

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 1 of 67

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Transit/Pantry Fundraiser](#)
- [3- Visitor Injured By Bison in Custer State Park](#)
- [3- Responding to the disaster in Yellowstone](#)
- [5- SDDOT Seeks Public Input for Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Fast Charging Plan](#)
- [6- SD News Watch: Attorney general race heats up as impeachment and GOP convention approach](#)
- [10- Weather Pages](#)
- [14- Daily Devotional](#)
- [15- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [16- Subscription Form](#)
- [17- News from the Associated Press](#)

Friday, June 17

Senior Menu: Bratwurst with bun, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, green beans, fruit.

SDSU Alumni Golf Tournament

5:30 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Selby, DH

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Doland, 1 game

Saturday, June 18

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

10 a.m.: Firemen's Triathlon (Trap shoot, golf, bowling)

U12 at Webster

At 10:30 Clark vs Groton

At 12 Groton vs Webster

Cancelled: Jr. Legion at Milbank Tourney

Jr. Teeners at Milbank Tourney

9:00. Webster v Milbank

10:45. Webster v Groton

12:30 Groton v Britton

2:15 Webster v Britton

4:00. Milbank v Groton

5:45. Milbank v Britton

June 19 - FATHER'S DAY

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.

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

YOU CAN'T BE BRAVE IF
YOU'VE ONLY HAD
WONDERFUL THINGS
HAPPEN TO YOU.

—MARY TYLER MOORE



June 20 - JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY

Senior Menu: Goulash, green beans, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

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

Ladies Invitational Golf Tourney at Olive Grove

5:30 p.m.: Legion at Northville, 1 game

7 p.m.: Jr. Legion at Northville, 1 game

5:30 p.m.: U12 hosts Britton, Nelson Field, DH

5:30 p.m.: U10 at Britton, DH (B/W)

5:30 p.m.: U8 at Britton, DH (R/W)

6 p.m.: U8 SB hosts Doland, 1 game

7 p.m.: U10 SB hosts Doland, 1 game

5 p.m.: T-Ball Gold hosts Doland

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 2 of 67



Topper Tastad and Nancy Larsen are pictured in the Pantry at the Groton Community Center. Larsen said there has been a lot of food that has been distributed through the Pantry. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



April Abeln and Kellie Locke were selling Grotonware with the proceeds going to the Pantry. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Travis McGannon and Joel Bierman are pictured here as some of the grillers at the Groton Community Transit Fundraiser held Thursday at the Groton Community Center. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Visitor Injured By Bison in Custer State Park

PIERRE, S.D. – A recent incident between a park visitor and a bison reminds us all to use caution in Custer State Park.

While hiking near the Wildlife Loop Road, a female visitor, her companion, and their dog came over a hill and surprised a small herd of bull bison. It appears one of the bulls charged the dog and hit the female visitor. She was taken to a local hospital.

“It is always important to remember that bison, and all the animals in the park, are unpredictable,” said Lydia Austin, Custer State Park’s Visitor Services Manager. “When possible, stay at least 100 yards away from bison and always be extra aware when approaching blind corners.”

While incidents between bison and visitors are not common in the park, they do happen. Custer State Park is home to one of the largest publicly owned bison herds in the world and hosts millions of visitors every year.

“We hope this serves as a good reminder to always be aware of your surroundings, and give animals their space when possible,” Austin said.

Responding to the disaster in Yellowstone

SD Dept of Tourism

Greetings, Industry Friends!

We wanted to quickly send an email to address the devastating situation in Yellowstone National Park and how our industry should be responding to this disaster.

Your team in the department has been tracking the situation in Yellowstone very closely since the onset of the flooding and mudslides. We have been monitoring our marketing, social channels, website visitors, sentiment around the disaster, and inquiries. We have also been in contact with colleagues throughout Wyoming, Montana, and the Great American West Region (Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming).

As reported in SKIFT this morning, here is what we know about the current situation in Yellowstone:

Park officials shut down all five entrances into Yellowstone to inbound traffic this past Tuesday.

Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly stated at a news conference yesterday that the park’s harder-hit northern tier would likely remain closed to visitors through the summer season. But the southern end of Yellowstone, which includes Old Faithful Geyser and many of the park’s other famous geothermal features, could reopen on a limited basis in a week or less, depending upon how extensive the damage there turns out to be.

Superintendent Sholly stated the park would probably explore a timed-entry or reservation system to prevent overcrowding of the park’s southern loop when it does reopen.

The disaster at Yellowstone is devastating to the entire states of Wyoming and Montana, as well as to our region as a whole. We know there is a huge and very popular loop between Yellowstone and our beautiful Black Hills (the Black to Yellow Trail). We see hundreds of thousands – if not millions - of visitors

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 4 of 67

exploring this loop every single summer.

So, how do we as an industry respond to this tragedy?

First, we must send our prayers and positive thoughts to our friends in Wyoming and Montana. After two years of unprecedented challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic, and now inflation and gas prices, no one could have predicted this awful blow.

If you have friends, colleagues, or acquaintances in the Wyoming and Montana tourism industries, please reach out to them with some South Dakota love and encouragement. We have great industry friends in both states, and I am sure a phone call, note, or text of encouragement would be most welcomed.

We have been asked if we are going to change our messaging to visitors to take advantage of the situation in Yellowstone. We will not. Please be careful about any messaging you are doing from your business or community. We absolutely do not want - in any way - to come across as exploiting this tragedy. If you know of visitors who may be adjusting their vacation plans, strongly encourage them to explore other parts of Wyoming and Montana. If they are planning to include South Dakota as part of their travel, let them know we are excited to see them and will do all we can to make their trip to The Mount Rushmore State extra special.

Our very successful marketing campaigns will continue in our target markets. We will not be changing our message in any way, shape, or form to take advantage of visitors who may now not be heading to Yellowstone. Our message will remain the same as it has since last January: we will encourage and inspire potential visitors to "Go Great Places" and explore our incredible outdoor offerings, national and state parks, events, attractions, festivals, museums, concerts, you-name-it, in every region of the state. Our "Go Great Places" and "Great Places Are Waiting" campaigns have resonated with visitors the past two years, and we will not deviate from the messaging and tactics that have been working extremely well for us.

I hope you find these quick thoughts to be of help to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

We appreciate our industry so much. THANK YOU AGAIN for your prayers and support for our great friends in Wyoming and Montana. We hope to see you soon!

All our best,

Jim and Team

SDDOT Seeks Public Input for Electric Vehicle (EV) Fast Charging Plan

PIERRE, S.D. –The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) will host two in-person open house public meetings and a virtual, on-demand meeting to discuss and receive public input on the South Dakota Electric Vehicle (EV) Fast Charging Plan. The in-person meetings will be informal, with a short presentation followed by one-on-one discussion with SDDOT and consultant staff. Through the in-person and virtual meetings, the public will have the opportunity to provide written comment.

“We are striving to provide reliable and convenient EV fast charging on the Interstate system across the state,” says Steve Gramm, SDDOT, Planning Squad Leader. “We want to create a convenient and accessible network by connecting to the national grid, and the community’s input is highly encouraged and valued at these meetings.”

Virtual Meeting:

The public may view the full EV Fast Charging Plan and provide written comment at www.sdEVplan.com between June 21 and July 8, 2022.

In-Person Meetings:

Rapid City - Tuesday, June 21, 2022

5-6:30 p.m. (MT)

Western Dakota Technical College – 800 Mickelson Dr. in Rapid City

Sioux Falls - Wednesday, June 22, 2022

5-6:30 p.m. (CT)

University Center Avera Hall – 4801 N. Career Ave. in Sioux Falls

A presentation will take place at 5:15 p.m. at the in-person public meetings. The presentation will be followed by an open house style meeting for the remainder of the evening. Input collected at the meetings will help the SDDOT make informed decisions about potential locations and amenities of EV fast charging stations around the state.

Open House Public Meeting Topics:

Details about the EV Fast Charging Plan

Federal Funding Opportunities

Future of EVs in South Dakota

The South Dakota EV Fast Charging Plan will be a framework to create a statewide network of EV fast chargers on the Interstate systems, linked to an overall national network and designed to provide convenient, reliable, affordable, and accessible charging for all EV drivers. The Plan is a requirement to obtain National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program funding from the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Notice is further given to individuals with disabilities that this open house is being held in a physically accessible place. Any individuals with disabilities who will require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the open house should submit a request to the department’s ADA Coordinator at 605-773-3540 or 1-800-877-1113 (Telecommunication Relay Services for the Deaf). Please request the accommodations no later than two business days prior to the meeting in order to ensure accommodations are available.

For further information regarding the EV Infrastructure Deployment Study, please contact Steve Gramm, Planning Squad Leader at 605-773-3281 or steve.gramm@state.sd.us. Visit the study website for more information at www.sdEVplan.com.



Attorney general race heats up as impeachment and GOP convention approach

Stu Whitney

South Dakota News Watch

Jason Ravensborg's decision to not pursue re-election as South Dakota attorney general doesn't rule out the possibility of him serving in state government following the November election, several South Dakota Republican officials told News Watch.

The speculation is part of a larger sense of uncertainty and intrigue that hover over the upcoming attorney general election in South Dakota, in which delegates of the state Republican Party will have a strong voice in charting the futures of three of the state's top legal officials — Ravensborg, David Natvig and Marty Jackley.

Ravnsborg faces a Senate impeachment trial June 21-22 stemming from a highway

crash in which he struck and killed pedestrian Joe Boever west of Highmore in the fall of 2020. But Ravensborg's future in government could also hinge on the state GOP convention a few days later in Watertown, where party delegates will vote to declare a nominee for attorney general. The Republican nomination process is pivotal because there is currently no Democratic candidate in the race for attorney general, and South Dakota hasn't elected a Democrat to the position since Kermit Sande in 1972.

Ravnsborg, suspended from his duties since the House of Representatives voted for impeachment April 12, has reached out to delegates in support of Natvig, director of the Division of Criminal Investigation. Natvig is a former law-school classmate of whom Ravensborg appointed to the DCI role.

Natvig announced his intention last month to run for Ravensborg's job against Jackley, the former three-term attorney general who held the post from 2009-2019. The Republican candidate in the November general election is selected by Republican delegates at the GOP convention.

GOP delegates interviewed by News Watch said that while Jackley is viewed as the favorite to win the nomination, convention balloting can be unpredictable, with anywhere from 600 to 800 statewide delegates expected to cast votes this year. If Natvig prevails, and wins the general election, he would be in position to appoint Ravensborg to the AG's office as a lawyer or even as DCI director, delegates told News Watch.

"There's a path to victory for David [Natvig]," said Rich Hilgemann of Aberdeen, vice chairman of the Brown County Republicans, adding that he has spoken recently with Natvig, Jackley and Ravensborg about delegate counts. "With everything going on, it was just decided that David's chances to win this thing are a lot better than Jason's."

Asked about the possibility of Natvig appointing Ravensborg to a state law enforcement role if he prevails, Hilgemann said: "It's possible. I wouldn't advise it, but it's possible."

Such an appointment could potentially occur even if Ravensborg is convicted in his impeachment trial.



Marty Jackley/Jason Ravensborg/David Natvig

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 7 of 67

State law defines the punishment as "removal from office and disqualification to hold any office of trust or profit under the state," which some law-trained delegates interpret as meaning elected office rather than working as a state employee, an analysis that could ultimately be tested in court.

In a phone interview with News Watch on June 13, Natvig didn't rule out any appointment scenarios but dismissed the notion that his candidacy for attorney general is linked to Ravensborg's future.

He went a step further in an interview with the Sioux Falls Argus Leader published June 15, stating that Ravensborg "will not be employed by either the attorney general's office or the Division of Criminal Investigation," if Natvig is elected as AG or continues as DCI director.

"First off, I'm not a politician," said Natvig, a 56-year-old Kimball native who served as Brule County State's Attorney from 2003-2019 while also practicing civil law. "I'm going into this race with the attitude that I don't owe political favors to anyone. I would not make any promises to anyone about anything."

Questions about qualifications

Natvig, a former high school wrestler who received his undergraduate degree in political science from South Dakota State University, said he knows Ravensborg from their time at the University of South Dakota School of Law, where Natvig graduated in 2000, one year ahead of Ravensborg.

"We had some contact between law school and (Natvig's appointment as DCI director in 2019), though not a lot," Natvig said. "We might have referred a case to each other a few times, but that's about it in those 19 years."

The fact that Natvig, who is not a certified law enforcement officer, was appointed to run the state investigative bureau came as a surprise to Jim Vlahakis, a former DCI director who will retire later this year after 10 years as Yankton County Sheriff.

"I'm in my 43rd year in law enforcement and I had never heard of David Natvig until Jason appointed him as a non-certified law enforcement officer to be DCI director," said Vlahakis, who was elected as a first-time Republican delegate earlier this month and supports Jackley. "That was odd to me, and I think it was felt throughout the agency."

Natvig cites his military service as an Army paratrooper and years as a prosecutor as examples of his leadership skills, adding that "clearly there was a reason I was brought in from the outside" to run DCI, an agency formed in 1937 to lead investigations as well as maintain records, train law enforcement and operate the state forensic lab.

Jackley has boasted during his campaign of support from the law enforcement community, including the endorsements of the past five DCI directors: Brian Zeeb (2018-19), Bryan Gortmaker (2008-18), Vlahakis (2006-08), Kevin Thom (2002-06) and Doug Lake (1996-2002).

"If I'm fortunate enough to be elected attorney general, I will appoint an experienced and certified law enforcement officer as DCI director so they can make arrests and lead other law enforcement officers," Jackley told News Watch. He recalled cases during his time as attorney general, such as when the original state flag was stolen in 2015, that he instructed his DCI director to handle the investigation and personally make the arrest.

"You're sending a message publicly by sending out the most experienced law enforcement officer that you have," said Jackley.

Natvig pointed to crackdowns on violent crime and drug trafficking as campaign priorities as he pursues the role of attorney general. He said he visited the southern border with Mexico about two months ago and that "it's wide open," allowing drugs such as cocaine and fentanyl to flow into the country, which fuels violent crime. "Those things go hand in hand," he said.

But delegates say that Natvig also has to run on his record at DCI, noting a string of recent retirements among senior staff and assistant directors.

Fall River County State's Attorney Lance Russell, a former South Dakota legislator who also served as state GOP director, said he has noticed a difference in DCI operations from when he served as state's attorney from 2001-08.

"We've had some needs, and the response time has not been as fast," Russell said. "I would say that it

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 8 of 67

is much more difficult to acquire the assistance of agents down here than the last time I served as state's attorney. There appears to be a staffing issue as far as the recruitment of agents, and that's frustrating."

Natvig admitted there have been retirements at DCI, but he attributes the departures to many of the agents reaching their 20-year state service time concurrently rather than a general dissatisfaction with the agency's direction. He estimated there are 150 employees at DCI, compared to about 45 in the Attorney General's Office.

Hilgemann, who is entering his 10th year as a state GOP delegate from Aberdeen, called DCI staffing issues a "sign of the times" and defended Natvig's stint as director.

"DCI is still DCI," he said. "They're still doing their job. It's tough to hire anyone in law enforcement right now because of all the protests we saw during the summer of unrest (in 2020) and the lack of respect for police officers. I'm not surprised that people don't want to be cops anymore, or that they take retirement when they can."

Fatal crash highlights connections

Natvig and Tim Bormann, chief of staff in the Attorney General's Office and a fellow USD law school grad, were both appointed by Ravensborg to their roles. Along with Ravensborg, the two form a triumvirate in the minds of some GOP delegates. Bormann has described the three as "law school friends" in testimony surrounding the impeachment probe.

Their connections were reinforced during the investigation into the fatal crash on Sept. 13, 2020 that led to Ravensborg pleading guilty to two misdemeanors and being suspended from his role as attorney general as he awaits the Senate trial.

In the moments following the crash on U.S. Highway 14, after calling 911, Ravensborg sent a combined text message to Natvig and Bormann, in which the AG speculated that he hit a deer and showed a photo of his damaged car, to which Natvig responded "Holy (expletive)" and "Glad you're OK." Ravensborg told investigators that he also separately called Natvig and Bormann that night.

Natvig was also present when Ravensborg spoke with a DCI agent during the time of the crash investigation, which was handled by agents from North Dakota to avoid a conflict of interest. Supervisory Special Agent Brent Gromer, who specialized in obtaining data from cell phones and has since retired, filed a report saying Ravensborg asked him about information North Dakota agents would be able to glean from his phones, which he had turned over as evidence.

Natvig testified to the House Select Committee on Investigation that he viewed the interaction as "a pretty innocuous conversation between a couple gentlemen who knew each other."

"I didn't assume it was anything that was to do with the investigation," Natvig added in that testimony. "We weren't involved in the investigation, the agent wasn't involved in the investigation, and from what I heard there was nothing that caused me concern."

Jackley, who entered the race in March of 2021 and has been calling delegates and attending Lincoln Day dinners to build support, said he has not been focused on "whatever that element is" in regard to connections between Ravensborg and Natvig.

Jackley traded endorsements earlier this year with Gov. Kristi Noem, who defeated Jackley in the 2018 gubernatorial primary. The governor has openly criticized Ravensborg, who rebuffed her calls to resign from his AG post amid the crash controversy.

"I haven't had a single delegate tell me that would change their decision-making process," Natvig said of Noem endorsing his opponent.

'If we have a case, we will come after you'

Since losing the primary to Noem, Jackley has worked as Haakon County State's Attorney in Pierre and in private practice, providing counsel to billionaire credit card magnate Denny Sanford, listed in court documents as the subject of a child pornography investigation involving state and federal authorities.

On May 27, less than a month before the state GOP convention, Deputy Attorney General Brent Kempema submitted a court filing saying that the office "has completed its investigation" and "has determined that there are no prosecutable offenses within the jurisdiction of the State of South Dakota" involving Sanford.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 9 of 67

The decision doesn't rule out charges federally or in other jurisdictions, but it resolves a potential conflict of interest for Jackley as he seeks to retain the job of South Dakota's top law enforcement official. Natvig was asked about the juxtaposition of DCI's work in combatting internet crimes such as child pornography and Jackley's representation of Sanford.

"There are certainly people who can look at what both of us are doing today and compare those things," said Natvig. "They can see the person who is (defending Sanford) and the person who is out there doing everything he can every day to fight crime and make sure the folks at DCI have all the available tools they need."

He then added: "Everyone deserves legal representation, but a lawyer doesn't have to accept every client."

In a video announcing his campaign for attorney general, Natvig said: "I don't care who you are – if we have the evidence, if we have the case, we are coming after you, and we will win."

Some delegates have asked him if he was referring to Sanford or even Noem, who has faced scrutiny for her involvement in her daughter's bid for a real-estate appraiser license, a process that led to the resignation of a longtime state employee who later received a \$200,000 wrongful termination settlement from the state. A state legislative panel concluded in a report last month that Noem's daughter, Cassidy Peters, received preferential treatment.

"That line in my video applied to everyone," said Natvig, who has four daughters with his wife, LaRae, and lives in Pierre. "I've spent a lot of time as a prosecutor, and my point was that if you break the law, I'll make it clear that no one is above the law, which I've shown in my career. A lot of politicians tell you what you want to hear. I'm more the kind of guy who's going to tell you the truth, and it may sting a little bit. That's just how I am."

Some delegates say it is difficult to judge Natvig's candidacy on its merits because of his connection to Ravensborg, which makes his late-starting campaign seem like a coordinated effort to work around the impeachment trial.

"I think they figured that with Jason having his trial the week before the convention, he wouldn't be able to run the race," Russell said. "The conclusion was that they better find another horse and then Jason could perhaps stay on in some role in the Attorney General's Office if David wins."

Russell said that Natvig reached out to him recently to seek his support, but Russell has already publicly supported Jackley and so didn't return the call.

"I like David," Russell said. "We knew each other at law school and have been colleagues. To me, though, his announcement seemed a little late in the game and came off as Jason asking him to run. I think Marty has been working very hard, I think he has the respect of law enforcement, and I think he will win the nomination handily."

Natvig is not buying into that analysis. He has worked to gain support by stressing his focus on prosecuting drug trafficking crimes and bolstering cold case units by using the latest advancements in investigative genetic genealogy.

After noting the political adage that anything can happen at state conventions, he was asked if he would disagree with the conventional wisdom that Jackley is a heavy favorite as the state GOP gathering nears.

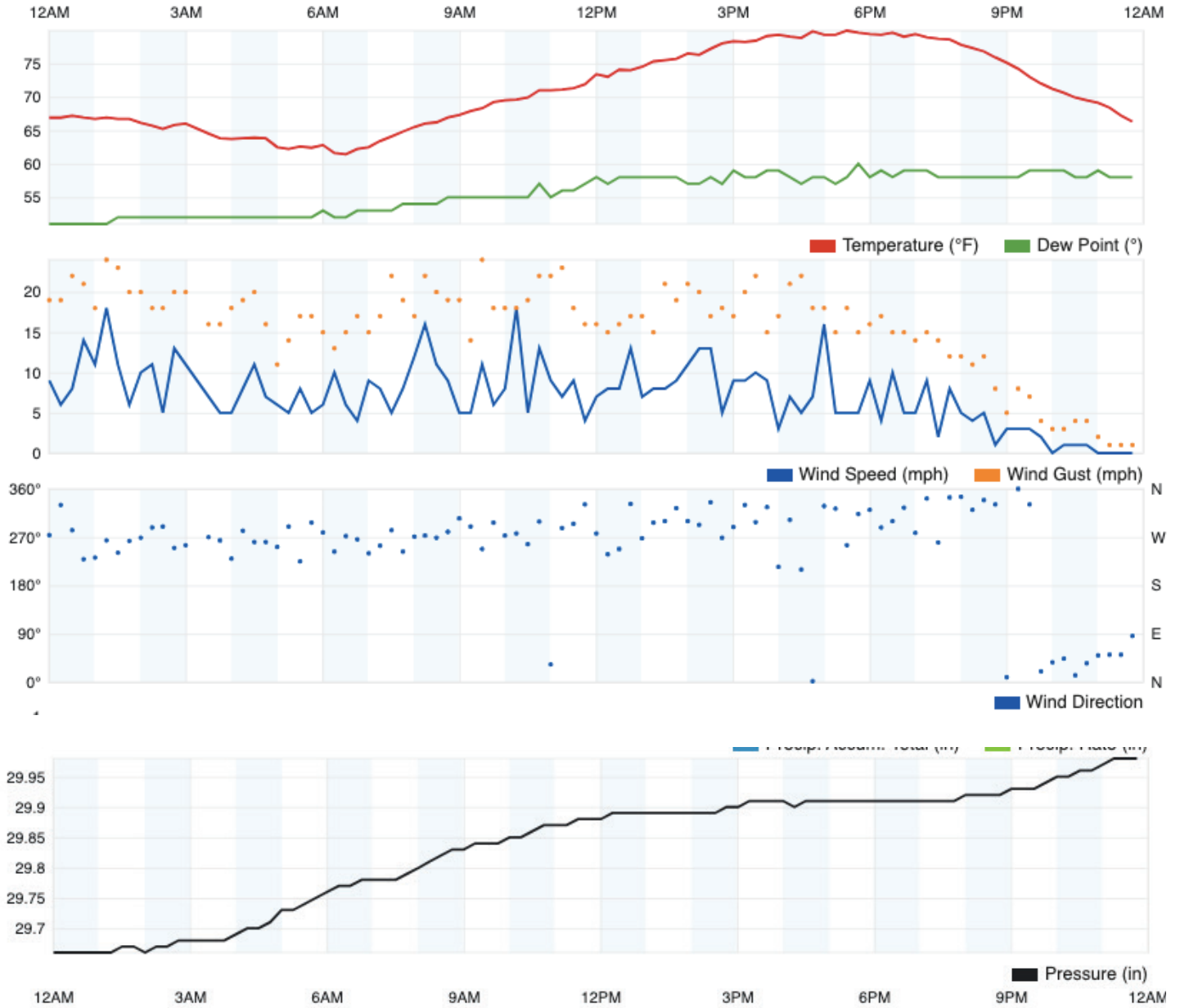
"I would disagree strongly," said Natvig. "Absolutely."

