

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, June 11

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

U10 at Aberdeen Tourney (R/W)

U8 Tourney in Groton

3 Team Pool Play

POOL A (Falk Field)

9:00 Groton White vs Britton

10:15 Hannigan vs Britton

11:30 Groton White vs Hannigan

Pool B (Nelson Field)

9:00 Groton Red vs Borge

10:15 Borge vs Milbank

11:30 Groton Red vs Milbank

12:45 Pool A #3 vs Pool B #3 Falk Field

1:30 Pool A #2 vs Pool B #2 Nelson Field

2:45 Pool A #1 vs Pool B #1 Falk Field

Sunday, June 12

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.

2 p.m.: Legion hosts Redfield, DH

U10 at Aberdeen Tourney (W/B)

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



Since there is nothing so well worth
having as friends, never lose a chance
to make them.

FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

Monday, June 13

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, coleslaw, peaches, whole wheat bread.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center

5 p.m.: Legion at Webster, DH

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Teeners host Aberdeen, DH

5:30 p.m.: U10 hosts Webster, Nelson Field, (R/B), DH

5:30 p.m.: U8 hosts Webster, Nelson Field, (R/B), DH

June 14 - FLAG DAY

Elementary Library Open 9-11 (Reading time 10 a.m.)

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

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Hannigan, DH

6 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage

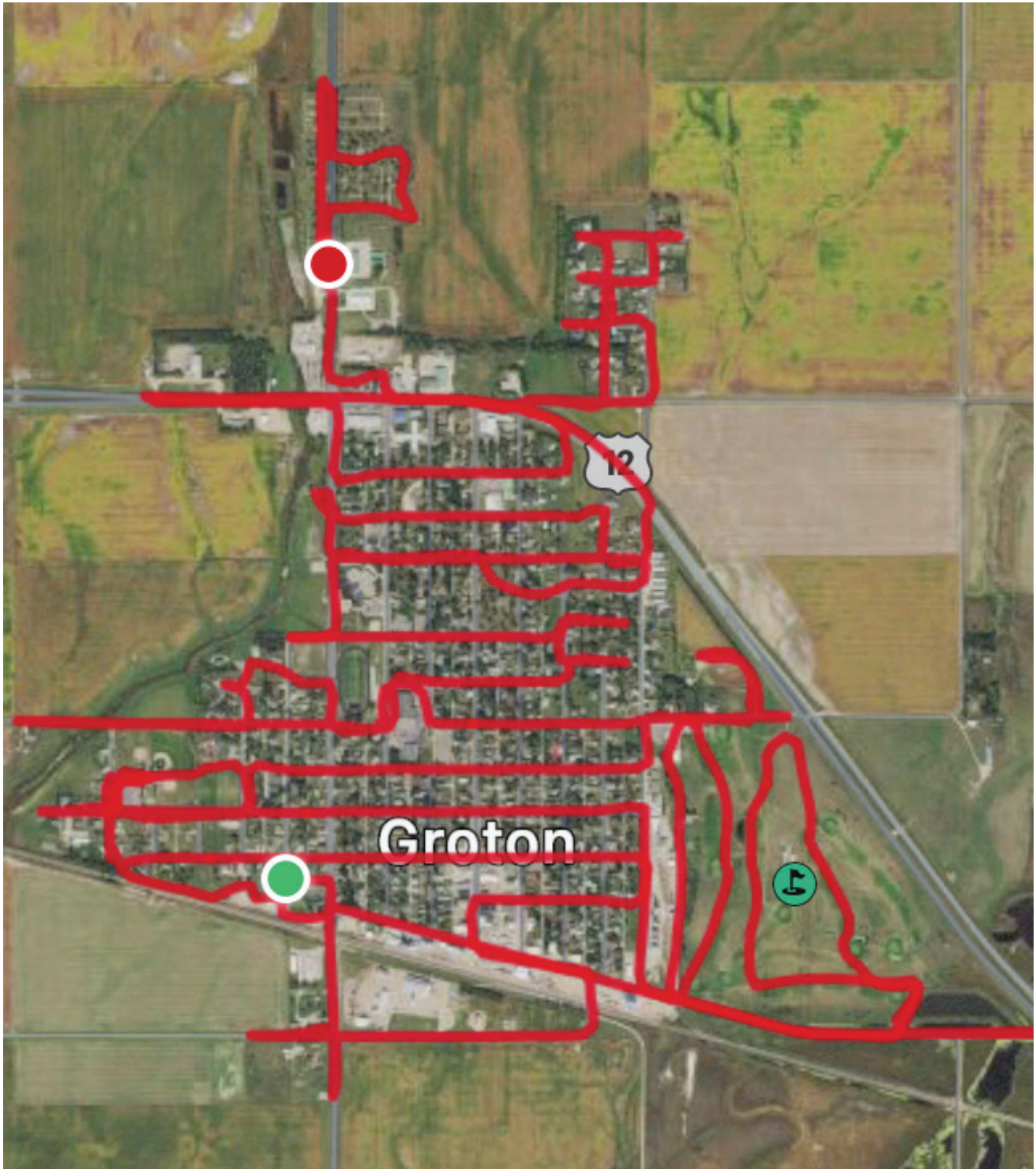
OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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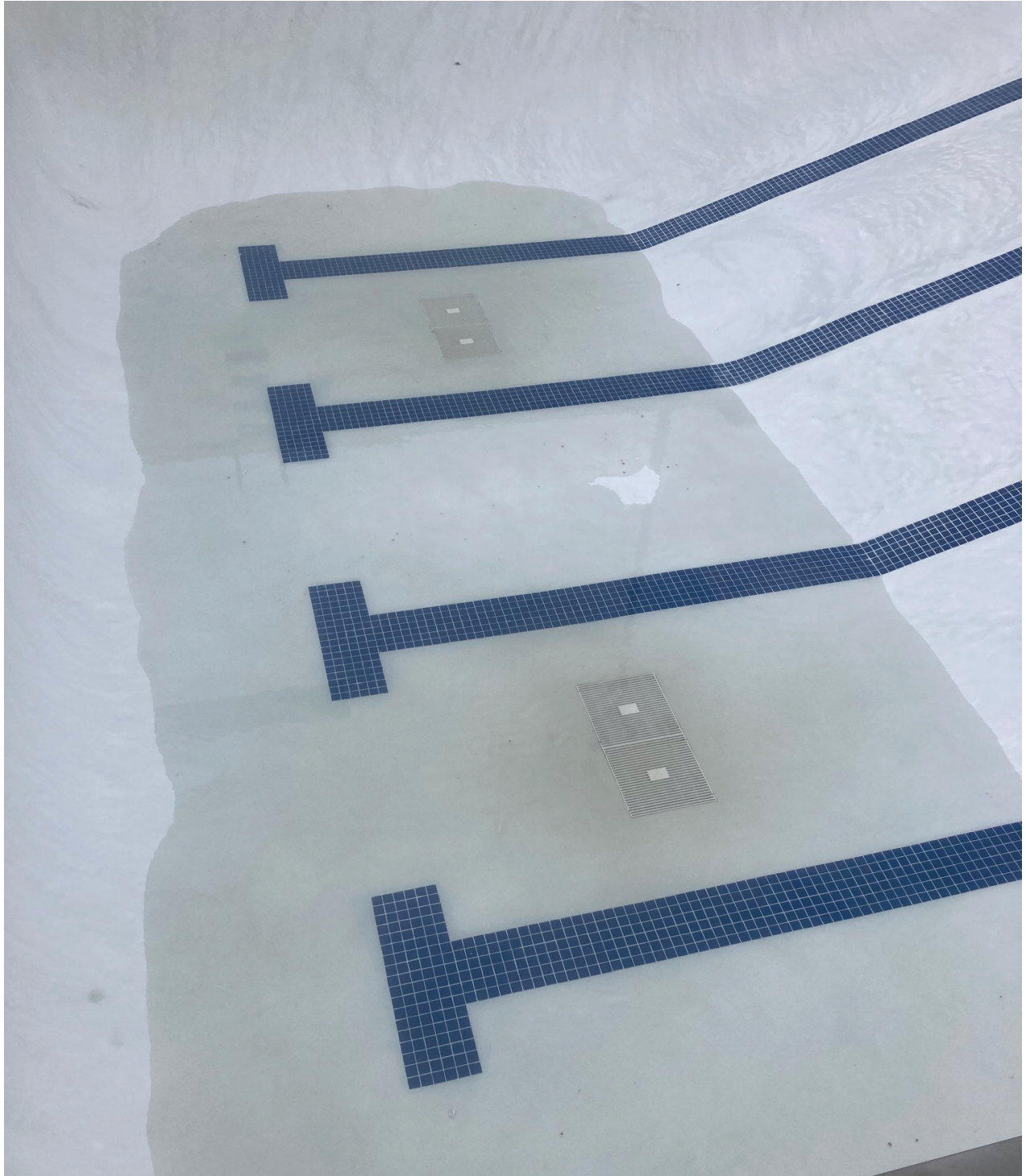
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City performs Adult Mosquito Control

The City of Groton performed an adult mosquito control Friday night. There was a south wind at 5-15 mph and a temperature of 70 degrees. 20 miles were covered with 5 gallons of Evolver 4x4.



Pool being filled

The filling process has begun at the Groton Municipal Swimming Pool. The first water entered Friday evening. The filtration system will begin either Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon. It will have to run for 24 hours before chemicals can be added. The pool will be shocked once it is filled and then the stabilization process will begin. It's still looking for Wednesday for an opening date.

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A neat effect of the tail lights illuminates the road with the sunrise in the background. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Groton Jr. Teeners overcomes Webster Teeners In Face Of Early 4-Run Inning

Vfw 4690 Teeners scored four runs in the fifth inning, but Groton Jr. Teeners 14U still won 12-4 on Wednesday. The offensive firepower by Webster's VFW 4690 Teeners was led by Sheldon S, Caleb E, and Devin S, who each had RBIs in the inning.

In the first inning, Groton Jr. Teeners 14U got their offense started. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored two runs when Nicholas Morris singled.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U notched five runs in the second inning. The offensive firepower by Groton Jr. Teeners 14U was led by Jarrett Erdmann, Karsten Flihs, and Karter Moody, all knocking in runs in the inning.

Kellen Antonsen led the Groton Jr. Teeners 14U to victory on the hill. The righthander went five innings, allowing four runs on one hit and striking out eight. Gavin Englund threw two innings in relief out of the bullpen.

S took the loss for Vfw 4690 Teeners. S lasted four innings, allowing five hits and four runs while striking out two.

Tayten K started the game for Vfw 4690 Teeners. The pitcher surrendered eight runs on four hits over two innings, striking out one

Morris led Groton Jr. Teeners 14U with two hits in three at bats. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tore up the base paths, as four players stole at least two bases. Morris led the way with five.

S went 1-for-4 at the plate to lead Vfw 4690 Teeners in hits.

Groton Jr. Teeners won the second game, 18-8, in three innings.

Tristin McGannon pitched his first game with three strike-outs, seven walks and six runs. Gavin Kroll came in to pitch in the third inning after the six runs were scored and gave up two runs had three walks and one strike-out.

Offensively, Carter Simon and Nick Morris each had a double.

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Vfw 4690 Teeners 4 - 12 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday June 08, 2022

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
VFW4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	1	2
GRTN	3	5	0	2	1	1	X	12	9	5

BATTING

Vfw 4690 Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
Gabe B (CF)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Dylan C (CF)	2	1	0	0	0	1
Owen E (SS)	4	1	0	0	0	0
Sheldon S (C, P)	4	1	1	0	0	1
Justin P (RF)	2	1	0	0	1	2
Caleb E (2B)	2	0	0	0	1	2
Devin S (3B, C)	3	0	0	1	0	1
Ethan S (1B)	3	0	0	0	0	2
Tayten K (P, 3B)	2	0	0	0	1	2
Jack S (LF)	2	0	0	0	1	2
Totals	25	4	1	1	5	13

TB: Sheldon S, **HBP:** Justin P, **LOB:** 6

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (CF)	4	2	1	1	0	0
J Erdmann (LF)	3	2	1	3	2	0
K Fliehs (C)	4	1	0	1	0	0
N Morris (SS)	3	2	2	2	1	0
C Simon (3B)	3	2	1	1	1	0
G Englund (1B, P)	3	0	1	1	1	0
K Moody	3	0	1	1	0	1
K Antonsen (P, 1B)	0	1	0	0	1	0
G Kroll (RF)	3	1	1	0	1	2
L Krause (2B)	3	1	1	0	1	0
Totals	29	12	9	10	8	3

2B: T McGannon, **TB:** G Englund, G Kroll, N Morris 2, C Simon, T McGannon 2, J Erdmann, L Krause, K Moody, **HBP:** K Fliehs, T McGannon, **SB:** G Kroll 2, K Antonsen, N Morris 5, C Simon 3, T McGannon, J Erdmann 3, **LOB:** 9

PITCHING

Vfw 4690 Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
Tayten K	2.0	4	8	3	3	1	0
Sheldon S	4.0	5	4	4	5	2	0
Totals	6.0	9	12	7	8	3	0

L: Sheldon S, **P-S:** Tayten K 64-31, Sheldon S 66-28, **WP:** Tayten K, **HBP:** Tayten K 2, **BF:** Tayten K 17, Sheldon S 22

Groton Jr. Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
K Antonsen	5.0	1	4	0	5	8	0
G Englund	2.0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Totals	7.0	1	4	0	5	13	0

W: K Antonsen, **P-S:** G Englund 24-18, K Antonsen 94-48, **WP:** K Antonsen 2, **HBP:** K Antonsen, **BF:** G Englund 6, K Antonsen 25

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Vfw 4690 Teeners 8 - 18 Groton Jr. Teeners 14U

📍 Home 📅 Wednesday June 08, 2022

	1	2	3	R	H	E
VFW4	0	0	8	8	0	3
GRTN	2	6	10	18	8	1

BATTING

Vfw 4690 Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
Gabe B (3B)	1	1	0	1	1	1
Owen E (SS, P)	2	1	0	2	1	1
Devin S (P)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caleb E (P, SS)	1	1	0	0	2	0
Sheldon S (C)	2	1	0	1	1	0
Ethan S (1B)	1	1	0	1	1	0
Matthew M (RF)	1	1	0	1	1	1
TJ S (2B)	1	0	0	0	1	1
Dylan C (LF)	1	1	0	1	1	0
Tayten K (CF)	0	1	0	1	1	0
Totals	10	8	0	8	10	4

Groton Jr. Teeners	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T McGannon (P)	1	1	0	1	1	0
G Kroll (P)	0	1	0	0	1	0
J Erdmann (C)	3	2	1	1	0	1
K Fliehs (1B)	2	2	0	1	1	0
N Morris (3B)	3	3	3	2	0	0
K Antonsen (SS)	2	1	1	3	1	0
K Moody (RF)	1	1	0	1	2	0
R Jangula (LF)	1	2	0	0	2	1
N Groeblichhoff (...)	1	1	1	0	0	0
L Krause (2B)	1	1	0	0	1	1
C Simon (CF)	3	1	2	1	0	1
G Englund	1	2	0	1	0	1
Totals	19	18	8	11	9	5

HBP: Tayten K, Gabe B, **SB:** Tayten K, **LOB:** 5

2B: C Simon, N Morris, **TB:** C Simon 3, N Groeblichhoff, K Antonsen, J Erdmann, N Morris 4, **HBP:** G Englund, **SB:** J Erdmann, **LOB:** 2

PITCHING

Vfw 4690 Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
Caleb E	2.0	6	8	6	2	2	0
Owen E	0.2	1	10	7	7	3	0
Devin S	0.0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	2.2	8	18	13	9	5	0

P-S: Owen E 57-22, Devin S 3-2, Caleb E 65-34, **WP:** Owen E 5, Devin S, Caleb E 7, **HBP:** Caleb E, **BF:** Owen E 12, Devin S, Caleb E 16

Groton Jr. Teeners	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
T McGannon	2.0	0	6	5	7	3	0
G Kroll	1.0	0	2	2	3	1	0
Totals	3.0	0	8	7	10	4	0

P-S: G Kroll 30-10, T McGannon 56-20, **WP:** T McGannon, **HBP:** G Kroll 2, **BF:** G Kroll 8, T McGannon 14

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Groton Legion Post #39 Defeats Mobridge Post 4 On Heels Of Cogley's No-Hitter

Jackson Cogley was brilliant on the pitcher's mound on Thursday, as Cogley threw a no-hitter to lead Groton Legion Post #39 past Mobridge Post 4 10-0.

Groton Legion Post #39 put up five runs in the fifth inning. Groton Legion Post #39 big bats were led by Cole Simon, Bradin Althoff, Ryan Groeblichhoff, and Evin Nehls, all driving in runs in the inning.

Cogley took the win for Groton Legion Post #39. The righty allowed zero hits and zero runs over five innings, striking out six.

Jack Faehnrich took the loss for Mobridge Post 4. The righthander surrendered ten runs on eight hits over four and two-thirds innings, striking out four.

Groton Legion Post #39 racked up eight hits. Simon and Pierce Kettering each racked up multiple hits for Groton Legion Post #39. Kettering and Simon each collected two hits to lead Groton Legion Post #39. Tate Larson led Groton Legion Post #39 with two stolen bases, as they ran wild on the base paths with eight stolen bases. Groton Legion Post #39 didn't commit a single error in the field. Cade Larson had the most chances in the field with six.

Mobridge Post 4 - 2022 Almost Erases 9-Run Deficit in Loss to Groton Post 39 Jr Legion

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion built a nine-run lead in the second inning and then held off Mobridge Post 4 - 2022's charge for a 12-10 victory on Thursday. Mobridge Post 4 - 2022 put up eight runs in the failed comeback. Brayden Blom, Holden Eisemann, Taylon Carmody, Jackson Eisemann, Eisemann, and Collin Tisdall picked up RBIs to lead the rally.

Mobridge Post 4 - 2022 scored six runs in the fourth inning, but Groton Post 39 Jr Legion still managed to pull out the victory. Eisemann, Carmody, and Eisemann all contributed in the big inning with RBIs.

Groton Post 39 Jr Legion fired up the offense in the first inning. Groton Post 39 Jr Legion scored one run when Bradin Althoff singled.

Taylor Diegel earned the victory on the pitcher's mound for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion. The righty surrendered two runs on one hit over two and two-thirds innings, striking out four. Ryan Groeblichhoff and Colby Dunker entered the game out of the bullpen and helped to close out the game in relief. Groeblichhoff recorded the last seven outs to earn the save for Groton Post 39 Jr Legion.

Eisemann took the loss for Mobridge Post 4 - 2022. The righty allowed five hits and nine runs over two innings, striking out three.

Althoff went 2-for-4 at the plate to lead Groton Post 39 Jr Legion in hits.

Eisemann led Mobridge Post 4 - 2022 with three hits in four at bats.

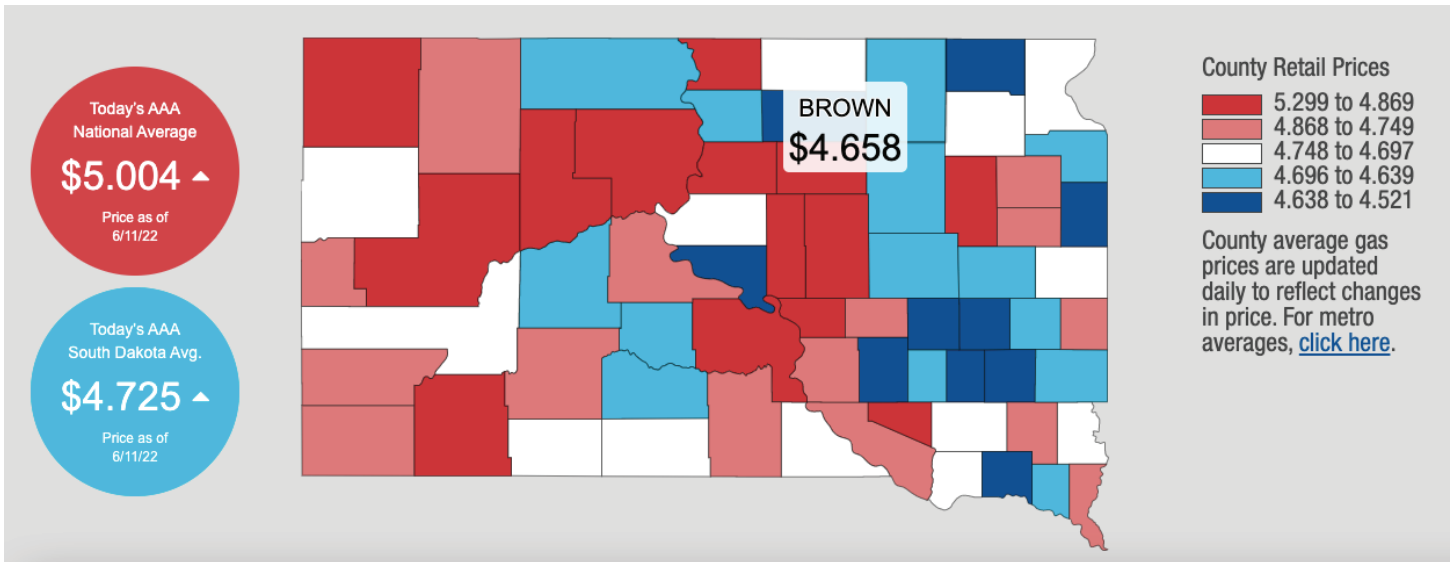
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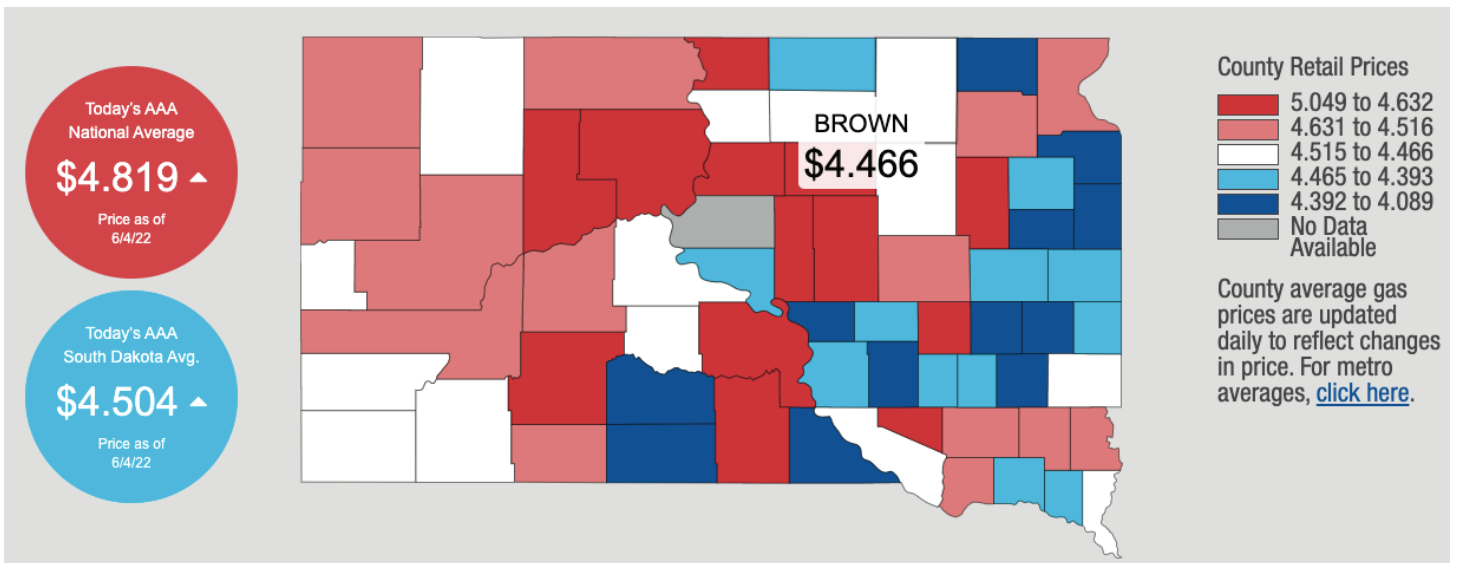
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.725	\$4.840	\$5.241	\$5.334
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.696	\$4.817	\$5.213	\$5.319
Week Ago Avg.	\$4.504	\$4.598	\$4.996	\$5.214
Month Ago Avg.	\$4.118	\$4.213	\$4.594	\$5.376
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.937	\$3.039	\$3.381	\$3.115

This Week



Last Week



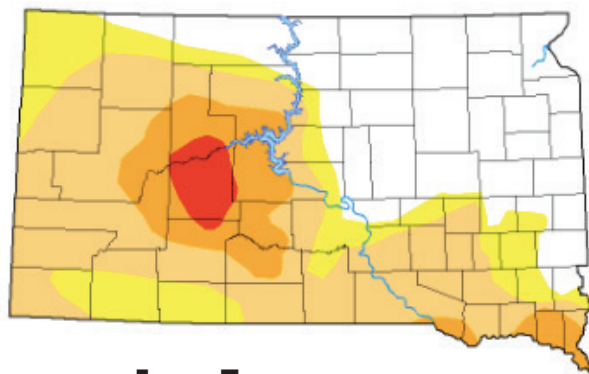
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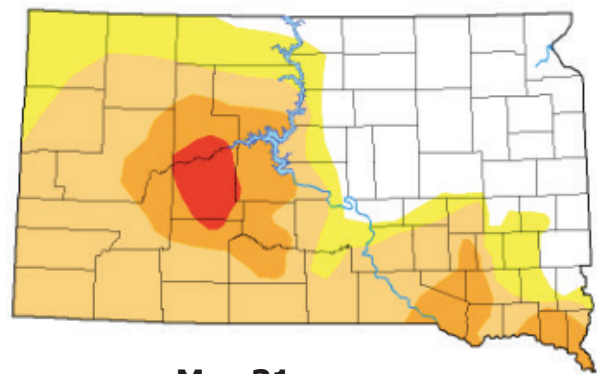
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



June 7



May 31

Heavy rainfall (1.5 to 3 inches, locally more) this past week resulted in a 1-category improvement to southeastern and central Kansas. More than 1.5 inches of rainfall this past week, along with soil moisture and long-term SPIs, supported a change from exceptional (D4) to extreme (D3) drought in parts of southwestern Kansas and adjacent southeastern Colorado. Widespread beneficial rainfall, exceeding 1 inch, this past week prompted a 1-class improvement to much of eastern Colorado. Swaths of heavy rainfall (more than 1 inch) also led to improvements of various Dx categories across parts of Nebraska and South Dakota. Much above-normal precipitation during the past 30 to 90 days and soil moisture percentiles supported the elimination of moderate drought (D1) across much of west-central Wyoming.

