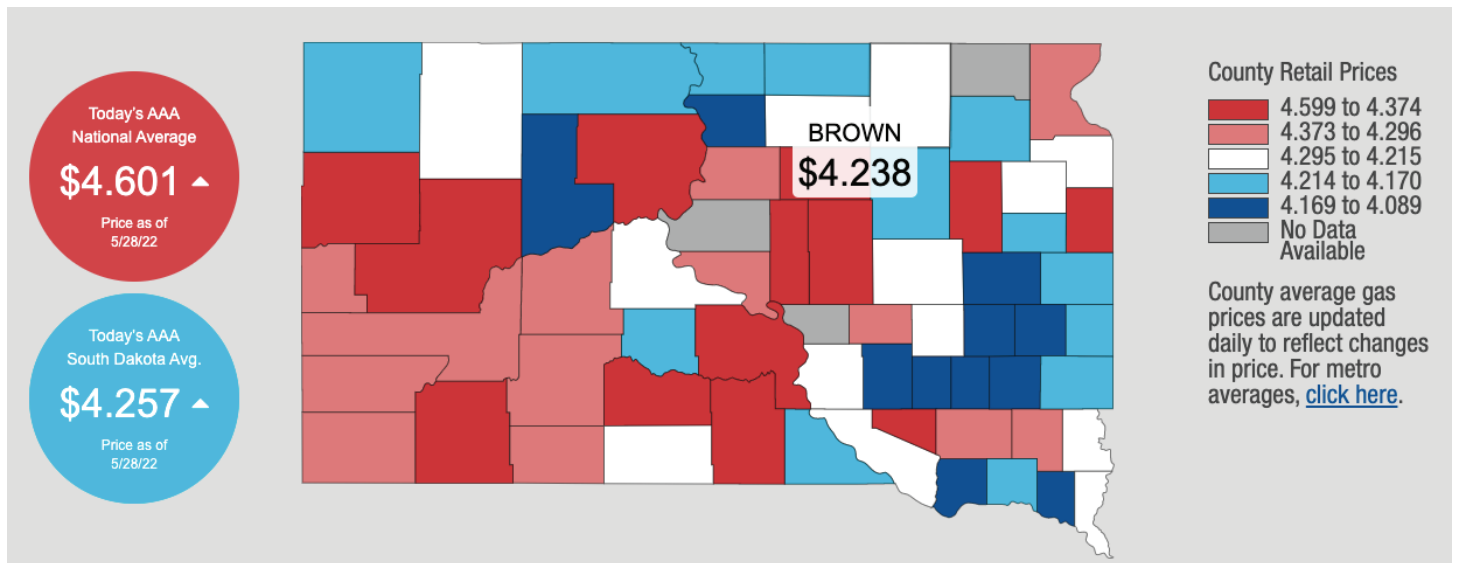
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.504	\$4.598	\$4.996	\$5.214
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.436	\$4.532	\$4.921	\$5.204
Week Ago Avg.	\$4.257	\$4.385	\$4.761	\$5.207
Month Ago Avg.	\$4.034	\$4.136	\$4.527	\$5.314
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.916	\$3.016	\$3.338	\$3.097

This Week



Last Week



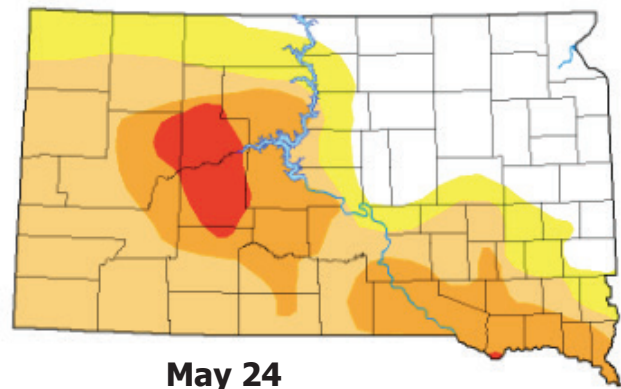
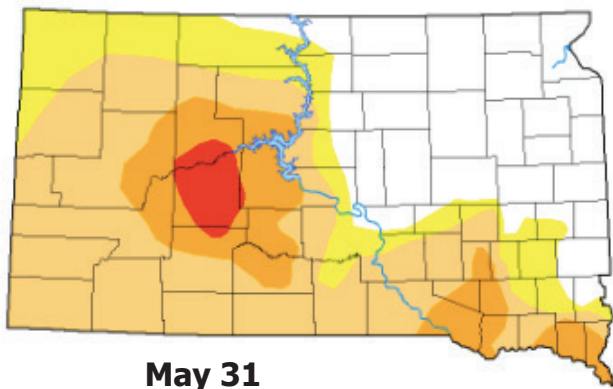
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 6 of 57

Drought Classification



Drought Monitor

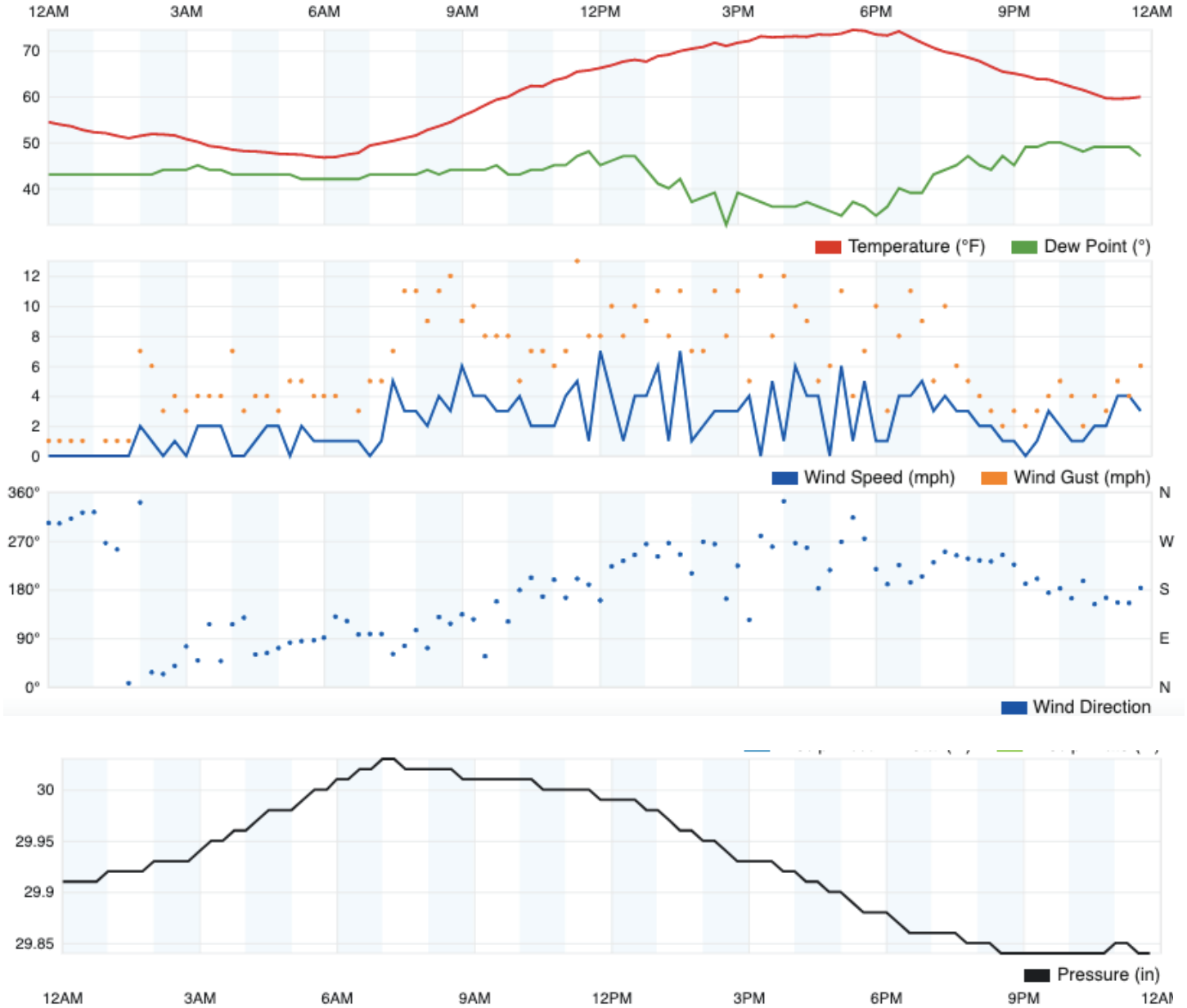


Large-scale improvements to drought conditions and abnormal dryness took place in the High Plains region this week, where widespread rain and mountain snow fell as several storm systems moved through the region. Extreme drought was removed from central Kansas and northeast Nebraska, where soil moisture improved and short- and long-term precipitation deficits lessened. Widespread improvements were also made in South Dakota, where precipitation deficits improved. Rain and mountain snow was also widespread in Colorado recently, leading to improving conditions in both the Rocky Mountains and high plains. Heavy precipitation amounts fell in northern Wyoming and southern Montana, leading to a large swath of improved conditions. Lingering long-term abnormal dryness in western North Dakota also continued to wane, while moderate drought was removed entirely from the west end of the state after precipitation this week. Despite the improving drought conditions, agricultural problems continued in the region. Winter wheat harvest potential in Kansas was reduced by over 25%, while conditions are too wet in parts of Montana and the Dakotas for planting spring wheat.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 7 of 57

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 8 of 57

Today



Partly Sunny

High: 74 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 52 °F

Sunday



Chance
Showers

High: 67 °F

Sunday
Night



Chance
Showers

Low: 48 °F

Monday



Chance
Showers

High: 64 °F

Today

70s

A few showers and thunderstorms, over central SD (20% chance). Dry over northeastern SD & west central MN.



Sunday

60s

Showers over central SD, with scattered showers (20-40% chance) over northeast SD & west central MN. A few thunderstorms possible.



For today, expect highs in the 70s. A few showers and thunderstorms will be possible over central SD, 20 percent chance. Dry weather should prevail over northeastern SD and west central MN. For Sunday, high temperatures will be 5 to 10 degrees cooler, topping out in the 60s. Expect showers over central SD, with scattered showers, 20 to 40 percent chance, over northeast SD and west central MN. A few thunderstorms will be possible, primarily over central South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 9 of 57

Today in Weather History

June 4, 1984: Heavy rains of up to seven inches caused the Bad River to rise over 23 feet in six hours at Fort Pierre. Flash flooding resulted as a dam, 17 miles west of Fort Pierre gave way, and an irrigation dam near town was damaged. Water covered some roads and bridges. Many homes had water damage. Strong thunderstorm winds gusting up to 60 mph downed numerous branches and several signs in Faulk, Edmunds, McPherson, and Brown Counties.

June 4, 1991: Heavy rains of 2 to 5 inches caused street flooding in Harrold. Several county roads in Stanley, Sully, Hughes, and Lyman Counties were closed due to flooding. Some rainfall amounts include 1.83 inches at Oahe Dam; 1.96 inches, 12 miles SSW of Harrold; and 3.20 inches, two miles North of Onaka.

June 4, 1993: An earthquake measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale shook a portion of northeast South Dakota but caused no real damage or injuries. The epicenter of the quake was 22 miles northwest of Morris, Minnesota or 38 miles east of Sisseton and was felt in most of Roberts, Grant, and Deuel Counties. The quake was the first in the area since 1975.

1825: A severe storm of tropical origin swept up the Atlantic Coast during the first week of June 1825 with reports of significant damage from Florida to New York City. Shipping logs told of a disturbance at Santo Domingo on May 28th and Cuba on June 1st. Gales were reported at St. Augustine, Florida on the 2nd. The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald reported "undiminished violence" from the gale force winds for 27 hours, ending on June 4th. The effect of the storm reached well inland. Washington had cold, heavy rain all day on the 4th with high winds laying the crops in the vicinity. The wind also tore up trees by the roots in front of the State House in Philadelphia. This storm impacted the New Jersey Coast and the Long Island area as well with high winds and a two-foot storm surge. A Columbian frigate was driven ashore as were many smaller boats. The largest loss of life occurred along the Long Island shore when a schooner capsized. The entire crew of seven was lost.

1860 - Iowa's Commanche Tornado, with wind speeds estimated in excess of 300 mph, was unquestionably one of the worst experienced by early settlers, with nearly a million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1877: A tornado of estimated F4 intensity touched down just west of Mt. Carmel, Illinois and moved east-northeast, devastating the town. 20 businesses and 100 homes were damaged or destroyed. At least 16 people and as many as 30 were killed, with 100 others injured.

1982 - A four day storm began over New England which produced up to 14 inches of rain in southern Connecticut breaching twenty-three dams and breaking two others. Damage was estimated at more than 276 million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Early morning thunderstorms in south Texas produced 6.5 inches of rain at Hockheim, and five inches at Hallettsville, in just a few hours. Afternoon thunderstorms in Virginia deluged northern Halifax County with 5.5 inches of rain in two hours. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 76 mph at Dusty WA, and wind gusts to 88 mph at Swanquarter NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A dozen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Atlantic City NJ with a reading of 40 degrees. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Glasgow MT and Havre MT with readings of 102 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern Plains Region and the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southern Atlantic Coast Region during the day and into the night. Just four tornadoes were reported, but there were 87 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 10 of 57

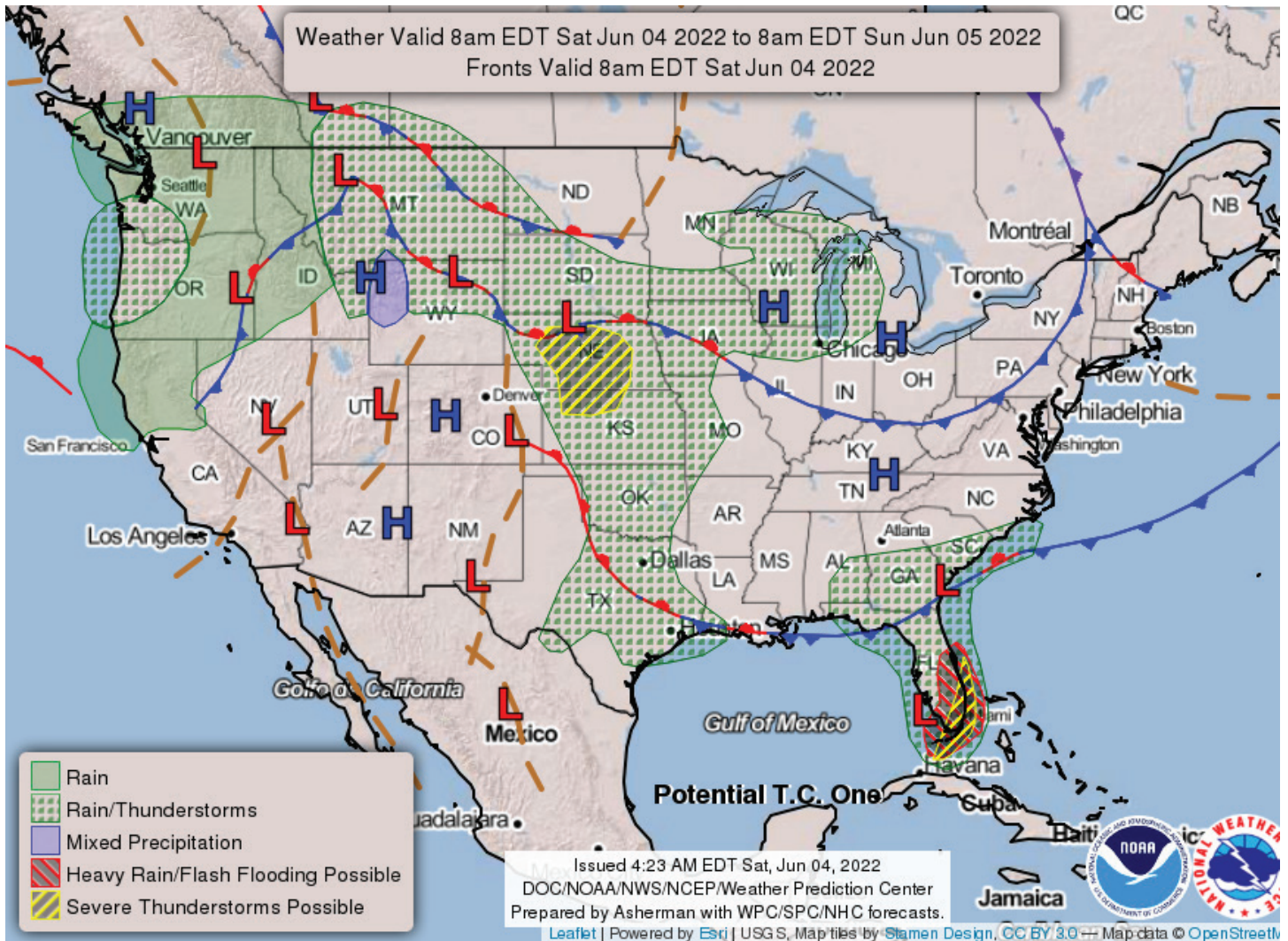
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 74.5 °F
Low Temp: 46.7 °F
Wind: 13 mph
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 34 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 101 in 1933
Record Low: 34 in 1954
Average High: 77°F
Average Low: 52°F
Average Precip in June.: 0.44
Precip to date in June.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 7.62
Precip Year to Date: 11.18
Sunset Tonight: 9:17:47 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43:22 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 11 of 57



Our Limitless Lord

"Understanding," said an angry husband, "is one thing my wife knows nothing about." No doubt, there are many who would make the same statement anytime they feel that they are misunderstood. Not only do we want to be loved, but we all want to be understood as well. And all too often, when we pour out our heart to our dearest friend, it seems that they, too, don't really care.

How precious, then, are the words of the Psalmist: "Great is our Lord and mighty in power, His understanding has no limit." Our God is a God whose understanding is unlimited!

God knows our abilities as well as our possibilities, what we can and cannot do. When we understand and accept that simple fact, we will realize that He is the only one who can direct and guide us each day of our lives. He has given each of us a special skill set and has endowed us with talents and gifts that are uniquely ours and to be used for His glory. So, when He offers us an opportunity to serve Him, He will take the gifts that He has given us and empower us to do what He has called us to do.

God also knows our spiritual limitations. We must never forget for a moment that He alone can deliver us from the temptations of life if we want Him to! If we trust Him and turn to Him, we can be assured that "no temptation will ever overpower us." If, when we are being tempted, we turn to Him for an escape route, He will deliver us from anything that will destroy us.

He is great, mighty and understanding. Trust Him!

Prayer: Lord, when we come to the end of our limits, may we realize that we are just at the beginning of Yours. You understand our hurts better than we do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: Great is our Lord and mighty in power, His understanding has no limit. Psalm 147:5

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 12 of 57

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, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 13 of 57

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

11-16-22-48-59, Mega Ball: 11, Megaplier: 4

(eleven, sixteen, twenty-two, forty-eight, fifty-nine; Mega Ball: eleven; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$207,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 184,000,000

Former U.S. ambassador points finger in Qatar lobbying probe

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

A former high-ranking U.S. ambassador admitted Friday to illegal foreign lobbying on behalf of Qatar after demanding that prosecutors tell him why a retired four-star general who worked with him on the effort has not also been charged.

The dispute involving two Washington power players has highlighted the often-ambiguous boundaries of foreign lobbying laws as well as what prosecutors say were high-level, behind-the-scenes influence dealings with the wealthy Persian Gulf country.

Richard G. Olson, former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, pleaded guilty Friday in Washington on federal charges that include improperly helping Qatar influence U.S. policy in 2017 -- when a diplomatic crisis erupted between the gas-rich monarchy and its neighbors over the country's alleged ties to terror groups and other issues.