— This article was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit news organization online at sdnewswatch.org.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 10 of 67

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 11 of 67

Today



Sunny

High: 86 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Low: 67 °F

Saturday



Hot and
Breezy

High: 99 °F

Saturday
Night



Partly Cloudy
and Breezy

Low: 79 °F

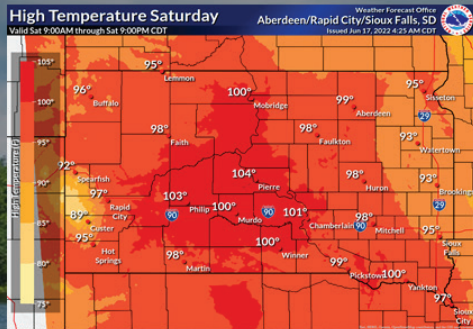
Juneteenth



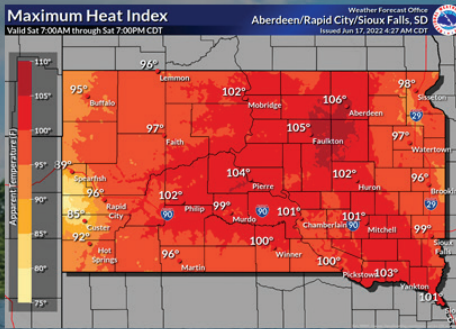
Hot and
Breezy

High: 102 °F

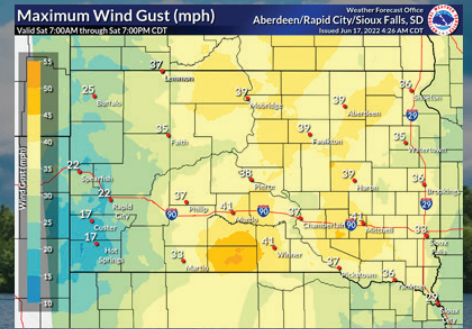
Heat and Humidity Arrive on Saturday



Highs on Saturday ranging from the 90s to low 100s across the region.



Saturday heat index values from 100 to 105 for many areas. Increased risk for heat related illnesses in as little as 30 minutes.



Gusty south winds expected all weekend as well. Saturday wind gusts will range from 35 to 40 mph for much of the area.



Updated: 6/17/2022 5:38 AM CT

The much talked about heat will slowly begin creeping in today, but conditions will still remain tolerable as highs climb into the 80s. Saturday the heat and humidity will arrive, along with gusty southerly winds. Temperatures in the 90s and low 100s can be expected this weekend, with wind gusts generally from 35 to 40 mph. Heat indices will range from 100 to 105 degrees for many areas, thus increasing the risk for heat related illnesses such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 12 of 67

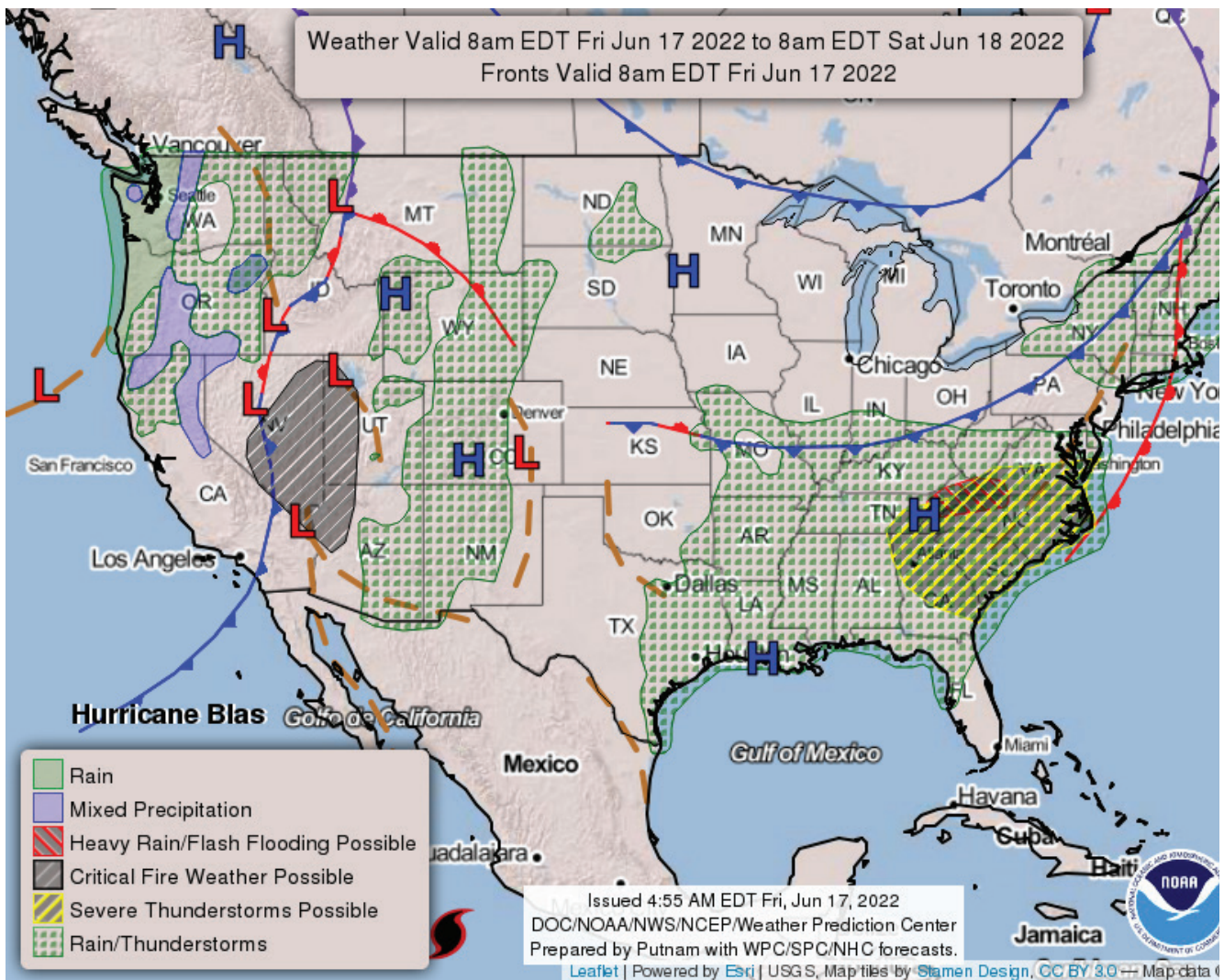
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 4:46 PM
Low Temp: 61 °F at 6:25 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 1:17 AM
Precip: 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 43 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1933
Record Low: 40 in 1915
Average High: 81°F
Average Low: 56°F
Average Precip in June.: 2.03
Precip to date in June.: 0.10
Average Precip to date: 9.28
Precip Year to Date: 11.26
Sunset Tonight: 9:25:17 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:35 AM



Today in Weather History

June 17, 1944: On this date, six estimated F2 or greater tornadoes were tracked across Faulk, Codington, Brown, Day, Grant, and Roberts County in South Dakota as well as Big Stone in Minnesota. The first tornado touched down at approximately 3:30 pm CST in Faulk County. This estimated F2 tornado destroyed all buildings except the house on a farm 7 miles northeast of Faulkton. The next tornado occurred at 4:00 pm CST in Codington County, where barns were destroyed. Cattle and a truck were thrown into Grass Lake, near Wallace. About the same time, in Brown County, a tornado moved northeast from just northeast of Warner and crossed the town of Bath. This storm killed two people and injured another twelve. A couple was killed in the destruction of their home. Twenty homes in Bath were damaged. A brick school had its upper story torn off. Another tornado moved through Codington County at 4:45 pm CST, killing three and injuring twenty-five. This F4 strength tornado moved northeast from two miles northeast of Henry, passing over Long Lake and ending 2 miles northwest of Florence. The funnel was described as snake-like over Long Lake and massive as it swept through five farms southwest of Florence. Over 100 head of cattle were killed, and about a dozen homes were destroyed. In Day County an estimated F2 moved due north from 4 miles south of Webster, ending 2 miles northeast of Roslyn. This storm passed two miles east of Webster where barns were destroyed, and livestock was killed on a half dozen farms. At 5:15 pm CST a monster of a storm moved northeast from 5 miles south of Summit, passing 3 miles south of Wilmot and ending about 3 miles east of Beardsley, Minnesota. This massive tornado had an estimated width of 1500 yards and traveled 30 miles. Along the path, eight people were killed, and another forty-three were injured. Farm devastation southwest and south of Wilmot was as complete as it could be with some farms reportedly left without even debris on the property. About 15 farms in South Dakota reported F3-F5 damage. From this day, the Red Cross counted 13 dead and 560 people injured across the state.

June 17, 2010: This day will go down as the day with the greatest single-day tornado total in Minnesota history. The 3 EF4 tornadoes in Minnesota were the first tornadoes EF4 or stronger in this state since the Granite Falls tornado on July 25, 2000. This outbreak produced the highest number of tornadoes rated EF4 or greater in one day in Minnesota since the Black Sunday tornado outbreak on April 30, 1967. This was the first EF4 tornado in Freeborn County since the Black Sunday outbreak. The four total EF4 tornadoes across the Upper Midwest on June 17, 2010 (3 in MN, and 1 in ND) were the most in an outbreak in the U.S. since the "Super Tuesday Outbreak" on February 5-6, 2008. The number of tornado fatalities (4) on this day was the highest in Minnesota since July 5, 1978. [Click HERE](#) for an NWS summary.

1859 - Hot Santa Ana winds in southern California roasted fruit on one side at Santa Barbara. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1882 - A tornado traveled more than 200 miles across the state of Iowa killing 130 persons. The tornado touched down about ninety miles west of Grinnell, and struck the town and college around sunset, killing sixty persons, and causing more than half a million dollars damage. Traveling at nearly 60 mph, the tornado hit Mount Pleasant about 11 PM causing another half a million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1946: The third deadliest tornado in Canadian history struck southwestern Ontario from Windsor to Tecumseh. 17 people were killed and hundreds injured. Damage was conservatively estimated at \$1.5 million.

1965 - Holly, CO, was deluged with 11.08 inches of rain to establish a state 24 hour rainfall record. (The Weather Channel)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in Georgia and the Carolinas. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 75 mph at Eden, NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2009: A tornado leveled a house, knocked down power poles and overturned about a dozen railroad cars in Aurora, Nebraska. The tornado is rated EF2, with winds between 111 and 135 mph.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 14 of 67



The Beginning And The End

The Psalms begin with a promise from God and end with a call to praise God. "Blessed is the man!" shouts the author. Any man? Every man? No. Indeed not. Blessed is "the" man who delights in and obeys the Words and the Ways of the Lord.

The Psalms end with a call to "Praise the Lord." Any man? Every man? Yes. Yes, indeed. "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

The first Psalm makes a difference between the godly man and the ungodly man. But the concluding Psalm does not mention the ungodly. Why?

The godly are "like a tree that is planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers." What a beautiful description of the godly: they are happy, have lived a worthwhile life, and will live forever!

But the ungodly? They are pictured with words of hopelessness. "They are like chaff," writes the Psalmist, "that the wind blows away. Therefore, the wicked will stand in judgment, and sinners will not be in the assembly of the righteous." The ungodly will not be safe on Judgment Day. Nor will they be invited to stand among the godly. What a tragedy. What an ending to lives that surely had opportunities to become godly: lives that were misspent, misdirected and mistaken.

No matter what we hear from politicians and social scientists, there are only two classes of people: the saved and the unsaved. And, two ends: heaven and hell.

Prayer: Lord, we pray that the world would hear Your Word and Your voice and accept Your invitation to become godly people. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Bible Verse: Praise the LORD. Psalm 150:1

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 15 of 67

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
-6/20/2022 Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start
07/04/2022 Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start
(4th of July)
07/10/2022 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion
Baseball Tourney
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm
08/05/2022 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/12/2022 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
United Methodist Church VBS 5-8pm
Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot
09/10/2022 Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm
09/11/2022 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm
Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/14/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am (2nd Friday in October)
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2022 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2022 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/12/2022 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 16 of 67

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



News from the Associated Press

Some clinics halting abortions while bracing for Roe's fall

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Abortion providers in some places where the procedure could be banned if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade are bracing for a ruling by halting scheduling for the procedure, transitioning staff to help patients travel to other states and creating networks of clinics that will span across regions of the country.

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, which operates three clinics that provide abortions in the state, is not scheduling the procedure beyond June 25 as it anticipates a late June decision reversing the landmark 1973 decision that guaranteed abortion rights nationwide. The organization in recent weeks has dedicated two staff members to help patients book appointments and figure out how to get to clinics.

Whether clinics in Wisconsin will be able to provide abortions, though, has turned into a day-to-day question.

"One of the hardest aspects of this is not knowing what day this decision will come down and what it will be," said Michelle Velasquez, the director of legal advocacy and services at Planned Parenthood Wisconsin. "The unknown has been difficult."

It's a window into what abortion providers and access funds are planning in more than a dozen other states across the South and Midwest. In South Dakota this week, the state's only abortion clinic, also operated by Planned Parenthood, announced it had "paused" scheduling abortions beyond the end of the month. In Oklahoma, providers already stopped the procedure after a law was enacted to ban it.

In Wisconsin, a law banning abortion has been on the books since 1849, but Roe v. Wade overrode it. While Roe's fall would likely spark a legal tussle over whether it is valid, Planned Parenthood does not want to put its staff at risk of prosecution.

Velasquez said clinic staff wanted to provide abortions in Wisconsin up until the last minute it was legal, but also had to consider that scheduling appointments for dates when it could become illegal could create uncertainty and be "distressing" for patients.

Velasquez acknowledged that the Supreme Court could release its decision as soon as next week, even while Planned Parenthood has appointments on the books. She said if that happened, Planned Parenthood would help those patients book appointments for abortions in nearby states, such as Minnesota and Illinois. Patients could still get counseling, lab work and ultrasounds in Wisconsin in the meantime.

"We wouldn't leave patients, like, 'You're on your own,'" Velasquez said.

"Even if we can't provide the medications or we can't do a procedure, we are absolutely able to help people find the care they need," she added.

The strategy will inevitably put more pressure on providers in states in the region where abortion will still be legal, said Caitlyn Myers, an economic professor at Middlebury College who studies abortion access.

"As hundreds of thousands of women flood out of these states, it is going to enormously tax the resources of these providers," she said. "I don't think they are prepared for this huge influx."

It comes as the number and rates of U.S. abortions is on the rise after a long decline. Abortions increased from 2017 to 2020, according to figures from the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights. It counted more than 930,000 abortions in the U.S. in 2020.

Clinics shuttering, like one did in Idaho recently, or halting scheduling show that a post-Roe reality has already arrived in many places. Myers said getting an appointment for an abortion may soon become "critical" across the country.

Judge: Documents in Sanford investigation should be public

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota judge ruled Thursday that there's no basis to keep sealed documents related to a child pornography investigation of billionaire banker and philanthropist T. Denny

Sanford.

Judge James Power wrote that affidavits supporting search warrants should be made public under South Dakota law. But he said they would remain sealed until Sanford and his attorneys decide whether to appeal the ruling to the state Supreme Court.

Sanford attorney Stacy Hegge asked Power in an email last month to keep the affidavits sealed or at least be given additional time in order to seek relief from the Supreme Court. Hegge didn't immediately reply to an email Thursday.

The South Dakota attorney general's office declined to file charges against Sanford following the investigation, saying it found no "prosecutable offenses" within the state's jurisdiction, according to a court document filed last month.

South Dakota investigators in 2019 began searching Sanford's email account, as well as his cellular and internet service providers, for possible possession of child pornography after his accounts were flagged by a technology firm.

The investigation was first reported in 2020 by ProPublica and the Argus Leader. Both news outlets went to court for access to affidavits.

The 86-year-old Sanford is the state's richest man, worth an estimated \$3.4 billion.

Forest Service, Nez Perce Tribe sign deal on Idaho forests

KEITH RIDLER Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The Nez Perce Tribe and U.S. Forest Service have signed an agreement allowing the two to team up on projects in the 6,250-square-mile (16,000-square-kilometer) Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests in north-central Idaho.

The Forest Service said Wednesday that the agreement through the Good Neighbor Authority will initially focus on fuels reduction projects to reduce wildfire threats.

Plans include heritage surveys and other projects important to the federally-recognized tribe on lands it ceded to the U.S. in the 1800s. Tribal members retain hunting, fishing and gathering rights on the ceded lands.

The Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service to enter into agreements with states, counties and tribes to collaborate on restoration work on Forest Service land. It was launched in 2001 and expanded in 2018 to include tribes and counties.

The Nez Perce agreement is the first tribal agreement in the Forest Service's Northern Region, which includes national forests in northern Idaho, Montana and northeastern Washington. The region also includes national grasslands in North Dakota and South Dakota.

"The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests are among the homelands of the Nez Perce Tribe and we share a common interest in healthy and resilient ecosystems," said Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Supervisor Cheryl Probert in a statement. "The Good Neighbor Authority is a great tool for helping us co-steward these important lands."

The tribe manages about 90 square miles (230 square kilometers) of forest on its reservation in north-central Idaho that generates income for essential tribal government services.

"The Nez Perce Tribe has been a steward of its land and resources since time immemorial," said Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Chairman Samuel N. Penney in a statement. "The GNA agreement is an affirmation of the Tribe's expertise in managing our homelands and is an additional intergovernmental tool to improve watershed health for fish and wildlife habitat, treat insect-infected and disease-infected trees, and reduce hazardous fuels."

Idaho has also partnered with the U.S. Forest Service under the Good Neighbor Authority for logging and restoration projects, signing the first agreement in 2016. The program allows state participation in federal timber sales to pay for restoration work on private, state and federal lands.

Residents in storm-damaged Castledwood still recovering

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 19 of 67

CASTLEWOOD, S.D. (AP) — Residents of a small community in northeastern South Dakota are still recovering from a wave of destructive storms a month ago.

Piles of debris and broken tree limbs sit on the edge of town in Castlewood, a community of about 600 near Watertown. Some homes and buildings show fresh wood from repairs, while in other places a hole in the ground is the only sign of a former structure.

Fallen trees with upturned roots are everywhere, and debris still litters some yards, South Dakota Public Broadcasting reported.

According to the National Weather Service, 16 tornadoes hit eastern South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota on May 12. Castlewood was hit by an EF2 tornado that packed winds of 120 mph and stayed on the ground for about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers).

Mayor Brian Ries says they are still assessing the extent of the damage in town.

"We've come a long ways," Ries said. "We've got a lot of cleanup to do yet, a lot of rebuilding process to go through. I think most people's mentality right now is one day at a time type of thing."

In total, around 20 structures in Castlewood are destroyed while another 80 are damaged. No one died in Castlewood or suffered major injuries in the tornado.

The school district's building, which houses preschool to senior high students, was one of the hardest hit locations in town. Superintendent Peter Books says almost half the school, specifically the elementary wing, is structurally unsound.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's preliminary estimates report a total of \$6.7 million in public infrastructure damages from the storm across 20 counties and two reservations. It's not clear how much assistance the federal agency will provide.

South Dakota senators silent on AG impeachment vote

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — State senators are staying silent on how they will vote in South Dakota's first-ever impeachment trial next week, as they weigh whether to remove Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg for his conduct surrounding a 2020 fatal car crash.

The Associated Press asked each of the 35 members of the Republican-controlled Senate whether they had made a decision on the two impeachment charges that will be argued starting Tuesday. None of the 20 who responded said they had reached a decision. Most likened themselves to jurors or judges who must give a fair hearing in an ordeal that has fractured the state's Republican Party and galvanized public opinion.

"Everybody's keeping an objective mind and going into it with their eyes wide open," said Republican Sen. Erin Tobin.

It will take 24 senators, or two-thirds, to convict Ravnsborg, a first-term Republican who isn't seeking reelection, on either of two articles of impeachment: committing crimes that caused the death of pedestrian Joseph Boever and malfeasance afterward.

The circumstances surrounding the two-day trial may have already tipped some senators as they review crash investigation files and material from the House impeachment investigation. Ravnsborg's defense hasn't submitted any documents, so everything they have looked at likely works in the prosecution's favor.

"It would be hard for anyone to look at that information and not come to a conclusion," said Republican Sen. Michael Rohl. "We haven't seen a defense."

Rohl said he hasn't made up his mind. Most of his questions are for Ravnsborg, who has not said whether he will testify.

Other senators have had less time to do their homework on the crash investigation. Republican Sen. Ryan Maher said he is already "agitated" because he will have to take a two-day break from running a new business to spend long hours in a Senate chamber likely baking in the summer heat. Lawmakers usually meet during the winter months, making air conditioning or cooling ventilation unnecessary.

"It's going to be hot and we're just going to sit there and sweat," Maher said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 20 of 67

He said he did not know how he would vote, but said if Ravensborg is convicted, he would probably vote to bar him from holding any future state office "just because he's wasting my time now when he should have resigned."

Other senators said they were looking forward to a trial as a public reckoning over crash details that have emerged in fits and starts in the 21 months since Ravensborg struck Boever as he drove home from a Republican gathering.

Ravnsborg has said he did not know he killed a man until he returned to the crash site the next day and discovered Boever's body. He initially told a 911 dispatcher he was in the middle of the road and hit "something." He later said he thought he hit a deer or other animal and has insisted that neither he nor a sheriff who came to the scene could find what was hit in the dark. Investigators said they doubted some of Ravensborg's statements.

"I am going to try and understand what really happened," Republican Sen. Arthur Rusch said in an email. "How did he get on the shoulder — how did he not see Mr. Boever — how did he not see his face in his windshield. How did neither the AG or the sheriff see the body when they walked right by it."

During the House impeachment investigation, Ravensborg's defense centered on the constitutional grounds for impeachment and whether the two traffic misdemeanors, to which he pleaded no contest last year, were any reason to impeach him. He has also charged that Gov. Kristi Noem "politically weaponized" the crash to drive him from office.

Noem pressed the impeachment process along. After her administration argued for his removal, impeachment squeaked out of the House by a single vote. In the Senate, where it would require a two-thirds majority to convict Ravensborg, lawmakers have usually been on the same page with the governor.

The political realities will certainly bear on senators' minds, said Jon Schaff, a political science professor at Northern State University.

"One would have to be naive to conclude that there's not at least some political element going on," he said. "What do constituents think and what does the governor think?"

Republican Sen. V.J. Smith said he has been careful not to comment on the trial out of fairness, even as dozens of people in his community have asked him about it. But he said he's reminded of Boever's death every time he passes the spot where he died on U.S. Highway 14.

"It never really leaves you," he said. "We're all looking for closure of a tragic situation."

T-shirts? Ice cream? Retailers cash in on Juneteenth

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Retailers and marketers have been quick to commemorate Juneteenth with an avalanche of merchandise from ice cream to T-shirts to party cups.

But many are getting backlash on social media for what critics say undermines the day, designated as a federal holiday last year to honor the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. A search for Juneteenth items among online sellers like Amazon and J.C. Penney produced everything from toothpicks with pan-African flags to party plates and balloons.

Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, apologized last month after getting slammed for a Juneteenth ice cream flavor — swirled red velvet and cheesecake — under its store label Great Value. Walmart said it's reviewing its product assortment and will remove items "as appropriate." As of Thursday, Walmart's site was still offering lots of T-shirts and party plates.

Meanwhile, the Indianapolis Children's Museum removed a Juneteenth watermelon salad from its menu and issued a mea culpa earlier this week. In a statement posted on its Facebook page, the museum blamed a lapse in vendor oversight, noting the label and salad were not reviewed by museum staff.

"We are an imperfect institution, but we are committed to improvement and will work tirelessly to regain your trust," the museum wrote on its Facebook page.

The backlash comes as companies promised after the police killing of George Floyd in May of 2020 to no longer stay silent and vowed to take an active role in confronting and educating customers and employees

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 21 of 67

on systemic racism. According to the preliminary results of a survey by Mercer of 200 employers, 33% are offering Juneteenth as a paid holiday to their staff. That's up from 9% last year in a survey of more than 400 companies conducted shortly before Juneteenth was declared a federal holiday.

At the same time, many have cashed in on a holiday that Black Americans have observed since June 19, 1865, when Union Major General Gordon Granger proclaimed freedom for enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, in alignment with President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation.

Many experts believe that if retailers and other marketers plan to recognize the day, they should either sell merchandise from Black-owned businesses or invest in campaigns that would help Black communities. Amazon, for instance, does have a Black-owned business storefront that's live all year-round for customers who want to support and shop Black-owned businesses selling on the site.

"This is a serious and reflective moment — I am excited and grateful for the recognition," said Ramon Manning, chairman of the board at Emancipation Park Conservancy, a nonprofit organization aimed to restore the park, which was purchased in 1872 by a group of former enslaved people to commemorate the anniversary of their emancipation.

"However, I feel like it is also brought back everybody else out of the woodwork who are opportunists more so than folks who are looking at the history of this country and looking at where a group of people have come from," he added.

