

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 1 of 71

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Groton Hosts the Annual Lake Region Marching Band Festival](#)
- [3- Flihs gets 1,000th assist at Mobridge](#)
- [4- Lake Region Marching Festival Schedule](#)
- [4- Hanson does play by play](#)
- [4- Conde National League](#)
- [5- Weather Pages](#)
- [10- Daily Devotional](#)
- [11- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [12- Subscription Form](#)
- [13- News from the Associated Press](#)

Wednesday, Oct. 5

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

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

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

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 6

Senior Menu: Ham loaf, sweet potatoes, peas, acini depepi fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Fall Picture Day

1 p.m.: NEC Cross Country at Webster
Volleyball at Milbank (7th at 4 p.m. in elementary gym, 8th at 4 p.m. in Armory gym, C match starts at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity.)

UMC: Bible Study with Ashley, 6:30 p.m.

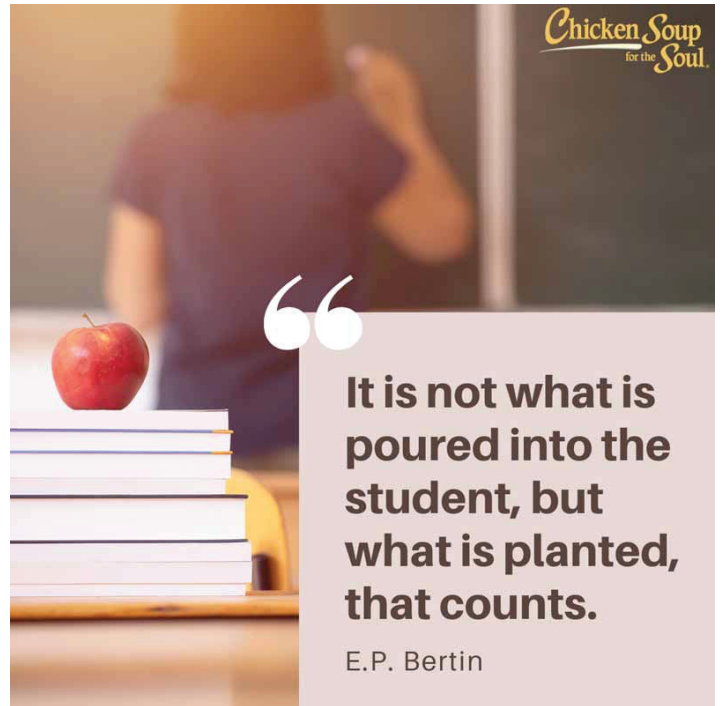
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 7

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice, seasonal fresh fruit, bread stick.

10 a.m.: Lake Region Marching Festival in Groton

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



Saturday, Oct. 8

9 a.m.: Gypsy Day Parade in Aberdeen
Common Cents Community Thrift Store Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 209 N Main.

Sunday, Oct. 9

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

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.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship (St. John's 9:00 am, Zion 11:00 am)

UMC: Conde worship, 8:30 p.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school after children's sermon during worship.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Senior members of the GHS Marching Band: Left to right. Ellie Weismantel, Cadance Tullis, Aspen Johnson, Carter Barse, Ethan Clark, Kamryn Flihs, Jacob Lewandowski, and Jackson Dinger. Not pictured is Ashtyn Bahr. (Photo courtesy Desiree Yeigh)

Groton Hosts the Annual Lake Region Marching Band Festival

On Friday, October 7th the Groton Area 8-12 Band, the Groton Area 6-7 Band, and eleven area school bands will converge in Groton for the Lake Region Marching Band Festival. The parade of bands will travel from South to North on Groton's Main Street from Railroad Avenue to 9th Avenue, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

This festival originated in Milbank then moved to Waubay for 11 years. Since 2013 Groton has hosted the festival and it plans to remain there for the foreseeable future. Bands will be evaluated on their performance by a panel of three judges. The bands will be judged by: Mr. Ron Stary, Mr. Dale Fiedler, and Mr. Mike Likness. Awards will be given to the top two bands in the high school and middle school band division, and the top three bands in the combined division. Other awards include Best Color Guard, Best Winds, and Best Percussion. A Grand Champion Award will also be awarded to the band with the highest score overall.

The festival has become a premier marching event in Northeast South Dakota, attracting bands and spectators from towns across the region. The public is invited to watch the parade of bands on Main Street as well as awards at the football field. Concessions will be available at the football field. Proceeds will go to the Band Department.

Attending the festival are bands from Aberdeen Roncalli, Faulkton, Langford, Leola, Ipswich, Frederick, Great Plains Lutheran, Northwestern, Pierre, Milbank Middle School, and Aberdeen Simmons and Holgate Middle School.

The event will be livestreamed, free of charge, at GDILIVE.COM. Anyone at the event can also listen to the announcer at 89.3 FM

Primary sponsors of the festival are the Groton Dairy Queen, The Groton Daily Independent, and the City of Groton.

Flihs gets 1,000th assist at Mobridge

Elizabeth Flihs got her 1,000th assist during the second set of volleyball action played Tuesday in Mobridge. She was recognized for her effort during the match.

Groton Areas volleyball team lost to Mobridge-Pollock, 3-0.

The first set was tied five times with the last at 13 before Mobridge-Pollock would score seven straight points to take a 20-13 lead. Trailing 24-17, Groton Area would score five straight to close to within two, 24-22, but the home town Tigers would win, 25-22.

Mobridge-Pollock would lead for most of the second set except when Groton Area tied it at 15 and 16 before Mobridge-Pollock would pull away for the 25-19 win.

Mobridge-Pollock would lead all the way for the 25-18 third set win.

Sydney Leight led Groton Area with 12 kills followed by Aspen Johnson with eight kills and two blocks, Anna Fjeldheim had six kills, Lydia Meier had three kills and an ace serve, Elizabeth Flihs had a kills and an ace serve, Jerica Locke had an ace serve and Laila Roberts had a kill.

Flihs had 27 assists and Carly Guthmiller had one. Guthmiller led Groton Area with 16 digs while Jerica Locke had 13 digs.

Hitting for the Tigers had Leight with 49 of 57, Johnson with 19 of 22 and Fjeldheim 16 of 18.

Charley Henderson led Mobridge-Pollock with nine kills and three blocks, Ryli Thompson had nine kills, Emma Keller had four kills and four ace serves, Emily Hatzembuehler had seven kills and one block, Raelyn Aberle had four kills, Gretchen Olson had two ace serves, Grace Overland had a block and a kill, Reagan Weisbeck and Mariah Goehring each had a kill and Katy Kemnitz and an ace serve.

The varsity match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bahr Spray Foam, John Sieh Agency, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Locke Electric , Dacotah Bank, SD Army National Guard with Brent Wienk, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc and Groton Area Chamber of Commerce.

Groton Area split the junior varsity sets, 16-25 and 25-19. Jaedyn Penning had seven kills and one ace serve, Talli Wright and Faith Traphagen each had two kills and an ace serve, Emma Kutter had two kills and a block, Jerica Locke had three ace serves, Kella Tracy had two kills and Rylee Dunker had a kill and a block. The JV match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM with an anonymous sponsor.

Groton Area won the C match, 26-24 and 28-26. Kella Tracy had six kills and two ace serves, Rylee Dunker had three kills, two blocks and an ace serve, Talli Wright had four ace serves and two kills, Emerlee Jones had two ace serves and two kills, Kayla Lehr had two kills and a block, Cali Tollifson had two kills, London Bahr had an ace serve and Hannah Sandness had a kill. Beauty Brew sponsored the broadcast on GDILIVE.COM.

Justin Hanson did the play-by-play of all three matches.



Elizabeth Flihs had her 1,000th assist during the Mobridge volleyball match. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 4 of 71

2022 Lake Region Marching Festival Lineup

**10:00- Groton Area 8-12 Marching Band
(EXHIBITION)**

Combined Division

10:05- Aberdeen Roncalli
10:10- Faulkton
10:15- Langford
10:20- Leola
10:25- Ipswich
10:30- Frederick

High School Division

10:35- Great Plains Lutheran
10:40- Northwestern
10:45- Pierre T.F. Riggs, Emerald Regiment

Middle School Division

10:50- Milbank Middle School
10:55- Simmons/Holgate Middle School
**11:00- Groton Area 6-7 Marching Band
(EXHIBITION)**

Awards after parade



Justin Hanson has been assisting the GDIL-IVE.COM network with play-by-play action of the volleyball matches. He is pictured here at the Mobridge match. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Conde National League

Sept. 26 Team Standings: Braves 10, Giants 9, Pirates 6, Tigers 4, Mets 4, Cubs 3

Men's High Games: Butch Farmen 187, 168; Ryan Bethke 184, 179; Tim Olson 162

Men's High Series: Ryan Bethke 524, Butch Farmen 512, Chad Furney 452

Women's High Games: Joyce Walter 166; Michelle Johnson 164, 150; Sam Bahr 149

Women's High Series: Michelle Johnson 449, Sam Bahr 424, Joyce Walter 416

Oct. 3 Team Standings: Braves 13, Giants 12, Cubs 7, Pirates 7, Mets 5, Tigers 4

Men's High Games: John Lowary 206, Daltan Locke 203, Russ Bethke 183

Men's High Series: Daltan Locke 525, Russ Bethke 525, John Lowary 501

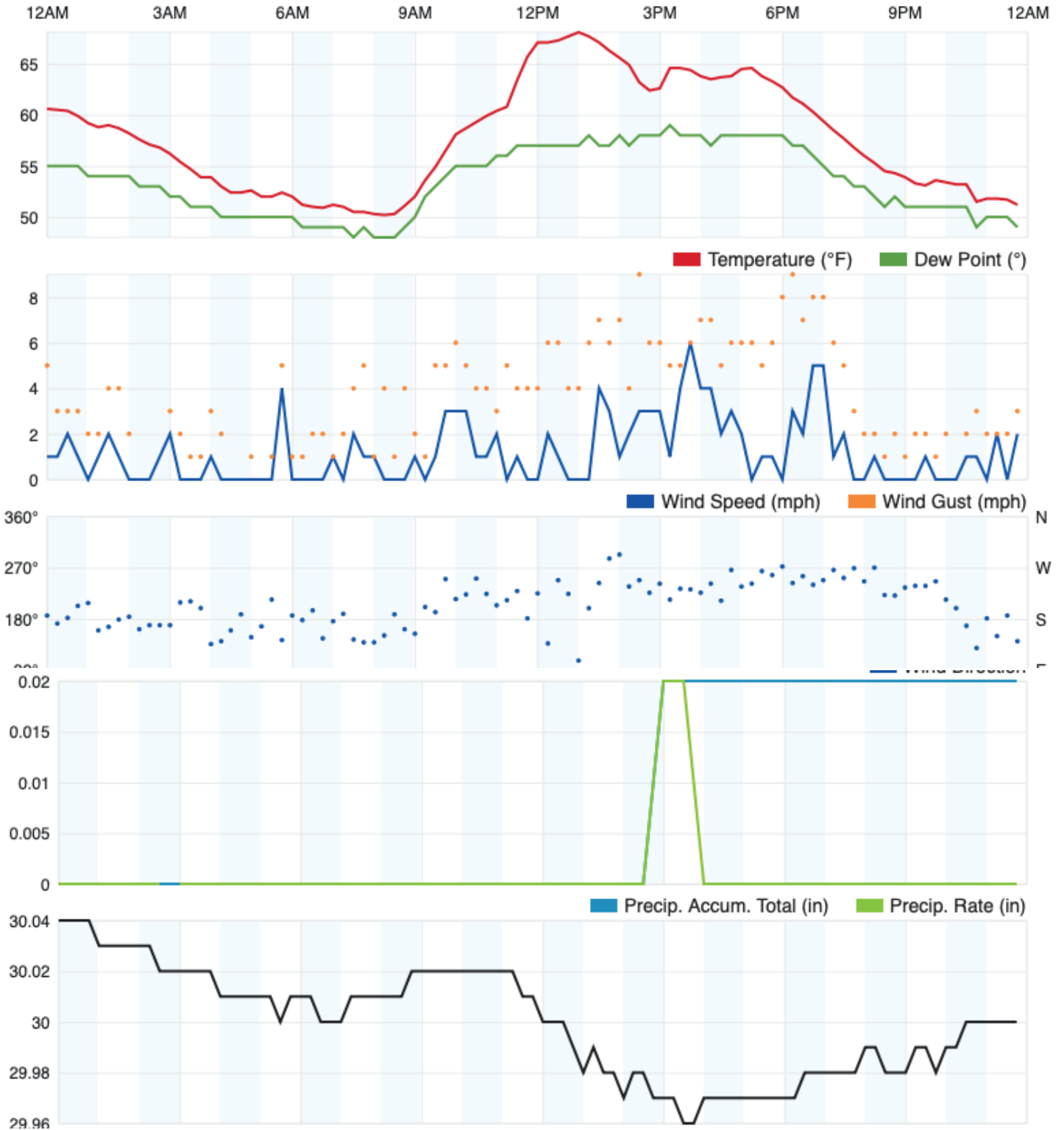
Women's High Games: Vickie Kramp 155, Joyce Walter 144, Sam Bahr 378

Women's High Series: Vickie Kramp 450, Joyce Walter 408, Sam Bahr 378

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 5 of 71

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 6 of 71

Today



Sunny

High: 75 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy
then Mostly
Cloudy and
Breezy

Low: 37 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny
and Breezy
then Mostly
Sunny

High: 49 °F

Thursday
Night



Frost

Low: 23 °F

Friday



Frost then
Sunny

High: 50 °F



Today:

- Chance of isolated rain/storms early
- Mostly Sunny West of the James River
- Clearing Skies East of the James River
- Highs: 72-77°F

Tonight:

- Increasing Clouds
- Lows: 34-45°F

Thursday:

- Becoming Partly to Mostly Sunny/Breezy
- Highs 45-55°F



Enjoy the last mild day before our cool down! A few isolated rain showers (and rumbles of thunder) continue early this morning. Otherwise, cloud cover will push east this morning leading to clearing skies with highs ranging in the 70s. Clouds back on the increase for tonight with lows in the mid-30s to the mid-40s. Thursday will start cloudy before clearing out with windy conditions, mainly east of the James River. Much cooler temperatures expected with a hard freeze likely to occur Thursday night into Friday morning.

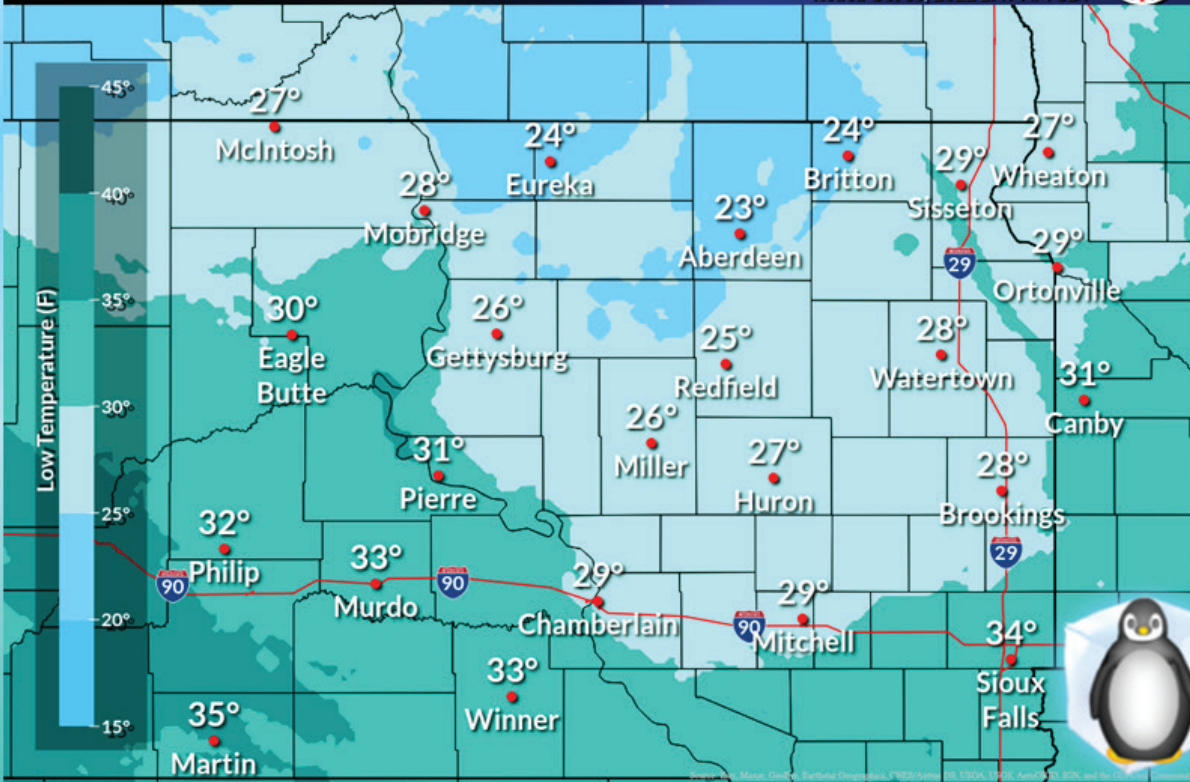
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 7 of 71

Early Morning Temperatures Friday Morning

Low Temperatures Early Friday Morning

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
Issued Oct 05, 2022 2:47 AM CDT



f t NWSAberdeen

www.weather.gov/abr

It is going to be a cold Friday morning with a hard freeze likely which will put an end to the growing season.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 8 of 71

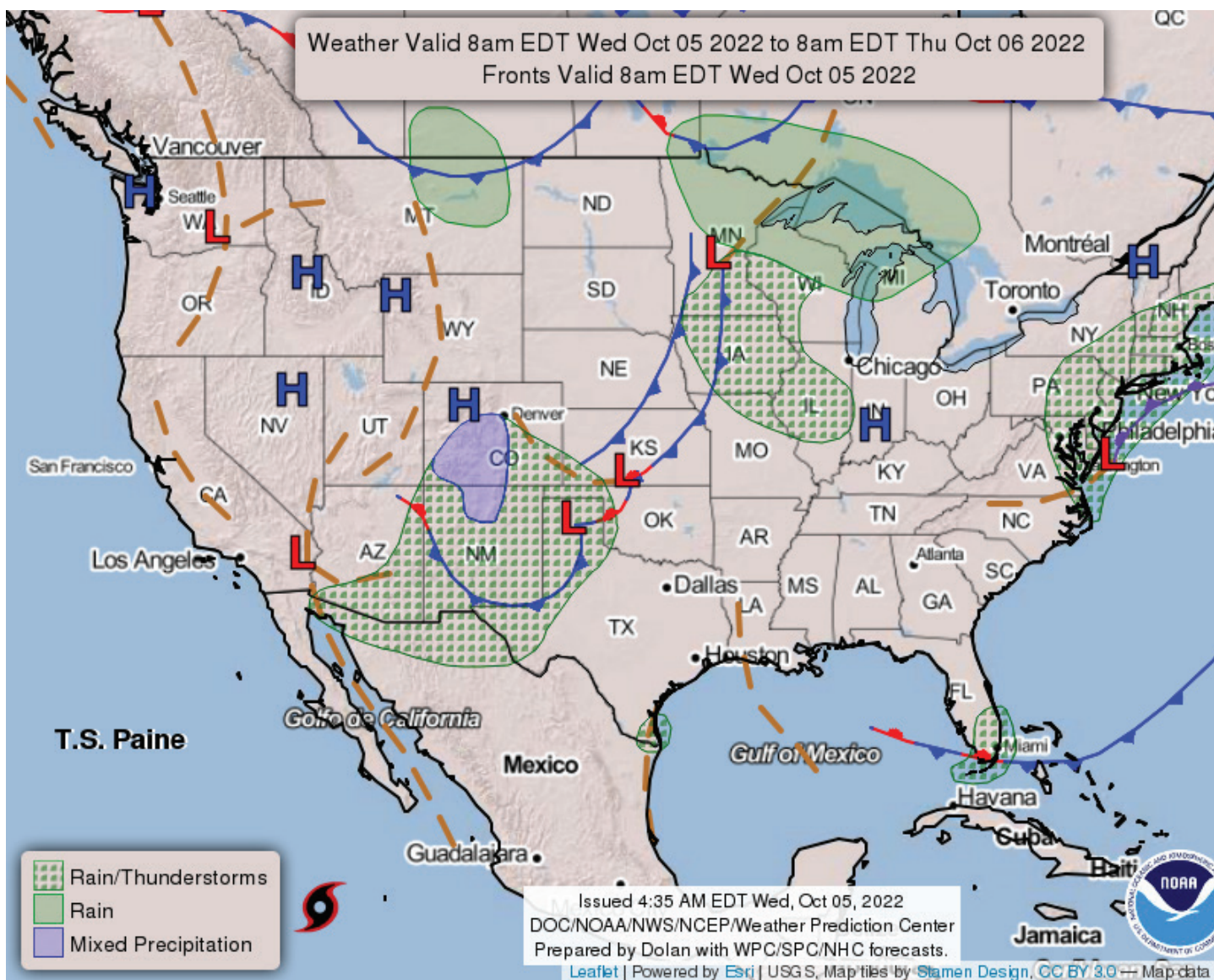
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 68 °F at 12:41 PM
Low Temp: 50 °F at 8:06 AM
Wind: 9 mph at 2:21 PM
Precip: : 0.02 (since midnight: 0.32)

Day length: 11 hours, 32 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 96 in 1963
Record Low: 19 in 1935
Average High: 66°F
Average Low: 39°F
Average Precip in Oct.: .39
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.13
Average Precip to date: 18.72
Precip Year to Date: 16.18
Sunset Tonight: 7:06:53 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:35:50 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 9 of 71

Today in Weather History

October 5, 1982: Strong thunderstorms developed across central South Dakota and raced into portions of southwest Minnesota. The storms were prolific lightning producers in South Dakota, setting several structures on fire. An electrical substation was damaged near Salem, an elementary school was set ablaze in Aberdeen, and several homes in Sioux Falls were struck. One house in Sioux Falls had a hole knocked in a wall by a lightning strike.

Numerous fires were also started in southern Minnesota by the same line of storms. Strong thunderstorm winds leveled several buildings, damaged a house, and moved a hog shed off its foundation on three separate farms near Worthington. The winds also turned over railroad cars near Pipestone. Worthington narrowly escaped damage as a small tornado touched down two miles southwest of town and moved southeast. Fortunately, the tornado's damage was confined to trees and crops.

October 5, 2013: A historic blizzard pounded western South Dakota with record-setting snowfall and high winds for almost 48 hours from October 3 through the afternoon of October 5. One to two feet of snow was reported over the plains of western South Dakota, with three to five feet of snow falling over the northern and central Black Hills. Wind gusts to 70 mph across the plains produced significant blowing and drifting snow, with visibilities near zero for much of the day on October 4. The heavy wet snow and strong winds downed trees and power lines, causing prolonged outages and impassable highways. The roofs of several businesses, a middle school, and a community center collapsed from the heavy snow. Thousands of livestock were killed from hypothermia, suffocation, or drowning. The South Dakota Animal Industry Board received over 21,000 cattle; over 1300 sheep; 400 horses; and 40 bison deaths from the storm. Tree and debris removal costs were several million dollars. An unyielding low-pressure area moving across the region brought an early fall blizzard to most of the counties west of Missouri River on October 4th and 5th. The snowfall and blizzard conditions occurred mainly along with the western parts of the counties. The snowfall amounts varied broadly from 1 to 2 inches to as much as 22 inches in far western Corson County. Very strong northwest winds of 30 to 50 mph with gusts to 60 mph brought blizzard conditions and significant travel problems. Interstate-90 was closed from Murdo to the Wyoming border from 7 pm on October 4th to October 8th. No travel was advised on all roads west of the Missouri River. Many cattle were also lost in western Corson County due to the storm. The heavy snow, along with strong winds, resulted in some power outages and some downed tree branches. The snowfall began in the late morning hours of the 4th and ended in the early afternoon hours of the 5th. Some snowfall amounts that occurred were 1 inch at Murdo; 2 inches at Timber Lake and 5 miles west of Hayes; 4 inches at McIntosh; 16 inches southeast of Morristown; and 22 inches southwest of Keldron.

1786: The famous "Pumpkin Flood" occurred on the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers. Harrisburg, PA, reported a river stage of twenty-two feet.

1864: A tropical cyclone hit India near Calcutta, devastating the city and killing about 60,000 people.

1972: Tropical Storm Joanne, earlier a hurricane, moved across the Baja California peninsula and came ashore in western Mexico south of Ajo. The storm brought heavy rain and flooding to much of Arizona. This storm is the first documented tropical storm to reach Arizona, with its cyclonic circulation intact. Over 5 inches of rain was reported on the Mogollon rim southeast of Flagstaff. Additional rainfall amounts included 4.44 at Flagstaff, 3.80 at Prescott, 2.21 at Yuma, 1.95 at Phoenix, 1.63 at Nogales, and 1.63 at Tucson.

2010: Large hail pounded Phoenix, Arizona, causing nearly \$3 billion in damage.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 10 of 71

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

FINDING SECURITY

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning..."

Eight words, strung together by God, that give man the building blocks of life.

Eight words that provide the foundation for wisdom.

Eight words that are essential to understanding the meaning of life.

Eight words that guarantee a joyous life.

Eight words that lead to fulfillment in life.

Eight words that point the direction for what we must do if we want to please God.

Eight words that prove the faithfulness of God.

Eight words that are the beginning of our obedience to the Lord.

Eight words that eliminate the folly of talk and teach us how to walk before God.

And once we completely and unreservedly "fear the Lord," we will have confidence and courage to face any obstacle in life because God is bigger than anything and everything else in the universe.

But those words do not end when our lives end. They are generational and, if the believer is faithful, will be passed from generation to generation.

Parents who want to provide safety and security and wellbeing for their children will do so because of their "fear of the Lord." Scripture provides all the evidence any parent needs to realize the benefits that will come to their children if they - the parents - "fear the Lord" and are obedient to Him - no matter the cost!

Not parents? Pass the message on. It's lifesaving!

Prayer: Lord, may we take to heart the significance and importance of those eight words, "the fear of the Lord" is where life begins. May we recognize Your power and our limits. Amen.