Olson had recently argued he's entitled to learn why prosecutors aren't also bringing charges against someone he says he worked side by side with on Qatar: retired Marine Gen. John Allen, who led U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan before being tapped in late 2017 to lead the influential Brookings Institution think tank.

Allen has denied ever working as a Qatari agent and said his efforts on Qatar in 2017 were motivated to prevent a war from breaking out in the Gulf that would put U.S. troops at risk. A statement from his spokesman to The Associated Press on Thursday said Allen has "voluntarily cooperated with the government's investigation."

Olson's lawyers said in court papers that since 2020 he has been seeking to get a lighter sentencing recommendation by extensively cooperating with prosecutors "with the express goal" of bringing charges against Allen. Olson's lawyers said prosecutors "reiterated their belief in the strength of their case against" Allen only to apparently drop their pursuit.

But federal prosecutor Evan Turgeon said at a hearing last week that the government has not "made a prosecutorial decision as to other persons" and disputed how Olson's attorney characterized past discussions. The Justice Department declined to comment on its internal deliberations on Allen.

Olson's lawyers had previously pushed prosecutors to provide copies of Allen's communications with U.S. government officials related to his actions involving Qatar. Friday, Olson's attorney Mike Hannon said prosecutors had provided the requested information — the contents of which are not public — and his client was now ready to plead guilty.

Recent filings in Olson's case provide new details about Allen's role and what actions prosecutors might view as possible crimes. Allen is not named in those filings but identified as "the General" or "Person 3."

U.S. law prohibits individuals from helping a foreign entity influence U.S. policy without registering with the Justice Department. The law, known as the Foreign Agents Registration Act or FARA, was largely unenforced until prosecutors began taking more aggressive action in recent years.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 15 of 57

Typically, FARA violations by themselves do not lead to significant prison time but the law's critics say there are too many unsettled questions about what may constitute a prosecutable offense.

"FARA is an exceptionally broad and vague law that ... sets snares for the unwary, even capturing some of the most sophisticated of Washington players," David Keating of the Institute for Free Speech said in comments to the Justice Department earlier this year.

Notably, Olson pleaded guilty to a violation of State Department policy regarding working for a foreign government within a year of leaving government service, not a FARA violation.

Olson's lawyer said in court last week that federal prosecutors made clear that they were pursuing a FARA case against Allen.

Olson recruited Allen to join him "in providing aid and advice to Qatari government officials with the intent to influence U.S. foreign policy" shortly after the Gulf diplomatic crisis erupted in June 2017, prosecutors said in court filings.

That crisis sparked a heavy spending war between Qatar and rivals Saudi Arabia and the UAE in a battle to win influence in Washington during much of President Donald Trump's administration.

Olson was being paid \$20,000 a month by Imaad Zuberi, a one-time political donor who is currently serving a 12-year prison sentence on corruption charges and who prosecutors say illegally lobbied for Qatar.

Zuberi also agreed to pay Allen an undisclosed fee for his efforts, prosecutors said in Olson's plea deal. Allen's spokesman said the general was never paid.

In mid June 2017, Allen met with Olson and Zuberi at a Washington hotel to explain "how he would conduct the lobbying and public relations campaign," prosecutors said.

A few days later, Olson and Allen flew to Qatar -- at Zuberi's expense -- to meet with the Qatari's ruling emir and other government officials, where the pair explained that they were not representing the U.S. government but "noted that they had the connections with U.S. government officials that placed them in a position to help Qatar," prosecutors wrote.

Allen advised the Qataris on what steps to take, including signing a pending deal to purchase F-15 fighter jets and using a major U.S. military base in Qatar "as leverage to exert influence over U.S. government officials," prosecutors wrote.

Qatar signed a deal to purchase the jets four days after that meeting.

After returning to the U.S., Allen sought the help of then-National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster and his staff to support Qatar's position in the diplomatic crisis, prosecutors said in court filings.

Allen previously said through a spokesman that McMaster had approved of Allen going to Qatar and "offered the assistance of his staff in preparation."

McMaster has not responded to multiple requests for comment.

Olson, Allen and a Qatari government representative also met with members of Congress "for the purpose of convincing the U.S. lawmakers to support Qatar rather than its regional rivals," prosecutors wrote in court records.

Allen's spokesman said previously that the general's work on Qatari issues only lasted three weeks and that it had nothing to do with Brookings.

Qatar has been one of Brookings' biggest donors for the last several years, according to annual reports that don't offer specific figures. A Brookings spokeswoman said Allen decided in 2019 to no longer accept new Qatari funding.

Olson is set to be sentenced Sept. 13.

Memorial Day tornadoes confirmed in Minnehaha County

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The National Weather Service has confirmed two early morning tornadoes struck Minnehaha County during severe storms on Memorial Day.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported Thursday that the NWS confirmed an tornado touched down briefly in Sioux Falls around 2 a.m. It traveled a third of a mile with peak winds of 90 mph. The tornado damaged residential structures and felled multiple trees.

Another tornado touched down about two miles outside of Brandon around the same time. That twister traveled about half-a-mile and had peak winds of 105 mph. It damaged a church roof and toppled trees at a nearby farm.

The NWS rated both twisters as EF-1s on the Enhanced Fujita Scale, which rates tornado intensity from EF-0 to EF-5.

Two future kings set to honor Elizabeth at jubilee concert

LONDON (AP) — Two future monarchs are set to pay tribute to Queen Elizabeth II at a special concert in front of Buckingham Palace on Saturday, the third day of the Platinum Jubilee extravaganza marking her 70 years on the throne.

Prince Charles and Prince William, the queen's son and grandson, are scheduled to address a live audience of 22,000 people and millions more watching on television. The event featuring Diana Ross, Queen + Adam Lambert and Alicia Keys will take place in a temporary amphitheater built around the Victoria Memorial outside the palace.

The 96-year-old monarch isn't expected to attend the nighttime outdoor event with rain in the forecast. Problems moving around, which the palace describes as "episodic mobility issues," have limited the queen's public appearances in recent months.

The sovereign opted not to attend the Epsom Derby on Saturday, the second time in as many days that her troubles in getting around have robbed crowds of a chance to see her. On Friday, the queen skipped a special service of Thanksgiving in her honor at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, were among nearly 50 members of the royal family who gathered to honor the absent head of state. It was their first public appearance in the U.K. since stepping back from royal duties two years ago.

As Ukraine loses troops, how long can it keep up the fight?

By JOHN LEICESTER and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

ZHYTOMYR, Ukraine (AP) — As soon as they had finished burying a veteran colonel killed by Russian shelling, the cemetery workers readied the next hole. Inevitably, given how quickly death is felling Ukrainian troops on the front lines, the empty grave won't stay that way for long.

Col. Oleksandr Makhachek left behind a widow, Elena, and their daughters Olena and Myroslava-Oleksandra. In the first 100 days of war, his grave was the 40th dug in the military cemetery in Zhytomyr, 90 miles (140 kilometers) west of the capital, Kyiv.

He was killed May 30 in the Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine where the fighting is raging. Nearby, the burial notice on the also freshly dug grave of Viacheslav Dvornitskyi says he died May 27. Other graves also showed soldiers killed within days of each other — on May 10, 9th, 7th and 5th. And this is just one cemetery, in just one of Ukraine's cities, towns and villages laying soldiers to rest.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said this week that Ukraine is now losing 60 to 100 soldiers each day in combat. By way of comparison, just short of 50 American soldiers died per day on average in 1968 during the Vietnam War's deadliest year for U.S. forces.

Among the comrades-in-arms who paid respects to the 49-year-old Makhachek at his funeral on Friday was Gen. Viktor Muzhenko, the Ukrainian Armed Forces' chief of general staff until 2019. He warned that losses could worsen.

"This is one of the critical moments in the war, but it is not the peak," Muzhenko told The Associated Press. "This is the most significant conflict in Europe since World War II. That explains why the losses are so great. In order to reduce losses, Ukraine now needs powerful weapons that match or even surpass Russian weaponry. This would enable Ukraine to respond in kind."

Concentrations of Russian artillery are causing many of the casualties in the eastern regions that Moscow has focused on since its initial invasion launched Feb. 24 failed to take Kyiv.

Retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the former commanding general of U.S. Army forces in Europe, described

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 17 of 57

the Russian strategy as a "medieval attrition approach" and said that until Ukraine gets promised deliveries of U.S., British and other weapons to destroy and disrupt Russian batteries, "these kinds of casualties are going to continue."

"This battlefield is so much more lethal than what we all became accustomed to over the 20 years of Iraq and Afghanistan, where we didn't have numbers like this," he said in an AP phone interview.

"That level of attrition would include leaders, sergeants," he added. "They are a lot of the brunt of casualties because they are the more exposed, constantly moving around trying to do things."

Makhachek, a military engineer, led a detachment that laid minefields and other defenses, said Col. Ruslan Shutov, who attended the funeral of his friend of more than 30 years.

"Once the shelling began, he and a group hid in a shelter. There were four people in his group, and he told them to hide in the dugout. He hid in another. Unfortunately, an artillery shell hit the dugout where he was hiding."

Ukraine had about 250,000 men and women in uniform before the war and was in the process of adding another 100,000. The government hasn't said how many have died in more than 14 weeks of fighting.

Nobody really knows the number of Ukrainian civilians who have been killed or how many combatants have died on either side. Claims of casualties by government officials — who may sometimes exaggerate or lowball their figures for public relations reasons — are all but impossible to verify.

Western analysts estimate far higher Russian military casualties, in the many thousands. Still, as Ukraine's losses mount, the grim mathematics of war require that it find replacements. With a population of 43 million, it has manpower.

"The problem is recruiting, training and getting them on the front line," said retired U.S. Marine Col. Mark Cancian, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"If the war is now moving into a long-term attrition struggle, then you have to build systems to get replacements," he said. "This has been a difficult moment for every army in combat."

Muzhenko, the Ukrainian general, said Zelenskyy's admission of high casualties would further galvanize Ukrainian morale and that more Western weaponry would help turn the tide.

"The more Ukrainians know about what is happening at the front, the more the will to resist will grow," he said. "Yes, the losses are significant. But with the help of our allies, we can minimize and reduce them and move on to successful offensives. This will require powerful weapons."

Police patrol Hong Kong park to enforce Tiananmen vigil ban

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Dozens of police officers patrolled Hong Kong's Victoria Park on Saturday after authorities for a third consecutive year banned public commemoration of the anniversary of the deadly Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989.

For decades, an annual candlelight vigil was held in the park to remember the violent suppression by army troops of student protesters demanding greater democracy in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Hundreds, if not thousands, were killed.

The ban is seen as part of a move to snuff out political dissent and a sign that Hong Kong is losing its freedoms as Beijing tightens its grip over the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The vigil organizers, the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, disbanded last year after many of its leaders were arrested on suspicion of violating the national security law, which was imposed following massive pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Authorities have cited risks from the coronavirus for banning the public commemoration over the past three years. Critics say the pandemic is used as an excuse to infringe on the right to assemble.

A government statement Friday said that parts of Victoria Park, which traditionally served as the venue for the candlelight vigil, will be closed as it may be used for "illegal activities." The move was to "prevent any unauthorized assemblies" in the park and to reduce the possibility of COVID-19 spread.

Earlier in the week, a police superintendent warned that anyone who gathered in a group "at the same

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 18 of 57

place, with the same time and with a common purpose to express certain views" could be considered part of an unauthorized assembly.

Since the British handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997, the city has been governed under a "one country, two systems" framework that gives it freedoms not found on the mainland, including freedom of speech and assembly.

For years, Hong Kong and Macao were the only places on Chinese soil allowed to commemorate the Tiananmen crackdown. In China, keywords such as "Tiananmen massacre" and "June 4" are strictly censored online, and people are not allowed to publicly mark the events.

Hong Kong's crackdown on the Tiananmen commemorations has drawn criticism internationally.

"Today, the struggle for democracy and freedom continues to echo in Hong Kong, where the annual vigil to commemorate the massacre in Tiananmen Square was banned by the PRC and Hong Kong authorities in an attempt to suppress the memories of that day," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement, referring to the People's Republic of China.

Blinken said the U.S. would continue to speak out and promote accountability on human rights abuses by China, including those in Hong Kong, against Muslim minorities in the western Xinjiang region as well as Tibet.

"To the people of China and to those who continue to stand against injustice and seek freedom, we will not forget June 4," he said.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry wrote on its Facebook page that "when this time of year comes around, there is a lot one can't say, a lot one can't write, and a lot one can't even look up on the internet."

The post encouraged Chinese citizens who use a VPN to access Facebook, which is blocked in China, and search for information on the Tiananmen Square massacre "to see what their country is hiding from them."

"We hope that no more will the individual be sacrificed for the party, and that freedom, democracy and human rights can become our common language with them," the ministry's post said.

Amid the ban on events in Hong Kong, overseas gatherings and seminars in the U.S., Taipei, Prague and elsewhere have taken on larger significance, with calls online encouraging people to participate.

In recent years, institutions including universities have also removed sculptures and artwork that mark the Tiananmen massacre to comply with a harsh national security law that Beijing imposed on the city in June 2020.

Authorities have been using the law to crack down on the opposition, with over 150 people arrested on suspicion of offences that include subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion to intervene in the city's affairs.

In December 2021, a sculpture called "Pillar of Shame," which depicts torn and twisted bodies symbolizing the lives lost during the massacre, was taken down at the University of Hong Kong. Officials said that no approval had been obtained to display the sculpture.

A day later, two other universities in the city removed monuments related to the commemoration of the Tiananmen massacre, citing similar reasons as well as legal issues.

Last week, Jens Galschiot, the artist who created "Pillar of Shame," unveiled a full-scale replica of the 8-meter- (26 foot) tall sculpture at the University of Oslo in Norway.

NATO chief speaks with Erdogan about Finland, Sweden joining

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has met with Finland's prime minister and spoken to Turkey's president as he seeks to overcome Turkish resistance to Finland and Sweden joining the alliance.

Stoltenberg, who visited Washington this week, tweeted late Friday that he met with Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin while there and discussed "the need to address Turkey's concerns and move forward" with the Finnish and Swedish membership applications.

Russia's war in Ukraine pushed the Nordic countries to apply to join NATO, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accuses Sweden and Finland of supporting Kurdish militants deemed by Turkey to be ter-

rorists.

Stoltenberg said he had a "constructive phone call" with Erdogan, calling Turkey a "valued ally" and praising Turkish efforts to broker a deal to ensure the safe transportation of grain supplies from Ukraine amid global food shortages caused by Russia's invasion. Stoltenberg tweeted that he and Erdogan would continue their dialogue, without elaborating.

Erdogan's office released a statement in which it said the president had emphasized that Sweden and Finland should "make it clear that they have stopped supporting terrorism," have lifted defense export restrictions on Turkey and are "ready to show alliance solidarity."

The Nordic states, among other countries, imposed limitations on arms sales in the wake of Turkey's 2019 military incursion into northern Syria.

The NATO chief's diplomatic efforts came before a gathering of senior officials from Sweden, Finland and Turkey next week in Brussels, where NATO is based, to discuss Turkey's opposition to the applications.

Pageant participants in queen's jubilee celebrate diverse UK

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — As designer Clary Salandy pushes open the kitchen door at a nondescript community center in west London, her visitors pause, astonished by what they find.

A dozen giraffe heads, crafted in shades of orange and brown with top hats and flowing eyelashes, smile in a tidy row atop the commercial-grade stove, while a pair of zebras peer out from a corner near the refrigerator.

That sense of surprise is exactly what Salandy hopes people will experience on Sunday, when the giraffes and zebras join a troupe of dancing elephants and flamingos outside Buckingham Palace as part of the pageant that will cap off four days of festivities celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne. In the meantime, the plastic foam beasts will remain locked in the kitchen for safekeeping.

Salandy and her team at Mahogany Carnival Arts want their playful reimagining of the setting where the young Princess Elizabeth learned she was queen in 1952, while on a wildlife expedition in Kenya, to spark a sense of fun and fantasy in a nation recovering from the coronavirus pandemic.

They want, in short, to inspire joy.

"When you see it, you should go, 'Wow! You know, that's amazing!'" Salandy said. "We're going to lift people out of COVID and take them forward when they finish. People should feel positive that life is coming back and we're going to move forward and back into enjoying our lives."

That message will be delivered by a group of 250 artists and performers from the African-Caribbean community, which was particularly hit hard by the pandemic and is now being squeezed by the cost-of-living crisis.

But the performers want to reach out to everyone with a presentation that celebrates the diversity of Britain and the Commonwealth.

Children will become swans, older people will zoom around in mobility scooters decked out as flamingos and dancers will bring the giraffes and zebras to life, perhaps even to mingle with the crowds.

Another group of dancers will unite to form the queen's coronation robe, with the symbols of every major faith and nods to all 54 Commonwealth nations woven into its purple and white fabric.

The dances and costumes — really wearable sculptures — grow out of the traditions of Carnival as it is celebrated in the Caribbean. That heritage inspired the Notting Hill Carnival, a celebration of Caribbean culture that has grown into Europe's largest street festival. The end of summer party was canceled the last two years because of the pandemic.

Artist Carl Gabriel, who is collaborating with Mahogany, is still putting the finishing touches on an 85-kilogram (nearly 200-pound) bust of the queen, complete with crown and diamond necklace, that will form the centerpiece of the performance. On its plinth, it is four meters (13 feet) tall.

Gabriel has spent months building the sculpture using the traditional technique of wire-bending together with his own innovations. Created by painstakingly bending bits of wire around a metal frame using an

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 20 of 57

assortment of pliers and hammers, the almost finished work resembles a giant macrame project. After he donned safety glasses and a leather apron at his studio on London, he said he wants the work to have meaning for the queen — and many others besides.

"I feel a lot of people are suffering," Gabriel said. "The least I could do is provide those who suffered a hard time some enjoyment by presenting the work to them."

At its heart, the performance is a celebration of the queen's 70 years of service, said Nicola Cummings, a costumer maker and a teacher at Queen's Park Community School, who is working with 24 young dancers. The queen is at the heart of it all.

"Every visit that she's ever been on, every time that she's come out, she's always represented the country at its best. We've never seen her looking scruffy," Cummings said. "For that alone, you know, we've got to give back now. Here we are. We're showing her our best."

But the performance also carries a message of rejuvenation.

Mahogany's community was an epicenter of the first outbreak of COVID-19, and the months of preparation for the jubilee have lifted the performers, many of whom lost family members during the pandemic.

Just as the queen promised the nation at the height of the pandemic that people would meet their friends and families again, so the performers are celebrating the ability to dance again as part of a community — a group even tighter now than before.

Cummings will be thinking about her father, who was also involved in carnivals. He died of COVID-19 last year.

"I feel like I'm representing him in a way," she said, unable to hold back the tears. "This is almost like tribute to him."

In eastern Ukraine, keeping the lights on is a dangerous job

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

BAKHMUT, Ukraine (AP) — As the fighting in eastern Ukraine inches forward, Russian attacks are knocking out power, water and gas to entire towns and cities — and the utility crews sent to repair the smashed transmission lines and pipes are finding themselves in the middle of the shelling.

Crews sometimes arrive at a location only to be forced to retreat because of the fighting, officials say. Some villages are impossible to reach.

"It is dangerous, because we can hear the shells whistling above us," said Sergii Marokhin, a water systems engineer in the town of Bakhmut, which has come under increased shelling recently as Russian forces press their offensive in the Donetsk region of the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland.

Shelling the day before had damaged water pipes in a nearby village and in Bakhmut itself that he and his crew had been repairing that morning. There was a sewage pipe to fix, and damage to water lines in other nearby villages.