Manning, who is also founder and chairman of Ridgegate Capital, a private investment fund, further wondered: "Who is this going to benefit?"

Sheryl Daija, founder and CEO of Bridge, a group of marketing and diversity, equity and inclusion executives, noted there's a disconnect between the seriousness of the holiday and the merchandise on display.

"A lot of companies have good intentions, but unfortunately good intentions can go awry, and this is what we have seen," said Daija, who found Walmart's Juneteenth ice cream particularly egregious because it used the holiday moniker to brand a new ice cream flavor.

Companies have a long history of commercializing holidays and other moments in order to cash in. Take Cinco de Mayo, which has become in the U.S. a celebration of all things Mexican, with companies selling everything from beans to beer to sombrero hats. The holiday has spread from the American Southwest, even though most have no idea about its original ties to the U.S. Civil War, abolition and promotion of civil rights for Blacks. In fact, it's often mistaken for Mexican Independence day.

Meanwhile, every October, retailers are awash in pink merchandise to celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness month, but critics say many make misleading claims about supporting cancer groups. And Memorial Day, a federal holiday day designated to mourn the U.S. military who have died while serving in the U.S. armed forces, has morphed into all-day mattress sales at stores.

But what makes the move by companies to cash in on Juneteenth worse is that it comes as the U.S. remains fraught with racial tensions, said Darnise Martin, clinical associate professor of African American studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

"It is weird to merchandise around it, but that's what America does," Martin said.

UK govt approves extradition of Assange; he plans to appeal

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government on Friday ordered the extradition of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to the United States to face spying charges — a milestone, but not the end of the decade-long legal saga.

WikiLeaks said it would challenge the order, and has 14 days to lodge an appeal.

Home Secretary Priti Patel signed the order authorizing Assange's extradition to the U.S., where he faces charges over WikiLeaks' publication of a huge trove of classified documents.

The decision was referred to Patel after a British court ruled in April that Assange could be sent to the U.S., where he faces trial on 17 charges of espionage and one charge of computer misuse. American prosecutors say Assange unlawfully helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal classified

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 22 of 67

diplomatic cables and military files that WikiLeaks later published, putting lives at risk.

The Home Office said in a statement that "the U.K. courts have not found that it would be oppressive, unjust or an abuse of process to extradite Mr. Assange," and so the government had to approve the extradition.

"Nor have they found that extradition would be incompatible with his human rights, including his right to a fair trial and to freedom of expression, and that whilst in the U.S. he will be treated appropriately, including in relation to his health," it said.

Supporters and lawyers for Assange, 50, argue that he was acting as a journalist and is entitled to First Amendment protections of freedom of speech for publishing documents that exposed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan. They argue that his case is politically motivated and that he cannot get a fair trial in the U.S.

"Today is not the end of the fight. It is only the beginning of a new legal battle," said Assange's wife, Stella Assange. She said the U.K. decision marked "a dark day for press freedom and for British democracy."

"Julian did nothing wrong," she said. "He has committed no crime and is not a criminal. He is a journalist and a publisher, and he is being punished for doing his job."

A British judge approved the extradition in April, leaving the final decision to the government. The ruling came after a legal battle that went all the way to the U.K. Supreme Court.

A British district court judge had initially rejected the extradition request on the grounds that Assange was likely to kill himself if held under harsh U.S. prison conditions. U.S. authorities later provided assurances that the WikiLeaks founder wouldn't face the severe treatment that his lawyers said would put his physical and mental health at risk. Those assurances led Britain's High Court and Supreme Court to overturn the lower court's ruling.

Journalism organizations and human rights groups had called on Britain to refuse the extradition request. Assange's lawyers say he could face up to 175 years in jail if he is convicted in the U.S., though American authorities have said any sentence is likely to be much lower than that.

Amnesty International Secretary General Agnes Callamard said Friday that extraditing Assange "would put him at great risk and sends a chilling message to journalists the world over."

"If the extradition proceeds, Amnesty International is extremely concerned that Assange faces a high risk of prolonged solitary confinement, which would violate the prohibition on torture or other ill treatment," she said. "Diplomatic assurances provided by the US that Assange will not be kept in solitary confinement cannot be taken on face value given previous history."

Assange has been held at Britain's high-security Belmarsh Prison in London since 2019, when he was arrested for skipping bail during a separate legal battle. Before that, he spent seven years inside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden to face allegations of rape and sexual assault.

Sweden dropped the sex crimes investigations in November 2019 because so much time had elapsed.

In March Assange and his partner Stella Moris, who have two sons together, married in a prison ceremony.

EU Commission backs candidate status for Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The executive arm of the European Union recommended Friday that Ukraine be granted candidate status to one day join the 27-nation bloc.

The promise of membership in a union created to safeguard peace on the continent holds deep symbolism for the nation at war. But it is only the first step in a process that could take decades.

And it didn't silence the guns and artillery that continue to kill civilians and flatten cities as well as sending millions fleeing from their homes since Russia launched its invasion of its neighbor on Feb. 24.

Russia pressed its attacks on cities in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, leaving desperate residents struggling to make sense of what the next years hold for them.

"We are old people, we do not have a place to go. Where will I go?" asked Vira Miedientseva, one of the elderly residents grappling with the aftermath of an attack Thursday in Lysychansk, which lies just across the river from Sievierodonesk, a key focus of battles in recent weeks that Russians have nearly captured.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 23 of 67

The European Commission recommendation is the first step on the long road toward membership and comes a day after four European Union leaders vowed to back Kyiv's candidacy. The recommendation will be discussed by leaders of the 27-nation bloc during a summit next week in Brussels. Launching accession talks requires unanimous approval from all member countries.

The war has increased pressure on EU governments to fast-track Ukraine's candidate status. But the process still is expected to take years, and EU members remain divided over how quickly and fully to open their arms to new members.

In other developments:

— The Ukrainian navy claimed Friday that it struck a Russian boat carrying air defense systems to a strategic island in the Black Sea. In a statement on social media, the navy said that the Vasily Bekh was used to transport ammunition, weapons and personnel to Snake Island, which is vital for protecting sea lanes out of the key port of Odesa. It did not say how much damage it inflicted with the strike.

Snake Island, located some 35 kilometers (20 miles) off the coast, figured memorably early in the war when Ukrainian border guards stationed there defied Russian orders to surrender, using colorful language that later became a rallying cry. There was no immediate reaction from Russian authorities about the Ukrainian claim.

Watergate 50th meets Jan. 6. Common thread: Thirst for power

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The wreckage of Watergate and Jan. 6 are a half-century apart yet rooted in the same ancient thirst for power at any cost.

Two presidents, wily and profane, tried an end run around democracy.

Mysteries from both affairs endure as the House inquiry into the Jan. 6, 2021, uprising at the Capitol intersects with this week's Watergate 50th anniversary.

Is there a smoking gun to be found in Donald Trump's deceptions? Or did we already see it when he summoned angry supporters to a "wild" time in Washington, called for them to "fight like hell" and mused that perhaps his vice president — one of the few "no" men in his compliant cabal — should be hanged like the insurrectionists demanded?

Trump had lost the election and sought to cling to power. But Nixon? A key question may be why he even bothered to go rogue.

Nixon was on a comfortable path to reelection when bumbling burglars tied to his campaign committee broke into Democratic Party headquarters at the Watergate office building 50 years ago Friday and got caught.

The chapter-upon-chapter exposure of his cover-up and efforts to obstruct justice drove him from office nearly two years later when he quit rather than face a likely conviction in an impeachment trial. Three Republican leaders from Congress went to the White House and helped convince him that he was doomed.

In contrast, Trump was desperate, having convincingly lost the 2020 election when he dispatched his own bumbler — lawyers, aides, hangers-on — as well as the violent mob at the Capitol on a quest to upend the results and keep him in office. Few in his party publicly urged him to accept defeat.

Watergate is the American presidential scandal by which all others are measured. It brought down a president. Yet Jan. 6 was the one that spilled blood.

Watergate had a powerful afterburn, leading to Republicans being tossed out of Congress by the dozens in 1974. This time, there is near unanimity that the party will make gains.

Michael Dobbs, author of "King Richard: Nixon and Watergate — An American Tragedy" from 2021, said the system worked in Watergate because Congress, the courts and the press did their job in establishing a chain of criminal activity that led Nixon to resign.

"The system was under stress then," he said, "but is under much greater stress today."

When the Senate Watergate committee conducted its landmark hearings starting in May 1973, inflation was heading toward 9% by year's end, about where it is now. The stock market crashed. Then as now,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 24 of 67

people had pressing distractions.

But Americans were riveted by the spectacle of a president sinking slowly into disgrace. More than 70% told a Gallup poll they watched the televised hearings that spread over nearly three months of that summer.

The Jan. 6 hearings, to date, are less about investigators discovering new facts than about showing and telling what they've already found out in months of methodical work.

To Dobbs, evidence of Trump's direct involvement in planning or inciting the riot with the intention of overturning the election would constitute a Nixonian smoking gun.

The challenge for the Jan. 6 inquiry and any prosecution that may follow is "the ambiguous nature of Trump's statements from a legal point of view," he said. "Fight like hell" can be interpreted in different ways."

In releasing previously recorded testimony from close associates of Trump, the panel has exposed the extent to which Trump's circle knew his case about a stolen election was a sham. Even his daughter Ivanka Trump wasn't buying it.

Trump's attorney general, William Barr, testified that the president's arguments were "detached from reality" if he really believes them.

Harsh words but to what effect?

Trump's election denialism courses through the campaigns of far-right Republicans in the 2022 midterm election season, some prevailing in their primaries. The hearings will in no way be the last word on Trump's lies.

"Trump is constitutionally unable to let criticism pass," said Southern Methodist University political scholar Cal Jillson. "So expect a rising tide of recriminations, a lengthening enemies list and a program of retribution stretching out into the future.

"Other Republican leaders will ponder the damage this might do to the party," he added, "but, as yet, there are no Howard Bakers on the horizon."

Baker personified the politics of the time in Congress, partisan but not poisonous. He was the Rep. Liz Cheney of the day, but on his way up in the Republican Party, not an outcast from it like the endangered Wyoming congresswoman, who is fierce in her disdain for Trump and fellow Republicans who won't cross him.

Baker expressed instinctive loyalty to Nixon at first — "I'm your friend," he recalled telling him face to face when the hearings started. But as the top Republican on the Watergate panel, he listened, questioned, dug in over the hundreds of hours of hearings and saw the corruption.

His famous question — "What did the president know and when did he know it?" — was actually posed as a tentative defense of the president, because Baker expected the answer to be not much.

"I believed that it was a political ploy of the Democrats, that it would come to nothing," Baker told The Associated Press in 1992. "But a few weeks into that, it began to dawn on me that there was more to it than I thought, and more to it than I liked."

The persistence and gravity of his questioning made the mild-mannered Tennessee senator an unlikely heartthrob. Love letters poured into his office. A women's magazine called him "studly."

The Watergate committee of four Democrats and three Republicans was formed by a unanimous vote in the Senate, unheard of today on almost any issue of substance. It was charged with probing the Watergate affair and "all other illegal, improper, or unethical conduct" in the 1972 campaign.

The House Jan. 6 committee, in contrast, was formed on a 222-190 vote. The only two Republicans who voted for the committee, Cheney and retiring Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, were put on it.

Where Trump loudly proclaimed his grievances and provocations, Nixon sounded off in private, or what he thought was private. It was the White House taping system that Nixon had installed for posterity that damned him, when the Supreme Court forced him to turn over the tapes.

In a June 23, 1972, conversation six days after the burglary, Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, is heard recommending to Nixon that the FBI be told to drop its investigation of the break-in before the bureau could trace the crime to the White House or Nixon himself.

"There's some business here we don't want you going any further on," Haldeman suggested the FBI chief be told.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 25 of 67

"Mm-hmm," Nixon said. "Mm-hmm."

"Alright, fine," Nixon concluded. "Play it tough. That's the way they play it, and that's the way we're going to play it."

That was the smoking gun, a bullet flying for the purpose of obstructing justice.

A day after the break-in, the AP reported that one of the burglars was a paid security official of the Nixon campaign, the first tentative tie to the president and one that surprised police and prosecutors.

Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein later confirmed the report for The Washington Post before going on to bulldoze everyone else with their blockbuster Watergate exclusives pinning the cover-up directly on the president.

The heroes of Watergate, Bernstein now says, were not primarily the journalists who exposed Nixon's misdeeds or the Democrats who led the charge but "Republicans who had the courage to say this is not about ideology, this is about illegality."

All these years later, it remains unknown who ordered the break-in. There is no evidence that Nixon did so directly, though there is no ambiguity over the fact he mounted a coverup and otherwise played dirty.

Nixon created the "paranoid culture" that spawned Watergate, Dobbs said. "The conspiracy took on a life of its own, driven forward by crazy operators like Gordon Liddy anticipating the president's wishes."

Fifty years from now, what will Americans say about Jan. 6?

Historian Michael Beschloss, in Twitter commentary about the hearings, said the answer depends on whether America by then is a democracy or autocracy. "If the latter, the nation's authoritarian leaders might celebrate January 6 as one of great days in U.S. history," as Trump has described it now.

He also asked a question that can never be definitively answered.

"What would have happened to our country if the January 6 coup had succeeded?"

Biden hosts climate meeting amid high gas price pressure

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden, who has recently been focused on boosting oil production to reduce rising gas costs, will turn his attention to climate change on Friday when he convenes a virtual meeting of some of the world's biggest economies.

Among the participants will be China, Germany, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Also present will be Egypt, which is hosting the next United Nations summit on climate change, and the U.N. secretary general, António Guterres.

The conference is known as the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, and it began under President Barack Obama in 2009.

The White House said the meeting is a "continuation of the president's efforts to use all levers to tackle the global climate crisis." Senior administration officials, who were not authorized to comment publicly before the event, said Biden would use the opportunity to prod his counterparts to adopt additional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Among the priorities are slashing methane leaks and getting more zero-emission vehicles on the roads.

The officials said they expect some of the countries to announce more ambitious climate targets as part of the landmark agreement reached in Paris in 2015.

But the Russian invasion of Ukraine has scrambled Biden's climate goals by driving up the cost of gasoline. Facing political pressure to get prices under control in a midterm election year, the Democratic president has urged U.S. oil refiners to produce more fuel.

Biden also is also expected to visit Saudi Arabia next month. The White House recently praised the kingdom after OPEC+ announced that it would pump more oil to boost the global supply.

EXPLAINER: Why is China denying Hong Kong was a UK colony?

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 26 of 67

BEIJING (AP) — Hong Kong is preparing to introduce new middle school textbooks that will deny the Chinese territory was ever a British colony. China's Communist rulers say the semi-autonomous city and the nearby former Portuguese colony of Macao were merely occupied by foreign powers and that China never relinquished sovereignty over them.

It's not a new position for China, but the move is a further example of Beijing's determination to enforce its interpretation of history and events and inculcate patriotism as it tightens its grip over Hong Kong following massive protests demanding democracy in 2019.

"Hong Kong has been Chinese territory since ancient times," says one new textbook seen by the AP. "While Hong Kong was occupied by the British following the Opium War, it remained Chinese territory."

It is one of four sets of textbooks being offered to schools to replace those currently in use, all stating the same position, Hong Kong's South China Morning Post newspaper reported earlier this week.

WAS HONG KONG A COLONY?

Hong Kong was a British colony from 1841 until its handover to Chinese rule in 1997, with the exception of Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945. Its colonial status was the result of a pair of 19th century treaties signed at the end of the first and second Opium Wars, along with the granting of a 99-year lease in 1898 to the New Territories, which greatly expanded the size of the colony.

China's Communist Party, which seized power during a civil war in 1949, says it never recognized what it calls the "unequal treaties" that the former Qing Dynasty was compelled to sign following military defeats.

In the late 20th century — with China unwilling to extend the lease on the New Territories, and the colony not viable without them — Britain entered into protracted and often contentious negotiations with Beijing over conditions for the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule.

Ultimately, China took control of Hong Kong in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" arrangement that would keep the city's economic, political and judicial systems distinct from those in mainland China for 50 years. That was laid out in a 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration registered with the United Nations, although China now refuses to recognize the agreement.

HAS THIS ISSUE COME UP BEFORE?

In 1972, just months after the China seat at the United Nations was transferred to Beijing from the Republic of China government that fled to Taiwan during the civil war, the government acted to remove Hong Kong and Macao, which reverted to Chinese rule in 1999, from a U.N. list of colonies, effectively stripping them of their right to self-determination.

At a time when European nations had granted independence to other colonies, China feared the same could happen to the British and Portuguese enclaves it wanted back. "The settlement of the questions of Hong Kong and Macao is entirely within China's sovereign right and does not at all fall under the ordinary category of 'Colonial Territories,'" China's representative said at the time.

Mary Gallagher, who teaches Chinese studies at the University of Michigan, said then-Chinese leader Mao Zedong wanted to ensure that Hong Kong would remain part of China. "So Hong Kong moves between the Chinese empire and the British empire, but loses its right to determine its own future," she said.

WHY IS HONG KONG CHANGING TEXTBOOKS NOW?

The new textbooks are part of broader changes to education following the 2019 protests, in which many students participated and some played leadership roles.

The texts are for liberal studies classes, which the government overhauled last year after pro-Beijing lawmakers and supporters said they encouraged opposition and activist thought. The classes now focus on themes such as national security, patriotism and identity.

The textbooks promote the official view that the protest movement was the result of foreign agitation and threatened national security. The Beijing government used such arguments to pass a sweeping National Security Law for Hong Kong in 2020 curtailing free speech, criticism of authorities and political opposition.

Authorities have launched a National Security Education Day on April 15, with students encouraged to learn more about national security and take part in educational activities that emphasize the importance of protecting China.

WHERE IS THIS LEADING?

The new textbooks are part of a push to bring Hong Kong's institutional values more closely in line with those of mainland China, especially in the areas of politics and history. Increasingly, Chinese leader Xi Jinping is imposing his vision of strongly nationalistic and increasingly authoritarian rule on the region.

China has sought to eradicate any memory of the military's 1989 bloody suppression of student-led protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square, citing pandemic concerns to ban once huge public commemorations in Hong Kong on the June 4 anniversary.

"The Communist Party has a monopoly of the truth and of history in China," said Steve Tsang, a Chinese politics specialist at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. "In the Xi approach to history, facts are merely incidental. Only interpretation matters. And only one interpretation is allowed."

Alabama church shooting kills 2, wounds 1; suspect detained

VESTAVIA HILLS, Ala. (AP) — A gunman opened fire inside a suburban Alabama church, killing two people and wounding a third at a small group meeting before being taken into custody Thursday, authorities said.

The attack occurred at Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church in the Birmingham suburb of Vestavia Hills, said Police Capt. Shane Ware. He said emergency dispatchers got a call at around 6:20 p.m. reporting an active shooter at the church.

A suspect was detained and the wounded victim was being treated at a hospital, Ware said at a press conference late Thursday. Police declined to identify the suspect or the victims, or provide further details on the attack, and said another briefing was planned Friday.

At an earlier news conference, Ware had said one person was killed and two others hospitalized.

The church's website listed a "Boomers Potluck" for Thursday night. "There will be no program, simply eat and have time for fellowship," the flyer read.

Thursday's shooting took place just over a month after one person was killed and five injured when a man opened fire on Taiwanese parishioners at a church in Southern California. It also comes nearly seven years to the day after an avowed white supremacist killed nine people during Bible study at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

In Vestavia Hills, investigators remained at the scene hours past nightfall, with yellow police tape cordoning off the church complex and emergency police and fire vehicles with flashing lights blocking the route to the church. The FBI, U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco and Explosives dispatched agents to the scene.

Nearby, people huddled and prayed.

The Rev. Kelley Hudlow, an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Alabama, told broadcast outlet WBRC the shooting stunned the church and the community at large.

"It is shocking. Saint Stephen's is a community built on love and prayers and grace and they are going to come together," she said in a live interview with the station. "People of all faiths are coming together to pray to hope for healing."

She said supportive messages were coming in from all over the U.S. and the world. "We need everybody out there. Pray, think, meditate and send love to this community because we are going to need all of it," she said.

There have been several high-profile shootings in May and June, starting with a racist attack on May 14 that killed 10 Black people at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York. The following week, a gunman massacred 19 children and two adults at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

On Saturday thousands of people rallied in the U.S. and at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to renew calls for stricter gun control measures. Survivors of mass shootings and other incidents of gun violence lobbied legislators and testified on Capitol Hill earlier this month.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey issued a statement late Thursday lamenting what she called the shocking and tragic loss of life at the church. Although she said she was glad to hear the suspect was in custody, she wrote: "This should never happen — in a church, in a store, in the city or anywhere."

Vestavia Hills is a residential community just southeast of Birmingham, one of Alabama's two most

populous cities.

As Po dries up, Italy's food and energy supplies are at risk

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA Associated Press

BORETTO, Italy (AP) — Water is so low in large stretches of Italy's largest river that local residents are walking through the middle of the expanse of sand and shipwrecks are resurfacing.

Authorities fear that if it doesn't rain soon, there'll be a serious shortage of water for drinking and irrigation for farmers and local populations across the whole of northern Italy.

In a park near the central northern village of Gualtieri, cyclists and hikers stop in curiosity to observe the Zibello, a 50-meter long (164 feet) barge that transported wood during the second world war but sank in 1943. It is normally covered by the Po's waters.

"It's the first time that we can see this barge," said amateur cyclist Raffaele Vezzali as he got off the pedals to stare at the rusted ship. Vezzali was only partially surprised, though, as he knew that the lack of winter rain caused the river to reach record low levels.

But the curiosities of a resurfaced wartime boat and wide sandy beaches do little to mask the disruption this will cause for local residents and farmers.

The drying up of the Po, which runs 652 kilometers (405 miles) from the northwestern city of Turin to Venice, is jeopardizing drinking water in Italy's densely populated and highly industrialized districts and threatening irrigation in the most intensively farmed part of the country, known as the Italian food valley.

Northern Italy hasn't seen rainfall for more than 110 days and this year's snowfall is down by 70%. Aquifers, which hold groundwater, are depleted. Temperatures of 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above season average are melting the tiny snowfields and glaciers that were left on the top of the surrounding Alps, leaving the Po basin without its summer water reservoirs.

All these factors are triggering the worst drought in 70 years, according to the Po River Basin Authority.

"We are in a situation where the river flow is approximately 300 cubic meters (80,000 gallons) per second here in (the riverside village of) Boretto, while normally in this area we have almost 1800 (cubic meters, 476,000 gallons)," explained Meuccio Berselli, secretary general of the Po River Basin Authority.

The authority is constantly monitoring the river flow but there is very little hope that weather will help. The downpours that occurred in the month of June were extreme but highly localized and weren't absorbed by the land and didn't reach the Po and its aquifers.

Berselli is frantically working on a resiliency plan to guarantee drinking and irrigation water to millions of households and to the Po valley farmers, who produce 40% of Italian food. Parmesan cheese, wheat, and high-quality tomatoes, rice and renowned grapes grow in huge quantities in the area.

The resilience plan includes higher draining from Alpine lakes, less water for hydroelectric plants and rationing of water in the upstream regions.

The Po drought comes at a time when farmers are already pushing both irrigation and watering systems to their maximum to counter the effect of high temperatures and hot winds.

Martina Codeluppi, a 27-year-old farmer from the tiny rural town of Guastalla, says her fields are entirely irrigated with the water coming from the Po and are already suffering due to the lack of winter and spring rain. She said she's expecting a "disastrous year."

"With such high temperatures... with no rain, and it seems that there won't be rain in the coming days, the situation is catastrophic," said Codeluppi, as she walked through her family's fields. She's proudly growing pumpkins, watermelons, wheat, and grapes on farmland passed down through the family, but she's extremely concerned about what this year's harvests will yield.

"We believe that there will be a drop in this wheat productivity by at least 20% or more due to the lack of rain and irrigation," she said. The Italian farmers confederation estimates that wheat yields could drop by 20% to 40% this year. Wheat is a particular concern for farmers as it's completely reliant on rain and does not get irrigated.

The irrigation system is also at risk. Usually, river water is lifted with diesel fueled electric pumps to up-

per basins and then flows down in the vast fields of the valley through hundreds of waterways. But now, pumps are at risk of failing to draw water and excavators are frantically working to constantly dredge dedicated waterways to ensure the water necessary for irrigation.

The water shortage won't just hamper food production, but energy generation, too. If the Po dries up, numerous hydroelectric power plants will be brought to a halt, at a time where the war in Ukraine has already hiked up energy prices across Europe.