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

June 13, 2022 – 7:00 PM – GHS Library Conference Room

AGENDA:

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

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of May 8, 2022 school board meetings as drafted or amended.
2. Approval of May 2022 Financial Report, Custodial Accounts, and Investments.
3. Approval of May 2022 School Lunch Report.
4. Approval of May 2022 School Transportation Report.
5. Approval of May 2022 District bills for payment.
6. Authorize request of 2022-23 energy quotes (fuel/diesel/gas) with due date of 4:00 PM on July 11, 2022.
7. Authorize request of 2022-23 newspaper quotes with due date of 4:00 PM on July 11, 2022.
8. Authorize Business Manager to publish 2022-23 Groton Area School District Budget with 8:00 PM public hearing set for July 11, 2022.
9. Approval of open enrollment applications #23-04, #23-05, #23-06, #23-08, #23-09

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

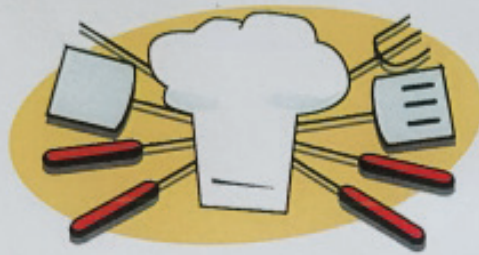
1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Continued Capital Planning Discussion
3. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve resignation of Joie Berg, 6th Grade Teacher/JH VB Coach, for the 22-23 school year with liquidated damages.
2. Approve resignation of Alison Tvinneriem, Elementary Paraprofessional.
3. Approve contract for Scott Glodt, K-12 Music Teacher, for the 2022-23 school year.
4. Approve contract for Ashley Brudvig, JK/Kindergarten Teacher, for the 2022-23 school year.
5. Approve contract for Jordan Carson, HS Mathematics Teacher, for the 2022-23 school year.
6. Approve hiring Cole Larson, seasonal custodian, 40 hours/week effective May 31, 2022.
7. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(4) negotiations and SDCL 1-25-2(1) personnel.
8. Approve work agreements for Auxiliary Administrative Staff for 2022-23.
9. Issue 2022-2023 Administrative Contracts with return date of June 17, 2022.
10. Discussion/Action regarding June 27, 2022 school board meeting.

ADJOURN

Groton Transit Fundraiser



When: Thursday, June 16, 2022

Time: 4:00 pm-7:00 pm

Where: Groton Community Center

*** Groton Transit Fundraiser will be held at the Groton Community Center-
109 N 3rd Street- One block East of Groton Transit***

*Food*Fun*Door Prizes*

FREE WILL OFFERING

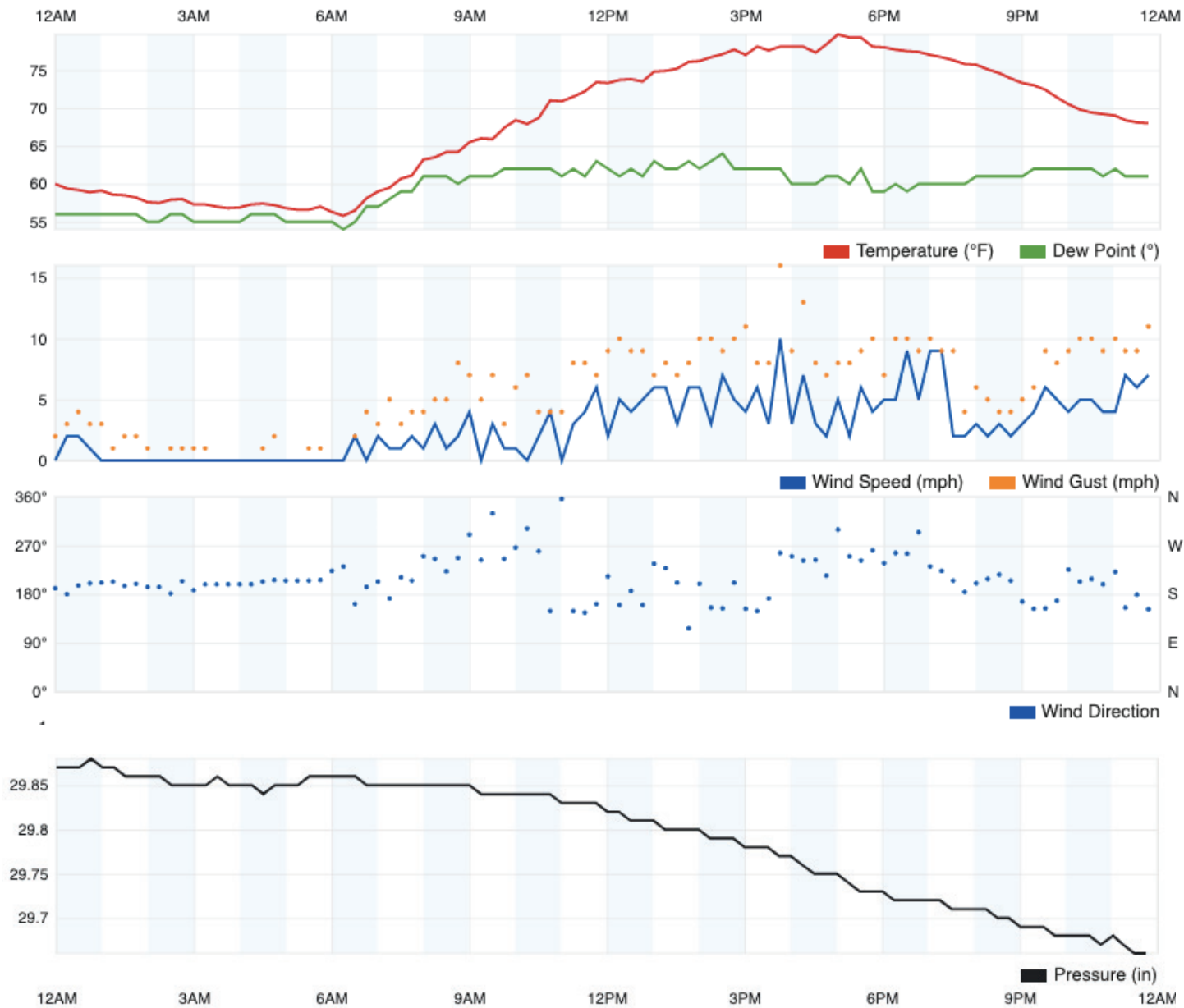
Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!

Also Serving State Fair Mini Donuts!!!!

Groton Daily Independent




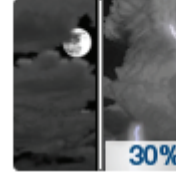

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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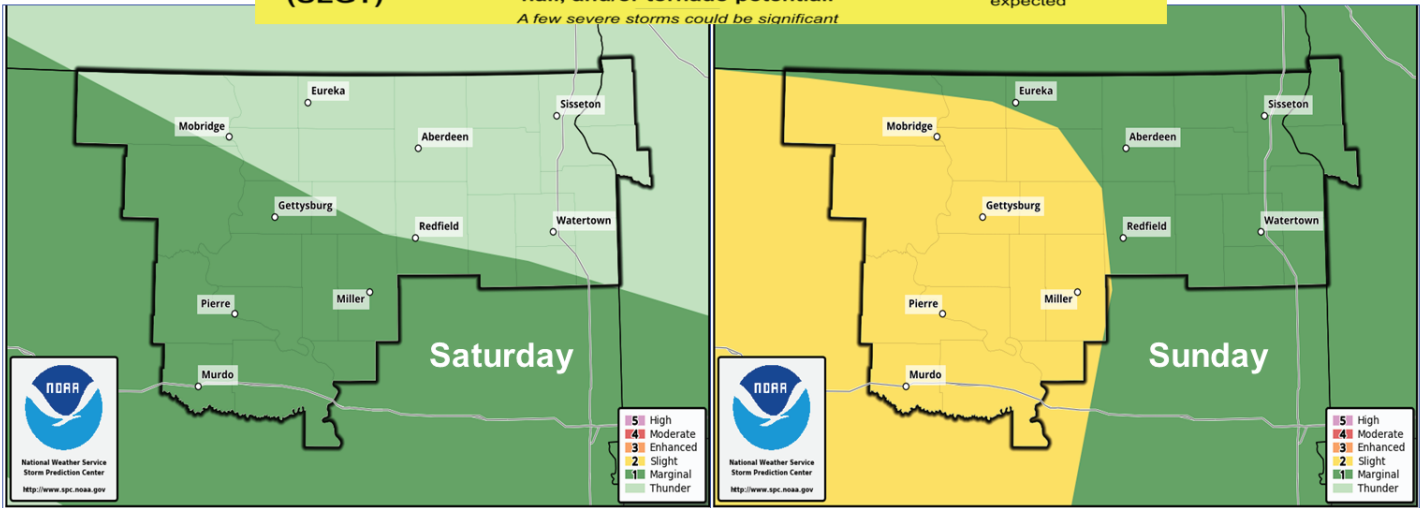
Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
10%	30% 20%	10%	30%	20%
Areas Fog then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance Showers then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms
High: 79 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 86 °F



Severe Outlook through Sunday

June 11, 2022
2:25 AM

Marginal (MRGL)	Some storms could be capable of damaging winds and severe hail. Localized tornado threat could develop.	Isolated severe storms possible
Slight (SLGT)	Increased confidence that some storms will contain damaging winds, severe hail, and/or tornado potential. A few severe storms could be significant.	Isolated to scattered severe storms expected



NORR National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

The chance for severe weather will ramp up some for this weekend. For tonight there is a marginal chance; for Sunday night the chance goes up to slight. Hail and wind are the main threats through the weekend. #sdwx #mnwx

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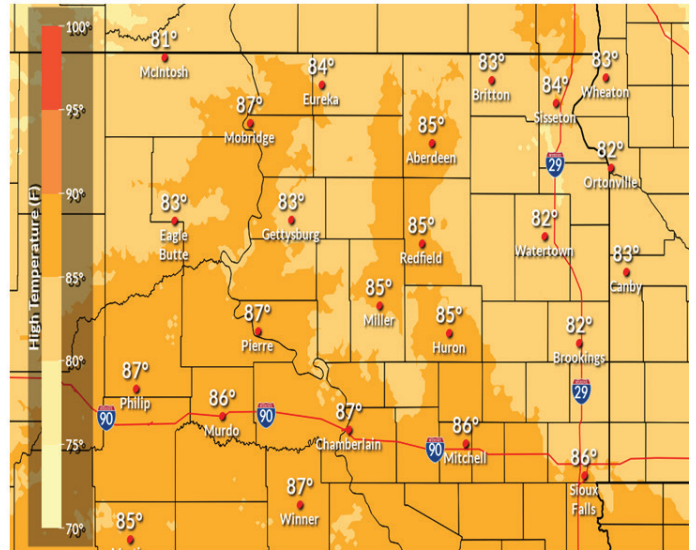
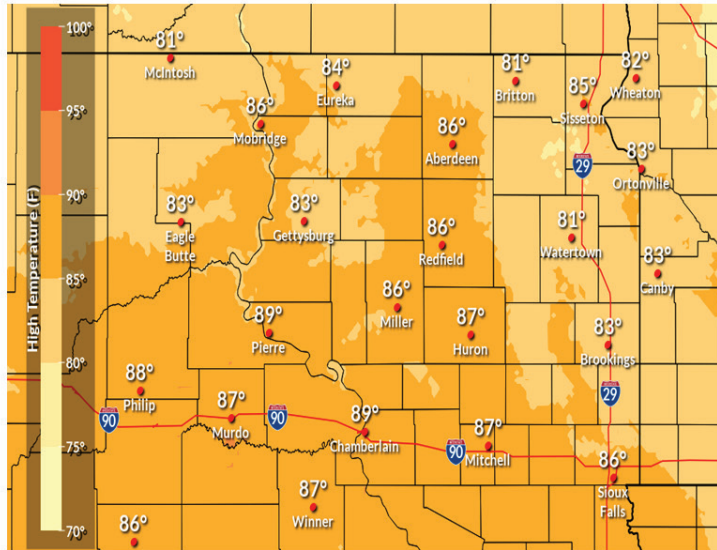


Weekend Max Temperatures

June 11, 2022
2:40 AM

Today

Sunday



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A warm weekend is on tap for the region. #sdwx #mnwx

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Today in Weather History

June 11, 1982: Golf ball size hail fell in Hayti, in Hamlin County, creating three-foot drifts of hail.

June 11, 1990: Hail, up to golf ball size, cut a swath 1.5 miles wide and 50 miles in length from the Missouri River east of the Hyde County line. Thunderstorm winds destroyed a granary roof and downed numerous trees. Damage from large hail was considerable to crops with entire fields being wiped out. The County Agent placed crop damage estimates at 1.8 million dollars in Sully County. Hail also produced window damage to cars and homes.

June 11, 2008: A strong inflow of moist and unstable air into and over a warm surface front resulted in training thunderstorms and very heavy rain across parts of northeast South Dakota. Rainfall amounts of 2 to 6 inches occurred across much of the area resulting in widespread flash flooding. The flooding damaged many roads, bridges, and cropland. In Milbank, many basements were flooded and received sewer backup.

June 11, 2010: Thunderstorms produced damaging winds over a large part of southeast South Dakota beginning just before midnight on June 10th and continuing well into the predawn hours of June 11th. The storms also produced heavy rain, which caused flash flooding at several locations. Heavy rainfall of at least 3 inches caused Enemy Creek to overflow and flood nearby roads. The expensive also caused flooding of roads and basements in Mitchell. A motorcycle business was flooded, resulting in damage to merchandise, although little damage to the motorcycles was reported. Thunderstorm winds caused widespread damage in the Sioux Falls area. Wood and siding were blown off a new house, and a nearby fence was blown over. The winds caused tree damage, including 2 to 3-foot diameter trees blown down. Debris from the tree damage blocked several roads. Garages were blown off three homes which were next to each other, and other nearby homes suffered significant damage in an area on West Eli Court which was subjected to the strongest winds, estimated at 100 mph. Windows were blown out in several of these homes, and a large camper was overturned in the same area. A wind gust of 74 mph was measured elsewhere in the city. The winds blew down out power lines in parts of the city. Heavy rain caused flash flooding of several streets in the southern part of Sioux Falls, with water up to two feet deep. Basement flooding was also reported.

1842: A late-season snowstorm struck New England. Snow fell during the morning and early afternoon, accumulating to a depth of ten to twelve inches at Irasburg, Vermont. Berlin, New Hampshire was blanketed with eleven inches of snow during the day. Snow whitened the higher peaks of the Appalachians as far south as Maryland. The latest date for the occurrence of a general snowstorm in our period over northern New England and northern New York came in 1842 on the morning of 11 June. Zadock Thompson, a professor of natural history and the Queen City's longtime weatherman, commented: "Snow during the forenoon's boards whitened and the mountains as white as in winter."

1877 - The temperature at Los Angeles, CA, reached 112 degrees during a heatwave. It would have been the all-time record for Los Angeles but official records did not begin until twenty days later. (The Weather Channel)

1972 - Heavy showers brought 1.64 inches of rain to Phoenix AZ, a record for the month of June. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - South Texas endured another day of torrential rains. Up to twelve inches of rain drenched Harris County, and nearly ten inches soaked Luce Bayou, mainly during the afternoon hours. Thunderstorm rains left seven feet of water over Highway 189 in northern Val Verde County. Flooding caused nine million dollars damage in Real County. A thunderstorm at Perryton, TX, produced golf ball size hail and 70 mph winds, and spawned a tornado which struck a mobile killing one person and injuring the other four occupants. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including El Dorado, AR, with a reading of 48 degrees. Canaan Valley WV and Thomas WV dipped to 30 degrees. Flagstaff AZ was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 30 degrees. Coolidge, just 180 miles away, was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1990: One of the most expensive hailstorms in U.S. history occurred as \$625 million of damage was caused along the Colorado Front Range from Colorado Springs to Estes Park. Golf to baseball sized hail fell along with heavy rain. 60 people were injured in the storm.

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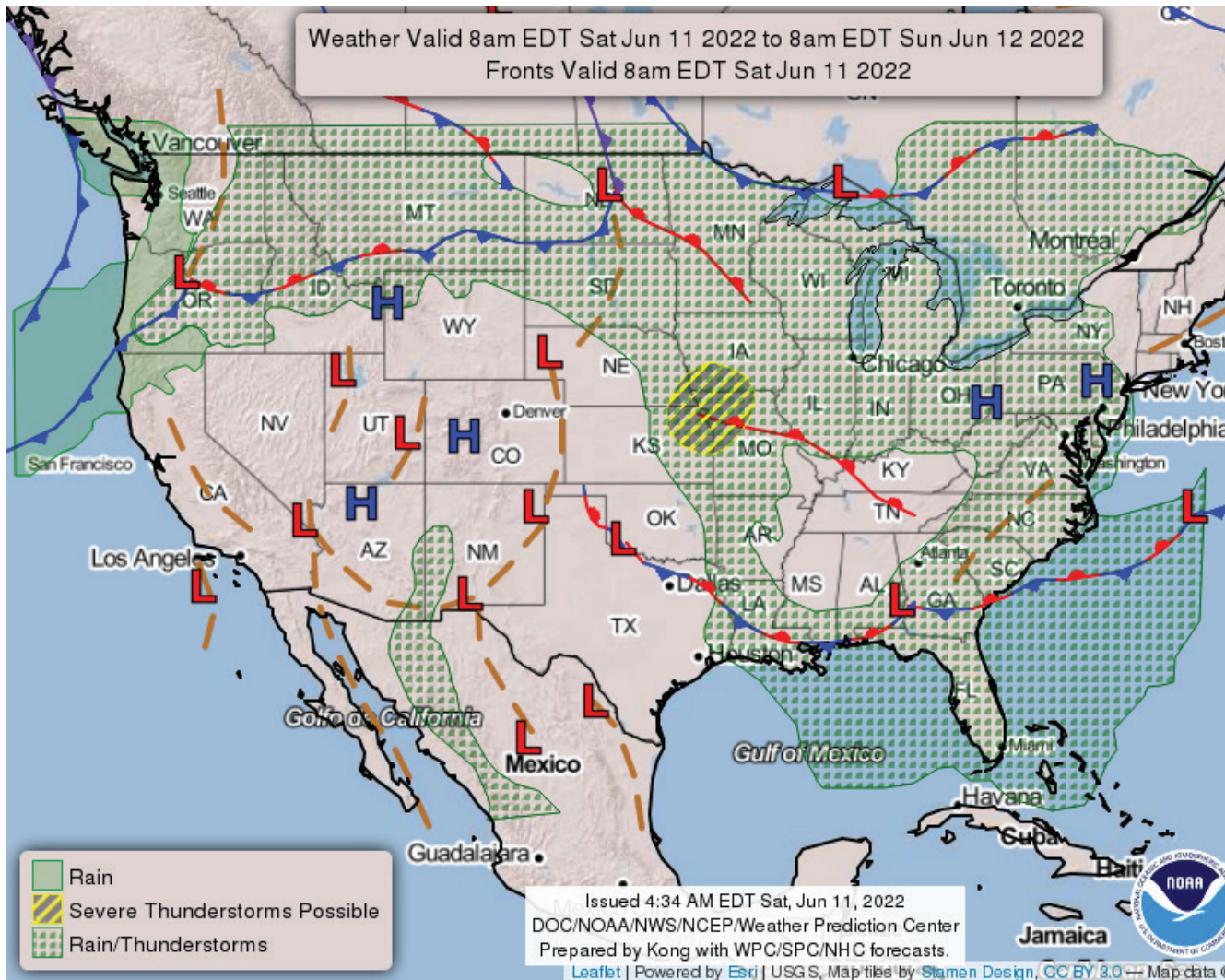
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 56 °F at 6:11 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 3:44 PM
Precip: 0.00 (since midnight: 0.10)

Day length: 15 hours, 40 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1893
Record Low: 31 in 1938
Average High: 79°F
Average Low: 54°F
Average Precip in June.: 1.27
Precip to date in June.: 0.02
Average Precip to date: 8.52
Precip Year to Date: 11.18
Sunset Tonight: 9:22:31 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:35 AM



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Why Praise The Lord?

All of Scripture is punctuated with outbursts of "praise." The reason? Praise rises spontaneously from an internal attitude of joy which is in the heart and life of the people of God. The Bible speaks of man being created to rejoice in God's gifts and God's grace and God's goodness. Praising God should be as natural as breathing and as regular as the beating of our hearts.

Perhaps one of the significant aspects of "praising" is that it implies a close relationship with the one being praised. When we praise God, we are letting Him know that we are aware of and recognize His presence in our lives, that we are grateful for His benefits and blessings - big and small - and, that we are dependent on Him for all things. Consider this: If you give someone a gift, and they do not recognize you for it, do you feel unappreciated?

Along with praising God, however, is the duty to exalt His name. Exalt, in Scripture, means to elevate, to glorify and to recognize the place and power of the one being exalted. When we exalt God, we acknowledge His Lordship in our lives and recognize that He is above all, in all, and has control of all. As we lift Him up above all others, we naturally bow down in humility before Him.

"Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted," said the Psalmist. Strange, isn't it, how the names of athletes and entertainers are more highly praised and exalted than God's name. How very sad!

But the day is coming when every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Prayer: Lord, You are so thoughtful and generous. All that we are and have is because You care. Thank You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens. Psalm 148:13a

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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)

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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

03-12-14-18-32, Mega Ball: 4, Megaplier: 5

(three, twelve, fourteen, eighteen, thirty-two; Mega Ball: four; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$247,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 229,000,000

GOP dealing with spam attack on convention registrations

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Republican Party officials are warding off a spam attack prior to the group's convention later this month.

Party officials have been forced to remove hundreds of fake names of participants after spammers accessed the party's online registration page. The hackers also maxed out the 28 spots that had been reserved for media credentials, forcing the party to close down press registrations, the Argus Leader reported.

In order to deter the activity, the party is forcing people to pay \$1 to register, which will be reimbursed to delegates when they go to the convention, GOP Chairman Dan Lederman said. The party can't charge money because it would constitute an illegal "poll tax."

The convention is June 23-25. Delegates will choose nominees for several constitutional offices to run in the general election in November.

South Dakota asks for disaster declaration for May 12 storms

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Friday requested a presidential disaster declaration as the result of damage from a May 12 storm system that included tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding.

The request is meant to pave the way for federal funding to help with recovery, although it is not guaranteed. Noem is asking the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help pay for repairs to public infrastructure.

The storms resulted in two deaths. There were 14 reported tornadoes and wind gusts of more than 100 mph in some places.

"Widespread damage, including downed power lines, overturned semi-trucks, vehicle crashes, uprooted or snapped trees, and destroyed traffic control signs, was reported," Noem wrote in the six-page letter to President Joe Biden.

A preliminary assessment indicates more than \$6.7 million in damage was done to public infrastructure in 20 counties and on two reservations. Nearly 70,000 customers experienced power outages.

The state is seeking damage assistance in the counties of Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Clay, Codington, Day, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Hanson, Hutchinson, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, Minnehaha, Moody, Roberts, and Turner, as well as the Flandreau Indian and Lake Traverse Reservations.

"The impact of this event will be felt in these communities well into the future," Noem said.

South Dakota currently has six open presidential disaster declarations for other events.

Census wants to know how to ask about sexuality and gender

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The 2020 census questionnaire drove Scout crazy. With no direct questions about

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sexual orientation and gender identity, it made him feel left out of the U.S. head count.

Among LGBTQ people, the census only asked about same-sex couples living together, and Scout didn't live with his partner. So to compensate, he hounded his gay, cohabiting neighbors in Providence, Rhode Island to respond and provide at least some visibility for the community.

"I was stalking them to fill out the census form because mine didn't make a difference," said Scout, a transgender man who uses one name. "There's no question I'm absolutely made invisible by the census."

This could change soon. Recognizing the difficulty of persuading people to reveal information many find sensitive, the U.S. Census Bureau is requesting millions of dollars to study how best to ask about sexual orientation and gender identity. The results could provide much better data about the LGBTQ population nationwide at a time when views about sexual orientation and gender identity are evolving.

"Change is in the air," said Kerith Conron, research director at the UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute, which researches these issues. "It's exciting."

The Census Bureau's request comes as President Joe Biden declared June as LGBTQ "Pride Month," and as U.S. passports now offer an "X" in addition to "M" or "F", for non-binary or intersex individuals. It is taking place as some Republican-dominated state legislatures restrict what can be discussed about sexual orientation and gender identity in schools and banned transgender girls from competing in girls' sports.

"We are seeing that numbers matter when politicians are demeaning and conducting culture wars against people," said Gina Duncan, a transgender woman who advocates in Orlando with Equality Florida.

As the nation's largest statistical agency, the bureau sets an example for how other agencies and businesses ask these questions, she noted.

The most common terms used for sexual orientation are lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight. Gender norms are typically understood as male, female, both or neither.

The \$10 million would be spent over several years to fund Census Bureau field tests of different wording and placement of questions that would appear on its annual American Community Survey.