Even on quiet days, there is still regular maintenance work to be done.

"People still go to work during the war," he said with a shrug.

In some hard-hit places, people have been forced to rely on makeshift outdoor ovens and stoves built out of bricks and stones.

"As of today, half of the city is without water. The other half of the city takes water from boreholes," Oleksandr Marchenko, deputy head of the Bakhmut military administration, said Wednesday. A dam to the north had been blown up, drying up the canal that runs past Bakhmut, he said.

The city has a backup water supply, but downed power lines disrupted the pumping of the water. Engineers hoped to repair the damage if it was safe to do so.

"Unfortunately, the city gets bombed every day," Marchenko said. As if to prove his point, mortar shells whistled over his head, sending him diving onto a grassy riverbank for cover.

The mortar fire landed with a thump in the northern part of the city, sending up puffs of black smoke.

"There is no gas, no electricity, no water!" thundered Viktor Paramonov as he and a few others on the edge of Bakhmut prepared to cook on a makeshift open-air stove consisting of a wood fire and a metal

plate balanced on bricks. "There is nothing."

A nearby construction materials factory had been destroyed in bombing a few days earlier. In mid-May, the apartment building next to his was struck, collapsing part of it.

Farther north in Sloviansk, a generator whirred in city hall after power was knocked out because of high-voltage lines downed by fighting just to the east. The water supply was also cut.

"The repair crews have to go to the areas of combat operations, which is dangerous," said Vadym Lyakh, head of Sloviansk's military administration.

City authorities delivered water from reservoirs to the Sloviansk's inhabitants, who number around 30,000, down from a prewar 100,000, he said. Others used communal water pumps.

Behind a series of apartment buildings pockmarked by shrapnel from a recent rocket strike, residents filled buckets and plastic bottles from an old yellow pump in the street.

The pump takes too much strength to operate, grumbled an older man. Some women have to wait for a man to come by and work the lever, he said, as he put together a small metal stove to cook lunch outdoors.

Online pro-gun extremism: 'Cool for active shooter stuff'

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

The young man in the jeans and sunglasses proudly shows off his gun in the YouTube video, then instructs his 1 million subscribers how to fit an extra clip in his gun belt, and offers a chilling observation.

"Pretty cool for active shooter stuff, if you need extra mags."

It's a typical video, one of thousands teaching military-style training and tactics to civilian gun owners, offering instructions on silencers and grenade launchers, on shooting from vehicles or into buildings. Other websites sell ghost gun kits, gas masks and body armor.

"You shouldn't be scared of the NRA. You should be scared of us," one online ghost gun dealer Tweeted last week.

As Americans reel from repeated mass shootings, law enforcement officials and experts on extremism are taking increasing notice of the sprawling online space devoted to guns and gun rights: gun forums, tactical training videos, websites that sell unregistered gun kits and social media platforms where far-right gun owners swap practical tips with talk of dark plots to take their weapons.

It's an ecosystem rich with potential recruits for extremist groups exploiting the often blurry line separating traditional support for a Constitutional right from militant anti-government movements that champion racism and violence.

White supremacists have carried out most of the deadliest attacks on U.S. soil in the last five years, including a 2018 shooting inside a Pittsburgh synagogue and a 2019 rampage in which a gunman targeting Hispanics inside a Texas Walmart killed 23 people.

The gunman who perpetrated last month's rampage in Buffalo, for example, claimed in a rambling racist diatribe that he was radicalized when pandemic boredom led him to far-right social media groups and tactical training videos he found online.

One of the companies specifically cited by the gunman sells firearm accessories and operates popular social media channels boasting hundreds of training videos. The videos cover topics like shooting from cars, assaulting a building, using gas masks while shooting, and night vision goggles.

"I think we're going to see an increase in these kinds of attacks," said Kurt Braddock, a professor and extremism researcher at the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab at American University. "Until we're able to figure out a way to address this, this kind of disinformation is going to keep spreading, and with it the risk of increased radicalization and violence."

Elected leaders in some states are considering how to address the internet's role in radicalizing extremists. New York lawmakers, for example, recently introduced legislation to require social media companies to set policies on "hateful conduct" and to create mechanisms for users to report disturbing posts they may read.

New York Attorney General Letitia James initiated an investigation into some of the platforms used by

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 22 of 57

the Buffalo gunman, who streamed his attack on Twitch, which is owned by Amazon. Twitch pulled the livestream after about two minutes.

Federal authorities have also taken notice, increasing funding for investigations into domestic terrorism, a challenge that FBI Director Christopher Wray last year described as "metastasizing." But there's little law enforcement can do but monitor as extremists use the threat of gun control to recruit new members.

Extremists paint any effort to regulate firearms as the prelude to widespread gun seizures, according to Callum Hood, director of research at the Center for Countering Digital Hate, a UK-based organization that researches online extremism and abuse.

"The message quickly becomes 'the government is coming to take your guns and leave you undefended,'" Hood said. That's despite the obvious political challenges that even modest attempts at gun control face in the U.S. Despite a long and growing list of mass shootings, gun rights have not been restricted in any significant way in the U.S. in decades.

Rather than be under threat, guns are flourishing. Since the year 2000, the year after Columbine school shooting in Colorado, the number of firearms manufactured in the U.S. has tripled. There are now an estimated 400 million guns in the U.S. — more than one for everyone in the country — giving the nation the world's highest gun ownership rate.

Gun manufacturers and industry groups like the National Rifle Association bear some responsibility for unfounded conspiracy theories about federal plots to seize American's guns, according to Braddock.

"What's the first rule in salesmanship? It's to create the need for the item. We think about guns as something different — and they are because they're instruments of violence — but they're also commodities sold in huge quantities," Braddock said. "They're creating the illusion of need."

Contacted by the Associated Press, one website selling ghost gun kits responded with a statement saying "all questions" about regulating firearms amount to "naked attempts to disarm traditional Americans, weaponize the government against them, and subject them to the ignorant and vicious tools of federal power."

While some of the creators of tactical training videos posted on platforms like YouTube say their intended audience is law enforcement, others say their subscriber base is mostly those looking to arm themselves against the government.

Despite their alarm, law enforcement officials and experts on extremism caution there's little to do about the growing online spaces devoted to military-style weaponry unless they find evidence of illegal gun sales or other crimes.

For their part, tech companies and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter say they have rules to prohibit violent threats, hate speech and other content that poses a direct harm. Some platforms also prohibit the sale of firearms.

Further restrictions on content about guns or even extremism will only backfire anyway, according to Amy Cooter, an expert on militias. While efforts to ban users might be successful in the short term, they're bound to fail as those users flee to other platforms with less moderation.

"If we want to reduce the size of the movement, de-platforming is really effective," Cooter said. "But if we want to de-radicalize it, it is not. The most extreme elements will find other ways to stay connected."

LGBTQ people urge Democrats to forcefully reject GOP attacks

By JEFF McMILLAN Associated Press

"The T stands for transgender," a teacher explains in a video on a Maine Department of Education website launched during the coronavirus pandemic.

"A transgender person is someone who the doctors made a mistake about when they were born," the teacher says in the lesson plan targeted at kindergartners. "But some people, when they get a little bit older, realize what the doctors said was not right."

Republicans later produced an ad accusing Democratic Gov. Janet Mills, who is running for reelection

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 23 of 57

against GOP former Gov. Paul LePage, of using state money to create "radical school lessons." Within hours, the lesson disappeared from the website, and Mills' spokesperson said the governor was on board with its removal.

While most Democrats support the rights, safety and visibility of LGBTQ adults and children, they're struggling to counter a barrage of GOP attacks on LGBTQ people, particularly transgender people. With measured responses and occasional capitulation, Democrats like Mills are aiming to avoid getting sucked further into culture wars that serve mostly to galvanize the Republican base.

But as Democrats largely avoid direct confrontations, some LGBTQ people say they feel abandoned.

"Our lives and our existence are being used as political fodder to ramp up the GOP base, and they're not coming to our defense," said Deja Alvarez, a transgender woman who finished third in the Democratic primary in a heavily LGBTQ state legislative district in Philadelphia. "They're not rallying the troops and saying, 'Hey, we can't stand for this.'"

Democrats are hardly silent on LGBTQ issues.

As Pride month began this week, President Joe Biden tweeted his support for LGBTQ rights. He recently named Karine Jean-Pierre as the first openly gay White House press secretary and was critical of Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis this year after he signed legislation to ban the discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade.

Even after she distanced herself from the Department of Education video, Mills released a statement this week ticking through LGBTQ-friendly legislation she has signed. She insisted that if she is reelected, Maine "will remain a safe and welcoming place to live for LGBTQ people."

And in Wisconsin, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers warned that if he loses in November, Republicans will take steps to ban books, especially those with LGBTQ themes.

Evers' approach is one activists say more Democrats should embrace this election year. They want to see candidates go beyond prepared statements celebrating Pride month and instead place LGBTQ issues more at the center of the campaign while warning of the specific consequences of Republican victories.

"These are the kinds of actions we need people to take," Alvarez said, "but not just because it's Pride month."

The problem may be that even allies are not prepared to speak on the issues, which allowed the framing of LGBTQ people as a threat to catch on, said Fran Hutchins, executive director of the advocacy group Equality Federation.

In this election cycle, Republicans have zeroed in on the discussions banned by the Florida bill dubbed by opponents as "Don't Say Gay"; the participation of transgender students in competitive sports, even though such conflicts are rare; and gender-affirming care for children.

"The root of why this is happening is a real lack of familiarity with and lack of understanding for trans folks and what it's like to be transgender," Hutchins said.

One notable exception has been Mallory McMorrow, a Democratic state senator from Michigan who gave an impassioned speech in response to an invocation from a Republican lawmaker who claimed McMorrow, who is running for reelection, wanted to "groom" and "sexualize" kindergarteners.

The video of McMorrow's reaction speech and a related Twitter thread were widely celebrated, but there remains a sense — even by McMorrow — that she fell on a sword other Democrats are dodging.

"There is a difference between politics and outright hate," she said in April, pondering the reaction to her speech. "I think people are frustrated that elected officials haven't done enough to call that out, that maybe Democrats are afraid of talking about religion and faith openly and honestly and calling hate what it is."

Labeling education about sexual orientation and gender identity as "grooming" connotes the methods sex offenders use to molest children, and is part of a push by conservatives to speak to parents' fears by equating such education with pornography and pedophilia.

The teacher in the Maine video, Kailina Mills — no relation to the governor — said in a Facebook post that she has taught transgender and nonbinary preschoolers and that they deserve to be represented in the curriculum, the Portland Press Herald reported.

"Public schools are for everyone and should, therefore, include everyone," the teacher said.

When the narrative that such issues are inappropriate or dangerous becomes embedded in the minds of voters, pushing back can indeed be politically problematic. But activists said there are larger issues to consider.

"It goes well for candidates when they stand up and say what their real values are and say what they believe about what's really going on with legislation," said Liz Seaton, policy director for the National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund. "When they speak the truth from values, they will be speaking from their heart, and their constituents will respond."

Annise Parker, a former Houston mayor who is now CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund and Institute, a nonpartisan organization that works on behalf of LGBTQ candidates, agreed that LGBTQ allies running for office have a responsibility to "stand up and speak out when any of those marginalized communities are attacked."

Political observers and activists noted parallels in today's rhetoric with that around same-sex marriage in the 1990s and 2000s.

It was only 10 years ago that former President Barack Obama — on the heels of Biden, his vice president — endorsed same-sex marriage. That was 16 years after another Democratic president, Bill Clinton, signed the law that blocked it.

Both presidents were running for reelection and may have been hostages to public opinion, which by Obama's time had swung the other way. Same-sex marriage soon became legal throughout the United States, and the public now sees the sky didn't fall as predicted, advocates said.

But now "conservative forces are using the tactics of 'othering' us very effectively again ... and they are making trans activists look radical when all they're looking for is the right to exist," said Jonathan Lovitz, a gay man who ran against Alvarez and other candidates in last month's Democratic primary in Philadelphia and placed second.

A poll released in April by the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that overall, Americans lean slightly toward expanding discussions of sexuality in K-12 classrooms. And some observers say it's only a matter of time before today's anti-LGBTQ rhetoric stops working in Republicans' favor.

Lovitz encouraged Democrats to set aside political concerns as LGBTQ people feel increasingly targeted.

"Be a vocal and visible ally even if it costs you endorsements and donations. Stand up for what you believe in; otherwise you're not an elected official, you're just a weather vane," he said. "We don't need fair-weather friends right now."

Deadly secret: Electronic warfare shapes Russia-Ukraine war

By OLEKSANDR STASHEVSKYI and FRANK BAJAK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — On Ukraine's battlefields, the simple act of powering up a cellphone can beckon a rain of deathly skyfall. Artillery radar and remote controls for unmanned aerial vehicles may also invite fiery shrapnel showers.

This is electronic warfare, a critical but largely invisible aspect of Russia's war against Ukraine. Military commanders largely shun discussing it, fearing they'll jeopardize operations by revealing secrets.

Electronic warfare technology targets communications, navigation and guidance systems to locate, blind and deceive the enemy and direct lethal blows. It is used against artillery, fighter jets, cruise missiles, drones and more. Militaries also use it to protect their forces.

It's an area where Russia was thought to have a clear advantage going into the war. Yet, for reasons not entirely clear, its much-touted electronic warfare prowess was barely seen in the war's early stages in the chaotic failure to seize the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.

It has become far more of a factor in fierce fighting in eastern Ukraine, where shorter, easier-to-defend supply lines let Russia move electronic warfare gear closer to the battlefield.

"They are jamming everything their systems can reach," said an official of Aerorozvidka, a reconnaissance team of Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicle tinkerers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of safety concerns. "We can't say they dominate, but they hinder us greatly."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 25 of 57

A Ukrainian intelligence official called the Russian threat "pretty severe" when it comes to disrupting reconnaissance efforts and commanders' communications with troops. Russian jamming of GPS receivers on drones that Ukraine uses to locate the enemy and direct artillery fire is particularly intense "on the line of contact," he said.

Ukraine has scored some successes in countering Russia's electronic warfare efforts. It has captured important pieces of hardware — a significant intelligence coup — and destroyed at least two multi-vehicle mobile electronic warfare units.

Its own electronic warfare capability is hard to assess. Analysts say it has markedly improved since 2014, when Russia seized Crimea and instigated a separatist revolt in eastern Ukraine. But there are setbacks. Last week, Russia claimed it destroyed a Ukrainian electronic intelligence center in the southeastern town of Dniprovske. The claim could not be independently confirmed, and Ukrainian officials did not respond to a request for comment.

Ukraine has also made effective use of technology and intelligence from the United States and other NATO members. Such information helped Ukraine sink the battle cruiser Moskva. Allied satellites and surveillance aircraft help from nearby skies, as does billionaire Elon Musk's Starlink satellite communications network.

Electronic war has three basic elements: probe, attack and protect. First, intelligence is gathered by locating enemy electronic signals. On attack, "white noise" jamming disables and degrades enemy systems, including radio and cellphone communications, air defense and artillery radars. Then there is spoofing, which confuses and deceives. When it works, munitions miss their targets.

"Operating on a modern battlefield without data is really hard," said retired Col. Laurie Buckhout, a former U.S. Army electronic warfare chief. Jamming "can blind and deafen an aircraft very quickly and very dangerously, especially if you lose GPS and radar and you're a jet flying at 600 miles an hour."

All of which explains the secrecy around electronic warfare.

"It is an incredibly classified field because it is highly dependent on evolving, bleeding-edge technologies where gains can be copied and erased very quickly," said James Stidham, a communications security expert who has consulted for the U.S. State and Homeland Security departments.

Ukraine learned hard lessons about electronic warfare in 2014 and 2015, when Russia overwhelmed its forces with it. The Russians knocked drones out of the sky and disabled warheads, penetrated cellphone networks for psychological ops and zeroed in on Ukrainian armor.

One Ukrainian officer told Christian Brose, an aide to the late U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., how Russian info warriors tricked a commander into returning a wireless call from his mother. When he did, they geolocated him in mid-call and killed him with precision rockets, Brose wrote in the book "The Kill Chain."

The U.S. also experienced Russia's electronic warfare in action in Syria, where the adversaries have backed opposing sides in the civil war. In 2018, U.S. Special Operations chief Gen. Raymond Thomas described how U.S. pilots' communications were regularly "knocked down" in Syria in the "most aggressive" electronic warfare environment on the planet. Russia's advanced systems are designed to blind U.S. Airborne Warning and Control Systems, or AWACS, aircraft — the eyes and ears of battlefield commanders — as well as cruise missiles and spy satellites.

In the current war, electronic warfare has become a furious theater of contention.

Aerorozvidka has modified camera-equipped drones to pinpoint enemy positions and drop mortars and grenades. Hacking is also used to poison or disable enemy electronics and collect intelligence.

Ukrainian officials say their electronic warfare capabilities have improved radically since 2015. They include the use of encrypted U.S. and Turkish communications gear for a tactical edge. Ukraine has advanced so much it exports some of its technology.

Russia has engaged in GPS jamming in areas from Finland to the Black Sea, said Lt. Col. Tyson Wetzel, an Air Force fellow at the Atlantic Council. One regional Finnish carrier, Transaviabaltica, had to cancel flights on one route for a week as a result. Russian jamming has also disrupted Ukrainian television broadcasting, said Frank Backes, an executive with California-based Kratos Defense, which has satellite ground stations in the region.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 26 of 57

Yet in the war's early days, Russia's use of electronic warfare was less effective and extensive than anticipated. That may have contributed to its failure to destroy enough radar and anti-aircraft units to gain air superiority.

Russia's defense ministry did not respond to a request for comment for this article.

Some analysts believe Russian commanders held back units fearing the units would be captured. At least two were seized. One was a Krasukha-4, which a U.S. Army database says is designed to jam satellite signals as well as surveillance radar and radar-guided weapons from more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) away. The other: the more advanced Borisoglebsk-2, which can jam drone guidance systems and radio-controlled land mines.

Russia may have also limited the use of electronic warfare early in the conflict because of concerns that ill-trained or poorly motivated technicians might not operate it properly.

"What we're learning now is that the Russians eventually turned it off because it was interfering with their own communications so much," said retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, a former U.S. Army commander for Europe.

The communications problems were evident with many Russian troops talking on insecure open radio channels, easily monitored by outsiders.

It's unclear how much of an edge Russia's electronic assets may now offer. Ukraine's forces are now more concentrated than early in the war, which could make them easier to target.

Much depends on whether Russia's battalion tactical groups "are configured in reality as they are on paper," said James Rands, of the Jane's military intelligence think tank. Each group, comprised of roughly 1,000 troops, is supposed to have an electronic warfare unit. The Pentagon says 110 such groups are in Ukraine.

The Kremlin also claims to have more than 1,000 small, versatile Orlan-10 unmanned aerial vehicles it uses for reconnaissance, targeting, jamming and cellphone interception.

Russia has lost about 50 of its Orlan-10s in the war, but "whatever they lost could be a small portion of what's flying," said researcher Samuel Bendett, of the Center for Naval Analyses think tank.

Ukraine's relative UAV strength is unclear, but Ukrainians have adapted such technologies as software-defined radio and 3D printing to stay nimble.

The U.S. and Britain also supply jamming gear, but how much it helps is unclear. Neither country has offered details. The ability of both sides to disable the other's drones is crucial with the artillery they scout now so decisive in battles.

Musk's Starlink is a proven asset. Its more than 2,200 low-orbiting satellites provide broadband internet to more than 150,000 Ukrainian ground stations. Severing those connections is a challenge for Russia. It is far more difficult to jam low-earth orbiting satellites than geostationary ones.