According to a state-owned energy service system operator, 55% of the renewable energy coming from hydroelectric plants in Italy comes from the Po and its tributaries. Experts fear that a lack of hydroelectric power will contribute to increased carbon dioxide emissions, as more electricity will have to be produced with natural gas.

"On the top of the critical situation we are creating an additional damaging situation," said the Po river authority's Berselli about the likely surge of greenhouse gas emissions.

Amid Ukraine's war, a farmer takes comfort in her snails

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

VERESNYA, Ukraine (AP) — The Ukrainian farmer was living a quiet life with the quietest of creatures: snails that she raises for export. Then, skies on the horizon turned flaming red. Russia had launched its invasion and nearby towns were burning.

Olena Avramenko's village of Veresnya, northwest of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, was quickly occupied by Russian forces. But her snails were too precious to leave.

So she stayed, sheltering in her basement and cooking meals of snails — snail ravioli, fried snails, snails with garlic butter — for herself and the eight other people she took in.

The war's disruption to exports of grain and other crops from Ukraine that feed the world has captured global attention and sent bread prices soaring across the world. But the production of other, more niche foodstuffs has also been impacted.

Before the war threw Ukrainian life and its economy into a tailspin, farmers and artisans in the country were successfully trying their hands not just with snails but also with oysters, edible frogs, vegetable-based milks, craft beers, cheeses and other products for European markets.

Avramenko and her son, Anton, turned to snail farming five years ago. He sold everything to invest in the business, which at the time was seen as a risky, exotic business in Ukraine. For them, it was an adventure, something new to learn. They exported the snails to Spanish restaurants and Avramenko realized she had found her calling.

"I stayed to protect our farm and home," she said. "If I hadn't done it, nothing would have been left."

In France, where snails are eaten piping hot with oozing garlic butter or mixed into pates, importers had noticed Ukrainian snails making inroads into the market. Exports to the European Union of raw Ukrainian snails more than doubled between 2017 and 2021, from 347 tons to 844 tons.

"But this number could be underestimated," said Pierre Commere of the French agro-industry group Adepale. "For several years now there has been a long-running crisis in the snail industry. It has become more and more difficult to find snails and prices are rising."

During the Russian occupation of her village, Avramenko found another calling: taking her mind off the war by dreaming up new recipes for snails when peace returned.

Her son, luckily, was not in Veresnya when the Russian invasion started on Feb. 24 and he couldn't immediately get back. But Russian soldiers didn't seem interested in their snails. They did come searching for fuel, smashing a window and asking Avramenko for her keys.

She gently scolded them for breaking and entering. One of them asked her to forgive him.

Russian forces pulled out of Veresnya at the end of March, part of a general withdrawal from the north and around Kyiv to head out for a massive Russian offensive on Ukraine's east and south, where the fighting still rages. Many villages in the Kyiv area were littered with bodies and international experts are working there to document suspected war crimes.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 30 of 67

Her son called the day after the Russian pullout and said they'd get straight back to work. He said because the war delayed the start of the snail-rearing season, their business will at best only break even this year. But he didn't want their seasonal workers to have no income. And a return to the slow pace of snail farming, he felt, will do everyone some good.

"I was somewhere between fear and collapse when he said that," Avramenko said. "But it was the right thing to do. You need to do something to overcome the state of shock. If not, you can easily lose your mind."

Palestinians say 3 killed during Israeli raid in West Bank

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli forces shot dead three Palestinians and wounded eight others early Friday during a military operation in the occupied West Bank town of Jenin, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. The military said the troops traded fire with militants.

The Israeli military has been carrying out near-daily raids in the occupied West Bank since a string of attacks earlier this year killed 19 people in Israel. Many of the arrest raids have been launched in and around Jenin, the hometown of several of the attackers.

The military said it raided two locations in search of weapons. At the first, it says soldiers fired back after Palestinians opened fire and hurled explosive devices at them. On their way to the second location, they exchanged fire with Palestinian gunmen in a vehicle, the army said.

The military did not say whether any of the militants were killed. It said the troops confiscated rifles, a submachine gun and other equipment from inside the vehicle.

Heavy exchanges of gunfire could be heard in videos circulated on social media. Later, footage on social media showed a bullet-riddled vehicle with bloodstains and residents inspecting it.

Hundreds of angry residents gathered outside a Jenin hospital after the overnight raid, chanting "God is Greatest" and calling for revenge, before carrying the three bodies on stretchers through the town in a spontaneous funeral procession. The three were to be buried later Friday.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state. The last serious peace talks broke down more than a decade ago, leaving no end in sight to Israel's 55-year-old military rule.

Analysis: On Stephen Curry, far more than a great shooter

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Greatest shooter ever. That's what everyone has been calling Golden State's Stephen Curry for years now, for obvious reasons. Nobody in the history of basketball has made more 3-pointers or made the art of throwing a ball through a hoop look easier than Curry does.

He has earned that distinction.

And it still seems like he has been undersold.

Thing is, Wardell Stephen Curry II is not just the greatest shooter ever. It's time to finally call him what he is — one of the greatest players ever. Go ahead, put him in the Greatest Of All Time conversation. It's a debate that will never end anyway, and he has earned the right to be there for one simple reason.

He has changed the game. The 3-pointer is vital now, and Curry made it that way.

"I think he's pretty much established what he can do," Warriors guard Klay Thompson said after the NBA Finals ended Thursday night with Golden State as champions and Curry as Finals MVP. "But to see him earn that, he's one of the greatest ever and we all followed in his lead and gosh, that was awesome. What a series."

Yes, what a series Curry had.

And what a player, too.

Curry's spot in the Basketball Hall of Fame was locked up long before Thursday night, when he scored 34 points and the Warriors won their fourth title in eight years by topping the Boston Celtics 103-90. What this one meant, though, was clear. Curry was weeping tears of joy before the game ended, unable to hold

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 31 of 67

back the emotions anymore.

"I'm happy for everybody, but I'm thrilled for Steph," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said as the champagne was spraying about in the champions' locker room in Boston after Golden State's title-clinching win. "To me, this is his crowning achievement in what's already been an incredible career."

This was his crowning moment. For now, anyway.

There's no reason to believe there can't be a fifth ring for this Warriors era, either, as long as a healthy Curry is leading the way.

"Best point guard of all time," Golden State's Andre Iguodala said.

Add that to the list, too. And his legend on the court only continues to grow. The 34-year-old Curry is stronger than ever, tougher than ever and, somehow, more motivated than ever. He already had three rings entering this year, has the 3-point record, more money than he could spend in 10 lifetimes and there isn't a corner of the world where he isn't known or revered. His wife Ayesha is a world-class cook. He has made birdies at Augusta National.

Curry, by all measures, had nothing left to prove.

Apparently, he disagreed. When last season ended with a loss in the play-in tournament, Curry went right back to work, with this title in mind, knowing that few so-called experts thought the Warriors had a chance of extending their dynasty. They had three titles and five finals trips in five years from 2015 through 2019, then injuries and roster changes sent them to the bottom of the NBA in 2020 and on the outside of the playoff picture last year.

All forgotten now. Curry reigns again.

"Damn, we did it. It's crazy to think about," Curry said. "All that talk paid off. Manifest your destiny in a certain way, and that stubbornness — who we are matters more than what anybody is saying about us — is why we're here."

His resume is ridiculous: Curry is an eight-time All-Star, a two-time NBA MVP, one of them unanimously, a two-time scoring champion, All-Star Game MVP, now is a four-time champion — and, finally, an NBA Finals MVP, also by unanimous decree.

Not bad for a player who went No. 7 in his draft class, got kicked out of his first college practice at Davidson for showing up late, was plagued by concerns about plenty of things in his early NBA years — he was too small, his ankles were too bad — and needed five seasons just to make his first All-Star Game.

"I thank God every day that I get to play this game at the highest level with some amazing people," Curry said on the floor as the celebration was starting, tears running down his face, game ball cradled under one of his arms. "This is what it's all about."

Very few people saw this coming 13 years ago.

On the night Curry was drafted in 2009, after six players who have a combined zero NBA championships heard their names called before him, the Warriors made no effort to hide their excitement.

That said, it wasn't exactly effusive praise, either.

"He's a guy who's going to fit in quite nicely," said Larry Riley, then the general manager of the Warriors. Probably safe to say Riley was right. Understated, sure, but right.

Now, he has more.

The fourth parade is Monday. The fourth ring comes this fall. The respect should be there forever now. He's not just a great shooter anymore. It's official: Stephen Curry is a player for all time.

"For Steph to win a finals MVP, and I know he said it don't matter ... but to add that to your resume as a competitor, you want that," Warriors forward Draymond Green said. "For him, well deserved. It's been a long time in the making. But he left no doubt. Left no doubt. He carried us. And we're here as champions."

China launches high-tech aircraft carrier in naval milestone

By DAVID RISING and KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing launched a new-generation aircraft carrier Friday, the first such ship to be both designed and built in China, in a milestone as it seeks to extend the range and power of its navy.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 32 of 67

The Type 003 carrier christened Fujian left its drydock at a shipyard outside Shanghai in the morning and tied up at a nearby pier, state media reports said.

State broadcaster CCTV showed assembled navy personnel standing beneath the massive ship as water jets sprayed over its deck, multi-colored streamers flew and colorful smoke was released.

Equipped with the latest weaponry and aircraft-launch technology, the Type 003 ship's capabilities are thought to rival those of Western carriers, as Beijing seeks to turn its navy, already the world's largest, into a multi-carrier force.

Satellite imagery captured by Planet Labs PBC on Thursday and analyzed by The Associated Press showed the carrier in what appeared to be a fully flooded drydock at the Jiangnan Shipyard, near Shanghai, ready for launch. It was draped with red bunting, presumably in preparation for the launch ceremony.

"This is an important milestone for China's military-industrial complex," said Ridzwan Rahmat, a Singapore-based analyst with the defense intelligence company Janes.

"This shows that Chinese engineers are now able to indigenously manufacture the full suite of surface combatants associated with modern naval warfare, including corvettes, frigates, destroyers, amphibious assault ships, and now an aircraft carrier," he said. "This ability to construct a very complex warship from the ground up will inevitably result in various spin-offs and benefits for the Chinese shipbuilding industry."

China's first carrier was a repurposed Soviet ship, and its second was built in China but based upon a Soviet design. Both were built to employ a so-called "ski-jump" launch method for aircraft, with a ramp at the end of the short runway to help planes take off.

The Type 003 employs a catapult launch, which experts had said appears to be an electromagnetic-type system like one originally developed by the U.S. Navy. China's official Xinhua News Agency confirmed the Fujian employed the electromagnetic system in a report on Friday's launch.

Such a system puts less stress on the aircraft than older steam-type catapult launch systems, and the use of a catapult means that the ship will be able to launch a broader variety of aircraft, which is necessary for China to be able to project naval power at a greater range, Rahmat said.

"These catapults allow aircraft deployed to carry a more extensive load of weapons in addition to external fuel tanks," Rahmat said.

"Once it is fully operational, the PLAN's third carrier would also be able to deploy a more complete suite of aircraft associated with carrier strike group operations including carrier onboard delivery transport and airborne early warning and control airframes, such as the KJ-600."

China's People's Liberation Army Navy, or PLAN, has been modernizing for more than a decade to become more of a "blue water" force — one capable of operating globally rather than being restricted to remaining closer to the Chinese mainland.

At the same time, the U.S. has been increasing its focus on the region, including the South China Sea. The vast maritime region has been tense because six governments claim all or part of the strategically vital waterway, through which an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade travels each year and which holds rich but fast-declining fishing stocks and significant undersea oil and gas deposits.

China has been far and away the most aggressive in asserting its claim to virtually the entire waterway, its island features and resources.

The U.S. Navy has sailed warships past artificial islands China built in the sea that are equipped with airstrips and other military facilities. China insists its territory extends to those islands, while the U.S. Navy says it conducts the missions there to ensure the free flow of international trade.

In its report to the U.S. Congress last year on China's military capabilities, the Department of Defense said the carrier development program was critical to the Chinese navy's continued development into a global force, "gradually extending its operational reach beyond East Asia into a sustained ability to operate at increasingly longer ranges."

China's "aircraft carriers and planned follow-on carriers, once operational, will extend air defense coverage beyond the range of coastal and shipboard missile systems and will enable task group operations at increasingly longer ranges," the Defense Department said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 33 of 67

In recent years, China has expanded its presence into the Indian Ocean, the Western Pacific and beyond, setting up its first overseas base over the last decade in the African Horn nation of Djibouti, where the U.S., Japan and others also maintain a military presence. It also recently signed a security agreement with the Solomon Islands that many fear could give it an outpost in the South Pacific, and is working with Cambodia on expanding a port facility there that could give it a presence in the Gulf of Thailand.

Xinhua reported the Fujian, which carries the hull number 18, had a fully loaded displacement of 80,000 tons. In a March report prepared by the U.S. Congressional Research Service, however, analysts said that satellite images suggest the Type 003's displacement was about 100,000 tons, similar to those of U.S. Navy carriers.

The PLAN currently has some 355 ships, including submarines, and the U.S. estimates the force will grow to 420 ships by 2025 and 460 ships by 2030. Despite having the world's largest navy numerically, however, the PLAN for now still has nowhere near the capabilities of the U.S. Navy and remains far behind in carriers.

The U.S. Navy is the world's leader in aircraft carriers, with 11 nuclear-powered vessels. It also has nine amphibious assault ships that can carry helicopters and vertical-takeoff fighter jets.

American allies like Britain and France also have their own carriers, and Japan has four "helicopter destroyers," which are technically not aircraft carriers, but carry aircraft. Two are being converted to support short take-off and vertical-landing fighters.

China's new carrier was named after the Fujian province on the country's southeastern coast, following a tradition after naming its first two carriers after the provinces of Liaoning and Shandong.

Its shipyard-launch ceremony was presided over by Xu Qiliang, member of the ruling Communist Party's Politburo and vice chairman of the Central Military Commission led by president and party leader Xi Jinping.

After Xu cut the ribbon for the launch, a bottle of champagne was broken across the Fujian's bow, Xinhua reported. The doors of the drydock then opened and the ship moved out into the water and moored at its pier.

China's development of the Type 003 carrier is part of a broader modernization of China's military. As with its space program, China has proceeded extremely cautiously in the development of aircraft carriers, seeking to apply only technologies that have been tested and perfected.

At the moment, China is not believed to have the aircraft developed to fully realize the potential of the new carrier, Rahmat said.

It is not known how close China is in the development of its KJ-600 AWACS aircraft, which it began testing in 2020, to have it ready for carrier operations, and there is "little evidence" it has begun work on carrier onboard delivery transport aircraft, he said.

Now that it is launched, the carrier will have to be fitted out, which could take two to six months. Then there will be harbor acceptance trials and sea trials, which will likely take another six months before engineers begin launching test loads using the catapult system.

"The first aircraft will only be launched from this carrier perhaps in late-2023 to 2024, and full operational capability will likely be declared closer to 2025," he said.

Warriors beat Celtics 103-90 to win 4th NBA title in 8 years

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The Golden State Warriors are NBA champions once again, topping the Boston Celtics 103-90 on Thursday night for their fourth title in the last eight seasons.

Stephen Curry scored 34 points and was named the NBA Finals MVP as the Warriors claimed the franchise's seventh championship overall. And this one completed a journey like none other, after a run of five consecutive finals, then a plummet to the bottom of the NBA, and now a return to greatness just two seasons after having the league's worst record.

"We found a way to just get it done," Curry said after the Warriors accepted the championship trophy and celebrated on the court.

With tears in his eyes and hoarse with emotion, Curry struggled to speak as he explained what allowed

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 34 of 67

the Warriors to capture their latest crown.

"It's part of a championship pedigree, our experience," he said. "We built this for 10-11 years. That means a lot when you get to this stage."

For Curry, Klay Thompson, Draymond Green and Andre Iguodala, it's a fourth championship. The first three rings came in 2015, 2017 and 2018, when Golden State was dynastic and made five consecutive trips to the finals.

"They're all unique, they're all special," coach Steve Kerr said of the multiple titles. "This one might have been the most unlikely. ... It takes a group effort to get it done and we had a great group."

Injuries, including ones that sidelined Thompson for 2 1/2 years, and roster changes changed everything. But this season, with Thompson returning around the midway point, the Warriors were finally back.

Back on top, too. Champions, again, denying the storied Celtics what would have been their record 18th championship, one that would have allowed Boston to break a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers for the most in league history.

This tale for the Warriors ended much differently than what was their most recent finals appearance against Toronto in 2019, one that saw Kevin Durant tear his Achilles tendon in Game 5 and then Thompson tear his ACL in what became the Raptors' title-clincher in Game 6.

The aftermath of that loss was exacerbated by Durant's decision to leave that summer in free agency to join the Brooklyn Nets and Thompson's own Achilles injury while rehabilitating his knee injury.

"It all paid off," Thompson said. "It was dog days, a lot of tears shed. ... You knew it was a possibility, but to see it in real time. ... It's crazy."

It thrust a Golden State team into a rebuild that became a reload. The Warriors used their two-year hiatus from the NBA's biggest stages to retool their roster – adding a past No. 1 draft pick in Andrew Wiggins, who excelled in his first finals, along with another rising star in Jordan Poole.

"This one hits different for sure knowing what the last three years meant, what it's been like," Curry said. "Injuries, the changing of the guard, rosters, the young guys. ... Now, we got four championships. Me, Dray, Klay and Andre.

"Finally got that bad boy," Curry added, referring to the MVP trophy. "It's special. ... Everybody mattered in that process."

Yes, it all clicked.

For Kerr, it's a ninth championship overall after winning five as a player. He's the sixth coach to capture four titles, joining Phil Jackson, Red Auerbach, John Kundla, Gregg Popovich and Pat Riley.

Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 34 points but Jayson Tatum finished with just 13, shooting just 6 of 18 from the field. Boston also committed 22 turnovers, dropping to 1-8 this postseason when committing 16 or more.

It was just the fifth defeat in 22 title-series appearances for Boston, which turned its season around to have a chance at this crown. Boston was 25-25 after 50 games, then went on a tear to get to the finals and nearly claim what would have been just the franchise's second championship since 1986.

It was the third consecutive season where things were affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and while things were closer to normal, pictures and video of the championship celebration will serve as a forever reminder that the virus was still an issue.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver could not be at the game because he remained in the league's health and safety protocols related to the virus. The redesigned Larry O'Brien Trophy – the golden souvenir given to the NBA champions – was presented to the Warriors by deputy commissioner Mark Tatum instead.

Boston trailed by as many as 22 points but battled back and cut the deficit to eight. A Jaylen Brown 3-pointer made it 86-78 with 5:33 to play, but the Warriors never relinquished the lead.

"Just couldn't withstand their runs," Celtics center Robert Williams said. "Messing up. They played harder and won tonight."

Curry sent Boston fans streaming toward the exits with his sixth 3 of the night to give the Warriors a commanding 15-point lead, 96-81 — then clasped his hands against face as he ran back down the court, signaling an end to Boston's hopes of extending the series.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 35 of 67

"We've had so many great players," Kerr said, "but Steph, ultimately is why this run happens."

TIP-INS

Warriors: Went 19 of 45 from the 3-point line. ... Improved to 20-1 when Green makes a 3-pointer.

Celtics: Boston's 13-point loss marked the first finals without a single-digit game. ... Former Celtic Ray Allen, a member of Boston's last championship team in 2008, sat courtside. Hall of Famer Robert Parish was also in attendance.

A RUN, AND A RESPONSE

The Celtics came out firing, riding the energy from a deafening TD Garden crowd to take an early 14-2 lead.

Golden State wasn't rattled and responded with a 35-8 run that stretched into the second quarter on the way to building as much as a 22-point lead. The Warriors outscored the Celtics 27-17 for the period and carried a 54-39 lead into the second half as some Celtics fans booed the home team as they left the court.

Boston fought back in the third, but the Warriors found their range from beyond the arc, connecting on six 3s in the quarter.

Russian superyacht Amadea arrives in Honolulu from Fiji

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A Russian-owned superyacht seized by the United States arrived in Honolulu Harbor on Thursday flying an American flag.

The U.S. last week won a legal battle in Fiji to take the \$325 million vessel and immediately sailed it to Hawaii.

The FBI has linked the Amadea to the Russian oligarch Suleiman Kerimov. The U.S. said Kerimov secretly bought the Cayman Island-flagged vessel last year through various shell companies.

The ship became a target of Task Force KleptoCapture, launched in March to seize the assets of Russian oligarchs to put pressure on Russia to end the war in Ukraine.

The FBI said a search warrant in Fiji turned up emails showing that Kerimov's children were aboard the ship this year and that the crew used code names — G0 for Kerimov, G1 for his wife, G2 for his daughter and so on.

The 348-foot-long (106-meter-long) vessel, about the length of a football field, features a live lobster tank, a hand-painted piano, a swimming pool and a large helipad.

Lawyer Feizal Haniff, who represented Millemarin Investments, the owner on paper, had argued the owner was another wealthy Russian who, unlike Kerimov, doesn't face sanctions.

Yellowstone Park gateway towns fret about tourism future

By MATTHEW BROWN and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

RED LODGE, Mont. (AP) — A gnawing uncertainty hung over the Yellowstone National Park gateway town of Gardiner this week following unprecedented flooding that shut down one of America's most beloved natural attractions and swept away roads, bridges and homes.

Gardiner itself escaped the flooding but briefly became home to hundreds of park visitors stranded when the road leading into it was closed along the surging Yellowstone River. When the road reopened, the tourists vanished.

"Town is eerie right now," said Katie Gale, who does booking for a company that offers rafting and other outdoor trips. "We had all those folks trapped in here, and then as soon as they opened the road ... it was just like someone just pulled the plug in a bathtub."

That draining of visitors has become a major concern for businesses in towns such as Gardiner and Red Lodge that lead to Yellowstone's northern entrances and rely on tourists passing through.

Officials have said the park's southern part, which features Old Faithful, could reopen as soon as next week. But the north end, which includes Tower Fall and the bears and wolves of Lamar Valley, could stay

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 36 of 67

closed for months after sections of major roads inside Yellowstone were washed away or buried in rockfall. Roads leading to the park also have widespread damage that could take months to repair.

Red Lodge is facing a double disaster: It will have to clean up the damage done by the deluge to parts of town and also figure out how to survive without the summer business that normally sustains it for the rest of the year.

"Winters are hard in Red Lodge," Chris Prindiville said as he hosed mud from the sidewalk outside his shuttered cafe, which had no fresh water or gas for his stoves. "You have to make your money in the summer so you can make it when the bills keep coming and the visitors have stopped."

At least 88 people were rescued by the Montana National Guard over the past few days from campsites and small towns, and hundreds of homes, including nearly 150 in Red Lodge, were damaged by muddy waters. One large house that was home to six park employees in the town of Gardiner was ripped from its foundation and floated 5 miles (8 kilometers) downstream before sinking. Four to five homes could still topple into the Stillwater River, which already washed several cabins away, according to a spokeswoman for Stillwater County.

No deaths or serious injuries have been reported.

Red Lodge was under a boil-water advisory, and trucks supplied drinking water to half of the town that was without it. Portable toilets were strategically placed for those who couldn't flush at home.

The Yodeler Motel, once home to Finnish coal miners, faced its first shutdown since it began operating as a lodge in 1964. Owner Mac Dean said he is going to have to gut the lower level, where 13 rooms flooded in chest-high waters.

"Rock Creek seemed to take in its own course," he said. "It just jumped the bank and it came right down Main Street and it hit us."

Dean had been counting on a busy summer tied to the park's 150th anniversary. The Yodeler had the most bookings in the 13 years Dean and his wife have owned the business. Now he's hoping to get some help, possibly from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The damage is catastrophic," he said. "We're between a rock and a hard place. And if we don't get some assistance, we're not gonna make it."

Yellowstone is one of the crown jewels of the park system, a popular summer playground that appeals to adventurous backpackers camping in grizzly country, casual hikers walking past steaming geothermal features, nature lovers gazing at elk, bison, bears and wolves from the safety of their cars, and amateur photographers and artists trying to capture the pink and golden hues of the cliffs of the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and its thundering waterfall.

All 4 million visitors a year have to pass through the small towns that border the park's five entrances.

The flooding — triggered by a combination of torrential rain and rapid snowmelt — hit just as hotels around Yellowstone were filling up with summer tourists. June is typically one of Yellowstone's busiest months.

President Joe Biden declared a disaster in Montana, ordering federal assistance be made available.

The tourism season had started well for Cara McGary, who guides groups through the Lamar Valley to see wolves, bison, elk and bears. She had seen more than 20 grizzlies some days this year.