The bureau is particularly interested in examining how answers are provided by "proxies" such as a parent, spouse or someone else in a household who isn't the person about whom the question is being asked.

Other federal agencies already ask about sexual orientation, primarily in health surveys conducted by trained interviewers with respondents answering for themselves. The much more widely circulated Census Bureau surveys tend to rely on proxies more.

Wording and design matter since they can affect accuracy.

A confusing layout on the 2010 census form led some census takers to misreport the genders of opposite-sex couples, falsely inflating the number of same-sex households. Studies also have shown that some transgender people are more likely to leave gender questions blank or check both "male" and "female."

Some respondents might not want to share such personal information, or may be unsure of how to answer. And some proxies might not know the sexual orientation and gender identity of everyone in their household. In places like New Zealand and the United Kingdom, surveys don't allow proxy reporting for sexual orientation questions because of concerns about accuracy and confidentiality.

The federal statistical system currently is unable to provide high-quality information about sexual and gender minorities without improving and expanding data gathering on this topic, the Census Bureau said in its 2023 budget submission.

"This research can help us measure the growing and diverse LGBTQ population in the United States," a Census Bureau statement said.

Next week, the House Committee on Oversight and Reform is discussing legislation that would require data on sexual orientation and gender identity to be collected voluntarily in federal surveys.

Federal data collection traditionally has treated sexual orientation and gender identity as binary — gay or straight, male or female — but this can mask greater complexities and wide-ranging identities, according to a report the National Academies of Sciences, Medicine and Engineering released this spring.

The once-a-decade census, the yearly American Community Survey and the annual Current Population Survey now allow same-sex couples a chance to answer if they are in a marriage or domestic partnership. But that omits LGBTQ people who are single or not living in the same household with their partner, and

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for the gender question, "male" and "female" are the only options.

Because the same-sex response is limited to individuals living together, it captures only a fifth of the nation's LGBTQ population, Conron said.

Only the bureau's online Household Pulse Survey, created at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, includes "transgender" and "none of these" alongside the "male" and "female" options. It also allows respondents to identify as gay, straight, bisexual, "something else" and "I don't know." However, the Household Pulse Survey is categorized as experimental and may not meet some of the bureau's statistical quality standards.

Other nations that already ask about sexual orientation in their data collection include Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the countries of the United Kingdom.

A report from a working group of U.S. agencies recommends that sexual orientation be asked separately from gender identity and that language used for older adults be tweaked when asking teens questions, since their preferred terminologies, like "queer," may be different. Cultural, regional and language differences also must be considered. Some Native Americans may identify as "two-spirit" rather than gay or bisexual, and in Spanish, "heterosexual" was found to reduce confusion over "straight, that is, not gay" which doesn't translate directly, the report said.

"Each new generation is more diverse in its sexuality and gender," Duncan said. "The Census Bureau should stay up to date with that evolution."

Ukraine: Russia said to be using more deadly weapons in war

By DAVID KEYTON and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian and British officials warned Saturday that Russian forces are relying on weapons able to cause mass casualties as they try to make headway in capturing eastern Ukraine and fierce, prolonged fighting depletes resources on both sides.

Russian bombers have likely been launching heavy 1960s-era anti-ship missiles in Ukraine, the U.K. Defense Ministry said. The Kh-22 missiles were primarily designed to destroy aircraft carriers using a nuclear warhead. When used in ground attacks with conventional warheads, they "are highly inaccurate and therefore can cause severe collateral damage and casualties," the ministry said.

Both sides have expended large amounts of weaponry in what has become a grinding war of attrition for the eastern region of coal mines and factories known as the Donbas, placing huge strains on their resources and stockpiles.

Russia is likely using the 5.5-tonne (6.1-ton) anti-ship missiles because it is running short of more precise modern missiles, the British ministry said. It gave no details of where exactly such missiles are thought to have been deployed.

As Russia also sought to consolidate its hold over territory seized so far in the 108-day war, U.S. Defense Secretary said Moscow's invasion of Ukraine "is what happens when oppressors trample the rules that protect us all."

"It's what happens when big powers decide that their imperial appetites matter more than the rights of their peaceful neighbors," Austin said during a visit to Asia. "And it's a preview of a possible world of chaos and turmoil that none of us would want to live in."

GOVERNOR: FLAMETHROWERS USED IN LUHANSK

A Ukrainian governor accused Russia of using incendiary weapons in the village of Vrubivka in Ukraine's eastern Luhansk province, southwest of the fiercely contested cities of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk.

While the use of flamethrowers on the battlefield is legal, Serhii Haidai, governor of Luhansk province, alleged the attacks overnight caused widespread damage to civilian facilities.

"Information about the number of victims in Vrubivka, in the Popasnyanska district, is being specified. At night, the enemy used a flamethrower rocket system - many houses burnt down," Haidai wrote on Telegram on Saturday.

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The accuracy of Haidai's claims could not be immediately verified.

Sievierodonetsk and neighboring Lysychansk are the last major areas of Luhansk province remaining under Ukrainian control. Haidai said the Russians were destroying critical industrial facilities, including railway depots, a brick factory and a glass factory.

ZELENSKY SEEMS MORE EU SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA

During a visit to Kyiv by the European Union's top official, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for a new round of "even stronger" EU sanctions against Russia.

Zelenskyy called for the new sanctions to target more Russian officials, including judges, and to hamper the activities of all Russian banks, including gas giant Gazprom's bank, as well as all Russian companies helping Moscow "in any way."

He spoke during a brief press appearance with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the heavily guarded presidential office compound in Kyiv.

The pair discussed Ukraine's aspirations for EU membership. Zelenskyy said Ukraine "will do everything" to integrate with the bloc.

Von der Leyen praised Ukraine's "strength and resilience" in the face of Russia's "horrible and atrocious" invasion and said the EU would assist with reconstruction so the country could "rise from the ashes."

"We are mourning with you. We share the tears with you," she said.

Von der Leyen was on her second visit to Ukraine since Russia invaded its neighbor. She was one of the first European leaders to go to Ukraine during the war.

RUSSIA SETS UP COMPANY TO SELL UKRAINE'S GRAIN

Russian-installed officials in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region have set up a company to buy up local grain and resell it on Moscow's behalf, a local representative told the Interfax news agency on Saturday.

Ukraine and the West have accused Russia of stealing Ukraine's grain and causing a global food crisis that could cause millions of deaths from hunger.

Yevgeny Balitsky, the head of Zaporizhzhia's pro-Russian provisional administration, said the new state-owned grain company has taken control of several facilities.

He said "the grain will be Russian" and "we don't care who the buyer will be."

Balitsky added that the company is considering the purchase of grain from both this year and last year's harvests, with collection beginning in two weeks. It was not clear if the farmers whose grain was being sold by Russia were getting paid.

He said his administration would not forcibly appropriate grain or pressure producers to sell it.

RUSSIAN PASSPORTS FOR MELITOPOL RESIDENTS

Russian forces occupying the southern Ukrainian city of Melitopol began handing out Russian passports to local residents Saturday, according to Russian state TASS agency.

A Telegram post by TASS cited a Russian-installed local official as the original source of the information. It did not specify how many Melitopol residents had requested or received Russian citizenship.

Earlier on Saturday, the agency reported that more than 800,000 people in separatist-held territories in Ukraine's industrial east had received Russian citizenship "through a simplified procedure" since April 2019.

Melitopol is located outside of the Donbas in the region of Zaporizhzhia, which is still held partly by Ukraine.

DEATH TOLL AMONG CHILDREN

Nearly 800 children have been killed or injured in Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's invasion, Ukrainian authorities said Saturday.

According to a statement by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, at least 287 children died as a result of military activity, while at least 492 more have been injured. The statement stressed the figures were not final and said they were based on investigations by juvenile prosecutors.

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The officer said children in Ukraine's Donetsk province, which together with Luhansk makes up the Donbas, suffered the most, with 217 reported killed or injured, compared with 132 and 116, respectively, in the Kharkiv and Kyiv regions.

RUSSIA PRESSES EASTERN OFFENSIVE

The Ukrainian army said Saturday that Russian forces were regrouping to launch an offensive on the Donetsk province city of Sloviansk.

Moscow-backed rebels have controlled self-proclaimed republics in both Donetsk and Luhansk since 2014, and Russia is trying to seize the territory still under Ukrainian control.

In its regular operational update, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said Russian soldiers managed to get a foothold overnight in the village of Bohorodychne, 24 kilometers (about 15 miles) north-west of Sloviansk, and were preparing to attack the city.

The Donetsk regional police said Russian missiles hit 13 towns and villages in the province overnight. In a statement, the police said civilians had been killed and wounded, without specifying numbers. Donetsk and Luhansk make up the Donbas.

The Ukrainian army's update said that the threat of missile and airstrikes on Ukraine from Belarus remains, noting that the Belarusian government extended military exercises along the Ukrainian-Belarusian border until June 18.

Also Saturday, the foreign minister of the Czech Republic, Jan Lipavsky, said a Czech citizen died fighting in Donetsk. It is the first reported Czech fatality among foreign volunteers fighting alongside Ukrainians.

DONETSK SEPARATISTS PLAN TO PUT SOUTH KOREAN ON TRIAL

Pro-Russian separatists controlling parts of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region said they were planning a trial against a captured South Korean citizen who had fought on the side of Ukraine.

The top diplomat of the self-proclaimed, unrecognized Donetsk People's Republic broke the news on Russian state TV on Saturday.

"Now a verdict is being prepared, as far as we know, on a mercenary from South Korea. This is their citizen, who fought on the side of the armed forces of Ukraine," Natalya Nikonorova said.

She did not disclose the individual's identity or give further specifics. On Thursday, a DNR court handed death sentences to two British nationals and a Moroccan who had fought in the Ukrainian military and been accused of being mercenaries.

Ukrainian and UK authorities both condemned these proceedings as a "sham trial", and insisted that the men had been regular members of the Ukrainian military.

Kavanaugh incident could lead to more security for judges

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man armed with a machete once broke into Stephen Breyer's vacation home in the Caribbean and took \$1,000. Ruth Bader Ginsburg had her purse snatched on a Washington street. David Souter was assaulted by several men while he was jogging.

Supreme Court justices have not been immune to violent crime. But this past week's late-night incident at Justice Brett Kavanaugh's suburban Washington home, where authorities said a man armed with a gun and knife threatened to kill the justice, reflects a heightened level of potential danger not just for members of the nation's highest court, but all judges.

One proposal pending in Congress would provide additional security measures for the justices, and another would offer more privacy and protection for all federal judges.

Round-the-clock security given to the justices after the leak of the draft opinion in a major abortion case may well have averted a tragedy.

But the situation had much in common with other recent incidents that ended with the shooting death of a former judge in Wisconsin last week and the killing in 2020 of the son of a federal judge at their home

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in New Jersey. Troubled men, harboring a warped desire for vengeance and equipped with guns, turned their threats into action.

"We're seeing these threats increase in number and intensity. That's a sign. That's a signal," said U.S. District Judge Esther Salas, whose son was killed nearly two years ago in the attack that also wounded her husband.

Kavanaugh's would-be attacker is Nicholas John Roske, 26, of Simi Valley, California, authorities said in charging him with the attempted murder of a justice. Clad in black, he arrived by taxi outside Kavanaugh's Maryland home around 1 a.m. Wednesday.

He spotted two U.S. Marshals who were guarding the house and walked in the other direction, calling 911 to say he was having suicidal thoughts and also planned to kill Kavanaugh, according to court documents. Roske said he found the justice's address on the internet.

When police searched a backpack and suitcase he was carrying, they said they found a Glock 17 pistol, ammunition, a knife, zip ties, duct tape and other items Roske said he was going to use to break into the house. He said he bought the gun to kill Kavanaugh.

Roske told police he was upset by the leaked draft opinion in the abortion case and by the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, and believed Kavanaugh would vote to loosen gun control laws, according to documents filed in federal court in Maryland.

Last week, Wisconsin authorities said Douglas Uhde, 56, shot John Roemer, a former county judge, in a targeted attack against a judge who had once sentenced him to prison. Roemer was found zip-tied to a chair. Uhde had shot himself and later died.

In July 2020, lawyer Roy Den Hollander showed up at Judge Salas' home posing as a FedEx delivery person. Den Hollander fatally shot Salas' 20-year-old son, Daniel Anderl, and wounded her husband, Mark Anderl. The judge was in another part of the home at the time and was not injured.

Den Hollander, 72, was a men's rights lawyer with a history of anti-feminist writings. He was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound the day after the ambush, when police said they found a document with information about a dozen female judges from across the country, half of whom are Latina, including Salas.

Authorities believe Den Hollander also was tracking Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Salas said in a televised interview last year, because they found a manila folder with information about Sotomayor when they searched a locker belonging to Den Hollander.

Over the years, Supreme Court justices have called on Congress to provide more money for their security. But at the same time, the justices often shrugged off protection when it was offered. When Justice Antonin Scalia died on a hunting trip in Texas in 2016, for example, he did not have a security detail with him.

In recent years, the court has stepped up security for the justices. The court routinely refuses to discuss protection for the nine justices, but Justice Amy Coney Barrett said earlier this year that she was not prepared for how much more extensive security is now than when she worked for Scalia in the late 1990s.

Sotomayor likes to walk among guests at her public appearances, often joking about the armed officers who are there to protect her. "The guys up here. The big guys with stuff around their waist and things. They're here to protect you from me," she said to laughter at an event this year. "They get nervous if you get up unexpectedly. ... Please don't make them nervous."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Thursday that the House would take up a bill with bipartisan support that already has passed the Senate that would expand protection to the members of the justices' immediate families.

Gabe Roth of the court reform group Fix the Court said in his view the justices "need Secret Service-level protection, which has only become more obvious this week. I've said it for years."

A separate bill, named in memory of Salas' son, would provide more privacy and protections for all federal judges, including scrubbing personal information from the internet, to deal with mounting cyberthreats. The U.S. Marshals Service, which protects about 2,700 federal judges and thousands more prosecutors and court officials, said there were 4,511 threats and inappropriate communications in 2021, compared with 926 such incidents in 2015.

The legislation, also widely supported by lawmakers in both parties, has been blocked by Sen. Rand

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Paul, R-Ky., who wants it to apply to members of Congress as well.

Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., the bill's author, said the Kavanaugh incident and Roemer's death in Wisconsin make plain the need for the legislation. "Our bill is the only existing proposal to protect the personal information of judges and their families," Menendez said in an email.

A similar bill in the House has not even gotten a hearing.

"We talk a lot about what can be done. How about we stop arming the public with information they are using to kill us? How about we do that?" Salas said Friday in an interview with The Associated Press.

The internet has made it much easier to find personal information pertaining to judges, and everyone else.

But even before the digital age, judges were sometimes the targets of people who harbored grudges about their treatment in the criminal justice system. In a book, retired Texas Judge Susan P. Baker details 42 judges, including three at the federal level, who were murdered or otherwise met suspicious ends in the 20th century.

In the past 17 years, three close relatives of federal judges have been killed in attacks at the judges' homes, including Salas' son. In 2005, U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkow returned from work to find her husband and mother shot dead in the basement of her Chicago home. The killer was a homeless electrician who had lost a medical malpractice suit in her courtroom.

U.S. District Judge Roslynn R. Mauskopf, who heads the office responsible for federal courts administration, said the incident at Kavanaugh's house is just the most recent reminder that "threats against judges are real and they can have and have had dire consequences."

Therapist sex abuse case reveals dark past, ethical concerns

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Two years after accusing her former therapist of sexual abuse, she idly plugged his address into an online directory and came across an unfamiliar alias. A search of that name turned up decades-old newspaper articles about the death of a 10-year-old girl.

"What's that got to do with Peter?" she wondered.

A pair of obituaries she found next pointed closer to a connection. But she was still circling the perimeter of the truth when she sat down at a public library computer in January 2020. On a newspaper archive site, she scrolled past several small, blurry photos until a larger one popped up.

"Bingo," she thought. "That's him."

Her next thought?

"You bastard."

New Hampshire is one of 10 states that allow people to change their names while incarcerated, though their criminal records remain accessible to police and employers conducting criminal background checks. But the public has no way of knowing someone's earlier identity unless they go to the county courthouse where the change was approved, or do some serious sleuthing.

That allowed Peter Dushame to become Peter Stone, who faces new charges more than 30 years after he was sent to prison under his old name. What happened in between raises complicated questions about the right to forge a new life after incarceration and what patients can or should know about a mental health provider's past.

There's another question with no simple answer: Who is Peter Stone?

He was 33 years old, drunk and named Peter Dushame when he plowed his Pontiac into a motorcycle parked alongside the F.E. Everett Turnpike in Nashua, New Hampshire, on Oct. 1, 1989. Lacey Packer, a fourth grader on her way home to Massachusetts from a Toys for Tots benefit with her father, died two days later.

It was his third fatal crash — though the first to involve alcohol. At age 17, he pleaded guilty to leaving the scene of a pedestrian crash after killing a former fellow student at his high school. At age 22, he was acquitted of vehicular homicide after a crash that killed a 61-year-old woman.

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Because he held a valid driver's license despite five previous drunken driving convictions, the 1989 crash became a flash point. Both Massachusetts and New Hampshire enacted new laws in response, and Dushame became the first person in New Hampshire to be convicted of manslaughter for a drunken driving fatality. The Boston Globe called him "the most notorious drunk driver in New England history."

But over time, he dedicated himself to helping people in addiction recovery, earning a master's degree in counseling psychology from behind bars, and leading treatment programs for other inmates.

"I have a gift," he told The Boston Globe Magazine in 1996. "I can look at a person and feel his pain."

Two years later, he legally changed his name from Peter Dushame to Peter Stone. He was released from prison in 2002 and eventually set up shop as a licensed drug and alcohol counselor in North Conway.

"I stand as evidence that people can change," Stone wrote to state regulators in 2013, telling them that contrary to their concerns, his past had helped clients gain perspective on the dangers of drunken driving.

"They respect my sincerity and honesty," he said.

Then, last July, he was charged with sexually assaulting a client who says he was anything but honest.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, the 61-year-old woman said she developed romantic feelings for Stone about six months after he began treating her for anxiety, depression and alcohol abuse in June 2013. Though he immediately told her a relationship would be unethical, he eventually initiated sexual contact in February 2016, she said.

"That crossed the line," the woman remembers him saying after he pulled up his pants. "When am I seeing you again?"

"It was almost comical," she told the AP, which generally does not name people who allege sexual assault. "Except that it was terrible."

Laws related to name changes differ across the country. While 26 states have no restrictions on name changes after felony convictions, 15 have bans or temporary waiting periods for those convicted of certain crimes, according to the ACLU in Illinois, which has one of the most restrictive laws.

New Hampshire does not prohibit felons from becoming therapists, and Stone appropriately disclosed his criminal record on licensing applications and other documents, according to a review of records obtained by the AP.

And so, despite "a misguided sense of it being wrong somehow," it's a nonissue legally, said Albert "Buzz" Scherr, a professor at the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law.

"The deeper question is, to what extent do we want to tar somebody for the rest of their life?" said Scherr. "Should every therapist be forced to reveal to any incoming patient that they've been convicted of a crime? Of certain crimes?"

Gary Goodnough is a Plymouth State University professor who teaches ethics to aspiring mental health counselors. It's not unusual, he said, for people in recovery to become counselors and to use their experiences to build greater empathy and support for clients.

Disclosure isn't mandatory, but he believes clients have a right to know in some scenarios.

"One of the principles that underlies the counseling profession is the notion of veracity," he said. "We should tell the truth. Particularly with something as profound as a murder or vehicular homicide. In my opinion, that would be something that should be disclosed."

Stone's former client said uncovering his past made her angry, at both Stone and the state, which she believes should not have licensed him as a therapist under his new name.

"I think in his capacity to become a therapist, it was wrong, because that's such a trusting position," she said. "If he was going to be a car mechanic, that would be different. Because when I go to my mechanic, he doesn't get into my head and pull strings."

The woman described Stone as an unorthodox counselor, blunt and arrogant, with a tendency to swear. She said he told her he used to drink vodka and beer starting first thing in the morning, had once been homeless and didn't drive because he had PTSD from his time in the military. In fact, as she later learned, his driver's license had been permanently revoked after his conviction.

After their first sexual encounter, she said, she got up to leave and found the door to his office locked

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when it never had been before.

"I felt duped, because in my mind, I thought it was spontaneous," she said. "But then I knew it was planned."

Stone, who declined to be interviewed by the AP, faces five counts of aggravated felonious sexual assault under a law that criminalizes any sexual contact between patients and their therapists or health care providers. Such behavior also is prohibited by the American Psychological Association's ethical code of conduct.

According to court documents, he told investigators that the woman fondled him on one occasion, but that he didn't know how his DNA ended up on her shirt. The state issued an emergency order suspending his counseling license in December 2017, and he voluntarily surrendered it four months later while denying the allegations.

A hearing to determine Stone's competency to stand trial is scheduled for September. His attorney did not respond to requests for comment, and the prosecutor declined to comment on any aspect of the case.

But Scherr, the law professor, said that if the case goes to trial, Stone's past convictions or name change are unlikely to be used against him.

Prior convictions, Scherr said, generally can't be used to prove a defendant's guilt, though they sometimes can be used to impeach a defendant's credibility if he testifies. And although it makes him appear sneaky or crafty, Stone had a legitimate reason for changing his name, Scherr said.

"You don't want to carry that around in public for the rest of your life," he said. "I'm inclined to say it doesn't tell you anything about whether he committed the crimes he's charged with."

Though Stone changed his name in 1998, news accounts of his 2001 parole hearing refer to him as Dushame, suggesting that authorities used only his original name in public and, perhaps unintentionally, eased his effort to start fresh. Several members of the parole board from that year have since died; two others told the AP recently that they remembered neither the specific case, nor how the board handled name changes.

But Gordon and Donna Packer haven't forgotten the man who killed their daughter. In a recent interview, Donna Packer said they would have opposed his name change but were notified by the state only after the fact.

She and her husband, who became prominent activists for tougher drunken driving laws, also were aware that Stone was working as a counselor but didn't know of his arrest until contacted by the AP.

"The minute I heard about it, I was disappointed," she said. "I know that sounds strange, but Gordon and I, we're Christians, and we believe in forgiveness."

Gordon Packer offered forgiveness to Stone years ago in a letter. Donna Packer said he responded by asking for help getting out of prison ahead of schedule, which struck the couple as manipulative.

Still, she hoped that after everything he had done, after causing so much pain for so many people, he had changed.

"I hate that he's still victimizing people," she said. "It didn't need to be this way."

Survivor of abusive facility searches for lost Korean roots

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The earliest photo Joo-Rei Mathieson has of herself was taken when she was about 4. Her head is shaved, her eyes cast downward. She has just arrived at perhaps the worst place a child could be sent in South Korea.

The black-and-white mugshot is from a November 1982 Brothers Home intake document that describes Mathieson as a lost street kid brought in by police. It notes that she's "capable of labor" — chillingly for a government-sponsored vagrants' facility that survivors have told The Associated Press often worked children to death.

She spoke no words for days, the document says, after entering Brothers, a now-destroyed facility in

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the southern port city of Busan where thousands of children and adults — most of whom were grabbed off the streets — were enslaved and often killed, raped and beaten in the 1970s and 1980s.

"She was so scared and traumatized," Mathieson said of herself, as she imagined in an AP interview the feelings of the girl in the photo who'd been given the name Hwang Joo Rei, because of the Jurye-dong district where Brothers once stood.

Mathieson was one of the lucky ones. In August 1983, she and 21 other young children from Brothers were transferred to an orphanage in another part of the city. Her escape may have been made possible because of overcrowding at the Brothers' sprawling compound.

Mathieson then slipped into an international adoption system that separated thousands of Korean children from their families as part of a lucrative business under the military governments that ruled South Korea from the 1960s to the late 1980s.

She was given an approximate birth date and other arbitrary details to accommodate a haphazard immigration process that was designed to send more children abroad as fast as possible. Mathieson was then flown to meet her Canadian adoptive parents in November 1984, becoming part of a child export frenzy that created the world's largest diaspora of adoptees.

Mathieson said she spent most of her adult life in a "tunnel vision moving forward," never questioning her past and living as a Canadian while traveling around the world, before settling in Hong Kong to work in the hospitality industry.

But her Korean past "jumped back" at her in recent months as she began to feel she was "on a mission" to discover her roots and locate her Korean parents if they are alive.

Because of privacy worries, she used the name on her adoption documents in a 2019 AP report that broke the news that Brothers was in the adoption business. Mathieson, however, is now willing to speak publicly for the first time to improve her chances of finding her Korean relatives, including a possible sibling named Lee Chang-keun.

That name appears on the adoption papers of another Korean adoptee who, along with his younger brother, was sent to a family in Belgium in 1986. Mathieson connected with him in October last year after commercial DNA tests — increasingly used by Korean adoptees seeking reunions — found that they were most likely siblings.

Mathieson said it was "exhilarating" to discover a blood relative and gain a tangible connection to her biological roots despite not knowing her true name, birthdate or hometown.

"I think no other human on this earth except for adoptees will understand what it's like to go through life with no link to their origins. It's something that normal people will take for granted," Mathieson said in a Zoom interview, using air quotes for the word "normal." "To see someone that looked so much like me was so exciting."

The finding also raised disturbing questions about the circumstances of her adoption and that of her newfound kin, who didn't respond to AP's requests for comment.

His paperwork says he and his younger brother were adopted from an orphanage in Anyang, a city near the capital, Seoul, that is about 190 miles away from Busan. It says the boys were found abandoned in August 1982, months before Mathieson's arrival at Brothers, and that they had another brother, Lee Chang-keun, who was at a different Anyang orphanage.

There's no mention whether Lee was adopted. Mathieson hopes Lee remained in Korea and that she can now find him. She's desperate for information about her Korean parents, and how they were separated from their children.