Musk has won plaudits from the Pentagon for at least temporarily defeating Russian jamming of Ukrainian satellite uplinks with a quick software fix. But he has warned Ukrainians to keep those terminals powered down when possible — they are vulnerable to geolocation — and recently worried on Twitter about redoubled Russian interference efforts.

"I'm sure that the Russians are getting smarter about that now," said Wetzels, the Air Force lieutenant colonel.

Ex-Trump aide Navarro indicted; Meadows won't be charged

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, ERIC TUCKER and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Trump White House official Peter Navarro has been indicted on charges that he refused to cooperate with a congressional investigation into the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, but the Justice Department spared two other advisers, including the ex-president's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, from criminal prosecution.

The department's decision to not prosecute Meadows and Dan Scavino, another adviser to former President Donald Trump, was revealed in a letter sent Friday by a federal prosecutor to a lawyer for the House

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 27 of 57

of Representatives. The move was reported hours after the indictment of Navarro and a subsequent, fiery court appearance in which he vowed to contest the contempt of Congress charges.

The flurry of activity comes just days before the House committee leading the investigation into the riot at the Capitol holds a primetime hearing aimed at presenting the American public with evidence it has collected about how the assault unfolded. The split decisions show how the Justice Department has opted to evaluate on a case-by-case basis contempt referrals it has received from Congress rather than automatically pursue charges against each and every Trump aide who has resisted congressional subpoenas.

The committee's leaders called the decision to not prosecute Meadows and Scavino "puzzling." In a statement late Friday, Reps. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., said: "We hope the Department provides greater clarity on this matter. ... No one is above the law."

Though the Justice Department has referred multiple Trump aides for potential prosecution for refusal to cooperate, Navarro is only the second to face criminal charges, following the indictment last fall of former White House adviser Steve Bannon.

Navarro, 72, was charged with one contempt count for failing to appear for a deposition before the House committee and a second charge for failing to produce documents the committee requested.

During an initial court appearance, he alleged that the Justice Department had committed "prosecutorial misconduct" and said he was told he could not contact anyone after being approached by an FBI agent at the airport Friday and put in handcuffs. He said he was arrested while trying to board a flight to Nashville, Tennessee for a television appearance.

"Who are these people? This is not America," Navarro said. "I was a distinguished public servant for four years!"

Each charge carries a minimum sentence of a month in jail and a maximum of a year behind bars.

The Justice Department and Attorney General Merrick Garland had been facing pressure to move more quickly to decide whether to prosecute other Trump aides who have similarly defied subpoenas from the House panel.

The New York Times first reported on the decision to not charge Meadows and Scavino. A person familiar with the decision who was not authorized to discuss it publicly confirmed it to The Associated Press on Friday. The U.S. Attorney's office in Washington, which made the decisions regarding each of the Trump aides, declined to comment Friday.

Meadows, a close Trump adviser seen by House investigators as a vital witness to key events, initially cooperated with the committee, turning over more than 2,000 text messages sent and received in the days leading up to and of the attack. But in December, Meadows informed the committee that he would not sit for a deposition. Scavino was held in contempt in April after declining to cooperate with Congress.

A lawyer for Meadows did not immediately return messages Friday night. Stan Brand, an attorney representing Scavino, said he had not yet received the letter from the U.S. attorney's office, but he'd heard the news through a third party. "I'm grateful that the Justice Department exercised their discretion to decline prosecution," Brand said.

The indictment against Navarro alleges that when summoned to appear before the committee for a deposition earlier this year, he refused to do so and instead told the panel that because Trump had invoked executive privilege, "my hands are tied."

After committee staff told him they believed there were topics he could discuss without raising any executive privilege concerns, Navarro again refused, directing the committee to negotiate directly with lawyers for Trump, according to the indictment. The committee went ahead with its scheduled deposition on March 2, but Navarro did not attend.

The indictment, dated Thursday, came days after Navarro revealed in a court filing that he also had been subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury this week as part of the Justice Department's sprawling probe into the insurrection. The subpoena to Navarro, a trade adviser to Trump, was the first known instance of prosecutors seeking testimony from someone who worked in the Trump White House as they investigate the attack.

"This was a preemptive strike by the prosecution against that lawsuit," Navarro told Magistrate Judge

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 28 of 57

Zia Faruqi during his court appearance. "It simply flies in the face of good faith and due process."

Navarro made the case in his lawsuit Tuesday that the House select committee investigating the attack is unlawful and therefore a subpoena it issued to him in February is unenforceable under law. He sued members of the committee, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and the U.S. attorney in Washington, Matthew M. Graves, whose office is now handling the criminal case against him.

In an interview with The Associated Press this week, Navarro said the goal of his lawsuit is much broader than the subpoenas themselves, part of an effort to have "the Supreme Court address a number of issues that have come with the weaponization of Congress' investigatory powers" since Trump entered office.

Members of the select committee sought testimony from Navarro about his efforts to help Trump overturn the 2020 presidential election, including a call trying to persuade state legislators to join their efforts.

The former economics professor was one of the White House staffers who promoted Trump's baseless claims of mass voter fraud. Trump, in turn, promoted a lengthy report Navarro released in December 2020, which Navarro falsely claimed contained evidence of the alleged misconduct and election fraud "more than sufficient" to swing victory to his former boss.

Despite the opposition from several Trump allies, the Jan. 6 panel, comprised of seven Democrats and two Republicans, has managed to interview more than 1,000 witnesses about the insurrection in the past 11 months and is now preparing for a series of public hearings to begin next week. Lawmakers on the panel hope the half-dozen hearings will be a high-profile airing of the causes and consequences of the domestic attack on the U.S. government.

Rangers beat Lightning 3-2 in Game 2 for 2-0 series lead

By VIN A. CHERWOOD AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After winning the series opener with an offensive display, the New York Rangers used a strong defensive effort to take Game 2. Now they are two victories away from reaching the Stanley Cup Final for the first time in eight years.

Mika Zibanejad scored in the third period, Igor Shesterkin stopped 29 shots and the Rangers held on to beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 3-2 on Friday night in the Eastern Conference finals.

"It's a huge win for us, but we just get ready for the next one," Rangers coach Gerard Gallant said. "The way we played the last two games, that's the way we're going to have to play to win the series. We want to battle hard, we want to compete hard and we've been a tough out so far."

K'Andre Miller and Kaapo Kakko scored in the first period, and Adam Fox and Chris Kreider each had two assists for the Rangers. New York won its eighth straight home game, extending a franchise playoff record.

"We did a great job limiting them, especially in the first two periods," Fox said. "We didn't make too many mistakes. ... When we needed those big saves, we got them at the end as usual."

Nikita Kucherov had a goal and an assist for Tampa Bay, Nicholas Paul also scored, and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 25 saves. The Lightning goalie has allowed nine goals in two games against the Rangers after limiting Florida to three in a four-game sweep in the second round.

"We haven't executed the proper way that got us here," Tampa Bay captain Steven Stamkos said. "They are a skilled team and make you pay. We found some momentum at the end. We have to carry that over."

The Lightning lost consecutive playoff games for the first time in the last three postseasons. The two-time defending Stanley Cup champions, winners of 10 straight playoff series, were 17-0 after a loss coming in.

"Their team obviously had a good playoff streak of not losing back-to-back games but that's not really in our minds when we're coming to the games," Fox said. "We're not thinking about what streaks teams have or how they've done earlier. It's right now and we're just trying to bring it day in and day out."

The series shifts to Tampa for Game 3 on Sunday and Game 4 on Tuesday night.

Zibanejad extended the Rangers' lead to 3-1 early in the third period as he got a pass from Fox, skated into the left circle and fired a shot that beat Vasilevskiy high on the stick side at 1:21. It was Zibanejad's ninth of the playoffs and gave him goals in six of the last seven games.

"It was a big goal, obviously," Gallant said. "We knew they were going to push real hard. ... We battled,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 29 of 57

we found a way. We're playing against a real good team over there. They pushed it, we made some key saves at the end."

With Vasilevskiy pulled for an extra skater, Paul scored in front off a pass from Corey Perry to pull the Lightning within one with 2:04 left.

Vasilevskiy was pulled again for an extra skater when Shesterkin had to make several sprawling saves with about a minute to go.

"You take that third period, remember it, bring it to the next game," Perry said. "They won at home. We have to go home and take care of business."

With the Rangers leading 2-1 after 20 minutes, Tyler Motte nearly added to it 3 1/2 minutes into the second period as his backhander trickled through Vasilevskiy's pads and was on the goal line when Perry dove across to keep it out.

The Rangers outshot the Lightning 14-10 in the scoreless middle period, with most of Tampa Bay's attempts coming in the last six minutes.

The Lightning got an early power play when the Rangers' Ryan Reaves was whistled for slashing 2 1/2 minutes into the game. They quickly took advantage as Kucherov fired a shot from the right circle that beat Shesterkin on the glove side at 2:41. It was Kucherov's fifth of the postseason. Tampa Bay was 0 for 9 on the power play in its previous three games.

Miller tied it a little more than the minutes later on a Rangers rush. He fired a shot from the right point that was blocked by Lightning defenseman Brandon Hagel, but the puck came back to him and he fired another shot that went in off the post at 5:59.

"It was a great all-around play," Fox said. "Huge goal by Key. It definitely fueled us."

Motte nearly gave the Rangers the lead with 8 1/2 minutes remaining, but his shot deflected off the goalpost.

Kakko put the Rangers ahead 2-1 as he deflected a pass from Fox past Vasilevskiy from the right doorstep with 2:28 left in the opening period.

STATS

Fox leads all NHL defensemen with 17 assists and 22 points in the postseason. ... Zibanejad has a seven-game point streak with six goals and 11 points. He has 22 points in the postseason. ... The Rangers have 20 goals over their last four games after scoring nine over the previous five.

CLIMBING LISTS

Kreider has 53 postseason points, taking over sole possession of fifth place in franchise history. ... Kreider played in his 96th playoff game, tying former teammate — and current Lightning defenseman Ryan McDonagh — for fourth place in franchise history.

100 speeches in 100 days of war: Zelenskyy rallies Ukraine

By LYNN BERRY Associated Press

As Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tells it, when Russia invaded 100 days ago, no one expected his country to survive. World leaders advised him to flee.

"But they didn't know us," he said in a late-night video address in April when the war hit its 50th day. "And they didn't know how brave Ukrainians are, how much we value freedom."

He could have been speaking about himself. No one knew how a 44-year-old man who had catapulted himself from the world of entertainment into the presidency would respond to an invasion by Russia's giant army.

His response has been forceful — and compellingly public. Zelenskyy has led his country in mounting an unexpectedly fierce resistance. Every night, he rallies Ukrainians to the fight with a video address on social media. There have been 100 so far — one for each day of the war — in nightly reminders that he has not fled, that Ukraine has indeed survived.

His actor-trained voice can be soothing, a deep, confidential almost-whisper as he looks directly into the camera. Or forceful, rising in moral outrage as he condemns the most recent Russian atrocities and insists

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 30 of 57

that those responsible will be punished.

As the days and weeks have ticked by, his unshaven face has grown a dark beard. He has lost his boyish looks. The puffiness from sleepless nights as Russian troops marched on the capital was replaced by new resolve when the invasion stalled.

From the start of the war he has dressed in various shades of army green, appearing most often in a simple T-shirt. The impression he leaves is clear: He's fresh from the fight and about to get back to it.

A tireless and skilled communicator, Zelenskyy has spoken by video link to the United Nations, British Parliament, U.S. Congress and about two dozen other parliaments around the world, as well as to the Cannes Film Festival and America's Grammy Awards. Rarely if ever has a man without a tie addressed so many VIPs. He also has given interviews to journalists. He held a news conference in the safety of the Kyiv subway.

But his nightly video address has been his favored channel for informing and inspiring his fellow citizens.

He often begins with an exuberant greeting to Ukrainians as "the free people of a brave country" or "the invincible people of our great country." He invariably ends with a defiant "Glory to Ukraine."

He tells them of the world leaders he has spoken with during the day and his efforts to get those leaders to send more and better weapons, to inflict ever more punishing sanctions on Russia.

He speaks to his fellow Ukrainians' anger and pain from the devastation of the country, the untold deaths. "My heart breaks from what Russia is doing to our people," he said on March 16 after Russian bombs killed hundreds sheltering in a theater in Mariupol.

He salutes their courage and says he never gets tired of thanking all those fighting to determine the future of Ukraine. That the country did not fall within days as Russia expected, he said on April 14, was because millions of Ukrainians "made the most important decision of their life – to fight."

He also has tried to reach a Russian audience, as on April 1 when he switched from Ukrainian into Russian to urge Russians to keep their sons away from the war.

"We do not need new dead people here," he said. "Take care of your children so they do not become villains, do not send them to the army. Do whatever you can to keep them alive. At home."

In his video address Friday on the war's 100th day, Zelenskyy said many words and numbers are now associated with the war, but "there are three words for which we have been fighting for 100 days after eight years: 'peace,' 'victory,' 'Ukraine.' Glory to Ukraine!"

In justifying the Feb. 24 invasion, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was saving Ukraine from the "drug addicts and neo-Nazis" of Zelenskyy's government. He has since ignored Zelenskyy's calls for a meeting.

Back in June 2019, shortly after Zelenskyy was elected president, Putin was asked why he hadn't congratulated the new Ukrainian leader. In a condescending response, Putin seemed to write off the actor-turned-president.

"Well, it's one thing to play someone and another to be someone," Putin said. "The important thing is to have the courage and the character to take responsibility. He hasn't shown his character yet."

For 100 nights, that character has been shown to Ukrainians and the world. And to Putin.

Russia may be in Ukraine to stay after 100 days of war

By The Associated Press undefined

When Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine in late February, the Russian president vowed his forces would not occupy the country. But as the invasion reached its 100th day Friday, Moscow seemed increasingly unwilling to relinquish the territory it has taken in the war.

The ruble is now an official currency in the southern Kherson region, alongside the Ukrainian hryvnia. Residents there and in Russia-controlled parts of the Zaporizhzhia region are being offered expedited Russian passports. The Kremlin-installed administrations in both regions have talked about plans to become part of Russia.

The Moscow-backed leaders of separatist areas in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region, which is mostly

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 31 of 57

Russian-speaking, have expressed similar intentions. Putin recognized the separatists' self-proclaimed republics as independent two days before launching the invasion, and fierce fighting has been underway in the east for weeks as Russia seeks to "liberate" all of the Donbas.

The Kremlin has largely kept mum about its plans for the cities, towns and villages it has bombarded, encircled and finally captured. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said it will be up to the people living in seized areas to decide their status.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said this week that enemy forces now control almost 20% of the country's territory. Before the war, Russia controlled 7%, including the Crimea Peninsula and parts of the Donbas.

But in a video message marking the war's first 100 days, Zelenskyy made it clear Ukraine will not submit easily.

"We have defended Ukraine for 100 days already. Victory will be ours," he said.

U.S. President Joe Biden, meanwhile, said he believes "there's going to have to be a negotiated settlement" to end the war. Asked if Ukraine should give up territory in exchange for peace, the president said, "It's their territory" and "I'm not going to tell them what they should and shouldn't do."

Initially, at least, annexing more land from Ukraine was not believed to be the main goal of the invasion. It was widely thought that the Kremlin intended to install a pro-Moscow government in Kyiv that would prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and pulling further away from Russia's influence.

But now, Moscow is unlikely to let go of its military gains, according to political analysts.

"Of course (Russia) intends to stay," said Andrei Kolesnikov, senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. To Russia, "it's a pity to give away what has been occupied, even if it was not part of the original plan."

Russian forces captured much of Kherson and neighboring Zaporizhzhia early in the war, gaining control over most of Ukraine's Sea of Azov coast and securing a partial land corridor to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. They completed the takeover last month with the capture of the port city of Mariupol following a three-month siege.

Residents of the cities of Kherson and Melitopol took to the streets to protest the occupation, facing off with Russian soldiers in plazas. Ukrainian officials warned that Russia might stage a referendum in Kherson to declare the region an independent state.

Petro Kobernyk, 31, an activist with a nongovernmental organization who fled Kherson with his wife, said Russian security forces are cracking down on pro-Ukrainian activists.

"Hundreds of pro-Ukrainian activists, including my friends, are being held in the basements of security services," Kobernyk said by phone. "Those who actively express their position are kidnapped and tortured, threatened and forced out of the region."

Russian forces keep people in an "information vacuum," with Ukrainian websites no longer available, Kobernyk said.

His claims could not be independently verified.

But some in captured areas of Ukraine have welcomed a Russian takeover.

"I've wanted to live in Russia since I was little, and now I realize I don't even have to move anywhere," said Vadim Romanova, a 17-year-old from Mariupol.

In Russian-occupied cities in southern Ukraine, people with pro-Kremlin views replaced mayors and other local leaders who disappeared in what Ukrainian officials and media said were kidnappings. Russian flags were raised, and Russian state broadcasts that promoted the Kremlin's version of the invasion supplanted Ukrainian TV channels.

The Russian ruble was introduced as the second official currency in both the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions — at least in the parts under Russian control — and pro-Russian administrations started offering a "one-time social payment" of 10,000 rubles (roughly \$163) to local residents.

An office of Russia's migration services opened in Melitopol, taking applications for Russian citizenship from residents of the captured southern regions through a fast-track procedure. The procedure was first implemented in 2019 in the rebel-controlled areas of the Donbas, where more than 700,000 people have

received Russian passports.

Top Russian officials started touring the regions, touting the territories' prospects for being integrated into Russia. Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin visited Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in mid-May and indicated they could become part of "our Russian family."

A senior official in the Kremlin's ruling United Russia party, Andrei Turchak, put it even more bluntly in a meeting with residents of Kherson: "Russia is here forever."

Members of the pro-Kremlin administrations in both regions soon announced that the areas would seek to be incorporated into Russia. While it remains unclear when or if it will happen, Russia appears to be digging in.

Oleg Kryuchkov, an official in Russia-annexed Crimea, said this week that the two southern regions have switched to Russian internet providers. State media ran footage of people lining up to get Russian SIM cards for their cellphones. Kryuchkov also said that both regions are switching to the Russian country code, +7, from the Ukrainian +380.

Senior Russian lawmaker Leonid Slutsky, a member of the Russian delegation in stalled peace talks with Ukraine, said that referendums on joining Russia could take place in the Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions as early as July.

Kremlin spokesman Peskov was evasive when asked Friday whether Russian authorities planned to hold votes in those areas, saying that it would depend on the course of Russia's offensive.

Tatyana Stanovaya, founder and CEO of R.Politik, an independent think tank on Russian politics, said she believes Putin doesn't want to rush the referendums and run the risk of them being denounced as shams.

"He wants the referendum to be real, so that the West can see that, indeed, Russia was right, the people want to live with Russia," Stanovaya said.

Ukrainian experts say it will not be easy for the Kremlin to rally genuine support in Ukraine's south.

Volodymyr Fesenko, of the Kyiv-based Penta Center think tank, said most residents of the southern regions identify as Ukrainians much more strongly than the people in areas that are closer to Russia or have been led by the Moscow-backed separatists for the past eight years.

Firm proposes Taser-armed drones to stop school shootings

By MATT O'BRIEN and MICHAEL BALSAMO

Taser developer Axon said this week it is working to build drones armed with the electric stunning weapons that could fly in schools and "help prevent the next Uvalde, Sandy Hook, or Columbine." But its own technology advisers quickly panned the idea as a dangerous fantasy.

The publicly traded company, which sells Tasers and police body cameras, floated the idea of a new police drone product last year to its artificial intelligence ethics board, a group of well-respected experts in technology, policing and privacy.