Now, with the road from Gardiner into northern Yellowstone washed out, the wildlife is still there, but it's out of reach to McGary. Her guide business, In Our Nature, is suddenly in trouble.

"The summer that we prepared for is not at all similar to the summer that we're going to have," she said. "This is an 80% to 100% loss of business during the high season."

Officials and business leaders are hoping Gardiner, Red Lodge and other small communities can draw visitors even without access to the park.

Sarah Ondrus, owner of Paradise Adventure Company, that rents out cabins and offers rafting, kayaking and horseback riding trips, was frustrated she was getting so many cancellations.

"Montana and Wyoming still exist. I don't know how I can convince these people," Ondrus said. "Once our water quality is good and our law enforcement thinks it's OK, we're good to go again. It's still a des-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 37 of 67

tionation. You can still horseback ride, go to cowboy cookouts, hike in the national forest.”

That could be a tall order for anyone coming from the south or east sides of the park who had hoped to exit in the north. After the southern portion of the park reopens, it would take an almost 200-mile (320 kilometers) detour through West Yellowstone and Bozeman to reach Gardiner. It would require a nearly 300-mile (480 kilometers) drive from Cody, Wyoming.

Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte, a Republican, has faced criticism from Democrats and members of the public for being out of the country during the disaster.

Spokesperson Brooke Stroyke said the governor had left last week on a long-scheduled personal trip with his wife and was due back Thursday. She would not say where he was, citing security reasons.

In his absence, Montana’s Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras signed an emergency disaster declaration Tuesday.

Takeaways from AP interview: Biden on inflation, US psyche

By ZEKE MILLER and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Thursday sat down with the Associated Press to discuss the state of the economy, his concerns about the national mood, and his commitment to standing up to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

Takeaways from Biden’s first news media interview since February:

PAIN AT THE PUMP

Biden blames gas prices for the nation’s economic pessimism, saying before prices started rising, “Things were much more, they were much more optimistic.”

The president acknowledged that Americans are paying vastly more to put food on their table and fuel in their cars and that it was putting a dent in his approval rating.

“If you want a direct barometer of what people are going to talk about at the kitchen table and the dining room table and whether things are going well, it’s the cost of food and what’s the cost of gasoline at the pump,” he said.

But while Biden said his message to oil companies was “Don’t just reward yourselves,” he has few tools at his disposal to meaningfully bring down prices in the near term.

THE U.S. HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO STAND UP TO RUSSIA

Biden said he didn’t consider the domestic political impact from U.S. efforts to sanction Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, particularly how it would roil the economy.

Without such action, he said, “I fear what would happen next is you’d see chaos in Europe.” He added: “It’s not about my political survival. It’s about what’s best for the country.”

Biden suggested that he’s willing to pay a political price as a result, saying his advice to young people interested in public service is, “Unless you know what’s worth losing over, don’t get engaged.”

BIDEN WANTS TO BUCK UP THE NATIONAL MOOD

After more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Biden said the American people are “really, really down.” He emphasized that the need for mental health in America “has skyrocketed because people have seen everything upset.”

Biden maintained that he’s optimistic about the country’s future, and that Americans should feel it too — even as the majority of voters say the country is on the wrong track.

“Be confident, because I am confident we’re better positioned than any country in the world to own the second quarter of the 21st century,” Biden said. “That’s not hyperbole, that’s a fact.”

Still, it wasn’t clear whether Biden’s rhetoric would have a tangible impact on the nation’s glum outlook.

HE STILL HAS HOPES FOR A DOMESTIC SPENDING BILL

Still smarting over the December collapse of a massive Democratic package to expand the social safety net and address climate change, Biden suggested he was hopeful that a slimmed-down bill could pass before the midterms.

West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin’s objections torpedoed the earlier efforts over inflation concerns. Biden needs all 50 Democrats to support a package in order to get around GOP opposition under the Senate’s

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 38 of 67

budget rules.

"There's more than one way to bring down the cost for working folks," Biden said. "Gasoline may be up to \$5 a gallon, but somebody who has a child with stage two diabetes is paying up to 1,000 bucks a month for their insulin. We can reduce it to 35 bucks a month and get it done."

He added: "We have the votes to do it. We're gonna get that done. I can't get it all done."

Biden also suggested there was consensus on providing tax credits for winterizing homes, which would help lower utility bills, and to boost domestic semiconductor manufacturing to address supply chain issues that have driven up prices.

AND FOR GUN CONTROL

Biden was optimistic about a bipartisan framework to address gun violence by tightening some background check requirements for young firearm purchasers and incentivizing states to establish "red flag" laws to keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill.

As lawmakers draft the legislative text, momentum appears to be building in the Senate after decades of inaction and mass tragedies. Biden acknowledged the progress, albeit limited.

"We're going to get gun safety," he said, adding, "We're not going to get what I wanted."

BIDEN HAS SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT REPUBLICANS

Despite years of political differences, Biden said he still views Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell as a Republican he can work with — something he said he considered an endangered species in today's GOP.

The president said that when he took office, he knew that there "were probably, probably 15 sort of traditional, mainstream, conservative Republicans left. And I include in that — and I'm going to get myself in trouble, gonna get him in trouble, probably — the minority leader from Kentucky."

Biden added of McConnell, "He's a solid, mainstream guy."

The president, who has taken to branding other Republicans as "ultra-MAGA," said examples included Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson and Florida Sen. Rick Scott.

Costa Rica chaos a warning that ransomware threat remains

By ALAN SUDERMAN and BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Teachers unable to get paychecks. Tax and customs systems paralyzed. Health officials unable to access medical records or track the spread of COVID-19. A country's president declaring war against foreign hackers saying they want to overthrow the government.

For two months now, Costa Rica has been reeling from unprecedented ransomware attacks disrupting everyday life in the Central American nation. It's a situation raising questions about the United States' role in protecting friendly nations from cyberattacks at a time when Russian-based criminal gangs are targeting less developed countries in ways that could have major global repercussions.

"Today it's Costa Rica. Tomorrow it could be the Panama Canal," said Belisario Contreras, former manager of the cybersecurity program at the Organization of American States, referring to a major Central American shipping lane that carries a large amount of U.S. import and export traffic.

Last year, cybercriminals launched ransomware attacks in the U.S. that forced the shutdown of an oil pipeline that supplies the East Coast, halted production of the world's largest meat-processing company and compromised a major software-company that has thousands of customers around the world.

The Biden administration responded with a whole of government action that included included diplomatic, law enforcement, and intelligence efforts designed to put pressure on ransomware operators.

Since then, ransomware gangs have shied away from "big-game" targets in the U.S. in pursuit of victims unlikely to provoke a strong response by the U.S.

"They're still prolific, they're making enormous amounts of money, but they're just not in the news everyday," Eleanor Fairford, a deputy director at the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, said at a recent U.S. conference on ransomware.

Tracking trends of ransomware attacks, in which criminals encrypt victims' data and demand payment to return them to normal, is difficult. NCC Group, a UK cybersecurity firm that tracks ransomware attacks,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 39 of 67

said the number of ransomware incidents per month so far this year has been higher than it was in 2021. The company noted that the ransomware group CL0P, which has aggressively targeted schools and health care organizations, returned to work after effectively shutting down for several months.

But Rob Joyce, the director of cybersecurity at the National Security Agency, has said publicly that there's been a decrease in the number of ransomware attacks since Russia's invasion of Ukraine thanks to increased heightened concerns of cyberattacks and new sanctions that make it harder for Russian-based criminals to move money.

The ransomware gang known as Conti launched the first attack against the Costa Rican government in April and has demanded a \$20 million payout, prompting the newly installed President Chaves Robles to declare a state of emergency as the tax and customs offices, utilities and other services were taken offline. "We're at war and this is not an exaggeration," he said.

Later, a second attack, attributed to a group known as Hive knocked out the public health service and other systems. Information about individual prescriptions are offline and some workers have gone weeks without their paycheck. It's caused significant hardship for people like 33-year-old teacher Alvaro Fallas.

"I live with my parents and brother and they are depending on me," he said.

In Peru, Conti has also attacked the country's intelligence agency. The gang's darkweb extortion site posts purportedly stolen documents with the agency's information, like one document market "secret" that details coca-eradication efforts.

Experts believe developing countries like Costa Rica and Peru will remain particularly ripe targets. These countries have invested in digitizing their economy and systems but don't have as sophisticated defenses as wealthier nations .

Costa Rica has been a longtime stable force in a region often known for upheaval. It has a long established democratic tradition and well-run government services.

Paul Rosenzweig, a former top DHS official and cyber consultant who is now a legal resident of Costa Rica, said the country presents a test case for what exactly the U.S. government owes its friendly and allied governments who fall victim to disruptive ransomware attacks. While an attack on a foreign country may not have any direct impact on U.S. interests, the federal government still has a strong interest in limiting the ways in which ransomware criminals can disrupt the global digital economy, he said.

"Costa Rica is a perfectly good example because it's the first," Rosenzweig said. "Nobody has seen a government under assault before."

So far, the Biden administration has said little publicly about the situation in Costa Rica. The U.S. has provided some technical assistance through its Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, via an information-sharing program with nations around the world. And the State Department has offered a reward for the arrest of members of Conti.

Eric Goldstein, the executive assistant director for cybersecurity at CISA, said Costa Rica has a computer emergency response team that had an established relationship with counterparts in the U.S. before the incidents. But his agency is expanding its international presence by establishing its first overseas attache position in the U.K. It plans others in as-yet unspecified locations.

"If we think about our role, CISA and the US government, it is intrinsically of course to protect American organizations. But we know intuitively that the same threat actors are using the same vulnerabilities to target victims around the world," he said.

Conti is one of the more prolific ransomware gangs currently operation and has hit over 1,000 targets and received more than \$150 million in payouts in the last two years, per FBI estimates.

At the start of invasion of Ukraine, some of Conti's members pledged on the group's dark web site to "use all our possible resources to strike back at the critical infrastructures of an enemy" if Russia was attacked. Shortly afterward, sensitive chat logs that appear to belong to the gang were leaked online, some of which appeared to show ties between the gang and the Russian government.

Some cyber threat researchers say Conti may be in the middle of a rebranding, and its attack on Costa Rica may be a publicity stunt to provide a plausible story for the group's demise. Ransomware groups

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 40 of 67

that receive lots of media attention often disappear, only for its members to pop back up later operating under a new name.

On its darkweb site, Conti has denied that's the case and continues to post victims' files. The gang's most recent targets include a city parks department in Illinois, a manufacturing company in Oklahoma and food distributor in Chile.

FIFA picks 2026 World Cup cities, predicts US 'No 1 sport'

By RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The 16 cities of the first World Cup spread across three nations were revealed, and FIFA President Gianni Infantino made a bold statement summing up the goal of the 2026 tournament, to be played largely in the United States.

"By 2026, soccer — or futbol — will be the No. 1 sport in this part of the world," he proclaimed.

Roughly four years before soccer's showcase comes to the U.S., Mexico and Canada, there already were winners and losers Thursday: Atlanta, Houston, Miami, Philadelphia, Seattle and Kansas City, Missouri, were among the cities picked after missing out on hosting the 1994 tournament.

Baltimore, Cincinnati, Denver, Nashville, Tennessee, and Orlando, Florida, missed the cut.

Eleven U.S. stadiums were taken, all from the NFL. Arlington, Texas; East Rutherford, New Jersey; Foxborough, Massachusetts, and Inglewood and Santa Clara, California, were holdover areas from the 1994 tournament that boosted soccer's American prominence.

Mexico City's Estadio Azteca, which hosted the 1970 and '86 finals, will become the first stadium in three World Cups, selected along with Guadalajara's Estadio Akron and Monterrey's Estadio BBVA.

Toronto's BMO Field and Vancouver, British Columbia's BC Place were picked for Canada's first time hosting, while Edmonton, Alberta's Commonwealth Stadium was dropped.

Following the withdrawal of outmoded FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland, Baltimore's omission means this will be a rare World Cup with no matches in the vicinity of a host's capital.

"You can't imagine a World Cup coming to the U.S., the capital city not taking a major role," said Colin Smith, FIFA's chief competitions and events officer.

Infantino promised a fan fest on Washington's National Mall, and locations across the three nations are in play for training sites.

"The story is always who doesn't get chosen," U.S. Soccer Federation President Cindy Parlow Cone said.

Infantino's goal of reaching the top of U.S. sports appears to be quite a reach. The NFL averaged 17.1 million viewers for television and digital during its 2021 season, while the 2018 World Cup averaged 5.04 million on U.S. English- and Spanish-language TV.

"You are leading the world in many areas," Infantino said about North America, "the objective must be that you will be leading the world, as well, in the world's No. 1 sport."

"I know it was giggles and laughs," North and Central American and Caribbean Confederation President Victor Montagliani said. "He wasn't joking."

Infantino defended FIFA's financial demands on bidding cities and states, which included sales tax exemptions. He said World Cup revenue supports FIFA's 211 members and 75% could not sustain operations without the money.

"This is something which is definitely a fair compromise, taking into the account the interest of sport and the interests of the host countries," he said.

The 1994 tournament set records with a 3.59 million total attendance and average of 68,991. The capacities of the U.S. stadiums for 2026 are all 60,000 and higher.

"I think this part of the world doesn't realize what will happen here in 2026," Infantino said. "These three countries will be upside down. The world will be invading Canada, Mexico and the United States."

The bid plan selected in 2018 envisioned 60 games in the U.S. for the first 48-nation Cup, including all from the quarterfinals on, and 10 each in Mexico and Canada.

Specific sites for each round will be announced later, and Infantino said world-wide television times will be a factor for the final, which makes the Eastern and Central times zones more likely. FIFA has gradually

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 41 of 67

moved back the kickoff time of the final from 3:30 p.m. EDT to 10 a.m. EDT for this year's tournament, which is 10 p.m. in Beijing.

The U.S. selections included none of the nine stadiums used in 1994. The Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, and Orlando's Camping World Stadium were the only ones remaining in contention, and they were among the sites dropped in negotiations with stadiums and cities that continued until right before the announcement.

New stadiums were selected in five areas used in 1994. AT&T Stadium in Texas instead of Dallas' Cotton Bowl, SoFi Stadium in Inglewood for the Rose Bowl and Levi's Stadium for Stanford Stadium.

Met Life Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, and Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, replaced torn-down sites that were adjacent, Giants Stadium and Foxboro Stadium.

Three U.S. venues have retractable roofs and Atlanta has a fixed roof. All of the U.S. stadiums but Miami and Kansas City opened in 2002 or later.

Venues have a broader array of pricey seats than in 1994 — the bid book listed a total of 3,757 luxury suites and 76,317 club seats, even before the opening of SoFi, which hosted this year's Super Bowl.

Eight of the 11 U.S. stadiums have artificial turf and promised to install temporary grass. Dietmar Exler, chief operating officer of AMB Sports & Entertainment, whose NFL Falcons and Major League Soccer team play at Mercedes-Benz, said growing lamps will be used.

"We will study very carefully with FIFA how we can handle and make sure we have the best natural turf available," he said. "That's one of the high priority areas for us to focus on."

Some venues, notably SoFi, cannot currently fit a 68-x-105 meter (75x-115 yard) field and would need renovations to remove seats near sidelines. FIFA made similar demands ahead of 1994 but backed off and allowed some narrower surfaces.

"We have to move out some of the pinch points," Smith said. "It doesn't have any material aspect on capacity."

The Detroit area, where the old Pontiac Silverdome hosted games, was cut in 2018 and Baltimore's M&T Bank Stadium was the capital area's contender after FedEx dropped out in April. Washington's RFK Stadium was used in 1994.

Chicago, which hosted the 1994 opener at Solider Field, refused to bid, citing FIFA's demands.

In contrast to the 1992 site announcement during a news conference, the 2026 announcement was made during a show broadcast from Fox's studio in Manhattan.

"It's grown so much in my lifetime," U.S. star Christian Pulisic said, "and I'm hoping that it can even take that next step."

Police: 2 dead, 1 hurt in church shooting; suspect detained

VESTAVIA HILLS, Ala. (AP) — A lone suspect fired on a small group meeting at a suburban church near one of Alabama's major cities Thursday evening, fatally wounding two people and injuring a third before being taken into custody, authorities said.

The attack occurred at Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church in the Birmingham suburb of Vestavia Hills, Police Capt. Shane Ware said. He said officers rushed to the church after dispatchers got a call reporting an active shooter at the church at 6:22 p.m.

"From what we've gathered from the circumstances of this evening, a lone suspect entered a small church group meeting and began shooting. Three people were shot. Two people are deceased. One person is being treated for an unknown injury at a local hospital," Ware said at a late Thursday news briefing.

He added that a suspect was in custody and that there was "no threat to the community at this time."

At an earlier briefing, Ware had initially said one person died and two others wounded in the shooting had been hospitalized.

Meanwhile, police declined to identify the suspect or the victims or provide further details of the attack, adding another briefing was planned Friday.

The FBI, U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco and Explosives dispatched agents to the scene. Investigators remained hours past nightfall, with yellow police tape cordoning off

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 42 of 67

the church complex and emergency police and fire vehicles with flashing lights blocking the route to the church. Nearby, people huddled and prayed.

The Rev. Kelley Hudlow, an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Alabama, told broadcast outlet WBRC that the church and the community at large were stunned by the shooting.

"It is shocking. Saint Stephen's is a community built on love and prayers and grace and they are going to come together," she said in a live interview with the station. "People of all faiths are coming together to pray to hope for healing."

She added that the church was receiving supportive messages from all over the U.S. and the world. "We need everybody out there. Pray, think, meditate and send love to this community because we are going to need all of it," she said.

The church's website had listed a "Boomers Potluck" for Thursday night. "There will be no program, simply eat and have time for fellowship," the flyer read.

Thursday's shooting was the latest of several high-profile shootings, including a racist attack last month that killed 10 Black people at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket, and the shooting deaths May 24 of 19 children and two adults at an Uvalde, Texas, elementary school in which the gunman was killed. In Southern California, one person was killed and five injured May 15 after a man authorities say was motivated by hatred of Taiwan opened fire on Taiwanese parishioners.

On Saturday thousands of people rallied in the U.S. and at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to renew calls for stricter gun control measures. Survivors of mass shootings and other incidents of gun violence also lobbied legislators and testified on Capitol Hill earlier this month.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey issued a statement late Thursday lamenting what she called the shocking and tragic loss of life at the church. Though she said she was glad to hear the suspect was in custody, she wrote: "This should never happen — in a church, in a store, in the city or anywhere."

Vestavia Hills is a residential community just southeast of Birmingham, one of Alabama's two most populous cities.

GOP, Dem Senate bargainers divided over gun deal details

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic and Republican senators were at odds Thursday over how to keep firearms from dangerous people as bargainers struggled to finalize details of a gun violence compromise in time for their self-imposed deadline of holding votes in Congress next week.

Lawmakers said they remained divided over how to define abusive dating partners who would be legally barred from purchasing firearms. Disagreements were also unresolved over proposals to send money to states that have "red flag" laws that let authorities temporarily confiscate guns from people deemed dangerous by courts, and to other states for their own violence prevention programs.

The election-year talks have seemed headed toward agreement, with both parties fearing punishment by voters if Congress doesn't react to the carnage of last month's mass shootings. A total of 31 people were slain at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York, and an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. An outline of a deal has been endorsed by President Joe Biden, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, a lead GOP bargainer, seemed visibly unhappy as he left Thursday's closed-door session after nearly two hours, saying he was flying home.

"This is the hardest part because at some point, you just got to make a decision. And when people don't want to make a decision, you can't accomplish the result. And that's kind of where we are right now," Cornyn said.

"I'm not frustrated, I'm done," he added, though he said he was open to continued discussions.

Lawmakers have said a deal must be completed and written into legislative language by week's end if Congress is to vote by next week. It begins a July 4 recess after that. Leaders want votes by then because Washington has a long record of talking about reacting to mass shootings, only to see lawmakers' and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 43 of 67

voters' interest fade quickly over time.

Other bargainers seemed more optimistic, saying much of the overall package has been agreed to and aides were drafting bill language.

"A deal like this is difficult," Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said when the meeting ended. "It comes with a lot of emotions, it comes with political risk to both sides. But we're close enough that we should be able to get there."

The measure would impose just small-scale curbs on firearms. It lacks proposals by Biden and Democrats to prohibit assault-style weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines like the ones used in Buffalo and Uvalde, or to raise the legal age for purchasing assault rifles from 18 to 21.

Even so, it would be Congress' most robust move against gun violence since 1993. A ban lawmakers enacted that year on assault weapons took effect in 1994 and expired after a decade. Scores of high-profile mass shootings since have yielded little from Washington but partisan deadlock, chiefly due to Republicans blocking virtually any new restrictions.

Federal law bars people convicted of domestic violence against a spouse from acquiring guns, but leaves a loophole for other romantic relationships. Everytown for Gun Safety, which advocates firearms curbs, says 31 states bar convicted domestic abusers from buying firearms, including 19 that cover violent dating partners.

Senators have disagreed over how to define such relationships, with Republicans working against a broad provision. Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, the other lead GOP negotiator, said bargainers would use some state statutes as their guide, though their laws vary.

"You need to make sure that you're capturing everyone that actually beat" up their girlfriends, said Murphy, a Democrat.

In addition, 19 states and the District of Columbia have "red flag" laws. Cornyn and the other lead bargainer, Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., represent states that do not, and it is unclear how money in the bill would be divided among them.

Senators have not said what the measure's overall price tag will be, though people following the talks have said they expect it to range around \$15 billion or \$20 billion. Lawmakers are looking for budget cuts to pay for those costs.

Twenty senators, 10 from each party, agreed to the outlines of a compromise measure last weekend. Top bargainers have labored ever since to translate it into details.

The framework includes access to the juvenile records of gun buyers age 18 to 20. Both shooters in Buffalo and Uvalde were 18, and both used AR-15 style rifles, which can load high-capacity magazines.

The plan also includes added spending for mental health and school safety programs, tougher penalties for gun trafficking and requirements that slightly more gun dealers obtain federal firearms licenses.

Panel sharpens focus on Trump's 'crazy' Jan. 6 plan

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's extraordinary effort to overturn his 2020 election defeat came into ever-clearer focus Thursday, with testimony describing his pressuring Vice President Mike Pence in vulgar private taunts and public entreaties to stop the certification of Joe Biden's victory in the run-up to the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Trump's closest advisers viewed his last-ditch efforts to halt congressional certification of his loss as "nuts," "crazy" and even likely to incite riots if Pence followed through, witnesses revealed in stark testimony Thursday.

The panel revealed how Trump put his vice president in danger as Pence was presiding over a joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, 2021, when the defeated president sent his supporters to the Capitol to "fight like hell" over his false claims of a fraudulent election.

Rioters came within 40 feet of the place at the Capitol where Pence and others had been evacuated. Never-before-shown photos showed Pence and his team sheltering.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 44 of 67

"He deserves to be burned with the rest of them," one rioter is heard saying on video as the mob prepares to storm the iconic building.

"Pence betrayed us," says another rioter, wearing a Make America Great Again hat in a selfie video inside the Capitol.

Pence's counsel Greg Jacob testified that he could "hear the din" of the rioters nearby. Asked if Trump ever checked on Pence during the siege, Jacob said, "He did not."

With live testimony and other evidence from its yearlong investigation, the panel held its third hearing this month aiming to demonstrate that Trump's repeated false claims and desperate attempt to stay in power led directly to the Capitol insurrection.

All told, the committee is pulling together a dark portrait of the end of Trump's presidency as the defeated Republican was left grasping for alternatives as courts turned back dozens of lawsuits challenging the vote.

Trump latched onto conservative law professor John Eastman's obscure plan to defy historical precedent of the Electoral Count Act and reverse Joe Biden's victory.

Trump aides and allies warned bluntly in private about his efforts, even as some publicly continued to stand by the president's false election claims. Nine people died in the insurrection and its aftermath.

"Are you out of your effing mind?" Eric Herschmann, a lawyer advising Trump, told Eastman in recorded testimony shown at the hearing.

"You're going to turn around and tell 78-plus million people in this country that your theory is, this is how you're going to invalidate their votes?" Herschmann said. He warned, "You're going to cause riots in the streets."

A text message from Fox News' Sean Hannity to Trump's chief of staff Mark Meadows about the plan in the run-up to Jan. 6 read, "I'm very worried about the next 48 hours."

Trump campaign adviser Jason Miller said those around Trump called the plan "crazy."

The committee has said the plan was illegal, and a federal judge has said "more likely than not" Trump committed crimes in his attempt to stop the certification.