Neither Mathieson's adoption papers nor those of the brothers in Belgium describe any meaningful effort to locate their original families despite the years they spent in the orphanage system.

Mathieson says she's filled with questions: Did her parents leave her with a relative in Busan while scrambling to search for their missing sons? Was she kidnapped by police, like many other inmates at Brothers?

"A lot of the adoptions, rather, were from new parents that had to give up their child right after birth," Mathieson said. "For a family to relinquish, voluntarily relinquish, three kids between the ages of four and six? It just didn't add up for me ... I knew that (the) true story was so far deep."

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Through documents obtained from officials, lawmakers or through freedom of information requests, the AP found direct evidence that 19 children were adopted out of Brothers between 1979 and 1986, and indirect evidence suggesting at least 51 more adoptions.

Mathieson's memories from before she left Korea — of watching children playing in an almost empty outdoor pool, of towering black iron gates, of flowers in a garden courtyard where she was hurried out for a photograph — were all vague and benign before the AP first told her that she'd been at Brothers in 2016.

She now connects those memories with Brothers photos showing children playing in the low water of a concrete pit behind huge barred gates that confined thousands — including homeless and disabled people as well as random pedestrians who'd been snatched off the streets — before a prosecutor exposed the facility's horrors in 1987.

Brothers was the largest of the nationwide facilities that accommodated aggressive roundups ordered by military leaders eager to clean the country's streets. Adoptions were another way to remove the socially undesirable, including children from unwed mothers or poor families, and to reduce the number of mouths to feed.

About 200,000 Korean children were adopted by families in the West in the past six decades, including 7,924 in 1984, the year Mathieson was adopted. Roots are often untraceable because most of the children were listed as abandoned, even when they had known relatives, which made them easily adoptable.

Mathieson plans to bring her case to Seoul's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has interviewed hundreds of Brothers survivors or their families, but so far no adoptee. While still determined to get information about her biological parents, Mathieson treasures the snippets of her past that have emerged as she presses on with her search.

"It was nice to get additional photos," Mathieson said about images recently sent from the Korea Welfare Service, her adoption agency. "I will cherish them."

Why France's parliamentary elections are important to Macron

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Emmanuel Macron saw off the far right's Marine Le Pen in April's presidential election, but now the French president is facing a threat from the other end of the political spectrum in the fight for parliamentary power.

Elections are being held nationwide to select the 577 members of the most powerful branch of France's Parliament, the National Assembly, on Sunday, with a runoff on June 19.

The far-left's Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the head of a coalition made up of leftists, greens and communists under the name Nupes, is seeking to win the election and prevent Macron's party from retaining its current parliamentary majority.

Former Trotskyist Mélenchon wants to significantly increase the minimum wage and lower the retirement age to 60. He also wants to be prime minister if his coalition gains control. That scenario would have the power to derail Macron's domestic agenda.

Here's a closer look:

WHAT'S MACRON GOT TO LOSE?

A lot. If Macron's coalition, Ensemble!, keeps control, the president will be able to carry out his agenda as before. But observers think Macron's party and allies could have trouble getting an absolute majority — the magic number of 289 seats — this time around.

A government with a large, but not absolute, majority will still be able to rule, but only by bargaining with MPs.

Though Mélenchon's coalition could win more than 200 seats, current projections give the left little chance of winning a majority. Macron and his allies are expected to win between 260 and 320 seats, according to latest polls.

Macron will have substantial powers over foreign policy whatever the outcome of this poll. But a poor showing for his coalition could be a thorn in his side for the rest of his second five-year term. This could

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prove disastrous for the president's agenda, which includes tax cuts, welfare reform and raising the retirement age.

"If Macron loses control, he will be a hobbled president — mainly in charge of foreign affairs, defense and Europe. But key economic and domestic issues will be decided by the government. And if it's Mélenchon's coalition it will be very hostile to his agenda," said Olivier Rozenberg, Associate Professor in legislative studies at the Sciences Po university.

COHABITATION

The last time France had a president and parliamentary majority from different parties was two decades ago, when conservative President Jacques Chirac found himself working alongside a Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin. This fraught power-sharing scenario is called cohabitation. To try to avoid this and prevent gridlock, in 2000 the constitution was changed to reduce the presidential term from seven to five years and move the parliamentary elections into the same five-year cycle.

But this year's vote is closer than it's been in years. If Nupes gains control, Macron would be forced to name a prime minister from that coalition.

"Prime Minister (Elisabeth) Borne will be forced to quit, all ministers will change, and will be chosen by the prime minister. Probably a Prime Minister Mélenchon," said Rozenberg. "Difficult is not even the word."

MELENCHON: THE COLORFUL RADICAL

Coming in a strong third placing in April's presidential election, the mercurial septuagenarian leader of the France Unbowed party pressed on to capitalize on this popularity.

He has a radical vision for France — and a theatrical way of presenting it. Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire branded him the "Gallic Chavez," comparing him to the late Venezuelan president.

Mélenchon recently softened his tone to attract more traditional leftist voters, and took a resolutely pro-environment stance, bringing him growing support from young people.

Mélenchon would like the Fifth Republic, established by Charles de Gaulle in 1958, scrapped in favor of a Sixth Republic with the aim of making it more democratic and parliamentary-based, instead of the current presidential system. He also wants to lower the retirement age to 60, restore wealth taxes and raise the minimum wage by 15%.

HOW IT WORKS

The French system is complex and not proportionate to the nationwide support for a party. Legislators are elected by district.

A parliamentary candidate requires over 50% of the day's vote to be elected outright on June 12.

Failing that, the top two contenders, alongside anyone who won more than 12.5% of the registered vote, go forward to a second round. In some cases, three or four people make it, though some may step aside to improve the chances of another contender.

That tactic has often been used to block candidates from Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party.

Le Pen's party, which won eight seats in 2017, hopes this time to get at least 15, allowing it to form a parliamentary group and gain greater powers at the Assembly.

The National Assembly, the lower house, is the more powerful of France's two houses of parliament. It has the final say in the law-making process over the Senate.

ISSUES AT STAKE

Inflation is a key issue among voters, as energy and food prices soar. Macron hopes his initiatives to boost growth and food production will play well among the electorate. However, Mélenchon's plans to raise the minimum wage to 1,400 euros a month will surely curry favor among blue-collar voters.

Police violence has also become a political hot potato recently after a fatal police shooting in Paris. That came a week after police chiefs were condemned for using tear gas on soccer fans at the Champions League final in the French capital. The left has capitalized on the incidents to criticize Macron over brutal policing methods. Still, observers say, Macron does well in voters' eyes on security issues, as he has struck a harder line than the left historically.

"Macron is more credible in terms of security. A silent majority of the population look to him to lead on

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this issue," said Rozenberg. "This could play into his hands."

Another factor that could benefit Macron is the predicted high rate of abstention.

\$5 gas is here: AAA says nationwide average hits new high

NEW YORK (AP) — The nationwide average price for a gallon of gasoline has topped \$5 for the first time ever.

Auto club AAA said the average price on Saturday was \$5.00. Motorists in some parts of the country, especially California, are paying far above that.

The national average price has jumped 19 cents in just the past week, and it's up \$1.93 from this time last year.

There are several reasons for the surge in gasoline prices.

Americans typically drive more starting around Memorial Day, so demand is up. Global oil prices are rising, compounded by sanctions against Russia, a leading oil producer, because of its war against Ukraine. And there are limits on refining capacity in the United States because some refineries shut down during the pandemic.

Add it all up, and the cost of filling up is draining money from Americans who are facing the highest rate of inflation in 40 years.

California has the highest average price, at \$6.43, according to AAA. The lowest average is Mississippi, at \$4.52.

While this is the first time breaking the \$5 barrier, it's still not a record when inflation is taken into account. Gas peaked at \$4.11 a gallon in July 2008, which would be equal to about \$5.40 a gallon today.

US: China's military activity around Taiwan threatens region

By SYAWALLUDIN ZAIN and DAVID RISING Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin stressed American support for Taiwan on Saturday, suggesting at Asia's premier defense forum that recent Chinese military activity around the self-governing island threatens to change the status quo.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Austin noted a "steady increase in provocative and destabilizing military activity near Taiwan," including almost daily military flights near the island by the People's Republic of China.

"Our policy hasn't changed, but unfortunately that doesn't seem to be true for the PRC," he said.

Austin said Washington remains committed to the "one-China policy," which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei.

Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory and has not ruled out using military force to take it.

China has stepped up its military provocations against democratic Taiwan in recent years, aimed at intimidating it into accepting Beijing's demands to unify with the communist mainland.

"We remain focused on maintaining peace, stability and the status quo across the Taiwan Strait," Austin said in his address. "But the PRC's moves threaten to undermine security, and stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific."

He drew a parallel with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, saying that the "indefensible assault on a peaceful neighbor has galvanized the world and ... has reminded us all of the dangers of undercutting an international order rooted in rules and respect."

Austin said that the "rules-based international order matters just as much in the Indo-Pacific as it does in Europe."

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is what happens when oppressors trample the rules that protect us all," he said. "It's what happens when big powers decide that their imperial appetites matter more than the rights of their peaceful neighbors. And it's a preview of a possible world of chaos and turmoil that none

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of us would want to live in.”

Austin met Friday with Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe on the sidelines of the conference for discussions where Taiwan featured prominently, according to a senior American defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to provide details of the private meeting.

Austin made clear at the meeting that while the U.S. does not support Taiwanese independence, it also has major concerns about China’s recent behavior and suggested that Beijing might be attempting to change the status quo.

Wei, meanwhile, complained to Austin about new American arms sales to Taiwan announced this week, saying it “seriously undermined China’s sovereignty and security interests,” according to a Chinese state-run CCTV report after the meeting.

China “firmly opposes and strongly condemns it,” and the Chinese government and military will “resolutely smash any Taiwan independence plot and resolutely safeguard the reunification of the motherland,” Wei reportedly told Austin.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson Col. Wu Qian quoted Wei as saying China would respond to any move toward formal Taiwan independence by “smashing it even at any price, including war.”

In his speech, Austin said the U.S. stands “firmly behind the principle that cross-strait differences must be resolved by peaceful means,” but also would continue to fulfill its commitments to Taiwan.

“That includes assisting Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability,” he said.

“And it means maintaining our own capacity to resist any use of force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security or the social or economic system of the people of Taiwan.”

The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which has governed U.S. relations with the island, does not require the U.S. to step in militarily if China invades, but makes it American policy to ensure Taiwan has the resources to defend itself and to prevent any unilateral change of status by Beijing.

Austin stressed the “power of partnerships” and said the U.S.’s “unparalleled network of alliances” in the region has only deepened, noting recent efforts undertaken with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN; the growing importance of the “Quad” group of the U.S., India, Japan and Australia; and the trilateral security partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom, known as AUKUS.

He dismissed Chinese allegations that the U.S. intends to start an “Asian NATO” with its Indo-Pacific outreach.

“Let me be clear, we do not seek confrontation or conflict and we do not seek a new Cold War, an Asian NATO, or a region split into hostile blocs,” he said.

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles told the forum that AUKUS, under which Australia will acquire nuclear-powered submarines from the U.S. with the help of Britain, was a technology-sharing relationship, and “not in the set of arrangements as you would describe NATO.”

Australia abruptly pulled out of a deal with France for submarines to sign on to the AUKUS deal, and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced Saturday that he had agreed to pay Paris 555 million euros (\$584 million) in compensation.

France’s new defense minister, Sebastien Lecornu, suggested his country was willing to put the matter behind it, saying the alliance with Australia was a long one, recalling the sacrifice of the “young Australians who came to die on French soil during World War I.”

“There are ups and downs in all relations between countries, but when there were real dramas, Australia was there,” he said.

War guilt and last kisses: A deceptive, uneasy calm for Kyiv

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — In the outdoor gym on Venice Beach, the name given to an inviting stretch of sand on the majestic Dnieper River that courses through the capital of Ukraine, Serhiy Chorny is working on his summer body, up-down-up-downing a chunky hunk of iron.

The aim of his sweat and toil isn’t to impress the girls in their bright summer bikinis. Working out is

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part of his contribution to Ukraine's all-hands-on-deck war effort: The National Guardsman expects to be sent eastward to the battlefields soon and doesn't want to take his paunch with him for the fight against Russia's invasion force.

"I'm here to get in shape. To be able to help my friends with whom I'll be," the 32-year-old said. "I feel that my place is there now. ... There is only one thing left: to defend. There is no other option, only one road."

So goes Kyiv's bitter summer of 2022, where the sun shines but sadness and grim determination reign, where canoodling couples cannot be sure that their kisses won't be their last as more soldiers head to the fronts; where flitting swallows are nesting as people made homeless weep in blown-apart ruins, and where the peace is deceptive, because it's shorn of peace of mind.

After Russia's initial assault on Kyiv was repelled in the invasion's opening month, leaving death and destruction, the capital found itself in the somewhat uncomfortable position of becoming largely a bystander in the war that continues to rage in the east and south, where Russian President Vladimir Putin has redirected his forces and military resources.

The burned-out hulks of Russian tanks are being hauled away from the capital's outskirts, even as Western-supplied weapons turn more Russian armor into smoking junk on battlefronts. Cafes and restaurants are open again, the chatter and the chink of glasses from their outdoor tables providing a semblance of normalcy — until everyone scoots home for the 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew, less constraining than it used to be when Kyiv had seemed at risk of falling.

Sitting on a lawn and savoring wine with friends one evening this week, Andrii Bashtovyi remarked that it "looks like there's no war but people are talking about their friends who are injured or who are mobilized." He recently passed his military medical check, meaning he could soon be thrown into combat, too.

"If they call me, I need to go to the recruiting center. I'll have 12 hours," said the chief editor of The Village online magazine, which covers life, news and events in Kyiv and other unoccupied cities.

Air raid alarms still sound regularly, screeching shrilly on downloadable phone apps, but they're so rarely followed by blasts — unlike in pounded front-line towns and cities — that few pay them much mind. Cruise missile strikes that wrecked a warehouse and a train repair workshop on June 5 were Kyiv's first in five weeks. Dog walkers and parents pushing strollers ambled unperturbed nearby even before the flames had been extinguished.

Many, but by no means all, of the 2 million inhabitants who Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said had fled when Russian forces tried to encircle the city in March are now returning. But with soldiers falling by the hundreds to the east and south, the surreal calm of Kyiv is laced with nagging guilt.

"People are feeling grateful but asking themselves, 'Am I doing enough?'" said Snezhana Vialko, as she and boyfriend Denys Koreiba bought plump strawberries from one of the summer-fruit vendors who have deployed across the city, in neighborhoods where just weeks ago jumpy troops manned checkpoints of sand bags and tank traps.

Now greatly reduced in numbers and vigilance, they generally wave through the restored buzz of car traffic, barely glancing up from pass-the-time scrolling on phones.

With the peace still so fragile and more treasured than ever, many are plowing their energies, time, money and muscle into supporting the soldiers fighting what has become a grinding war of attrition for control of destroyed villages, towns and cities.

Trained as a chef and now working as a journalist, Volodymyr Denysenko brewed up 100 bottles of spicy sauce, using his home-grown hot peppers to enliven the troops' rations. He dropped them off with volunteers who drive in convoys from Kyiv to the fronts, laden with crowdfunded gun sights, night-vision goggles, drones, medical kits and other badly needed gear.

"All Ukrainian people must help the army, the soldiers," he said. "It's our country, our freedom."

WTO looks to reach trade deals with its fate on the line

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

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GENEVA (AP) — The World Trade Organization is facing one of its most dire moments, the culmination of years of slide toward oblivion and ineffectiveness. Now may be a chance to turn the tide and reemerge as a champion of free and fair trade — or face a future further in doubt.

For the first time in 4 1/2 years, after a pandemic pause, government ministers from WTO countries will gather for four days starting Sunday to tackle issues like overfishing of the seas, COVID-19 vaccines for the developing world and food security at a time when Russia's war in Ukraine has blocked the export of millions of tons of Ukrainian grain to developing nations.

Facing a key test of her diplomatic skill since taking the job 15 months ago, WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in recent days expressed "cautious optimism" that progress could be made on at least one of four issues expected to dominate the meeting: fisheries subsidies, agriculture, the pandemic response and reform of the organization, spokesman Fernando Puchol said.

Diplomats and trade teams have been working "flat out — long, long hours" to serve up at least one "clean text" for a possible agreement — that ministers can simply rubber-stamp and not have to negotiate — on one of those issues, Puchol told reporters Friday.

"It's difficult to predict a result right now," he said.

The Geneva-based body, barely a quarter-century old, brings together 164 countries to help ensure smooth and fair international trade and settle trade disputes. Some outside experts expect few accomplishments out of the meeting, saying the main one may simply be getting the ministers to the table.

"The multilateral trading system is in a bad way. The Ukraine situation is not helping," said Clemens Boonekamp, an independent trade policy analyst and former head of WTO's agricultural division. "But the mere fact that they are coming together is a sign of a respect for the system."

Alan Wolff, a former WTO deputy director-general, sounded optimistic that members could make at least some headway.

They might reach an agreement, he said, to help relieve a looming global food crisis arising from the war in Ukraine by ensuring the U.N. World Food Program receives a waiver from food export bans imposed by WTO countries eager to feed their own people.

Wolff, now senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, expressed confidence in Okonjo-Iweala, saying, "I'm not willing to sell her short."

He said members "seem to be making progress" on an agreement to scale back subsidies that encourage overfishing — something they have been trying to do for more than two decades.

"Do they wrap it up this time?" Wolff asked. "Unclear. It's been a drama."

One problem — among many — is that the WTO operates by consensus, so any one of its 164 member countries could gum up the works.

In short, the WTO has become an important diplomatic battleground between developed and developing countries, and some experts say reform is needed if it's ever to get things done.

The trade body, created in 1995 as a successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, has seen a slow unraveling. It hasn't produced a major trade deal in years. The last big success was a 2014 agreement billed as a boost to lower-income countries that cut up red tape on goods clearing borders.

Years ago, the United States started clamping down on the WTO's appeals court, which in theory delivers the last word on trade disputes, such as a high-profile one between the U.S. and EU involving plane-making giants Airbus and Boeing.

Then, U.S. President Donald Trump came along, threatening to pull America out of the WTO over his insistence that it was unfair to the U.S. In the end, he didn't, and simply bypassed the WTO — slapping sanctions on allies and foes alike and ignoring the trade organization's rulebook and dispute-resolution system.

Once a champion of the WTO, the United States has rued the admission of China and insists Beijing has been violating the trade body's rules too much. The U.S. accuses China of excessively supporting state-run companies and impeding free trade, among other things. China denies those allegations.

A generation ago, the WTO drew huge, vituperative, even violent protests — notably from anti-globalists

and anarchists who detested its closed-door secrecy and elites-decide-all image.

William Reinsch, a former U.S. trade official, warned that the WTO is now in danger of becoming irrelevant. The best way to show that it still matters, he wrote this month, is to negotiate an agreement, perhaps on fisheries, COVID-19 vaccines or a more difficult issue: encouraging more free trade in farming.

Reinsch, now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the United States needs to be doing more — including making compromises — to ensure the WTO can reach agreement on contentious issues.

"The future of the WTO is at risk," he said. "Failure would be bad for the fish and the farmers, but it would also be bad for a rule-of-law-based global economy."

Trump endorses Katie Britt in Alabama Senate race

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Donald Trump endorsed Katie Britt on Friday in an Alabama U.S. Senate race, doubling down on the former president's decision to spurn his previous choice in the Republican primary.

Trump called Britt "an incredible fighter for the people of Alabama." The former president had originally backed U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks in the race, but rescinded that endorsement in March after their relationship soured.

Britt was chief of staff to retiring U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby before stepping down to lead a state business group, and is now running to fill Shelby's vacant seat. Britt and Brooks face off in the June 21 runoff that will decide the Republican nominee.

"Above all, Katie Britt will never let you down," Trump wrote, adding, "she has my complete and total endorsement!"

The decision was another blow to Brooks, who had sought to regain Trump's support. "Mo has been wanting it back ever since," Trump said Friday of his endorsement, "but I cannot give it to him! Katie Britt, on the other hand, is a fearless America First Warrior."

Trump endorsed Brooks last year, rewarding the conservative firebrand who had been an ardent supporter of Trump's false 2020 election fraud claims. Brooks had whipped up a crowd of Trump supporters at the Jan. 6, 2021, rally that preceded the U.S. Capitol insurrection.

But Trump pulled that endorsement, citing Brooks' languishing performance in the race. He also accused Brooks of going "woke" for saying at a Cullman rally that it was time to move on from litigating the 2020 presidential election and focus that energy on upcoming elections instead.

Britt led the primary field in the May primary, and has been seeking Trump's support since he backed away from Brooks.

Trump's glowing endorsement of Britt is a stark contrast to statements he made a year ago about her when he called her "not in any way qualified" and describing her as an "assistant" to a "RINO Senator," referring to Shelby as a "Republican in name only."

Britt said Friday that she was thankful to have Trump's support. "President Trump knows that Alabamians are sick and tired of failed, do-nothing career politicians," she said in a statement. "It's time for the next generation of conservatives to step up and shake things up in Washington to save the country we know and love for our children and our children's children."

Despite losing Trump's endorsement in March, Brooks had continued to campaign under the label of "MAGA Mo," a reference to the Make America Great Again slogan, and had challenged Britt to a debate on the singular topic of whether the 2020 election was "stolen."

Brooks tweeted Friday that the voters of Alabama will decide the race.

"Let's just admit it: Trump endorses the wrong people sometimes," Brooks wrote, noting that a Trump-endorsed candidate lost the 2017 Senate race in Alabama.

Trump has a mixed record in this year's midterm elections.

He burnished his kingmaker status last month by lifting a trailing Senate candidate in Ohio, JD Vance, to the Republican nomination. And in Pennsylvania, Republican voters narrowly chose Trump's Senate pick,

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celebrity heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz, as well as his preferred gubernatorial candidate, Doug Mastriano, who said he wouldn't have certified President Joe Biden's 2020 win of the state.

However, voters in Georgia rejected Trump's efforts to unseat the state's Republican governor and secretary of state, both of whom rebuffed his extraordinary pressure to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. That has raised questions about whether Republican voters are beginning to move on from Trump, ahead of another possible White House run.

Curry scores 43 to beat Boston, Warriors tie NBA Finals 2-2

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — He stomped his feet, waved his arms, flexed his muscles and talked back to the crowd. And Stephen Curry also made baskets. Plenty of those, too.

In a demonstrative and dominating performance that was one of the best of his postseason career, Curry scored 43 points to lead the Golden State Warriors to a 107-97 victory over the Boston Celtics in Game 4 of the NBA Finals on Friday night, sending the series back to San Francisco knotted at two games apiece.

Two nights after shaking off a foot injury in a Game 3 loss, the two-time league MVP stomped and shot his way to his third-highest scoring total in the postseason, adding 10 rebounds and making a pair of baskets during a 10-0 fourth-quarter run that turned a four-point Boston edge into a 100-94 Golden State lead. It was the second-most points he's scored in the NBA Finals.

"The heart on that man is incredible," Warriors guard Klay Thompson said. "The things he does, we kind of take for granted at times, to go out there and put us on his back. We've got to help him out on Monday."

Andrew Wiggins had 17 points and 16 boards for the Warriors, who have won at least one road game for an NBA-record 27 consecutive playoff series since 2013. They will host Game 5 on Monday night, with Game 6 in Boston on Thursday; Golden State would hold the home-court advantage in a seventh game, if necessary.

"We had to do it the difficult way," said Celtics coach Ime Udoka, whose team is 7-0 after losses in the 2022 postseason. "We have to do it again. It could have been an easier road, obviously, if you get the win tonight. But we're 2-2 now. We know we can do it. We've done it before."

Jayson Tatum had 23 points and 11 rebounds for Boston, but he managed just one basket while playing the entire fourth quarter. Jaylen Brown scored 21 points and Robert Williams III had 12 rebounds.

Marcus Smart, who scored 18 points, hit a 3-pointer to give the Celtics a 94-90 lead with just over five minutes remaining. But they missed six straight shots and did not score again until the 1:18 mark, after Curry made a floater and a 3-pointer to give the Warriors a 100-94 lead.

"He wasn't letting us lose. That's all it boils down to," Warriors big man Draymond Green said. "I could tell in his demeanor, last couple of days, even after Game 3 that he was going to come out with that kind of fire."

Curry was more demonstrative than usual, raising his arms after failing to get a foul call, interacting with the sold-out TD Garden crowd and flexing to celebrate a big Warriors basket. Rather than returning home at the brink of elimination, the Warriors moved closer to a fourth NBA title in eight years at home.

"I felt like we just had to let everybody know that we were here tonight," Curry said. "Whether that's their crowd, their team, our team, whoever wants to see that energy and that fire, we feed off of that."

Fans arriving at the TD Garden for what could have been the final time this season found a T-shirt draped over their seats with the 17 NBA championship banners lined up on the front. There was a blank rectangle where the 18th would go.

Now the Celtics would need to win at least one more time in San Francisco to fill in the blank.

The amped-up crowd spent much of the game booing Green, chanting an obscenity at him that is usually reserved for Bucky Dent, and jeering his many misses. He shot 1 of 7 but finished with nine rebounds and eight assists to go with two points.

Green also had an offensive rebound and a dish to Curry after returning to the game in the final minute to eliminate any chance of a Boston comeback.

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"He's the ultimate competitor. ... Made huge plays down the stretch," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "This is a tough series for him to score because of Boston's size and athleticism, but he's still impacting the game at a huge level."

INJURY REPORT

Curry's foot was an issue coming into the night after Boston's Al Horford landed on it late in Game 3. But didn't seem to bother him on Friday night: He played 41 minutes — only Wiggins spent more time on the court for the Warriors — and made 14 of 26 shots, including 7 of 14 from 3-point range.

"Never even looked like it was a factor," Kerr said. "The physicality out there is pretty dramatic. Boston's got the best defense in the league — huge and powerful at every position, and for Steph to take that kind of pressure all game long and still be able to defend ... I think this is the strongest physically he's ever been in his career."