Scripture For Today: Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge. Proverbs 14:26



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 11 of 71

2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: 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
No Date Set: 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)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/01/2022: Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022: Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
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
11/19/2022: 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
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 12 of 71

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 13 of 71

News from the  Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Langford, 25-12, 25-5, 25-11

Arlington def. Deuel, 25-6, 25-14, 25-13

Bennett County def. Red Cloud, 17-25, 25-13, 26-24, 26-24

Bon Homme def. Freeman, 16-25, 25-15, 27-25, 25-22

Britton-Hecla def. Waubay/Summit, 25-14, 25-12, 25-12

Burke def. Avon, 25-6, 25-21, 25-14

Canistota def. Menno, 27-25, 26-24, 18-25, 25-21

Castlewood def. Florence/Henry, 25-18, 25-18, 25-20

Chester def. Tri-Valley, 25-6, 25-11, 25-20

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Little Wound, 25-23, 26-24, 15-25, 25-17

DeSmet def. Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op, 25-21, 25-21, 25-11

Dell Rapids def. Vermillion, 25-12, 25-11, 25-23

Deubrook def. Milbank, 25-17, 25-18, 25-18

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Viborg-Hurley, 20-25, 25-22, 25-16, 25-15

Elkton-Lake Benton def. West Central, 25-9, 25-15, 25-22

Estelline/Hendricks def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-13, 25-9, 25-13

Garretson def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-9, 25-14, 19-25, 25-15

Gayville-Volin def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-22, 25-11, 25-13

Gregory def. Winner, 25-13, 21-25, 14-25, 25-22, 15-3

Groton Area def. Moberly-Pollock, 25-22, 25-18, 25-18

Hamlin def. Sioux Valley, 25-23, 25-20, 25-19

Hanson def. Centerville, 25-14, 25-18, 26-24, 17-25, undefined-undefined

Highmore-Harold def. Sully Buttes, 25-13, 28-26, 19-25, 25-22

Ipswich def. Faulkton, 25-11, 25-16, 25-11

Kadoka Area def. Lyman, 25-7, 25-21, 25-10

Kimball/White Lake def. Chamberlain, 25-17, 25-6, 25-18

Lakota Tech def. St. Francis Indian, 25-11, 25-11, 25-16

Lead-Deadwood def. Harding County, 19-25, 25-22, 25-11, 25-17

Lennox def. Parker, 25-17, 25-12, 25-16

Leola/Frederick def. North Central Co-Op, 25-17, 25-17, 25-23

McCook Central/Montrose def. Howard, 25-22, 25-18, 25-23

Northwestern def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-14, 25-4, 25-9

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. James Valley Christian, 25-14, 25-22, 12-25, 25-17

Pierre def. Huron, 19-25, 21-25, 25-15, 25-12, 18-16

Rapid City Christian def. Chadron, Neb., 25-18, 25-14, 30-28

Sioux Falls Christian def. Canton, 25-20, 25-15, 26-24

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Brandon Valley, 25-17, 25-15, 25-8

Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 23-25, 25-20, 25-16, 25-23

St. Thomas More def. Philip, 25-18, 25-21, 25-22

Tea Area def. Madison, 25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 25-15

Timber Lake def. Lemmon, 25-9, 25-17, 25-10

Wagner def. Scotland, 25-9, 25-10, 25-20

Wakpala def. McLaughlin, 0-0

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 14 of 71

Warner def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-6, 25-13, 25-12
Webster def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-19, 25-17, 25-17
Wessington Springs def. Ethan, 21-25, 22-25, 25-15, 25-9, 16-14
Western Christian, Iowa def. Harrisburg, 25-21, 25-21, 25-17
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Dupree vs. Newell, ppd. to Oct 14th.

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

15-18-25-33-38, Mega Ball: 25, Megaplier: 2

(fifteen, eighteen, twenty-five, thirty-three, thirty-eight; Mega Ball: twenty-five; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$410,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 353,000,000

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-19, 16-25, 25-22, 25-14

Bon Homme def. Hanson, 12-25, 25-13, 25-23, 28-26

Chester def. Colman-Egan, 26-24, 25-14, 25-16

Dakota Valley def. Dell Rapids, 25-21, 25-20, 25-16

Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Castlewood, 25-21, 25-16, 20-25, 25-22

Hot Springs def. Edgemont, 25-23, 21-25, 25-12, 25-20

Lyman def. Stanley County, 24-26, 25-19, 27-25, 14-25, 18-16

McCook Central/Montrose def. Baltic, 25-18, 25-23, 25-16

Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-19, 25-16, 25-17

Sisseton def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-19, 25-13, 25-17

St. Francis Indian def. Marty Indian, 25-19, 19-25, 25-17, 25-21

Timber Lake def. Sully Buttes, 25-21, 25-15, 25-15

Wagner def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-23, 25-14, 25-19

Wall def. New Underwood, 19-25, 25-19, 25-23, 25-22

Wilmot def. Langford, 25-11, 26-24, 16-25, 25-16

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Acclaimed Native American flute player, hoop dancer has died

By GRETCHEN EHLKE Associated Press

Kevin Locke, an acclaimed Native American flute player, hoop dancer, cultural ambassador and educator, has died in South Dakota at age 68, according to his family.

A member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and from the ancestral line of Lakota and Anishinabe, Locke died Friday night after returning to his hotel room in Hill City, his son Ohiyesá Locke said Monday.

The younger Locke said his father, who had been performing at the Crazy Horse Memorial in the Black Hills, suffered an asthma attack and died while he was being taken to the hospital.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 15 of 71

Ohiyesá Locke said he had been video chatting with his father several hours before he died.

"He was walking through the Black Hills and telling me how beautiful they were, and he talked about some of the history of the Lakota people," he said.

According to his website, Locke performed for nearly 40 years to hundreds of thousands of people in more than 90 countries at performing art centers, festivals, schools, universities, conferences, state and national parks, monuments and powwows.

As a folk artist, Locke used his talents to teach others about Native American history and especially enjoyed working with children on the reservations to ensure the survival and growth of indigenous culture, the website said.

"He had an amazing gift to touch people's hearts and was very generous with his time," said Ohiyesá Locke, who lives in Killeen, Texas.

"Through my music and dance, I want to create a positive awareness of the Oneness of humanity," Kevin Locke once wrote on his website.

The Native American Music Awards issued a statement Saturday after learning of Locke's death.

"Kevin Locke was undoubtedly one of the greatest flutists, hoop dancers and teachers the world had ever seen. He will be greatly missed. The Native American Music Awards would like to extend their deepest condolences and sorrow to his family," the statement read.

Locke attended high school at the Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico. He also earned a bachelor's degree from the University of South Dakota and a master's degree in educational administration from the University of North Dakota, his son said.

Locke was a fluent Lakota speaker and served as a board member for the Lakota Language Consortium, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the language.

Since 1982, Locke, who played the Northern Plains flute, has recorded twelve albums of music and stories, most recently "The First Flute," "Open Circle," "Keepers of the Dream," and "Dream Catcher," according to his website.

"I have always been in admiration of him, and he wanted me to follow in his footsteps. But his shoes were too big to fill," his son said.

Nobel Prize for 3 chemists who made molecules 'click'

By DAVID KEYTON and FRANK JORDANS Associate Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Three scientists were jointly awarded this year's Nobel Prize in chemistry on Wednesday for developing a way of "snapping molecules together" that can be used to design better medicines.

Americans Carolyn R. Bertozzi and K. Barry Sharpless, and Danish scientist Morten Meldal were cited for their work on click chemistry and bioorthogonal reactions, which are used to make cancer drugs, map DNA and create materials that are tailored to a specific purpose.

"It's all about snapping molecules together," said Johan Aqvist, a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences that announced the winners Wednesday at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

Sharpless, 81, who previously won a Nobel Prize in 2001 and is now the fifth person to receive the award twice, first proposed the idea for connecting molecules using chemical "buckles" around the turn of the millennium, said Aqvist.

"The problem was to find good chemical buckles," he said. "They have to react with each other easily and specifically."

Meldal, 68, based at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and Sharpless, who is affiliated with Scripps Research, California, independently found the first such candidates that would easily snap together with each other but not with other molecules, leading to applications in the manufacture of medicines and polymers.

Bertozzi, 55, who is based at Stanford University in California, "took click chemistry to a new level," the Nobel panel said.

She found a way to make click chemistry work inside living organisms without disrupting them, establishing a new method known as bioorthogonal reactions. Such reactions are now used to explore cells, track

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 16 of 71

biological processes and design drugs that can target diseases such as cancer more precisely.

"Doing chemistry inside human patients to make sure that drugs go to the right place and stay away from the wrong place," Bertozzi explained.

Speaking by phone at a news conference following the announcement, Bertozzi said she was "absolutely stunned" to receive the prize.

"I'm still not entirely positive that it's real, but it's getting realer by the minute," she said.

Meldal said he received a call from the Nobel panel about half an hour before the public announcement.

"They (...) told me not to tell anyone. So I sat inside my office and I shook my pants with fright," he told The Associated Press. "This is a huge honor."

Meldal started out as an engineer. "But I wanted to understand the world so I thought chemistry would give me the solutions," he told the AP.

Last year the prize was awarded to scientists Benjamin List and David W.C. MacMillan for finding an ingenious and environmentally cleaner way to build molecules that the Nobel panel said is "already benefiting humankind greatly."

A week of Nobel Prize announcements kicked off Monday with Swedish scientist Svante Paabo receiving the award in medicine for unlocking secrets of Neanderthal DNA that provided key insights into our immune system.

Three scientists jointly won the prize in physics Tuesday. Frenchman Alain Aspect, American John F. Clauser and Austrian Anton Zeilinger had shown that tiny particles can retain a connection with each other even when separated, a phenomenon known as quantum entanglement, that can be used for specialized computing and to encrypt information.

The awards continue with literature on Thursday. The 2022 Nobel Peace Prize will be announced on Friday and the economics award on Monday.

The prizes carry a cash award of 10 million Swedish kronor (nearly \$900,000) and will be handed out on Dec. 10. The money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, in 1895.

Seoul's reprisal blows up after North Korean missile success

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A malfunctioning South Korean ballistic missile blew up as it plowed into the ground Wednesday during a live-fire drill with the United States that was a reprisal for North Korea's successful launch a day earlier of a weapon that flew over Japan and has the range to strike the U.S. territory of Guam.

The explosion and subsequent fire panicked and confused residents of the coastal city of Gangneung, who were already uneasy over the increasingly provocative weapons tests by rival North Korea. Their concern that it could be a North Korean attack only grew as the military and government officials provided no explanation about the explosion for hours.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said no injuries were reported from the explosion, which involved a short-range Hyumoo-2 missile that crashed inside an air force base on the outskirts of the city.

A Joint Chiefs of Staff official, who spoke on condition of anonymity during a background briefing, said the missile's warhead didn't explode during the crash and that the fire was caused by burning rocket propellant. The official said the missile fell soon after liftoff and that no civilian facilities were affected.

Kwon Seong-dong, a governing party lawmaker representing Gangneung, wrote on Facebook that a "weapons system operated by our blood-like taxpayer money ended up threatening our own people" and called for the military to thoroughly investigate the missile failure. He also criticized the military for not issuing a notice about the failure while maintaining a media embargo on the joint drills.

"It was an irresponsible response," Kwon wrote. "They don't even have an official press release yet."

South Korea's military acknowledged the malfunction hours after internet users raised alarm about the blast and posted social media videos showing an orange ball of flames emerging from an area they described

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 17 of 71

as near the air force base. It said it was investigating what caused the "abnormal flight" of the missile.

Officials at Gangneung's fire department and city hall said emergency workers were dispatched to the air force base and a nearby army base in response to calls about a possible explosion but were sent back by military officials.

The U.S. and South Korean militaries are conducting the joint exercises to show their ability to deter a North Korean attack on the South. During Tuesday's drills, they conducted bombing runs by F-15 strike jets using precision munitions and launched two missiles each that are part of the Army Tactical Missile System.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan was scheduled to return to waters east of South Korea on Wednesday to demonstrate the allies' "firm will" to counter North's continued provocations and threats. The carrier was part of drills last week with South Korea and Japan.

The homegrown Hymoo-2 is key to South Korea's preemptive and retaliatory strike strategies against the North. Some versions of the missile are similar to Russian-designed Iskander missiles, which also inspired a localized variant in North Korea as it expands its arsenal of nuclear-capable short-range weapons designed to evade South Korea's missile defenses.

North Korea's successful launch of a nuclear-capable ballistic missile hours before the drills was the country's most provocative weapons demonstration since 2017 and was its fifth round of weapons tests in 10 days.

That missile has a range capable of striking Guam, which is home to one of the largest military facilities maintained by the U.S. in Asia. North Korea in 2017 also tested missiles capable of hitting the continental United States.

Japan's lower house, the more powerful of the two-chamber parliament, adopted a resolution on Wednesday condemning North Korea's launch, saying that the flight over Japan posed a "grave and imminent" threat to the country's security.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said the country's deputy nuclear envoy, Lee Tae-woo, met with U.S. counterpart Jung Park in Seoul on Wednesday to discuss the recent North Korean launches and vowed to strengthen three-way cooperation with Tokyo to counter the threat and bring Pyongyang back to the negotiation table.

North Korea has fired nearly 40 ballistic missiles over about 20 different launch events this year, exploiting Russia's war on Ukraine and the resulting deep divide in the U.N. Security Council to accelerate its arms development without risking further sanctions.

Its aim is to develop a fully fledged nuclear arsenal capable of threatening the U.S. mainland and its allies while gaining recognition as a nuclear state and wresting concessions from those countries.

The United States, Britain, France, Albania, Norway and Ireland called for an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council over the latest North Korean launch. The open meeting was scheduled for 3 p.m. Wednesday.

Washington's nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang has stalled since 2019 over disagreements in exchanging the release of crippling U.S.-led sanctions against the North and the North's disarmament steps.

Biden to focus on hurricane victims in Florida, not politics

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden will visit hurricane-ravaged Florida with a pledge that federal, state and local governments will work as one to help rebuild homes, businesses and lives — putting politics on mute for now to focus on those in need.

Hurricane Ian has resulted in at least 84 people confirmed dead, including 75 in Florida, as hundreds of thousands of people wait for power to be restored. Ian's 150 mph winds and punishing storm surge last week took out power for 2.6 million in Florida. Many people are unable to access food and water.

Biden planned to meet Wednesday with residents and small business owners in Fort Myers, Florida, and to thank government officials providing emergency aid and removing debris.

With the midterm elections just a month away, the crisis had the potential to bring together political

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 18 of 71

rivals in common cause at least for a time.

Joining Biden in Florida will be two of his most prominent Republican critics: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Sen. Rick Scott, according to the White House and Scott's spokesman. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre suggested Tuesday that it would be inappropriate for them to focus on political differences.

"There will be plenty of time, plenty of time, to discuss differences between the president and the governor — but now is not the time," Jean-Pierre told reporters at a White House briefing. "When it comes to delivering and making sure that the people of Florida have what they need, especially after Hurricane Ian, we are one. We are working as one."

Biden typically waits to visit the scene of a natural disaster, to ensure his presence and the fleet of vehicles that accompany him will not hinder the rescue efforts.

Before the storm hit, the president had intended to visit the Florida cities of Orlando and Fort Lauderdale last week, where he planned to stress his efforts to strengthen Social Security and Medicaid. Biden has accused Scott of wanting to end both programs by proposing that federal laws should expire every five years, although the Florida senator has said he wants to preserve the programs.

Biden and DeSantis have had a multitude of differences in recent years over how to fight COVID-19, immigration policy and more. In recent weeks, they tussled over the governor's decision to put migrants on planes or buses to Democratic strongholds, a practice that Biden has called "reckless."

The hurricane changed the purpose and tone of Biden's first trip to Florida this year.

DeSantis confirmed Tuesday he'd be meeting with Biden in the hurricane zone and he praised the administration's Federal Emergency Management Agency for declaring an emergency before Ian made landfall.

"That was huge because everyone was full steam ahead. They knew they had the ability to do it," DeSantis said. "We appreciate it. I think FEMA's worked very well with the state and local."

The White House message of bipartisan unity marks a difference from Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, who at times threatened to withhold aid to Democratic officials who criticized him, including Govs. Gavin Newsom of California and Andrew Cuomo of New York. At other times, Trump appeared insensitive or clumsy in his response to people's suffering.

Trump threatened to withhold federal money from California after wildfires, saying its state officials were to blame for the deadly conflagrations, tweeting in 2018: "Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests. Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!"

Politicians' responses to natural disasters have the power to make or break political careers.

As Florida's governor for eight years, Jeb Bush maintained a steady response to a parade of hurricanes and was rewarded with sky-high approval ratings. President George W. Bush and Louisiana lawmakers' more troubled response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 still hangs over their legacies.

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, the Republican who welcomed President Barack Obama to his state to survey Hurricane Sandy damage just days before the 2012 general election, said that during natural disasters "the best political strategy is to have no political strategy, to do your job."

Christie ended up the target of some in his own party who believed that his warm welcome for Obama helped cement the Democrat's reelection, but he has no regrets.

"At core this is what government is there for, it's to protect the safety and the welfare of the people," Christie said in an interview Tuesday. "The only thing that should be on the president's mind, on Gov. DeSantis's mind, on (Sen.) Marco Rubio's mind is the turmoil and the tragedy that's happened to people's lives and how we can make it better."

Christie noted that the comparisons to Sandy aren't exact — Biden is two years away from being a candidate himself, and DeSantis is weeks, not days, from facing voters in his reelection bid. But Christie said any attempts to score political points would be admonished at the polls.

"Playing games is not what this is about," Christie said. "This is a pretty transparent time and people will get it — that's not what they want, and they'll punish you for it."

Ian deals blow to Florida's teetering insurance sector

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 19 of 71

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

Daniel Kelly and his wife bought a 1977 doublewide mobile home in May for about \$83,000 at Tropicana Sands, a community for people 55 and older in Fort Myers, Florida. But he ran into roadblocks when he tried to insure it.

Managers at Tropicana Sands told him he likely wouldn't be able to find a carrier who would offer a policy because the home was too old. He said he checked with a Florida-based insurance agent who searched and couldn't find anything.

"I can insure a 1940s car, why can't I insure this?" Kelly said.

Kelly was lucky that his trailer was largely spared by Hurricane Ian aside from some flood damage. But for many Floridians whose homes were destroyed, they now face the arduous task of rebuilding without insurance or paying even steeper prices in an insurance market that was already struggling. Wind and storm-surge losses from the hurricane could reach between \$28 billion and \$47 billion, making it Florida's costliest storm since Hurricane Andrew made landfall in 1992, according to the property analytics firm CoreLogic.

Even before Ian, Florida's home insurance market was dealing with billions of dollars in losses from a string of natural disasters, rampant litigation and increasing fraud. The difficult environment has put many insurers out of business and caused others to raise their prices or tighten their restrictions, making it harder for Floridians to obtain insurance.

Those who do manage to insure their homes are seeing costs increase exponentially. Even before Hurricane Ian, the annual cost of an average Florida homeowners insurance policy was expected to reach \$4,231 in 2022, nearly three times the U.S. average of \$1,544.

"They are paying more for less coverage," said Florida's Insurance Consumer Advocate Tasha Carter. "It puts consumers in dire circumstances."

The costs have gotten so high that some homeowners have forgone coverage altogether. About 12% of Florida homeowners don't have property insurance — or more than double the U.S. average of 5% — according to the Insurance Information Institute, a research organization funded by the insurance industry.

Florida's insurance industry has seen two straight years of net underwriting losses exceeding \$1 billion each year. A string of property insurers, including six so far this year, have become insolvent, while others are leaving the state.

As of July, 27 Florida insurers were on a state watchlist for their precarious financial situation; Mark Friedlander, the head of communications for the Insurance Information Institute, expects Hurricane Ian will cause at least some of those to tip into insolvency.

The insurance industry says overzealous litigation is partly to blame. Loopholes in Florida law, including fee multipliers that allow attorneys to collect higher fees for property insurance cases, have made Florida an excessively litigious state, Friedlander said.

Florida currently averages about 100,000 lawsuits over homeowners' insurance claims per year, he said. That compares to just 3,600 in California, which has almost double Florida's population.

The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation said the state accounts for 76% of the nation's homeowners' insurance claims lawsuits but just 9% of all homeowners insurance claims.

"Plaintiff attorneys in Florida have historically found ways of circumventing any efforts at reining in legal system abuses, making it likely that ongoing reforms will be needed to further stabilize the insurance marketplace," said Logan McFaddin of the American Property Casualty Insurance Association.

But Amy Boggs, the property section chair for the Florida Justice Association — a group that represents attorneys — said the insurance industry is also at fault for refusing to pay out claims. Boggs said homeowners are driven to attorneys "as a last resort."

"No policyholder wants to be embroiled in years of litigation just to get their homes rebuilt," she said. "They come to attorneys when their insurance company underpays their claim and they can't rebuild."

Rampant fraud — particularly among roofing contractors — has also added to costs. Regulators say it's common for contractors to go door-to-door offering to cover homeowners' insurance deductible in

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 20 of 71

exchange for submitting a full roof replacement claim to their property insurance company, claiming damage from storms.

Things have gotten so bad with insurance that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis called a special session in May to address the issues. New laws limit the rates attorneys can charge for some property insurance claims and require insurers to insure homes with older roofs — something they had stopped doing because of rising fraud claims.

The legislation also includes a \$150 million fund that will offer grants to homeowners to make improvements to protect against hurricanes. But that program has yet to be launched, and experts say it will take years to reverse the damage to Florida's insurance market.

In the meantime, the crisis has pushed more homeowners to Citizens Property Insurance Corp., the state-backed insurer that sells home insurance for those who can't get coverage through private insurers.

Citizens had more than 1 million active policies as of Sept. 23, before Ian hit, according to Michael Pel-tier, a spokesman at Citizens. In 2019, that number was roughly 420,000. He said the company had been writing 8,000 to 9,000 new policies per week, double compared with a few years ago. Citizens has \$13.4 billion in reserves and predicts it will pay 225,000 claims from Ian worth a total of \$3.7 billion.

Even if they have homeowners' insurance, many Floridians could still be facing financial ruin because of flooding. Flood damage isn't typically covered by homeowners' insurance but can be costly; Florida's Division of Emergency Management says 1 inch of floodwater can do \$25,000 in damage.

Friedlander said just 18% of Florida homeowners carry flood insurance, either through the federal government's National Flood Insurance Program or private insurers. In some coastal areas, more than half of homeowners have flood insurance, but in inland areas — where flood waters continued to rise even after the storm had passed — it's closer to 5%.

Kelly, whose trailer in Fort Myers was saturated in 4 feet of salt water and sewage after Hurricane Ian, could have benefitted from flood insurance. He thought he might not be able to get it because he didn't have homeowners insurance, but that's not the case — flood insurance is completely separate and can even be purchased by renters, experts say.

"I kinda let it lie when I originally couldn't find someone to insure it," he said. "It's a costly oversight on my part."

Putin signs annexation of Ukrainian regions as losses mount

By ADAM SCHRECK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed laws formally absorbing four Ukrainian regions into Russia, even as its military struggles to control the territory that was illegally annexed.

The documents finalizing the annexation, carried out in defiance of international laws, were published on a Russian government website on Wednesday morning.

Earlier this week, both houses of the Russian parliament ratified treaties making the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions part of Russia. That followed Kremlin-orchestrated "referendums" in the four regions that Ukraine and the West have rejected as a sham.

On the ground, Moscow's war in Ukraine has entered a new, more dangerous phase. Russia faces mounting setbacks, with Ukrainian forces retaking more and more land in the east and in the south — the very regions Moscow has pushed to annex.

The borders of the territories Russia is claiming still remain unclear, but the Kremlin has vowed to defend Russia's territory — the newly absorbed regions too — with any means at its disposal, including nuclear weapons.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy responded to the annexation by announcing a fast-track application to join NATO and formally ruling out talks with Russia. Zelenskyy's decree, released Tuesday, declares that holding negotiations with Putin has become impossible after his decision to take over the four regions of Ukraine.

The head of Zelenskyy's office, Andriy Yermak, wrote on his Telegram channel shortly after Putin signed

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 21 of 71

the annexation that “the worthless decisions of the terrorist country (Russia) are not worth the paper they are signed on.

“A collective insane asylum can continue to live in a fictional world,” he added.

Russia and Ukraine gave conflicting assessments Wednesday of a Ukrainian offensive in the strategic southern Kherson region — one of the four areas that Russia is annexing.

A Russian-installed official in the Kherson region insisted that Ukrainian advances in the region have been halted.

Kirill Stremousov, in comments to the state-run news agency RIA Novosti, said that “as of this morning ... there are no movements” by Kyiv’s forces. He vowed that “they won’t enter (the city of) Kherson, it is impossible.”

However, Kyiv’s military said Wednesday they have recaptured more villages in the Kherson region as a part of their massive counteroffensive effort. Operational Command South said that the Ukrainian flag has been raised above seven villages previously occupied by the Russians.

Military hospitals are full of wounded Russian soldiers, and Russian military medics lack medicaments, wrote Deputy Head of Kherson regional administration Yuri Sobolevskiy on Telegram. After the condition of Russian soldiers stabilizes, they are sent for further treatment in Crimea. “Not everyone arrives,” he wrote.

On the battlefield on Wednesday morning, multiple explosions rocked Bila Tserkva, setting off fires at what were described as infrastructure facilities in the city to the south of the capital Kyiv, regional leader Oleksiy Kuleba said on Telegram.

Early indications are that the city was attacked by so-called kamikaze or suicide drones, he said.

Bila Tserkva is about 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Kyiv.

Russia has increasingly been using suicide drones in recent weeks, posing a new challenge to Ukrainian defenses. The unmanned vehicles can stay aloft for long periods of time before diving into their targets and detonating their payload at the last moment.

Many of the earlier attacks by the Iranian-made drones happened in the south of the country and not near the capital, which hasn’t been targeted for weeks.

In a later post, Kuleba said that a total of six Shahed-136 drones struck the city, one of the largest in the region after Kyiv itself. One person was wounded in the attacks.

Dozens of rescue workers were on the scene and still working to extinguish the fires hours after the attacks were reported, he said.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, at least five civilians have been killed and eight others have been wounded by the latest Russian shelling, according to the country’s presidential office.

In the Donetsk region, the Russian forces shelled eight towns and villages. In Sviatohirsk, which was reclaimed by Ukrainian forces, a burial ground for civilians was found and the bodies of four civilians were discovered, according to Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko.

EXPLAINER: Musk Twitter turnaround reflects legal challenges

By MARCY GORDON AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — News that Elon Musk has agreed after all to proceed with his \$44 billion deal to buy Twitter may have felt like a stunning surprise from the brash billionaire who loves to shock.

It sent shares of the social media platform soaring and stoked alarm among some media watchdogs and civil rights groups worried about what kind of free speech would flourish on Twitter under Musk.

But it wasn’t surprising to observers of the monthslong legal battle as Twitter tried to compel the world’s richest man to consummate the buyout he had tried to back out of. In the months since his initial offer to buy Twitter in April, Musk faced a huge legal challenge.