Some of them expressed reservations about weaponizing drones in over-policed communities of color. But they were not expecting Axon's Thursday announcement that it wants to send those Taser-equipped drones into classrooms to prevent mass shootings by immobilizing an intruding gunman.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Axon founder and CEO Rick Smith said he felt compelled to make the idea public after the mass shooting at an Uvalde, Texas elementary school, saying he was "catastrophically disappointed" in the response by police who didn't move in to kill the suspect for more than an hour.

But he stressed Friday that no product had been launched and any potential launch would be down the road. The idea, he felt, needed to be shared now because of the public conversation about effective ways for police to safely confront attackers and how schools can increase safety.

"This is an idea that should get into the public's consciousness while our minds are open to it and I felt if I wait another six months, the world is going to change and people are going to forget this pain and we're going to see a shift in sentiments where people are going to focus a lot more on what could go wrong, rather than the pain of this problem we need to solve," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 33 of 57

Axon's stock price rose with the news. But the announcement angered members of the ethics board, some of whom are now likely to quit in protest.

"This particular idea is crackpot," said Barry Friedman, a New York University law professor who sits on the Axon AI Ethics Board. "Drones can't fly through closed doors. The physical properties of the universe still hold. So unless you have a drone in every single classroom in America, which seems insane, the idea just isn't going to work."

Friedman said it was a "dangerous and fantastical idea" that went far beyond the proposal for a Taser-equipped police drone that board members — some of them former or current police officials — had been debating in recent months.

"We begged the company not to do it," Friedman said of the company's announcement. "It was unnecessary and shameful."

The product idea had been kicked around at Axon since at least 2019 and the company has been working to try to figure out whether a drone with a Taser was even a feasible idea. Over the last year, the company created computer-generated art renderings to mock up a product design and conducted an internal test to see if Taser darts — which transmit an immobilizing electric jolt — could be fired from a flying drone, Smith said. He added that he had discussed the possibility of developing such a product with the ethics board.

Board members who spoke with The Associated Press said they were taken aback by the school drone proposal — which they got notice of only earlier this week — and cobbled together a unanimous statement of concern that described Axon's decision as "deeply regrettable." The company tweeted out the board's dissent shortly after its own statement Thursday announcement.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there were resignations," said another ethics board member, Ryan Calo, a law professor at the University of Washington. "I think everyone on the board has to make a choice about whether they want to stay involved."

Friedman and Calo both described this week's process as a sharp turnaround from the respectful relationship that Axon executives have had with the board in recent years on controversial topics such as face recognition — which Axon decided against using in its body cameras — and automated license plate readers.

"Sometimes the company takes our advice and sometimes it doesn't," Friedman said. "What's important is that happens after thoughtful discussion and coordination. That was thrown out the window here."

Smith said the company is still in the very early phases of product development and would continue to consult the ethics board, along with law enforcement officials, community leaders and school officials. He acknowledged that the company might later determine that the idea isn't feasible and abandon it.

But he took issue with the idea that he had ignored the concerns from the ethics board, which is meant to provide guidance and share feedback. Ultimately, the decision still falls to Smith as the company's chief executive.

"I have not ignored what they have said. People can have debates and disagree," Smith said. "I think there is one thing the world can see: our board is not a whitewash."

"I hope they don't resign," he added. "I hope that they are somewhat proud maybe after this that we're having this public debate."

On Friday in an "Ask Me Anything" chat on the online forum Reddit. Smith acknowledged that "drones in schools can sound nuts" but went on to answer detailed questions about them. They could travel through school vents, he said, and perch on doors and walls near ceilings. It could be a "good thing" if a gunman tried to shoot one down because it would distract from trying to kill people.

"We're doing this because we care," Smith said. "We're a business so ultimately we have to find a financial model that works, but at the end of the day we've been successful because our mission drives our business and we solve problems we care about," he added.

Smith told a Reddit user that Axon was "absolutely not" trying to capitalize on recent tragedies to attract investors. He noted the advisory board's disagreements but said the mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas —

and what he described as misguided proposals to arm teachers with guns — compelled him to go public with the drone idea to field a “far broader array of voices.”

Woman testifies Cosby forcibly kissed her when she was 14

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — A woman testified Friday that she was 14 when Bill Cosby took her into a trailer on a movie set in 1975, grabbed her so she couldn't move her arms, and kissed her.

“I was struggling to get away,” she said. “It was very shocking.”

The woman, now 61, told her story in a public venue for the first time during a Los Angeles County civil trial over the lawsuit of Judy Huth, who alleges Cosby sexually assaulted her at the Playboy Mansion when she was 16 at around the same time, in the spring of 1975.

The woman testified that she, her mother, and other family and friends were on the Los Angeles set of the film “Let's Do It Again,” starring Cosby and Sidney Poitier, where Cosby had invited them to act as extras after meeting them at a tennis tournament a few months earlier.

She said Cosby invited her alone into his trailer to help him straighten the bow tie he was wearing for a scene.

“He immediately grabbed me,” she said. “He started kissing me, all over my face, tongue down my throat.”

Asked by Huth's attorney Nathan Goldberg how tightly Cosby was holding her, she replied, “enough that I couldn't get away.”

After about 30 seconds she pulled free and left.

Pictures were shown in court of Cosby and the 14-year-old together at the tennis tournament, with him smiling and his arms around her. Other photos were shown of Cosby and the girl with her family on the set of the film. Huth would later meet Cosby on a different set of the same film.

Old photos from the mid-1970s have loomed large at the trial, one of the last remaining legal claims against Cosby after his Pennsylvania criminal conviction was thrown out and other lawsuits were settled by his insurer. Two photos of Cosby and Huth at the Playboy Mansion were shown during earlier testimony. Cosby has denied sexually assaulting Huth, and his attorney says the case is about her attempt to cash in on the pictures.

The woman who testified Friday said after leaving the trailer, she did not tell anyone she was with what happened with Cosby, who is not attending the trial.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” she said. “I didn't want to ruin everything for everyone.”

They went about the rest of their day, appearing in a boxing scene for the film shot at the Grand Olympic Auditorium.

In her cross-examination of the woman, Cosby attorney Jennifer Bonjean showed a still from the film of the girl and her brother cheering in the front row next to the boxing ring.

Bonjean asked whether she had been distraught at the time.

“I probably was,” the woman said.

“Probably?” Bonjean asked.

“I was distraught when I was in there,” she said.

The woman said she did not speak of the incident until telling her husband years later, and telling her teenage daughter years after that.

Bonjean asked whether multiple media reports with allegations in 2015 about Cosby caused her to come forward and tell her story to Gloria Allred, who along with Goldberg represents both her and Huth.

The woman said one brief Allred clip prompted her to do this after she heard Cosby's denial, but said she had no intention of filing a lawsuit when she sought out Allred.

The woman is not a party to the lawsuit, but is being allowed to testify along with one other woman about her experiences for Huth's case.

Bonjean gave serious challenges to the other witness, Margie Shapiro, who has told her story several times before to media outlets and in a news conference with Allred.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 35 of 57

Shapiro testified that when she was 19 in November of 1975, she was at the Playboy Mansion with Cosby when he gave her a pill, which she took voluntarily. She said she later woke from unconsciousness to find him raping her.

Bonjean produced a document that showed Shapiro was supposed to be in court as a defendant on the day she said she met Cosby when she was working at a donut shop near the set of another film he was making.

"I might have gone," Shapiro said. "If I needed to I would have taken a short break."

Bonjean also grilled Shapiro over a matchbook that was produced in court that Shapiro said she got at Cosby's house when they stopped there briefly before going to the mansion.

Written on the matchbook was "11/18/1975, my evening at Bill Cosby's house."

"After this drugging and raping you kept a memento?" Bonjean asked.

"It was important, whether it was good or bad," Shapiro answered.

Bonjean also challenged Shapiro over her testimony that she knew the pill Cosby gave her was not a Quaalude, a depressant popular in the 1970s, because of the coding etched on it.

She pointed out that in a 2016 interview with police she had said the pill had looked like a Quaalude and that Cosby told her it was one.

"Either I got it wrong or the detective got it wrong," Shapiro said.

One of the jurors, many of whom were not born in the 1970s, raised a hand and asked the judge for clarification on what a Quaalude was. Shapiro compared it to Valium.

Shapiro said she angrily went looking for Cosby's house days later but couldn't find it.

Bonjean asked whether it was true that she was upset because Cosby had declined to take her to the Playboy Mansion, and that she and Cosby had consensual sex at his house and she didn't like the way he treated her afterward.

"I was upset because he raped me," she said.

The Associated Press does not normally name people who say they have been sexually abused, unless they come forward publicly, as Huth and Shapiro have several times.

GOP Rep. Jacobs to retire after backing assault weapons ban

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Republican Rep. Chris Jacobs announced Friday that he will not run for another term in Congress amid backlash over his support for new gun control measures.

Jacobs, who represents parts of western New York, including suburban Buffalo, told reporters he has decided to retire instead of facing what he said would be "an incredibly divisive election." His announcement came just days after Jacobs broke with his party and voiced support for a federal assault weapons ban.

"The last thing we need is an incredibly negative, half-truth-filled media attack funded by millions of dollars of special interest money coming into our community around this issue of guns and gun violence and gun control," he said, according to footage of his announcement.

Last week, as the nation mourned deadly shootings at a Texas elementary school and a Buffalo supermarket, Jacobs said he would vote for a federal assault weapons ban and other measures if he had a chance. His comments sparked furious backlash among conservatives, who have refused to consider new gun control legislation to try to curb the violence.

"I want to be completely transparent of where I am in Congress. If an assault weapons ban bill came to the floor that would ban something like an AR-15, I would vote for it," Jacobs said, according to Spectrum News 1.

He also voiced support for limiting magazine capacity, said he planned to write a bill banning body armor for civilians, and said he believed it was "perfectly reasonable" to raise the age limit to purchase semi-automatic weapons to 21.

Jacobs currently represents New York's 27th Congressional District, but had been running for the newly redrawn 23rd District, which includes large swaths of new voters, including rural counties.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 36 of 57

Gerard Kassar, who chairs the New York State Conservative Party, welcomed Jacobs' decision in a statement, saying the party had been "perplexed" by Jacobs' "recent stance on Second Amendment rights, a position well outside the mainstream of the Republican Party, the Conservative Party, and the voters of NY 23."

"We agree that it's the best interest of all three — and of Congressman Jacobs himself — that he forgoes a run for reelection and returns to civilian life. We wish him only the best in his future endeavors," he said.

Republicans have largely ignored President Joe Biden's pleas to back new measures to address gun violence despite polling that shows most U.S. adults think that mass shootings would happen less often if guns were harder to get, and support legislation that would curb access to guns or ammunition. But the numbers are highly partisan, with the vast majority of Republicans in disagreement.

Jacobs had been considered an easy favorite to win the seat before his comments, which sparked a flurry of interest from rival Republicans including Buffalo developer Carl Paladino, best known for his combative campaign for governor in 2010. New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, a member of GOP leadership and rising star in the party, endorsed Paladino shortly after Jacobs' announcement.

Senator: Chief had no radio during Uvalde school shooting

By ACACIA CORONADO and JAY REEVES Associated Press

UVALDE, Texas (AP) — The state agency investigating the mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde has determined that the commander facing criticism for the slow police response was not carrying a radio as the massacre unfolded, a Texas state senator said Friday.

Sen. Roland Gutierrez told The Associated Press in a brief telephone interview that a Texas Department of Public Safety official told him school district police Chief Pete Arredondo was without a radio during the May 24 attack by a lone gunman at Robb Elementary School that left 19 students and two teachers dead. Seventeen more people were injured.

Authorities have not said how Arredondo was communicating with other law enforcement officials at the scene, including the more than a dozen officers who were at one point waiting outside the classroom where the gunman was holed up. Arredondo heads the district's small department and was in charge of the multi-agency response to the shooting.

He has not responded to multiple interview requests from AP since the attack, including a telephone message left with district police Friday.

The apparently missing radio is the latest detail to underscore concerns about how police handled the shooting and why they didn't confront the gunman faster, even as anguished parents outside the school urged officers to go inside. The Justice Department has said it will review the law enforcement response.

Focus has turned to the chief in recent days after Steven McCraw, the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said Arredondo believed the active shooting had turned into a hostage situation, and that he made the "wrong decision" to not order officers to breach the classroom more quickly to confront the gunman.

Gutierrez, who represents Uvalde, complained Thursday that Arredondo was not informed of panicked 911 calls coming from students trapped inside a classroom where the gunman had holed up. The Democrat called it a "system failure."

Police radios are a crucial source of real-time communication during an emergency and, according to experts, often how information from 911 calls is relayed to officers on the ground. It's unclear who at the scene was aware of the calls. Uvalde police did not respond to questions about the calls Thursday.

The news emerged amid tensions between state and local authorities over how police handled the shooting and communicated what happened to the public.

The gunman in Uvalde, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, spent roughly 80 minutes inside the school, and more than an hour passed from when the first officers followed him into the building and when he was killed by law enforcement, according to an official timeline.

Ramos slipped through an unlocked door into adjoining fourth-grade classrooms at 11:33, authorities

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 37 of 57

said. He rapidly fired off more than 100 rounds.

Officers entered minutes later, exchanging fire with Ramos, and by 12:03 there were as many as 19 officers in the hallway outside the classroom, McCraw said. Authorities have not said where Arredondo was during this period.

Officers from other agencies urged the school police chief to let them move in because children were in danger, according to two law enforcement officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they had not been authorized to discuss the investigation publicly.

A U.S. Border Patrol tactical team used a school employee's key to unlock the classroom door and kill the gunman around 12:50 p.m., McCraw said.

Law enforcement and state officials have struggled to present an accurate timeline and details of the shooting and how police responded, sometimes providing conflicting information or withdrawing statements hours later. State police have said some accounts were preliminary and may change as more witnesses are interviewed.

Gutierrez said Friday that a Texas Department of Public Safety official told him that the Uvalde-area district attorney, Christina Mitchell Busbee, a Republican, had directed the agency to not release more information about the shooting investigation to the senator or the public.

The Department of Public Safety on Friday referred all questions about the shooting investigation to Busbee, who has not returned telephone and text messages seeking comment.

Gutierrez said Thursday that many people should shoulder some blame in the Uvalde shooting, including the Texas governor.

"There was error at every level, including the legislative level. Greg Abbott has plenty of blame in all of this," he said.

Former U.S. ambassador points finger in Qatar lobbying probe

By ALAN SUDERMAN and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

A former high-ranking U.S. ambassador admitted Friday to illegal foreign lobbying on behalf of Qatar after demanding that prosecutors tell him why a retired four-star general who worked with him on the effort has not also been charged.

The dispute involving two Washington power players has highlighted the often-ambiguous boundaries of foreign lobbying laws as well as what prosecutors say were high-level, behind-the-scenes influence dealings with the wealthy Persian Gulf country.

Richard G. Olson, former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, pleaded guilty Friday in Washington on federal charges that include improperly helping Qatar influence U.S. policy in 2017 -- when a diplomatic crisis erupted between the gas-rich monarchy and its neighbors over the country's alleged ties to terror groups and other issues.

Olson had recently argued he's entitled to learn why prosecutors aren't also bringing charges against someone he says he worked side by side with on Qatar: retired Marine Gen. John Allen, who led U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan before being tapped in late 2017 to lead the influential Brookings Institution think tank.

Allen has denied ever working as a Qatari agent and said his efforts on Qatar in 2017 were motivated to prevent a war from breaking out in the Gulf that would put U.S. troops at risk. A statement from his spokesman to The Associated Press on Thursday said Allen has "voluntarily cooperated with the government's investigation."

Olson's lawyers said in court papers that since 2020 he has been seeking to get a lighter sentencing recommendation by extensively cooperating with prosecutors "with the express goal" of bringing charges against Allen. Olson's lawyers said prosecutors "reiterated their belief in the strength of their case against" Allen only to apparently drop their pursuit.

But federal prosecutor Evan Turgeon said at a hearing last week that the government has not "made a prosecutorial decision as to other persons" and disputed how Olson's attorney characterized past discussions. The Justice Department declined to comment on its internal deliberations on Allen.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 38 of 57

Olson's lawyers had previously pushed prosecutors to provide copies of Allen's communications with U.S. government officials related to his actions involving Qatar. Friday, Olson's attorney Mike Hannon said prosecutors had provided the requested information — the contents of which are not public — and his client was now ready to plead guilty.

Recent filings in Olson's case provide new details about Allen's role and what actions prosecutors might view as possible crimes. Allen is not named in those filings but identified as "the General" or "Person 3."

U.S. law prohibits individuals from helping a foreign entity influence U.S. policy without registering with the Justice Department. The law, known as the Foreign Agents Registration Act or FARA, was largely unenforced until prosecutors began taking more aggressive action in recent years.

Typically, FARA violations by themselves do not lead to significant prison time but the law's critics say there are too many unsettled questions about what may constitute a prosecutable offense.

"FARA is an exceptionally broad and vague law that ... sets snares for the unwary, even capturing some of the most sophisticated of Washington players," David Keating of the Institute for Free Speech said in comments to the Justice Department earlier this year.

Notably, Olson pleaded guilty to a violation of State Department policy regarding working for a foreign government within a year of leaving government service, not a FARA violation.

Olson's lawyer said in court last week that federal prosecutors made clear that they were pursuing a FARA case against Allen.

Olson recruited Allen to join him "in providing aid and advice to Qatari government officials with the intent to influence U.S. foreign policy" shortly after the Gulf diplomatic crisis erupted in June 2017, prosecutors said in court filings.

That crisis sparked a heavy spending war between Qatar and rivals Saudi Arabia and the UAE in a battle to win influence in Washington during much of President Donald Trump's administration.

Olson was being paid \$20,000 a month by Imaad Zuberi, a one-time political donor who is currently serving a 12-year prison sentence on corruption charges and who prosecutors say illegally lobbied for Qatar.

Zuberi also agreed to pay Allen an undisclosed fee for his efforts, prosecutors said in Olson's plea deal. Allen's spokesman said the general was never paid.

In mid June 2017, Allen met with Olson and Zuberi at a Washington hotel to explain "how he would conduct the lobbying and public relations campaign," prosecutors said.

A few days later, Olson and Allen flew to Qatar -- at Zuberi's expense -- to meet with the Qatari's ruling emir and other government officials, where the pair explained that they were not representing the U.S. government but "noted that they had the connections with U.S. government officials that placed them in a position to help Qatar," prosecutors wrote.

Allen advised the Qataris on what steps to take, including signing a pending deal to purchase F-15 fighter jets and using a major U.S. military base in Qatar "as leverage to exert influence over U.S. government officials," prosecutors wrote.

Qatar signed a deal to purchase the jets four days after that meeting.

After returning to the U.S., Allen sought the help of then-National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster and his staff to support Qatar's position in the diplomatic crisis, prosecutors said in court filings.

Allen previously said through a spokesman that McMaster had approved of Allen going to Qatar and "offered the assistance of his staff in preparation."

McMaster has not responded to multiple requests for comment.

Olson, Allen and a Qatari government representative also met with members of Congress "for the purpose of convincing the U.S. lawmakers to support Qatar rather than its regional rivals," prosecutors wrote in court records.

Allen's spokesman said previously that the general's work on Qatari issues only lasted three weeks and that it had nothing to do with Brookings.

Qatar has been one of Brookings' biggest donors for the last several years, according to annual reports that don't offer specific figures. A Brookings spokeswoman said Allen decided in 2019 to no longer accept new Qatari funding.

Olson is set to be sentenced Sept. 13.

100 speeches in 100 days of war: Zelenskyy rallies Ukraine

By LYNN BERRY Associated Press

As Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tells it, when Russia invaded 100 days ago, no one expected his country to survive. World leaders advised him to flee.

"But they didn't know us," he said in a late-night video address in April when the war hit its 50th day. "And they didn't know how brave Ukrainians are, how much we value freedom."