Eastman later sought to be "on the pardon list," according to an email he sent to Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, shared by the committee.

In a social media post Thursday, Trump decried the hearings anew as a "witch hunt," lambasted coverage by "the Fake News Networks" and exclaimed, "I DEMAND EQUAL TIME!!!"

On Capitol Hill, panel Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., cited Pence's own words that there was "almost no idea more un-American" than the one he was being asked to follow — reject Americans' votes.

By refusing Trump's demands, Pence "did his duty," said the panel's vice-chair, Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming.

The panel heard from Jacob, the vice president's counsel who fended off Eastman's ideas for Pence, and retired federal judge Michael Luttig, who called the plan from Eastman, his former law clerk, "incorrect at every turn."

Jacob said it became clear to Pence from the start that the founding fathers did not intend to empower any one person to affect the election result, and he "never budged."

Pence was determined to stay at the Capitol that night and finish the job, even as his security team prepared for him to leave, Jacob said.

Luttig, a conservative scholar, said in a halting voice but firm terms that had Pence obeyed Trump's orders, declaring "Trump as the next president would have plunged America into what I believe would have been tantamount to a revolution within a constitutional crisis in America."

Thursday's session presented new dramatic evidence about the danger Pence faced as rioters chanted "Hang Mike Pence" with a makeshift gallows outside the Capitol.

The president's daughter, Ivanka Trump, testified about the "heated" phone call he had with Pence that morning, as the family joined in the Oval Office. Another aide, Nicholas Luna, said he heard Trump call Pence a "wimp." Ivanka Trump's chief of staff, Julie Radford, said she was told the president called Pence "the p-word."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 45 of 67

In another development Thursday, Thompson said the panel will ask Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, the wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, for an interview amid disclosures of the conservative activist's communications with people in Trump's orbit ahead of the attack. He did not specify a schedule for that.

"It's time for her to come talk," Thompson told reporters.

The panel's yearlong investigation is showcasing Trump's final weeks in office as the defeated president clung to "the big lie" of a rigged election even as those around him — his family, his top aides, officials at the highest levels of government — were telling him he simply had lost.

With 1,000 interviews and some 140,000 documents, the committee is showing how Trump's false claims of election fraud became a battle cry as he summoned thousands of Americans to Washington and then Capitol Hill.

Thursday's hearing unpacked the Eastman plan to have the states send alternative slates of electors from states Trump was disputing, including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. With competing slates for Trump or Biden, Pence would be forced to reject them, returning them to the states to sort it out, under the plan.

The panel played video showing Eastman repeatedly invoking his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination while being interviewed by the committee.

More than 800 people have been arrested in the Capitol siege, including members of extremist groups facing rare sedition charges over their roles in the Capitol attack.

The panel is considering whether to send a referral for criminal charges against Trump to the Justice Department. No president or former president has ever been indicted by the Justice Department, and Attorney General Merrick Garland has said he and his team are following the proceedings in Congress.

Several members of Congress are also under scrutiny, and the panel is also probing several candidates for elected office who were among the rioters.

In a letter earlier this week, the Justice Department warned the committee it is complicating the federal investigation and requested transcripts of all witness interviews the panel has conducted.

The panel, which is expected to deliver a final report on its findings later this year, intends for its work to be a record for history of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the War of 1812.

Hadwin leads US Open as McIlroy makes statement with clubs

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

BROOKLINE, Mass. (AP) — Adam Hadwin can be excused for the opening round of the U.S. Open — the so-called toughest test in golf — giving him a chance to exhale.

Hadwin was home in Canada last week for his own national open, an even bigger deal because the pandemic had canceled the Canadian Open the previous two years and the golf-mad fans brought enormous energy.

Plus, he has been immune from the endless chatter and speculation of the Saudi-backed rival league that consumed attention all week at The Country Club.

Small wonder he walked off Thursday with a 4-under 66 for this best score in 63 rounds at major championships and a one-shot lead over Rory McIlroy and four others.

"Nice to get down here and a couple of days' rest and get going for this week," Hadwin said. "Not that the golf course gets any easier. But yeah, in certain instances it definitely felt a little more relaxed than last week."

Any lingering thoughts of the rival league came from McIlroy — not from anything he said but with the golf he played.

This time, his bold statement came a clean card and a few tough pars required at the U.S. Open. McIlroy didn't make a bogey until his final hole when he missed the green and flung his club, a brief fit of anger that revealed as much desire as frustration.

He had a 67 that left him in the large chasing pack with four players, all of whom had to go through 36-hole qualifying — Callum Tarren of England, David Lingmerth of Sweden, MJ Daffue of South Africa

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 46 of 67

and Joel Dahmen.

At the opposite end was Phil Mickelson, who celebrated his 52nd birthday — on the golf course, anyway — with a four-putt double bogey on his way to a 78.

Hadwin ran off three straight birdies to finish the front nine in 31, and he only dropped one shot on the back nine for his 66. His previous low score in a major was 68 on three occasions, most recently the first round of the 2020 PGA Championship at Harding Park.

McIlroy has become a leading voice on the PGA Tour over the last few years, particularly with his rebuke of the Saudi-funded series that is disrupting golf. Thursday was a reminder he's pretty good at his day job, too.

McIlroy made two straight birdies late in his round to become the first player to reach 4 under, only to miss the ninth green and make his only bogey.

At the moment, McIlroy isn't concerned with his strong stance against LIV Golf.

"It's been eight years since I won a major," he said. "And I just want to get my hands on one again."

Even with a good start, and coming off a victory last week in the Canadian Open, it doesn't figure to be easy for McIlroy or anyone else. The Country Club might be as accommodating as it gets all week, with moderate wind and cloud cover keeping the sun from making greens crispy and firm.

And the best anyone could do was a 66.

The group at 68 included two-time major winner Dustin Johnson, Justin Rose and Matt Fitzpatrick, who won the U.S. Amateur at Brookline in 2013.

For McIlroy, it was his second straight major — and third time in his last four U.S. Opens — he opened with a score under par. There is confidence in his game for winning last week in Toronto, and there is passion rare for a Thursday unless the game is going badly.

He tried to drive the reachable par-4 fifth hole and caught an awkward lie in the thick collar above a bunker, forcing him to stand in the sand. He hit that into another bunker, and then twice slammed the club into the sand out of frustration. But he managed to save par.

"You're going to encounter things at a U.S. Open, whether they be lies or stuff like that, that you just don't really encounter any other week," he said. "It's hard not to get frustrated because I'm walking up there going, 'Just come back into the bunker.' The thickest rough on the course is around the edges of the bunker. So I was sort of cursing the USGA whenever I was going up to the ball."

And then from the ninth fairway, his approach sailed to the right and he flung his club. He couldn't save par on that one and had to accept a 67 — not a bad start, and no apologies for his few outbursts of emotion.

"Almost to remind yourself sometimes how much it means to you," he said.

There's a lot on the table outside of golf, too, with 13 players at the U.S. Open who took part in the Saudi-backed LIV Golf last week, leading the PGA Tour to suspend those members.

McIlroy, the first to shut down talk of rival leagues in 2020, spoke passionately this week about building on the legacy handed down by Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. For those taking the guaranteed money for 54-hole events, he said it felt like "the easy way out."

But now it's time for golf, and there a vibe of relief that focus could turn to a U.S. Open that first came to Brookline more than a century ago. Thursday was more about birdies and bogeys — mostly the latter in a U.S. Open — and a place in history.

No other major is more open — roughly half the 156-man field has to qualify — and it showed. Seven of the top 13 came through qualifiers, including Hadwin. He was first alternate out of the Dallas section and got in when Paul Casey withdrew because of an ailing back.

Gateway towns to Yellowstone become dead ends after flood

By MATTHEW BROWN and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

RED LODGE, Mont. (AP) — This gateway town to Yellowstone National Park has become a dead end, a casualty of the severe flooding that tore through one of America's most beloved natural attractions and swept away roads, bridges and homes.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 47 of 67

The unprecedented flood has closed the entire park and forced the evacuation of 10,000 visitors. And towns like Red Lodge that lead to Yellowstone's northern entrances and rely on tourists passing through could suffer all summer.

Officials have said the park's southern part, which features Old Faithful, could reopen as soon as next week. But the north end, which includes Tower Fall and the bears and wolves of Lamar Valley, could stay closed for months after sections of major roads inside Yellowstone were washed away or buried in rockfall. Roads leading to the park also have widespread damage that could take months to repair.

Red Lodge is facing a double disaster: It will have to clean up the damage done by the deluge to parts of town and also figure out how to survive without the summer business that normally sustains it for the rest of the year.

"Winters are hard in Red Lodge," Chris Prindiville said as he hosed mud from the sidewalk outside his shuttered cafe, which had no fresh water or gas for his stoves. "You have to make your money in the summer so you can make it when the bills keep coming and the visitors have stopped."

At least 88 people were rescued by the Montana National Guard over the past few days from campsites and small towns, and hundreds of homes, including nearly 150 in Red Lodge, were damaged by muddy waters. One large house that was home to six park employees in the town of Gardiner was ripped from its foundation and floated 5 miles (8 kilometers) downstream before sinking. Four to five homes could still topple into the Stillwater River, which already washed several cabins away, according to a spokeswoman for Stillwater County.

No deaths or serious injuries have been reported.

Red Lodge was under a boil-water advisory, and trucks supplied drinking water to half of the town that was without it. Portable toilets were strategically placed for those who couldn't flush at home.

The Yodeler Motel, once home to Finnish coal miners, faced its first shutdown since it began operating as a lodge in 1964. Owner Mac Dean said he is going to have to gut the lower level, where 13 rooms flooded in chest-high waters.

"Rock Creek seemed to take in its own course," he said. "It just jumped the bank and it came right down Main Street and it hit us."

Dean had been counting on a busy summer tied to the park's 150th anniversary. The Yodeler had the most bookings in the 13 years Dean and his wife have owned the business. Now he's hoping to get some help, possibly from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The damage is catastrophic," he said. "We're between a rock and a hard place. And if we don't get some assistance, we're not gonna make it."

Yellowstone is one of the crown jewels of the park system, a popular summer playground that appeals to adventurous backpackers camping in grizzly country, casual hikers walking past steaming geothermal features, nature lovers gazing at elk, bison, bears and wolves from the safety of their cars, and amateur photographers and artists trying to capture the pink and golden hues of the cliffs of the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone and its thundering waterfall.

All 4 million visitors a year have to pass through the small towns that border the park's five entrances.

The flooding — triggered by a combination of torrential rain and rapid snowmelt — hit just as hotels around Yellowstone were filling up with summer tourists. June is typically one of Yellowstone's busiest months.

President Joe Biden declared a disaster in Montana, ordering federal assistance be made available.

The tourism season had started well for Cara McGary, who guides groups through the Lamar Valley to see wolves, bison, elk and bears. She had seen more than 20 grizzlies some days this year.

Now, with the road from Gardiner into northern Yellowstone washed out, the wildlife is still there, but it's out of reach to McGary. Her guide business, In Our Nature, is suddenly in trouble.

"The summer that we prepared for is not at all similar to the summer that we're going to have," she said. "This is an 80% to 100% loss of business during the high season."

In Gardiner, where the park's north entrance is located, the town escaped flooding but briefly became home to hundreds of park visitors stranded when the road into town was closed off along the surging

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 48 of 67

Yellowstone River. They didn't stick around when it reopened Tuesday.

"Town is eerie right now," Katie Gale said Wednesday. "We had all those folks trapped in here, and then as soon as they opened the road ... it was just like someone just pulled the plug in bathtub."

Officials and business leaders are hoping Gardiner, Red Lodge and other small communities can draw visitors even without access to the park.

Sarah Ondrus, owner of Paradise Adventure Company, that rents out cabins and "glamping" tepees and offers rafting, kayaking and horseback riding trips, was frustrated she was getting so many cancellations.

"Montana and Wyoming still exist. I don't know how I can convince these people," Ondrus said. "Once our water quality is good and our law enforcement thinks it's OK, we're good to go again. It's still a destination. You can still horseback ride, go to cowboy cookouts, hike in the national forest."

That could be a tall order for anyone coming from the south or east sides of the park who had hoped to exit in the north. After the southern portion of the park reopens, it would take an almost 200-mile (320 kilometers) detour through West Yellowstone and Bozeman to reach Gardiner. It would require a nearly 300-mile (480 kilometers) drive from Cody, Wyoming.

Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte, a Republican, has faced criticism from Democrats and members of the public for being out of the country during the disaster.

Spokesperson Brooke Stroyke said the governor had left last week on a long-scheduled personal trip with his wife and was due back Thursday. She would not say where he was, citing security reasons.

In his absence, Montana's Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras signed an emergency disaster declaration Tuesday.

Storm star Sue Bird says 2022 will be her final WNBA season

By TIM BOOTH AP Sports Writer

Always in control on the court, Sue Bird lasted about 10 minutes until the emotion of the moment and the finality of the decision got the best of her.

After 21 professional seasons, one of the greatest basketball careers ever is nearing its end.

"I feel like I've played as long as I can at a really high level both physically and mentally, and it's just gotten harder," Bird said, fighting through tears.

The Seattle Storm star and five-time Olympic gold medalist announced Thursday the 2022 season will be her last playing in the WNBA.

The announcement by Bird, 41, ended any speculation about her future; she had acknowledged in February when she re-signed with Seattle that this would likely be her final season. She strongly considered retirement after last season before choosing to return for a 19th season as a player.

Bird's announcement came a day before Seattle's game at Connecticut, the state where she was a collegiate star and national player of the year. The Storm will close out their road trip on Sunday in New York, about 30 miles from where Bird grew up in Syosset, New York.

It's Seattle's only scheduled trip to New York this season, which helped prompt her announcement.

"Knowing it was going to be my last game in New York is really what started the thought process around announcing that this would be my last year," Bird said. "So that's kind of the how, and the when. That was the motivating factor on the timing. And I feel like for every athlete, sometimes it really just comes down to you know when you know. There isn't necessarily a recipe for it. You just know when you know."

Bird is a four-time WNBA champion, 12-time All-Star and the oldest player in the league. She has spent her entire WNBA career with Seattle since becoming the No. 1 draft pick in 2002 following her storied college career at UConn. This season is her 21st associated with the franchise although just her 19th playing after missing two seasons because of injuries.

Her resume is the envy of anyone in professional sports, let alone basketball. National championships at UConn in 2000 and 2002. WNBA titles with Seattle in 2004, 2008, 2018 and 2020, the last coming inside the WNBA "bubble" in Florida amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Bird hoisted five additional titles playing overseas in the EuroLeague. Last year, she added a fifth Olympic gold in Tokyo to go along with the ones the United States earned in 2004 in Athens, 2008 in Beijing, 2012

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 49 of 67

in London and 2016 in Rio de Janeiro.

Bird was the AP national player of the year her final season at UConn. She is a five-time all-WNBA first-team selection, the league's all-time leader in assists and the only player to appear in more than 500 games in league history.

She has been honored on every list imaginable as one of best and most influential players in the history of the league. And she's the standard by which other point guards are judged.

Bird told her current teammates about her decision during a team dinner on Wednesday night and Seattle's coaching staff Thursday morning. Bird also had a long list of former teammates, coaches, executives and friends she wanted to tell personally rather than hearing it through various channels. Among the most emotional was her talk with Karen Bryant, the general manager of the Storm when Bird was drafted in 2002.

Deep down, they all knew that the hints Bird gave over the past several months were leading to this announcement.

"Not a lot of people do something for their entire lives the way that athletes do. Don't get me wrong, I know people are fulfilled in other ways. It's not about a comparison. It's just sports is different, I think," Bird said. "I've been doing this since I was 5 or 6 years old. It's really all I know. So of course, I'm sad. It's a little bit of like a mourning knowing I'm going to miss it. But I mean, I've got no regrets. I feel wonderful about my career, the people I've met, the things we've all accomplished."

Bird said she's not really prepared for the farewell tour that's likely to follow her every time she visits a WNBA road city for the last time.

"I feel like I don't personally need that," Bird said. "But I also understand that there are fan bases that that might want to, you know, take that moment. ... But yeah, I'm not prepared for it."

Bird turns 42 in October and was on the cusp of stepping away a year ago, and when the Storm were eliminated by the Phoenix Mercury in the playoffs, fans chanted "One more year! One more year!" as she did an on-court televised interview.

Those cheers were egged on by Phoenix's longtime star Diana Taurasi, Bird's former college teammate at UConn and part of all five of those Olympic gold-medal runs.

In the end, the fans — and Taurasi — got what they wanted. Bird came back, for exactly one more year.

"Sue Bird is Storm basketball," her WNBA team tweeted moments after Bird made her decision known. "Every moment, every memory has one constant. No. 10. It's time for the final chapter."

Fed's aggressive rate hikes raise likelihood of a recession

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has pledged to do whatever it takes to curb inflation, now raging at a four-decade high and defying the Fed's efforts so far to tame it.

Increasingly, it seems, doing so might require the one painful thing the Fed has sought to avoid: A recession.

A worse-than-expected inflation report for May — consumer prices rocketed up 8.6% from a year earlier, the biggest jump since 1981 — helped spur the Fed to raise its benchmark interest rate by three-quarters of point Wednesday.

Not since 1994 has the central bank raised its key rate by that much all at once. And until Friday's nasty inflation report, traders and economists had expected a rate hike of just half a percentage point Wednesday. What's more, several more hikes are coming.

The "soft landing" the Fed has hoped to achieve — slowing inflation to its 2% goal without derailing the economy — is becoming both trickier and riskier than Powell had bargained for. Each rate hike means higher borrowing costs for consumers and businesses. And each time would-be borrowers find loan rates prohibitively expensive, the resulting drop in spending weakens confidence, job growth and overall economic vigor.

"There's a path for us to get there," Powell said Wednesday, referring to a soft landing. "It's not getting easier. It's getting more challenging"

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 50 of 67

It was always going to tough: The Fed hasn't managed to engineer a soft landing since the mid-1990s. And Powell's Fed, which was slow to recognize the depth of the inflation threat, is now having to play catch-up with an aggressive series of rate increases.

"They are telling you: 'We will do whatever it takes to bring inflation to 2%,'" said Simona Mocuta, chief economist at State Street Global Advisors. "I hope the (inflation) data won't require them to do whatever they're willing to do. There will be a cost."

In Mocuta's view, the risk of a recession is now probably 50-50.

"It's not like there's no way you can avoid it," she said. "But it's going to be hard to avoid it."

The Fed itself acknowledges that higher rates will inflict some damage, though it doesn't foresee a recession: On Wednesday, the Fed predicted that the economy will grow about 1.7% this year, a sharp downgrade from the 2.8% growth it had forecast in March. And it expects unemployment to average a still-low 3.7% at year's end.

But speaking at a news conference Wednesday, Powell rejected any notion that the Fed must inevitably cause a recession as the price of taming inflation.

"We're not trying to induce a recession," he said. "Let's be clear about that."

President Joe Biden told The Associated Press on Thursday that he also believes a recession in the United States is not inevitable. The U.S. is in a better position than any other nation to tame inflation, he said.

Economic history suggests, though, that aggressive, growth-killing rate hikes could be necessary to finally control inflation. And typically, that is a prescription for a recession.

Indeed, since 1955 every time inflation ran hotter than 4% and unemployment fell below 5%, the economy has tumbled into recession within two years, according to a paper published this year by former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and his Harvard University colleague Alex Domash. The U.S. jobless rate is now 3.6%, and inflation has topped 8% every month since March.

Inflation in the United States, which had been under control since the early 1980s, resurged with a vengeance just over a year ago, largely a consequence of the economy's unexpectedly robust recovery from the pandemic recession. The rebound caught businesses by surprise and led to shortages, delayed shipments — and higher prices.

President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus program added heat in March 2021 to an economy that was already warmed up. So did the Fed's decision to continue the easy-money policies — keeping short-term rates at zero and pumping money into the economy by buying bonds — it had adopted two years ago to guide the economy through the pandemic.

Only three months ago did the Fed start raising rates. By May, Powell was promising to keep raising rates until the Fed sees "clear and convincing evidence that inflation is coming down."

Some of the factors that drove the economy's recovery have meanwhile vanished. Federal relief payments are long gone. Americans' savings, swelled by government stimulus checks, are back below pre-pandemic levels.

And inflation itself has been devouring Americans' purchasing power, leaving them less to spend in shops and online: After adjusting for higher prices, average hourly wages fell 3% last month from a year earlier, the 14th straight drop. On Wednesday, the government reported that retail sales fell 0.3% in May, the first drop since December.

Now, rising rates will squeeze the economy even harder. Buyers of homes and autos will absorb higher borrowing costs, and some will delay or scale back their purchases. Businesses will pay more to borrow, too.

And there's another byproduct of Fed rate hikes: The dollar will likely rise as investors buy U.S. Treasuries to capitalize on higher yields. A rising dollar hurts U.S. companies and the economy by making American products costlier and harder to sell overseas. On the other hand, it makes imports cheaper in the United States, thereby helping ease some inflationary pressures.

The U.S. economy still has strength. The job market is booming. Employers have added an average 545,000 jobs a month over the past year. Unemployment is near a 50-year low. And there are now roughly two job openings for every jobless American.

Families aren't buried in debts as they were before the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Nor have banks

and other lenders piled up risky loans as they had back then.

Still, Robert Tipp, chief investment strategist at PGIM Fixed Income, said that recession risks are rising, and not only because of the Fed's rate hikes. The growing fear is that inflation is so intractable that it might be conquered only through aggressive rate hikes that imperil the economy.

"The risk is up," Tipp said, "because the inflation numbers came in so high, so strong."

All of which makes the Fed's inflation-taming, recession-avoiding act even more treacherous.

"It's going to be a tightrope walk," said Thomas Garretson, senior portfolio strategist at RBC Wealth Management. "It's not going to be easy."

Detroit honors Vincent Chin, Asian American killed in 1982

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Decades before Chinese immigrant Yao Pan Ma was attacked while collecting cans in New York and Thai American Vicha Ratanapakdee was fatally assaulted in San Francisco, Vincent Chin was beaten to death with a baseball bat in Detroit by two white men who never served jail time.

Forty years later — and amid a rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans — Detroit has partnered with The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication Coalition on a four-day commemoration to honor civil rights efforts that began with Chin's death and declare the city's commitment against such violence.

"Although hate crimes existed, Vincent Chin did bring out a flash point for Asian Americans," Stanley Mark, senior staff attorney at the New York-based Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, said, calling Chin's death "a seminal moment among Asian Americans."

Chin, a 27-year-old Chinese immigrant, was at the Fancy Pants Tavern strip club in the Detroit enclave of Highland Park for his bachelor party on June 19, 1982, when a fight erupted. Federal authorities said two autoworkers blamed Chin for layoffs at car factories due to Japanese imports. After Chin left the club, the two men tracked him down at a fast food eatery and attacked him, authorities said. Chin later died at a hospital.

The Vincent Chin 40th Remembrance & Rededication commemoration started Thursday.

It comes as crimes against people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent have increased, fueled in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some in the U.S. say bigots have been emboldened by then-President Donald Trump, who often disparagingly referred to the virus as the "Chinese virus."

"This recent spike of anti-Asian violence because of COVID and anti-China rhetoric deals with geopolitical things," Mark said. "The rhetoric is: China is the boogeyman."

From March 19, 2020, through the end of last year, people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent reported 10,905 incidents — from taunting to outright assaults, according to Stop AAPI Hate, a national coalition based in California.

The Justice Department said that in 2020, more than 8,000 single-bias incidents involved 11,126 victims — up from 7,103 incidents the previous year. Bias over race, ethnicity and ancestry was behind nearly 62% of the incidents.

Ratanapakdee was among the Asian Americans who have been attacked in recent years. He was on a morning walk when he was shoved to the ground and his head hit the pavement. The 84-year-old died two days later.

Ma, 61, was knocked down and repeatedly kicked in the head in an attack last year. He died Dec. 31.

Last month, three women of Asian descent were shot in a hair salon in Dallas' Koreatown. The suspect's girlfriend later told investigators he has delusions that Asian Americans are trying to harm him.

President Joe Biden last year signed the bipartisan COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which expedited Justice Department reviews of anti-Asian hate crimes. His administration has spent recent weeks in meetings with Asian American leaders to discuss the violence. K-pop sensation BTS visited the White House last month to speak with Biden about combating the rise in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans.

Helen Zia, an activist in Detroit at the time Chin was slain and now executor of an estate named after Chin and his mother, Lily, said anti-Asian racism that was going on in the 1980s is similar to what is hap-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 52 of 67

pening today.