A combination of gambles or missteps and potential advantages that didn’t pan out made his hand appear weak for the trial looming in less than two weeks in Chancery Court in Delaware. He says he’ll only complete the deal if that trial is put on hold.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 22 of 71

More immediately, Musk faced a deposition in the case by Twitter's attorneys starting Thursday.

Here's a look at how the legal battle unfolded:

WHAT WAS MUSK'S MAIN ARGUMENT FOR BACKING OUT OF BUYING TWITTER?

Musk grounded his argument largely on the allegation that Twitter vastly misrepresented how it measures the magnitude of "spam bot" accounts that are useless to advertisers.

But Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick, the court's head judge, apparently wasn't buying it. As the two sides presented evidence prior to the trial, the judge appeared to focus narrowly in line with the court's mandate: on the merger agreement between Musk and Twitter, and whether anything had changed since it was signed in April that would justify terminating the deal.

A former Twitter head of security, fired early this year and turned whistleblower, appeared to bolster Musk's argument. Peiter "Mudge" Zatkó, a respected cybersecurity expert, filed complaints in July with federal regulators and the Justice Department alleging that Twitter misled regulators about its efforts to control millions of spam accounts as well as its cyber defenses.

But help to Musk from Zatkó's disclosures was a "longshot," said Brian Quinn, a professor at Boston College Law School, and in the end, "it didn't really change the (legal) landscape in any significant way."

DID MUSK'S APPROACH TO BUYING TWITTER HURT OR HELP HIS CASE?

"He was fairly cavalier," Quinn said. Recently released text messages between Musk and others show jubilation over Musk taking a large stake in Twitter and joining its board. It wasn't until after he signed the merger agreement in late April that he undertook what's called due diligence, close inspection, regarding the company and started lodging complaints about bots, Quinn noted. That may not have impressed the judge as the right approach for someone buying a major company.

WHY DID MUSK CHANGE HIS MIND NOW?

In addition to the trial looming and his deposition scheduled for Thursday, Musk faced a ticking meter of potential rising interest costs. If he lost the trial, the judge could not only force him to close the deal but also could impose interest payments that would have increased its cost. Experts say the interest likely started piling up mid-September.

But of course the deal isn't done yet, and there are legal hoops yet to be jumped through. Given Musk's track record and volatility, it would be a mistake to assume that it's tied up in a bow.

'Best Before' labels scrutinized as food waste concerns grow

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

As awareness grows around the world about the problem of food waste, one culprit in particular is drawing scrutiny: "best before" labels.

Manufacturers have used the labels for decades to estimate peak freshness. Unlike "use by" labels, which are found on perishable foods like meat and dairy, "best before" labels have nothing to do with safety and may encourage consumers to throw away food that's perfectly fine to eat.

"They read these dates and then they assume that it's bad, they can't eat it and they toss it, when these dates don't actually mean that they're not edible or they're not still nutritious or tasty," said Patty Apple, a manager at Food Shift, an Alameda, California, nonprofit that collects and uses expired or imperfect foods.

To tackle the problem, major U.K. chains like Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer recently removed "best before" labels from prepackaged fruit and vegetables. The European Union is expected to announce a revamp to its labeling laws by the end of this year; it's considering abolishing "best before" labels altogether.

In the U.S., there's no similar push to scrap "best before" labels. But there is growing momentum to standardize the language on date labels to help educate buyers about food waste, including a push from big grocers and food companies and bipartisan legislation in Congress.

"I do think that the level of support for this has grown tremendously," said Dana Gunders, executive director of ReFED, a New York-based nonprofit that studies food waste.

The United Nations estimates that 17% of global food production is wasted each year; most of that

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 23 of 71

comes from households. In the U.S., as much as 35% of food available goes uneaten, ReFED says. That adds up to a lot of wasted energy — including the water, land and labor that goes into the food production — and higher greenhouse gas emissions when unwanted food goes into landfills.

There are many reasons food gets wasted, from large portion sizes to customers' rejection of imperfect produce. But ReFED estimates that 7% of U.S. food waste — or 4 million tons annually — is due to consumer confusion over "best before" labels.

Date labels were widely adopted by manufacturers in the 1970s to answer consumers' concerns about product freshness. There are no federal rules governing them, and manufacturers are allowed to determine when they believe their products will taste best. Only infant formula is required to have a "use by" date in the U.S.

Since 2019, the Food and Drug Administration — which regulates around 80% of U.S. food — has recommended that manufacturers use the labels "best if used by" for freshness and "use by" for perishable goods, based on surveys showing that consumers understand those phrases.

But the effort is voluntary, and the language on labels continues to vary widely, from "sell by" to "enjoy by" to "freshest before." A survey released in June by researchers at the University of Maryland found at least 50 different date labels used on U.S. grocery shelves and widespread confusion among customers.

"Most people believe that if it says 'sell by,' 'best by' or 'expiration,' you can't eat any of them. That's not actually accurate," said Richard Lipsit, who owns a Grocery Outlet store in Pleasanton, California, that specializes in discounted food.

Lipsit said milk can be safely consumed up to a week after its "use by" date. Gunders said canned goods and many other packaged foods can be safely eaten for years after their "best before" date. The FDA suggests consumers look for changes in color, consistency or texture to determine if foods are all right to eat.

"Our bodies are very well equipped to recognize the signs of decay, when food is past its edible point," Gunders said. "We've lost trust in those senses and we've replaced it with trust in these dates."

Some U.K. grocery chains are actively encouraging customers to use their senses. Morrisons removed "use by" dates from most store-brand milk in January and replaced them with a "best before" label. Co-op, another grocery chain, did the same to its store-brand yogurts.

It's a change some shoppers support. Ellie Spanswick, a social media marketer in Falmouth, England, buys produce, eggs and other groceries at farm stands and local shops when she can. The food has no labels, she said, but it's easy to see that it's fresh.

"The last thing we need to be doing is wasting more food and money because it has a label on it telling us it's past being good for eating," Spanswick said.

But not everyone agrees. Ana Wetrov of London, who runs a home renovation business with her husband, worries that without labels, staff might not know which items should be removed from shelves. She recently bought a pineapple and only realized after she cut into it that it was rotting in the middle.

"We have had dates on those packages for the last 20 years or so. Why fix it when it's not broken?" Wetrov said.

Some U.S. chains — including Walmart — have shifted their store brands to standardized "best if used by" and "use by" labels. The Consumer Brands Association — which represents big food companies like General Mills and Dole — also encourages members to use those labels.

"Uniformity makes it much more simple for our companies to manufacture products and keep the prices lower," said Katie Denis, the association's vice president of communications.

In the absence of federal policy, states have stepped in with their own laws, frustrating food companies and grocers. Florida and Nevada, for example, require "sell by" dates on shellfish and dairy, and Arizona requires "best by" or "use by" dates on eggs, according to Emily Broad Lieb, director of the Food Law and Policy Clinic at Harvard Law School.

The confusion has led some companies, like Unilever, to support legislation currently in Congress that would standardize U.S. date labels and ensure that food could be donated to rescue organizations even after its quality date. At least 20 states currently prohibit the sale or donation of food after the date listed

on the label because of liability fears, Lieb said.

Clearer labeling and donation rules could help nonprofits like Food Shift, which trains chefs using rescued food. It even makes dog treats from overripe bananas, recovered chicken fat and spent grain from a brewer, Apple said.

"We definitely need to be focusing more on doing these small actions like addressing expiration date labels, because even though it's such a tiny part of this whole food waste issue, it can be very impactful," Apple said.

'So many children dying': Somalia drought brings famine near

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

DOLLOW, Somalia (AP) — A man in a donkey cart comes wheeling through the dust, carrying two small, silent boys. The sky is overcast. It could rain. It won't. It hasn't for a very long time.

Mohamed Ahmed Diriye is 60 years old, and he's completing the grimmest journey of his life. He set off from a seaside city on the northern edge of Somalia two weeks ago. People were dying. Livestock were dying. He decided to abandon work as a day laborer and flee to the other end of the country, crossing a landscape of carcasses and Islamic extremist-held territory along the way.

Seven hundred miles later, he is exhausted. The food has run out. He clutches a battered stick in one hand, the nearly empty cart in the other. His boys are just 4 and 5.

They had tried to escape, Diriye says. "But we came across the same drought here."

More than 1 million Somalis have fled and discovered that, too.

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In Somalia, a nation of poets, droughts are named for the kind of pain they bring. There was Prolonged in the 1970s, Cattle Killer in the 1980s, Equal five years ago for its reach across the country. A decade ago, there was Famine, which killed a quarter-million people.

Somalis say the current drought is worse than any they can remember. It doesn't yet have a name. Diriye, who believes no one can survive in some of the places he traveled, suggests one without hesitation: White Bone.

This drought has astonished resilient herders and farmers by lasting four failed rainy seasons, starting two years ago. The fifth season is underway and likely will fail too, along with the sixth early next year.

A rare famine declaration could be made as soon as this month, the first significant one anywhere in the world since Somalia's famine a decade ago. Thousands of people have died, including nearly 900 children under 5 being treated for malnutrition, according to United Nations data. The U.N. says half a million such children are at risk of death, "a number, a pending nightmare, we have not seen this century."

As the world is gripped by food insecurity, Somalia, a country of 15 million people shaking off its past as a failed state, can be considered the end of the line. The nation of proud pastoralists that has survived generations of drought now stumbles amid several global crises descending at once.

They include climate change, with some of the harshest effects of warming felt in Africa. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which stalled ships carrying enough grain to feed hundreds of millions of people. A drop in humanitarian donations, as the world shifted focus to the war in Ukraine. One of the world's deadliest Islamic extremist groups, which limits the delivery of aid.

The Associated Press spoke with a dozen people in rapidly growing displacement camps during a visit to southern Somalia in late September. All say they've received little aid, or none. A day's meal might be plain rice or just black tea. Many camp residents, overwhelmingly women and children, beg from neighbors, or go to sleep hungry.

Mothers walk for days or weeks through bare landscapes in search of help, at times finding that the withered, feverish child strapped to them has died along the way.

"We'd grieve, stop for a while, pray," Adego Abdinur says. "We'd bury them beside the road."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 25 of 71

She holds her naked 1-year-old in front of her new home, a fragile hut of plastic sacks and fabric lashed together with cord and stripped branches. It's one of hundreds scattered over the dry land. Behind a thorn barrier marking her hut from another, giggling children pour cherished water from a plastic jug into their hands, sipping and spitting in delight.

The home the 28-year-old Abdinur left was far superior — a farm of maize and dozens of livestock in the community where she was born and raised. The family was self-sufficient. Then the water dried up, and their four-legged wealth began to die.

"When we lost the last goat, we realized there was no way to survive," Abdinur says. She and her six children walked 300 kilometers (186 miles) here, following rumors of assistance along with thousands of other people on the move.

"We have seen so many children dying because of hunger," she says.

At the heart of this crisis, in areas where famine likely will be declared, is an Islamic extremist group linked to al-Qaida. An estimated 740,000 of the drought's most desperate people live in areas under the control of the al-Shabab extremists. To survive, they must escape.

Al-Shabab's grip on large parts of southern and central Somalia was a major contributor to deaths in the 2011 famine. Much aid wasn't let into its areas, and many starving people weren't let out. Somalia's president, who has survived three al-Shabab attempts on his life, has described the group as "mafia shrouded with Islam." But his government has urged it to have mercy now.

In a surprise comment on the drought in late September, al-Shabab called it a test from Allah, "a result of our sins and wrongdoings." Spokesman Ali Mohamud Rage claimed that the extremists had offered food, water and free medical treatment to more than 47,000 drought-affected people since last year.

But in rare accounts of life inside al-Shabab-held areas, several people who fled told the AP they had seen no such aid. Instead, they said, the extremists continue their harsh taxation of families' crops and livestock even as they withered and died. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

One woman says al-Shabab taxed up to 50% of her family's meager harvest: "They don't care whether people are left with anything."

Some flee their communities at night to escape the fighters' attention, with men and even young boys often being forbidden to leave. One woman says no one from her community was allowed to leave, and people who received assistance from the outside would be attacked. Weeks ago, she says, al-Shabab killed a relative who had managed to take a sick parent to a government-held city and then returned.

Those who escaped al-Shabab now cling to a bare existence. As what should be the rainy season arrives, they wake in camps under a purple sky, or a gray one offering the tiniest specks of moisture.

Children send up kites, adults their prayers. Black smoke rises in the distance as some farmers clear land just in case.

In the only treatment center for the most severely malnourished in the immediate region, 1-year-old Hamdi Yusuf is another sign of hope.

She was little more than bones and skin when her mother found her unconscious, two months after arriving in the camps and living on scraps of food offered by neighbors. "The child was not even alive," recalls Abdikadir Ali Abdi, acting nutrition officer with the aid group Trocaire, which runs the center of 16 beds and has more patients than they can hold.

Now the girl is revived, slumped over her mother's arm but blinking. Her tiny toes twitch. A wrist is bandaged to stop her from pulling out the port for a feeding tube.

The ready-to-use therapeutic food so crucial to the recovery of children like her could run out in the coming weeks, Abdi says. Humanitarian workers describe having to take limited resources from the hungry in Somalia to treat the starving, complicating efforts to get ahead of the drought.

The girl's mother, 18-year-old Muslima Ibrahim, anxiously rubs her daughter's tiny fingers. She has saved her only child, but survival will require the kind of support she still hasn't seen.

"We received a food distribution yesterday," Ibrahim says. "It was the first since we arrived."

Food is hard to come by everywhere. At midday, dozens of hungry children from the camps try to slip

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 26 of 71

into a local primary school where the World Food Program offers a rare lunch program for students. They are almost always turned away by school workers.

Mothers recall having to eat their stockpiles of grain and selling their few remaining goats to afford the journey from the homes and lives they loved. Many had never left until now.

"I miss fresh camel milk. We love it," says 29-year-old Nimco Abdi Adan, smiling at the memory. She hasn't tasted it for two years.

Residents outside the camps feel the growing desperation. Shopkeeper Khadija Abdi Ibrahim, 60, now keeps her goats, sheep and cattle alive by buying precious grain, grinding it and using it as fodder. She says the price of cooking oil and other items has doubled since last year, making it more difficult for displaced people to obtain food with vouchers handed out by WFP.

Hundreds of families continue to emerge from the empty horizon across Somalia, bringing little but grief. The true toll of dead is unknown, but people at two of the country's many displacement camps in the hardest hit city, Baidoa, say over 300 children have died in the last three months in rural areas, according to aid organization Islamic Relief.

One day in mid-September, 29-year-old Fartum Issack and her husband carried a small body along a dusty track to a graveyard. Their 1-year-old daughter had arrived at camp sick and hungry. She was rushed for treatment, but it was too late.

The graveyard opened in April especially for the newly displaced people. It already had 13 graves, seven of them for children. There's easily room for hundreds more.

Issack and her husband chose to bury their daughter in the middle of the empty ground.

"We wanted to easily recognize her," Issack says.

At the camp, eight other hungry daughters are waiting.

Home run hands! Dallas fan catches Judge's 62nd homer on fly

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — As he walked through a concourse in the outfield at Globe Life Field, high-fiving with fans and surrounded by a sea of cameras, it was almost as if Cory Youmans had hit a huge home run.

Instead, he hit the jackpot.

Youmans made the catch of a lifetime Tuesday night, snagging the ball New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge launched for his American League-record 62nd homer.

The historic souvenir came sailing into the front row of section 31 in left field, a drive Judge hit to lead off the second game of a day-night doubleheader against the Texas Rangers. Youmans snared it on the fly.

Youmans, from Dallas, works in the financial world and there's no telling yet what the ball could be worth. With security personnel around him as he took the ball to be authenticated, he was asked what he planned to do with the prize.

"Good question. I haven't thought about it," he said.

After the Yankees lost 3-2, Judge said he didn't have possession of the home-run ball.

"I don't know where it's at," he said. "We'll see what happens with that. It would be great to get it back, but that's a souvenir for a fan. He made a great catch out there, and they've got every right to it."

Soon after a local TV station posted a brief interview with Youmans in a walkway, Bri Amaranthus tweeted: "THIS IS MY HUSBAND."

Amaranthus works in local media and identifies herself in her Twitter bio as an alum of ABC's "The Bachelor."

Youmans was among the crowd of 38,832, the largest to watch a baseball game at the 3-year-old ballpark.

Many fans came clad in Yankees caps, T-shirts and pinstripe jerseys.

Some came to watch Judge make history. Some came just for the history. Some traveled a long way.

The latter two categories included Jimmy Bennicaso of Norwalk, Connecticut.

"I'm a Met fan, actually," Bennicaso confessed. "Cowboy and Met fan – a rough combo."

Bennicaso was home in Connecticut on Monday night having watched Judge fail to homer in the first of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 27 of 71

four games against the Rangers in three days. He ran an idea past his girlfriend — what if he headed to Texas to take in Judge's chase in person?

"She said, 'Yeah, go for it,'" he said.

Bennicaso caught a morning flight to Texas. Being self-employed in real estate investments helped, he said.

Bennicaso stationed himself in the lower deck of the right-field stands in hopes of grabbing an opposite-field homer, certainly a possibility given Judge's spray chart.

Instead, Judge pulled a home run that broke the AL record set by Roger Maris in 1961.

Empty-handed, Bennicaso planned to return home Wednesday morning.

"It was worth it," he said. "I gave it my best shot."

As Europe's leaders meet, some fear for EU membership hopes

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Leaders from more than 40 countries meeting in the Czech capital Thursday are set to launch a "European Political Community" aimed at boosting security and prosperity across the continent. But critics claim the new forum is an attempt to put the brakes on European Union enlargement.

The Prague meeting is the brainchild of French President Emmanuel Macron and is backed by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. It's taking place with Russia's war on Ukraine in its eighth month and as pressure builds to allow Ukraine to join the 27-nation EU.

"The war in Ukraine and the legitimate aspiration of its people, just like that of Moldova and Georgia, to join the European Union, encourages us to rethink our geography and the organization of our continent," Macron said in May in a speech outlining his idea.

But even with the outpouring of support for Ukraine — in the form of weapons so it can fight back, or shelter for people fleeing — Macron said, "we all know perfectly well that the process which would allow them to join, would in reality take several years, and most likely several decades."

What is needed, Macron said, is "a new space for political and security cooperation, cooperation in the energy sector, in transport, investments, infrastructures, the free movement of persons and in particular of our youth."

His plan — which would involve 44 countries, including existing EU members, aspiring partners in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, as well as Britain and Turkey — mirrors a proposal by former president Francois Mitterrand to unite Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The inaugural European Political Community summit at Prague Castle will kick off with an opening ceremony, followed by a series of meetings where leaders will discuss the key challenges Europe faces; security, energy, climate, the dire economic situation, and migration.

No EU money or programs are on offer, and no formal declaration will be issued after the meeting.

The aim, should this summit go well, would be for leaders to gather once or twice a year. The forum, an EU official involved in preparations said, "does not replace existing organizations, structures or processes and does not aim to create new ones at this stage."

However, Macron's speech, and remarks by Scholz in August, have raised concerns that the European Political Community might become a "second-class ticket" to joining the EU, given the almost glacial pace of membership talks in recent years.

Several Balkan countries have been waiting around two decades to join — Turkey even longer — and progress has been held up by objections from single EU member countries, most recently Greece and then Bulgaria in the cases of hopefuls Albania and North Macedonia.

"Macron's specification that 'we may not all live in the same house, but we share the same street' feeds skepticism that these structures could relegate the Balkans and other EU hopefuls to the waiting room indefinitely," said Marta Mucznik, from the European Policy Centre think tank.

"If member states stopped hijacking enlargement for reasons that have more to do with their domestic politics than the process as such, then the EU would be one step closer to finding the remedy to the cur-

rent deadlock," she wrote in an analysis of the plan.

But in a speech in Prague in August, Scholz insisted that the new grouping "is not an alternative to the upcoming process of EU enlargement. After all, we have given our accession candidates our word ... and these words must be followed by deeds at long last."

That said, he suggested that a bloc with 30 members or more could become unwieldy and he underlined that "we must also make the EU itself fit for this major enlargement," which would involve six Balkan countries, and possibly Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the future. Turkey's hopes are on hold.

Indeed, the exercise of once-relatively-rare national vetoes has become a common occurrence, notably in the case of Hungary. Each country has also insisted on having its own policy commissioner in the EU's executive branch, the European Commission, which proposes laws and ensures they're respected.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament — the bloc's only democratically elected institution — has also swollen to more than 750 members.

"Just letting EU enlargement proceed slowly through the existing uncertain process will turn the politically significant commitment to Ukraine, Moldova and other candidates into a discouraging obstacle course," the Bruegel think-tank said in its analysis.

The new forum, it said, ought not to be "regarded as a substitute for EU accession, but should be designed to work as an accelerator. For countries not seeking to join the EU, it would provide an ongoing framework that sustains structured cooperation with the EU."

Whether that message is heard and believed by the many countries hoping to join the world's biggest trading bloc should be known by the time the summit ends on Thursday evening. The proof of its worth will probably only come once a second summit is held.

Ukraine nuclear workers recount abuse, threats from Russians

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine (AP) — Alone in his apartment in the Russian-occupied city of Enerhodar in southeastern Ukraine, nuclear plant security guard Serhiy Shvets looked out his kitchen window in late May and saw gunmen approaching on the street below. When his buzzer rang, he was sure he was about to die.

Shvets, a former soldier in Ukraine's military who was loyal to Kyiv, knew the gunmen would either kill or abduct and torture him. He thought briefly about recording a farewell to his family, who had fled to safety abroad, but instead lit a cigarette and grabbed his gun.

Six Russian soldiers broke down his door and opened fire, which he returned. Wounded in the hand, thigh, ear, and stomach, Shvets began to lose consciousness. Before he did, he heard the commander of the group tell his men to cease fire and call an ambulance.

Shvets, who survived the shooting, is among workers from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant recounting their fears of being abducted and tortured or killed by Russian forces occupying the facility and the city of Enerhodar. Ukrainian officials say the Russians have sought to intimidate the staff into keeping the plant running, through beatings and other abuse. but also to punish those who express support for Kyiv.

A GOOD LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

Life was good for employees of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant before the Russian invasion of Feb. 24. They were guaranteed a financially secure and stable life for their families.

And even though Ukraine still bears the psychological scars of the world's worst atomic accident at Chernobyl in 1986, the Zaporizhzhia plant — Europe's largest nuclear facility with its six reactors — provided jobs for about 11,000 people, making Enerhodar and its prewar population of 53,000 one of the wealthiest cities in the region.

But after Russia occupied the city early in the war, that once-comfortable life turned into nightmare.

The invaders overran the ZNPP, about 6 kilometers (nearly 4 miles) from Enerhodar, but kept the Ukrainian staff in place to run it. Both sides accused the other of shelling the plant that damaged power lines connecting it to the grid, raising international alarm for its safety. Ukrainian officials say the Russians used the plant as a shield from which to fire shells on nearby towns.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 29 of 71

Reports of intimidation of the staff and abductions began trickling out over the summer. Rafael Mariano Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N.'s atomic watchdog, told The Associated Press about reports of violence between the Russians and the Ukrainian staff.

About 4,000 ZNPP workers fled. Those who stayed cited threats of kidnap and torture — underscored by the abduction Friday of plant director Ihor Murashov, who was seized and blindfolded by Russian forces on his way home from work.

He was freed Monday after being forced to make false statements on camera, according to Petro Kotin, head of Energoatom, Ukraine's state nuclear company. Kotin told AP Murashov was released at the edge of Russian-controlled territory and walked about 15 kilometers (9 miles) to Ukrainian-held areas.

"I would say it was mental torture," Kotin said of what Murashov suffered. "He had to say that all the shelling on the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant was made by Ukrainian forces and that he is a Ukrainian spy ... in contact with Ukrainian special forces."

Enerhodar's exiled Mayor Dmytro Orlov, who spoke to Murashov after his release, said the plant official told him he had spent two days "in solitary confinement in the basement, with handcuffs and a bag on his head. His condition can hardly be called normal."

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, described Murashov's abduction as "yet another manifestation of absolutely uncovered Russian terror."

'TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPEN THERE'

More than 1,000 people, including plant workers, were abducted from Enerhodar, although some have been released, estimated Orlov, who fled to Zaporizhzhia, the nearest city under Ukrainian control, after refusing to cooperate with the Russians. Kotin estimated that 100-200 remain abducted.

Orlov said the first abduction was March 19, when Russians seized his deputy, Ivan Samoidiuk, whose whereabouts remains unknown. The abductions then accelerated, he said.

"Mostly, they took people with a pro-Ukrainian position, who were actively involved in the resistance movement," he said.

Orlov alleged they were tortured at various locations in Enerhodar, including at the city's police station, in basements elsewhere and even in the ZNPP itself.

"Terrible things happen there," he said. "People who managed to come out say there was torture with electric currents, beatings, rape, shootings. ... Some people didn't survive."

Similar sites were seen by AP journalists in parts of the Kharkiv region abandoned by Russian troops after a Ukrainian counteroffensive. In the city of Iziium, an AP investigation uncovered 10 separate torture sites.

Plant worker Andriy Honcharuk died in a hospital July 3 shortly after the Russians released him, beaten and unconscious, for refusing to follow their orders at the facility, Orlov said.

Oleksii, a worker who said he was responsible for controlling the plant's turbines and reactor compartment, fled Enerhodar in June when he learned Russian troops were looking for him. The 39-year-old asked not to be identified by his full name for fear of reprisal.

"It was psychologically difficult," Oleksii told the AP in Kyiv. "You go to the station and see the occupiers there. You come to your workplace already depressed."

Many plant employees "visited the basements" and were tortured there, he said.

"Graves appeared in the forest that surrounds the city. That is, everyone understands that something horrible is happening," he said. "They abduct people for their pro-Ukrainian position, or if they find any Telegram groups on their phone. This is enough for them to take a person away."

Another employee who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of his safety said he was unafraid of working at the plant amid shelling but decided to flee in September after colleagues were seized. He said Russians visited his home twice while he was away, and the possibility of torture was too much for him.

The plant's last reactor was shut down in September to guard against a disaster from constant shelling that cut reliable external power supplies needed for cooling and other safety systems. Kotin said the company could restart two of the reactors in a matter of days to protect safety installations as winter approaches and temperatures drop.

But the power plant sits in one of four regions that Russia has moved to annex, making its future uncertain.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 30 of 71

Kotin on Tuesday renewed his call for a “demilitarized zone” around the plant, where two IAEA experts are based.

‘FREEDOM OR DEATH’

For Serhiy Shvets, whose apartment was raided May 23, it was only a matter of time before the Russians came for him during the occupation of Enerhodar, he said. He had signed up to serve in Ukraine’s territorial defense forces shortly after the invasion and had sent his wife and other relatives abroad for safety.