Williams was listed as questionable coming into the game with the knee injury that kept him out at the end of the regular season and the start of the playoffs. He started strong, with 10 rebounds in the first half, but he was limping in the second half and on the bench in the final minutes.

He finished with seven points to go with four assists and two blocked shots, playing 31 minutes.

THIRD TIME

The Warriors won the third quarter for the fourth game in a row, but not as decisively as they had previously.

Golden State had a 30-24 edge coming out of the break, closing with a 14-7 run to erase a six-point Boston lead. Curry scored 14 points in the quarter, making four 3-pointers.

The Warriors have outscored the Celtics by a combined score of 136-87 in the third quarter in the finals.

This time, it was the fourth quarter that was decisive, with the Warriors scoring 17 of the game's last 20 points.

Thousands rally for gun reform after surge in mass shootings

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of protestors are expected to rally in Washington, D.C., Saturday and in separate demonstrations around the country as part of a renewed push for nationwide gun control. Motivated by a fresh surge in mass shootings, from Uvalde, Texas, to Buffalo, New York, protestors say lawmakers must take note of shifting public opinion and finally enact sweeping reforms.

Organizers expect the second March for Our Lives rally to draw around 50,000 demonstrators to the Washington Monument. That's far less than the original 2018 march, which filled downtown Washington with more than 200,000 people. This time, organizers are focusing on holding smaller marches at an estimated 300 locations.

"We want to make sure that this work is happening across the country," said Daud Mumin, co-chairman of the march's board of directors and a recent graduate of Westminster College in Salt Lake City. "This work is not just about D.C., it's not just about senators."

The first march was spurred by the Feb. 14, 2018, killings of 14 students and three staff members by a former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. That massacre sparked the creation of the youth-led March For Our Lives movement, which successfully pressured the Republican-dominated Florida state government to enact sweeping gun control reforms.

The Parkland students then took aim at gun laws in other states and nationally, launching March for Our Lives and holding the big rally in Washington on March 24, 2018.

The group did not match the Florida results at the national level, but has persisted in advocating for gun restrictions since then, as well as participating in voter registration drives.

Now, with another string of mass shootings bringing gun control back into the national conversation, organizers of this weekend's events say the time is right to renew their push for a national overhaul.

"Right now we are angry," said Mariah Cooley, a March For Our Lives board member and a senior at Washington's Howard University. "This will be a demonstration to show that us as Americans, we're not

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stopping anytime soon until Congress does their jobs. And if not, we'll be voting them out."

The protest comes at a time of renewed political activity on guns and a crucial moment for possible action in Congress.

Survivors of mass shootings and other incidents of gun violence have lobbied legislators and testified on Capitol Hill this week. Among them was Miah Cerrillo, an 11-year-old girl who survived the shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. She told lawmakers how she covered herself with a dead classmate's blood to avoid being shot.

On Tuesday, actor Matthew McConaughey appeared at the White House briefing room to press for gun legislation and made highly personal remarks about the violence in his hometown of Uvalde.

The House has passed bills that would raise the age limit to buy semi-automatic weapons and establish federal "red flag" laws. But such initiatives have traditionally stalled or been heavily watered down in the Senate. Democratic and Republican senators had hoped to reach agreement this week on a framework for addressing the issue and talked Friday, but they had not announced an accord by early evening.

Mumin referred to the Senate as "where substantive action goes to die," and said the new march is meant to send a message to lawmakers that public opinion on gun control is shifting under their feet. "If they're not on our side, there are going to be consequences — voting them out of office and making their lives a living hell when they're in office," he said.

New York's lawsuit against NRA can move forward, judge rules

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York attorney general's lawsuit against the National Rifle Association is no mere "witch hunt," a New York judge ruled Friday in dismissing the gun rights advocacy group's claims that the case is a political vendetta.

Manhattan Judge Joel M. Cohen's decision means the nearly 2-year-long legal fight can continue.

The ruling comes after mass shootings last month in New York and Texas reanimated debate over U.S. gun policy and refocused attention on the NRA.

The New York case began when James, a Democrat, filed a lawsuit that accused some top NRA executives of financial improprieties and sought to dissolve the group. The attorney general's job includes oversight of nonprofit organizations incorporated in the New York, where the NRA was chartered in 1871.

In March, Cohen rebuffed James' bid to shutter the NRA. But the judge let the case go on, with the potential for fines or other remedies if the attorney general prevails.

The NRA accused James in a court filing last year of waging "a blatant and malicious retaliation campaign" because of its views. The group sought to halt the lawsuit.

Cohen rejected those arguments.

"The narrative that the attorney general's investigation into these undeniably serious matters was nothing more than a politically motivated — and unconstitutional — witch hunt is simply not supported by the record," he wrote, noting that the probe was sparked by reports of misconduct and "uncovered additional evidence."

James applauded the decision, saying it confirms the suit's "legitimacy and viability."

"Our fight for transparency and accountability will continue," she said in a statement.

NRA lawyer William A. Brewer III said the group was disappointed but would keep fighting the case and still believes it was unfairly targeted.

"The NRA believes the NYAG's pursuit was fueled by her opposition to the association and its First Amendment activities in support of the Second Amendment," he said in a statement, using an abbreviation for the attorney general's title.

In the wake of the recent shootings in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, Congress is under renewed pressure to respond after years of partisan logjams over gun legislation.

The House has passed bills that would raise the age limit to buy semiautomatic weapons and establish federal "red flag" laws, which allow for taking guns from people at extreme risk of harming themselves

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or others. Such initiatives traditionally have faltered in the Senate.

Democratic and Republican senators have been talking about a framework for addressing the issue, but no agreement has been announced.

The NRA — a longtime political force that has lost some influence amid financial scandals in recent years — has long insisted that mass shootings are no reason to limit access to guns, arguing that the solution instead is for law-abiding people to have firearms to defend themselves and others.

The message was echoed at the group's convention in Houston last month, days after a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers in Uvalde.

Rallies calling for significant changes to gun laws are planned in Washington and around the country this weekend and are expected to draw tens of thousands of people.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court also is caught up in the national tug of war over the place of guns in America. The justices are expected soon to issue their most consequential gun ruling in more than a decade, potentially making it easier to be armed on the streets of New York and other large cities.

US lifts COVID-19 test requirement for international travel

By ZEKE MILLER and DAVID KOENIG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is lifting its requirement that international travelers test negative for COVID-19 within a day before boarding a flight to the United States, ending one of the last remaining government mandates designed to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Friday that the requirement will end early Sunday morning. The health agency said it will continue to monitor state of the pandemic and will reassess the need for a testing requirement if the situation changes.

"This step is possible because of the progress we've made in our fight against COVID-19," said U.S. Health Secretary Xavier Becerra.

Airline and tourism groups have been pressing the administration for months to eliminate the testing requirement, saying it discourages people from booking international trips because they could be stranded overseas if they contract the virus on their trip.

Roger Dow, president of the U.S. Travel Association, called lifting the testing rule "another huge step forward for the recovery of inbound air travel and the return of international travel to the United States."

Airlines argued that the rule was put into effect when few Americans were vaccinated — now 71% of those 5 and older are fully vaccinated, according to CDC figures. They also complained that people entering the U.S. at land borders are not required to test negative for COVID-19, although they must show proof of vaccination.

While domestic U.S. travel has returned nearly to pre-pandemic levels, international travel — which is very lucrative for the airlines — has continued to lag. In May, U.S. international air travel remained 24% below 2019 levels, with declines among both U.S. and foreign citizens, according to trade group Airlines for America.

Many other countries have lifted their testing requirements for fully vaccinated and boosted travelers in a bid to increase tourism.

Some infectious-disease experts said they were comfortable with the CDC's decision, and that lifting the restriction is unlikely to cause further spread of the virus in the U.S.

Dr. William Schaffner of Vanderbilt University said the rule was designed to prevent importing the virus, "but we've got plenty of COVID here. It's like telling someone not to pour a bucket of water in their swimming pool."

Dr. Peter Chin-Hong at the University of California, San Francisco, said travel restrictions demonstrate that officials are trying to keep variants out, "but they haven't really shown to be beneficial, ever." However, he said, requiring foreign visitors to be vaccinated makes sense to avoid straining the U.S. health-care system with people who could develop severe disease.

The requirement for a negative COVID-19 test before flying to the U.S. dates to January 2021 and is the

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most visible remaining U.S. travel restriction of the pandemic era.

In April, a federal judge in Florida struck down a requirement that passengers wear masks on planes and public transportation, saying that the CDC had exceeded its authority. The Biden administration is appealing that ruling, saying it aims to protect the CDC's ability to respond to future health emergencies.

The Biden administration put the testing requirement in place as it moved away from rules that banned nonessential travel from dozens of countries — most of Europe, China, Brazil, South Africa, India and Iran — and focused instead on classifying individuals by the risk they pose to others. It was coupled with a requirement that foreign, non-immigrant adults traveling to the United States need to be fully vaccinated, with only limited exceptions.

The initial mandate allowed those who were fully vaccinated to show proof of a negative test within three days of travel, while unvaccinated people had to present a test taken within one day of travel.

In November, as the highly transmissible omicron variant swept the world, the Biden administration toughened the requirement and required all travelers — regardless of vaccination status — to test negative within a day of travel to the U.S.

In February, travel groups argued that the testing requirement was obsolete because of the high number of omicron cases already in every state, higher vaccinations rates and new treatments for the virus.

Meanwhile, travelers found creative ways around the rule. This spring, several Canadian teams in the National Hockey League flew to cities near the border, then took buses into the U.S. to avoid the risk of losing players who tested positive.

U.S. airlines estimate that dropping the test requirement will mean 4.3 million more passengers in one year.

It is unclear, however, whether airlines can boost flights quickly enough to handle that kind of increase. Airlines facing a shortage of pilots have already scaled back their original schedules for the peak summer vacation season.

Brett Snyder, a travel adviser who writes about the industry at CrankyFlier.com, said the requirement has caused some people to postpone international travel.

"It's not that they are afraid of getting sick, they don't want to get stuck," Snyder said. He thinks there will now be a surge in booking those trips, "which, if anything, will lead to higher fares."

Hotels, theme parks and other travel businesses also lobbied the administration to drop the rule.

"The whole industry has been waiting for this announcement," said Martin Ferguson, a spokesman for American Express Global Business Travel, which advises companies on travel policy. He said there are few remaining pandemic policies that cause so much consternation for the travel sector, with China's "zero-COVID" restrictions being another.

Despite ending the testing requirement, the CDC said it still recommends COVID-19 testing prior to air travel of any kind as a safety precaution.

Judge blocks Texas investigating families of trans youth

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

A Texas judge on Friday temporarily blocked the state from investigating families of transgender children who have received gender-confirming medical care, a new obstacle to the state labeling such treatments as child abuse.

The temporary restraining order issued by Judge Jan Soifer halts investigations against three families who sued, and prevents any similar investigations against members of the LGBTQ advocacy group PFLAG Inc. The group has more than 600 members in Texas.

"I do find that there is sufficient reason to believe that the plaintiffs will suffer immediate and irreparable injury if the commissioner and the (Department of Family and Protective Services) are allowed to continue to implement and enforce this new Department rule that equates gender affirming care with child abuse," Soifer said at the end of a roughly 40-minute hearing.

The ruling comes about a month after the Texas Supreme Court allowed the state to investigate par-

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ents of transgender youth for child abuse while also ruling in favor of one family that was among the first contacted by child welfare officials following order by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

"That families will be protected from invasive, unnecessary, and unnerving investigations by DFPS simply for helping their transgender children thrive and be themselves is a very good thing," Brian K. Bond, executive director of PFLAG National, said in a statement. "However, let's be clear: These investigations into loving and affirming families shouldn't be happening in the first place."

The latest challenge was brought by Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the families of three teenage boys — two 16-year-olds and a 14-year-old — and PFLAG. An attorney for Lambda Legal told the judge that the 14-year-old's family had learned after the lawsuit's filing that the state's investigation into them had been dropped.

Spokespeople for Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday afternoon.

An attorney for the state had argued during the hearing that applying the order to any member of PFLAG was "untenable" and would be difficult for the department to comply with. But Lambda Legal senior counsel Paul Castillo said that parents could simply show their membership receipt or some other proof of membership.

The families had talked in court filings about the anxiety that the investigations had created for them and their children. The mother of one of the teens said her son attempted suicide and was hospitalized the day Abbott issued his directive. The outpatient psychiatric facility where the teen was referred reported the family for child abuse after learning he had been prescribed hormone therapy, she said in a court filing.

A judge in March put Abbott's order on hold after a lawsuit brought on behalf of a 16-year-old girl whose family said it was under investigation. The Texas Supreme Court in May ruled that the lower court overstepped its authority by blocking all investigations going forward.

That lawsuit marked the first report of parents being investigated following Abbott's directive and an earlier nonbinding legal opinion by Paxton labeling certain gender-confirming treatments as "child abuse." The Texas Department of Family and Protective Service has said it opened nine investigations following the directive and opinion.

Abbott's directive and the attorney general's opinion go against the nation's largest medical groups, including the American Medical Association, which have opposed Republican-backed restrictions filed in statehouses nationwide.

Arkansas last year became the first state to pass a law prohibiting gender-confirming treatments for minors, and Tennessee approved a similar measure. A judge blocked Arkansas' law, and a federal appeals court will hear arguments in the case next week.

The judge set a June 21 hearing on whether to extend the order into a temporary injunction blocking the investigations.

Key moments from the Jan. 6 committee's video of the riot

By The Associated Press undefined

In launching its case to the American public, the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection made a central argument: Look at the tape.

The centerpiece of Thursday night's hearing was a video reconstruction of the attack on the Capitol. Over 10 minutes, it went point by point, showing the rioters overwhelming and beating police officers as the mob broke into the building to stop the certification of Donald Trump's election loss.

The video had a powerful impact inside the hearing room and among Democrats. Police officers in the audience consoled one another as they relived the violence. U.S. Capitol Police officer Harry Dunn teared up during the footage of rioters hitting his colleagues with flagpoles and baseball bats.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York posted a photo on Instagram of her television with images of the riot. "There was (and continues to be) a widespread GOP campaign to downplay the scale of this attack," she wrote in a caption.

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"We were trapped on the campus with no way out," she added. "This is what a US terrorist attack looks like."

Meanwhile, many Republicans downplayed the new footage or didn't watch it at all. Unlike other networks, Fox News did not air the committee hearing and allotted hours to hosts and guests who denigrated it. Taylor Budowich, a Trump spokesman, said: "This isn't a legislative hearing, it's a production."

Here are some of the key moments from the committee's video.

THE PROUD BOYS

Three months after Trump said they should "stand back and stand by," the Proud Boys had many members stationed in Washington.

The committee's video shows members of the far-right extremist group gathering on the National Mall hours before Trump's speech exhorting his supporters to "fight like hell." By the time Trump spoke near the White House, members of the Proud Boys had already reached the Capitol several blocks away.

The group's former top leader is now charged with seditious conspiracy, as are other members. Federal prosecutors allege they carried out a coordinated attack on the Capitol.

THE BREACH

By 1 p.m., as Speaker Nancy Pelosi began the certification of electoral votes, rioters had already breached police lines east of the Capitol.

A riot was declared at 1:50 p.m., and lawmakers were soon moved to safety. New video aired Thursday shows people running in the office of House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy.

THE POLICE

Undermanned officers fought assailants who came with weapons and bear spray. The officers' body cameras and overhead security footage captured much of the melee.

Why the National Guard wasn't already there and why it took so long for Guard members to arrive are questions that remain disputed among key figures. The U.S. Capitol Police chief that day has alleged that the House and Senate sergeants-at-arms delayed responding to his pleas, which those officials have denied. The Pentagon has said it did not have full forces ready and needed several hours to deploy.

The chief and both sergeants-at-arms resigned after the attack.

US inflation at new 40-year high as price increases spread

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The prices of gas, food and most other goods and services jumped in May, raising inflation to a new four-decade high and giving American households no respite from rising costs.

Consumer prices surged 8.6% last month from a year earlier, faster than April's year-over-year increase of 8.3%, the Labor Department said Friday. The new inflation figure, the highest since 1981, will heighten pressure on the Federal Reserve to continue raising interest rates aggressively.

On a month-to-month basis, prices jumped 1% from April to May, much faster than the 0.3% increase from March to April. Contributing to that surge were much higher prices for everything from airline tickets to restaurant meals to new and used cars. Those price spikes also elevated so-called "core" inflation, a measure that excludes volatile food and energy prices. In May, core prices jumped a sharp 0.6% for a second straight month. They're now 6% above where they were a year ago.

Friday's report underscored fears that inflation is spreading well beyond energy and goods whose prices are being driven up by clogged supply chains and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It also sent stock prices tumbling. The increased pressure on the Fed to raise rates even faster — which means higher-cost loans for consumers and businesses — will raise the risk of a recession, too.

"Virtually every sector has higher-than-normal inflation," said Ethan Harris, head of global economic research at Bank of America. "It's made its way into every nook and cranny of the economy. That's the thing that makes it concerning, because it means it's likely to persist."

Gas prices rose 4% just in May and have soared nearly 50% in one year. The national average price at the pump reached \$4.99 Friday, according to AAA, edging closer to an inflation-adjusted record high of \$5.40.

The cost of groceries surged nearly 12% last month from a year earlier, the biggest such increase since

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1979. Rising prices for grain and fertilizer after Russia's war against Ukraine, is intensifying that rise. Restaurant prices jumped 7.4% in the past year, the largest 12-month gain since 1981, reflecting higher costs for food and workers.

Employers face immense pressure to raise pay in a job market that remains robust, with low unemployment, few layoffs and near-record job openings. But while average wages are rising at their fastest pace in decades, they aren't increasing fast enough for most workers to keep pace with inflation. Many households accumulated savings from government stimulus aid during the pandemic and are now having to draw on those savings to pay bills.

Housing costs are still climbing. The government's shelter index, which includes rents, hotel rates and a measure of what it costs to own a home, increased 5.5% in the past year, the most since 1991. Airline fares are up nearly 38% in the past year, the sharpest such rise since 1980.

Rampant inflation is imposing severe pressures on families. Lower-income and Black and Hispanic Americans, in particular, are struggling because, on average, a larger proportion of their income is consumed by necessities.

In light of Friday's inflation reading, the Fed is all but certain to implement the fastest series of interest rate hikes in three decades. By sharply raising borrowing costs, the Fed hopes to cool spending and growth enough to curb inflation without tipping the economy into a recession. It will be a difficult balancing act.

The Fed has signaled that it will raise its key short-term rate by a half-point — double the size of the usual hike — next week and again in July. Some investors had hoped the Fed would then slow its rate increases to a quarter-point hike when it meets in September or perhaps even pause its credit tightening. But with inflation raging hot, investors now foresee yet another half-point hike in September, which would be the fourth since April.

Surveys show that Americans see high inflation as the nation's top problem, and most disapprove of President Joe Biden's handling of the economy. Congressional Republicans are hammering Democrats on the issue in the run-up to midterm elections this fall.

On Friday, Biden responded to the latest figures in a speech at the Port of Los Angeles, which is now moving a record amount of cargo under an agreement the White House has shepherded. Yet even as the number of ships waiting to unload at the port has dropped sharply, inflation has not.

"My administration," the president said, "is going to continue to do everything we can to lower the prices to the American people."

Surging prices have forced Rocky Harper of Tucson, Arizona, to start doing gig work for delivery companies, on top of his regular full-time job with a package delivery service. His main job pays \$800 a week, he said, which "used to be really good money and is now just above dirt-poor."

Harper, 44, said he and his fiancée are delaying marriage because they can't afford it right now. They've cut off Netflix and Hulu. His car's catalytic converter was stolen recently — an increasingly common theft — for the rare metals they contain that have shot up in price. A repair cost \$1,300.

"With the food, gas and rent — holy cow," he said. "I'm working a massive amount of overtime, just to make it, just to keep it together."

A report from the World Bank this week made clear that high inflation is a global problem that threatens to slow economies around the world. For the 19 countries that use the euro currency, inflation fueled by rising food and fuel prices hit a record 8.1% last month, leading the European Central Bank to announce that it will raise interest rates for the first time in 11 years, starting in July and again in September.

In the coming months, prices in the United States may ease somewhat. Some large retailers, including Target, Walmart and Macy's, are now stuck with too much of the patio furniture, electronics and other goods that suddenly are no longer in demand. Target said it's cutting prices due to mounds of unsold inventory.

Though Americans have soured on the economy, they have largely kept up their spending. They are increasingly turning to credit cards, with total card debt rising sharply in April, the Fed reported, though such debt has only barely surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

How long these trends — higher wages, extra savings and rising card debt — enable Americans to keep spending will help determine whether a recession can be avoided. To cool inflation, spending growth must

be slowed.

For lower-income Americans, there are signs it's already slowing. Walmart said customers are shifting down to cheaper items, while sales are picking up at retailers that cater to budget-conscious shoppers, like dollar stores.

Research by the Bank of America Institute, which uses anonymous data from millions of their customers' credit and debit card accounts, shows gasoline eating up a larger share of budgets.

For lower-income households — defined as those with incomes below \$50,000 — spending on gas reached nearly 10% of all spending on credit and debit cards in the last week of May, the institute said. That's up from about 7.5% in February, a steep increase in such a short period.

Many small businesses are still struggling to keep up with rising costs for supplies and labor, a sign that price hikes will continue. Andrew McDowell, founder of With Love Market & Cafe in Los Angeles, said he's paying more for food supplies, workers and reusable bags, which used to cost him 23 cents but now cost 45 cents.

The company's chicken BLT now costs 20% more than it did before the pandemic. McDowell said he's grappling with the highest prices for supplies and workers he's ever faced. He thinks he may have to rise prices again, by 10% to 20%.

"Every product is impacted, every aspect of the business is affected," McDowell said.

Navajo mystery series 'Dark Winds' seeks true storytelling

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Robert Redford and George R.R. Martin are the big names behind "Dark Winds," but they're not the most important.

That distinction belongs to the Native American creators and actors who ensured the AMC mystery series rings true to the Native experience and enduring culture, which largely has been snubbed or recklessly caricatured by Hollywood.

This time the storytelling is "an inside job," said director Chris Eyre, resulting in what he describes as a "Native American, Southwestern film noir."

Based on Tony Hillerman's admired novels featuring Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police, AMC's "Dark Winds" puts the newly teamed lawmen on a double-murder case that could be linked to a brazen armored-car heist.

The investigation and what underlies it is gripping but, as with Hillerman's books, what distinguishes "Dark Winds" is its intricate blend of nuanced characters and relationships, spiritual traditions and the devastating toll of entrenched inequality.

The last aspect is painfully illustrated by a midwife's warning to a pregnant woman to avoid a hospital birth or risk unwanted sterilization, a reflection of what Native Americans faced in the series' 1970s setting, the producers said. (A 1976 U.S. General Accounting Office study found that women under 21 were being sterilized despite a moratorium, among other issues.)

"A lot of our history is based on oral tradition, said Zahn McClarnon, who stars as Lt. Leaphorn. "We've been telling our stories for thousands of years.....I think that the television business is finally seeing that, and realizing that we have our own stories, and that they're rich, deep stories."

"Dark Winds," debuting Sunday on AMC (9 p.m. EDT) and on streaming service AMC+, is imbued with the stark grandeur of New Mexico, where it's largely set and was shot.

"In the daytime, the landscape is just beautiful. In the nighttime, it turns into something else, it becomes intimidating that there's so much land out there," said Eyre. "That's what the series is about, this beautiful paradox of this world we haven't seen before, this mystery."

The series counts actor-filmmaker Redford and Martin, of "Game of Thrones" book and TV fame, among its executive producers. Viewers may recall a 2002 miniseries featuring Leaphorn and Chee, which Redford produced. Martin is new to the mix but not to Hillerman's work — both New Mexico residents, they were part of a writers' circle that met regularly in Albuquerque.

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The PBS series, "Skinwalkers: The Navajo Mysteries," made before authenticity gained serious traction in Hollywood, was notable for its Native American cast and a Native director — Eyre, a member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, who shared directing duties.

But "Dark Winds" also boasts a nearly all Native writing staff, with one exception. Eyre ("Friday Night Lights," "Smoke Signals") directed the full series, and creator and executive producer Graham Roland is Chickasaw.

The cast features prominent Native actors including McClarnon ("Fargo," "Longmire"); Kiowa Gordon ("The Twilight Saga" franchise) as Chee; Jessica Matten as police Sgt. Bernadette Manuelito, and Deanna Allison as Leaphorn's wife, Emma.

Their resumes and performances refute longstanding industry complaints about a lack of experienced Native actors.

"I've heard that excuse before," said Roland. "What we found when we went about casting this was the Native talent pool is a lot deeper than even I realized....Everybody in the show is amazing."

Roland ("Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan," "Fringe") was connected with the proposed series in 2019, before the recent boomlet of Native-inclusive shows including "Reservation Dogs" and "Rutherford Falls."

"What was unique about it was the opportunity to tell a story in the Native community without a white character bringing you into the community and experiencing it through the white character's point of view," Roland said. Instead, the perspective is that of the Native character "who grew up there, lived there, and polices that environment."

U.S. television has been slow to the diversity game but is a welcome addition, said the Canadian-born Matten, who is Red River Metis-Cree.

"Canada has been very, very generous in giving Native storytellers a platform for about a decade now. However, the kind of reach we have is very limited, compared to what the USA can give," she said. "To be a part of 'Dark Winds' means a lot because, finally, I get to be a part of something that does have that reach."

For Gordon, the show is a chance to "shatter all these expectations and stereotypes that have always been attributed to us." He said the trailer's release alone has drawn blood pressure-raising comments that slam the show as unreal because it avoids hackneyed Native depictions.

"We're trying to portray these people (characters) as nothing that we've seen before, so it's a great opportunity," the actor said.

