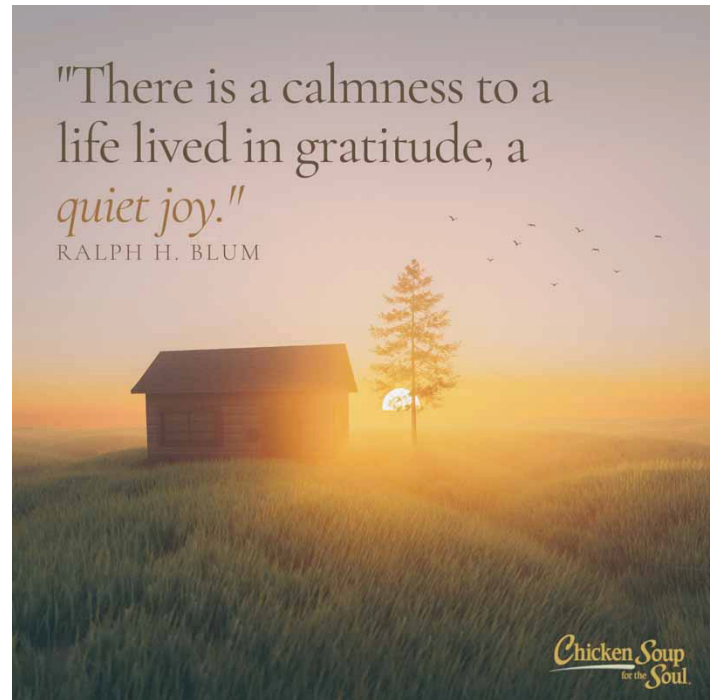


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Groton Community Calendar

Wednesday, Oct. 26

Chicken enchiladas, Spanish rice, refried beans, tossed green salad, fruit cobbler.

School Breakfast: Eggs and breakfast potatoes.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, peas and carrots.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

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

UMC: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; UMYF Pumpkin Carving/Painting, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 27

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, pears, sherbet.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Spaghetti, corn..

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

Friday, Oct. 28

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo, broccoli, spinach salad, mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits and jelly.

School Lunch: Cheese bread sticks with marinara.

Saturday, Oct. 29

UMC: Charge Conference in Groton, 6:30 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 30

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

St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, Milestones for JK and K, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

UMC: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School after children's sermon during worship.

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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Lewandowski interns in band



Jacob Lewandowski, son of Brad and Becky Lewandowski, is doing his senior internship with Mrs. Desiree Yeigh in the junior high/high school band room.

"One of my jobs here is to photocopy material for the music students," Lewandowski explained. "Actually that is the hardest part of this job. Operating the copier, pushing all the right buttons in the correct order, making sure the paper is in the copier correctly, and so on, can be very annoying and puzzling!" he admitted.

"In addition to running that contrary photo copier, I also help keep the drums in tune and make sure the percussion players are prepared and ready."

"Since I participate in several of the music program here in Groton, working in the school, and not having to travel to my internship job, seemed like the best idea!" Lewandowski smiled.

"I am a member of the high school band, the flex band, the pit band for the show choir, as well as participating in cross country and track," he listed.

"After I graduate, I plan to go into pre-law, either at the University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, or USD," Lewandowski stated. "I would have liked doing an internship in a law office but was unable to arrange that."

- Dorene Nelson

Frost interns at GHS Library



Hollie Frost, daughter of Jason and Britt Frost, is serving as an intern in the high school library, under the supervision of Mrs. Brenda Madsen. "While working here, I've checked out books to other students as well as shelving those that have been returned," Frost explained.

"I decided to work here because it has a quiet, relaxing atmosphere," she said. "The work can be time-consuming but isn't very difficult."

"The job that takes the most time and is the most difficult for me is to learn where to return the books back on the shelf," Frost admitted. "The books are on the shelves in a particular order, so I have to be very careful when re-shelving them. If I didn't do it correctly, it would be difficult for the next student to find that book among all the others on all of these shelves!"

"The easiest job, and probably the most fun here in the library," she explained, "is helping the other students whether it is in finding a book or needing some help with their online Spanish class."