He said the Russian forces who shot him called the ambulance “so I could die in the hospital.”

Doctors initially gave him a 5% chance of survival after he lost nearly two-thirds of his blood. But following several operations, he was well enough to leave Enerhodar in July and is living in Zaporizhzhia.

Shvets, whose right hand is in a metal brace, quietly exhaled from pain as he moved it and said the only thing he regrets now is that he is too disabled to fight.

“I’m a descendant from Zaporozhian Cossacks,” he said, referring to his ancestors who lived on the territory of Ukraine from the 15th to 18th centuries and defended it from invaders. “There was no such thing as surrender for them — just freedom or death.”

He added: “Why would I want such a life if I don’t have my freedom?”

GOP optimistic about Senate chances despite Walker turmoil

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Leading Republicans are entering the final month of the midterm campaign increasingly optimistic that a Senate majority is within reach even as a dramatic family fight in Georgia clouds one of the party’s biggest pickup opportunities.

And as some Democrats crow on social media about apparent Republican setbacks, party strategists privately concede that their own shortcomings may not be outweighed by the GOP’s mounting challenges.

The evolving outlook is tied to a blunt reality: Democrats have virtually no margin for error as they confront the weight of history, widespread economic concerns and President Joe Biden’s weak standing. There is broad agreement among both parties that the Democrats’ summertime momentum across states like Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin has eroded just five weeks before Election Day.

“There’s reason to be apprehensive, not reason to be gloomy,” veteran Democratic strategist James Carville said. “It looked like at the end of August we had a little momentum. I don’t know if we’ve regressed any, but we’re not progressing in many places.”

That tepid outlook comes even as Republicans confront a series of self-imposed setbacks in the states that matter most in the 2022 midterms, which will decide the balance of power in Congress and statehouses across the nation.

None has been more glaring than Herschel Walker’s struggles in Georgia, where the Republican Senate candidate’s own son accused him of lying about his personal challenges — including a report from The Daily Beast alleging that the anti-abortion Walker paid for a girlfriend’s abortion in 2009. Walker called the accusation a “flat-out lie” and said he would sue, an action his campaign hadn’t taken as of late Tuesday.

“Everything has been a lie,” Christian Walker responded Tuesday.

The Republican establishment, including the Sen. Mitch McConnell-aligned Senate Leadership Fund, and former President Donald Trump himself remained staunchly behind Walker on Tuesday in his bid to oust first-term Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock. The Walker campaign also reported a massive fundraising haul that coincided with the latest allegations.

“If you’re in a fight, people will come to your aid,” said Steven Law, head of the Senate Leadership Fund and a close ally of McConnell, R-Ky.

Law said the Georgia race had grown increasingly competitive despite the Democrats’ focus on Walker’s personal life. And looking beyond Georgia, Law said the political climate was predictably shifting against the party that controls the White House, as is typically the case in midterm elections.

“It certainly seems that voters are returning to a more traditional midterm frame of mind,” Law said.

Should Republicans gain even one Senate seat in November, they would take control of Congress’ upper

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 31 of 71

chamber — and with it, the power to control judicial nominations and policy debates for the last two years of Biden's term. Leaders in both parties believe Republicans are likely to take over the House.

Even facing such odds, it's far too soon to predict a Republican-controlled Congress.

Democrats remain decidedly on offense and are spending heavily to try to flip Republican-held seats in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and North Carolina. Voter opposition to the Supreme Court's decision this summer to strip women of their constitutional right to an abortion has energized the Democratic base and led to a surge in female voter registrations.

Republicans are most focused on Democratic incumbents in Arizona, Georgia, New Hampshire and Nevada, although Republican officials believe that underwhelming Trump-backed nominees in Arizona and New Hampshire have dampened the party's pickup opportunities.

"The Republican candidates they're running are too extreme," said J.B. Poersch, who leads the pro-Democrat Senate Majority PAC. "I think this is still advantage Democrats."

Meanwhile, conditions in the top battleground states are rapidly evolving.

In Pennsylvania, Republican Senate nominee Mehmet Oz faced difficult new questions this week raised by a Washington Post article about the medical products he endorsed as a daytime television star. Another news report by the news site Jezebel detailing how his research caused hundreds of dogs to be killed rippled across social media.

Still, Democratic officials acknowledge the race tightened considerably as the calendar shifted to October. And White House officials are concerned about Democratic nominee John Fetterman's stamina as he recovers from a May stroke.

"Senate Republicans had a very bad start to October, but we know each of our races will be tight and we're going to keep taking nothing for granted," said Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, who leads the Senate Democrats' campaign arm.

The GOP Senate candidates' latest challenges in Georgia and Pennsylvania dominated social media Monday and Tuesday, according to data compiled by GQR, a public opinion research firm that works with Democratic organizations.

News stories about Walker's abortion accuser and Oz's animal research had the first- and second-highest reach of any news stories on Facebook and Twitter since they surfaced Monday, topping content related to the television show "Sons of Anarchy," another report about Planned Parenthood mobile abortion clinics and news about Kanye West. GQR used the social listening tool NewsWhip, which tracks over 500,000 websites in more than 100 languages roughly in real time.

In swing-state Nevada, the rhetoric from Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto has become increasingly urgent in recent days as she fends off a fierce challenge from former state Attorney General Adam Laxalt. Within the White House, there is real fear that she could lose her reelection bid, giving Republicans the only seat they may need to claim the Senate majority.

"We have a big problem, friend," Cortez Masto wrote in a fundraising appeal Tuesday. "Experts say that our race in Nevada could decide Senate control — and right now, polling shows me 1 point behind my Trump-endorsed opponent."

Democrats and their allies continue to hope that backlash against the Supreme Court's abortion decision will help them overcome historical trends in which the party controlling the White House almost always loses seats in Congress. Democrats, who control Washington, are also facing deep voter pessimism about the direction of the country and Biden's relatively weak approval ratings.

The traditional rules of politics have often been broken in the Trump era. In past years, Republicans may have abandoned Walker. But on Tuesday, they linked arms behind him.

Law, of the Senate Leadership Fund, said he takes Walker at his word that he did not pay for a former girlfriend's abortion, despite apparent evidence of a "Get Well" card with Walker's signature and a check receipt.

He said voters believe that "Walker may have made mistakes in his personal life that affected him and his family, but Warnock has made mistakes in public life in Washington that affected them and their families."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 32 of 71

There were some signs of Republican concern on the ground in Georgia, however.

Martha Zoller, a popular Republican radio host in north Georgia and one-time congressional candidate, told her audience Tuesday that the latest allegations require Walker to reset his campaign with a straight-forward admission about his "personal demons" and what he's done to overcome them.

"He needs to fall on the sword. 'I was a dog. ... And I have asked forgiveness for it,'" she said, detailing the kind of message she believes Walker must give voters. "It would be so refreshing to have somebody just tell the truth."

Veteran Democratic strategist Josh Schwerin warned his party against writing off the Georgia Republican.

"I wouldn't say Walker is done. Over the last couple of cycles we've certainly seen Republican candidates survive things that are not supposed to be survivable," Schwerin said. "There are a lot of close races, and the dynamics of this election are difficult to predict. Everybody is expecting multiple shifts in momentum between now and Election Day."

Yankees star Judge hits 62nd homer to break Maris' AL record

By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Aaron Judge took a smooth, mighty swing, then broke into a big smile as he trotted around the bases. Heading home, his teammates backed away, letting him touch the plate alone.

At last, the New York Yankees slugger had the American League home run record all to himself.

Judge hit his 62nd home run of the season Tuesday night, breaking Roger Maris' AL record and setting what some fans consider baseball's "clean" standard.

"It's a big relief," Judge said. "Everybody can finally sit down in their seats and watch the ballgame. It's been a fun ride so far, getting a chance to do this. ... Getting a chance to have your name next to someone as great as Roger Maris and Babe Ruth and those guys is incredible."

Judge said he felt "quite a few emotions" after connecting, thinking about his family and fans and supporters. He said it would probably be after the season until he'd truly soak in and appreciate the significance of his achievement.

"In my book, it's just another day," the stoic Judge said.

After slamming his helmet in a rare show of frustration when he went without a homer in the first game of the doubleheader against the Rangers in Texas, Judge hit the third pitch of the nightcap into the first row of seats in left field.

That trip around the bases after a long chase was certainly a mixture of pure joy and relief for No. 99, whose only homer in the previous 13 games had been when he tied Maris' 61 last Wednesday in Toronto.

Judge did it just in time, too, homering on the next-to-last day of the regular season.

Barry Bonds holds the major league record of 73 home runs, set with the San Francisco Giants in 2001.

Judge's milestone ball was caught by Cory Youmans of Dallas, who was sitting in Section 31. When asked what he was going to do with the ball while being taken away with security to have the ball authenticated, Youmans responded, "Good question. I haven't thought about it."

Asked after the 3-2 loss if he'd gotten the ball, Judge said, "not yet."

"I don't know where it's at. It'd be great to get it back," he said.

Judge also praised the fan for making a "great catch" and said the man had every right to keep the prized souvenir.

Another fan was escorted away after leaping over the rail into a gap between the seats and the left-field wall. The crowd of 38,832 was Texas' third sellout of the season.

Almost as soon as Judge connected on a 1-1 slider from right-hander Jesús Tinoco, his Yankees teammates streamed out of the dugout to celebrate with him. But they stayed away from home plate — leaving him to step on it before sharing hugs and high-fives.

"You never know how you're going to react in the moment. And it was just so, so very cool," manager Aaron Boone said.

Gerrit Cole, who set a Yankees single-season strikeout record in the same game, said he didn't know if

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 33 of 71

Judge was pressing as of late, but chuckled when saying everybody else on the team was.

"Just wanted it to happen so bad," Cole said. "So I don't know if that's pressing, or it's just hoping hard. We were all just hoping really hard I think ... He's not trying to get the record for himself. He's trying to get the record for his teammates, and for the Yankee fans."

New York wound up losing the second game after winning the opener 5-4. With one game left in the regular season, the split left the Yankees with a fitting 99-62 record — Judge's number and his home run total.

Judge's mother and father were in the stands to see the 30-year-old outfielder end a five-game homerless streak, including the earlier game Tuesday when he was 1 for 5 with a single.

The Maris family wasn't in Texas after following Judge around for a while, but Roger Maris Jr. tweeted, "Congratulations to Aaron Judge and his family on Aaron's historic home run number 62! It has definitely been a baseball season to remember. You are all class and someone who should be revered. For the MAJORITY of the fans, we can now celebrate a new CLEAN HOME RUN KING!!"

When the top of the first ended, and Judge went to take his place in right field, he carried the glove and cap of first baseman DJ LeMahieu, who patted him on the back.

The fans in right field cheered Judge loudly while he warmed up by tossing a ball back and forth with center fielder Harrison Bader. Judge then provided another souvenir ball when he tossing the one he had warmed up with several rows deep.

Judge, eligible to become a free agent after this season, struck out on a full-count pitch when batting again in the second.

He took his spot right field in the bottom of the inning before Boone pulled him from the game. Oswaldo Cabrera, who had been at second base, moved to right field and the slugger got another loud ovation as he jogged back to the Yankees dugout on the third base side.

Reaction quickly came from far beyond the ballpark.

"History made, more history to make," President Joe Biden posted on Twitter.

Tweeted former Yankees star Derek Jeter: "Congrats @TheJudge44 on 62! Postseason next!!!"

Former President Bill Clinton also tweeted congratulations, as did former MLB players like Paul O'Neill, Dwight Gooden, Dave Winfield and Ryan Howard.

Maris' 61 for the Yankees had been exceeded six times previously, but all were tainted by the stench of steroids. Along with Bonds' record, Mark McGwire hit 70 for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1998 and 65 the following year. Sammy Sosa had 66, 65 and 63 for the Chicago Cubs during a four-season span starting in 1998.

McGwire admitted using banned steroids, while Bonds and Sosa denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs. Major League Baseball started testing with penalties for PEDs in 2004, and some fans — perhaps many — until now have considered Maris as holder of the legitimate record.

A Ruthian figure with a smile as outsized as his body, the 6-foot-7 Judge has rocked the major leagues with a series of deep drives that hearken to the sepia tone movie reels of his legendary pinstriped predecessors.

The doubleheader nightcap in Texas was his 55th game in row Judge had played since Aug. 5.

Boone initially said Judge earned himself a day off Wednesday, but then said he would speak with the slugger who had already said he hoped to play in the regular season finale, before the AL East champion Yankees have five days until the AL Division Series.

"We'll have a conversation and see what makes the most sense," Boone said. "And I'll try and lead him in a certain direction, maybe he'll lead me back in the other direction."

Judge had gone 3 for 17 with five walks and a hit by pitch since moving past the 60 home runs Babe Ruth hit in 1927, which had stood as the major league record for 34 years. Maris hit his 61st off Boston's Tracy Stallard at old Yankee Stadium on Oct. 1, 1961.

Judge likely will come up short of becoming the first AL Triple Crown winner since Detroit's Miguel Cabrera in 2012. He leads the AL with 131 RBIs and goes into the final day of the regular season trailing Minnesota's Luis Arraez, who was hitting .315. Judge was at .311, right where he had started the day.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 34 of 71

Judge's accomplishment will cause endless debate.

"To me, the holder of the record for home runs in a season is Roger Maris," author George Will said earlier this month. "There's no hint of suspicion that we're seeing better baseball than better chemistry in the case of Judge. He's clean. He's not doing something that forces other players to jeopardize their health."

Can Biden save democracy one US factory job at a time?

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is working to create a manufacturing revival — even helping to put factory jobs in Republican territory under the belief it can restore faith in U.S. democracy.

The latest development came Tuesday, when chipmaker Micron announced an investment of up to \$100 billion over the next 20-plus years to build a plant in upstate New York that could create 9,000 factory jobs. It's a commitment made in a GOP congressional district that Biden and the company credited to the recently enacted \$280 billion CHIPS and Science Act.

"Today is another win for America, and another massive new investment in America spurred by my economic plan," Biden said in a statement. "Together, we are building an economy from the bottom up and the middle out, where we lower costs for our families and make it right here in America."

Biden has staked his presidency on what he has called "a historic manufacturing boom," hoping to succeed where past presidents, governors and hordes of other politicians have struggled for a half-century. His goal is to keep opening new factories in states such as Ohio, Idaho, North Carolina and Georgia — where Democrats' footholds are shaky at best. Administration officials say they want to spread the prosperity across the entire country, rather than let it cluster in centers of extreme wealth, in a bid to renew the middle class and a sense of pride in the country itself.

The push comes at a precarious moment for the global economy. High inflation in the U.S. has hurt Biden's popularity and prompted recession concerns. Much of Europe faces a possible downturn due to the jump in energy prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while the International Monetary Fund just downgraded growth in China. The world economy is defined by uncertainty just as Biden has called for investments in clean energy and technology that could take years to pay off.

The president is hopeful that whatever good manufacturing can do for the U.S. economy also turns out to yield political benefits for himself and other Democrats in 2022 and beyond. He told Democratic donors on Friday that the manufacturing and technology investments mean "we have an opportunity" to strengthen the U.S. if Democratic governors and lawmakers are elected this year.

Going into the midterm elections, Biden is telling voters that a factory renaissance has already started because of him. The administration sees its infrastructure spending, computer chip investments and clean-energy incentives as helping domestic manufacturing in unprecedented ways.

Recent academic studies suggest that decades of layoffs due to offshoring contributed to the rise of Republican Donald Trump, with his opposition to immigration and global trade. But many of the authors of the studies doubt that Biden can make these demographic trends disappear through the promise of jobs for skilled workers.

Democratic Rep. Ro Khanna of California would like to see the president make a national tour of factory openings, so that his policies could stick better in voters' minds. Khanna recently attended the groundbreaking of a \$20 billion Intel plant in Ohio and laid out his belief that factory job losses helped cause today's political schisms.

The Silicon Valley congressman reasons that too many Americans have lost faith in a government that seemed indifferent to their own well-being, leading them to embrace hucksters and authoritarians who thrive by exploiting and widening divisions in society.

"How do you get rid of people's jobs and expect them to believe in democracy?" Khanna asks.

Factory jobs have risen during Biden's tenure to the most since 2008 at 12.85 million, yet the task of steadying the country's middle class and its democratic institutions is far from complete. The industrial Midwest has yet to recover the factory jobs shed in the pandemic, let alone decades of layoffs in which

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 35 of 71

the economic challenges evolved into political tensions.

Labor Department data show that Ohio is still 10,000 factory jobs shy of its pre-pandemic level and 350,000 jobs below its total in 2000. The numbers are similarly bad in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — three states that were key to Biden's 2020 victory and could help decide control of Congress in November's elections.

The White House says Biden eschews thinking about Americans solely as consumers interested only in the cheapest prices and thus promoting outsourcing. Instead, his speeches are woven with talk about people as workers and the identity that working gives them.

What Biden can show with this year's factory groundbreakings is progress, even if the total number of manufacturing jobs is unlikely to return to the 1979 peak of 19.55 million. Intel's computer chip plant being built in New Albany, Ohio, would add 3,000 jobs. Hyundai would add 8,100 jobs with its electric vehicle plant in Georgia. Wolfspeed, with plans to produce silicon carbide wafers in North Carolina, would add 1,800 jobs.

Jay Timmons, CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, said the gains in factory jobs reflect five years of effort, starting with the 2017 tax cuts by Trump and including Biden's investments in infrastructure and computer chips as well as efforts to return jobs to the U.S. after global supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic.

"There's a commitment by government at all levels to do more here and a desire by manufacturers to do more here," Timmons said.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Daron Acemoglu applauded the president's plans for spreading factory work across the country. It's too soon to tell if the administration is succeeding, he said, but Biden is challenging what was once conventional wisdom among economists that little could be done to expand factory work in the U.S.

"I believe the president is right," said Acemoglu, the co-author of the book "Why Nations Fail." "Good jobs, which pay decent wages, have job stability, offer career-addressing opportunities, and endow a sense of accomplishment and dignity, are important for the middle class and social cohesion."

New academic research released in September suggests that the offshoring of factory jobs led white men to feel like victims and gave way to the rise of grievance politics that helped fuel Trump's ascendancy among Republican voters. That movement in turn spawned election denialism and political violence that Biden has repeatedly said is "a dagger to the throat of our democracy."

The research covering 3,500 U.S. citizens finds that factory job losses due to automation are less controversial among voters than the offshoring, which triggered a "self-victimization bias" for whites who were more likely to "view offshoring as leading to greater total harm to the American economy, and to the U.S. position in the world."

One of the study's authors, Leonardo Baccini of McGill University, still expects factory job totals to shrink, though a decline primarily due to automation would be less harmful to Democratic candidates. He still anticipates factory job losses over the long term as advanced economies focus more on productive services to sustain growth.

"From an economic standpoint, the decline of U.S. manufacturing is inevitable and it is actually a good thing," Baccini said. "Any attempt to stop this structural transformation with protectionism and government subsidies is likely to backfire."

J. Lawrence Broz, a political scientist at the University of California San Diego, co-wrote a 2019 research paper that found populist support was strongest in communities that endured long-term economic and social decline, a contrast to the superstar cities where technology, finance and a highly educated workforce were magnets for wealth.

"It is unlikely that recent efforts to re-shore manufacturing jobs will produce the intended effects, either economically or politically," Broz said. "The new factories won't employ large numbers of less-skilled workers, leaving white industrial workers just as angry as they are now."

That means the underlying test of Biden's agenda might be whether enough workers can be educated to

meet the needs of a manufacturing sector with higher standards than during the heights of its dominance in the 20th century.

Big Brazilian gold refiner delisted amid Amazon mining probe

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — One of Brazil's biggest gold refiners, which processes gold suspected of being mined illegally in the Amazon rainforest, has been stripped of an important industry seal of approval that global manufacturers from Apple to Tesla rely on to root out abuses in their supply chains.

An investigation by The Associated Press in January revealed how Sao Paulo-based Marsam shared ownership links and processes gold on behalf of an intermediary accused by Brazilian prosecutors of buying tarnished gold from Indigenous territories and other protected areas.

A former partner at Marsam, Dirceu Frederico Sobrinho, has been at the center of recent gold rush in the Amazon, purchasing through a separate company he controls more than 2 billion reais (\$388 million) worth of gold last year from wildcat miners at 252 sites. Last year, federal prosecutors filed a civil suit against the company, F.D'Gold, and two other companies that purchase gold, seeking 10 billion reais in social and environmental damages.

With that lawsuit still going on, Marsam this month was quietly removed by the Responsible Minerals Initiative from a public list of smelters and refiners deemed to follow best sourcing practices. The assessment program run by a Virginia-based coalition of manufacturers emerged with the passage a decade ago of legislation in the U.S. requiring companies to disclose their use of conflict minerals fueling civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

André Nunes, an external consultant for Marsam, said it would appeal the initiative's decision. He said Marsam conducted its own evaluation of F.D'Gold and found nothing amiss.

He also cautioned that the accusations of illegal mining against Marsam's client have yet to be proven, citing a procedural decision last month by a judge who blasted prosecutors for not providing sufficient evidence to back their request that company's activities be suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

"In Marsam's understanding, we were diligent and did what was within our reach," Nunes said. "We didn't see a reason to end our relationship with F.D'Gold and the judiciary corroborated that decision."

The Responsible Minerals Initiative wouldn't disclose its findings, citing confidentiality agreements to encourage companies to participate in its evaluation process. But according to its standards, refiners can be removed from its "conformant" list for a variety of reasons, ranging from not performing enhanced due diligence when red flags are raised — something Marsam's internal policies also require — to overlooking evidence that actors in its supply chain falsified mandatory declaration of origin forms, a rampant problem in the Amazon's prospecting frontier.

More than 300 publicly traded companies list Marsam as a supplier in responsible mining disclosures that they are required to file with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Such sourcing decisions are guided by independent auditors who evaluate refiners to make sure they aren't contributing to illegal armed groups, human rights violations and financial wrongdoing. Currently, 98 refiners are considered to be aligned with the initiative's standards — the same status Marsam enjoyed from 2017 until its recent delisting.

Additionally, Marsam provided the gold that was used to make the medals hanging on the necks of athletes in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro — medals touted as a victory for the environment because they were partly made from recycled materials and free of mercury.

But critics said much of Marsam's bona fides were undeserved. They accuse the company of "green-washing" — promoting itself as more sustainable than it really is — by not delving deep into the origin of the ore it processes on behalf of F.D'Gold. Marsam is now co-run by the daughter of Dirceu, as he is widely known in Brazil.

"In Brazil, as in so many gold-producing countries, illegality enters into the supply chain very early on, so it's essential to get better visibility on what happens upstream," said David Soud, head of research at I.R. Consilium, who has researched illegal gold flows in South America. "Refiners are often culpable for

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 37 of 71

failures in due diligence and need to be held to strict standards so that questionably sourced gold doesn't get laundered into the legitimate supply chain."

Illegal airstrips, toxic mercury ponds and forest-wrecking heavy machinery have proliferated throughout the Amazon as prospecting for gold on Indigenous lands and other protected areas has exploded in recent years. Weak government oversight enabled by President Jair Bolsonaro, the proud son of a prospector whose administration has facilitated mining in the Amazon, has exacerbated the frenzy.

But critics said companies in the U.S. and Europe bear part of the responsibility for the devastation. So do guidelines set by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that are used by the Responsible Minerals Initiative and other groups to evaluate companies' compliance, the critics said.

Such standards pay scant attention to environmental crimes or the rights of Indigenous communities. Instead, they are geared toward risks stemming from civil wars and criminal networks. In Latin America, only Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela — where drug cartels or guerrilla insurgencies are active — are classified as conflict or high-risk areas deserving greater scrutiny for sourcing practices.

A recent study by Kumi, a London-based consulting firm that advises the OECD, found that only 7% of 284 end-user companies registered with the Responsible Minerals Initiative had policies on sourcing conflict materials that were in line with OECD guidelines. Most of them are U.S. based. The number was basically unchanged from a previous assessment by Kumi in 2017.

AP asked Amazon, Apple, Microsoft and Tesla if they intended to stop sourcing from Marsam in light of the company's delisting. Of the four, only Apple commented, saying that Marsam is no longer part of its supply chain.

"Our responsible sourcing standards are the strongest in the industry and strictly prohibit the use of illegally mined minerals," Apple said in a statement. "If a smelter or refiner is unable or unwilling to meet our strict standards, we remove them from our supply chain, and since 2009, we have directed the removal of over 150 smelters and refiners."

Dirceu, the former Marsam partner, said Marsam's delisting reflects an effort to convict gold players in the court of public opinion.

Last month, Sao Paulo police temporarily arrested him for an outstanding warrant in the Amazonian state of Rondonia in connection with a separate investigation into illegal mining. He said his company purchases gold legally from a cooperative in the state that was being probed. He called his arrest "arbitrary."

The son of a vegetable grocer who was raised selling produce at an open-pit mine, Dirceu acknowledges Brazil's legal framework for gold trading has many holes. But he said toughening oversight and encouraging compliance is a better course than driving reform-minded companies like F.D'Gold out of business when so many illegal players already export raw gold with almost no concern for the environment.

"We have laws in Brazil, and we're complying with them. They aren't perfect, but they can be improved," he said, noting that the nation's gold association, which he presided over until recently, has proposed multiple reforms. "If the market doesn't purchase gold legally, it doesn't go back into the earth. It will be negotiated in another way, any other way."

Musk says he wants Twitter again and will pay \$44B price

By TOM KRISHER, MATT O'BRIEN, RANDALL CHASE and BARBARA ORTUTAY Associated Press

Elon Musk wants Twitter again — and Twitter is game. The billionaire Tesla CEO has proposed to buy the company at the originally agreed-on price of \$44 billion, bringing the tumultuous, monthslong saga another step closer to a conclusion.

Musk made the surprising turnaround not on Twitter, as has been his custom, but in a letter to Twitter that the company disclosed in a filing Tuesday with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

It came less than two weeks before a trial between the two parties over Musk's attempt to back out of the deal is scheduled to start in Delaware. Musk also faced a scheduled deposition by Twitter attorneys starting Thursday.

In response, Twitter said it intends to close the transaction at \$54.20 per share after receiving the letter from Musk. But the company stopped short of saying it's dropping its lawsuit against the billionaire Tesla

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 38 of 71

CEO. Experts said that makes sense given the contentious relationship and lack of trust between the two parties.

"I don't think Twitter will give up its trial date on just Musk's word — it's going to need more certainty about closing," said Andrew Jennings, professor at Brooklyn Law School, noting that the company may also be worried about Musk's proposal being a delay tactic. After all, he's already tried to unsuccessfully postpone the trial twice.

Trading in Twitter's stock, which had been halted for much of the day pending release of the news, resumed trading late Tuesday and soared 22% to close at \$52.