The decision to leave the story in the 20th century proved the right one for Eyre and Roland.

"When you drill down into the soil of the reservation proper....there are places that don't have electricity to this day. There are communities that don't have water, that don't have cell service," Eyre said. "It's ironic that so much has changed, and so little has changed."

Biden vows to battle inflation as prices keep climbing

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In President Joe Biden's estimation, the U.S. is in a strong position to overcome the worst inflation in more than 40 years. But so far, inflation just keeps getting the better of the U.S. economy and of the Biden administration.

The president's policies, his deals with the private sector, regulatory actions and public jawboning have failed so far to stop prices from marching upward.

Biden on Friday pledged to keep fighting against inflation while touring the Port of Los Angeles, America's busiest port and a place that the White House said last October would be key for reducing price pressures.

"My administration is going to continue to do everything we can to lower the prices for the American people," the president said after a decidedly bleak new report on consumer prices.

The Labor Department reported Friday that consumer prices climbed 8.6% in May from a year ago. That's the worst reading since December 1981 and a troubling sign for the economy as rate hikes by the Federal Reserve have yet to tamp down inflation as gasoline costs are surging upward. Rising prices are imperiling

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the U.S. economy as well as Democratic control of the House and Senate, putting Biden on the defensive.

AAA separately reported that average U.S. gas prices reached a record \$4.99 a gallon, an increase that has overwhelmed the president's previous efforts to reduce overall inflation. The pain at the pump is hurting Biden's public approval ahead of the midterm elections.

The president on Friday also blamed corporate profits for inflation, saying that some companies — including shipping firms and the oil industry — are focused on maximizing profits. Biden specifically targeted ExxonMobil for not doing more to increase oil production.

"Exxon made more money than God this year," he said.

ExxonMobil responded to Biden's comment by saying that it is producing more oil.

"We have been in regular contact with the administration, informing them of our planned investments to increase production and expand refining capacity in the United States," Casey Norton, a spokesperson for the company, said in an email. "We increased production in the Permian Basin by 70%, or 190,000 barrels per day, between 2019 and 2021. We expect to increase production from the Permian by another 25% this year."

The Port of Los Angeles moved to round-the-clock operations last October under an agreement that the White House helped to shepherd. The goal was to clear backlogs of ships waiting to dock and containers waiting to flow into the country, a logjam that was pumping up prices as the world began to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

The port is now moving out a record 200,000 containers on a rolling 30-day average. But the forces driving inflation have largely shifted to rising energy and food costs in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There has also been a broader increase in prices that go beyond supply chain issues. Housing, airfare and medical services expenses rose significantly in May.

Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said there were many levers that caused performance to improve in terms of getting goods to consumers and businesses faster. But he specifically credited the "convening powers of the federal government to bring people to the table" and the Biden administration's focus on the supply chain.

"We've reduced those ships that have been waiting to get into the port by 75% this year," Seroka said. "These guys are really working because we've got strong consumer demand still."

The Biden administration is seeking to further reduce shipping prices with a bipartisan bill that the House could pass as soon as next week. The bill would give the Federal Maritime Commission tools to make ocean-based trade more efficient and price competitive, improving the flow of exports and imports.

"What I have found here in California is that they want us to do whatever we could possibly do to address the inflation problem — and this is clearly one significant part of the problem," said Rep. John Garamendi, D-Calif., a sponsor of the bill.

Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., said he saw a need for the additional tools in part after a cheese processor in his state had two million pounds of lactose rot because no carriers would take the product even though 60% of shipping containers were going back to Asia empty.

"This is not a silver bullet with regard to inflation," said Johnson, who sponsored the bill. But he noted that, as the provisions get implemented, "this will absolutely have an impact on inflation."

Strong consumer demand has been a mixed blessing for Biden. It reflects the robust job growth and solid household balance sheets that followed the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package passed last year. But demand has consistently outpaced supply, causing prices to rise to levels that are forcing the Federal Reserve to try to slow growth and possibly risk a recession.

The White House contends that the U.S. can tackle inflation without stumbling into a downturn because the economy is so strong with its 3.6% unemployment rate that it can withstand a slowdown.

Biden is also trying to frame inflation as a global challenge, having been triggered first by the pandemic and then by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The president is attempting to rebut criticism by Republican lawmakers that inflation was the result of his government aid being too generous and his restrictions on U.S. oil production too onerous.

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Biden has attempted to slow inflation by improving port operations and twice releasing oil from the U.S. strategic reserve, in addition to other regulatory initiatives and a domestic agenda that includes budget deficit reduction and would need congressional approval.

The visit to the port occurs as Biden has been hosting the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles. On Friday, he will also announce a declaration on migration and hold a working luncheon with the heads of government and state attending the conference for nations in the Western Hemisphere.

And mindful of the campaign season, Biden on Friday will attend two fundraising receptions for the Democratic National Committee.

US buys more monkeypox vaccine as global case count grows

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. government is buying more monkeypox vaccine as a surprising international outbreak continues to grow, health officials said Friday.

As of Friday, the U.S. had identified 45 cases in 15 states and the District of Columbia. More than 1,300 cases have been found in about 30 other countries outside the areas of Africa where the virus is endemic.

Officials say the risk to the American public is low, but they are taking steps to assure people that medical measures are in place to deal with the growing problem.

A two-dose vaccine, Jynneos, is approved for monkeypox in the U.S.

The U.S. government has 72,000 Jynneos doses, and will get 300,000 more doses from its manufacturer, Bavarian Nordic, over the next several weeks, said Dawn O'Connell, who oversees the government's stockpile of emergency vaccines and treatments.

On Friday, the government announced it had ordered 500,000 more Jynneos doses from Bavarian Nordic to be delivered late this year. The company also is holding other doses owned by the U.S. government, she said.

"We have the vaccines and treatments we need to respond," said O'Connell, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Monkeypox is endemic in parts of Africa, where people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals. It does not usually spread easily among people.

Last month, cases began emerging in Europe and the United States. Many — but not all — of those who contracted the virus had traveled internationally. Most were men who have sex with men, but health officials stress that anyone can get monkeypox.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday that every U.S. case they had looked at involved very close contact.

Officials have alerted doctors to watch for monkeypox cases and offered vaccinations to people in contact with those who were infected.

So far, over 1,400 vaccine courses and over 110 treatment courses have been sent to affected state and local jurisdictions, officials said.

Ship owners sought CO2 exemption when the sea gets too wavy

By ED DAVEY Associated Press

The world's ocean freight shipping companies recently called on international maritime authorities to exclude pollution that their vessels spew in bad weather from new regulations, a condition that would apply almost a third of the time in the Atlantic. But the effort failed Friday.

Under international laws due to come into force in 2023, all big vessels will be rated from A to E by how much carbon dioxide flows from their stacks for every mile traveled and ton carried. The idea is to incentivize owners to install cleaner technologies. Although the proposed rules are currently toothless, nation states might bring in penalties for high-polluting ships in the future.

In April, four trade groups, including the World Shipping Council, complained that the new rules would penalize ships that have to sail in rough conditions. This burns more fuel and produces more carbon di-

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oxide, meaning ships in windy seas would get a worse carbon efficiency rating.

So the trade groups proposed to the International Maritime Organization in written submissions that periods of eight hours or more undertaken in bad weather be struck from the scoring entirely. They defined bad weather as wind speeds of 28 knots or waves four meters (13.1 feet) high.

"It would pretend that ships hardly ever sail in stormy weather and only calculate the carbon intensity of the ship under the most favorable conditions," said Bryan Comer, who heads up the marine program at the International Council of Clean Transportation.

The International Maritime Organization, made up of member countries, has now rejected that idea.

Going slow is one of the best ways to reduce emissions. If they had won the exemption, ships could have gone as fast as they wanted in bad weather, Comer said, burning more fuel than usual without it showing up in their ratings. This might enable them to hit tougher deadlines and win contracts.

"There is actually an incentive if this had gone forward to sail in adverse weather," said Comer.

According to the World Shipping Council, waves exceed four meters in the North Atlantic more than 30% of the time.

The World Shipping Council argued that factors like extreme weather "distort the picture and make the numbers less effective at driving the change we want."

The trade group conceded it was "logical at first glance" that the proposal might incentive ships to sail into heavy weather, but said the high cost of fuel made this very unlikely. It pointed out sailing in rough seas can use 30% more fuel than in calmer weather, thus saddling ships with a worse rating. Ships that routinely traverse calm waters such as those off Nigeria would more easily win top grades while those that have to cross the Atlantic would automatically look worse.

"Failing to address these inequities... unfairly labels certain ships as 'inferior' because of the routes they serve," the World Shipping Council said.

James Gamble, a program director at Pacific Environment, which works to protect the Pacific Ocean and coastal communities, has also been following the negotiations.

The proposed regulations should be left as they are to achieve 2030 emissions targets, he said. While trade groups can give good advice on cutting emissions, their primary focus is on making members money, he said.

What was really at issue, Gamble said, is that "ships that are low-rated will be at a market disadvantage with customers who want to transport their goods with as little emissions as possible."

The World Shipping Council represents more than a dozen companies, including the two largest ship owners, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and Maersk.

Both have made stringent promises to cut greenhouse gases. MSC has pledged to hit net zero by 2050, while Maersk says it will do so ten years earlier.

The World Shipping Council said having a carbon intensity score that correctly reflects vessels' energy efficiency is "crucial".

Responding to a request for comment, the trade group took a somewhat different position than in its filings. An average rate of fuel use should be applied during rough seas, rather than subtracting these portions of the journey completely, the company said by email.

When The Associated Press pointed out the effect would be the same, because carbon efficiency ratings are a ratio and not a measure of total emissions, the company said "recent internal discussions" had led it to reconsider this suggestion.

It concluded, "I doubt that we will advance the idea" which "may offer little mathematical difference in the calculation."

For the climate, it's actual emissions that matter.

"The regulation would be working if ships that consume more fuel are graded more harshly," said marine emissions expert Bryan Comer.

Neither Maersk or MSC returned requests for comment.

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NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

COVID vaccines do not kill more people than rifles

CLAIM: Rifles caused 454 deaths in the United States in 2020, while COVID-19 vaccines caused 20,622 deaths in the United States in 2021.

THE FACTS: The claim that 20,000 people have died from COVID-19 vaccines misrepresents data maintained by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration. To date, a total of nine deaths in the U.S. have been linked to the shots. As the country reels from a spate of mass shootings that have sparked calls for gun reform, social media users are distorting data to falsely claim that COVID-19 vaccines kill people more often than rifles do. The post uses a graphic that compares rifle death numbers to purported COVID-19 vaccine death numbers. The text claims that rifles killed 454 people in the U.S. in 2020 while COVID-19 vaccines killed 20,622 people in the U.S. in 2021. The post implies that vaccines cause more deaths than rifles do, but a closer look at the data reveals that's false. The CDC data it cites comes from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, or VAERS, an early warning system run by the CDC and the FDA that is meant as a portal to share potential adverse events after vaccines, not a verified database of vaccine-related deaths. VAERS uses passive surveillance, meaning people self-report any negative medical event they experienced after getting vaccinated. Anyone can submit a report on any possible reaction after the vaccine and anyone can access the database. Health care providers and manufacturers are required to submit adverse responses reported after vaccines, even if they don't know whether the vaccine caused them. The VAERS website explains that its data may include "information that is incomplete, inaccurate, coincidental, or unverifiable." VAERS states that submissions or the number of reports in the system cannot be interpreted as causal evidence of an association between a vaccine and an adverse event. When serious events are reported in VAERS, officials follow up with the person reporting the event to obtain more information and medical records. To date, the CDC has identified nine deaths associated with rare blood clots that were caused by the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. Currently, 221.5 million people in the U.S. are fully vaccinated. The rifle death data was taken from the FBI's annual Crime in the United States report in 2020. According to a table showing murder circumstances by weapon, at least 454 homicides in the U.S. in 2020 involved rifles. However, that dataset also shows that nearly 5,000 additional murders involved guns that were not classified by type. It is possible some of those involved rifles. The table lists 13,620 total 2020 gun deaths, when all types of firearms are counted. The FBI's Crime in the United States report is also limited because it doesn't include data from every law enforcement agency in the country. Participation in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program, which makes up the report, is voluntary.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report.

Posts distort data on Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine and pregnancy

CLAIM: A Pfizer document reveals that 82%-97% of pregnant women who received the company's COVID-19 vaccine "lost their babies."

THE FACTS: The flawed calculation misrepresents a narrow subset of data from a Pfizer database of adverse events recorded during the first two months of the vaccine rollout. Some social media users shared screenshots of headlines from pro-life blogs that made the false claim. "Shocking Pfizer Document Reveals 82% of Vaccinated Pregnant Women Suffered Miscarriages," read one. "Court Ordered Release Of Pfizer Document Reveals 82% – 97% Of Vaccinated Pregnant Women Lost Their Babies," said another. The blog posts, written by the same author and shared on several sites, make the misleading calculation based on an April 2021 document that Pfizer submitted to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and later released

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as part of an ongoing Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, FDA spokesperson Abby Capobianco confirmed to the AP. The document compiled adverse event reports from Dec. 1, 2020, through Feb. 28, 2021, across 63 countries. Anyone could report to the registry, and it contained reports submitted directly to Pfizer, those reported by federal health authorities, cases published in medical literature and clinical studies. The data described 270 reported vaccinated pregnancies. No outcome was recorded for 238 of those pregnancies. Details on adverse events or other outcomes were recorded for 34 pregnancies. Of this group, 28 women reported either the loss of a fetus or a neonatal death. Five others reported "outcome pending," and one reported "normal outcome." To come up with its high percentages, the blog divided the 28 cases of fetal or neonatal loss by the 34 cases that listed outcomes. This yielded the 82% figure. Then, the blog factored in a calculation that assumed without evidence that the five pending cases also resulted in fetal losses, which would bring the total losses to 33. Thirty-three was then divided by 34 to yield 97%. "This takes data from the Pfizer document completely out of context," said Dr. Laura Morris, co-chair of the University of Missouri health care system's COVID-19 and influenza vaccine committee. The document does not give the total number of vaccinated pregnant women, so the overall rate of specific adverse events cannot be determined, she said. Experts say the online posts' interpretations paint a false picture of the vaccine's effects, and fail to account for important factors, including patient reporting bias, which reflects that women who have experienced an adverse pregnancy event would be more likely to report to the registry, regardless of whether or not the vaccine was linked to the event. "We have no evidence that the vaccine in any way would interrupt a pregnancy or cause this," said Dr. Elyse Kharbanda, executive director of research at the Minnesota-based HealthPartners Institute. "If we saw a difference in rates following vaccination versus without vaccination, that would be what we call a signal and need more investigation. But bigger studies that have been done more vigorously haven't shown a signal." Those studies include one that she authored, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2021 and found that COVID-19 vaccine exposure did not increase the odds of spontaneous abortion — pregnancy loss before 20 weeks. Experts and health officials say there is no medical proof that the adverse events reported to Pfizer are linked to the vaccine, and the vaccine is safe and effective for pregnant women and fetuses. Representatives for Pfizer said the company doesn't comment on unverified reports.

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in Atlanta contributed this report.

Tweet distorts health care for trans children

CLAIM: Transgender children as young as 5 years old are being given hormones to transition.

THE FACTS: Experts say young transgender children who haven't reached puberty are offered support, not medical interventions. But a widely shared tweet suggested that 5-year-olds are receiving hormone treatments, likening it to children driving cars or smoking. "Can I drive your car? No you're 5 'Can I have a beer?' No you're 5 'Can I have a cigarette?' No you're 5," the tweet reads. "Can I take hormones and change my gender? Of course! You know what's best." Experts say that's a big distortion of standards of care for transgender youth. Medical interventions for transgender youth, including puberty blockers and hormones, aren't designed to begin before the onset of puberty, as guidance from groups such as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health and American Academy of Pediatrics shows. "Children age 5 are far away from puberty," said Kellan Baker, executive director of the Whitman-Walker Institute in Washington, D.C., which specializes in LGBTQ health care and research. "The primary intervention for children of that age is support — being told by parents, families, friends, peers, that it's OK to be who they are and to not be teased, bullied or subjected to coercive 'therapy' to try to change something that's innate as gender identity." Similarly, Dr. Elyse Pine, a pediatric endocrinologist at Chase Brexton Health Care in Baltimore, said in an email that a 5-year-old transgender child may see a mental health provider who could support social and emotional needs and provide educational materials or referrals to support groups. "A five-year-old may socially transition, which means wearing clothes, having a hairstyle, and using a name/pronoun that matches the child's identity," Pine said. When children do show early signs of puberty, children who meet clinical guidelines are first offered medication that temporarily blocks puberty,

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the AP has reported. This treatment is designed for youth diagnosed with “gender dysphoria” — or distress caused when gender identity doesn’t match a person’s assigned sex — who have been counseled with their families and are mature enough to understand what the regimen entails. After puberty blockers, kids can either go through puberty while still identifying as the opposite sex or choose whether to begin treatment to make their bodies more closely match their gender identity. For those choosing the second option, guidelines say the next step is taking manufactured versions of estrogen or testosterone — hormones that prompt sexual development in puberty. Guidelines recommend starting these when kids are mature enough to make informed medical decisions. That is typically around age 16, and parents’ consent is typically required, Dr. Gina Sequiera, co-director of Seattle Children’s Hospital’s Gender Clinic, previously told the AP. “Masculinizing or feminizing hormones are not appropriate in a five-year-old, because five-year-old children are not supposed to be in puberty,” Pine said. “If a 16-year-old individual is ready to take gender affirming hormone therapy, such as estrogen or testosterone, they will be concordant with their peers, who are nearly all experiencing pubertal hormones.”

Posts about high gas prices falsely attributed to BP executive

CLAIM: An executive with the energy company BP named Brice Cromwell wrote a post arguing that high gas prices in the U.S are due to excessive imports of foreign oil and insufficient domestic oil production.

THE FACTS: There is no such executive at BP and the statement did not come from the company, a spokesperson for BP confirmed. Posts copying and pasting a statement attributed to a “BP Oil Executive” named “Brice Cromwell,” and claiming that high gas prices are caused by an overreliance on foreign oil, have circulated widely on social media in recent days. “The prices are high because the people who run our country have decided to import oil from another country instead of using our very own American made product,” the supposed statement reads. But nobody named Brice Cromwell works for BP and the post is not from the company, a spokesperson told the AP. “We can confirm we do not currently have an employee with that name and this text did not come from bp,” Megan Baldino, a spokesperson for BP, wrote in an email. It is unclear who wrote the original text. Searches show it appeared in Facebook posts as early as March, but the versions at that time were not attributed to an author. Experts argue that soaring gas prices are due to various factors in the global energy market, such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February. Jonathan Elkind, a fellow and senior research scholar at Columbia University’s Center on Global Energy Policy, described the theory that U.S. gas prices are high due to reliance on foreign oil imports as “economically illiterate.” “The notion that we are producing too little, exporting too little, importing too much, et cetera, is just all wrong on its face,” he said. “From one month to the next, the United States in this period is either the number one or number two producer of crude oil and natural gas in the world.” The recent spike in gas prices stems from “resurgent demand” as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic ebbed, which was made worse by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Joshua Busby, an associate professor of public affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, wrote in an email to the AP. “European countries are starting to delink from importing Russian oil, which means that the available pool of oil is diminished for them, putting pressure on oil prices in the rest of the world,” Busby wrote. European Union leaders agreed on May 30 to ban most Russian oil imports by the end of the year, the AP reported.

Salvadoran women jailed for abortion warn US of total ban

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and JESSIE WARDARSKI Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Teodora del Carmen Vásquez was nine months pregnant and working at a school cafeteria when she felt extreme pain in her back, like the crack of a hammer. She called 911 seven times before fainting in a bathroom in a pool of blood.

The nightmare that followed is common in El Salvador, a heavily Catholic country where abortion is banned under all circumstances and even women who suffer miscarriages and stillbirths are sometimes accused of killing their babies and sentenced to years or even decades in prison.

When Vásquez regained consciousness, she had lost her nearly full-term fetus. Instead of an ambulance,

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officers drove her in the bed of a pickup through heavy rain to a police station. There she was arrested on suspicion of violating El Salvador's abortion law, one of the world's strictest. Fearing she could die, authorities eventually rushed her to a hospital, where she was chained by her left foot to a gurney. She was prosecuted, convicted and given 30 years in prison for aggravated homicide.

"This is the reality that we have lived, and I am not alone," said Vásquez, who ended up serving more than 10 years for what she has always said was a stillbirth. "Any woman who arrives to jail accused of having an abortion is seen as the most evil, heartless being."

"From the moment we get pregnant, we become incubators," said Vásquez, who was freed in 2018 after her sentence was commuted. "We lose our rights because the only possibility that we have of a life is taking care of the product inside us. It's violence against us."

Abortion rights activists say the law has led to widespread human rights violations against Salvadoran women and should serve as a cautionary tale for the United States, where more than 20 states are expected to ban abortion if the Supreme Court overturns the landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling in the coming weeks.

Some states may retain exceptions for cases such as rape or incest, but others are likely to have none save for a threat to a pregnant woman's life. That would mean some rape victims may be forced to carry unwanted pregnancies to term and obstetric emergencies could be mistaken for intentional abortions, according to Catalina Martínez Coral, Latin America and Caribbean director for the New York-based Center for Reproductive Rights.

"These states are going to live similar situations that women are living in El Salvador," Martínez Coral said.

Some anti-abortion leaders in the U.S. say they oppose prosecuting women who have abortions, but others think differently. Louisiana legislators unsuccessfully pushed a bill this year that would have allowed such prosecutions, for example, and Tom Ascol, a top contender to become the Southern Baptist Convention's next president, favors classifying the procedure as homicide.

Women used to be able to seek abortions in cases of risk to their life, severe fetal malformations incompatible with life, or rape in El Salvador, a country of 6.5 million people nestled between Guatemala and Honduras along Central America's Pacific Coast.

But that ended in the late 1990s with a law championed by anti-abortion activists, conservative lawmakers and the Catholic Church, followed by a constitutional amendment defining life as starting at conception.

Today it is one of four countries in the Western Hemisphere with total bans — but it stands out for its aggressive prosecutions. While abortion carries a two- to eight-year prison sentence, dozens of women have, like Vásquez, been convicted of aggravated homicide, punishable by 30 years behind bars.

Overall, El Salvador has prosecuted at least 181 women who experienced obstetric emergencies in the past two decades, according to the Citizen Group for the Decriminalization of Abortion, which has been working to win freedom for such women since 2009. At least 65 imprisoned women have been released with the help of the organization and its allies.

"Everywhere in the world it's understood that there are pregnancy losses for natural reasons. ... Here, that's punished," said Morena Herrera, the nonprofit's director.

El Salvador expects doctors and nurses to report suspected abortions under threat of prosecution, so women who show up at hospitals following miscarriages or botched abortions are sometimes turned over for investigation.

Prosecution and punishment overwhelmingly fall on poor, young women who lack sufficient access to medical services and cannot afford to travel overseas for an abortion or pay for good legal defense if they run afoul of the law. Sometimes they are victims of rape, in a country with a high incidence of that crime.

One such woman, Imelda, was repeatedly raped from age 8 to 18 by her mother's partner and became pregnant by him. In 2017 she unexpectedly gave birth to the baby in a latrine and then lost consciousness. The child survived, but Imelda was accused of attempted murder due to the circumstances of the birth.

She was freed from prison in 2018 after a court determined that she had not tried to kill her baby.

Imelda firmly believes that a woman should not be forced to carry to term a fetus conceived by rape.

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Since her release she has been studying to become a nurse and hopes to set an example to medical providers by treating patients in similar situations better than she was.

"What young girl is going to want to be a mother? They're innocent," Imelda said. "What they really want is to play, to study. I've always wanted to study, not be a mother."

The Associated Press generally does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted; The AP is identifying Imelda only by her first name.

Another woman, Karen, was 21 and pregnant when she fainted alone in her grandmother's home. She woke up handcuffed to a hospital gurney and lost the pregnancy. A police interrogation led to an aggravated homicide conviction in 2015 and a 30-year prison sentence.

"They told me that I was a murderer and that I was going to pay for what I had done," she said, "that I was going to rot in jail."

In prison, other inmates told Karen she didn't deserve to live. She spent seven years locked up, drawing strength from her son and belief in her innocence, and was released in December.

Like some other women interviewed by AP, Karen shared her story and agreed to be photographed on condition her full name not be disclosed out of concerns over privacy, possible reprisals and societal stigma over abortion.

Today Karen tries to make up for lost time by playing soccer with her 14-year-old son and cooking his favorite meals, refried beans and fried plantains. She holds onto her Catholic faith but has grown disenchanted by some of the church's positions, including its staunch opposition to abortion.

"If it was up to them, we shouldn't have been freed," Karen said. "We should still be paying a sentence for a crime that we committed, according to society and the church."

The Catholic Church and the growing number of evangelical churches have vast influence in the overwhelmingly Christian country, where some lawmakers cited Scripture last year as they voted to uphold the abortion ban.

In his office in El Salvador's congress, lawmaker Guillermo Gallegos maintains what he calls his altar — a wooden table with an open Bible; images of Jesus that he got on a trip to Russia; a plastic bottle filled with water blessed by Pope Francis during a visit to the Vatican; a statue of the Virgin Mary; and a silver one of Moses holding the Ten Commandments.

In an interview, Gallegos said allowing abortion would countermand deeply held beliefs among a large majority in El Salvador.

"There is no valid reason why abortion can be decriminalized in our country," Gallegos said. "There are strong movements in the country in favor of abortion for some reasons, but fortunately that has not been able to prosper here in the parliament, where the decision would have to be made."

"Approving abortion, well, that would go against our faith," he added.

The Vatican has long been strenuously opposed to abortion, and that hasn't changed under Francis. The pontiff has repeatedly denounced it as evidence of "throwaway culture," and in 2019 he asked at a Catholic-sponsored conference, "Is it licit to hire a hitman to resolve a problem?"