"This is a common thread for the history of Asians in America whether it's an economic crisis or somebody to blame for the World Trade Center being destroyed: It's Asians, yellow and brown people that have historically been scapegoated and blamed for these things," she said.

"It goes to a threat that is more than a couple of hundred years old — blaming a group that is seen as the forever-enemy alien."

To the horror of Zia and many others, neither of the two men accused of beating Chin received any jail time. Ronald Ebens pleaded guilty to manslaughter, while his stepson, Michael Nitz, pleaded no contest.

Each was sentenced to three years' probation and fined \$3,700.

"These men are not going to go out and harm somebody else," Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman, who has since died, explained at the time. "You don't make the punishment fit the crime; you make the punishment fit the criminal."

The declaration shocked many.

"The sentence put a target on every Asian American's head," said Zia, who is now an author living in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Ebens and Nitz also were later acquitted of federal civil rights charges.

Federal prosecutors had said Ebens blamed people of Asian descent for problems in the U.S. auto industry, and killed Chin because of his race. The defense admitted Ebens killed Chin, but said he was drunk and had been provoked.

The Associated Press was unable to reach Nitz for comment this week. A voicemail message was left Wednesday at a telephone number listed for Ebens.

"There was a full expectation (Ebens and Nitz) would receive the full wrath of the criminal justice system," Zia said. "I think the family — people — thought the justice system was going to work."

Leaders pledge arms and EU path for Ukraine in Kyiv visit

By JOHN LEICESTER and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Four European leaders expressed their support for Ukraine on Thursday while meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, vowing to back Kyiv's candidacy to eventually join the European Union and offering more weapons to fend off Russia's invasion.

French President Emmanuel Macron promised Ukraine six more truck-mounted artillery guns, the latest in a new round of Western arms pledges as the war grinds on in the Donbas region in the east.

France, Germany, Italy and Romania "are doing everything so that Ukraine alone can decide its fate," Macron said at a news conference with Zelenskyy and the others.

"My colleagues and I have come here to Kyiv today with a clear message: Ukraine belongs to the European family," said German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Amid Ukrainian fears that Western resolve could wane, the visit carried heavy symbolism. France, Germany and Italy have all faced criticism for continuing to engage with Russian President Vladimir Putin — and failing to give Kyiv the weaponry it says it needs.

With Scholz beside him, Macron defended earlier comments that riled Ukrainians about not humiliating Russia, solemnly noting how the end of World War I had sown the seeds of World War II.

"We are side by side today with Chancellor Scholz. One hundred years ago, we were at war and allies helped France win. France committed a historic mistake. It lost the peace because it wanted to humiliate Germany. The question of humiliation I always placed in a context to come, not the current context," he said.

"Today, this war must be won, France clearly supports Ukraine so it prevails," Macron said. "Germany, like France, will never be in situations where they negotiate on Ukraine's behalf with Russia. Moreover, we have never done that."

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said it was important for him to hear that European leaders "agree the end of the war and peace for Ukraine should be as Ukraine sees them." He said Ukrainians will

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 53 of 67

continue to fight for all of their land.

Ukrainians and some of their European neighbors have been afraid that Western powers might press for territorial concessions for the sake of peace.

Scholz reiterated that there is no such intent to dictate anything to Ukrainians, and that only they "can decide what is right in terms of an agreement on a peace which we are unfortunately very, very far away from."

Italian Premier Mario Draghi expressed concern about millions of tons of grain backed up in Black Sea ports by the war, saying it could bring "worldwide catastrophe." Italy has been a first destination for African migrants and could find itself overwhelmed as a result of largescale hunger in the Southern Hemisphere.

"We want the atrocities to stop and we want peace," Draghi said. "But Ukraine must defend itself, and it will be Ukraine that chooses the peace it wants."

The leaders also visited Irpin, a Kyiv suburb that saw intense fighting and where many civilians were killed. They decried the destruction there, with Macron saying he saw signs of "war crimes."

While shocking images of such devastation have rallied Western support, Ukrainian officials have expressed concern that "war fatigue" could eventually erode that — particularly as rising prices and upcoming U.S. elections increasingly dominating public concerns.

The U.S. and its European allies have given billions of dollars in weaponry to Ukraine, and Germany and the U.S. recently announced new arms shipments. Such arms have been crucial in preventing the Russians from taking the capital, but Kyiv has said much more will be needed.

"Russia is only looking for new ways to scare Europe and seize more and more of our land," Zelenskyy said at the news conference. "The goal of Russia in this war is to break Ukraine and through this break the whole of Europe."

While the European leaders were in Kyiv, NATO defense ministers were meeting in Brussels to discuss plans for strengthening the military alliance's eastern borders to dissuade Russia from planning any further aggression.

Many in Ukraine hope the visit could open the way to significant new arms supplies. It also comes as EU leaders prepare to decide next week on Ukraine's request to become a candidate for membership in the bloc.

The war has increased pressure on EU governments to fast-track Ukraine's candidate status, and Thursday's pledge to support candidacy status for Ukraine and neighboring Moldova pushes the whole 27-nation union closer to doing so. But the process still is expected to take years, and EU members remain divided over how quickly and fully to open their arms to new members.

European allies have sent increasingly powerful weapons and rallied around Ukraine more than many expected, approving waves of unprecedented sanctions against Russia that also are badly squeezing Europe's economy.

Ukrainians say more is needed as Russia presses an offensive in the Donbas, slowly but steadily gaining ground on the outmanned and outgunned Ukrainian forces.

After the news conference, Zelenskyy made a digital appearance at technology shows in Paris, Amsterdam, London and Stockholm as what organizers called a 3D avatar, with his image on a large screen. Wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with futuristic fighters and the text "Come to the Dark Side" and "Dominate or Die," he urged countries to support what he called a "digital Lend Lease" for Ukraine to bounce back from the war with a "global digital revolution."

Macron, Scholz and Draghi, representing the EU's three largest economies, traveled to Kyiv together on a special overnight train. They had been criticized for not visiting sooner. Soon after they arrived, air raid sirens wailed.

Dmitry Medvedev, the former Russian president who is now deputy head of the Kremlin Security Council, dismissed the European leaders as "connoisseurs of frogs, liver and pasta" and said their visit brought no benefit.

"Again they promised EU membership and old howitzers, slammed down some vodka and, like 100 years ago, took the train home," he tweeted. "And that's all good. It's just that this doesn't bring Ukraine any closer to peace. And the clock is ticking. ... "

President Klaus Iohannis of Romania, which borders Ukraine and has been a key destination for its refugees, arrived on a separate train. He said at the news conference that Romania is facilitating the transit of Ukrainian exports, including grain.

A number of other European leaders have already made the trip to show their solidarity with Ukraine, even when the fighting raged closer to the capital than it does now.

Scholz had long resisted traveling to Kyiv, saying he didn't want to "join the queue of people who do a quick in-out for a photo opportunity," adding that a trip should focus on doing "concrete things."

Tamara Malko, a resident of the Donetsk region, which is part of the Donbas, said Macron and Scholz had been "very cold" toward Ukrainians so far and hoped their visit would bring change.

"We want peace very much ... and have high hopes for Macron and Scholz," she said. "We want them to see and understand our pain."

Heat stress blamed for thousands of cattle deaths in Kansas

By ROXANA HEGEMAN Associated Press

BELLE PLAINE, Kan. (AP) — Thousands of cattle in feedlots in southwestern Kansas have died of heat stress due to soaring temperatures, high humidity and little wind in recent days, industry officials said.

The final toll remains unclear, but as of Thursday at least 2,000 heat-related deaths had been reported to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the state agency that assists in disposing of carcasses. Agency spokesman Matt Lara said he expects that number to rise as more feedlots report losses from this week's heat wave.

The cattle deaths have sparked unsubstantiated reports on social media and elsewhere that something besides the weather is at play, but Kansas agriculture officials said there's no indication of any other cause.

"This was a true weather event — it was isolated to a specific region in southwestern Kansas," said A.J. Tarpoff, a cattle veterinarian with Kansas State University. "Yes, temperatures rose, but the more important reason why it was injurious was that we had a huge spike in humidity ... and at the same time wind speeds actually dropped substantially, which is rare for western Kansas."

Last week, temperatures were in the 70s and 80s, but on Saturday they spiked higher than 100 degrees, said Scarlett Hagins, spokeswoman for the Kansas Livestock Association.

"And it was that sudden change that didn't allow the cattle to acclimate that caused the heat stress issues in them," she said.

The deaths represent a huge economic loss because the animals, which typically weigh around 1,500 pounds, are worth around \$2,000 per head, Hagins said. Federal disaster programs will help some producers who incurred a loss, she added.

And the worst may be over. Nighttime temperatures have been cooler and — as long as there is a breeze — the animals are able to recover, Tarpoff said.

Hagins said heat-related deaths in the industry are rare because ranchers take precautions such as providing extra drinking water, altering feeding schedules so animals are not digesting during the heat of the day, and using sprinkler systems to cool them down.

"Heat stress is always a concern this time of year for cattle and so they have mitigation protocols put in place to be prepared for this kind of thing," she said.

Many cattle had still not shed their winter coats when the heatwave struck.

"This is a one in 10-year, 20-year type event. This is not a normal event," said Brandon Depenbusch, operator of the Innovative Livestock Services feedlot in Great Bend, Kansas. "It is extremely abnormal, but it does happen."

While his feedlot had "zero problems," he noted that his part of the state did not have the same combination of high temperatures, high humidity, low winds and no cloud cover that hit southwestern Kansas.

Elsewhere, cattle ranchers haven't been so hard hit.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Nebraska Cattlemen said they have received no reports of higher-than-normal cattle deaths in the state, despite a heat index of well over 100 degrees this week.

Oklahoma City National Stockyards President Kelli Payne said no cattle deaths have been reported since temperatures topped 90 degrees last Saturday, after rising from the mid 70s starting June 1.

"We have water and sprinklers here to help mitigate heat and the heat wave," Payne said, but "we don't have any control over that pesky Mother Nature."

Some clinics halting abortions while bracing for Roe's fall

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Abortion providers in some places where the procedure could be banned if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade are bracing for a ruling by halting scheduling for the procedure, transitioning staff to help patients travel to other states and creating networks of clinics that will span across regions of the country.

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, which operates three clinics that provide abortions in the state, is not scheduling the procedure beyond June 25 as it anticipates a late June decision reversing the landmark 1973 decision that guaranteed abortion rights nationwide. The organization in recent weeks has dedicated two staff members to help patients book appointments and figure out how to get to clinics.

Whether clinics in Wisconsin will be able to provide abortions, though, has turned into a day-to-day question.

"One of the hardest aspects of this is not knowing what day this decision will come down and what it will be," said Michelle Velasquez, the director of legal advocacy and services at Planned Parenthood Wisconsin. "The unknown has been difficult."

It's a window into what abortion providers and access funds are planning in more than a dozen other states across the South and Midwest. In South Dakota this week, the state's only abortion clinic, also operated by Planned Parenthood, announced it had "paused" scheduling abortions beyond the end of the month. In Oklahoma, providers already stopped the procedure after a law was enacted to ban it.

In Wisconsin, a law banning abortion has been on the books since 1849, but Roe v. Wade overrode it. While Roe's fall would likely spark a legal tussle over whether it is valid, Planned Parenthood does not want to put its staff at risk of prosecution.

Velasquez said clinic staff wanted to provide abortions in Wisconsin up until the last minute it was legal, but also had to consider that scheduling appointments for dates when it could become illegal could create uncertainty and be "distressing" for patients.

Velasquez acknowledged that the Supreme Court could release its decision as soon as next week, even while Planned Parenthood has appointments on the books. She said if that happened, Planned Parenthood would help those patients book appointments for abortions in nearby states, such as Minnesota and Illinois. Patients could still get counseling, lab work and ultrasounds in Wisconsin in the meantime.

"We wouldn't leave patients, like, 'You're on your own,'" Velasquez said.

"Even if we can't provide the medications or we can't do a procedure, we are absolutely able to help people find the care they need," she added.

The strategy will inevitably put more pressure on providers in states in the region where abortion will still be legal, said Caitlyn Myers, an economic professor at Middlebury College who studies abortion access.

"As hundreds of thousands of women flood out of these states, it is going to enormously tax the resources of these providers," she said. "I don't think they are prepared for this huge influx."

It comes as the number and rates of U.S. abortions is on the rise after a long decline. Abortions increased from 2017 to 2020, according to figures from the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights. It counted more than 930,000 abortions in the U.S. in 2020.

Clinics shuttering, like one did in Idaho recently, or halting scheduling show that a post-Roe reality has already arrived in many places. Myers said getting an appointment for an abortion may soon become "critical" across the country.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 56 of 67

Feds taking first steps toward revising race, ethnic terms

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

The federal government is taking preliminary steps toward revising racial and ethnic classifications that have not been changed in a quarter century following calls for more accurate categories for how people identify themselves in federal data gathering.

The revisions could open the door to changes long desired by advocates on census and survey forms. Among them are a new category for people of Middle Eastern and North African descent who currently are classified as white and efforts to make categories less confusing for Hispanic participants.

The chief statistician of the U.S. said in a blog post Wednesday that her office was initiating a formal review of the race and ethnicity classifications maintained by the Office of Management and Budget which were first outlined in 1977 and have not been revised since 1997.

The purpose of any changes to the standards will be to better reflect the diversity of the U.S., said Karin Orvis, the chief statistician, who was named to the position by the Biden administration earlier this year.

The review will wrap up by summer 2024 after getting input from government experts across agencies and public feedback, according to the chief statistician. That date would be months before a presidential election that could lead to a stop to any revisions if there's a change in administrations. Momentum for changing the classifications grew in the years leading up to the 2020 census, but it was halted after then-President Donald Trump took office in 2017.

"I understand the importance of moving quickly and with purpose," Orvis said. "It is also important that we get this right."

Besides helping to provide a portrait of the demographic makeup of the U.S., the categories are used to enforce civil rights, voting rights and employment discrimination laws. Under current classifications, race and Hispanic origin are separate categories on census forms and surveys.

Some advocates have been pushing for combining the race and Hispanic origin questions, saying the way race is categorized often confuses Hispanic respondents who are not sure how to answer. Tests by the Census Bureau in the 2010 census showed that combining the questions yielded higher response rates.

The need to change the current standards can be seen in 2020 census results in which the "some other race" category surpassed African Americans as the nation's second-largest racial group. The "some other race" category was made up overwhelmingly of Latinos, said Arturo Vargas, executive director of NALEO Educational Fund.

"Right now, the Census Bureau knows the way it collects data is fundamentally flawed. It's confusing and distorts the true nature of our nation's diversity," Vargas said. "For the Latino population, the current construct is flawed when it comes to Latinos being able to identify themselves as Latino and by the race category."

Advocates also have been pushing for a category of Middle Eastern and North African, also known as MENA, for the once-a-decade census and other federal demographic surveys. The Census Bureau recommended adding a MENA category to the 2020 census form, but the idea was dropped by the Trump administration.

Several U.S. House members equated the lack of a MENA category to "the longstanding erasure of a group of our fellow Americans" in a letter this week to Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young and Census Bureau Director Robert Santos.

"OMB standards determine how our political institutions distribute material resources, political representation, and research funding," said the letter from 18 House Democrats, including Michigan's U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the lone Palestinian American in Congress. "These resources are vital components of growth and development for any minority community, particularly those who experience historical barriers to meeting basic needs and accessing support."

Meanwhile, Asian communities also have been calling for more nuanced details. Grouping Asians together in a single race category masks wide variations among different Asian groups, according to advocates.

"Aggregated data points in health, education and other issues perpetuate the persistent and pernicious

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 57 of 67

myth that all Asian Americans are affluent and well-educated — by not allowing for a deeper dive into the differences within subgroups,” said Terry Ao Minnis, an official at Asian Americans Advancing Justice ` AAJC.

For many civil rights groups, updating the categories has been a priority for years.

“We have been calling for urgency on this matter,” Vargas said. “We are heartened that we are seeing some movement.”

For families deeply divided, a summer of hot buttons begins

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Kristia Leyendecker has navigated a range of opposing views from her two siblings and other loved ones since 2016, when Donald Trump’s election put a sharp, painful point on their political divisions as she drifted from the Republican Party of today and they didn’t.

Then came the pandemic, the chaotic 2020 election and more conflict over masks and vaccinations. Yet she hung in there to keep relationships intact. That all changed in February 2021 during the devastating freeze in the Dallas area where they all live, she with her husband and two of their three children. Leyendecker’s middle child began a gender transition, and Leyendecker’s brother, his wife and her sister cut off contact with her family. Their mother was caught in the middle.

“I was devastated. If you had told me 10 years ago, even five years ago, that I would now be estranged from my family, I would have told you you were lying. We were a very close family. We did all holidays together. I’ve been through all of the stages of grief multiple times,” says the 49-year-old Leyendecker, a high school teacher.

Since, there have been no family picnics or group vacations. There were no mass gatherings for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Heading into summer, nothing has changed.

For families fractured along red house-blue house lines, summer’s slate of reunions, trips and weddings poses another exhausting round of tension at a time of heavy fatigue. Pandemic restrictions have melted away but gun control, the fight for reproductive rights, the Jan. 6 insurrection hearings, who’s to blame for soaring inflation and a range of other issues continue to simmer.

Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silvers, co-hosts of the popular Pantsuit Politics podcast, have been hosting small group conversations with listeners about family, friendships, church, community, work and partners as they’ve launched their second book, “Now What? How to Move Forward When We’re Divided (About Basically Everything).”

What they’ve heard is relatively consistent.

“Everyone is still really hurt by some of the fallout in their relationships over COVID,” Stewart Holland says. “People are still brokenhearted about some friendships that fell apart, partnerships that are now strained, family relationships that are estranged. As people start to come back together again, that pain is right on the surface, about the last fight or the last disagreement or the last blowup.”

She called this moment in a nation still greatly polarized as a “bingo card of political conflict for certain families right now.”

Reda Hicks, 41, was born and raised in Odessa, the epicenter of the West Texas oil industry. Her family is large, conservative and deeply evangelical. She’s the oldest of four siblings and the senior of 24 first cousins. Her move to Austin for college was an eye-opener. Her move to ultra-progressive Berkeley, California, for law school was an even bigger one.

She’s been in Houston since 2005 and has watched friction among friends and family from her two very different worlds devolve on her social media feeds, emboldened by the distance the internet affords.

“There’s been a horrific caricaturing on both ends of that spectrum. Like, ‘I’m going to talk to you like you are the caricature in my mind of a hippie’ or ‘I’m going to talk to you like you’re the caricature in my mind of a roughneck,’ which means you’re an idiot either way and you have no idea what you’re talking about,” says Hicks, a business consultant and the mother of two young children.

“It all feels so personal now.”

Immigration and border security pop up regularly. So does abortion and access to health care for women.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 58 of 67

Religion, particularly the separation of church and state, is a third hot button. And there's gun reform in light of the recent mass school shooting in Uvalde at home in Texas and other massacres. She has relatives — including her retired military and conservative husband — who own and carry guns.

In offline life, Hicks' family interactions can be tense but do remain civil, with regular get-togethers that include a recent group weekend at her second home in the Pineywoods of East Texas.

She has never considered a transition to no contact with conservative loved ones. With a brother living just across the street, that would be difficult to pull off. As a couple, Hicks and her husband have made a conscious decision to openly discuss their opposing views in the presence of their children, ages 11 and 5.

It's a humbling of sorts, making space for them to agree to disagree. "And we disagree a lot. But our ground rules are no name calling. If something gets extra heated, we take a timeout."

No real ground rules are set when it comes to the rest of their families, other than a change of topic when things appear headed for a boil over.

Daryl Van Tongeren, an associate professor of psychology at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, is out with a new book on the quiet power of restraint, "Humble: Free Yourself from the Traps of a Narcissistic World." In his eyes, the Hickses have got it right, though cultural humility is a big ask for some divided families.

"Cultural humility is when we realize that our cultural perspective is not superior, and we demonstrate curiosity to learn from others, seeing the multitude of diverse approaches as a strength," Van Tongeren says. "This humility does not come at the cost of fighting for the oppressed nor does it require that people shy away from upholding their personal values. But how we engage with people with whom we disagree matters."

Van Tongeren is an optimist. "Humility," he says, "has the potential to change our relationships, our communities and nations. It helps bridge divides, and it centers the humanity of each of us. And it is what we desperately need right now."

In the humility camp, he's not alone. Thomas Plante, who teaches psychology at California's Santa Clara University, a liberal Jesuit school, urges the same.

"Having a heated conversation during a picnic or over the barbecue isn't going to change anyone's mind. It only creates tensions and hurt feelings as a rule," Plante says.

Carla Bevins, an assistant teaching professor of communication at Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business, focuses on interpersonal communication, etiquette and conflict management. The wells of emotional reserves have fallen even lower at the start of summer's closeness, she says, compared to the stressful family times of, say, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"We're so worn out," she says. "And so often we're framing our own response before we really even hear what the other person is trying to say. It needs to be about finding that commonality. Ask yourself, how much energy do I have in a day? And remember, there's always the option to just not go."

Campus sex assault rules fall short, prompting overhaul call

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — What Karla Arango says started as a dorm-room sexual assault got even worse as word spread around campus. Her attacker's fraternity brothers snubbed her, she says, whispering about her in the cafeteria, blocking her phone number and unfriending her on social media. Soon her grades were slipping.

Arango's experience in her first year at Northern Kentucky University highlights what experts see as deep-seated problems with Title IX, the 1972 federal civil rights law that prohibits sexual discrimination in education. It turns 50 this month.

Heralded as a gamechanger for female college athletes, the law also is supposed to protect sexual assault and harassment accusers like Arango, giving them options like moving dormitories or even getting their attackers removed from the school.

In practice, the law's protections fall short, accusers and advocates say.

Polarizing regulations finalized under former President Donald Trump have discouraged students from

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 59 of 67

coming forward with abuse allegations. Those who do face a live hearing and cross-examination by a person of their alleged attacker's choosing. The rules also narrowed the definition of sexual harassment and allowed colleges to ignore most cases arising off campus.

President Joe Biden and other critics say the rules, finalized in 2020 by then-Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, fail to adequately protect sexual assault victims, deter them from reporting misconduct and go too far in shielding the accused. Biden is expected to announce new rules as soon as this month.

In the meantime, many students have opted out entirely, never reporting the abuse. Or they've chosen to go an informal route, in which the accused might be asked not to take classes with the accuser, or to switch schools — often with no mark on their record.

Arango ultimately decided not to pursue her case, and nothing happened to the other student.

"I felt like my identity was beginning to form, and then it was completely stripped away," said Arango, now 21 and heading into her senior year. "Everyone just saw me as this girl that was lying about being sexually assaulted. And I was spiraling really bad."

The Associated Press typically doesn't identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted, but Arango allowed her name to be used. She serves on a caucus of survivors for End Rape on Campus, a national advocacy group.

Sexual assault is commonplace on college campuses. Thirteen percent of college students overall and nearly 26% of undergraduate women reported nonconsensual sexual contact, according to a 2019 Association of American Universities survey of 181,752 students on 27 campuses. Rates were nearly as high for students who are transgender, nonbinary or otherwise gender nonconforming.

Only about one-third of the female accusers reported what happened, according to the survey. Doing so often ends badly, according to Know Your IX, an advocacy group that has found students who report abuse often leave school, at least temporarily, and are threatened with defamation lawsuits.

"The current process is not really working for anybody," said Emma Grasso Levine, the manager of Know Your IX.

At some universities, the Trump administration rules have been followed by a decrease in the number of complaints addressed by Title IX offices, according to records provided to The Associated Press.

At the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 204 Title IX complaints were logged in 2019, but just 12 in 2021, records show. The number of cases that met the criteria for formal investigations fell from 27 to zero in the same period. No student has been found responsible for a Title IX violation at the university since 2020.

At Michigan State University, the number of Title IX complaints dropped from more than 1,300 in 2019 to 56 in 2021. School officials say the drop is the result of narrowed definitions in the 2020 regulations. Complaints that fall outside the scope of the federal rules now go through a similar but separate disciplinary system, officials said.

Arango's nightmare began in August 2019, when she blacked out after playing a drinking game with her new fraternity friends.

She recalls waking on an air mattress, a male student on top of her, although she had given no consent for the sex. She grabbed her belongings and headed to class, acting like nothing had happened.

She kept quiet until that October, when she told a fraternity friend but swore him to secrecy.

A few days later, she received an email from the Title IX office saying her name had been included in a sexual assault misconduct report. Her friend had shared her secret with the fraternity's president, who was a resident adviser and required to report it.