But even if the deal now goes through without a hitch, it's too soon to call a victory for Twitter, said Jasmine Enberg, an analyst with Insider Intelligence.

"The deal will solve some of the short-term uncertainty at the company, but Twitter is essentially in the same place it was in April," she said. "There is still plenty of uncertainty around what Musk intends to do with Twitter, as well as the future of a company with a leader who has wavered in his commitment to buying it. And if we've learned anything from this saga, it's that Musk is unpredictable and that it isn't over yet."

Musk's proposal is the latest twist in a high-profile saga involving the world's richest man and one of the most influential social media platforms. Much of the drama has played out on Twitter itself, with Musk — who has more than 100 million followers — lamenting that the company was failing to live up to its potential as a platform for free speech and had too many bots.

While some logistical and legal hurdles remain, Musk could be in charge of Twitter in a matter of days — however long it takes him and his co-investors to line up the cash, said Ann Lipton, an associate law professor at Tulane University.

A letter from Musk's lawyer dated Monday and disclosed by Twitter in a securities filing said Musk would close the merger signed in April, provided that the Delaware Chancery Court "enter an immediate stay" of Twitter's lawsuit against him and adjourn the trial scheduled to start Oct. 17.

Attorneys for Musk did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday.

Musk has been trying to back out of the deal for several months after signing on to buy the San Francisco company in April. Shareholders have already approved the sale, and legal experts say Musk faced a huge challenge to defend against Twitter's lawsuit, which was filed in July.

Eric Talley, a law professor at Columbia University said he's not surprised by Musk's turnaround.

"On the legal merits, his case didn't look that strong," Talley said. "It kind of seemed like a pretty simple buyer's remorse case."

Musk claimed that Twitter under-counted the number of fake accounts on its platform, and Twitter sued when Musk announced the deal was off.

Musk's argument largely rested on the allegation that Twitter misrepresented how it measures the magnitude of "spam bot" accounts that are useless to advertisers. Most legal experts believe he faced an uphill battle to convince Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick, the court's head judge, that something changed since the April merger agreement that justifies terminating the deal.

Musk remained mum about the turn of events on Twitter until late Tuesday afternoon, when he tweeted that "Buying Twitter is an accelerant to creating X, the everything app" without further explanation.

Jolie details Brad Pitt abuse allegations in court filing

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A court filing Tuesday from Angelina Jolie alleges that on a 2016 flight, Brad Pitt grabbed her by the head and shook her then choked one of their children and struck another when they tried to defend her.

The descriptions of abuse on the private flight came in a cross-complaint Jolie filed in the couple's dispute over a French home and winery they co-owned that is separate from their ongoing divorce, which she sought soon after.

A representative for Pitt, who was not authorized to speak publicly, strongly denied Jolie's allegations

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 39 of 71

and called them "another rehash that only harms the family."

The allegations of abuse on the plane first became public shortly after the flight, but reports were initially vague and details were kept sealed in divorce documents and investigations by the FBI and Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, both of which found that no action against Pitt was necessary.

A judge gave Pitt 50-50 custody of the children after a closed-door trial in which the allegations were aired. But an appeals court subsequently disqualified the private judge for not disclosing possible conflicts of interest after a motion from Jolie, nullifying the decision.

More details of the allegations were revealed earlier this year when a Jolie lawsuit against the FBI over a Freedom of Information Act request was made public.

The New York Times first reported the court filing.

The filing says that on Sept. 14, 2016, Jolie, Pitt and their six children were traveling from the winery, Chateau Miraval, to Los Angeles.

"Pitt's aggressive behavior started even before the family got to the airport, with Pitt having a confrontation with one of the children. After the flight took off, Jolie approached Pitt and asked him what was wrong," the filing says. "Pitt accused her of being too deferential to the children and verbally attacked her."

Later, it says, "He pulled her into the bathroom and began yelling at her. Pitt grabbed Jolie by the head and shook her, and then grabbed her shoulders and shook her again before pushing her into the bathroom wall."

One of the children, who were between 8 and 15 years old at the time, verbally defended Jolie, the countersuit says, and Pitt lashed out.

"Pitt lunged at his own child and Jolie grabbed him from behind to stop him. To get Jolie off his back, Pitt threw himself backwards into the airplane's seats injuring Jolie's back and elbow," the filing says. "The children rushed in and all bravely tried to protect each other. Before it was over, Pitt choked one of the children and struck another in the face."

The document says he subsequently poured beer on Jolie and poured beer and red wine on the children.

Jolie's gave an account of the flight to two FBI investigators in the days that followed. It appeared in a heavily redacted report later released by the agency.

It included a photo of a bruise on Jolie's elbow and a "rug-burn type injury" on her hand. In it she said that she had seen Pitt have two to three drinks, but said he appeared articulate and not intoxicated.

The investigators met with federal prosecutors, and "It was agreed by all parties that criminal charges in this case would not be pursued due to several factors," the report says.

An FBI statement said it has "conducted a review of the circumstances and will not pursue further investigation."

The 47-year-old Oscar-winning actor and director Jolie and the 58-year-old Oscar-winning actor Pitt were among Hollywood's most prominent couples for 12 years.

They had been romantic partners for a decade when they married in 2014. Jolie filed for divorce in 2016, and a judge declared them single in 2019, but the divorce case has not been finalized with custody and financial issues still in dispute.

Police: California serial killer 'on a mission' in slayings

STOCKTON, Calif. (AP) — A California serial killer seems to be "on a mission" throughout the fatal shooting of six men and the wounding of one woman dating back to last year.

Ballistics tests and some video evidence linked the crimes in Stockton and Oakland, about 70 miles (110 kilometers) apart, police said.

"We don't know what the motive is. What we do believe is that it's mission-oriented," Stockton Police Chief Stanley McFadden said Tuesday. "This person's on a mission."

The first fatal shooting was in Oakland in April 2021. The woman was wounded in Stockton days later. More than a year passed, then the five killings in Stockton took place between July 8 and Sept. 27, all

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 40 of 71

within a radius of a few square miles, police said.

Although police would not say whether all seven shootings had been linked to the same gun, McFadden alluded to a single pistol during the news conference.

"I have absolutely no answer as to why that pistol went dormant for over 400 days," between the April 2021 shootings and the first case this summer, the chief said.

Authorities last week announced that five men in Stockton were ambushed and shot to death, alone in the dark. On Monday, police said the two additional cases last year had been tied to those killings.

A person of interest is being sought in connection with the bloodshed — they appear on video at several of the crime scenes — but no evidence directly links them to the shootings, McFadden said. He said some of the victims were homeless and some were not.

There is a \$125,000 reward for information leading to an arrest. Police are fielding hundreds of tips daily, as well as submitting additional evidence in case other crimes in the state can be connected to the spate of shootings.

The first killing targeted Juan Vasquez Serrano, 39, in Oakland at around 4:15 a.m. on April 10, 2021. He was shot multiple times, according to the Alameda County coroner's bureau. It was not immediately clear if he was alone when he was killed.

In the nonfatal attack, the 46-year-old woman told investigators that she was inside her tent on April 16, 2021 at about 3:20 a.m. when she heard someone walking around outside.

"When she came out of her tent, she encountered someone holding a gun," McFadden said.

The suspect fired multiple shots, wounding the woman, but she tried to defend herself by advancing toward her attacker, the chief said. The shooter lowered the gun.

"She said there were no words mentioned at all," McFadden said.

The woman described the attacker as wearing a dark-colored hooded sweatshirt with the hood pulled up, dark-colored pants and an all-black COVID-style face mask.

In the fatal Stockton cases, none of the men were robbed or beaten before the killings, and none appeared to have known one another, Stockton Police Officer Joseph Silva said. The shootings also do not appear to be related to gangs or drugs.

The San Joaquin County Office of the Medical Examiner identified the Stockton victims as Paul Yaw, 35, who died July 8; Salvador Debudey Jr., 43, who died Aug. 11; Jonathan Hernandez Rodriguez, 21, who died Aug. 30; Juan Cruz, 52, who died Sept. 21; and Lawrence Lopez Sr., 54, who died Sept. 27.

Lopez was shot shortly before 2 a.m. in a residential area just north of downtown.

He "was just a person who was out here at the wrong place, at the wrong time, at the wrong circumstance," his brother, Jerry Lopez, told KXTV-TV. "It's hard to process that this has happened."

There may even be multiple people involved in the violence.

"To be honest, we just don't know," Silva said. "This person or people who are out doing this, they are definitely very bold and brazen."

Police said four of the Stockton homicide victims were walking alone and a fifth was in a parked car when they were killed in the evening or early morning. Stockton is a city of 320,000 residents, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of the state capital, Sacramento.

Loretta Lynn, coal miner's daughter and country queen, dies

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Loretta Lynn, the Kentucky coal miner's daughter whose frank songs about life and love as a woman in Appalachia pulled her out of poverty and made her a pillar of country music, has died. She was 90.

In a statement provided to The Associated Press, Lynn's family said she died Tuesday at her home in Hurricane Mills, Tennessee.

"Our precious mom, Loretta Lynn, passed away peacefully this morning, October 4th, in her sleep at home in her beloved ranch in Hurricane Mills," the family said in a statement. They asked for privacy as

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 41 of 71

they grieve and said a memorial will be announced later.

Lynn already had four children before launching her career in the early 1960s, and her songs reflected her pride in her rural Kentucky background.

As a songwriter, she crafted a persona of a defiantly tough woman, a contrast to the stereotypical image of most female country singers. The Country Music Hall of Famer wrote fearlessly about sex and love, cheating husbands, divorce and birth control and sometimes got in trouble with radio programmers for material from which even rock performers once shied away.

Her biggest hits came in the 1960s and '70s, including "Coal Miner's Daughter," "You Ain't Woman Enough," "The Pill," "Don't Come Home a Drinkin' (With Lovin' on Your Mind)," "Rated X" and "You're Looking at Country." She was known for appearing in floor-length, wide gowns with elaborate embroidery or rhinestones, many created by her longtime personal assistant and designer Tim Cobb.

Her honesty and unique place in country music was rewarded. She was the first woman ever named entertainer of the year at the genre's two major awards shows, first by the Country Music Association in 1972 and then by the Academy of Country Music three years later.

"It was what I wanted to hear and what I knew other women wanted to hear, too," Lynn told the AP in 2016. "I didn't write for the men; I wrote for us women. And the men loved it, too."

In 1969, she released her autobiographical "Coal Miner's Daughter," which helped her reach her widest audience yet.

"We were poor but we had love/That's the one thing Daddy made sure of/He shoveled coal to make a poor man's dollar," she sang.

"Coal Miner's Daughter," also the title of her 1976 book, was made into a 1980 movie of the same name. Sissy Spacek's portrayal of Lynn won her an Academy Award and the film was also nominated for best picture.

Long after her commercial peak, Lynn won two Grammys in 2005 for her album "Van Lear Rose," which featured 13 songs she wrote, including "Portland, Oregon" about a drunken one-night stand. "Van Lear Rose" was a collaboration with rocker Jack White, who produced the album and played the guitar parts.

Reba McEntire was among the stars who reacted to Lynn's death, posting online about how the singer reminded her of her late mother. "Strong women, who loved their children and were fiercely loyal. Now they're both in Heaven getting to visit and talk about how they were raised, how different country music is now from what it was when they were young. Sure makes me feel good that Mama went first so she could welcome Loretta into the hollers of heaven!"

Born Loretta Webb, the second of eight children, she wrote that her birthplace was Butcher Holler, near the coal mining company town of Van Lear in the mountains of east Kentucky. She literally put the place on the map, according to Peter Cooper, senior director, producer and writer at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. He wrote in his 2017 book "Johnny's Cash and Charley's Pride: Lasting Legends and Untold Adventures in Country Music" that she made up the name for the purposes of the song based on the names of the families that lived there.

Her daddy played the banjo, her mama played the guitar and she grew up on the songs of the Carter Family. Her younger sister, Crystal Gayle, is also a Grammy-winning country singer, scoring crossover hits with songs like "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue" and "Half the Way." Lynn's daughter Patsy Lynn Russell also was a songwriter and producer of some of her albums.

"I was singing when I was born, I think," she told the AP in 2016. "Daddy used to come out on the porch where I would be singing and rocking the babies to sleep. He'd say, 'Loretta, shut that big mouth. People all over this holler can hear you.' And I said, 'Daddy, what difference does it make? They are all my cousins.'"

She wrote in her autobiography that she was 13 when she got married to Oliver "Mooney" Lynn, but the AP later discovered state records that showed she was 15. Tommy Lee Jones played Mooney Lynn in the biopic.

Her husband, whom she called "Doo" or "Doolittle," urged her to sing professionally and helped promote her early career. With his help, she earned a recording contract with Decca Records, later MCA, and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 42 of 71

performed on the Grand Ole Opry stage. Lynn wrote her first hit single, "I'm a Honky Tonk Girl," released in 1960.

She also teamed up with singer Conway Twitty to form one of the most popular duos in country music with hits such as "Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man" and "After the Fire is Gone," which earned them a Grammy Award. Their duets, and her single records, were always mainstream country and not crossover or pop-tinged.

And when she first started singing at the Grand Ole Opry, country star Patsy Cline took Lynn under her wing and mentored her during her early career.

The Academy of Country Music chose her as the artist of the decade for the 1970s, and she was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1988. She won four Grammy Awards, was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2008, was honored at the Kennedy Center Honors in 2003 and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013.

In "Fist City," Lynn threatens a hair-pulling fistfight if another woman won't stay away from her man: "I'm here to tell you, gal, to lay off of my man/If you don't want to go to Fist City." That strong-willed but traditional country woman reappears in other Lynn songs. In "The Pill," a song about sex and birth control, Lynn sings about how she's sick of being trapped at home to take care of babies: "The feelin' good comes easy now/Since I've got the pill," she sang.

She moved to Hurricane Mills, Tennessee, outside of Nashville, in the 1990s, where she set up a ranch complete with a replica of her childhood home and a museum that is a popular roadside tourist stop. The dresses she was known for wearing are there, too.

Lynn knew that her songs were trailblazing, especially for country music, but she was just writing the truth that so many rural women like her experienced.

"I could see that other women was goin' through the same thing, 'cause I worked the clubs. I wasn't the only one that was livin' that life and I'm not the only one that's gonna be livin' today what I'm writin'," she told The AP in 1995.

Even into her later years, Lynn never seemed to stop writing, scoring a multi-album deal in 2014 with Legacy Records, a division of Sony Music Entertainment. In 2017, she suffered a stroke that forced her to stop touring, but she released her 50th solo studio album, "Still Woman Enough" in 2021.

She and her husband were married nearly 50 years before he died in 1996. They had six children: Betty, Jack, Ernest and Clara, and then twins Patsy and Peggy. She had 17 grandchildren and four step-grandchildren.

Deal back on? Elon Musk gets closer to buying Twitter

By TOM KRISHER, MATT O'BRIEN, RANDALL CHASE and BARBARA ORTUTAY Associated Press

The tumultuous saga of Elon Musk's on-again off-again purchase of Twitter took a turn toward a conclusion Tuesday after the mercurial Tesla CEO proposed to buy the company at the originally agreed-on price of \$44 billion.

Musk made the surprising turnaround not on Twitter, as has been his custom, but in a letter to Twitter that the company disclosed in a filing Tuesday with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. It came less than two weeks before a trial between the two parties is scheduled to start in Delaware.

In response, Twitter said it intends to close the transaction at \$54.20 per share after receiving the letter from Musk. But the company stopped short of saying it's dropping its lawsuit against the billionaire Tesla CEO. Experts said that makes sense given the contentious relationship and lack of trust between the two parties.

"I don't think Twitter will give up its trial date on just Musk's word — it's going to need more certainty about closing," said Andrew Jennings, professor at Brooklyn Law School, noting that the company may also be worried about Musk's proposal being a delay tactic. After all, he's already tried to unsuccessfully postpone the trial twice.

Trading in Twitter's stock, which had been halted for much of the day pending release of the news,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 43 of 71

resumed trading late Tuesday and soared 22% to close at \$52.

Musk's proposal is the latest twist in a high-profile saga involving the world's richest man and one of the most influential social media platforms. Much of the drama has played out on Twitter itself, with Musk — who has more than 100 million followers — lamenting that the company was failing to live up to its potential as a platform for free speech and had too many bots.

While some logistical and legal hurdles remain, Musk could be in charge of Twitter in a matter of days — however long it takes him and his co-investors to line up the cash, said Ann Lipton, an associate law professor at Tulane University.

A letter from Musk's lawyer dated Monday and disclosed by Twitter in a securities filing said Musk would close the merger signed in April, provided that the Delaware Chancery Court "enter an immediate stay" of Twitter's lawsuit against him and adjourn the trial scheduled to start Oct. 17.

Eric Talley, a law professor at Columbia University, said he's not surprised by Musk's turnaround, especially ahead of a scheduled deposition of Musk by Twitter attorneys starting Thursday that was "not going to be pleasant."

"On the legal merits, his case didn't look that strong," Talley said. "It kind of seemed like a pretty simple buyer's remorse case."

Attorneys for Musk did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday.

Musk has been trying to back out of the deal for several months after signing on to buy the San Francisco company in April. Shareholders have already approved the sale, and legal experts say Musk faced a huge challenge to defend against Twitter's lawsuit, which was filed in July.

Musk claimed that Twitter under-counted the number of fake accounts on its platform, and Twitter sued when Musk announced the deal was off.

Musk's argument largely rested on the allegation that Twitter misrepresented how it measures the magnitude of "spam bot" accounts that are useless to advertisers. Most legal experts believe he faced an uphill battle to convince Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick, the court's head judge, that something changed since the April merger agreement that justifies terminating the deal.

Musk's main argument for terminating the deal — that Twitter was misrepresenting how it measured its "spam bot" problem — also didn't appear to be going well as Twitter had been working to pick apart Musk's attempts to get third-party data scientists to bolster his concerns.

Musk remained mum about the turn of events on Twitter until late Tuesday afternoon, when he tweeted that "Buying Twitter is an accelerant to creating X, the everything app" without further explanation.

Many of Musk's other tweets in the past 24 hours have been about a divisive proposal to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine, drawing the ire of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Even if the deal now goes through without a hitch, it's too soon to call a victory for Twitter, said Jasmine Enberg, an analyst with Insider Intelligence.

"The deal will solve some of the short-term uncertainty at the company, but Twitter is essentially in the same place it was in April," she said. "There is still plenty of uncertainty around what Musk intends to do with Twitter, as well as the future of a company with a leader who has wavered in his commitment to buying it. And if we've learned anything from this saga, it's that Musk is unpredictable and that it isn't over yet."

Trump asks Supreme Court to intervene in Mar-a-Lago dispute

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for former President Donald Trump asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday to step into the legal fight over the classified documents seized during an FBI search of his Florida estate, escalating a dispute over the powers of an independent arbiter appointed to inspect the records.

The Trump team asked the justices to overturn a lower court ruling and allow the arbiter, called a special master, to review the roughly 100 documents with classification markings that were taken in the Aug. 8 search of Mar-a-Lago.

A three-judge panel from the Atlanta-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit last month limited

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 44 of 71

the special master's review to the much larger tranche of non-classified documents. The judges, including two Trump appointees, sided with the Justice Department, which had argued there was no legal basis for the special master to conduct his own review of the classified records.

But Trump's lawyers said in their application to the Supreme Court that it was essential for the special master to have access to the classified records to "determine whether documents bearing classification markings are in fact classified, and regardless of classification, whether those records are personal records or Presidential records."

"Since President Trump had absolute authority over classification decisions during his Presidency, the current status of any disputed document cannot possibly be determined solely by reference to the markings on that document," the application states.

It says that without the special master review, "the unchallenged views of the current Justice Department would supersede the established authority of the Chief Executive." An independent review, the Trump team says, ensures a "transparent process that provides much-needed oversight."

The FBI says it seized roughly 11,000 documents, including about 100 with classification markings, during its search. The Trump team asked a judge in Florida, Aileen Cannon, to appoint a special master to do an independent review of the records.

Cannon subsequently assigned a veteran Brooklyn judge, Raymond Dearie, to review the records and segregate those that may be protected by claims of attorney-client privilege and executive privilege. She also barred the FBI from being able to use the classified documents as part of its criminal investigation.

The Justice Department appealed, prompting the 11th Circuit to lift Cannon's hold on investigators' ability to scrutinize the classified records. The appeals court also ruled that the department did not have to provide Dearie with access to the classified records.

Trump's lawyers submitted the Supreme Court application to Justice Clarence Thomas, who oversees emergency matters from Florida and several other Southern states. Thomas can act on his own or, as is usually done, refer the emergency appeal to the rest of the court. Late Tuesday the court said the government was being asked to respond to the petition by Oct. 11.

Thomas has previously come under scrutiny for his vote in a different Trump documents case, in which he was the only member of the court to vote against allowing the U.S. House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot to obtain Trump records held by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Thomas' wife, Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, is a conservative activist and staunch Trump supporter who attended the Jan. 6 "Stop the Steal" rally on the Ellipse and wrote to then-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows in the weeks following the election encouraging him to work to overturn Biden's victory and keep Trump in office. She also contacted lawmakers in Arizona and Wisconsin in the weeks after the election. Thomas was recently interviewed by the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection and she stood by the false claim that the 2020 election was fraudulent.

US starts fiscal year with record \$31 trillion in debt

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's gross national debt has surpassed \$31 trillion, according to a U.S. Treasury report released Tuesday that logs America's daily finances.

Edging closer to the statutory ceiling of roughly \$31.4 trillion — an artificial cap Congress placed on the U.S. government's ability to borrow — the debt numbers hit an already tenuous economy facing high inflation, rising interest rates and a strong U.S. dollar.

And while President Joe Biden has touted his administration's deficit reduction efforts this year and recently signed the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which attempts to tame 40-year high price increases caused by a variety of economic factors, economists say the latest debt numbers are a cause for concern.

Owen Zidar, a Princeton economist, said rising interest rates will exacerbate the nation's growing debt issues and make the debt itself more costly. The Federal Reserve has raised rates several times this year in an effort to combat inflation.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 45 of 71

Zidar said the debt "should encourage us to consider some tax policies that almost passed through the legislative process but didn't get enough support," like imposing higher taxes on the wealthy and closing the carried interest loophole, which allows money managers to treat their income as capital gains.

"I think the point here is if you weren't worried before about the debt before, you should be — and if you were worried before, you should be even more worried," Zidar said.

The Congressional Budget Office earlier this year released a report on America's debt load, warning in its 30-year outlook that, if unaddressed, the debt will soon spiral upward to new highs that could ultimately imperil the U.S. economy.

In its August Mid-Session Review, the administration forecasted that this year's budget deficit will be nearly \$400 billion lower than it estimated back in March, due in part to stronger than expected revenues, reduced spending, and an economy that has recovered all the jobs lost during the multi-year pandemic.

In full, this year's deficit will decline by \$1.7 trillion, representing the single largest decline in the federal deficit in American history, the Office of Management and Budget said in August.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget said in an emailed statement Tuesday, "This is a new record no one should be proud of."

"In the past 18 months, we've witnessed inflation rise to a 40-year high, interest rates climbing in part to combat this inflation, and several budget-busting pieces of legislation and executive actions," MacGuineas said. "We are addicted to debt."

A representative from the Treasury Department was not immediately available for comment.

Sung Won Sohn, an economics professor at Loyola Marymount University, said "it took this nation 200 years to pile up its first trillion dollars in national debt, and since the pandemic we have been adding at the rate of 1 trillion nearly every quarter."

Predicting high inflation for the "foreseeable future," he said, "when you increase government spending and money supply, you will pay the price later."

3 physicists share Nobel Prize for work on quantum science

By SETH BORENSTEIN, MADDIE BURAKOFF and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

Three scientists jointly won this year's Nobel Prize in physics Tuesday for proving that tiny particles could retain a connection with each other even when separated, a phenomenon once doubted but now being explored for potential real-world applications such as encrypting information.

Frenchman Alain Aspect, American John F. Clauser and Austrian Anton Zeilinger were cited by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for experiments proving the "totally crazy" field of quantum entanglements to be all too real. They demonstrated that unseen particles, such as photons, can be linked, or "entangled," with each other even when they are separated by large distances.

It all goes back to a feature of the universe that even baffled Albert Einstein and connects matter and light in a tangled, chaotic way.

Bits of information or matter that used to be next to each other even though they are now separated have a connection or relationship — something that can conceivably help encrypt information or even teleport. A Chinese satellite now demonstrates this and potentially lightning fast quantum computers, still at the small and not quite useful stage, also rely on this entanglement. Others are even hoping to use it in superconducting material.

"It's so weird," Aspect said of entanglement in a telephone call with the Nobel committee. "I am accepting in my mental images something which is totally crazy."

Yet the trio's experiments showed it happens in real life.

"Why this happens I haven't the foggiest," Clauser told The Associated Press during a Zoom interview in which he got the official call from the Swedish Academy several hours after friends and media informed him of his award. "I have no understanding of how it works but entanglement appears to be very real."

His fellow winners also said they can't explain the how and why behind this effect. But each did ever more intricate experiments that prove it just is.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 46 of 71

Clauser, 79, was awarded his prize for a 1972 experiment, cobbled together with scavenged equipment, that helped settle a famous debate about quantum mechanics between Einstein and famed physicist Niels Bohr. Einstein described "a spooky action at a distance" that he thought would eventually be disproved.

"I was betting on Einstein," Clauser said. "But unfortunately I was wrong and Einstein was wrong and Bohr was right."

Aspect said Einstein may have been technically wrong, but deserves huge credit for raising the right question that led to experiments proving quantum entanglement.

"Most people would assume that nature is made out of stuff distributed throughout space and time," said Clauser, who while a high school student in the 1950s built a video game on a vacuum tube computer. "And that appears not to be the case."

What the work shows is "parts of the universe — even those at great distances from each other — are connected," said Johns Hopkins physicist N. Peter Armitage. "This is something so unintuitive and something so at odds with how we feel the world 'should' be."

This hard-to-understand field started with thought experiments. But what in one sense is philosophical musings about the universe also holds hope for more secure and faster computers all based on entangled photons and matter that still interact no matter how distant.

"With my first experiments I was sometimes asked by the press what they were good for," Zeilinger, 77, told reporters in Vienna. "And I said with pride: 'It's good for nothing. I'm doing this purely out of curiosity.'"

In quantum entanglement, establishing common information between two photons not near each other "allows us to do things like secret communication, in ways which weren't possible to do before," said David Haviland, chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics.

Quantum information "has broad and potential implications in areas such as secure information transfer, quantum computing and sensing technology," said Eva Olsson, a member of the Nobel committee. "Its predictions have opened doors to another world, and it has also shaken the very foundations of how we interpret measurements."