After celebrating Mass on a recent morning at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in the Salvadoran capital, San Salvador, Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez praised Francis' views and echoed his theme of abortion as a violent act.

"We live in a culture of death," the cardinal told the AP, saying it "leads us to a total disaster."

Anti-abortion activists say that women sharing their stories did kill their babies and that their arguments are led by abortion-rights nonprofits to try to ease the law. Local anti-abortion groups did not respond to interview requests or declined to talk to the AP.

El Salvador's health minister declined to comment via a spokesperson for the presidency, who also said no other government officials would be available for interviews.

With Roe v. Wade in jeopardy in the United States, Latin American abortion rights activists who once

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looked to their northern neighbor as a model have shifted their sights elsewhere to countries such as Argentina, Colombia and Mexico, which have loosened restrictions in recent years under pressure from women's movements pushing the issue through the courts.

The Center for Reproductive Rights was one of several organizations that litigated and lobbied for decriminalizing abortion up to 24 weeks in Colombia. It is now working to preserve Roe.

"We hope that this green wave is also going to inspire our sisters in the United States," Martínez Coral said, referring to the colorful handkerchiefs worn at demonstrations by supporters of abortion rights in the region. "It needs to be protected everywhere."

Jocelyn Viterna, a Harvard University sociologist, has reviewed court documents from dozens of cases in which Salvadoran women were convicted of pregnancy-related homicide.

"If this plays out the way it does in El Salvador, in the United States women who have naturally occurring miscarriages may much more frequently be under suspicion for abortion," Viterna said. "We may be asking, 'Did they take a pill? Did they drink too much when they shouldn't? What leads you to lose that child?'"

Herrera, of the Citizen Group, agreed with U.S. activists' fears that their country may see a disproportionate impact among women of color and low-income women if Roe disappears — similar to the ban's effect in El Salvador, where it has upended poor families.

Jesús, 22, was 8 years old when his mother was arrested in 2008 after losing her pregnancy. He and his 5-year-old brother were left in the care of their grandparents, subsistence farmers. The boys' mother, who in court proceedings was identified only as Manuela, succumbed to cancer in 2010 while serving a 30-year sentence.

"Death," Jesús said. "That's what the state of El Salvador caused when it sentenced my mom — it killed her and sentenced her children to a bad life."

Tormented for years by the accusations against his mother, he finally found some closure last November when the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that El Salvador had violated her rights.

The court found that Manuela's lost pregnancy was due to a complication known as preeclampsia and that health care workers wrongly prioritized reporting her to authorities instead of treating her health situation. It ordered the government to pay damages to her two boys.

Tapping his feet nervously during an interview, Jesús said he decided to tell their story in hopes that other children won't have to face the same suffering: "My mom's name is a memory that will never fade."

Vásquez also grew up poor in rural El Salvador, helping her parents farm before moving to the capital as a teen. She entered prison at age 24. Having attended school through just the fourth grade, she earned her high school degree behind bars and became a de facto spokesperson for others serving time.

When she was released in 2018, she vowed to fight to free other women and help them transition to new lives. Today she has become the public face of the abortion rights movement in El Salvador, traveling nationwide to meet with women in similar cases and recruit them to join her group, Mujeres Libres — Spanish for "free women." Its motto: Don't let this history repeat itself.

Inside a loaned home that the group helped repair, Mujeres Libres holds theater performances, music lessons for their children and workshops on how to run small businesses. The walls are decorated with a photo of Nelson Mandela and pictures of the women from their time in incarceration.

"The pain of one woman is every woman's pain," said Vásquez, who was awarded a human rights and democracy prize by Sweden in 2018. She recently graduated from college with a degree in communications and was featured in a documentary.

The group attracts women like Mariana López, 40, who was also imprisoned after losing a pregnancy in 2000 and served 17 years. Back on the outside, she joined Mujeres Libres and took out a loan to become a baker, a childhood dream.

"Teodora has had the greatest struggle, because she's the one who has had enough courage to stand up to others," López said.

Her 7-year-old daughter takes music lessons at the home with other children, and they live off sales of the baguettes that López bakes before dawn in her humble home about two hours from San Salvador.

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"Perhaps we could have had the courage, but we needed someone to give us a little push," López said, adding, "Now we feel a bit better, maybe even happy, because we can share with each other in another stage of life — in freedom."

Another woman, Cindy, was imprisoned in 2014 after having a stillbirth in a shopping mall bathroom. At the time she had a 4-year-old son, Justin, and was studying tourism and English. Parenting and her education were put on hold, and it was four years before she was able to see Justin again.

"What I reflect on the most is the losses. ... The total loss of all family, homes, houses, studies, work, children. Everything is lost," Cindy said. "What makes you think the most is how are you going to start over? How are you going to recover time with your family?"

Now 30 and out of prison, she has to travel to a judicial office in the capital every month to sign her parole papers. She and Justin live with her parents, and she's back in school. She makes and sells piñatas to get by, and crafted one for her son's birthday in the form of a dinosaur — he wants to become a paleontologist.

They dream of traveling abroad together: "To forget everything," Cindy said, "to start again in a new place."

Vásquez said she is heartened by the children of the women, who tell her they will carry on her legacy long after she's gone.

"It gets my hopes up because I really think that these processes must start when we're young," Vásquez said. "So the message ... especially for mothers worldwide should be: Teach your girls to know their rights now, so that they will be able to defend human rights.

"It's really important to try to change El Salvador," she continued, "so our history doesn't get repeated elsewhere and by future generations."

Abortion funds feel frustration, gratitude at 'rage giving'

By THALIA BEATY Associated Press

Casie Pierce doesn't usually work Fridays. But on the Friday after the draft Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade was leaked, Pierce, the development director for a Dallas-based abortion fund, which helps people pay for the procedure and associated logistics, had to be at her computer.

She was monitoring the "rage giving."

"Am I optimistic watching funds rolling in? Of course I am," she said. "But what's unfortunate is it takes a tragedy to wake people up out of their slumber to start giving, because we've been here doing this all along."

In response to the May 2 leaked draft that signaled the likely withdrawal of the legal right to an abortion in the U.S., donors clicked on donations buttons and mailed checks in a fury.

An annual fundraiser organized by the National Network of Abortion Funds raised more than \$2.4 million by the end of May to benefit some 90 abortion funds, more than in any previous year. In 2019, NNAF said those abortion funds aided 56,000 people — only about one in four of those who contacted them for help.

Abortion funds, unlike clinics or advocacy organizations, focus on providing people with money to pay for abortions as well as help with logistics like travel, childcare and support. As a result, they have smaller budgets than broader reproductive rights organizations like Planned Parenthood.

Kelly Nelson, who founded an abortion fund in Tampa, Florida, felt two ways about the "rage donors," as she called them.

"I love them," she said. "We've really benefited. But, you know, I don't think a lot of them we'll ever see again."

Given the magnitude of the need, she said, abortion funds need multiyear philanthropic grants.

"We really want to make this a long-term thing where people recognize that the fight with the courts is over now and we lost," Nelson said. "We have to help the people on the ground today and tomorrow. We need to get them to their appointments."

She added: "This is the time for philanthropy to get creative and reach out to abortion funds, who have traditionally been underfunded in the reproductive health world."

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One analysis of philanthropic donations done by the progressive group the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) found that between 2015 and 2019, of the \$1.7 billion that foundations gave to reproductive rights issues, less than 3% was designated specifically for abortion funds while 21% was directed to other abortion-related work, for example, by advocates or clinics.

Groups that oppose abortion also saw a big boost in funding since the Supreme Court signaled openness to new restrictions on abortion in December. The anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America plans to spend more on political campaigns this election cycle than ever before — \$78 million. They did not respond to a request for comment about their donors' response to the leaked draft opinion.

Since 2017, the Tampa Bay Abortion Fund has been run entirely by volunteers, including Nelson, and over that time has reduced its reliance on individual donors as a proportion of its budget. Still, Nelson said, the organization often has just a month's worth of funds lined up at any time.

Before May 2, it had run out of money three times this year, forcing a shutdown of the the phone line that clients use to contact them.

"That's how paycheck-to-paycheck we are," Nelson said.

Even before some states acted in recent years to restrict the right to abortion, many people couldn't afford one.

"When abortion funds have to close their doors on the 15th of the month, that's 15 days of callers who aren't getting funding," said Brandi Collins-Calhoun of the NCRP. "Those are people who aren't going to have access to their abortions. And it's not because of the lack of Roe. It's because of the lack of funding."

The unpredictability of rage giving, or fad funding, can hurt movements. "It's very harmful," Collins-Calhoun said. "And it's something that we urge funders not to lean into too much."

Collins-Calhoun argues that despite legal restrictions, philanthropic giving can still make a transformational difference if foundations and large donors were to increase their donations to abortion access organizations and sustain that giving over time.

"That's what a lack of investment means: It means that you have to keep revisiting the same thing every 50 years," said Paris Hatcher, executive director of Black Feminist Future, referring to the multigenerational struggle to secure access to abortion in the U.S.

She is making the case to other organizers whose focus isn't specifically reproductive justice that their work for racial or economic equality is intertwined with abortion access.

Another analysis by The Bridgespan Group, a philanthropic consultancy, and Shake the Table, a feminist philanthropic advisory group, found that less than 1% of total foundation giving in 2017 went to women's rights organizations around the world. It further concluded that feminist funds have the capacity to distribute 10 times the amount of philanthropic donations than they do now.

In the weeks since the leaked decision, Nelson's Tampa fund has received renewed donations from several foundations as well as a first-time grant for \$50,000, the largest they've ever received.

Federal funds, through programs like Medicaid, cannot be used to pay for abortions, except when a pregnancy is the result of rape or incest or endangers the life of the patient.

Pierce, of the Texas Equal Access Fund in Dallas, said she hopes that might change in the long run. Until then, she urged donors to be bold.

"I really would like to tell donors to not be shy and to not be afraid of the stigma around the word 'abortion,'" she said.

Still, Pierce suggests to those who don't want to be identified on the fund's tax return to contribute through a donor advised fund, a kind of charitable investment account that does not require attaching names to donations.

Pierce is seeking to raise \$2.5 million to help fund travel and other support for half of their callers and hire a new staffer to organize those logistics. The fund's current annual budget is \$800,000.

Both the Dallas and Tampa abortion funds promote monthly giving programs to individual donors as a preferred way to receive donations. And some have responded.

Before the May 2 Supreme Court leak, monthly donors gave the Tampa fund a total of \$470 a month,

"which isn't a lot. That's one procedure. But we knew that we could cover that one procedure," Nelson said. After a month of "rage giving," Nelson said, 111 monthly donors had signed up to give a total of nearly \$4,000.

Ukraine fears a long war might cause West to lose interest

By COLLEEN BARRY and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — As Russia's invasion of Ukraine grinds into its fourth month, officials in Kyiv have expressed fears that the specter of "war fatigue" could erode the West's resolve to help the country push back Moscow's aggression.

The U.S. and its allies have given billions of dollars in weaponry to Ukraine. Europe has taken in millions of people displaced by the war. And there has been unprecedented unity in post-World War II Europe in imposing sanctions on President Vladimir Putin and his country.

But as the shock of the Feb. 24 invasion subsides, analysts say the Kremlin could exploit a dragged-out, entrenched conflict and possible waning interest among Western powers that might lead to pressuring Ukraine into a settlement.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy already has chafed at Western suggestions he should accept some sort of compromise. Ukraine, he said, would decide its own terms for peace.

"The fatigue is growing, people want some kind of outcome (that is beneficial) for themselves, and we want (another) outcome for ourselves," he said.

An Italian peace proposal was dismissed, and French President Emmanuel Macron was met with an angry backlash after he was quoted as saying that although Putin's invasion was a "historic error," world powers shouldn't "humiliate Russia, so when the fighting stops, we can build a way out together via diplomatic paths." Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said such talk "can only humiliate France and every other country that would call for it."

Even a remark by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that Ukraine should consider territorial concessions drew a retort from Zelenskyy that it was tantamount to European powers in 1938 letting Nazi Germany claim parts of Czechoslovakia to curb Adolf Hitler's aggression.

Kyiv wants to push Russia out of the newly captured areas in eastern and southern Ukraine, as well as retaking Crimea, which Moscow annexed in 2014, and parts of the Donbas under control of Kremlin-backed separatists for the past eight years.

Every month of the war is costing Ukraine \$5 billion, said Volodymyr Fesenko, political analyst with the Penta Center think tank, and that "makes Kyiv dependent on the consolidated position of the Western countries."

Ukraine will need even more advanced weaponry to secure victory, along with Western determination to keep up the economic pain on Russia to weaken Moscow.

"It is obvious that Russia is determined to wear down the West and is now building its strategy on the assumption that Western countries will get tired and gradually begin to change their militant rhetoric to a more accommodating one," Fesenko said in an interview with The Associated Press.

The war still gets prominent coverage in both the United States and Europe, which have been horrified by images of the deaths of Ukrainian civilians in the biggest fighting on the continent since World War II.

The U.S. continues to help Ukraine, with President Joe Biden saying last week that Washington will provide it with advanced rocket systems and munitions that will enable it to more precisely strike key targets on the battlefield.

In a New York Times essay on May 31, Biden said, "I will not pressure the Ukrainian government — in private or public — to make any territorial concessions."

Germany, which had faced criticism from Kyiv and elsewhere for perceived hesitancy, has pledged its most modern air defense systems yet.

"There has been nothing like it, even in the Cold War when the Soviet Union appeared most threatening," said Nigel Gould-Davies, senior fellow for Russia and Eurasia at the International Institute for Strategic

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Studies.

While he doesn't see a significant erosion in the "emphatic support for Ukraine," Gould-Davies said "there are hints of different tensions over what the West's goals should be. Those have not yet been clearly defined."

Europe's domestic concerns are nudging their way into the discourse, especially as energy prices and raw materials shortages start to take an economic toll on ordinary people who are facing higher electricity bills, fuel costs and grocery prices.

While European leaders hailed the decision to block 90% of Russian oil exports by the end of the year as "a complete success," it took four weeks of negotiations and included a concession allowing Hungary, widely seen as the Kremlin's closest EU ally, to continue imports. Weeks more of political fine-tuning are required.

"It shows that unity in Europe is declining a bit on the Russian invasion," said Matteo Villa, an analyst with the ISPI think tank in Milan. "There is this kind of fatigue setting in among member states on finding new ways to sanction Russia, and clearly within the European Union, there are some countries that are less and less willing to go on with sanctions."

Wary of the economic impact of further energy sanctions, the European Commission has signaled it won't rush to propose fresh restrictive measures targeting Russian gas. EU lawmakers are also appealing for financial aid for citizens hit by heating and fuel price hikes to ensure that public support for Ukraine doesn't wane.

Italy's right-wing leader Matteo Salvini, who has been seen as close to Moscow, told foreign journalists this week that Italians are ready to make sacrifices, and that his League supports the sanctions against Russia.

But he indicated that backing is not unlimited, amid signs the trade balance under sanctions has shifted in Moscow's favor, hurting small business owners in northern Italy who are part of his base.

"Italians are very available to make personal economic sacrifices to support Ukraine's defense and arrive at a cease-fire," Salvini said.

"What I would not like is to find us back here in September, after three months with the conflict still ongoing. If that is the case, it will be a disaster for Italy. Beyond the deaths, and saving lives, which is the priority, economically, for Italy, if the war goes on, it will be a disaster," he said.

Capitol riot panel blames Trump for 1/6 'attempted coup'

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House panel investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol has laid the blame firmly on Donald Trump, saying the assault was not spontaneous but an "attempted coup" and a direct result of the defeated president's effort to overturn the 2020 election.

With a never-before-seen 12-minute video of extremist groups leading the deadly siege and startling testimony from Trump's most inner circle, the 1/6 committee provided gripping detail Thursday night in contending that Trump's repeated lies about election fraud and his public effort to stop Joe Biden's victory led to the attack and imperiled American democracy.

"Democracy remains in danger," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., chairman of the panel, during the hearing, timed for prime time to reach as many Americans as possible.

"Jan. 6 was the culmination of an attempted coup, a brazen attempt, as one rioter put it shortly after Jan. 6, to overthrow the government," Thompson said. "The violence was no accident."

The hearings may not change Americans' views on the Capitol attack, but the panel's investigation is intended to stand as its public record. Before this fall's midterm elections, and with Trump considering another White House run, the committee's final report aims to account for the most violent attack on the Capitol since 1814, and to ensure such an attack never happens again.

Testimony on Thursday showed how Trump desperately clung to his own false claims of election fraud, beckoning supporters to the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, when Congress would certify the results, despite

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those around him insisting Biden had won the election.

In a previously unseen video clip, the panel played a remark from former Attorney General Bill Barr, who testified that he told Trump the claims of a rigged election were "bull——."

In another clip, the former president's daughter, Ivanka Trump, testified to the committee that she respected Barr's view that there was no election fraud. "I accepted what he said."

Others showed leaders of the extremist Oath Keepers and Proud Boys preparing to storm the Capitol to stand up for Trump. One rioter after another told the committee they came to the Capitol because Trump asked them to.

"President Trump summoned a violent mob," said Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., the panel's vice chair who took the lead for much of the hearing. "When a president fails to take the steps necessary to preserve our union — or worse, causes a constitutional crisis — we're in a moment of maximum danger for our republic."

There was a gasp in the hearing room when Cheney read an account that said when Trump was told the Capitol mob was chanting for Vice President Mike Pence to be hanged for refusing to block the election results. Trump responded that maybe they were right, that he "deserves it."

At another point it was disclosed that Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., a leader of efforts to object to the election results, had sought a pardon from Trump, which would protect him from prosecution.

When asked about the White House lawyers threatening to resign over what was happening in the administration, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner scoffed they were "whining."

Police officers who had fought off the mob consoled one another as they sat in the committee room reliving the violence they faced on Jan. 6. Officer Harry Dunn teared up as bodycam footage showed rioters bludgeoning his colleagues with flagpoles and baseball bats.

In wrenching testimony U.S. Capitol Police officer Caroline Edwards told the panel that she slipped in other people's blood as rioters pushed past her into the Capitol. She suffered brain injuries in the melee.

"It was carnage. It was chaos," she said.

The riot left more than 100 police officers injured, many beaten and bloodied, as the crowd of pro-Trump rioters, some armed with pipes, bats and bear spray, charged into the Capitol. At least nine people who were there died during and after the rioting, including a woman who was shot and killed by police.

Biden, in Los Angeles for the Summit of the Americas, said many viewers were "going to be seeing for the first time a lot of the detail that occurred."

Trump, unapologetic, dismissed the investigation anew — and even declared on social media that Jan. 6 "represented the greatest movement in the history of our country."

Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee tweeted: "All. Old. News."

Emotions are still raw at the Capitol, and security was tight. Law enforcement officials are reporting a spike in violent threats against members of Congress.

Against this backdrop, the committee was speaking to a divided America. Most TV networks carried the hearing live, but Fox News Channel did not.

The committee chairman, civil rights leader Thompson, opened the hearing with the sweep of American history. saying he heard in those denying the stark reality of Jan. 6 his own experience growing up in a time and place "where people justified the action of slavery, the Ku Klux Klan and lynching."

Cheney, the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, outlined what the committee has learned about the events leading up to that brisk January day when Trump sent his supporters to Congress to "fight like hell" for his presidency.

Among those testifying was documentary maker Nick Quested, who filmed the Proud Boys storming the Capitol — along with a pivotal meeting between the group's then-chairman Henry "Enrique" Tarrío and another extremist group, the Oath Keepers, the night before in nearby parking garage. Quested said the Proud Boys later went to get tacos.

Court documents show that members of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers were discussing as early as November a need to fight to keep Trump in office. Leaders both groups and some members have since been indicted on rare sedition charges over the military-style attack.

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In the weeks ahead, the panel is expected to detail Trump's public campaign to "Stop the Steal" and the private pressure he put on the Justice Department to reverse his election loss — despite dozens of failed court cases attesting there was no fraud on a scale that could have tipped the results in his favor.

The panel faced obstacles from its start. Republicans blocked the formation of an independent body that could have investigated the Jan. 6 assault the way the 9/11 Commission probed the 2001 terror attack.

Instead, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ushered the creation of the 1/6 panel through Congress and rejected Republican-appointed lawmakers who had voted on Jan. 6 against certifying the election results, eventually naming seven Democrats and two Republicans.

House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy, who has been caught up in the probe and has defied the committee's subpoena for an interview, called the panel a "scam."

In the audience were several lawmakers who were trapped together in the House gallery during the attack. "We want to remind people, we were there, we saw what happened," said Rep. Dean Phillips, D-Minn. "We know how close we came to the first non-peaceful transition of power in this country."

The Justice Department has arrested and charged more than 800 people for the violence that day, the biggest dragnet in its history.

Small businesses are facing 'summer of uncertainty'

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) —

Small businesses that depend on outdoor crowds and free-spending tourists aren't sure what to expect this summer.

Consumers likely have a lot of pent-up demand after more than two years of the pandemic. But they're also facing some significant financial headwinds because of the highest inflation in decades. And COVID-19 remains a looming presence.

The U.S. Travel Association, an industry trade group, expects money spent on travel — excluding business travel — in the U.S. to total \$726 billion in 2022, up 3 percent from 2021 and slightly above pre-pandemic levels. Many Americans appear ready to spend what's left of their pandemic savings.

But inflation might throw a wrench in their plans. Higher prices are making day-to-day living more expensive, which could leave less money for discretionary spending. Gas prices are up more than 60% from a year ago and hotel rooms and airfare are pricier as well, putting pressure on travel budgets.

Memorial Day weekend might offer a snapshot of how the summer will go. According to the Transportation Security Administration, an average of 2.23 million people per day passed through U.S. airport checkpoints during the five-day Thursday through Monday holiday period. That was 9% lower than the same five days in 2019, but up 24% from the same days last year.

Businesses are also struggling with inflation — raw materials and finished goods are more expensive and workers are demanding higher pay. Owners have been forced to raise prices or cut back on some services.

"It's a summer of uncertainty," said Ray Keating, chief economist with advocacy group the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council. "Inflation is a major worry and tied to that is increases in costs small businesses are seeing from their own vendors and suppliers. There's a tight labor market. It's a tough mix."

Jack Morey's family has owned and operated Morey's Piers & Beachfront Water Parks, three boardwalk amusement parks along the waterfront in The Wildwoods, New Jersey, for two generations. Morey said the last two years have been devastating for his businesses, due to shutdowns and COVID-19 restrictions and a lack of staff.

This year, restrictions have been dropped and Morey has been able to fully staff up again. But payroll costs and all other expenses are "through the roof," so he's had to raise prices. Morey is unsure whether his base of mostly working-class families will come back to the parks because they're facing higher prices for everything from groceries to gas. But he's hoping for the best.

"Will people come back? I think they will. I know they will be coming for the beaches first," he said. "What's going to happen with inflation and gas, nobody knows. I'm cautiously optimistic — we'll know

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when we know.”

The higher cost for gas and other items means a growing divide between wealthy tourists and the middle or working class. At Mansion House Inn on Martha’s Vineyard, rooms are booking at pre-pandemic prices, with most of the summer sold out. Owner Susan Goldstein said her clientele likes the fact they can drive to the Vineyard instead of flying somewhere, despite higher gas prices.

But Goldstein said people aren’t booking as far ahead as they used to.

“There’s a lot of last-minute action,” she said. “People are waiting to see what the world is offering.”

A labor crunch is putting pressure on many small businesses this summer, too. To staff her two Cinnaholic vegan cinnamon bun bakeries in Tennessee, Holly Roe has had to raise wages — and hire a lot more teenagers.

Before the pandemic Roe’s staff was 80% people over the age of 18 and 20% under. Now, the ratio has completely switched.

“Most of them it’s their first job, but it’s been interesting. They’re eager to work, excited and want to impress,” said Roe, whose stores are in Knoxville and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Dollywood amusement park.

Hiring more teens is a national trend. According to data from Gusto, a payroll, benefits, and human resources provider, teens made up 9.3% of new hires in April 2022, up from 7.7% in April 2021 and 2% in April 2019. Meanwhile, the share of hires 25 to 54 years old fell to 62.9% this April from 75.3% in April 2021.

Some businesses are still concerned about the ongoing threat of COVID-19 cases. Samuel Clark’s business, Broadway Crew, a promotional staffing agency and street team that promotes Broadway shows, is heavily dependent on face-to-face interaction with tourists in Times Square. While his business has recovered since Broadway reopened, it isn’t smooth sailing. Shows still close temporarily because of COVID-19 cases.

“That is a clear and present existential threat – we see events and shows closing and having a week off,” he said.

Meanwhile Clark has had to raise wages, but his staff is being stretched thin by higher living expenses. “For hourly workers, rent has gone up 25% year over year,” he said. “These guys don’t have any room for error in their budgets. It’s heartbreaking for me.”

Still, Clark says he’s hopeful for the summer as Asia loosens restrictions, hopefully bringing an influx of international tourists. Still, in April, overseas visitations remained 43% below 2019 levels, according to the U.S. Travel Association. Travel from Asia is still down 71% due to restrictions in individual countries.

For Austin Ray, who owns Von Elrod’s Beer Hall and Kitchen in Nashville, summer means an influx of crowds, many who come from the Nashville Sounds minor league baseball stadium next door. The minor league season was canceled in 2020, so times were tough. But sales rebounded in 2021 because the restaurant has a large outdoor patio and baseball returned. While the crowds are back, Ray’s costs have skyrocketed. He plans a menu revamp that will raise prices 7% to 10% across the board.

Retaining workers remains a challenge, one that requires “more time and more money,” he said.

Still, after weathering the pandemic for more than two years, he thinks his business can weather this, too.

“I feel like we can get through anything, because we’ve made it this far,” he said.