The accused student soon found out. His fraternity brothers shunned her as she weighed whether to pursue a Title IX investigation. People were calling her a liar, she said.

Arango asked Title IX officials if the other student would be suspended or sanctioned if she filed a formal complaint. The coordinator told her the process was lengthy and that, if nothing else, she probably could get a no-contact order.

She was skipping two classes to avoid the student and his friends, on track to receive the first two Cs of her life — grades that could threaten her scholarship. Then there was the isolation. "The thing is, no one is talking to me anymore," she realized.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 60 of 67

She put the investigative process on hold. By the time she revisited it in the spring, the pandemic was slowing everything down. Then DeVos' new regulations were announced.

"Byzantine" is the word attorney Russell Kornblith uses to describe them. He is representing three Harvard University graduate students in a lawsuit alleging that the Ivy League school for years ignored complaints about sexual harassment by a renowned professor.

He said pursuing the cases can be time intensive, distracting students from their classwork. Income disparities often play out, with affluent students able to pay for attorneys and others represented only by themselves. In some cases, accusers find themselves being questioned about their sexual past.

A process that already had seemed rough became overwhelming to Arango.

"I just saw the words 'cross-examination' and freaked out," she recalled. "I was like, 'I can't. I can't put myself through that.'"

As more complaints fall outside its scope, experts have raised alarms that colleges are increasingly judging cases in parallel campus discipline systems that don't guarantee accusers the same rights as Title IX.

Justin Dillon, a Washington-based lawyer who has defended dozens of students accused of sexual misconduct, called the cross-examination process created under DeVos an "unparalleled success," but criticized the overall handling of sexual misconduct cases under Title IX.

"It's just sort of created this kind of sexual police state on college campuses that I think goes far beyond making sure that men and women get equal access to education," he said.

Students are filing fewer sexual misconduct cases and the bulk of them — upward of 90% — are now being handled informally, said Brett Sokolow, president of the Association of Title IX Administrators. Sometimes the accused will simply agree to transfer so their new school won't know anything happened, he said.

For all the difficulties colleges have had adjudicating sex assault cases, Title IX at least holds them accountable for protecting the rights of accusers who can otherwise sue, said Maha Ibrahim, a staff attorney with Equal Rights Advocates, a nonprofit that represents survivors.

"What if it wasn't there? Then what?" she said. "You know, college campuses are just a free for all, a very dangerous place for women and for queer folks. And then what?"

Shaky oasis for some polar bears found, but not for species

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

With the polar bear species in a fight for survival because of disappearing Arctic sea ice, a new distinct group of Greenland bears seem to have stumbled on an icy oasis that might allow a small remote population to "hang on."

But it's far from "a life raft" for the endangered species that has long been a symbol of climate change, scientists said.

A team of scientists tracked a group of a few hundred polar bears in Southeast Greenland that they show are genetically distinct and geographically separate from others, something not considered before. But what's really distinct is that these bears manage to survive despite only having 100 days a year when there's sea ice to hunt seals from. Elsewhere in the world, polar bears need at least 180 days, usually more, of sea ice for them to use as their hunting base. When there's no sea ice bears often don't eat for months.

With limited sea ice, which is frozen ocean water, these Southeast Greenland polar bears use freshwater icebergs spawned from the shrinking Greenland ice sheet as makeshift hunting grounds, according to a study in Thursday's journal Science. However, scientists aren't sure if they are thriving because they are smaller and have fewer cubs than other polar bear populations.

"These polar bears are adapted to living in an environment that looks like the future," said study lead author Kristin Laidre, a polar bear biologist at the University of Washington, who over nine years tracked, collared and tested the all-white bears usually from a helicopter hovering the white snow and ice backdrop. "But most bears in the Arctic don't have glacial ice. They don't have access to this. So it can't be taken out of context like somehow this is like a life raft for polar bears around the Arctic. It's not. Greenland is unique."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 61 of 67

"We project large declines of polar bears across the Arctic and this study does not change that very important message," Laidre said. "What this study does is show that we find this isolated group living in this unique place... We're looking at where in the Arctic polar bears can as a species hang on, where they might persist."

The freshwater ice will keep coming off the ice sheet for centuries giving limited hope that this is "a place that polar bears might continue to survive" but it's separate from an overall trend of sea ice loss in the summer because of emissions of heat-trapping gases from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, said National Snow and Ice Data Center deputy lead scientist Twila Moon, a study co-author.

These bears hunt on the fresh glacial ice that has more peaks and valleys than the flatter sea ice, often in house- or car-sized bergs, called bergy bits, Moon said.

This population of polar bears are on the southeast tip of the giant island, where there are no towns. For years scientists figured these bears were part of the same population in Northeast Greenland, just roaming up and down the massive coast. But they don't, Laidre said. An unusual set up of winds, currents and geographical features around 64 degrees North make it next to impossible for bears to move north of that point, the current sends them south fast, she said.

While most bears travel 25 miles (40 kilometers) over four days, the Southeast Greenland bears go about 6 miles (10 kilometers) in the same time, the study said.

"They just stay in the same place for years and years," Laidre said.

Genetic testing Laidre and colleagues did showed they are more different from the neighboring populations than any other pair of polar bear populations on Earth, said study co-author Beth Shapiro, a University of California Santa Cruz evolutionary geneticist.

Occasionally, a bear from elsewhere breeds with the southeast bear, but Shapiro said it's infrequent and only one-way with no bear heading north and breeding with that population.

In general these bears are thinner than other Arctic bears, with females weighing about 400 pounds (185 kilograms), compared to 440 to 560 pounds (199 to 255 kilograms) elsewhere in the North American Arctic, Laidre said. And they also tend to have fewer cubs, which could be because they are so isolated and don't get as many mating opportunities, she said.

Because this group hadn't been studied before, Laidre said it is impossible to tell if the Southeast Greenland polar bear population has just adapted to be smaller and have fewer cubs or whether these are indicators of a stressed population and not a good sign for survival. Shapiro and others don't think it looks good.

"They're not reproducing as much as other individuals," Shapiro said. "They're not as healthy as other individuals who are in a better habitat. So it's kind of an oasis maybe, but it's not a happy oasis. It's a I'm-struggling-to-get-by-but-just-making-it kind of oasis."

Long-time polar bear scientist Steve Amstrup of Polar Bear International, who wasn't part of the study, said he worries that people will wrongly take this research to mean polar bears can adapt to climate change, when it's about one small group that is prolonging their ability to persist, adding that this "does not offer salvation." While this group is distinct he said he fears that calling attention to it "may in fact diminish the natural isolation they currently enjoy."

This shows "that we can still really have surprises," Moon said. "And I'm constantly reminded that there's not ever a point where we throw in the towel."

Buffalo supermarket gunman in court on hate crime counts

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The white man who killed 10 Black people at a Buffalo supermarket made his first appearance in federal court on hate crime charges Thursday, and the judge urged prosecutors to quickly decide whether to pursue the death penalty given the "substantial" cost of those cases.

In a brief proceeding, presiding Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder said Payton Gendron was eligible to be represented by public defenders based on his financial situation. Fielding a series of questions from the judge mostly with "yes" or "no" responses, Gendron said he had not been employed in a year, had

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 62 of 67

\$16 dollars in a bank account, had no car and two shares of Disney stock.

Gendron has been held without bail since his arrest shortly after the May 14 attack at a Tops Friendly Supermarket, which also left three people wounded.

He appeared in U.S. District Court on a criminal complaint charging him with 10 counts each of hate crime resulting in death and using a firearm to commit murder. The complaint also includes three counts each of hate crime involving bodily injury and attempt to kill, and using a firearm in a violent crime.

Gendron wore an orange jump suit, shackles and a black mask covering a scruffy beard. He leaned forward slightly in his chair with his head down when the judge read the charges.

No plea was entered during the proceeding.

"It's hard being here. It's hard being in a courtroom with a terrorist," said Zeneta Everhart, one of about two dozen relatives of victims who were in the courtroom. "Seeing the man who tried to kill my son sitting there, sharing the same space with him, is hard."

Everhart's 21-year-old son, Zaire Goodman, a Tops employee, was shot in the neck as he helped a customer in the parking lot but survived.

She called being in court "part of my healing process."

Gendron's parents were not in the courtroom.

Attorney General Merrick Garland, who met with the victims' families in Buffalo on Wednesday, has not ruled out seeking the death penalty against Gendron.

In calling for prosecutors to make a quick decision on the death penalty, Schroeder noted such cases typically require expert testimony from psychiatrists and medical examiners.

Federal prosecutor Joseph Tripi said the next step in the process involves an indictment. At that point, it will be the attorney general's "sole decision" whether to seek the death penalty.

"I'm a Christian person, I don't wish death on anyone," a niece of 62-year-old victim Geraldine Talley said after the hearing, "but this right here I have to work with it, because I would rather see him dead."

The niece, Tamika Harper, vowed to be at every court appearance "for my aunt and the other nine victims."

"I'm angry, very, very angry," said Harper, who wore pins on her top with the victims' pictures. "He has not shown a lick of remorse."

The federal hate crimes case is based partly on documents in which Gendron detailed his plans for the attack, including the semi-automatic rifle he would use, clothing and body armor he would wear and the portable camera that would allow him to stream the massacre live on the internet.

The writings included "statements that his motivation for the attack was to prevent Black people from replacing white people and eliminating the white race, and to inspire others to commit similar racially-motivated attacks," according to the complaint.

Gendron was already facing a mandatory life sentence without parole if convicted on previously filed state charges, including hate-motivated domestic terrorism and murder. He has pleaded not guilty.

His lawyer in the state case declined to comment on the federal charges.

Gendron drove more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) from his home in Conklin to a predominantly Black part of Buffalo. There, authorities say, he fired approximately 60 shots at shoppers and workers.

The complaint details his path through the store's aisles in search of victims as customers and employees ran to take cover in a stock room, conference room, freezer and dairy cooler.

Gendron surrendered to police as he exited the supermarket.

Production at bedeviled baby formula factory halted by storm

By TOM MURPHY and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

Severe weather has forced Abbott Nutrition to pause production at a Michigan baby formula factory that had just restarted after being closed for several months, contributing to a national shortage.

Production for Abbott's EleCare specialty formula has been suspended, but there is enough supply to meet demand until production is restarted, the company said. Abbott had prioritized ramping up production of the specialty formula for infants with severe food allergies and digestive problems who have few

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 63 of 67

other options for nutrition.

Abbott says it needs to assess damage and re-sanitize the factory after severe thunderstorms and heavy rains swept through southwestern Michigan late Monday. Spokesman Jonathon Hamilton said flooding hit a few areas of the factory, but he declined to provide more specific details about damage.

The storm also brought high winds, hail and power failures to Sturgis, Michigan, where the factory is located. The company expects production and distribution to be delayed for a few weeks as it cleans the plant.

Once it restarts, the factory will begin with the production of EleCare and other specialty formulas. Abbott says it also plans to restart production of its Similac formula as soon as possible.

Abbott had initially restarted the factory on June 4 after it had been closed since February due to contamination.

Abbott recalled several leading brands of formula then, including Similac. That squeezed supplies that had already been strained by supply chain disruptions and stockpiling during COVID-19 shutdowns.

The ongoing formula shortage has been most dire for children with allergies, digestive problems and metabolic disorders who rely on specialty formulas.

President Joe Biden's administration has since eased import rules for foreign manufacturers, airlifted formula from Europe and invoked federal emergency rules to prioritize U.S. production.

FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf told a Senate committee on Thursday that government work done to increase the supply means that there will be more than enough product to meet current demand. He also noted that other U.S. baby formula manufacturers are running their plants around the clock.

Califf said they hoped to have a "super supply" of formula to get shelves fully restocked in perhaps two weeks.

"But it's too early to give an exact estimate of what the delay will be in the Sturgis plant," Califf said at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions.

Califf called the flood at the plant "an unfortunate setback and a reminder that natural weather events can cause unforeseen disruptions in supply chains."

Abbott is one of just four companies that produce about 90% of U.S. formula. Hamilton said Abbott has produced 8.7 million pounds of formula in June, or 95% of what it produced the month before the recall.

The Michigan factory was closed after the Food and Drug Administration began investigating four bacterial infections among infants who consumed powdered formula from the plant. Two of the babies died. The company continues to state that its products have not been directly linked to the infections, which involved different bacterial strains.

FDA inspectors eventually uncovered a host of violations at the plant, including bacterial contamination, a leaky roof and lax safety protocols.

During Thursday's hearing, Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Virginia, cited Associated Press reporting that the Food and Drug Administration skipped 15,000 inspections of baby formula plants due to COVID-19 and said inspectors should be considered "essential workers."

Califf said he agreed with the point. "Definitely we had inspections were put on hold and there's been a price to pay for that," Califf said.

Kevin Spacey 'strenuously' denies sex charges, granted bail

LONDON (AP) — Kevin Spacey "strenuously denies" allegations of sexual assault, his lawyer said Thursday, as the Oscar-winning actor appeared in a London court to face five charges of offenses against three men.

Photographers and television camera crews thronged Spacey, 62, as he arrived at London's Westminster Magistrates Court for the preliminary hearing, walking into court accompanied by members of his legal team and two police officers.

Spacey sat in the glass-fronted dock during the half-hour hearing, standing to give his full name — Kevin Spacey Fowler — as well as his birthdate and a London address.

He was not asked to enter a formal plea, but his lawyer, Patrick Gibbs, said: "Mr. Spacey strenuously denies any and all criminality in this case."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 64 of 67

"He has returned to the U.K. in order to establish his innocence," Gibbs said. "He needs to answer these charges if he is to proceed with his life."

Deputy Chief Magistrate Tan Ikram granted Spacey unconditional bail until his next appearance, a plea hearing scheduled for July 14 at London's Southwark Crown Court. He is free to return to the U.S. in the meantime.

The former "House of Cards" star is accused of four counts of sexual assault and one count of causing a person to engage in penetrative sexual activity without consent.

The alleged incidents took place in London between March 2005 and August 2008, and one in western England in April 2013. The victims are now in their 30s and 40s.

In a statement issued last month, Spacey said he would travel to Britain to face the charges and was confident he would "prove my innocence."

Spacey was questioned by British police in 2019 about claims by several men that he had assaulted them. The two-time Academy Award winner ran London's Old Vic theater between 2004 and 2015.

Spacey won a best supporting actor Academy Award for the 1995 film "The Usual Suspects" and a lead actor Oscar for the 1999 movie "American Beauty."

But his celebrated career came to an abrupt halt in 2017 when actor Anthony Rapp accused the star of assaulting him at a party in the 1980s, when Rapp was a teenager. Spacey denies the allegations.

Rich nations hit brakes on climate aid to poor at UN talks

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Rich countries including the European Union and the United States have pushed back against efforts to put financial help for poor nations suffering the devastating effects of global warming firmly on the agenda for this year's U.N. climate summit.

Observers and campaigners attending a ten-day preparatory meeting in Bonn, Germany, that's wrapping up Thursday expressed frustration at the resistance shown by developed nations to formally discussing how poor countries can get more aid when they're hit by climate disasters.

"Rich countries, particularly the EU, spiked the discussion about loss and damage at every single turn," said Teresa Anderson of the campaign group ActionAid International.

Delegates from developing countries had hoped growing awareness of the severe economic cost that global warming is already having for billions of people around the world would help move the needle on an issue that has long split rich and poor nations.

Those hopes were fueled last month, when officials from the Group of Seven leading economies for the first time acknowledged the need for more public and private money to avert and address the "adverse impacts of climate change."

The meeting in Bonn, which is home to the U.N. climate office, was designed to lay the foundations for the upcoming climate summit in Egypt's seaside resort of Sharm-el-Sheikh in November.

"Whether it was about setting up a new finance facility, providing funds, organizing technical support, or even just including the issue on the agenda for discussion at COP27 later this year, rich countries continued to block, block, block," said Anderson.

Noting the drought-induced famine currently threatening millions in the Horn of Africa, she accused rich countries of a "terrifying disconnect" to the real world.

Her comments echoed those of U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who this week accused many governments of "dragging their feet" on climate action.

Seasoned watchers of international climate meetings had cautioned against expecting delegates in Bonn to make any big progress on long-standing points of disagreement, particularly those that would entail big financial commitments.

"Many of the issues are above their pay grade," said Alden Meyer of E3G, an environmental think tank. Still, the outcome was slimmer than expected, he said.

The issue of ramping up climate aid is likely to come up Friday at a virtual meeting of major economies

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 65 of 67

hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden, and at the G-7 leaders summit in Germany on June 26-28.

The head of the U.N. climate office, Patricia Espinosa, had urged delegates at the start of the meeting in Bonn not to give in to despair, noting the progress made in recent years in tackling global warming.

Participants drew some cheer from an announcement Thursday by Australia's new government, which formally pledged to raise its target for cutting greenhouse gas reduction to 43% by the end of the decade compared with 2005 levels. The previous government's goal had been to cut emissions by just 26% to 28% in 2030, far below the targets set by other big polluters.

Kyiv Diary: European leaders bear witness to war's horror

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Before the ceremony and the serious meetings about war, the European leaders witnessed the devastation wrought by Russia. A must. To understand Ukraine's fight for survival, they had to see it themselves, with their own eyes.

The blown up buildings. The smashed cars. And a message of hope spray-painted on a damaged building despite mounting Ukrainian deaths.

French President Emmanuel Macron spotted it immediately amid the ruins Thursday.

"Look at that, 'Make Europe, not war,'" Macron said, pointing and reading the words out loud in English. "It's very moving to see that."

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Romania had a walking tour of Irpin, a small city which bore the full brunt of Russia's failed assault on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in the first weeks of the war. The tour preceded a meeting in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who met them wearing army green pants, a matching T-shirt and sneakers.

If the four hadn't fully grasped the scale of the horrors inflicted by the Russian invasion, ravages like the ones visited across much of Europe during World War I and World War II, then Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian Premier Mario Draghi and Romanian President Klaus Iohannis have no excuses now.

The leaders traveled by overnight train to the Ukrainian capital because flights aren't possible in the wartime airspace where missiles, drones, fighter jets and helicopters have rained down death and destruction. Iohannis, whose country has been a key destination for Ukrainian refugees, traveled separately from the others.

Standing out in their suits and ties amid the heavily armed soldiers guarding them, they heard from a Ukrainian government minister how Russian soldiers fired indiscriminately at families in cars and how the blowing up of bridges had blocked escape routes, locking people in a furnace of death and fighting.

"How many cities do you have in such a situation?" Macron asked.

"Hundreds," Oleksiy Chernyshov, Ukraine's minister for communities and territories development, replied.

"They were shooting into the families, children, women" as they tried to flee the fighting, the minister said. "They were just deliberately killing people inside the cars."

Macron wanted to understand how troops could do such things.

"How do you explain this?" he asked.

Chernyshov explained that some of the killers appeared to have been ordinary young soldiers and others appeared to have been special forces from the Caucasus region, which lies between the Black and Caspian seas. Moscow has deployed fighters from Chechnya, known for their ferocity, to Ukraine.

"We have hundreds of these cases, I am sorry to say. They are still going on," he said.

The devastated buildings with their innards blown out that the chancellor, the premier and the presidents walked past are just a fraction of the destruction in Ukraine after nearly four months of fighting.

The official said more than 12,000 apartment buildings have been destroyed so far. Add to that electricity substations, heating plants, roads, bridges, schools, churches.

"You name it," the minister said. "A lot of things to be rebuilt."

The leaders wanted to know more.

How was the Russian advance going now? Scholz asked.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 66 of 67

Macron wanted to know whether additional forces were being massed in Belarus, posing another possible threat to Ukraine.

"We think yes," Chernyshov said.

Macron was clearly moved. He called Irpin, which Ukrainian forces retook as Russian troops retreated from around Kyiv, "a heroic town."

"This is where the Ukrainians stopped the Russian army," he said.

The French leader said Irpin bore "the traces of barbarity."

"Massacres were carried out," he said. "We have the first traces of what are war crimes."

So now they know: With their own eyes.

Today in History: June 17, South Carolina church shooting

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, June 17, the 168th day of 2022. There are 197 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 17, 2015, nine people were shot to death in a historic African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina; suspect Dylann Roof was arrested the following morning. (Roof was convicted of federal hate crimes and sentenced to death; he later pleaded guilty to state murder charges and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.)

On this date:

In 1775, the Revolutionary War Battle of Bunker Hill resulted in a costly victory for the British, who suffered heavy losses.

In 1885, the Statue of Liberty arrived in New York Harbor aboard the French ship *Isere* (ee-SEHR').

In 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which boosted U.S. tariffs to historically high levels, prompting foreign retaliation.

In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Abington (Pa.) School District v. Schempp*, struck down, 8-1, rules requiring the recitation of the Lord's Prayer or reading of Biblical verses in public schools.

In 1967, China successfully tested its first thermonuclear (hydrogen) bomb.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon's eventual downfall began with the arrest of five burglars inside the Democratic headquarters in Washington, D.C.'s, Watergate complex.

In 1994, after leading police on a slow-speed chase on Southern California freeways, O.J. Simpson was arrested and charged with murder in the slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ronald Goldman. (Simpson was later acquitted in a criminal trial but held liable in a civil trial.)

In 2008, hundreds of same-sex couples got married across California on the first full day that gay marriage became legal by order of the state's highest court.

In 2009, President Barack Obama extended some benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees. Nevada Sen. John Ensign resigned from the GOP leadership a day after admitting an affair with a former campaign staffer.

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that states can't demand proof of citizenship from people registering to vote in federal elections unless they get federal or court approval to do so.

In 2019, Iran announced that it was breaking compliance with the international accord that kept it from making nuclear weapons; the announcement meant that Iran could soon start to enrich uranium to just a step away from weapons-grade levels. The Trump administration followed Iran's announcement by ordering 1,000 more troops to the Middle East.

In 2020, prosecutors in Atlanta brought murder charges against white police officer Garrett Rolfe in the fatal shooting of a Black man, Rayshard Brooks, following a struggle; a second officer, Devin Brosnan, was charged with aggravated assault and violating his oath. (Both officers are awaiting trial.) Quaker Oats announced that it would retire the Aunt Jemima brand, saying the company recognized that the character's origins were "based on a racial stereotype."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, June 17, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 345 ~ 67 of 67

Ten years ago: Rodney King, 47, whose 1991 videotaped beating by Los Angeles police sparked widespread outrage and who struggled with addiction and repeated arrests, died in Rialto, California, in an apparent accidental drowning. Webb Simpson won the U.S. Open, outlasting former U.S. Open champions Jim Furyk and Graeme McDowell.

Five years ago: The jury in Bill Cosby's sexual assault case declared itself hopelessly deadlocked, resulting in a mistrial for the 79-year-old TV star charged with drugging and groping a woman more than a decade earlier; prosecutors immediately announced they would pursue a second trial. (That trial resulted in Cosby's conviction, but Pennsylvania's highest court later overturned it.) The Navy destroyer USS Fitzgerald was damaged in a collision with a Philippine-flagged container ship off Japan that killed seven sailors.

One year ago: The Supreme Court, in a 7-2 ruling, left intact the entire Affordable Care Act, rejecting the latest major Republican-led effort to kill the national health care law known as "Obamacare." President Joe Biden signed legislation establishing a new federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery; Juneteenth, or June 19, would be the 12th federal holiday. A St. Louis couple who pointed guns at social justice demonstrators in front of their home in 2020 pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges; Mark and Patricia McCloskey were fined and agreed to forfeit the weapons they carried when they confronted several hundred protesters. Zambia's first president Kenneth Kaunda, died at 97; he was a leader of the campaign that ended British colonial rule.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Peter Lupus is 90. Movie director Ken Loach is 86. Singer Barry Manilow is 79. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich is 79. Comedian Joe Piscopo is 71. Actor Mark Linn-Baker is 68. Actor Jon Gries (gryz) is 65. Rock singer Jello Biafra is 64. Movie producer-director-writer Bobby Farrelly is 64. Actor Thomas Haden Church is 62. Actor Greg Kinnear is 59. Actor Kami Cotler is 57. Olympic gold medal speed skater Dan Jansen is 57. Actor Jason Patric is 56. Actor-comedian Will Forte is 52. Latin pop singer Paulina Rubio is 51. Tennis player Venus Williams is 42. Actor Arthur Darvill is 40. Actor Jodie Whittaker is 40. Actor Manish Dayal is 39. Country singer Mickey Guyton is 39. Actor Marie Avgeropoulos is 36. Rapper Kendrick Lamar is 35. NHL forward Nikita Kucherov is 29. Actor KJ Apa is 25.