The kind of secure communication used by China's Micius satellite — as well as by some banks — is a "success story of quantum entanglement," said Harun Siljak of Trinity College Dublin. By using one entangled particle to create an encryption key, it ensures that only the person with the other entangled particle can decode the message and "the secret shared between these two sides is a proper secret," Siljak said.

While quantum entanglement is "incredibly cool" security technologist Bruce Schneier, who teaches at Harvard, said it is fortifying an already secure part of information technology where other areas, including human factors and software are more of a problem. He likened it to installing a side door with 25 locks on an otherwise insecure house.

At a news conference, Aspect said real-world applications like the satellite were "fantastic."

"I think we have progress toward quantum computing. I would not say that we are close," the 75-year-old physicist said. "I don't know if I will see it in my life. But I am an old man."

Speaking by phone to a news conference after the announcement, the University of Vienna-based Zeilinger said he was "still kind of shocked" at hearing he had received the award.

Clauser, Aspect and Zeilinger have figured in Nobel speculation for more than a decade. In 2010 they won the Wolf Prize in Israel, seen as a possible precursor to the Nobel.

The Nobel committee said Clauser developed quantum theories first put forward in the 1960s into a practical experiment. Aspect was able to close a loophole in those theories, while Zeilinger demonstrated a phenomenon called quantum teleportation that effectively allows information to be transmitted over distances.

"Using entanglement you can transfer all the information which is carried by an object over to some other place where the object is, so to speak, reconstituted," Zeilinger said. He added that this only works for tiny particles.

"It is not like in the Star Trek films (where one is) transporting something, certainly not the person, over some distance," he said.

A week of Nobel Prize announcements kicked off Monday with Swedish scientist Svante Paabo receiving

the award in medicine Monday for unlocking secrets of Neanderthal DNA that provided key insights into our immune system.

Chemistry is on Wednesday and literature on Thursday. The Nobel Peace Prize will be announced Friday and the economics award on Oct. 10.

The prizes carry a cash award of 10 million Swedish kronor (nearly \$900,000) and will be handed out on Dec. 10. The money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish dynamite inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1895.

Flint water crisis charges dropped for 7 former officials

By ED WHITE Associated Press

A Michigan judge threw out felony charges Tuesday against seven people in the Flint water scandal, including two former state health officials blamed for deaths from Legionnaires' disease.

The dismissal was significant but not a complete surprise after the Michigan Supreme Court in June said a different judge acting as a one-person grand jury had no authority to issue indictments.

Judge Elizabeth Kelly rejected efforts by the attorney general's office to just send the cases to Flint District Court and turn them into criminal complaints, a typical path to filing felony charges in Michigan. It was a last-gasp effort to keep things afloat.

"Anything arising out of the invalid indictments are irreconcilably tainted from inception. ... Simply put, there are no valid charges," Kelly said.

Kelly's decision doesn't affect former Republican Gov. Rick Snyder. That's only because he was charged with two misdemeanors — willful neglect of duty — and his case is being handled by another judge. But he, too, was indicted in a process declared invalid by the Supreme Court. His next hearing is Oct. 26.

In 2014, Flint managers appointed by Snyder took the city out of a regional water system and began using the Flint River to save money while a new pipeline to Lake Huron was being built. But the river water wasn't treated to reduce its corrosive qualities. Lead broke off from old pipes and contaminated the system for more than a year.

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission said it was the result of systemic racism, doubting that the water switch and the brush-off of complaints in the majority-Black city would have occurred in a white, prosperous community.

The attorney general's office lashed out at the courts after its latest defeat, declaring that "well-connected, wealthy individuals with political power and influence" had prevailed over Flint residents.

"There are not adequate words to express the anger and disappointment felt by our team, who have spent years on this case only to see it thwarted based upon a new interpretation of a nearly century-old law," the statement said.

Prosecutors, however, didn't mention that the Supreme Court's summer opinion was unanimous. The attorney general's office didn't indicate what's next, only that it will "continue its pursuit of justice for Flint."

Besides lead contamination, the Flint River water was blamed for an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease, which typically spreads through cooling systems.

Former state health director Nick Lyon and former chief medical executive Eden Wells were charged with involuntary manslaughter in nine deaths linked to Legionnaires'. They were accused of failing to timely warn the Flint area about the outbreak.

Lyon's attorneys praised Kelly's decision and urged the attorney general's office to close a "misguided prosecution."

"This misuse of the criminal justice system has to stop," Chip Chamberlain and Ron DeWaard said. "Misleading statements about what Director Lyon did or didn't do contribute nothing to a constructive public dialogue and do not represent justice for anyone."

Besides Lyon and Wells, charges were dismissed against Snyder's longtime fixer in state government, Rich Baird; former senior aide Jarrod Agen; former Flint managers Gerald Ambrose and Darnell Earley; and Nancy Peeler, a former health department manager.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 48 of 71

Michigan's six-year statute of limitations could be a problem in some cases if the attorney general's office wants to file charges again. The deadline, however, would be longer for charges faced by Lyon and Wells.

Prosecutors in Michigan typically file felony charges in District Court after a police investigation. A one-judge grand jury was extremely rare and had mostly been used in Detroit and Flint to protect witnesses, especially in violent crimes, who could testify in private.

Prosecutors Fadwa Hammoud and Kym Worthy chose that path in the Flint water probe to hear evidence in secret and get indictments against Snyder and others.

But the state Supreme Court said Michigan law is clear: A one-judge grand jury can't issue indictments. The process apparently had never been challenged.

Chief Justice Bridget McCormack called it a "Star Chamber comeback," a pejorative reference to an oppressive, closed-door style of justice in England in the 17th century.

An effort to hold people criminally responsible for Flint's lead-in-water disaster has lasted years and produced little.

Before leaving office in 2019, then-Attorney General Bill Schuette, a Republican, had pledged to put people in prison. But the results were different: Seven people pleaded no contest to misdemeanors that were eventually scrubbed from their records.

After Dana Nessel, a Democrat, was elected, she got rid of special counsel Todd Flood and put Hammoud, the state's solicitor general, and Worthy, the respected Wayne County prosecutor, in charge.

Flint activist Melissa Mays said residents have been let down.

"This team of people who promised justice for Flint didn't file the right paperwork," she said. "It's not like they went to trial and lost; we never even had a chance to get that far. ... The attorney general's team owes us to try again and do it right, but in my gut it's going to go nowhere. It was just a show."

Flint was poisoned, Mays said, "but not one person is behind bars."

There is no dispute that lead affects the brain and nervous system, especially in children. Experts have not identified a safe lead level in kids.

Facing a wave of lawsuits, the state agreed to pay \$600 million as part of a \$626 million settlement with Flint residents and property owners who were harmed by lead-tainted water. Most of the money is going to children.

Flint in 2015 returned to a water system based in southeastern Michigan. Meanwhile, roughly 10,100 lead or steel water lines had been replaced at homes by last December.

The city had 100,000 residents in 2010, but the population fell roughly 20% to 81,000 by the 2020 census, following the water crisis, according to the government.

You're a winner: Listening in on 'the call' for Nobel Prize

By MADDIE BURAKOFF and SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writers

This is what it's like to get "the call" — the Swedish Academy of Sciences ringing you up to say you won the Nobel Prize.

It's usually a dream-of-a-lifetime call that only the special few get in private. But for American physicist John Clauser, who was awarded the Nobel for his work on quantum mechanics, it rang a little different.

Thanks to a three-hour delay from a phone busy with congratulations and reporters' queries, the call finally got through to him while he was on a live Zoom interview with The Associated Press. And he shared his side of the notification and celebration.

"Oh hang on. They're on the phone right now," he said. "OK. Hang on just a second. Can I talk to the guys from the Swedish Nobel Committee?"

Over the next nine minutes, Clauser recounted to the Swedish Academy the difficult road that eventually led to a Nobel-awarding phone call — albeit a few hours late.

While studying at Columbia in the 1960s, Clauser became interested in designing practical experiments to put quantum mechanics to the test. But his ideas weren't always well-received in the field, he said.

Leading physicist Richard Feynman, who won his own physics Nobel in 1965, "kind of threw me out

of his office," Clauser said. "He was very offended that I should even be considering the possibility that quantum mechanics might not give the correct predictions."

But Clauser said he was having fun working on these experiments and thought they were important — "even though everybody told me I was crazy and was going to ruin my career by doing it."

While continuing his work at University of California Berkeley, he and the late physicist Stuart Freedman "had to build everything from scratch. There was very little money so I was basically cobbling together junk or scrap from the UC physics department," he told the Academy.

"There's a lot of stuff unused in storerooms," Clauser said. "I would rummage around and say, 'Oh, hey, I can use this.'"

Some of the great physicists of the past scavenged the same way, he pointed out.

And those experiments, with all their backlash and scraped-together budgets, were the very reason he was on the phone with the Swedish Academy decades later.

As the call wrapped up, there was the matter of logistics. Clauser asked the Academy about when he would "get some dates and times on what I'm expected to do."

Of course, there's something you definitely have to say to the Academy when it calls: "Thanks a lot."

Lawyers: Arizona GOP chair pleaded Fifth to Jan. 6 panel

By BOB CHRISTIE Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona Republican Party Chair Kelli Ward refused to answer questions during a deposition of the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, an attorney for the panel revealed Tuesday during a court hearing in Phoenix.

Attorney Eric Columbus told a federal judge that Ward asserted her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination when she complied with a subpoena from the House committee.

The detail about Ward's deposition came at a hearing where lawyers urged a federal judge to block the committee from getting her phone records while she appeals. U.S. District Judge Diane Humetewa ruled on Sept. 23 that Ward's arguments that her phone call records should be secret did not pass legal muster.

Ward attorney Laurin Mills cast the phone records fight as one with major implications for democracy, on par if not bigger than the violent insurrection that unfolded at the Capitol.

"This is the first time in American history that a select committee of the United State Congress controlled by one party has subpoenaed the records of the state chair of the rival party," Mills said.

He said the outcome will set important precedent, not just for the current case but for others that will come when Republicans ultimately control Congress.

The House Committee investigating the attack on the Capitol is seeking phone records from just before the November 2020 election to Jan. 31, 2021. That would include a period where Ward was pushing for former President Donald Trump's election defeat to be overturned and while Congress was set to certify the results.

Kelli Ward and her husband Michael Ward were presidential electors who would have voted for Trump in the Electoral College had he won Arizona. Both signed a document falsely claiming they were Arizona's true electors, despite Democrat Joe Biden's victory in the state.

Columbus said that investigators get telephone records all the time, and noted that congressional investigators can't arrest or charge anyone with a crime. And he noted Congress does not know all that is involved with Ward's action to overturn President Joe Biden's 2020 win.

"Dr. Ward was deposed by the select committee and she declined to answer on every substantive question under her rights under the Fifth Amendment," he said. "There are other aspects of her involvement that are not at this point fully understood."

Ward is hardly the first witness to refuse the committee's questions. Others who have asserted their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination include Trump allies Michael Flynn, Roger Stone and lawyer John Eastman. Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones also asserted his Fifth Amendment rights.

The committee has talked to more than 1,000 other witnesses, including many White House aides and several of Trump's lawyers and confidants.

But Mills noted during the hearing that there is a parallel criminal investigation underway, and in the appeal her lawyers noted that she and the other 10 fake Arizona electors received grand jury subpoenas from the Department of Justice.

"All I can say is if we do this wrong, we will set a precedent that is worse than the Capitol riot," Mills said.

Mills told the judge that the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has set a briefing schedule and could decide the case as early as January. Columbus noted that will likely be too late, since the committee dissolves on Jan. 3, when the current congressional session ends.

The Wards say the subpoena should be quashed because it violates their First Amendment rights, violates House rules and exceeds the authority of the Jan. 6 committee. Humetewa rejected each argument in turn in her earlier ruling and is considering their request to block access during appeal.

Kelli Ward is a staunch Trump ally who has aggressively promoted the false claim that the election was stolen from him. In the days after the election, she pressured Republicans on the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to investigate unsupported claims of fraud before election results were certified, according to text messages released by the county.

A spokesperson for the 6 committee did not immediately respond Tuesday to a request for comment.

Retreating Russians leave their comrades' bodies behind

By ADAM SCHRECK and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

LYMAN, Ukraine (AP) — Russian troops abandoned a key Ukrainian city so rapidly that they left the bodies of their comrades in the streets, offering more evidence Tuesday of Moscow's latest military defeat as it struggles to hang on to four regions of Ukraine that it illegally annexed last week.

Meanwhile, Russia's upper house of parliament rubber-stamped the annexations following "referendums" that Ukraine and its Western allies have dismissed as fraudulent.

Responding to the move, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy formally ruled out talks with Russia, declaring that negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin are impossible after his decision to take over the regions.

The Kremlin replied by saying that it will wait for Ukraine to agree to sit down for talks, noting that it may not happen until a new Ukrainian president takes office.

"We will wait for the incumbent president to change his position or wait for a future Ukrainian president who would revise his stand in the interests of the Ukrainian people," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Despite the Kremlin's apparent political bravado, the picture on the ground underscored the disarray Putin faces amid the Ukrainian advances and attempts to establish new Russian borders.

Over the weekend, Russian troops pulled back from Lyman, a strategic eastern town that the Russians had used as a logistics and transport hub, to avoid being encircled by Ukrainian forces. The town's liberation gave Ukraine an important vantage point for pressing its offensive deeper into Russian-held territories.

Two days later, an Associated Press team reporting from Lyman saw at least 18 bodies of Russian soldiers still on the ground. The Ukrainian military appeared to have collected the bodies of their comrades after fierce battles for control of the town, but they did not immediately remove those of the Russians.

"We fight for our land, for our children, so that our people can live better, but all this comes at a very high price," said a Ukrainian soldier who goes by the nom de guerre Rud.

Speaking late Tuesday in his nightly video address, Zelenskyy said dozens of settlements had been retaken "from the Russian pseudo-referendum this week alone" in the four annexed regions. In the Kherson region, he listed eight villages that Ukrainian forces reclaimed, "and this is far from a complete list. Our soldiers do not stop."

The deputy head of the Russian-backed regional administration in Kherson, Kirill Stremousov, told Russian TV that Ukrainian troops made "certain advances" from the north, and were attacking the region from other sides too. He said they were stopped by Russian forces and suffered high losses.

As Kyiv pressed its counteroffensives, Russian forces launched more missile strikes at Ukrainian cities.

Several missiles hit Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, damaging infrastructure and causing power

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 51 of 71

cuts. Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said one person was killed. In the south, Russian missiles struck the city of Nikopol.

After reclaiming control of Lyman in the Donetsk region, Ukrainian forces pushed further east and may have gone as far as the border of the neighboring Luhansk region as they advanced toward Kreminna, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said in its latest analysis.

On Monday, Ukrainian forces also scored significant gains in the south, raising flags over the villages of Arkhanhelske, Myroliubivka, Khreshchenivka, Mykhalivka and Novovorontsovka.

In Washington, the U.S. government announced Tuesday that it would give Ukraine an additional \$625 million in military aid, including more of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, that are credited with helping Kyiv's recent military momentum. The package also includes artillery systems ammunition and armored vehicles.

Before that announcement, Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Yevhen Perebyinis told a conference in the Turkish capital, Ankara, on Tuesday that Ukraine needed more weapons since Russia began a partial mobilization of draft-age men last month. He said additional weapons would help end the war sooner, not escalate it.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said the military has recruited more than 200,000 reservists as part of the partial mobilization launched two weeks ago. He said the recruits were undergoing training at 80 firing ranges before being deployed to the front lines in Ukraine.

Putin's mobilization order said that up to 300,000 reservists were to be called up, but it held the door open for an even bigger activation. The order sparked protests across Russia and drove tens of thousands of men to flee the country.

Russia's effort to incorporate the four embattled regions in Ukraine's east and south was done so hastily that even the exact borders of the territories being absorbed were unclear.

The upper house of the Russian parliament, the Federation Council, voted to ratify treaties to make the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk and the southern Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions part of Russia. The lower house did so Monday.

Putin is expected to quickly endorse the annexation treaties.

In other developments, the head of the company operating Europe's largest nuclear plant said Ukraine is considering restarting the Russian-occupied facility to ensure its safety as winter approaches.

In an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday, Energoatom President Petro Kotin said the company could restart two of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant's reactors in a matter of days.

"If you have low temperature, you will just freeze everything inside. The safety equipment will be damaged," he said.

Fears that the war in Ukraine could cause a radiation leak at the Zaporizhzhia plant had prompted the shutdown of its remaining reactors. The plant has been damaged by shelling, prompting international alarm over the potential for a disaster.

North Korea sends missile soaring over Japan in escalation

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, KIM TONG-HYUNG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea conducted its longest-ever weapons test Tuesday, a nuclear-capable ballistic missile that flew over Japan and could reach the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam and beyond, forcing the Japanese government to issue evacuation alerts and halt trains.

The South Korean and U.S. militaries responded by launching fighter jets that fired weapons at a target off South Korea's west coast in a show of strength against North Korea.

The North Korean missile launch was its most provocative weapons demonstration this year, as it pushes to develop a fully fledged nuclear arsenal capable of threatening the U.S. mainland and its allies with the goal of wresting concessions from those countries, some experts say.

The United States, Britain, France, Albania, Norway and Ireland called for an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council. Diplomats said it is likely to be held Wednesday, but it's not certain whether it will

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 52 of 71

be open or closed.

North Korea has test-fired about 40 missiles over about 20 different launch events this year as its leader, Kim Jong Un, refuses to return to nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

The United States strongly condemned North Korea's "dangerous and reckless decision" to launch what it described as a "long-range ballistic missile" over Japan.

"The United States will continue its efforts to limit (North Korea's) ability to advance its prohibited ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction programs, including with allies and U.N. partners," National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement.

South Korea and Japan earlier said the missile had an intermediate or longer range. If the launch involved a long-range missile, it could be a test of a weapon capable of targeting the U.S. homeland, some experts say.

The launch is the fifth round of weapons tests by North Korea in the past 10 days. The testing spree is an apparent response to two sets of military drills -- one between Washington and Seoul and the other involving Washington, Seoul and Tokyo -- off the Korean Peninsula's east coast last week.

North Korea regards such drills involving the United States as an invasion rehearsal. It was expected to react strongly this time because both exercises involved a U.S. aircraft carrier, which North Korea views as more provocative.

Japanese authorities alerted residents in its northeastern regions to evacuate to shelters, in the first "J-alert" since 2017 when North Korea fired an intermediate-range Hwasong-12 missile twice over Japan in a span of weeks during a previous run of weapons tests.

Trains were suspended in the Hokkaido and Aomori regions until the government issued a notice that the North Korean missile appeared to have landed in the Pacific. In Sapporo city, the prefectural capital of Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido, subways were also temporarily halted, with stations packed with morning commuters.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters the launch "is a reckless act and I strongly condemn it."

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said North Korea's "reckless nuclear provocations" would meet a stern response from the South and the broader international community. His military separately warned that North Korea's repeated missile launches would deepen its international isolation and prompt Seoul and Washington to bolster their deterrence capacities.

Later Tuesday, four U.S. F-16 fighter jets and four South Korean F-15s conducted a joint strike drill in which one of the South Korean planes fired two precision-guided Joint Direct Attack Munition bombs into an island target. The exercise was aimed at demonstrating the allies' ability to accurately strike North Korean targets with "overwhelming force," the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

According to South Korean and Japanese estimates, the North Korean missile fired from its northern province bordering China traveled 4,500-4,600 kilometers (2,800-2,860 miles) at a maximum altitude of 970-1,000 kilometers (600-620 miles). Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said that it landed in the Pacific about 3,200 kilometers (1,990 miles) off the northern Japanese coast and that there were no reports of damage to Japanese aircraft or ships.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the missile flew farther than any other weapon fired by North Korea. Before Tuesday's launch, the 3,700-kilometer (2,300-mile) flight of a Hwasong-12 in 2017 was North Korea's longest. It has previously tested intercontinental ballistic missiles at steep angles so they flew shorter distances to avoid neighboring countries.

The missile's flight distance shows it has enough range to hit Guam, home to U.S. military bases that have sent advanced warplanes to the Korean Peninsula in shows of force during past periods of tension with North Korea. In 2017, North Korea threatened to make "an enveloping fire" near Guam with Hwasong-12 missiles amid rising animosities with the then-Trump administration.

North Korea last test-fired a Hwasong-12 missile in January. At the time, it said the launch was meant to verify the overall accuracy of the weapon.

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 53 of 71

said Tuesday's launch of a suspected Hwasong-12 missile would demonstrate a capacity that "truly places Guam within striking distance." He said North Korea likely wanted to confirm the missile's operational capabilities as it is being mass-produced.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at Seoul's University of North Korean Studies, said North Korea could have tested the Hwasong-12 again, or even an intercontinental ballistic missile, closer to what would be a normal ballistic trajectory but shorter than its full range. If it was an ICBM, the purpose of the launch would be to test whether the warhead could survive the harsh conditions of atmospheric reentry, Kim said.

The missiles fired during the past four rounds of launches were short range and fell in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Those missiles are capable of hitting targets in South Korea.

Heo Tae-keun, South Korea's deputy minister of national defense policy, told lawmakers Tuesday that North Korea is preparing to test a new liquid-fueled ICBM and a submarine-launched ballistic missile, as well. He said North Korea also maintains a readiness to conduct a nuclear test in what would be its first such bomb detonation in five years and its seventh in total.

Last month, North Korea adopted a new law authorizing the preemptive use of nuclear weapons in some cases, a move that showed its increasingly aggressive nuclear doctrine. Saturday, Yoon warned of a "resolute, overwhelming response" from South Korean and U.S. militaries if North Korea uses nuclear weapons.

Some foreign experts say North Korea needs to master a few remaining technologies to acquire functioning nuclear-armed missiles. Each new test pushes it closer to being able to reach the U.S. mainland and its allies with a host of missiles of varying range.

Some experts say North Korean leader Kim will eventually will return to diplomatic talks and use his enlarged arsenal to pressure Washington to accept his country as a nuclear state, a recognition he thinks is necessary to win the lifting of international sanctions and other concessions.

Oath Keepers founder: Be 'ready to fight' after Trump loss

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hours after Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 presidential election, the leader of the Oath Keepers extremist group was discussing how to push President Donald Trump to go further in his fight to cling to power, according to messages shown to jurors Tuesday in his U.S. Capitol attack trial.

Prosecutors used Stewart Rhodes' messages and recordings of him speaking from November 2020 to try to show that he had been working behind the scenes for two months to try to stop the transfer of presidential power before his followers attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Rhodes and four associates are facing charges of seditious conspiracy for what authorities allege was a detailed, drawn-out plot to keep Biden out of the White House that included putting armed teams on standby outside of Washington. Tuesday was the first full day of testimony in the high-stakes case that's expected to last several weeks.

The five defendants are the first people arrested in the Jan. 6 attack to stand trial for seditious conspiracy — a rarely used Civil War-era charge that can be difficult to prove. Rhodes' attorneys have said their defense will focus on Rhodes' belief that Trump was going to invoke the Insurrection Act and call up the militia to support his bid to stay in power.

The messages were revealed during testimony of an FBI agent investigating the insurrection. In several messages sent around Nov. 7, 2020 — the day that The Associated Press and other news outlets called the election for Biden — Rhodes pressed others to refuse to accept the results and "bend the knee" to what he saw as an illegitimate administration. In one message, Rhodes urged his followers to get their "get your gear squared away" and be "ready to fight."

In another — sent to a group called "FOS" or "Friends of Stone" that included Trump ally Roger Stone — Rhodes urged his fellow Oath Keepers to think of the ways early Americans had resisted the British.

"We are now where the founders were in March, 1775," he wrote. He implored them to "step up and push Trump to finally take decisive action."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 54 of 71

"The final defense is us and our rifles," Rhodes wrote to the group. "Trump has one last chance, right now, to stand. But he will need us and our rifles too."

The evening of Nov. 9, Rhodes held a conference call with more than 100 of his followers to discuss the plan. It was secretly recorded by someone on the call and sent to the FBI.

Rhodes urged people on the call to go to Washington and let Trump know that "the people are behind him," according to a recording played to jurors. Rhodes expressed hope that left-wing antifa activists would start clashes because that would give Trump the "reason and rationale for dropping the Insurrection Act."

"So we have a chance to get President Trump to fight as Commander in Chief. If you're going to have a fight, guys, you want to start now while he's still Commander in Chief," Rhodes told the group.

Rhodes said they would have some of their "best men bolstered up outside" — or "quick reaction forces" that he said would be "awaiting the president's orders." It needed to be that way because that gives you "legal cover," Rhodes said on the call.

Rhodes' attorney sought to show that prosecutors are cherry-picking messages from hundreds of chats on his phone. Defense attorney Phillip Linder pressed the FBI agent over whether he ever saw Rhodes encourage anybody to do anything illegal before prosecutors objected to the question.

"All we have is bombastic language," Linder said.

Rhodes' lawyers have said they will argue that their client can't be guilty of seditious conspiracy because all of his actions were in anticipation of orders he expected were coming from Trump under the Insurrection Act. Even though Trump never did, Rhodes' lawyers say he was merely lobbying the president to invoke the law, which gives the president wide discretion to decide when military force is necessary, and what qualifies as military force.

On trial with Rhodes, of Granbury, Texas, are Kelly Meggs, leader of the Florida chapter of the Oath Keepers; Kenneth Harrelson, another Florida Oath Keeper; Thomas Caldwell, a retired U.S. Navy intelligence officer from Virginia, and Jessica Watkins, who led an Ohio militia group.

Prosecutors showed jurors several items found at Caldwell's home, including a notebook with writing about things like "comms" and "lookouts." The FBI agent said that "was all indicative to us of some sort of an operation."

Caldwell's attorney, David Fischer, pressed the agent on whether the government has any witnesses who claim Caldwell had a plan to attack the Capitol on Jan. 6. The agent said it did not.

Justices mull latest challenge to landmark voting rights law

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared open Tuesday to making it harder to create majority Black electoral districts, in an Alabama case that could have far-reaching effects on minority voting power across the United States.

The justices heard two hours of arguments in the latest showdown over the federal Voting Rights Act, with lawsuits seeking to force Alabama to create a second Black majority congressional district. About 27% of Alabamians are Black, but they form a majority in just one of the state's seven congressional districts.

The court's conservatives, in a 5-4 vote in February, blocked a lower court ruling that would have required a second Black majority district in time for the November elections. A similar ruling to create an additional Black majority district in Louisiana also was put on hold.

Conservative high-court majorities have made it harder for racial minorities to use the Voting Rights Act in ideologically divided rulings in 2013 and 2021. A ruling for Alabama in the new case could weaken a powerful tool that civil rights groups and minority voters have used to challenge racial discrimination in redistricting.