Watchdog says Afghan Taliban detaining, torturing civilians

By RAHIM FAIEZ Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Taliban security forces in northern Afghanistan have unlawfully detained and tortured residents accused of association with an opposition armed group, the New York-based Human Rights Watch said Friday.

Fighting has escalated in Panjshir province since mid-May as anti-Taliban forces there attacked Taliban units and checkpoints, HRW said in a statement. The Taliban have responded by deploying thousands of fighters on search operations targeting communities they allege are supporting the opposition forces, the group added.

“Taliban forces have committed summary executions and enforced disappearances of captured fighters

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and other detainees, which are war crimes," both in Panjshir and elsewhere in Afghanistan, it said.

The force fighting in the mountainous Panjshir Valley north of Kabul — a remote region that has defied conquerors before — rose out of the last remnants of Afghanistan's shattered security forces. It has vowed to resist the Taliban after they overrun the country and seized power in Afghanistan in mid-August.

Nestled in the towering Hindu Kush range, the Panjshir Valley has a single narrow entrance. Local fighters held off the Soviets there in the 1980s, and the Taliban a decade later under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Massoud, a guerrilla fighter who attained near-mythic status before he was killed in a suicide bombing.

His 33-year-old foreign-educated son, Ahmad Massoud, and several top officials from the ousted Western-backed government have vowed to resist the Taliban.

"Taliban forces in Panjshir province have quickly resorted to beating civilians in their response to fighting against the opposition National Resistance Front," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"The Taliban's longstanding failure to punish those responsible for serious abuses in their ranks puts more civilians at risk," Gossman was quoted in the statement.

Taliban officials have not commented on the HRW statement. Their troops in Panjshir are under the command of the Taliban-appointed defense minister, Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob. HRW said that Yaqoob stated in May that Afghanistan's new rulers will not allow anyone to "disrupt security" in the province.

Former detainees reported in early June that Taliban security forces detained about 80 residents in the province's Khenj district and beat them to compel them to provide information about the opposition forces, HRW said, citing an unnamed human rights advocate who has interviewed several former detainees and a person with direct information about Taliban detentions.

After several days, the Taliban released 70 of the captives but continue to hold 10 whose relatives they accuse of being members of the opposition force, according to the HRW statement.

"Taliban forces in Panjshir have imposed collective punishment and disregarded protections to which detainees are entitled," Gossman said. "This is just the latest example of Taliban abuses during fighting in the region."

National groups flooding local prosecutor races with money

By DAVID SHARP, ANDREW DEMILLO and GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A local district attorney's race in Maine wasn't generating much attention until a political action committee linked to a deep-pocketed liberal donor with international name recognition suddenly took an interest.

A super PAC funded by George Soros, the billionaire investor, philanthropist and conspiracy-theory target, dropped \$300,000 on behalf of the challenger, dwarfing the \$70,000 combined that had been raised by both candidates until then.

The cash infusion — a stunning sum for a local race in Maine — shows how national groups are seeking to influence district attorney's contests across the country. The spending highlights a mostly under-the-radar jostling for control of an office that some see as being on the front lines of the movement for criminal justice reforms.

Left-leaning groups have stepped in to fund candidates who support those reforms, while conservatives are pushing back amid concerns that crime in America's cities is out of control.

Whitney Tymas, president of the Justice & Public Safety PAC, which supports progressive district attorney candidates, said political money is necessary to bring change to an office that is overwhelmingly white and male, and where most incumbents run unopposed for reelection.

"It takes real money to meet this moment," said Tymas, who leads political action committees funding races in Maine and several other states.

In Maine, a Soros-backed super PAC funneled the \$300,000 windfall to Tymas' political action committee, which has been sending mailings in advance of Tuesday's primary attacking incumbent Jonathan Sahrbeck, a Democrat. It also has been mailing fliers in favor Democratic challenger Jacqueline Sartoris.

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Sahrbeck called on his opponent to denounce the ads and described the spending amount in the county that includes Maine's most populous city, Portland, as "outrageous."

"Folks in Cumberland County should be disgusted by this attempt to buy this race," he said in a statement. The spending is not unique to Maine.

Money also poured into this week's recall election that gave the boot to San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin, a Democrat. Among other things, Boudin's critics said he had failed to prosecute repeat offenders.

Boudin's supporters raised more than \$3 million, with money coming from the ACLU and Real Justice, a political action committee that has supported more than 50 progressives running for prosecutors' positions across the U.S. over the past five years.

Opponents had raised at least \$7 million, with the majority of that coming from an organization fueled by large donations from individuals, including more than \$500,000 each from San Francisco investors Jean-Pierre Conte and William Oberndorf.

Boudin was elected on a platform of reducing incarceration and had implemented policies against seeking cash bail and not trying juveniles as adults. While many crime numbers are lower since he took office less than three years ago, the city has been shaken by a spate of attacks against Asian-Americans, smash-and-grab retail robberies and open drug use on the streets.

While Soros-funded groups did not play a role in the San Francisco recall, the billionaire has spent sizable sums in other states.

In Arkansas, some \$321,000 from Soros flowed through a PAC in a failed attempt to help Alicia Walton beat Will Jones in a race last month for prosecutor in a judicial district that includes Little Rock, the state capital. Special interest money cut both ways in the race to fill an open seat, with a pair of Republican billionaires spending \$316,000 to support Jones.

The outside money funded direct-mail ads to voters. One from the Soros-backed group misleadingly suggested Jones was anti-victim by using portions of a quote from his argument before jurors when he prosecuted a man on trial for rape. Jurors convicted the man in the 2008 case.

Fair Courts America, the super PAC supporting Jones, sent a mailer calling Walton "soft on crime" and criticizing her work as a public defender.

Soros-funded groups also have gotten involved in at least two other local prosecutor races. In Northern California's Contra Costa County, California Justice & Public Safety PAC spent at least \$950,000 to help District Attorney Diana Benton fend off challenger Mary Knox in this week's Democratic primary, according to an Associated Press analysis of campaign finance filings. The group paid for TV ads to promote Benton and criticize Knox, who was supported by more than \$200,000 in independent expenditures from a group funded mostly by police organizations.

In Iowa's Polk County, which includes Des Moines, the Justice & Public Safety PAC spent at least \$136,000 on behalf of Kimberly Graham as she defeated two other Democrats running for county attorney in this week's primary, filings show. The seat is open for the first time in more than 30 years.

Soros has donated billions of dollars over the years in support of liberal and anti-authoritarian causes. The Hungarian-American has been the subject of conspiracy theories spread by right-wing groups, as well as antisemitic attacks.

Earlier this year, he gave more than \$125 million to Democracy PAC II to spend on midterm elections and said in a statement that he was looking to make a "long-term investment" in races nationwide.

Races for local district attorneys have been gaining attention because those offices are often at the center of debates over law enforcement reforms and problems in the criminal justice system, which incarcerates poor people and people of color at higher rates.

A study released this month by the Prosecutors and Politics Project at the University of North Carolina Law School showed money and incumbency play important roles in local district attorney's races in 45 states where they're elected.

Incumbents usually don't face a challenger, and 38% of them won contested elections even when the challenger raised more money, the study found. Challengers won only 20% of the time when they lost

the fundraising battle. The study focused on individual fundraising, not independent expenditures on a candidate's behalf.

"It takes a lot of money for a challenger to be able to break through and have a chance at winning," said Carisssa Hessick, director of the Prosecutors and Politics Project.

The stakes are high in Maine's primary election.

Because both district attorney candidates are running as Democrats, and there are no other candidates, the race effectively will be decided during Tuesday's primary.

Sartoris, an assistant district attorney in another county, told the AP that the outside donations show the importance of the job — and recognize that she's the "only lifelong Democrat" in the race.

She said she stands for Democratic values by seeking to address underreported crimes such as sexual assault and hate crimes and helping those struggling with substance use disorder. She vowed to "finally take seriously questions of racial disparities in charging and convictions."

Sahrbeck said he has worked on practical reforms in some of those same areas and organized training to examine implicit bias, racism, racial equity and inclusion.

While he's registered as a Democrat, an attack ad noted he won the previous race for district attorney as an independent.

Sahrbeck said the community would be much better served if the \$300,000 linked to Soros was being spent on addressing homelessness, substance use disorder and mental health issues.

Sartoris said she can't accept responsibility for independent spending over which she has no control.

"I'm responsible for my campaign," she said. "He's responsible for his."

Capitol officer recounts Jan. 6 'war scene' in her testimony

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Capitol Police Officer Caroline Edwards described to lawmakers the "war scene" that she and other officers faced when rioters began viciously attacking them on Jan. 6, 2021.

"It was something like I've seen in movies. I couldn't believe my eyes," Edwards said.

"There were officers on the ground. They were bleeding. I was slipping in people's blood."

"It was carnage," she said. "It was chaos."

The raw and graphic testimony from Edwards Thursday night played out in the first public hearing on the findings of the House committee investigating the insurrection on the U.S. Capitol.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think as a police officer, as a law enforcement officer that I would find myself in the middle of a battle," Edwards said. "I am not combat-trained. That day it was just hours of hand-to-hand combat."

Her recollections of the day spotlighted the police officers who fought for hours as a violent mob of pro-Trump rioters, some armed with pipes, bats and bear spray, charged into the Capitol, quickly overrunning the overwhelmed police force. More than 100 police officers were injured, many beaten, bloodied and bruised.

Over her shoulder as Edwards testified sat fellow Capitol Police officers Harry Dunn and Aquilino Gonell and Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone, all of whom testified at a hearing last summer about the violence they endured. There were moments in her testimony that brought Dunn, a 13-year veteran of the force, to tears.

Edwards' testimony was accompanied by a barrage of never-before-seen footage, testimony and evidence the committee has gathered in the past 11 months to document how then-President Donald Trump's words and actions led to the assault on the Capitol. Officers are seen in the footage being pummeled with flagpoles, trashcans and bike racks.

"My literal blood, sweat tears were shed in defending the building I spent countless holidays and weekends working in," Edwards said.

Edwards said she has worked on hundreds of civil disturbances but it quickly became apparent that this one was different. She asked her supervisor for backup.

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"I think we're going to need a few more people down here," she recalled saying, calling it "the understatement of the century," as officers were quickly outnumbered by the hundreds of rioters.

She said she suffered a concussion after rioters forced a bike rack over the top of her head, pushing her backward. "I blacked out," she said, adding that she experienced fainting spells for months after the insurrection.

But the moment Edwards recalled most vividly was the moment when she saw fellow officer Brian Sicknick turn "ghostly pale."

Sicknick, who was injured while confronting rioters during the Jan. 6 insurrection, suffered a stroke and died from natural causes the day after the attack. Members of his family sat alongside officers Dunn and Gonell as Edwards described his injuries. Before she could go to help Sicknick, Edwards said, she was pepper-sprayed by the mob.

Ken Sicknick, one of Brian Sicknick's brothers, said Friday that Edwards told them in private "what a hero Brian was....that while she was going through the ordeal she was going through, Brian was right there with her."

"Whenever there was a breach in the line, Brian was filling that breach," he told CNN. "You know, it's reassuring to know he was a hero. I just wish he was still here."

He said Trump "couldn't care less about my brother.We got calls from a lot of politicians after my brother had passed, including Mike Pence. Not one tweet, not one note, not one card, nothing from him."

Committee vice chair Liz Cheney thanked Edwards and the other officers and their families for being there and assisting in their investigation. The Wyoming Republican noted the sacrifice the officers made that day with the limited resources and equipment they had been given.

"As part of our investigation, we will present information about what the White House and other intelligence agencies knew, and why the Capitol was not better prepared," Cheney said.

But Cheney pushed back on Republicans who have challenged the Jan. 6 panel to focus more intently on security failures.

"We will not lose sight of the fact that the Capitol Police did not cause the crowd to attack," she said. "And we will not blame the violence that day, violence provoked by Donald Trump, on the officers who bravely defended all of you."

Takeaways: 'Carnage' at the Capitol and a case against Trump

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, FARNOUSH AMIRI and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An injured officer who slipped in blood and spoke of "carnage." Video of a huge, violent mob pushing through the U.S. Capitol. Former President Donald Trump's allies and family members acknowledging his lies.

House investigators worked to lay out a devastating case Thursday in the first of a series of June hearings examining the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the Capitol. The House panel probing the attack showed violent video of the siege and showed clips of testimony examining the weeks beforehand in which Trump pushed falsehoods about widespread fraud in the election he lost.

While the basics of the attack on the Capitol are well known, the committee is trying to tell the story of how it happened, and how to prevent it from ever happening again, for history. The made-for-TV hearings — including video of police officers being brutally beaten and right-wing extremists leading the crowds into the Capitol — come as some have tried to downplay the violence.

"We can't sweep what happened under the rug," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, the chairman of the panel, as he opened the hearing. "The American people deserve answers."

The committee has conducted more than 1,000 interviews with people connected to the siege and collected more than 140,000 documents. They will use that evidence over the course of seven hearings this month to show how the attack was coordinated by some of the rioters in the violent mob that broke into the Capitol and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's victory — and how Trump's efforts started it all.

Takeaways from the Jan. 6 committee's first hearing:

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LAYING IT ALL ON TRUMP

Thompson laid out the committee's initial findings that Trump led a "sprawling, multi-step conspiracy aimed at overturning the presidential election" and the insurrection was a culmination of that "attempted coup." The panel's vice chairwoman, Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, called it a "sophisticated seven-part plan."

"The attack on our Capitol was not a spontaneous riot," said Cheney, one of two Republicans on the nine-member panel.

The hearing featured never-before-seen video testimony from Trump's family and close aides, many of whom were interviewed by the committee remotely.

The panel started by showing a video interview with former Attorney General Bill Barr, who said he told Trump at the time that his fraud claims had no merit. Barr, who said publicly a month before the insurrection that the Justice Department had not found fraud, told the committee members that he had told Trump it was all "bull—."

The panel also showed video testimony from Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, who spoke to the committee in April. Ivanka Trump told the panel that Barr's declaration "affected my perspective."

"I respect Attorney General Barr so I accepted what he said," she told the committee.

Another Trump adviser, Jason Miller, told the panel that campaign advisors had told the president in "clear terms" that he had lost the election.

'THIS ISN'T EASY TO WATCH'

The committee showed new, graphic video from the insurrection, moving through a timeline of the violence. It started with rioters angrily walking toward the Capitol, then showed them breaking through thin police barriers and brutally beating police.

Using security footage, police body cameras, video from those who broke in and audio from the police scanner, the video showed rioters using flagpoles, tactical equipment and other weapons to hit officers as they overwhelmed them and broke inside. Some of the body camera footage was from the ground looking up, as officers watched their attackers beat them.

At the same time, it showed what was happening inside — the beginning of the joint session to certify Biden's election win and, people fleeing from the violence.

And it showed the rioters chanting "Hang Mike Pence," referring to the vice president who had defied Trump's orders to try to thwart Biden's certification, and chanting "Nancy! Nancy!" as they walked up a staircase inside the Capitol, referring to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

AN OFFICER OVERWHELMED AND INJURED

Caroline Edwards, a Capitol Police officer, testified in graphic terms about the bloody scene outside the Capitol that day and the traumatic brain injury she suffered when members of the Proud Boys and others pushed her to the ground as they led the mob into the Capitol.

Edwards was alone and holding two bike racks together at the front lines as the mob heaved toward her, pushing her and the racks to the ground. She hit her head on a concrete stairway, briefly falling unconscious.

Even with her injury, Edwards continued to fight off the crowd. She described a "war scene" out of the movies and hours of hand-to-hand combat that no law enforcement officer is trained to handle.

"They were throwing up — I saw friends with blood all over their faces," said Edwards, who has still not returned to duty in the first responders unit where she worked then. "I was slipping in people's blood. I was catching people as they fell. It was carnage. It was chaos."

EXTREMIST GROUPS' INVOLVEMENT

The panel's other witness was British filmmaker Nick Quested, who was with members of the Proud Boys as they walked from Trump's rally in front of the White House to the Capitol. Quested was also filming members of the group the day ahead of the attack as they planned and met with members of the Oath Keepers in an underground garage.

The committee used some of Quested's footage of the war zone in front of the Capitol.

"For anyone who didn't understand how violent that event was, I saw it," he said. "I documented it and I experienced it."

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Thompson said Trump's call for people to come on Jan. 6 "energized" members of the Proud Boys and other extremist groups. They highlighted Trump's comment at a presidential debate that the Proud Boys should "stand back and stand by."

The panel showed video testimony with a witness named Jeremy Bertino, a member of the Proud Boys, who said the group's membership "tripled, probably" after Trump's comment.

MADE FOR TELEVISION

The committee took the unusual step of launching the hearings with a prime time show — aimed to gather as many viewers as possible.

It's still unclear how many will tune in, but the panel is producing the hearing in hopes of becoming must-see television, featuring never before seen video footage of the violent insurrection.

The hearing room was also set up for impact, with a huge screen hanging over the lawmakers.

'WE WERE THERE'

Lawmakers who were trapped together in the House during the insurrection attended Thursday's hearing after having dinner together. The members, all Democrats, were caught in an upper gallery of the chamber as rioters beat on the doors.

Rep. Dean Phillips, D-Minn., said the House members, who were eventually evacuated without harm, are dismayed that an event that exposed the fragility of democracy could "somehow be whitewashed by tens of millions of people."

Some GOP lawmakers have tried to downplay the insurrection, charging that Democrats are overly focused on the attempt to thwart the peaceful transfer of power.

"We want to remind people, we were there, we saw what happened. We know how close we came to the first non-peaceful transition of power in this country," Phillips said.

Toes-for-cash hoax reflects Zimbabwe fears of soaring prices

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Battling rampant inflation, Zimbabweans are counting their toes as they struggle to buy food for their families.

An internet rumor blazed through the country that desperate people were selling their toes for cash. The false report became so widespread that the country's Deputy Minister of Information Kindness Paradza visited street vendors in central Harare earlier this month to debunk it.

One-by-one the traders took off their shoes to show that they had all 10 toes, as Zimbabwe's state media recorded the digital investigation.

Paradza declared the toes-for-money story a hoax, as did local and foreign fact-checkers. Police later arrested a street vendor who now faces a fine or 6 months in jail on charges of criminal nuisance for allegedly starting the story.

It's starkly true, however, that Zimbabweans are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Since the start of Russia's war in Ukraine, Zimbabwe's inflation rate has shot up from 66% to more than 130%, according to official statistics. The war is blamed for rising fuel and food prices.

The war in Ukraine has exacerbated inflation rising around the world. Consumer prices in the 19 European Union countries that use the euro currency surged 8.1% in May, a record rate as energy and food costs climb. In the U.S. and the United Kingdom, annual inflation hit or was close to 40-year highs of 8.3% and 9%, respectively, in April. Turkey approached Zimbabwe's eye-watering prices, with inflation reaching 73.5% in May, the highest in 24 years.

In Zimbabwe, the impact of the Ukraine war is heaping problems on the already fragile economy. The war "coupled with our historical domestic imbalances, has created challenges in terms of economic instability seen through the currency volatility and spilling over into price volatility," Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube told Parliament in May.

Teachers "can no longer afford bread and other basics, this is too much," tweeted the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe in early June. The three largest teachers' unions are demanding the government

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pay their salaries in U.S. dollars because their pay in local currency is "eroded overnight."

"Because of high inflation, the local currency is collapsing," economic analyst Prosper Chitambara told The Associated Press. "Individuals and companies no longer trust the local currency and that has put pressure on the demand for U.S. dollars. The Ukraine war is simply exacerbating an already difficult situation."

Many fear Zimbabwe could return to the hyperinflation of 2008 which reached 500 billion%, according to the International Monetary Fund. At that time, plastic bags full of 100 trillion Zimbabwe dollar banknotes were not enough to buy basic groceries.

The economic catastrophe forced then-President Robert Mugabe to form a "unity government" with the opposition and adopt a multi-currency system in 2009 in which US dollars and the South African rand were accepted as legal tender.

The U.S. dollar continues to dominate with prices in local currency often benchmarked to the rates for the American currency on the flourishing illegal market, where most individuals and companies get their foreign currency.

Across the country, currency traders line the streets and crowd entrances to shopping centers waving wads of both the local currency and U.S dollars.

Many Zimbabweans who earn in local currency such as government workers are forced to source dollars on the illegal market, where exchange rates are soaring, to pay for goods and services that are increasingly being charged in U.S. dollars.

Retailers said the rising rates for U.S. dollars on the illegal market are forcing them to frequently increase prices, often every few days, to allow them to restock.

The once-prosperous southern African country's economy is battered by years of de-industrialization, corruption, low investment, low exports and high debt. Zimbabwe struggles to generate an adequate inflow of greenbacks needed for its largely dollarized local economy.

Ordinary Zimbabweans are returning to coping mechanisms they relied on during the hyperinflationary era such as skipping meals. Others now buy food items in smaller quantities, sometimes in such tiny packages they are enough for just a single meal. Locals call them "tsaona," meaning "accident" in the local Shona language.

Promising better days ahead, Ncube, the finance minister, said the government "will not hesitate to act and intervene to cushion against price increases and exchange rate volatility."

Many are skeptical of such vows from the government, saying nothing short of a miracle will pull Zimbabwe out of its economic crisis. Even while coping with constantly rising prices, many can't help making grim jokes about the situation.

"I still have all my toes intact but it wouldn't hurt selling one," chuckled Harare resident Asani Sibanda. "I could still walk without it, but my family would at least get some food."

Today in History: June 11, auto racing disaster at Le Mans

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 11, the 162nd day of 2022. There are 203 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 11, 1955, in motor racing's worst disaster, more than 80 people were killed during the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France when two of the cars collided and crashed into spectators.

On this date:

In 1509, England's King Henry VIII married his first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

In 1770, Captain James Cook, commander of the British ship Endeavour, "discovered" the Great Barrier Reef off Australia by running onto it.

In 1776, the Continental Congress formed a committee to draft a Declaration of Independence calling for freedom from Britain.

In 1919, Sir Barton won the Belmont Stakes, becoming horse racing's first Triple Crown winner.

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In 1938, Johnny Vander Meer pitched the first of two consecutive no-hitters as he led the Cincinnati Reds to a 3-0 victory over the Boston Bees. (Four days later, Vander Meer refused to give up a hit to the Brooklyn Dodgers, who lost, 6-0.)

In 1962, three prisoners at Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay staged an escape, leaving the island on a makeshift raft; they were never found or heard from again.

In 1985, Karen Ann Quinlan, the comatose patient whose case prompted a historic right-to-die court decision, died in Morris Plains, New Jersey, at age 31.

In 1987, Margaret Thatcher became the first British prime minister in 160 years to win a third consecutive term of office as her Conservatives held onto a reduced majority in Parliament.

In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that people who commit "hate crimes" motivated by bigotry may be sentenced to extra punishment.

In 2001, Timothy McVeigh, 33, was executed by injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people.

In 2009, with swine flu reported in more than 70 nations, the World Health Organization declared the first global flu pandemic in 41 years.

In 2020, Louisville, Kentucky, banned the use of "no-knock" warrants and named the new ordinance for Breonna Taylor, who'd been fatally shot by officers who burst into her home. San Francisco's mayor said city police officers would stop responding to non-criminal activities such as disputes between neighbors and reports about homeless people; they would be replaced on those calls by trained, unarmed professionals.

Ten years ago: Testimony began in the trial of former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky, accused of sexually abusing 10 boys over 15 years. (Sandusky was later convicted and sentenced to at least 30 years in prison.) Rafael Nadal (rah-fay-ehl nah-DAHL') won his record seventh French Open title, defeating Novak Djokovic (NOH'-vak JOH'-kuh-vich) 6-4, 6-3, 2-6, 7-5. The Los Angeles Kings won their first NHL championship, beating the New Jersey Devils 6-1 in Game 6 of the Stanley Cup finals.

Five years ago: Supporters of LGBT rights marched and rallied in the nation's capital and dozens of other U.S. cities, celebrating gains but angry over threats posed by the administration of President Donald Trump. "Dear Evan Hansen," the heartfelt musical about young outsiders, took the best new musical trophy at the Tony Awards along with five other statuettes. The Stanley Cup returned to Pittsburgh after the Penguins defeated the Nashville Predators 2-0 in Game 6. Rafael Nadal (rah-fay-ehl nah-DAHL') won his record 10th French Open title by dominating 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka 6-2, 6-3, 6-1 in the final.

One year ago: Group of Seven leaders gathered for a seaside summit in England, bringing pledges to share at least 1 billion coronavirus vaccine shots with struggling countries; half would come from the United States. Novelist Louise Erdrich won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for "The Night Watchman"; winners for books also included the late Les Payne and daughter Tamara Payne for their Malcolm X biography "The Dead Are Arising." Darnella Frazier, the teenager who pulled out her cellphone and began recording when she saw George Floyd being pinned to the ground by a Minneapolis police officer, was given a special citation by the Pulitzer Prizes for her video.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Rep. Charles B. Rangel, D-N.Y., is 92. International Motorsports Hall of Famer Jackie Stewart is 83. Singer Joey Dee is 82. Actor Roscoe Orman is 78. Actor Adrienne Barbeau is 77. Rock musician Frank Beard (ZZ Top) is 73. Animal rights activist Ingrid Newkirk is 73. Singer Graham Russell (Air Supply) is 72. Rock singer Donnie Van Zant is 70. Actor Peter Bergman is 69. Pro Football Hall of Famer Joe Montana is 66. Actor Hugh Laurie is 63. TV personality Mehmet Oz, M.D., is 62. Singer Gioia (JOY'-ah) Bruno (Expose) is 59. Rock musician Dan Lavery (Tonic) is 56. Country singer-songwriter Bruce Robison is 56. Actor Clare Carey is 55. Actor Peter Dinklage is 53. Actor Lenny Jacobson is 48. Actor Joshua Jackson is 44. Americana musician Gabe Witcher (Punch Brothers) is 44. U.S. Olympic and WNBA basketball star Diana Taurasi is 40. Actor Shia LaBeouf (SHY'-uh luh-BUF') is 36.