He could have been speaking about himself. No one knew how a 44-year-old man who had catapulted himself from the world of entertainment into the presidency would respond to an invasion by Russia's giant army.

His response has been forceful — and compellingly public. Zelenskyy has led his country in mounting an unexpectedly fierce resistance. Every night, he rallies Ukrainians to the fight with a video address on social media. There have been 100 so far — one for each day of the war — in nightly reminders that he has not fled, that Ukraine has indeed survived.

His actor-trained voice can be soothing, a deep, confidential almost-whisper as he looks directly into the camera. Or forceful, rising in moral outrage as he condemns the most recent Russian atrocities and insists that those responsible will be punished.

As the days and weeks have ticked by, his unshaven face has grown a dark beard. He has lost his boyish looks. The puffiness from sleepless nights as Russian troops marched on the capital was replaced by new resolve when the invasion stalled.

From the start of the war he has dressed in various shades of army green, appearing most often in a simple T-shirt. The impression he leaves is clear: He's fresh from the fight and about to get back to it.

A tireless and skilled communicator, Zelenskyy has spoken by video link to the United Nations, British Parliament, U.S. Congress and about two dozen other parliaments around the world, as well as to the Cannes Film Festival and America's Grammy Awards. Rarely if ever has a man without a tie addressed so many VIPs. He also has given interviews to journalists. He held a news conference in the safety of the Kyiv subway.

But his nightly video address has been his favored channel for informing and inspiring his fellow citizens.

He often begins with an exuberant greeting to Ukrainians as "the free people of a brave country" or "the invincible people of our great country." He invariably ends with a defiant "Glory to Ukraine."

He tells them of the world leaders he has spoken with during the day and his efforts to get those leaders to send more and better weapons, to inflict ever more punishing sanctions on Russia.

He speaks to his fellow Ukrainians' anger and pain from the devastation of the country, the untold deaths. "My heart breaks from what Russia is doing to our people," he said on March 16 after Russian bombs killed hundreds sheltering in a theater in Mariupol.

He salutes their courage and says he never gets tired of thanking all those fighting to determine the future of Ukraine. That the country did not fall within days as Russia expected, he said on April 14, was because millions of Ukrainians "made the most important decision of their life — to fight."

He also has tried to reach a Russian audience, as on April 1 when he switched from Ukrainian into Russian to urge Russians to keep their sons away from the war.

"We do not need new dead people here," he said. "Take care of your children so they do not become villains, do not send them to the army. Do whatever you can to keep them alive. At home."

In his video address Friday on the war's 100th day, Zelenskyy said many words and numbers are now associated with the war, but "there are three words for which we have been fighting for 100 days after eight years: 'peace,' 'victory,' 'Ukraine.' Glory to Ukraine!"

In justifying the Feb. 24 invasion, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was saving Ukraine from the "drug addicts and neo-Nazis" of Zelenskyy's government. He has since ignored Zelenskyy's calls for a meeting.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 40 of 57

Back in June 2019, shortly after Zelenskyy was elected president, Putin was asked why he hadn't congratulated the new Ukrainian leader. In a condescending response, Putin seemed to write off the actor-turned-president.

"Well, it's one thing to play someone and another to be someone," Putin said. "The important thing is to have the courage and the character to take responsibility. He hasn't shown his character yet."

For 100 nights, that character has been shown to Ukrainians and the world. And to Putin.

Stocks sink as Wall Street eyes downside of solid jobs data

By STAN CHOE and DAMIAN J. TROISE AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks fell broadly Friday and pulled major indexes into the red for the week as Wall Street focused on the downside of the still-strong U.S. jobs market.

A report showed employers hired more workers last month than economists expected. While that's a good sign for the economy amid worries about a possible recession, many investors saw it keeping the Federal Reserve on its path to hiking interest rates aggressively. Such moves would slow the economy in hopes of ultimately knocking down high inflation, and the Fed risks causing a recession if it moves too quickly or too far. In the meantime, higher interest rates put downward pressure on stocks and other investments.

The S&P 500 index fell 68.28 points, or 1.6%, to 4,108.54. It's a reversal from Thursday's market movements, when a narrower report on the U.S. jobs market came in weaker than expected. That bolstered speculation the Fed may consider a pause in raising rates later this year, and the hopes for a less-aggressive Fed sent stocks jumping.

The slide on Friday also dragged the benchmark S&P 500 into its eighth weekly loss in the last nine. The outlier in that stretch was last week, when stocks roared in part on speculation that the Fed would consider a pause in rate hikes in September.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 348.58 points, or 1%, to 32,899.70. The Nasdaq fell 304.16 points, or 2.5%, to 12,012.73.

Bitcoin also fell, while a measure of worry in the stock market rose, even though some glass-half-full signals for inflationary pressures were buried within the jobs data.

Friday's comprehensive report from the U.S. government showed employers added 390,000 jobs last month, better than expectations for 322,500. That sent Treasury yields climbing, though they initially wobbled as investors moved from one knee-jerk reaction to another following the report's release.

The yield on the two-year Treasury, which tends to move with expectations for Fed action, rose to 2.68% from 2.62% just before the report's release. The 10-year yield, which tracks expectations for longer-term growth and inflation, rose to 2.95% from 2.91% after earlier climbing as high as 2.99%.

The report did contain some signals analysts said could ultimately get the Fed to be less aggressive, and the mixed data could lead markets to swing through Friday. Big daily reversals have become the norm recently as Wall Street struggles to handicap how aggressive the Fed will be.

Average wages for workers were a touch weaker in May than economists expected. While that's discouraging for people watching prices at the grocery store and gasoline pump jump more than their paychecks, it could mean less future pressure on inflation across the economy. Plus, the nation's job growth decelerated last month, even if it was better than expectations.

"The employment situation remains solid for the economy, but there are some signs of slowing," said Brian Jacobsen, senior investment strategist at Allspring Global Investments. "The signs aren't clear and convincing enough to suggest the Fed needs to pause yet, but a lot can change over the next few months."

More than four out of five stocks in the S&P 500 fell amid the worries about rising rates, with the heaviest losses hitting technology stocks and other big winners of the prior low-rate world.

Tesla tumbled 9.2% after U.S. safety regulators said more than 750 owners have complained about cars suddenly stopping on roadways for no apparent reason while operating on their partially automated driving systems. A report also said Tesla is considering layoffs amid concerns by its CEO, Elon Musk, about the economy. Because Tesla is the fifth-biggest company in the S&P 500, its movements carry a heavier

weight on the index.

Companies from Walmart to Delta Air Lines have recently warned how inflation is eating into their profits, which has upped the pressure on markets because stock prices tend to track profits over the long term. The warnings are layering on top of the market's worries about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and about business-slowning, anti-COVID measures in China.

"There are just so many uncertainties," said John Lynch, chief investment officer for Comerica Wealth Management. "You can't put Ukraine on a spreadsheet and you can't put lockdowns in China on a spreadsheet."

JPMorgan Chase's CEO, Jamie Dimon, said earlier this week that he's preparing his company for a possible economic "hurricane," highlighting less economic support from the U.S. government and Federal Reserve, as well as the war in Ukraine.

What did police know as the Uvalde school shooting unfolded?

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

As investigators dig deeper into the law enforcement response to the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, a host of disturbing questions remain about what officers on the scene knew as the deadly attack was unfolding.

Did any of them know children were trapped in a classroom with the gunman? Was that potentially critical information relayed to the incident commander on the scene? And did officers challenge the commander's decision not to promptly storm the classroom?

Authorities have not released audio of the 911 calls or radio communications but have confirmed dispatchers received panicked 911 calls from students trapped in the locked classroom with the gunman while officers waited in a hallway outside.

In an apparent breakdown in communications, the commander overseeing police at the scene, school district Police Chief Pete Arredondo, was never informed that children were calling 911 from inside the school, Texas state Sen. Roland Gutierrez said Thursday.

Gutierrez told The Associated Press on Friday that the state agency investigating the shooting determined Arredondo was not carrying a police radio as the massacre unfolded.

Arredondo also has come under criticism for not ordering officers to immediately breach the classroom and take down the gunman. Steven McCraw, the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said that Arredondo believed the active shooting had turned into a hostage situation, and that the chief made the "wrong decision."

Nineteen children and two teachers were killed in the attack last week at Robb Elementary, the deadliest school shooting in nearly a decade. Seventeen others were injured. The funerals began this week.

Arredondo has not responded to repeated interview requests from The AP, and telephone messages left at the school police headquarters were not returned.

There have been other cases in which officers on the scene of a crime were not relayed critical information by a police dispatcher, often because the dispatcher wasn't following protocols, said Dave Warner, a retired police officer and expert at the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch.

He cited a 2009 domestic disturbance call in Pittsburgh in which a woman told a 911 operator that her son was armed. That information was never relayed to responding officers. When they arrived, the man opened fire, ultimately killing three officers and seriously wounding two.

"It's an old case, but it's still very relevant today," Warner said.

Protocols for 911 dispatchers handling calls in active-shooter situations also specifically caution against changing a law enforcement response based solely on the amount of time that has elapsed since shots were last heard, Warner said.

Warner said those protocols were developed in part as a result of the 2007 mass shooting at Virginia Tech, where a student killed 32 people.

In that case, the gunman first killed two people at a dormitory. Police and school authorities thought that

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 42 of 57

the gunman had fled the campus and that the danger had passed. But he instead moved on to another part of campus a couple of hours later and continued his murderous rampage.

Warner said the protocols stress that dispatchers should not think a shooting is over “just because that caller can no longer see the shooter or hear shots being fired.”

The protocols also outline key questions for 911 dispatchers to ask callers in active-shooter cases, including the types of weapons involved, the number and location of suspects and whether the caller can safely evacuate the building.

The gunman in Uvalde, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos, spent roughly 80 minutes inside the school before law enforcement officers killed him, according to an official timeline.

Since the shooting, law enforcement and state officials have struggled to present an accurate account of how police responded, sometimes providing conflicting information or withdrawing some statements hours later.

Many of those details are likely to become clearer after reviewing 911 calls and police radio communications, said Fritz Reber, a 27-year veteran and former captain with the Chula Vista, California, Police Department who has studied 911 dispatch systems.

Operators at a 911 center typically relay information from callers in writing to a dispatcher, who then passes it along to officers in the field over the radio.

On the scene of major events, a specific radio channel is typically established so that all local, state and federal agencies can communicate with one another, Reber said. It is not clear whether that was done in Uvalde.

Reber said one reason information may not be relayed by dispatchers to officers on the ground is that dispatchers don't want to overload the channel with details they assume police on the scene would already know.

“The assumption is the officers are there and will know more about what's going on than the people calling 911,” he said.

Thor Eells, former commander of a 16-member SWAT team in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and director of the National Tactical Officers Association, said another key question is how many people were working at the 911 call center covering Uvalde.

“A lot of 911 calls were being placed, and in my experience that can lead to information overload,” he said. “When the 911 call center is being overwhelmed, it is extremely difficult to make sure you have a timely flow of information.”

There have been communication breakdowns during other mass shootings in Texas, and experts say smaller, regional dispatch centers are often inundated with calls during a major emergency.

Police communications were a problem in 2019 when a gunman shot and killed seven people and wounded more than two dozen during a rampage in Odessa, Texas.

Authorities said 36-year-old gunman Seth Aaron Ator called 911 before and after the shootings, but a failure in communication between agencies — they were not all operating on the same radio channel — slowed the response. Ator was able to cover about 10 miles before officers shot and killed him.

Depp-Heard trial: Advocates fear chilling effect on accusers

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and JOCELYN NOVECK Associated Press

The call came Thursday, only a day after the Johnny Depp-Amber Heard verdict, to a free legal clinic for domestic violence victims in Athens, Georgia. The woman wanted to pursue her abuse claims, but she was worried.

“The fear was that she'd be seen to be a liar like Amber Heard,” clinic director Christine Scartz said of the woman — the first caller to directly mention the verdict. “People do not want to give the most intimate details of their personal life and then be called a liar.”

Scartz is among advocates and legal experts who fear that the case — unique as it was for its celebrity lineup, sordid revelations, mutual claims of abuse, and relentless misogyny on social media — will have a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 43 of 57

real-world chilling effect on women coming forward with abuse claims. The jury, with five men and two women, mostly sided with Depp in the dueling defamation case, ordering Heard to pay him \$10 million to the \$2 million he must give her.

Although jurors were considering civil libel claims and not criminal abuse charges, the verdict largely vindicated Depp's allegations that Heard lied about abusing her. During testimony, Heard detailed dozens of instances of assault, and Depp emphatically denied ever abusing her. In 2020, a U.K. judge in a civil libel case found that Depp assaulted Heard on a dozen occasions.

For Scartz, who directs the clinic at the University of Georgia's law school, the concern is about the assumptions some will make that women are lying. She fears abusers may be newly emboldened to paint their accusers as liars in retaliation for them coming forward.

Not all experts fear a chilling effect or, as some have framed it, a threat to the #MeToo movement. Debra Katz, a Washington employment attorney and perhaps the nation's most prominent #MeToo lawyer, said the Depp case was one of a kind, "a thing of itself – who these people were, and the dysfunction in their marriage and the craziness that took place between them. And this was really driven by celebrity."

Still, Katz, who has represented accusers of Brett Kavanaugh, Andrew Cuomo and others, considers the case a setback, because it "unfortunately taps into misogyny that already exists, and it's terrible that Amber Heard was put through the kind of character assassination, the smear job that she was put through."

During the trial, users of TikTok and Twitter vilified Heard in memes and videos, some using court footage. The social media content, viewed billions of times, blasted her as a liar, an abuser, and a "fake" crier. #AmberIsALiar and other hashtags became popular search terms.

TikTok has tallied nearly 20 billion views for the hashtag #JusticeForJohnnyDepp, compared with some 78 million for #JusticeForAmberHeard. That amounts to more than 250 posts supporting Depp for each one supporting Heard.

What's clear, Katz said, is "there is still misogyny, deep misogyny in the world, and it still pervades our justice system." However, she said, one shouldn't assume women won't come forward in other cases.

And she said a more important gauge of the #MeToo movement's durability lies in a court decision that came Thursday, a day after the Depp verdict: Harvey Weinstein's loss of his appeal of his rape conviction in New York and 23-year prison sentence. In that case, she said, jurors "saw through every single sexist argument that Harvey Weinstein's lawyers made about these women. That's a much more consequential jury verdict and court victory than anything this Depp-Heard thing suggests."

The organization metoo.International - launched by Tarana Burke, who coined the phrase decades ago through her work with survivors of sexual violence - has rejected efforts to connect the Depp-Heard trial and the movement.

"The way in which #MeToo has been co-opted and manipulated during the Johnny Depp vs. Amber Heard trial is a toxic catastrophe and one of the biggest defamations of the movement we have ever seen," the group said in a statement issued before the verdict.

"What we experienced in the Depp-Heard trial was a public retelling of intimate partner violence between two privileged white celebrities," it said, while also decrying "the public humiliation and harassment" heaped onto Heard.

Law professor Mary Anne Franks tried to avoid coverage of the trial, only to find herself barraged by "these really terrible, out-of-context, completely distorted types of takes" whenever she peeked online. She can't help but wonder whether jurors — who weren't sequestered, and could use their phones when not in court — caught them, too.

"It's crazy to think they are not going to be influenced by what's happening on social media," said Franks, a University of Miami law professor who studies the intersection of civil rights and technology.

Social media, Franks added, amplified the power imbalance between the wealthier, beloved actor and his less famous ex-wife. And the trial came at a critical cultural moment, she noted, as the progress women have made in the last 50 years is increasingly under threat, and the #MeToo movement faces backlash.

"When men are being held to account, that resentment, that rage, it might simmer for awhile, but it's

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 44 of 57

going to bubble over after at some point, and I think a lot of people were channeling these emotions through this case," Franks said.

While the jury deliberated, the streets outside the Fairfax, Virginia, courtroom became a pro-Depp carnival. The spectacle included a retired detective sporting a pirate hat to pay homage to his Jack Sparrow character and the arrival of a flatbed truck bearing a "Pirates of the Caribbean" vessel.

During the six-week trial, the national organization RAINN, which combats sexual violence, noted a striking increase in calls to its hotline. It says it provided help to 28% more people in May 2022 than in May 2021, a spike it attributes to news coverage. On verdict day, it served 35% more people than on the average Wednesday, spokeswoman Erinn Robinson said.

Washington lawyer Joseph Cammarata, who represented seven women in a successful defamation suit against Bill Cosby, and Paula Jones in a lawsuit against President Bill Clinton that included a defamation claim, closely followed the courtroom action. He said he understands sex assault victims are increasingly concerned they could be sued if they come forward. But he believes the truth can still prevail.

The trial pitting Heard against Depp, he said, reflected only their relationship and doesn't mean that in all cases, the accused now has an advantage.

"It is a story of these two people," he said of the trial. "A public story about their private life."

"And a woman who feels aggrieved, should have an opportunity ... to have her day in court. Her case will be judged on the facts of that case, not on Johnny Depp's case, not on any other case, but on her case."

But Scartz, at the Georgia clinic, worries that the accused may decide it's worth it to "to take a chance, roll the dice and call her a liar. See what happens, you know? You don't lose anything at this point.

"Those of us who work on the front lines of all of these sorts of cases ... we will do our best to convince our clients to go ahead and seek the relief that they need. But we'll see. We may never be able to definitively say this had an effect, because you don't know who isn't calling you."

Special Olympics drops vaccine rule after \$27M fine threat

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — The Special Olympics has dropped a coronavirus vaccine mandate for its games in Orlando after Florida moved to fine the organization \$27.5 million for violating a state law against such rules.

Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis on Friday announced the organization had removed the requirement for its competition in the state, which is scheduled to run June 5 to June 12.

"In Florida, we want all of them to be able to compete. We do not think it's fair or just to be marginalizing some of these athletes based on a decision that has no bearing on their ability to compete with honor or integrity," DeSantis said at a news conference in Orlando.

The Florida health department notified the Special Olympics of the fine in a letter Thursday that said the organization would be fined \$27.5 million for 5,500 violations of state law for requiring proof of coronavirus vaccination for attendees or participants.

Florida law bars businesses from requiring documentation of a COVID-19 vaccination. DeSantis has strongly opposed vaccine mandates and other virus policies endorsed by the federal government.

In a statement on its website, the Special Olympics said people who were registered but unable to participate because of the mandate can now attend.

Can Gauff top Swiatek? At Surprise Slam, anything can happen

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — Even Coco Gauff looked ahead to her French Open final against Iga Swiatek and concluded: "She's definitely the favorite going into the match, on paper."

In an interview last weekend, Swiatek's sports psychologist, Daria Abramowicz, saw the way the bracket was developing and spoke of her client "being — let's not lie — a clear favorite" to leave Court Philippe Chatrier with the trophy on Saturday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 45 of 57

Makes sense, right? Swiatek is ranked No. 1, on a 34-match winning streak and a past champion at the place. Gauff is still just 18, making her the youngest major finalist since 2004, is ranked 23rd, owned a 14-10 record in 2022 until last week and never previously made it beyond the quarterfinals at a Grand Slam tournament.

Then again, Roland Garros, with its fickle red clay and springtime weather, is the Surprise Slam, one with a long history of smiling upon those who arrive low-seeded or inexperienced, unheralded or unknown, yet become unexpected success stories.

"The clay is a surface that gives a little bit more of a chance to everyone," said Francesca Schiavone, who was seeded 17th at the 2010 French Open when she became, at 29, the oldest woman since 1969 to win her first Grand Slam title. "Every match is 50-50."