Some conservative justices seemed sympathetic to Alabama's arguments that the court should insist on a "race-neutral" approach to redistricting and should make it harder for people claiming racial discrimination in voting to clear an early legal hurdle.

Against pushback from Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson and the other liberal justices, Justice Samuel Alito

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 55 of 71

said it's too easy for people suing over discrimination in redistricting to win because the first bar in the legal test is too low — simply showing that another political district could be drawn in which minority residents make up a majority of voters.

In practice, Alito said, "will not the plaintiffs always run the table?"

The outcome appears to rest with Justices Amy Coney Barrett and Brett Kavanaugh. Their questions suggested they may be open to a more narrow win for Alabama than the broadest outcome the state is asking for, which might even allow states to dismantle existing districts where racial minorities make up more than half the voters.

Even the state's "least far-reaching argument," as Alito put it, would result in many fewer districts drawn to give racial minorities the opportunity to elect their candidates of choice, the court's three liberal justices said.

Jackson, the court's first Black female justice who was hearing her second day of arguments, disagreed with arguments made by Alabama's lawyer, Edmund LaCour Jr., that redistricting has to be done without regard to race.

Constitutional amendments adopted after the Civil War were intended to give a "constitutional foundation for a piece of legislation that was designed to make people who had less opportunity and less rights equal to white citizens," Jackson said. The Voting Rights Act "by its plain text is doing that same thing."

Justice Elena Kagan referred to the Voting Rights Act as not only "an important statute" but "one of the great achievements of American democracy" while acknowledging that recent Supreme Court cases have cut back on the law. "Now, in recent years, the statute has fared not well in this court," she said.

"You're asking us essentially to cut back substantially on our 40 years of precedent and to make this, too, extremely difficult to prevail on, so what's left?" Kagan said to LaCour.

Partisan politics underlies the case. Republicans who dominate elective office in Alabama have been resistant to creating a second district with a Democratic-leaning Black majority that could send another Democrat to Congress.

Two appointees of President Donald Trump were on the three-judge panel that unanimously held that Alabama likely violated the landmark 1965 law by diluting Black voting strength.

The judges found that Alabama has concentrated Black voters in one district, while spreading them out among the others to make it impossible for them to elect a candidate of their choice.

Alabama's Black population is large enough and geographically compact enough to create a second district, the judges found.

Alabama argues that the lower court ruling would force it to sort voters by race and the state insists it is taking a "race neutral" approach to redistricting.

That argument could resonate with conservative justices, including Chief Justice John Roberts. He has opposed most consideration of race in voting both as a justice and in his time as a lawyer in Republican presidential administrations.

Roberts said little Tuesday to telegraph his vote. Justices Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch also had little or nothing to say in court, but Thomas in particular has voted consistently to limit the reach of anti-discrimination laws.

The arguments were the first Supreme Court case involving race for Jackson. A challenge to affirmative action in college admissions is set for arguments on Oct. 31.

A decision in *Merrill v. Milligan* is expected by late June.

Hollywood sign gets makeover ahead of its centennial in 2023

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Hollywood sign is getting a makeover befitting its status as a Tinseltown icon. After a pressure-wash and some rust removal, workers this week began using 250 gallons (946 liters) of primer and white paint to spruce up the sign ahead of its centennial next year.

The entire renovation effort is expected to take up to eight weeks.

Originally built in 1923, the sign read "Hollywoodland" to promote a property development.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 56 of 71

But after decades of neglect, the original sign was shortened to read "Hollywood" and then was replaced altogether with a new sign in 1978.

"It's now representing not only the place of Hollywood, but it signifies the entertainment industry, and LA is the entertainment capital of the world," Jeff Zarrinam with the Hollywood Sign Trust said Monday.

The 45-foot-tall (13-meter) sign in the Hollywood Hills above Los Angeles is repainted every decade.

Herschel Walker paid for girlfriend's abortion, report says

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

DUNWOODY, Ga. (AP) — Herschel Walker, who has vehemently opposed abortion rights as the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Georgia, paid for an abortion for his girlfriend in 2009, according to a new report. The candidate called the accusation a "flat-out lie" and said he would sue.

The Daily Beast spoke to the former girlfriend, who asked that her name not be used out of concerns for her privacy. In the report published late Monday, the news outlet said it reviewed a receipt showing her \$575 payment for the procedure, along with a get-well card from Walker and her bank deposit records showing the image of a \$700 personal check from Walker dated five days after the abortion receipt.

The woman said Walker encouraged her to end the pregnancy, saying that the time wasn't right for a baby, The Daily Beast reported. As a candidate, Walker has characterized abortion as "a woman killing her baby" and has played up his opposition to the procedure in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling earlier this year stripping a woman's constitutional right to access abortion services.

In a statement, Walker said he would file a lawsuit against The Daily Beast on Tuesday morning.

"This is a flat-out lie — and I deny this in the strongest terms possible," he wrote.

As of late Tuesday afternoon, Walker had not taken any legal action, according to a campaign spokesman.

Matt Fuller, the politics editor for The Daily Beast, tweeted in response to Walker's initial denial: "I can tell you we stand behind every word and feel very solid about the story."

Later Monday night, Walker appeared on Sean Hannity's program on Fox News, where Walker was asked if he recalled sending a \$700 check to a girlfriend.

"Well, I sent money to a lot of people," he said. "I give money to people all the time because I'm always helping people. I believe in being generous. God has blessed me. I want to bless others."

Former President Donald Trump, who encouraged Walker to run for Senate, said Walker was being "slandered and maligned."

"Herschel has properly denied the charges against him, and I have no doubt he is correct," Trump said in a statement.

Walker and Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock are engaged in a tight contest that is key to the balance of power in the U.S. Senate. The chamber is now divided 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris holding the tie-breaking vote to give Democrats control. Warnock won the seat in a special election runoff on Jan. 5, 2021, prevailing by 2 percentage points over then-Sen. Kelly Loeffler, a Republican.

The allegation against Walker is the latest in a series of stories about the football legend's past that has rocked the first-time candidate's campaign in one of the most competitive Senate races in the country. Earlier this year, Walker acknowledged reports that he had three children he had not previously talked about publicly.

Walker has often boasted of his work helping service members and veterans struggling with mental health. Yet The Associated Press reported in May that various records showed he overstated his role in a for-profit program that is alleged to have preyed upon veterans and service members while defrauding the government.

The AP also has reported that a review of public records detailed accusations that Walker repeatedly threatened his ex-wife's life, exaggerated claims of financial success and alarmed business associates with unpredictable behavior. Walker himself has at times discussed his long struggle with mental illness.

Republicans targeted Warnock as perhaps the most vulnerable of the Democratic Senate incumbents. But they were also skeptical about Walker's viability as a statewide candidate, especially through the spring

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 57 of 71

and summer as Walker's past was aired publicly. In recent months, Walker found his footing by attacking Warnock for backing President Joe Biden's agenda in Washington. Biden won Georgia narrowly but has seen his approval ratings in the state fall significantly since 2020.

But Walker also has made abortion an issue. During the Republican Senate primary, he openly backed a national ban on abortions with no exceptions for cases involving rape, incest or a woman's health being at risk — particularly notable at a time when the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court precedent has been overturned and Democrats in Congress have been discussing codifying abortion rights into federal law.

"I'm for life," Walker has said repeatedly as he campaigns. When asked about whether he'd allow for any exceptions, he has said there are "no excuses" for the procedure.

As the Republican nominee, Walker has sometimes sidestepped questions about his earlier support for a national abortion ban, a tacit nod to the fact that most voters, including many Republicans, want at least some legal access to abortion. Walker instead tries to turn the issue against Warnock, who supports abortion rights. Walker often says he doesn't understand how Warnock, a Baptist pastor, can support the procedure being legal.

Campaigning in Dunwoody, an Atlanta suburb, on Monday night, Warnock stressed his support for abortion rights.

"I have a profound reverence for life. I have a deep and abiding respect for choice. I believe a patient's room is too small and cramped a space for a woman, her doctor and the United States government," he said, emphasizing Walker's support for a national ban.

Warnock was dismissive when told of The Daily Beast story and when asked whether it might affect the outcome in Georgia. "I'll let the pundits decide," he said.

Walker's son, Christian Walker, criticized his father in a series of tweets late Monday, saying his family "asked him not to run for office."

"I don't care about someone who has a bad past and takes accountability," Christian Walker tweeted. "But how DARE YOU LIE and act as though you're some 'moral, Christian, upright man.' You've lived a life of DESTROYING other peoples lives. How dare you."

For now, Republicans in Washington are standing by Walker, with a spokesman for the Senate GOP's campaign arm dismissing The Daily Beast story as "nonsense" rooted in desperation by Democrats.

"They and their media allies are doing what they always do — attack Republicans with innuendo and lies," said Chris Hartline, a top aide at the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

US to require more rest between shifts for flight attendants

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

Airlines will be required to give flight attendants at least 10 hours off duty between shifts, one more hour than currently, under a rule announced Tuesday by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Acting FAA Administrator Billy Nolen said that the extra hour of rest would contribute to safety.

The rule goes into effect in 30 days, and airlines have up to 90 days to comply.

Congress directed the FAA in 2018 to increase the rest requirement for flight attendants and eliminate a provision that let crews work with less rest under some circumstances.

"It took us way too long, but we are finally here," Nolen said at a news conference at Reagan Washington National Airport, where he was flanked by more than a dozen flight attendants.

Current federal rules allow flight attendants to work up to 14 hours in a day and get nine hours of rest between shifts.

The Association of Flight Attendants has fought for years for a longer break between shifts. The union thought it had prevailed four years ago, when Congress voted by large margins to require more rest. The union's president, Sara Nelson, appeared with Nolen at the news conference and accused the Trump administration of attempting to kill the expansion through regulatory foot-dragging.

Union officials have pointed to a 2020-2021 increase in incidents involving unruly passengers as demonstrating the need to give cabin crews more rest between shifts. Airlines have reported fewer incidents since the federal requirement to wear face masks on flights ended in April.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 58 of 71

"This is a small handful of people making it hell for flight attendants on the front lines," Nelson said.

The FAA took public comments on the extra rest requirement in both 2019 and 2021 and received more than 1,000 comments from airlines, flight attendants and the public.

Airlines for America, a trade group representing the largest U.S. airlines, said safety is always the industry's top priority, and "having rested and alert flight attendants who are prepared to carry out their responsibilities, including cabin safety and other duties, is critical to this goal." The group said it supports "scientifically validated and data-driven countermeasures to prevent fatigue."

Beyond the grunt: Umpires mic up, and baseball changes a bit

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After a century and a half of Major League Baseball — after generations of grunts and growls, of muffled shouts and dramatic arm gestures and a cultivated sense of remoteness — something quietly extraordinary happened to the national pastime this year: The umpires began talking to the world.

On April 5, umpire Ted Barrett spoke into a tiny microphone and said these 20 words: "After review, the call is confirmed. The batter was hit by the pitch. The Los Angeles Angels lose their challenge." Suddenly, one of baseball's most remote figures became a bit more human.

A policy change implemented at the beginning of the season, designed to explain on-field call challenges and outcomes, equipped umpires with tiny wireless microphones and — for the first time in baseball history — introduced their amplified voices to ballpark speakers, to the fans in their seats and to the world at home. They'll be there on the sport's biggest stage this month, too, during the playoffs and World Series.

Change in baseball is often measured in big things, loud things, significant things. Things like catchers being barred from blocking the plate. Like challenges adjudicated in a far-off room by out-of-sight officials. Like next season's plans for bases getting bigger, shifts getting restricted and the time between pitches — in a game that never had a clock — finally being counted.

But baseball is, if nothing else, a game of subtleties. And the notion of hearing a mic'd-up ump's voice explaining something feels oddly revolutionary, even after nearly an entire season of hearing it off and on.

"I think it is a good thing for the microphone to have replaced the megaphone, the booming oration, or mysterious hand signals," says John Thorn, Major League Baseball's official historian. "Instant replay, because it operates in (the) background, does require explanation, especially when an on-field call is reversed."

Hearing officials' voices is hardly new; it has been standard in the NFL and other sports for years. But with their whistles, bright shirts and maskless faces, those sports' officials never felt quite as remote. The umpire has always carried an air of mystery and sequesteredness; for a sportswriter even to interview one can require special permission.

Yet it's in keeping with the times. In most realms of entertainment, more access — and thus more content — seems to be the trend. Athletes are mic'd up all over the place to bring fans closer to the action, including players and managers doing in-game TV interviews in the dugout or on the field while the game is in progress.

It's more than that, though. There's something about a voice that personalizes and humanizes. It's why people feel like they know the morning DJs and podcast hosts who they listen to while waking up or driving to work.

So hearing the normal voices of the men whose verbal expressions, in fans' ears, have generally been restricted to grunts adds a dimension to watching a game — and adds information, too.

"In a small way, it can get people to understand that there's actually a person in that uniform," says retired MLB umpire Dale Scott, who knows something about the power of voice. In an earlier career, he was a disc jockey.

Scott says former colleagues went to empty stadiums to practice in the months leading up to the debut in April. After listening to some of them for a good chunk of this season, he says some seem much more at ease with it than others. "You're going to see guys getting better with it and more comfortable with it."

Being able to explain the game just a bit in real time, he says, is a sea change. He recalls a play in the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 59 of 71

2015 ALDS when Toronto Blue Jays catcher Russell Martin threw a ball back to the pitcher that hit Texas Rangers batter Shin-Soo Choo. Scott was the home-plate umpire and says the ensuing disarray was complicated. He wishes he could have explained.

"There was mass confusion. A microphone then would have been very helpful," says Scott, author of "The Umpire Is Out: Calling the Game and Living My True Self."

Greg Brown, the Pittsburgh Pirates' longtime play-by-play announcer, watched with great interest through the season as more and more umpires got amplified. He approves. "To hear that voice is revealing. It seems like such a small thing, and then you peel it back," Brown says.

But it is the clarity that comes when umpires can speak through mics — the information that makes the game more accessible — that impresses him the most.

"I always wondered: These other sports, why are they able to communicate with their fan base and we can't? It was so frustrating," Brown says. "It was a great relief to me that it finally got to the point where they were ready to embrace this opportunity to humanize these umpires but communicate with both the fans at the ballpark and the fans on radio and TV."

In a way, this moment in baseball is a miniature version of what watching a movie was like in the late 1920s, when silent films were being replaced by "talkies." Suddenly an entirely new layer of information became available.

"We're a visual culture. But visually, you can't always track everything. You turn on the sound to find out what happened," says Shilpa Davé, a professor of media studies at the University of Virginia. "Our culture is really dependent on sound and voices right now — podcasts, voices in your ear. That intimacy of the voice is part of the equation now. It has been for a while, but vocal interactions like this are highlighting it a bit more."

But does it raise the umpire's profile higher than the game intended? Baseball's most storied umpire, Bill Klem, who called balls and strikes from 1905 to 1941, had this to say about his craft: "The best-umpired game is the game in which the fans cannot recall the umpires who worked it."

As 2022 draws to a close with umpires talking, that notion may be changing. Scott, for one, couldn't be more pleased. "I would have loved to have done it," he says. "This is right in my wheelhouse, man."

But even with this step, Scott says, there's one cliché of umpiring that may stick around no matter what. "When it's all said and done," he says, "whatever explanation you give, people may think you're still a bum."

Haiti at breaking point as economy tanks and violence soars

By EVENS SANON and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Daily life in Haiti began to spin out of control last month just hours after Prime Minister Ariel Henry said fuel subsidies would be eliminated, causing prices to double.

Gunshots rang out as protesters blocked roads with iron gates and mango trees. Then Haiti's most powerful gang took a drastic step: It dug trenches to block access to the Caribbean country's largest fuel terminal, vowing not to budge until Henry resigns and prices for fuel and basic goods go down.

The poorest country in the Western hemisphere is in the grips of an inflationary vise that is squeezing its citizenry and exacerbating protests that have brought society to the breaking point. Violence is raging and making parents afraid to send their kids to school; fuel and clean water are scarce; hospitals, banks and grocery stores are struggling to stay open.

The president of neighboring Dominican Republic described the situation as a "low-intensity civil war."

Life in Haiti is always extremely difficult, if not downright dysfunctional. But the magnitude of the current paralysis and despair is unprecedented. Political instability has simmered ever since last year's still-unsolved assassination of Haiti's president; inflation soaring around 30% has only aggravated the situation.

"If they don't understand us, we're going to make them understand," said Pierre Killick Cemelus, who sweated as he struggled to keep pace with thousands of other protesters marching during a recent demonstration.

The fuel depot blocked by gangs has been inoperable since Sept. 12, cutting off about 10 million gallons of diesel and gasoline and more than 800,000 gallons of kerosene stored on site. Many gas stations are

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 60 of 71

closed, and others are quickly running out of supplies.

The lack of fuel recently forced hospitals to cut back critical services and prompted water delivery companies to shut down. Banks and grocery stores also are struggling to stay open because of dwindling fuel supplies — and exorbitant prices — that make it nearly impossible for many workers to commute.

A gallon of gasoline costs \$30 on the black market in Port-au-Prince and more than \$40 in rural areas. Desperate people are walking for miles to get food and water because public transportation is extremely limited.

"Haiti is now in complete chaos," said Alex Dupuy, a Haiti-born sociologist at Wesleyan University. "You have gangs basically doing whatever they want, wherever they want, whenever they want with complete impunity because the police force is not capable of bringing them under control."

Henry's de-facto government "doesn't seem to be fazed at all by the chaos and is probably benefiting from it because it allows him to hold on to power and prolong as long as possible the organization of new elections," Dupuy said.

Gangs have long wielded considerable power in Haiti, and their influence has only grown since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

Gangs control roughly 40% of Port-au-Prince, the U.N. has estimated. They are fighting to control even more territory, killing hundreds of Haitians in recent months — including women and children — and driving away some 20,000 people from their homes. Kidnappings have spiked.

Henry has pledged to hold elections as soon as it's safe to do so, writing in a speech read at the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 24 that he has "no desire to stay in power longer than necessary."

"My country is going through a multidimensional crisis whose consequences threaten democracy and the very foundations of the rule of law," Henry said. He condemned widespread looting and violence, and said those responsible "will have to answer for their crimes before history and before the courts."

U.S. President Joe Biden, also speaking at the U.N., said Haiti faces "political-fueled gang violence and an enormous human crisis."

From 2004 until 2017, U.N. peacekeepers bolstered the country's security and helped rebuild political institutions after a violent rebellion ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. But for now, any foreign intervention in Haiti is off the table.

Local political leaders have repudiated the suggestion of outside help, noting that U.N. peacekeepers in Haiti sexually abused children and sparked a cholera epidemic more than a decade ago that killed nearly 10,000 people.

The first round of protests in mid-September prompted France and Spain to close their embassies and banks to shut down in the capital of Port-au-Prince. Protesters attacked businesses, the homes of well-known politicians and even warehouses of the United Nations' World Food Program, stealing millions of dollars' worth of food and water.

Protests have since grown bigger. Tens of thousands of people recently marched in Port-au-Prince and beyond, including the cities of Gonaïves and Cap-Haitien in the north. They waved leafy green branches and chanted, "Ariel has to go!"

Primary school teacher Jean-Wilson Fabre joined a recent protest as he ducked into a side street to avoid a cloud of tear gas thrown by police trying to control the crowd.

"He's not doing anything," he said of the prime minister.

The 40-year-old father of two sons lamented the lack of food and water, the rise of kidnappings and the growing power of gangs: "No one is crazy enough to send their kids to school in this situation. They will not be safe."

Fabre is one of millions of parents who refused to send their children to school even though the government announced an Oct. 3 return to class as scheduled in an attempt to restore some normalcy amid an increasingly unstable situation.

Haiti's courts also were slated to reopen on Oct. 3, but the country's Bar Federation rejected an invitation from the prime minister to talk about the issue days before, noting that gangs still occupy a main courthouse in Port-au-Prince, among other problems.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 61 of 71

"Under Ariel, things have gotten worse and worse," said Merlay Saint-Pierre, a 28-year-old unemployed mother of two boys who joined a recent protest wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with a middle finger.

Hundreds of people have spent hours in line each day just to buy buckets of water. Delivery trucks cannot go into neighborhoods because of roadblocks.

"I'm scared of this water," said 22-year-old Lionel Simon, noting he would use it to wash clothes and add chlorine before drinking it.

At least eight people have died of cholera in recent days and dozens more have been treated, according to local health officials who urged protesters and gang leaders to allow fuel and water to flow into neighborhoods.

But Simon was not worried about cholera. His biggest concerns are gangs and an increase in young children carrying guns.

"We don't know if life will go back to normal," he said. "If you die today, you don't even know if you're going to make it to a morgue. You could be left in the street for dogs and animals to eat you. This is how crazy the city has become."

Dupuy, the Haitian expert, said it's unlikely Henry would step down since there is no international pressure for him to do so. He worried there is no clear solution as the situation spirals: "How much more boiling point can there be?"

Kids with disabilities face off-the-books school suspensions

By MEREDITH KOLODNER and ANNIE MA The Hechinger Report/Associated Press

The phone call from her son's school was alarming. The assistant principal told her to come to the school immediately.

But when Lisa Manwell arrived at Pioneer Middle School in Plymouth, Michigan, her son wasn't sick or injured. He was sitting calmly in the principal's office.

John, who has ADHD and finds it soothing to fidget during class, had been removed from the classroom after he refused to stop using a pair of safety scissors to cut his cuticles.

When she asked why he couldn't stay for the rest of the day, Manwell said the school told her they would call child protective services if she didn't take him home.

The call was just one of a dozen that Manwell received last fall telling her John couldn't stay in school because of behaviors she says stemmed from his disability, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Many schools have promised to cut down on suspensions, since kids can't learn as well when they aren't in class. But none of these pickups was ever recorded as suspensions, despite the missed class time.

The practice is known as informal removal, defined by the U.S. Education Department as an action taken by school staff in response to a child's behavior that excludes the child for part or all of the school day — or even indefinitely.

Excessive use of informal removals amounts to a form of off-the-books discipline — a de facto denial of education that evades accountability, advocates and legal experts say. It has special implications for kids with disabilities: Informally removing these students circumvents federal law that protects them from being disciplined or barred from class for behaviors related to their disability.

Since the pandemic began, parents of disabled kids say the practice is on the rise, denying their kids their legal right to an education.

"This is a repeat issue that we see in enforcement across the country, over years," said Catherine E. Lhamon, assistant secretary for the department's Office for Civil Rights. "And that means that the practice has taken hold in a way that is dangerous for students and needs to be addressed."

In July, the department issued guidance on discriminatory practices in discipline for students with disabilities. Lhamon said the guidance included informal removals because of how frequently they appeared in the office's investigations of complaints against school districts.

Informal removals can happen through frequent parent pickups, shortened school days or hours spent in "time-out" rooms.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 62 of 71

The Associated Press and The Hechinger Report interviewed 20 families in 10 states who described being called repeatedly and at all hours of the school day to pick up their children. In some cases, parents were called less than an hour into the school day. Others said they had to leave work to get their child so frequently they lost their jobs. Many felt they had no choice but to change schools, or even districts.

Because the removals aren't recorded, there's no way to quantify how often they happen. But the National Disability Rights Network says it has seen an increase during the pandemic.

Teacher shortages mean there are fewer staffers available to do evaluations and provide services for disabled students, creating "more of an incentive or more of a push for getting kids with behavioral needs out," said Dan Stewart, the organization's managing attorney for education and employment.

Students of color with a disability appear to be disproportionately affected based on anecdotal reports to the network from disability rights advocates around the country.

"It's pervasive," said Ginny Fogg, an attorney at Disability Rights North Carolina, "and the reason for that is that most parents don't know their rights and the consequence for the school system is not enough to make them not do it."

"The remedy isn't, 'You just can't go to school,'" she added. "The law was enacted 50 years ago to prevent this very outcome — that students with disabilities aren't allowed to go to school and participate in an education."

Manwell said the calls from her son's school felt relentless.

"They would be calling my personal phone, my work phone. They were calling my husband, who works nights," said Manwell, a resource planner at Ford Motor Co. "It was impossible. I couldn't function. I never knew when they were going to call or what was going to happen."

An official from the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools district in Michigan where John goes to school said he couldn't comment on specific student issues, citing federal student privacy law.

Federal law protects disabled students from being repeatedly disciplined or removed from school for behaviors related to their disability. If they are suspended for more than 10 days, families are entitled to a meeting with the school to determine whether the behaviors are a result of the child's disability. If they are, then the school must offer adjustments instead of suspension. For example, if a child's disability makes it difficult for them to focus in a loud classroom with dozens of other children, the parent has the right to request a quieter classroom or one with fewer children.

The Education Department's July guidance made clear that children who are informally removed have the same rights, such as reviews of whether the student's behavior was a result of their disability, as those who had been officially suspended.

Tricia Ellinger says she would have requested a hearing to make sure her 10-year-old daughter was getting appropriate services and support, had she known that her frequent removals from the classroom amounted to suspensions.

One day last spring, she received three phone calls in rapid succession, telling her to immediately pick up Cassie from Kenneth J. Carberry Elementary School in Emmett, Idaho. When she arrived, her daughter was sitting quietly in the school's resource room eating a snack. She says a school staff member told her that Cassie was refusing to do her work and needed to go home.

"When I got her in the car, I asked her, 'Cass, what happened? Did you tear up your notebook? Did you throw your pencil?'" Ellinger recalled. "She said, 'No, it was just hard. Math is hard.'"

The call was one of about 20 Ellinger says she got last year from the school, which is designed specifically to educate students with disabilities. She says her daughter was also taken out of class repeatedly and kept in a room by herself. None of the removals was recorded as suspensions.

Emmett School District Superintendent Craig Woods said he couldn't comment, citing federal student privacy law.

Families often do not know what grounds they have to lodge a complaint, Lhamon said. Sometimes they aren't aware their child should not have been suspended in the first place.

"That is so concerning when schools are excluding students for reasons that are unlawful," she said. "We want our kids to be in class, learning with other students, fully participant and respected as learners."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 63 of 71

We do not want our school communities to be sending a message that there's some category of kids who can't be there."

Manwell said most of the calls she got last year from her son's school were a result of bullying. On the fourth day of school, John got shoved in the locker room, and she got a call to pick him up. Another time, he went to the bathroom and another student threatened to beat him up.

Because of his disability, John was supposed to be granted access to a quiet room so he could recover from difficult incidents. But often, she said, either there wasn't a room or when he didn't want to return to class, she'd get a call to come pick him up.

"It was just the stress of never knowing what I was sending my kid into each day. I was worrying the whole time he was gone," said Manwell. "I could see the damage."