Put aside one absolute aberration by the name of Rafael Nadal — he of the 111-3 career record and 13 championships on the rust-colored courts made of "terre battue" and headed to another final Sunday after his semifinal opponent, Alexander Zverev, fell and injured himself — and the unpredictability of the French Open truly does seem to apply across the board.

Scan the lists of titlists since tennis' professional era began in 1968, and you'll find more people who collected a first major championship at the French Open, 42 — 21 women, 21 men — than the U.S. Open's 28 (13 women, 15 men), Australian Open's 24 (13 women, 11 men) or Wimbledon's 18 (nine women, nine men).

On Saturday, Gauff could become the seventh woman in a row to triumph in Paris without already having won one of the sport's four most prestigious events, following Garbiñe Muguruza (2016), Jelena Ostapenko (2017), Simona Halep (2018), Ash Barty (2019), Swiatek (2020) and Barbora Krejčíková (2021).

"The tournament is smaller, it's more cozy," Halep said, "so I feel like most of the players feel that a Grand Slam is more within reach there."

Consider, too, that if Swiatek does win, she would be just the third woman in the past quarter-century to win the French Open as its top seed (the others were Halep, Justine Henin in 2007, and 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams in 2013 and 2015).

There's also this: Of those with only one Grand Slam title, more players attained that status at Roland Garros, 21 — 11 women, 10 men — than at any of the other majors. It's happened a total of 12 times at the U.S. Open (six women, six men), 11 at the Australian Open (five women, six men), eight at Wimbledon (four women, four men).

And it's not just the out-of-nowhere champions that make the French Open unique. After all, for all of the Ostapenkos, Albert Costas and Gaston Gaudio in these parts, there have been the Emma Raducanu, Marion Bartolis, Richard Krajicek and Thomas Johansson elsewhere. But it's also the sort of round-by-round uncertainty at Roland Garros that leads to "Who's that?" male runners-up such as Martin Verkerk in 2003 or low-ranked female semifinalists like No. 59 Martina Trevisan this year, No. 85 Tamara Zidansek last year and No. 131 Nadia Podoroska in 2020.

Day 1 this year saw exits for Muguruza and No. 6 Ons Jabeur, who leads the women's tour in clay-court wins this season. On Day 2, Krejčíková lost. On Day 3, four-time major champion and former No. 1 Naomi Osaka departed. After just two rounds, only three of the top 10 women's seeds remained, the first time since 1976 so few were among the last 32 standing.

"These are the rounds," 11th-seeded American Jessica Pegula observed, "where anything can happen."

In the men's field, three of the top four seeds were gone before the quarterfinals were done: No. 1 Novak Djokovic, No. 2 Daniil Medvedev and No. 4 Stefanos Tsitsipas. Djokovic was the defending champion; Tsitsipas was last year's runner-up.

"This surface is the most demanding one, I think, from various aspects. First, physically, you always need to expect that you're going to play a shot or two more than any other surface, because of the nature of clay," said Djokovic, who has won two of his 20 major titles at Roland Garros. "It's just slow and it requires a lot of effort mentally, emotionally, physically. I think all the players know that."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 46 of 57

EXPLAINER: At 100 days, Russia-Ukraine war by the numbers

By JAMEY KEATEN and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — One hundred days into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the war has brought the world a near-daily drumbeat of gut wrenching scenes: Civilian corpses in the streets of Bucha; a blown-up theater in Mariupol; the chaos at a Kramatorsk train station in the wake of a Russian missile strike.

Those images tell just a part of the overall picture of Europe's worst armed conflict in decades. Here's a look at some numbers and statistics that — while in flux and at times uncertain — shed further light on the death, destruction, displacement and economic havoc wrought by the war as it reaches this milestone with no end in sight.

THE HUMAN TOLL

Nobody really knows how many combatants or civilians have died, and claims of casualties by government officials — who may sometimes be exaggerating or lowballing their figures for public relations reasons — are all but impossible to verify.

Government officials, U.N. agencies and others who carry out the grim task of counting the dead don't always get access to places where people were killed.

And Moscow has released scant information about casualties among its forces and allies, and given no accounting of civilian deaths in areas under its control. In some places — such as the long-besieged city of Mariupol, potentially the war's biggest killing field — Russian forces are accused of trying to cover up deaths and dumping bodies into mass graves, clouding the overall toll.

With all those caveats, "at least tens of thousands" of Ukrainian civilians have died so far, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday in comments to Luxembourg's parliament.

In Mariupol alone, officials have reported over 21,000 civilian dead. Sievierodonetsk, a city in the eastern region of Luhansk that has become the focus of Russia's offensive, has seen roughly 1,500 casualties, according to the mayor.

Such estimates comprise both those killed by Russian strikes or troops and those who succumbed to secondary effects such as hunger and sickness as food supplies and health services collapsed.

Zelenskyy said this week that 60 to 100 Ukrainian soldiers are dying in combat every day, with about 500 more wounded.

Russia's last publicly released figures for its own forces came March 25, when a general told state media that 1,351 soldiers had been killed and 3,825 wounded.

Ukraine and Western observers say the real number is much higher: Zelenskyy said Thursday that more than 30,000 Russian servicemen have died — "more than the Soviet Union lost in 10 years of the war in Afghanistan"; in late April, the British government estimated Russian losses at 15,000.

Speaking on condition of anonymity Wednesday to discuss intelligence matters, a Western official said Russia is "still taking casualties, but ... in smaller numbers." The official estimated that some 40,000 Russian troops have been wounded.

In Moscow-backed separatist enclaves in eastern Ukraine, authorities have reported over 1,300 fighters lost and nearly 7,500 wounded in the Donetsk region, along with 477 dead civilians and nearly 2,400 wounded; plus 29 civilians killed and 60 wounded in Luhansk.

Ukraine's ambassador in Geneva, Yevheniia Filipenko, said for her, the 100-day mark was more about the faces of children who lost parents or homes, or the faces of fleeing mothers than about any particular count.

"It's not about the numbers," she said in an interview, "it's about the feelings and the sufferings of Ukrainians."

THE DEVASTATION

Relentless shelling, bombing and airstrikes have reduced large swaths of many cities and towns to rubble.

Ukraine's parliamentary commission on human rights says Russia's military has destroyed almost 38,000 residential buildings, rendering about 220,000 people homeless.

Nearly 1,900 educational facilities from kindergartens to grade schools to universities have been damaged, including 180 completely ruined.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 47 of 57

Other infrastructure losses include 300 car and 50 rail bridges, 500 factories and about 500 damaged hospitals, according to Ukrainian officials.

The World Health Organization has tallied 296 attacks on hospitals, ambulances and medical workers in Ukraine this year.

FLEEING HOME

The U.N. refugee agency UNHCR estimates that about 6.8 million people have been driven out of Ukraine at some point during the conflict.

But since fighting subsided in the area near Kyiv and elsewhere, and Russian forces redeployed to the east and south, about 2.2 million have returned to the country, it says.

The U.N.'s International Organization for Migration estimates that as of May 23 there were more than 7.1 million internally displaced people — that is, those who fled their homes but remain in the country. That's down from over 8 million in an earlier count.

LAND SEIZED

Ukrainian officials say that before the February invasion, Russia controlled some 7% of Ukrainian territory including Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, and areas held by the separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk. On Thursday, Zelenskyy said Russian forces now held 20% of the country.

While the front lines are constantly shifting, that amounts to an additional 58,000 square kilometers (22,000 square miles) under Russian control, a total area slightly larger than Croatia or a little smaller than the U.S. state of West Virginia.

THE ECONOMIC FALLOUT IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE ...

The West has levied a host of retaliatory sanctions against Moscow including on the crucial oil and gas sectors, and Europe is beginning to wean itself from its dependence on Russian energy.

Evgeny Gontmakher, academic director of European Dialogue, wrote in a paper this week that Russia currently faces over 5,000 targeted sanctions, more than any other country. Some \$300 billion of Russian gold and foreign exchange reserves in the West have been frozen, he added, and air traffic in the country dropped from 8.1 million to 5.2 million passengers between January and March.

Additionally, the Kyiv School of Economics has reported that more than 1,000 "self-sanctioning" companies have curtailed their operations in Russia.

The MOEX Russia stock index has plunged by about a quarter since just before the invasion and is down nearly 40 percent from the start of the year. And the Russian Central Bank said last week that annualized inflation came in at 17.8 percent in April.

Ukraine, meanwhile, has reported suffering a staggering economic blow: 35% of GDP wiped out by the war.

"Our direct losses today exceed \$600 billion," Andriy Yermak, the head of Zelenskyy's office, said recently.

Ukraine, a major agricultural producer, says it has been unable to export some 22 million tons of grain. It blames a backlog of shipments on Russian blockades or capture of key ports. Zelenskyy accused Russia this week of stealing at least a half-million tons of grain during the invasion.

... AND THE WORLD

The fallout has rippled around the globe, further driving up costs for basic goods on top of inflation that was already in full swing in many places before the invasion. Developing countries are being squeezed particularly hard by higher costs of food, fuel and financing.

Crude oil prices in London and New York have risen by 20 to 25 percent, resulting in higher prices at the pump and for an array of petroleum-based products.

Wheat supplies have been disrupted in African nations, which imported 44% of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine in the years immediately before the invasion. The African Development Bank has reported a 45% increase in continental prices for the grain, affecting everything from Mauritanian couscous to the fried donuts sold in Congo.

Amin Awad, the U.N. crisis coordinator in Ukraine, said 1.4 billion people worldwide could be affected by shortages of grain and fertilizer from the country.

"This war's toll on civilians is unacceptable. This war has no winner," he told reporters in Geneva via

video from Kyiv on Friday. "Today we mark a tragic milestone. And we know what is needed the most: An end to this war."

Exhibit of famed prehistoric cave to open in Marseille

MARSEILLE, France (AP) — A permanent virtual exhibit of one of France's most famous prehistoric sites, the undersea Cosquer Cave, is set to open its doors as concerns grow that it could be completely inundated as a result of rising tides driven by climate change.

As of Saturday, visitors to the port city of Marseille will be able to see the Cosquer Mediterranean, a replica of the over 30,000-year old site. The visual and audio "experience" features copies of the prehistoric paintings that made the cave internationally famous.

The Cosquer Cave was discovered in 1985 by diver Henri Cosquer, in deep waters off the Marseille coastline.

Years in the making, the exhibit offers the chance to the public to discover the cave of which only 20% currently remains dry and accessible. Officials say the cave's remaining dry areas are under threat of being flooded because of the effects of climate change.

Report: Musk seeks to cut 10% of Tesla workforce

Associated Press undefined

Tesla shares tumbled about 9% Friday on a report that CEO Elon Musk is considering laying off 10% of the company's workers, as well as new questions from U.S. regulators over complaints of the electric vehicles braking for no reason.

In an email Thursday to Tesla executives titled "pause all hiring worldwide," Musk wrote that he had a "super bad feeling" about the economy and that the company needed to cut staff, Reuters reported.

Tesla had around 100,000 employees worldwide according to recent regulatory filings, including its subsidiaries.

Tesla shares have lost nearly one-third of their value since early April, shortly after Musk first publicly floated the idea of buying Twitter.

Tesla shares fell \$66 to \$709 Friday. Shares were trading around \$1,150 just two months ago.

President Joe Biden, while giving a speech on Friday's jobs report in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, was asked about Elon Musk saying he's pessimistic about the U.S. economy.

"While Elon Musk is talking about that, Ford is increasing their investment overwhelmingly and I think Ford is increasing the investment in building new electric vehicles," Biden responded. "Six thousand new employees -- union employees I might add -- in the Midwest. The former Chrysler Corporation, Stellantis, they're also making similar investments in electric vehicles. Intel's adding 20,000 new jobs making computer chips. So, you know, lots of luck on his trip to the moon, I mean, I don't know."

Musk thanked Biden minutes later in a tweet.

Intel is building a \$20 billion chip plant in Ohio which will employ about 3,000 people. Intel has said there will be about 7,000 construction jobs as well and thousands of additional technical jobs, plus indirect jobs in restaurants, health care, housing and entertainment.

There were other issues Friday that may have been weighing on Tesla's stock.

Government regulators reported Friday that more than 750 Tesla owners have complained that cars operating on the automaker's partially automated driving systems have suddenly stopped on roadways for no apparent reason.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration revealed the number in a detailed information request letter to Tesla that was posted on the agency's website.

It's the fourth formal investigation of the Texas automaker in the past three years, and NHTSA is supervising 23 Tesla recalls since January of 2021.

GOP's Cornyn tapped to lead as Senate talks gun law changes

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Less than 48 hours after a gunman stormed an elementary school and killed 19 children and two teachers in his home state of Texas, Sen. John Cornyn walked straight from the floor of the U.S. Senate into Republican leader Mitch McConnell's office.

The Texas Republican had just returned to Washington from the scene of the horrific school shooting in Uvalde when he was summoned by McConnell to lead the GOP in fraught negotiations over a potential legislative response to the tragedy. Eager, if wary, he took the job.

"I'm not interested in making a political statement," Cornyn said at the time. "I'm actually interested in what we can do to make the terrible events that occurred in Uvalde less likely in the future."

Cornyn is at the center of a bipartisan group of senators working furiously to try to strike a compromise over gun safety legislation, a political longshot despite the heartbreaking pleas from the Uvalde community to "do something" after the massacre.

A four-term senator, Cornyn has been here plenty of times before, a central figure at the forefront of on again, off again talks with Democrats over gun policy changes that almost never make it into law. As gun owners and the powerful gun lobby wield influence, Congress has proven unable to substantively respond even as more gruesome mass shootings rip through communities all across America.

With his previous negotiating partner, Sen. Chris Murphy-D-Conn., Cornyn convened a small group of four senators to meet privately this week, some who are part of a broader Murphy-led group in a desperate search for possible compromise gun safety measures.

President Joe Biden implored Congress — and particularly the Republican senators, who have spent years blocking almost every gun control measure — to act.

"This time, it's time for the Senate to do something," Biden said in remarks from the White House.

Biden, too, is looking at Cornyn to lead.

"I think there's a realization on the part of rational Republicans — and I think Senator McConnell is a rational Republican; I think Cornyn is as well — I think there's a recognition in their party that they — we can't continue like this," Biden said earlier in the week after visiting Texas.

Expectations are low that even the most modest gun control measures could find support among Republicans in Congress, particularly in the evenly-split 50-50 Senate where at least 60 votes are needed to advance legislation past a filibuster.

Senators aren't expected to even broach ideas for an assault weapon ban or other restrictions that are popular with the public as potential ways to curb the most lethal mass shootings.

Instead, the bipartisan group is intensifying talks to reach a deal on incremental changes to the nation's gun laws, after a decade of mostly failed efforts ever since a gunman killed 20 children at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

At most, the senators may be able reach consensus in a few distinct areas — bolstering school security measures; adding more mental health resources in communities; and possibly sending money to the states to encourage red flag laws to keep firearms out of the hands of those who would do harm.

"That may be all they can do," said Matthew Bennett, a longtime gun policy advocate at the centrist Third Way think tank.

It's been nearly 30 years since Congress approved sweeping gun safety legislation with the passage of the 1994 assault weapons ban, which has since expired. In 2013, Congress rejected proposals to expand background checks and ban some assault-style rifles and high-capacity ammunition magazines.

One of the only gun-related bills that has become law in the decade since the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre was Cornyn's fix-NICS bill — a modest effort he and Murphy developed to encourage states to comply with the recordkeeping of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Cornyn first pushed the bill forward after another tragedy in his state, the 2017 church shooting in Sutherland Springs, Texas, when the gunman's Air Force record of court-martial for domestic violence had not been sent for inclusion in the federal database used for gun purchases.

The Fix-NICS bill stalled in the Senate, until months later when another gunman opened fire at a Park-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 50 of 57

land, Florida, high school killing 17 in a massacre on Valentine's Day in 2018.

"Let's do what we can and build from there," Cornyn said at the time.

But by then, Democrats and some Republicans were circulating broader proposals and Donald Trump, who was president, suggested raising the legal age for purchasing firearms to 21. But efforts fizzled after Trump had an Oval Office meeting with the National Rifle Association.

The Fix-NICS bill ultimately won approval in Congress not on its own, but after being included in a government funding measure later that spring. It had the NRA's backing.

Cornyn, who has an A+ rating from the NRA's Political Victory Fund for his support of Second Amendment issues, said last week the Uvalde killings may be an impetus for new reforms.

A former judge and member of the Texas Supreme Court, Cornyn, 70, is a member of McConnell's leadership team and widely believed to be a contender to become Republican Senate leader whenever McConnell retires. McConnell tasked him to work with Murphy and also Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, a deal-maker close to Republicans.

An owner of multiple firearms who frequently hunts in Texas, Cornyn did not attend the NRA's convention in Houston alongside Trump and fellow GOP Texas Sen. Ted Cruz in the days after the Uvalde shooting, even as he dismissed some of the red-flag laws or broader changes in federal gun policy being proposed.

"He is the central figure — or at least one of them — because he has respect among Republicans but is also a critical thinker," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., about Cornyn.

"If he really wants to get it done, he will potentially make a critical difference."

Many Democrats are skeptical that Republicans in the Senate will come to the table. Already the Senate has hopelessly blocked two House-passed measures to bolster background checks for firearm purchases online or at gun shows.

Instead, House Democrats are pushing ahead with their own package of gun safety measures, the "Protecting Our Kids Act," that includes raising the age limits on semi-automatic rifle purchases from 18 to 21 years old. It has almost no hope of passing the Senate.

Queen Elizabeth II skips Platinum Jubilee church service

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, joined other members of Britain's royal family on Friday for a church service honoring Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne, making their first public appearance in the U.K. since stepping back from royal duties two years ago.

The queen skipped the event at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, which came on the second of four days of festivities marking her Platinum Jubilee. The 96-year-old monarch has had difficulty moving around in recent months and experienced "some discomfort" after smiling and waving to throngs of supporters from the balcony of Buckingham Palace on Thursday afternoon.

But royal watchers quickly shifted their focus to Harry and Meghan, who held hands as they walked down the long central aisle accompanied only by a military officer in a scarlet dress tunic. Other guests craned their necks to watch the couple take their places in the second row, underscoring their lesser roles as non-working members of the royal family.

Prince Charles, who represented the queen, and his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall, had special chairs in the front row on the other side of the central aisle. Prince William and his wife, the Duchess of Cambridge were seated next to them.

Harry and Meghan sparked tensions within the royal family when they moved to California and signed lucrative media contracts. The rift deepened after they made allegations of racism and bullying in the royal household. But they flew back to Britain for the jubilee celebrations, bringing their son, Archie, and daughter, Lilibet, who had never met her great grandmother the queen.

"This is, again, Elizabeth II trying to put on a united front, bringing her family together one last time, probably, during her reign, so that ... handing over to the next monarch, she can be seen to have done at least publicly her best to try and unite the divisions that have opened up within the family group over the last couple of years," Ed Owens, author of "The Family Firm: Monarchy Mass Media and the British Public

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 51 of 57

1932-53" said in an interview before the jubilee.

The service of thanksgiving took place a day after the celebrations opened with the glittering military parade known as Trooping the Color, an event that has marked the sovereign's official birthday for some 260 years.

Following the event, tens of thousands of royal supporters cheered wildly as Elizabeth joined other senior royals on the palace balcony and 70 military aircraft roared overhead in salute.

The queen doggedly appeared later in the evening outside her home at Windsor Castle for the final moments of an international beacon lighting ceremony. Moving slowly and with some difficulty she pressed an illuminated globe that sent a river of lights flooding toward Buckingham Palace, where a sculpture of living trees was lit up.

Though the palace said she had enjoyed the festivities, the queen apparently decided that another trip from Windsor back into London on Friday might be a bit much. Prince Charles again stood in for his mother at the church service, as he has often done of late.

But the queen was still part of the service as participants assumed she was watching on television.

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell spoke directly to her in his sermon, playfully riffing on her love of horse racing.

"I'm afraid I don't have any great tips for the Derby tomorrow, but since the scriptures describe life as a race set before us, let me observe that your long reign reflects the distance of Aintree rather than the sprints of Epsom ...," he joked. "But with endurance, through times of change and challenge, joy and sorrow, you continue to offer yourself in the service of our country and the commonwealth."

"Your Majesty, we're sorry you're not with us this morning, but we are so glad you are still in the saddle," he added. "And we are all glad that there is still more to come."

AP-NORC poll details rift between lay Catholics and bishops

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

The hardline stances of many conservative Catholic bishops in the U.S. are not shared by a majority of lay Catholics. Most of them say abortion should be legal, favor greater inclusion of LGBT people, and oppose the denial of Communion for politicians who support abortion rights, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The poll, conducted in mid-May, shows a clear gap between the prevalent views of American Catholics, and some recent high-profile actions taken by the church's leaders.

For example, leaders of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recently called on Catholics nationwide to pray for the U.S. Supreme Court to end the constitutional right to abortion by reversing its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. According to the new poll, 63% of Catholic adults say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, and 68% say Roe should be left as is.

On May 20, the archbishop of San Francisco, Salvatore Cordileone, announced that he will no longer allow U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to receive Communion because of her support for abortion rights.

According to the poll, only 31% of lay Catholics agree that politicians supporting abortion rights should be denied Communion, while 66% say they should be allowed access to the sacrament.

An even larger majority -- 77% -- said that Catholics who identify as LGBT should be allowed to receive Communion. That contrasts sharply with a policy issued by the Diocese of Marquette, which encompasses Michigan's Upper Peninsula, saying pastors should deny Communion to transgender, gay and nonbinary Catholics "unless the person has repented."

Natalia Imperatori-Lee, a professor of religious studies at Manhattan College, said the rift between rank-and-file Catholics and the bishops "reveals a breakdown in communication and trust -- shepherds who are far removed from the sheep."

"This is a precarious time for the U.S. Catholic church," she added in an email. "U.S. Catholics are, on the whole, accustomed to living and working in a pluralistic society and this poll reinforces the notion that they want the public square to remain pluralistic, free from coercion, and oriented toward care for the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 52 of 57

vulnerable populations among us.”

The Rev. Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, said the poll results didn't surprise him, and underscored a need for anti-abortion clergy and activists to redouble efforts to change people's positions.

“For us working on pro-life issues, these kinds of polls are like a summons,” he said. “You've got to be doing your work -- maybe you've got to do it better.”

As for conservative bishops, “their awareness of the gaps that the polling reveals is precisely one of the reasons they feel the need to speak up,” Pavone said. “They are striving to exercise the role outlined for them in Scripture, namely, to patiently and persistently teach the faith, whether convenient or inconvenient, to clear up confusion.”

Beyond the bishops/laity rift, the poll highlighted other challenges facing the church, which is the largest denomination in the U.S.

For example, 68% of Catholics reported attending religious services once a month or less. Compared to five years ago, 37% said they were now attending less often; 14% said they were attending more often.

Over that five-year span, 26% percent of Catholics said their opinion of the Catholic church had worsened, while 17% said their opinion had improved. Most said their opinion hadn't changed.

More than two-thirds of U.S. Catholics disagree with church policies that bar women from becoming priests. And 65% say the church should allow openly gay men to be ordained.

The poll was conducted just after the leak of a draft Supreme Court majority opinion that would strike down *Roe v. Wade*. The views of U.S. Catholics, as expressed in the poll, were in line with the overall American public, both in regard to supporting abortion's legality and preserving *Roe*.

However, there were sharp differences among major religious groupings. While 63% of Catholics said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, that stance was held by 74% of mainline Protestants and only 25% of evangelical Protestants.

Sharon Barnes of Dallas, who converted to Catholicism as a young adult, appreciates the centuries-old consistency of Catholic doctrine. Yet she differs from the church on some major social issues, including abortion.

“It's a woman's right to decide,” said Barnes, 65. “It's something that you have to kind of reconcile yourself, and it's between you and God.”

Pedro Gomez, a 55-year-old border patrol agent in Rio Rico, Arizona, is a lifelong Catholic who prays every night and attends church regularly. He understands the need for abortion in cases of rape, incest or saving the life of a mother, but he said he considers the procedure to be the killing of a child.

Gomez was surprised that most U.S. Catholics support some degree of abortion rights.

“There's a lot of gray area now that was never there in my upbringing,” he said. “Maybe they're watering down Catholicism ... Now people are being able to make up their own rules.”

Ed Keeley, a 62-year-old public school teacher in Houston, also was raised Catholic. He described abortion as “a hard subject,” saying he believes in the sanctity of life but that abortion should be allowed in specific cases, including rape or incest.

He finds it “ridiculous” that a priest would deny Communion to someone because of their views on abortion or politics generally.

Last year, some conservative bishops, including Cordileone, argued publicly that President Joe Biden — a lifelong Catholic — should not receive Communion because of his support for abortion rights. However, Pope Francis conveyed his opposition to such a stance, saying Communion “is not a prize for the perfect.”

Cordileone's recent denial of Communion for Pelosi was supported by several of his clerical colleagues, including the archbishops of Denver, Oklahoma City, Portland, Oregon, and Kansas City, Kansas. However, Archbishop Michael Jackels of Dubuque, Iowa, issued a statement describing the action as “misguided.”

“As Jesus said, it's the sick people who need a doctor, not the healthy, and he gave us the Eucharist as a healing remedy,” Jackels said. “Don't deny the people who need the medicine.”

He also contended that abortion was not the only critical “life issue” facing the church.

“Protecting the earth, our common home, or making food, water, shelter, education and health care ac-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 53 of 57

cessible, or defense against gun violence... these are life issues too," he said. "To be consistent, to repair the scandal of Catholics being indifferent or opposed to all those other life issues, they would have to be denied Holy Communion as well."

John Gehring, Catholic program director at the Washington-based clergy network Faith in Public Life, said some conservative bishops engage in the culture wars "in ways that damage their already diminished relevance and credibility."

"Most Catholics are fed up with bishops who want to weaponize Communion in a hypocritical, single-issue campaign against pro-choice politicians, especially when we see Pope Francis offering a better road map," said Gehring

The AP-NORC poll of 1,172 adults, including 358 Catholics, was conducted May 12-16 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points, and for Catholics is plus or minus 7.4 percentage points.

Jennifer Lopez to receive honor at MTV Movie & TV Awards

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jennifer Lopez will be honored for her film and television achievements at the MTV Movie & TV Awards.

The network announced Friday that Lopez will receive the Generation Award on Sunday in Santa Monica, California. The award celebrates actors whose diverse contributions in both film and television have turned them into household names.

Previous recipients include Scarlett Johansson, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Tom Cruise, Sandra Bullock, Robert Downey Jr., Chris Pratt, Will Smith and Reese Witherspoon.

"Jennifer embodies everything about the Generation Award," executive producers Wendy Plaut and Vanessa WhiteWolf said in a statement. "As a woman who does it all — in the acting, singing, dancing, producing, fashion and beauty realms — Jennifer Lopez is a timeless icon who's made a lasting impact on film, TV, music and culture."

Lopez's first breakthrough came as a dancer on the 1990s sketch comedy series "In Living Color." She pursued an acting career and landed a leading role in "Selena" in 1997. She would go on to appear in such films including "Anaconda," "Out of Sight," "The Wedding Planner," "Hustlers" and her latest, "Marry Me."

The 52-year-old actor will release a new Netflix documentary called "Halftime" on June 14. The project focuses on the second half of her career and she reflects on her milestones and evolution as an artist.

As a singer, Lopez has had success on the pop and Latin charts with multiple hit songs and albums. She released her multi-hit debut "On the 6" in 1999 and topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart with songs like "If You Had My Love," "All I Have" and the remixes of "I'm Real" and "Ain't It Funny."

And in 2020, Lopez performed during the Super Bowl halftime show alongside Shakira.

"Spider-Man: No Way Home" enters the awards show as the leading nominee with seven nominations. HBO's "Euphoria" earned six nods, and "The Batman" followed with four nominations. Vanessa Hudgens will host the awards, which will air live from the Barker Hangar. The nominations include 26 gender-neutral categories.

Jack Black will receive the Comedic Genius Award.

Satellite images suggest new Chinese carrier close to launch

By JON GAMBRELL and DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — China's most advanced aircraft carrier to date appears to be nearing completion, satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press showed Friday, as experts suggested the vessel could be launched soon.

The newly developed Type 003 carrier has been under construction at the Jiangnan Shipyard northeast of Shanghai since 2018. Satellite images taken by Planet Labs PBC on May 31 suggest work on the vessel

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 54 of 57

is close to done.

The launch has been long anticipated, and constitutes what the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank called a "seminal moment in China's ongoing modernization efforts and a symbol of the country's growing military might."

CSIS noted in a report that China often pairs military milestones with existing holidays and anniversaries. It suggested that the vessel could be launched as soon as Friday to coincide with the national Dragon Boat Festival, as well as the 157th anniversary of the founding of the Jiangnan Shipyard.

In the satellite images, the carrier's deck can be clearly seen. In an image taken Tuesday through wispy clouds, equipment behind the carrier appears to have been removed, a step toward flooding the entire drydock and floating the vessel. Pictures earlier this month showed work ongoing.

Cloud cover blocked Planet Labs satellites from capturing images of the shipyard from Wednesday to Friday.

China's Ministry of National Defense did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Though no launch was announced, the state-run Global Times newspaper on Tuesday ran a story quoting reports that it "could be launched soon."

It added that the Chinese navy in April had released a promotional video on the country's carrier program "in which it implied that the country's third aircraft carrier will be officially revealed soon."

Though the U.S. Department of Defense estimates that the carrier won't be fully operational until 2024, first needing to undergo extensive sea trials, the carrier is China's most advanced yet. As with its space program, China has proceeded extremely cautiously in the development of aircraft carriers, seeking to apply only technologies that have been tested and perfected.

Its development is part of a broader modernization of China's military as it seeks to extend its influence in the region. China already has the largest navy in the world in terms of numbers of ships, but not near the capabilities of the U.S. Navy.

Among other assets, the U.S. Navy remains the world's leader in aircraft carriers, with its forces able to muster 11 nuclear-powered vessels. The Navy also has nine amphibious assault ships, which can carry helicopters and vertical-takeoff fighter jets as well.

The expected launch of the new Chinese carrier comes as the U.S. has been increasing its focus on the region, including the South China Sea. The vast maritime region has been tense because six governments claim all or part of the strategically vital waterway, through which an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade travels each year and which holds rich but fast declining fishing stocks and significant undersea oil and gas deposits.

China has been far and away the most aggressive in asserting its claim to virtually the entire waterway, its island features and resources.

The U.S. Navy has sailed warships past Chinese-held humanmade islands in the sea, which are equipped with airstrips and other military facilities. China insists its territory extends to those islands, while the Navy says it conducts the missions there to ensure the free flow of international trade.

Once mainly a coastal force, China's navy has in recent years expanded its presence into the Indian Ocean, the Western Pacific and beyond, setting up its first overseas base over the last decade in the African Horn nation of Djibouti, where the U.S., Japan and others also maintain a military presence.

The carrier is China's second domestically developed carrier, following a Type 002 ship that is currently undergoing sea trials. Its other carrier is a modified former Soviet ship bought as a hulk from Ukraine and refurbished over several years as an experimental platform that nevertheless packs considerable combat capability with an airwing of Chinese-built fighters developed from the Russian Su-33.

In addition to being the largest of its three carriers, the new Type 003 class is fitted with a catapult launch system that will "enable it to support additional fighter aircraft, fixed-wing early-warning aircraft, and more rapid flight operations and thus extend the reach and effectiveness of its carrier-based strike aircraft," the U.S. Defense Department said in its annual report to Congress on China's military in November.

"In particular, the PRC's (People's Republic of China's) aircraft carriers and planned follow-on carriers, once

operational, will extend air defense coverage beyond the range of coastal and shipboard missile systems and will enable task group operations at increasingly longer ranges," the Defense Department said, adding that the Chinese navy's "emerging requirement for sea-based land-attack systems will also enhance the PRC's ability to project power."

China's existing carriers weigh in at about half the size of the U.S. Nimitz class flattops and displace about 100,000 tons fully loaded.

Experts from the Washington-based CSIS, which has been monitoring the construction for years, said in an analysis Thursday of different satellite images by Maxar Technologies, also taken Tuesday, that a smaller vessel had been moved out of the carrier's way, and that water now partially fills some of the dry dock.

But, they said, more work still needed to be done before the vessel could leave the dock.

"The staircases that workers use to access the carrier — as well as the support structures and other equipment that skirt the ship — will need to be removed," CSIS said. "The caisson, which segments the dry dock and allows work to proceed simultaneously on multiple vessels, will also be opened to allow water to fill the entire dry dock."

The Wall Street Journal first published the Maxar images of the vessel from the CSIS analysis.

As COVID retreats, dragon boat tradition back in south China

GUANGZHOU, China (AP) — The dragon boat tradition returned in parts of China on Friday for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic in late 2019, as restrictions are lifted along with a major drop in COVID-19 cases.

The historic Lychee Bay scenic area in the southern Chinese manufacturing hub of Guangzhou staged boat displays and other scaled-back celebrations to mark the holiday commemorating the death more than 2,200 years ago of revered poet and government minister Qu Yuan.

Restrictions on the length of events and the size of crowds remained in place but did little to dampen the mood.

Along with the displays and traditional boat races — featuring teams of up to a dozen or more paddlers but which were not held this year due to pandemic measures — the holiday is marked by community gatherings and the enthusiastic consumption of steamed rice dumplings cooked with meat, peanuts and other ingredients and wrapped in green leaves bound with string.

China recorded just 74 new COVID-19 cases on Friday and restrictions have been eased in cities such as Shanghai, which had been under strict lockdown for more than two months.

While travel restrictions, testing requirements, quarantines and mask mandates remain, the country is gradually emerging from its hard-line "zero-COVID" policy that has throttled the domestic economy and severely constricted global supply chains.

Guangzhou native June He said it was a relief to finally be able to enjoy the festival again after the cancellations of the previous two years.

"I feel particularly excited and happy," said He, who was among the spectators watching the crews from Panting village compete in the carefully-decorated boats as long as 38 meters (125 feet).

Wang Haoran, a tourist from Inner Mongolia in China's far north, said he'd only ever experienced the festival through books and television.

"I wasn't able to get a sense of the magnificence of the event," Wang said.

The dragon boat tradition dates back 500 years, and residents a century ago began displaying the boats as works of folk art and craftsmanship.

The return of dragon boat festivities also delighted small businesses in the area.

"It's good for various parties, including tourists. There will be lively scenes here again," said Ji Tuhui, the owner of a small bakery selling traditional Cantonese pastries.

While business has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, Friday's dragon boat performance brought tourists and their spending money, Ji said.

"This is an unforgettable experience. But it's OK. We were able to hold this event under such strict con-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 56 of 57

ditions," he said.

Today in History: June 4, Battle of Midway begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 4, the 155th day of 2022. There are 210 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 4, 1942, the World War II Battle of Midway began, resulting in a decisive American victory against Japan and marking the turning point of the war in the Pacific.

On this date:

In 1812, the U.S. House of Representatives approved, 79-49, a declaration of war against Britain.

In 1919, Congress approved the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which said that the right to vote could not be denied or abridged based on gender. The amendment was sent to the states for ratification.

In 1939, the German ocean liner MS St. Louis, carrying more than 900 Jewish refugees from Germany, was turned away from the Florida coast by U.S. officials.

In 1940, during World War II, the Allied military evacuation of some 338,000 troops from Dunkirk, France, ended. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

In 1944, U-505, a German submarine, was captured by a U.S. Navy task group in the south Atlantic; it was the first such capture of an enemy vessel at sea by the U.S. Navy since the War of 1812. The U.S. Fifth Army began liberating Rome.

In 1967, "Mission: Impossible" won outstanding dramatic series, "The Monkees" outstanding comedy series at the 19th Primetime Emmy Awards.

In 1985, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling striking down an Alabama law providing for a daily minute of silence in public schools.

In 1986, Jonathan Jay Pollard, a former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, pleaded guilty in Washington to conspiring to deliver information related to the national defense to Israel. (Pollard, sentenced to life in prison, was released on parole on Nov. 20, 2015; he moved to Israel after completing parole in December 2020.)

In 1989, a gas explosion in the Soviet Union engulfed two passing trains, killing 575.

In 1990, Dr. Jack Kevorkian carried out his first publicly assisted suicide, helping Janet Adkins, a 54-year-old Alzheimer's patient from Portland, Oregon, end her life in Oakland County, Michigan.

In 1998, a federal judge sentenced Terry Nichols to life in prison for his role in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

In 2020, in the first of a series of memorials set for three cities over six days, celebrities, musicians and political leaders gathered in front of George Floyd's golden casket in Minneapolis.

Ten years ago: With President Barack Obama standing off to the side, former President Bill Clinton warned during a fundraiser in New York that a Mitt Romney presidency would be "calamitous" for the nation and the world. Al-Qaida's second-in-command, Abu Yahya al-Libi (ah-BOO' yah-HEE'-ah ahl LIH'-bee), was killed in a U.S. drone strike in North Waziristan, Pakistan.

Five years ago: Alfredo del Mazo of the governing PRI (pree) party was elected governor of the state of Mexico in a hotly disputed contest marred by charges of irregularities. Elite rock climber Alex Honnold became the first to climb alone to the top of the massive granite wall known as El Capitan in Yosemite National Park without ropes or safety gear.

One year ago: A federal judge overturned California's three-decade-old ban on assault weapons, calling it a "failed experiment" that violated people's constitutional right to bear arms. Facebook said former President Donald Trump's accounts would be suspended for two years, following a finding that Trump stoked violence ahead of the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol. Prince Harry and Meghan welcomed their second child, a girl born in California and named Lilibet Diana in a tribute both to Queen Elizabeth II and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 4, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 332 ~ 57 of 57

to the prince's late mother, Princess Diana. Actor Clarence Williams III, who played undercover cop Linc Hayes on the TV series 'The Mod Squad,' died in Los Angeles at 81.

Today's Birthdays: Sex therapist and media personality Dr. Ruth Westheimer is 94. Actor Bruce Dern is 86. Musician Roger Ball is 78. Actor-singer Michelle Phillips is 78. Jazz musician Anthony Braxton is 77. Rock musician Danny Brown (The Fixx) is 71. Actor Parker Stevenson is 70. Actor Keith David is 66. Blues singer-musician Tinsley Ellis is 65. Actor Eddie Velez is 64. Singer-musician El DeBarge is 61. Actor Julie White is 61. Actor Lindsay Frost is 60. Actor Sean Pertwee is 58. Former tennis player Andrea Jaeger is 57. Opera singer Cecilia Bartoli is 56. R&B singer Al B. Sure! is 54. Actor Scott Wolf is 54. Actor-comedian Rob Huebel is 53. Comedian Horatio Sanz is 53. Actor James Callis is 51. Actor Noah Wyle is 51. Rock musician Stefan Lessard (The Dave Matthews Band) is 48. Actor-comedian Russell Brand is 47. Actor Angelina Jolie is 47. Actor Theo Rossi is 47. Alt-country singer Kasey Chambers is 46. Actor Robin Lord Taylor is 44. Rock musician JoJo Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 42. Model Bar Refaeli (ruh-FEHL'-lee) is 37. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evan Lysacek is 37. Americana singer Shakey Graves is 35. Rock musician Zac Farro is 32.