"He was withdrawing. He started talking about hurting himself," she said, her voice breaking.

In January, she made the difficult decision to switch John to homebound instruction, sending him to a tutoring center every day for a couple of hours and rearranging her work schedule. It made her life more predictable, she said, and John began to act like his old self.

She said she'd like to send him back to school but doesn't trust what will happen.

"You want to protect your kids, right?" she said. "I just can't send him to a school where he won't be safe."

Micron to bring microchip plant to upstate New York

NEW YORK (AP) — Micron, one of the world's largest microchip manufacturers, announced Tuesday it would open a semiconductor plant in upstate New York, promising a long-term investment of up to \$100 billion and a plant that could bring 50,000 jobs to the state.

The company was lured to the Syracuse area with help from a generous set of federal, state and local incentives, including up to \$5.5 billion in state tax credits over 20 years.

The announcement comes after Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, D-NY, had pushed for Idaho-based Micron and the company's CEO, Sanjay Mehrotra, to consider upstate New York for its factory. It also comes months after Congress passed the \$280 billion CHIPS and Science Act, which set aside \$52 billion to bolster the semiconductor industry.

"An investment of this scale in the U.S. is simply not possible without significant government and community support," Mehrotra said at the announcement.

In addition to tax credits tied to investment and job creation, New York has pledged \$200 million for road and infrastructure improvements where the plant is being built in suburban Clay and \$100 million to a "community benefit" fund. The state also will review supplying the operation with low-cost power.

New York has a long history of providing financial incentives for companies to locate or expand in the state, with critics questioning whether taxpayers consistently get their money's worth. Recently, Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul has defended her plan to spend an eventual \$850 million in taxpayer money toward a new stadium for her hometown Buffalo Bills.

Companies like Micron manufacture the diminutive chips that power everything from smartphones to computers to automobiles. The federal bill was aimed at bolstering U.S. competitiveness against China and avoiding another chip shortage like the one that derailed the automobile and technology industries during the pandemic.

"Chips are essential to our economy, and if we were to lose the ability to manufacture chips here in the United States, it would be a severe, both economic security and national security risk," Schumer said in an interview with The Associated Press. "This will be the most advanced memory chip manufacturing facility in the United States and probably the world. And it's located in a place that will really benefit from it."

The company plans to invest up to \$100 billion over the next 20-plus years to construct the project, with the first investment of \$20 billion planned by the end of the decade. The deal is also expected to bring more than 9,000 jobs to Micron, and officials believe it could also bring close to 40,000 other ancillary jobs to the region, from suppliers to contractors, officials said.

After signing the \$280 billion bill last month, President Joe Biden touted the New York investment as

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 64 of 71

proof that it was working.

"Today is another win for America, and another massive new investment in America spurred by my economic plan," Biden said. "Micron, an American company, is investing \$20 billion dollars this decade and up to \$100 billion over twenty years in CHIPS manufacturing in upstate New York, creating tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. Together, we are building an economy from the bottom up and the middle out, where we lower costs for our families and make it right here in America."

Micron, based in Boise, Idaho, has several chip manufacturing plants around the world, including in Singapore and Taiwan. The company announced in September that it would invest \$15 billion through the end of the decade on a new semiconductor plant in its hometown, which the chipmaker said will create 17,000 American jobs.

Manish Bhatia, Micron's executive vice president of global operations, told the AP that New York was selected in large part because it has a history of semiconductor development. New York is currently home to 76 semiconductor companies, according to Schumer.

"There is an ecosystem of other manufacturers, research institutions," Bhatia said. "We believe we can funnel a lot of that talent" to the Syracuse-area, including military veterans.

Bhatia also said the company needed a large site for a facility that could ultimately encompass 2.4 million square feet. That also means having the water and power infrastructure in place to accommodate the production of memory chips, a sector that he said is growing because the "era of big data" requires even more capacity for processing larger and larger sets of information.

"This is like a 21st century Erie Canal," Schumer said of the New York plant. "And just as the original Erie Canal did centuries ago, this will help cement the growth of our economy for decades to come, not only in upstate New York, but in the country, since these chips are so vital to so many of our cutting-edge industries."

Smacked asteroid's debris trail more than 6,000 miles long

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The asteroid that got smacked by a NASA spacecraft is now being trailed by thousands of miles of debris from the impact.

Astronomers captured the scene millions of miles away with a telescope in Chile. Their remarkable observation two days after last month's planetary defense test was recently released a National Science Foundation lab in Arizona.

The image shows an expanding, comet-like tail more than 6,000 miles (10,000 kilometers) long, consisting of dust and other material spewed from the impact crater.

This plume is accelerating away from the harmless asteroid, in large part, because of pressure on it from solar radiation, said Matthew Knight of the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, who made the observation along with Lowell Observatory's Teddy Karetka using the Southern Astrophysical Research Telescope.

Scientists expect the tail to get even longer and disperse even more, becoming so tenuous at one point that it's undetectable.

"At that point, the material will be like any other dust floating around the solar system," Knight said in an email Tuesday.

More observations are planned to determine how much and what kind of material was hurled from the 525-foot (160-meter) Dimorphos, a moonlet of a larger asteroid.

Launched nearly a year ago, NASA's Dart spacecraft was destroyed in the head-on collision. The \$325 million mission to deflect an asteroid's orbit was intended as a dress rehearsal for the day a killer rock heads our way. Dimorphos and its companion rock never posed a threat to Earth and still do not, according to NASA.

Analysis: NFL isn't passing the eye test on head injuries

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 65 of 71

By ARNIE STAPLETON AP Pro Football Writer

What happened in Tampa was the last thing the NFL, its players and its fanbase needed three days after Tua Tagovailoa's horrifying head injury called into question the league's commitment to curbing concussions.

Buccaneers tight end Cameron Brate sat out the second half of Sunday night's 41-31 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs with a concussion after colliding with a teammate and initially being allowed to re-enter the game.

Brate was shaken up just before halftime after catching a pass for a 9-yard gain and colliding with Bucs receiver Chris Godwin while being tackled. Brate stayed down for a few seconds before heading for the sideline, but he didn't get off the field fast enough for Tampa Bay to avoid a penalty for having too many men on the field on the next play.

Brate re-entered the game and was Tom Brady's intended receiver on multiple incompletions just before halftime.

Coach Todd Bowles said after the game that Brate was in the concussion protocol but was unable to explain why he was allowed to re-enter the game with a head injury.

A day later, Bowles said it was because Brate experienced delayed symptoms of a concussion at halftime after initially complaining only of shoulder discomfort and being allowed to return to the game.

"Broken system," tweeted Hall of Fame coach Tony Dungy, who was in attendance in his role as analyst for NBC's "Football Night in America."

"I was on the sideline very close to Brate — obvious he had his bell rung," Dungy continued. "There's a league appointed spotter in the press box who should stop play & alert the referee. Brate shouldn't have been allowed to return until after an evaluation. Why didn't that happen???"

Dungy added: "Coaches, team doctors and game officials are all watching play and can all step in. But the league appointed spotter has the ability to buzz the referee, stop the game and mandate that player leave the game to be evaluated — no penalty or timeout charged to the team."

Bowles said Monday that Brate was checked out three times before being allowed to re-enter the game with the Bucs driving for a touchdown that trimmed Tampa Bay's deficit to 28-17 at halftime. Brate said "nothing about his head" while complaining of shoulder discomfort, Bowles said.

The NFL's concussion and diagnosis protocol states that potential signs of a concussion include: "Slow to get up from the ground or return to play following a hit to the head" which "may include secondary contact with the playing surface," and "motor coordination/balance problems of neurologic etiology (stumbles, trips/falls, slow/labored movement)."

Bowles said Brate was re-examined at halftime after symptoms arose and "we kept him out the rest of the game."

That did little to placate critics who say Tagovailoa never should have been allowed to suit up against the Cincinnati Bengals on Thursday night, just four days after Miami's quarterback came up stumbling when his head hit the ground in a game against the Buffalo Bills on Sept. 25.

Tagovailoa initially seemed to exhibit concussion symptoms against Buffalo, but he was cleared by a team physician and unaffiliated neurotrauma consultant, or UNC, to return to the game. He and the team later explained his legs were wobbly because of a back injury.

Still, the league and its players' union began a joint review into Tagovailoa's quick return to the Bills game that is ongoing.

When Tagovailoa sustained a concussion four days later at Cincinnati, the UNC who cleared him from entering concussion protocol against Buffalo was fired by the union, and the league and the union said changes were needed to the concussion protocol.

The league and the NFLPA issued a statement last week that said they had made no conclusions about "medical errors or protocol violations" while the investigation is still underway. But the two added that "modifications are needed ... to enhance player safety."

Tagovailoa's concussion was topic No. 1 across the NFL heading into Sunday's slate of games, and coaches across the league spoke about safety being the game's top priority.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 66 of 71

Then came Sunday night when Brate kept playing despite a head injury.

"IT HAPPENED AGAIN @NFL!" tweeted Chris Nowinski, a founder of the Concussion Legacy Foundation who played football at Harvard and is adamant Tagovailoa sustained a concussion against Buffalo and shouldn't have played at Cincinnati.

"Cam Brate went back in 4 plays after showing #concussion signs from this huge hit to the head. He stayed down too long & couldn't run off the field fast enough to avoid a penalty," Nowinski fumed, adding that Dungy "says it was obvious he had a concussion. How did he go back in?"

Bowles said an unaffiliated neurotrauma consultant did not ask the Bucs to test Brate for a concussion. "Nobody called down. He was checked out three times. He went back in until the end of the half. The concussion thing didn't come up until halftime. He had delayed symptoms," Bowles repeated.

Bowles acknowledged "it was noticeable hit, but again it was on the shoulder. Nobody said anything about the head."

Given what happened to Tagovailoa just 72 hours earlier, somebody certainly should have.

US job openings sink as economy slows, cost to borrow rises

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of available jobs in the U.S. plummeted in August compared with July as businesses grow less desperate for workers, a trend that could cool chronically high inflation.

That is good news for the Federal Reserve in its efforts to bring down high prices without plunging the economy into a recession. The government jobs report released Tuesday also showed that layoffs remained historically low, even after a modest increase in August. And overall hiring was essentially unchanged that month.

Altogether, the data suggested that even as companies take down job postings, they aren't cutting workers or slamming the brakes on adding jobs.

"Employers are thinking about who they don't need to hire, but not thinking about who they need to lay off," said Layla O'Kane, a senior economist at labor analytics firms Lightcast.

There were 10.1 million advertised jobs on the last day of August, the government said Tuesday, down a huge 10% from 11.2 million openings in July. In March, job openings hit a record of nearly 11.9 million.

The report pushed major U.S. markets higher because it is a potential sign that the Fed could slow its rapid pace of rate hikes, though most economists said that it would take more than one report to change the Fed's trajectory. The U.S. releases critical data on monthly employment on Friday.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added to its early gains and jumped nearly 770 points, or 2.5%, in mid-morning trading.

The report on job openings followed news that Australia's central bank made an interest rate hike that was smaller than its previous increases, a rare sign of moderation as central bankers around the world rapidly boost rates to fight rising prices.

In their effort to combat the worst inflation in 40 years, the Fed has rapidly raised its key short-term interest rate to a range of 3% to 3.25%, up sharply from nearly zero as recently as March.

Federal Reserve officials are hoping to reduce the demand for workers by raising rates, which pushes up the cost of mortgages, auto loans, and borrowing for businesses. While workers typically welcome larger raises, the Fed sees the current pace of wage increases — at about 6.5% a year, according to some measures — as unsustainably high and a key driver of inflation.

Chair Jerome Powell and other Fed officials hope that their interest rate hikes — the fastest in roughly four decades — will cause employers to slow their efforts to hire more people. Fewer job openings should reduce the pressure on companies to raise pay to attract and keep workers. Smaller pay raises, if sustained, could ease inflationary pressures.

"This helps bring that inflation pressure down and reassures the Fed that maybe there is a road out of this without dramatically pushing up the unemployment rate," said Derek Tang, an economist at LHMeyer, an economic research firm.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 67 of 71

Powell has warned that the central bank's rate hikes will likely lead to higher unemployment and potentially a recession. Still, he and other Fed officials have held out hope for what they call a "soft landing" — in which the economy slows enough to curb inflation but not so much as to cause a recession.

Christopher Waller, a member of the central bank's Board of Governors, has argued that the Fed's rate hikes may be able to reduce job openings and therefore inflation pressures without causing widespread job losses. But former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers and former IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard have written that such an outcome is unlikely, based on past trends. When job openings fall, layoffs and unemployment typically rise, they found.

Yet for now, businesses are still hiring. Tuesday's figures arrive the same week that a key report on jobs and the unemployment rate is set to be released Friday. Economists forecast that it will show that employers added 250,000 jobs in September and that the unemployment rate remained 3.7% for a second straight month.

The level of job openings and the number of quits have declined in recent months, which points to some cooling in the job market. Most people quit for another, typically higher-paying job. About 4.2 million people quit their jobs in August, still historically high, but down from a record peak of 4.5 million last November.

Last week, San Francisco Fed President Mary Daly said the declines in job openings and quits were "early signs that the labor market is easing." But she added that the Fed would still need to see concrete evidence that inflation is falling before they dialed back their interest rate hikes.

Source: Ukraine to join Spain-Portugal 2030 World Cup bid

By GRAHAM DUNBAR and TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writers

GENEVA (AP) — Ukraine is set to join Spain and Portugal in a combined bid to host the 2030 World Cup.

A person familiar with the project told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Ukraine is being added to the Spain-Portugal bid. The revitalized bid, which has been in the works for more than three years, is scheduled to be announced on Wednesday at UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the announcement has not yet been made public.

Ukrainian soccer federation president Andriy Pavelko confirmed to the AP he will go to Switzerland for the announcement, but he declined to confirm details of the project.

The addition of Ukraine to the European bid was first reported by British newspaper The Times of London.

Ukraine co-hosted the 2012 European Championship in four stadiums, including in Donetsk and Kharkiv. Those cities in eastern Ukraine have been under occupation or bombardment since Russia invaded the country earlier this year.

FIFA has given no formal timetable to choose a host for the 48-team tournament in 2030, but the governing body has promised a decision in 2024. Voting would involve about 200 FIFA member federations.

The European bid is expected to face a South American candidacy with co-hosts Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. That bid has the emotional pull of being the centenary for Uruguay, which hosted — and won — the inaugural 1930 World Cup.

Saudi Arabia, which has worked to build close ties to FIFA and its president, Gianni Infantino, in recent years, has been preparing an unprecedented multi-continent bid potentially including Egypt and Greece. It is unclear how Greece would be approved by UEFA to take part in a rival bid.

Ukraine's involvement in a World Cup bid would likely be supported by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who two weeks ago praised UEFA for supporting soccer in his country and suspending all Russian teams from international competitions, including the lucrative Champions League.

Soccer in Ukraine restarted in August after the national league was abandoned last season during the invasion. League games are being played in Kyiv and the western city of Lviv, with many interrupted by air raid alerts. Teams and officials have sheltered in bunkers until it was safe to resume games.

Ukraine's national team and leading clubs are currently unable to host games in international competitions because of the security risk. Those games, including Shakhtar Donetsk playing in the Champions League, have mostly been played in neighboring Poland.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 68 of 71

Pavelko is set to accompany the presidents of the Spanish and Portuguese soccer federations, Luis Rubiales and Fernando Gomes, at the news conference Wednesday. All three are members of the UEFA executive committee and both Rubiales and Gomes are vice presidents.

Launching the three-nation bid ahead of this year's World Cup in Qatar allows the European colleagues to lobby their potential voters at the tournament.

Europe last hosted the World Cup in 2018 in Russia. The 2026 edition, expanding to 48 teams, will be played in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The Onion and the Supreme Court. Not a parody

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Onion has some serious things to say in defense of parody.

The satirical site that manages to persuade people to believe the absurd has filed a Supreme Court brief in support of a man who was arrested and prosecuted for making fun of police on social media.

"As the globe's premier parodists, The Onion's writers also have a self-serving interest in preventing political authorities from imprisoning humorists," lawyers for the Onion wrote in a brief filed Monday. "This brief is submitted in the interest of at least mitigating their future punishment."

The court filing doesn't entirely keep a straight face, calling the federal judiciary "total Latin dorks."

The Onion said it employs 350,000 people, is read by 4.3 trillion people and "has grown into the single most powerful and influential organization in human history."

The Supreme Court case involves Anthony Novak, who was arrested after he spoofed the Parma, Ohio, police force in Facebook posts.

The posts were published over 12 hours and included an announcement of new police hiring "strongly encouraging minorities to not apply." Another post promoted a fake event in which child sex offenders could be "removed from the sex offender registry and accepted as an honorary police officer."

After being acquitted of criminal charges, the man sued the police for violating his constitutional rights. But a federal appeals court ruled the officers have "qualified immunity" and threw out the lawsuit.

One issue is whether people might reasonably have believed that what they saw on Novak's site was real.

But The Onion said Novak had no obligation to post a disclaimer. "Put simply, for parody to work, it has to plausibly mimic the original," the Onion said, noting its own tendency to mimic "the dry tone of an Associated Press news story."

More than once, people have republished the Onion's claims as true, including when it reported in 2012 that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was the sexiest man alive.

The brief concludes with a familiar call for the court to hear the case and a twist.

"The petition for certiorari should be granted, the rights of the people vindicated, and various historical wrongs remedied. The Onion would welcome any one of the three, particularly the first," lawyers for the Onion wrote.

Amid Ian's wounds, Jews see healing, renewal in Yom Kippur

BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP) — Even though a destructive hurricane tore through his community just days earlier, nothing was going to stop Rabbi Yitzchok Minkowicz from holding prayer services Tuesday night for the start of the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.

Throughout a southwest Florida devastated by Hurricane Ian, Jews planned to hold worship services for Yom Kippur, a day in which they fast for 24 hours and ask forgiveness for the wrongs they have committed during the year, although many were doing so with plans drastically modified by the storm.

Some congregations were skipping in-person attendance for the all-important Kol Nidre service Tuesday evening out of concern it would be too dangerous to drive at night with debris piled up on roads and traffic lights out. Others were holding it online.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 69 of 71

At Minkowicz's synagogue, the religiously traditional Chabad Lubavitch of Southwest Florida in Fort Myers, members planned a community dinner before fasting was to start at sunset Tuesday, with the help of caterers from South Florida, on the other side of the state. Some buildings on the 5-acre (2-hectare) campus were flooded. But the main building, where 50 or so people sheltered during the hurricane, was comparatively unscathed because of its higher elevation.

Power returned Sunday night, and the campus had turned into a community center of sorts, with food trucks and a food pantry. A large tent was erected in the parking lot where members of the synagogue — or anyone from the community — could stop by for a meal.

"The most important thing we have is to make God happy," Minkowicz said. "If God is happy, everything works out."

At Temple Beth El in Fort Myers, congregants planned to have in-person Yom Kippur services Wednesday, with Kol Nidre services available only online Tuesday night. However, plans had been in flux at the congregation, which is part of the progressive Reform movement, since utility trucks were using the parking lot as a rest area for utility worker breaks. The trucks were expected to be gone by Wednesday's services.

Electricity was restored to the synagogue, whose property was littered with fallen trees and debris, but traffic lights were still down in the neighborhood, so Rabbi Nicole Luna said congregants should consider their safety when deciding whether to attend in person. Some of the congregation's more than 250 families lost their homes.

"People are shattered and in need both of resources and supplies, but also of community and hope," Luna said.

Rabbi Lawrence Dermer and his wife, Robin, decided not to hold a Kol Nidre service Tuesday night at their synagogue, Shalom Life Center, out of concerns about the safety of their congregants. The evening service marks the start of the holiday with a chanted prayer asking to be released from all obligations that can't be fulfilled.

"We didn't want to encourage anyone to go out after dark. The roads are hazardous and in some areas there's still a curfew," said Lawrence Dermer, who leads the congregation, which welcomes members from all Jewish backgrounds.

Shalom Life Center planned to hold daytime services Wednesday but was skipping holding a traditional community "break fast" Wednesday evening, when Jews indulge with bagels, lox, whitefish and other staples following 24 hours of not eating. That will be postponed for a few weeks, until the community gets out of the crisis mode from the storm, Lawrence Dermer said.

The Fort Myers metro area has around 7,500 Jews, and the Naples area further south has an additional 7,500, according to estimates published in the 2020 American Jewish Year Book. Compared with other parts of the state, the Jewish community in southwest Florida is relatively new, with the oldest congregation, Temple Beth El, formed only in 1954 with 22 families.

Rather than making them question their religious convictions, the ferocious storm has renewed the faith of many members of their congregation, said Lawrence Dermer and his wife. During the 10 days between the Jewish new year, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, Jews traditionally say to one another, "May you be inscribed in the Book of Life," in what is almost an entreaty that they be blessed with another year of life.

"Yom Kippur is about the fragility of life. If anything, we have seen with Ian how precarious life is," said Robin Dermer. "The meaning of Yom Kippur, of renewal and connection to God, will be deeper, not lessened."

Rams LB Bobby Wagner flattens protester who gets on field

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Bobby Wagner delivered one of the biggest hits on a person who got onto the field.

The Rams linebacker flattened the protester who ran on the field with a device emitting pink smoke late in the second quarter of Los Angeles' game against the San Francisco 49ers on Monday night.

"I just saw someone running on the field," Wagner said. "It looked like he wasn't supposed to be on the field so I saw security was having a problem so I helped them out."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 70 of 71

With less than a minute left in the first half, the person got onto the field and ran across while being chased by security as the pink smoke filled the field.

As the person ran toward the Rams sideline, linebacker Takkarist McKinley came toward him before Wagner came off the sideline and laid him out with a big hit.

"I saw Bobby Wagner taking somebody out," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. "I thought that was kind of cool to see."

The protester was taken off the field by security and the game quickly resumed.

Earlier in the game, another person tried to get onto the field with a similar device, but was stopped by security.

Today in History: October 5, Truman speaks on TV

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 5, the 278th day of 2022. There are 87 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 5, 1953, Earl Warren was sworn in as the 14th chief justice of the United States, succeeding Fred M. Vinson.

On this date:

In 1892, the Dalton Gang, notorious for its train robberies, was practically wiped out while attempting to rob a pair of banks in Coffeyville, Kansas.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman delivered the first televised White House address as he spoke on the world food crisis.

In 1958, racially-desegregated Clinton High School in Clinton, Tennessee, was mostly leveled by an early morning bombing.

In 1983, Solidarity founder Lech Walesa (lek vah-WEN'-sah) was named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1989, a jury in Charlotte, North Carolina, convicted former P-T-L evangelist Jim Bakker (BAY'-kur) of using his television show to defraud followers. (Although initially sentenced to 45 years in prison, Bakker was freed in December 1994 after serving 4 1/2 years.)

In 1994, 48 people were found dead in an apparent murder-suicide carried out simultaneously in two Swiss villages by members of a secret religious doomsday cult known as the Order of the Solar Temple; five other bodies were found the same week in a building owned by the sect near Montreal, Canada.

In 2001, tabloid photo editor Robert Stevens died from inhaled anthrax, the first of a series of anthrax cases in Florida, New York, New Jersey and Washington.

In 2005, defying the White House, senators voted 90-9 to approve an amendment sponsored by Republican Sen. John McCain that would prohibit the use of "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" against anyone in U.S. government custody. (A reluctant President George W. Bush later signed off on the amendment.)

In 2011, Steve Jobs, 56, the Apple founder and former chief executive who'd invented and master-marketed ever sleeker gadgets that transformed everyday technology from the personal computer to the iPod and iPhone, died in Palo Alto, California.

In 2015, the United States, Japan and 10 other nations in Asia and the Americas reached agreement on the landmark Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

In 2018, a jury in Chicago convicted white police officer Jason Van Dyke of second-degree murder in the 2014 shooting of Black teenager Laquan McDonald. (Van Dyke was sentenced to 81 months in state prison.)

In 2020, President Donald Trump staged a dramatic return to the White House after leaving the military hospital where he was receiving an unprecedented level of care for COVID-19; Trump immediately ignited a new controversy by declaring that despite his illness, the nation should not fear the virus.

Ten years ago: A month before the presidential election, the Labor Department reported that unemployment fell in Sept. 2012 to its lowest level, 7.8 percent, since President Barack Obama took office; some

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 089 ~ 71 of 71

Republicans questioned whether the numbers had been manipulated.

Five years ago: Hollywood executive Harvey Weinstein announced that he was taking a leave of absence from his company after a New York Times article detailed decades of alleged sexual harassment against women including actor Ashley Judd. The National Rifle Association and the White House expressed support for controls on "bump stock" devices like those that apparently aided the gunman behind the Las Vegas attack; the NRA later said it was opposed to an outright ban on the devices. California Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation extending protections for immigrants living in the United States illegally; police in California would be barred from asking people about their immigration status or taking part in federal immigration enforcement activities.

One year ago: A former Facebook employee, data scientist Frances Haugen, told a Senate panel that the company knew that its platform spread misinformation and content that harmed children, but that it refused to make changes that could hurt its profits. Work at all of the Kellogg Company's U.S. cereal plants came to a halt as roughly 1,400 workers went on strike. (The strike would end in December after workers voted to ratify a new contract.) A Russian actor and a film director rocketed into space on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft to make the world's first movie in orbit during a 12-day stay on the International Space Station.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Glynis Johns is 99. College Football Hall of Fame coach Barry Switzer is 85. R&B singer Arlene Smith (The Chantels) is 81. Singer-musician Steve Miller is 79. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin, D-Md., is 79. Rock singer Brian Johnson (AC/DC) is 75. Blues musician Rick Estrin is 73. Actor Karen Allen is 71. Writer-producer-director Clive Barker is 70. Rock musician David Bryson (Counting Crows) is 68. Astrophysicist-author Neil deGrasse Tyson is 64. Memorial designer Maya Lin is 63. Actor Daniel Baldwin is 62. Rock singer-musician Dave Dederer is 58. Hockey Hall of Famer Mario Lemieux is 57. Actor Guy Pearce is 55. Actor Josie Bissett is 52. Singer-actor Heather Headley is 48. Pop-rock singer Colin Meloy (The Decemberists) is 48. Actor Parminder Nagra (pahr-MIHN'-da NAH'-grah) is 47. Actor Scott Weinger is 47. Actor Kate Winslet is 47. Rock musician James Valentine (Maroon 5) is 44. Rock musician Paul Thomas (Good Charlotte) is 42. Actor Jesse Eisenberg is 39. TV personality Nicky Hilton is 39. Actor Azure Parsons is 38. R&B singer Brooke Valentine is 37. Actor Kevin Bigley is 36. Actor Joshua Logan Moore is 28. Actor Jacob Tremblay is 16.