"Helping other students is actually why I chose to intern in the high school library," Frost smiled. "Since I enjoy working with children and young adults, I plan to go to SDSU and major in elementary education."

"I participate in several extra circular activities, including volley ball, dance team, trapshooting, and wrestling," she listed.

- Dorene Nelson

The Life of Becky Diegel



Funeral services for Rebecca Diegel, 47, of Groton will be 4:30 p.m., Thursday, October 27th at the Groton High School Arena. Pastor Brandon Dunham will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the United Methodist Church on Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Becky passed away October 22, 2022, at home surrounded by her family after a courageous battle with cancer.

Rebecca Jo was born in Aberdeen on February 14, 1975, to Glenn and Vicki (Nehls) Sperry. She attended school in Groton where she was active in many extra curriculars including track, basketball, volleyball, cross country, and cheerleading. She was also involved in Carnival of Silver Skates. During the summers, Becky was a lifeguard at the Groton Pool. Following graduation, Becky attended Lake Area Technical School in Watertown where she earned her degree in Dental Assisting. Becky's first dental job was with Dr. Opp. She then continued her dental career with Dr. Carl Kimbler. On August 30, 1996, she was united in marriage with Steve Diegel at St. John's Catholic Church in Groton. Together they were blessed with two sons, Treyton and Taylor.

Becky was a member of the United Methodist Church, Groton. She loved attending sporting events for her boys and her nieces and nephews. She also shared fond memories of coon hunting with her Dad before he passed.

Becky was incredibly creative and artistic. She painted many pictures over the years and enjoyed interior decorating and design work. She shared these talents with others while working at Olde Bank Floral. Becky volunteered with the B.A.G.S program in Groton. Above all, Becky loved being a mom and took great pride in that role.

Grateful for having shared her life is her husband, Steve, her beloved boys, Treyton and Taylor, her parents, Vicki and Bob Walter of Groton, in-laws Larry and Jan Diegel of Aberdeen, siblings, Kristi (Jamie) Marlow of Sioux Falls, Ryan (Amanda) Sperry of Groton, T.J. Sperry of Groton, Tasha (Craig) Dunker of Groton, Tyler (Carla) Sperry of Groton, grandparents, Eddy & Virginia Nehls of Groton and Jean Walter of Groton. Becky is also survived by her nieces and nephews Madi (Zach) Motl, Kennedy and Kamden Thurston, Ashlyn and Owen Sperry, Spencer and Reagan Sperry, Colby, Rylee, and Brynlee Dunker, Briggs Sperry, Karsyn and Ryder Jangula, and Lucas, Kennedy, and Margret Marlow, many aunts, uncles and cousins. She will be missed by her dog, Bea, who was always by her side.

Preceding her in death was her father, Glenn Sperry, and grandparents, Eunice & Lester Sperry and Vernon Walter.

Honorary Casketbearers will be all of Becky's Nieces and Nephews.

Casketbearers will be Toby Doeden, Chris Kucker, Dr. Carl Kimbler, Brian Schuring, Ryan Kurtz, and Jeremy Weber

Her family would like to thank Dr. Richard Conklin and the entire team at the Avera Cancer Institute where she received excellent medical care. We would also like to thank everyone who touched her life with your cards, flowers, visits, meals, prayers, and love.

Becky requested that memorials can be made to the B.A.G.S program in Groton or to the Groton HS Sports Program.

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Pumpkin Fest volunteer celebration

Gathered together for an after Pumpkin Fest celebration at Bierman Farm Service Tuesday night for a wonderful meal provided by Joel Bierman. Volunteers pictured include Joel Bierman, Topper Tastad, Katelyn Nehlich, Karyn Babcock, Suzie Easthouse, April Abeln, Darlene Daly, Val Baker, Tyrel Telkamp, and Lisa Adler. (Courtesy Photo from April Abeln)

Conde National Bowling League

Oct. 24 Team Standings: Braves 21, Cubs 14, Tigers 14, Giants 14, Pirates 13, Mets 8

Men's High Games: Butch Farmen 227, Russ Bethke 220, Ryan Bethke 191

Men's High Series: Butch Farmen 588, Ryan Bethke 517, Russ Bethke 503

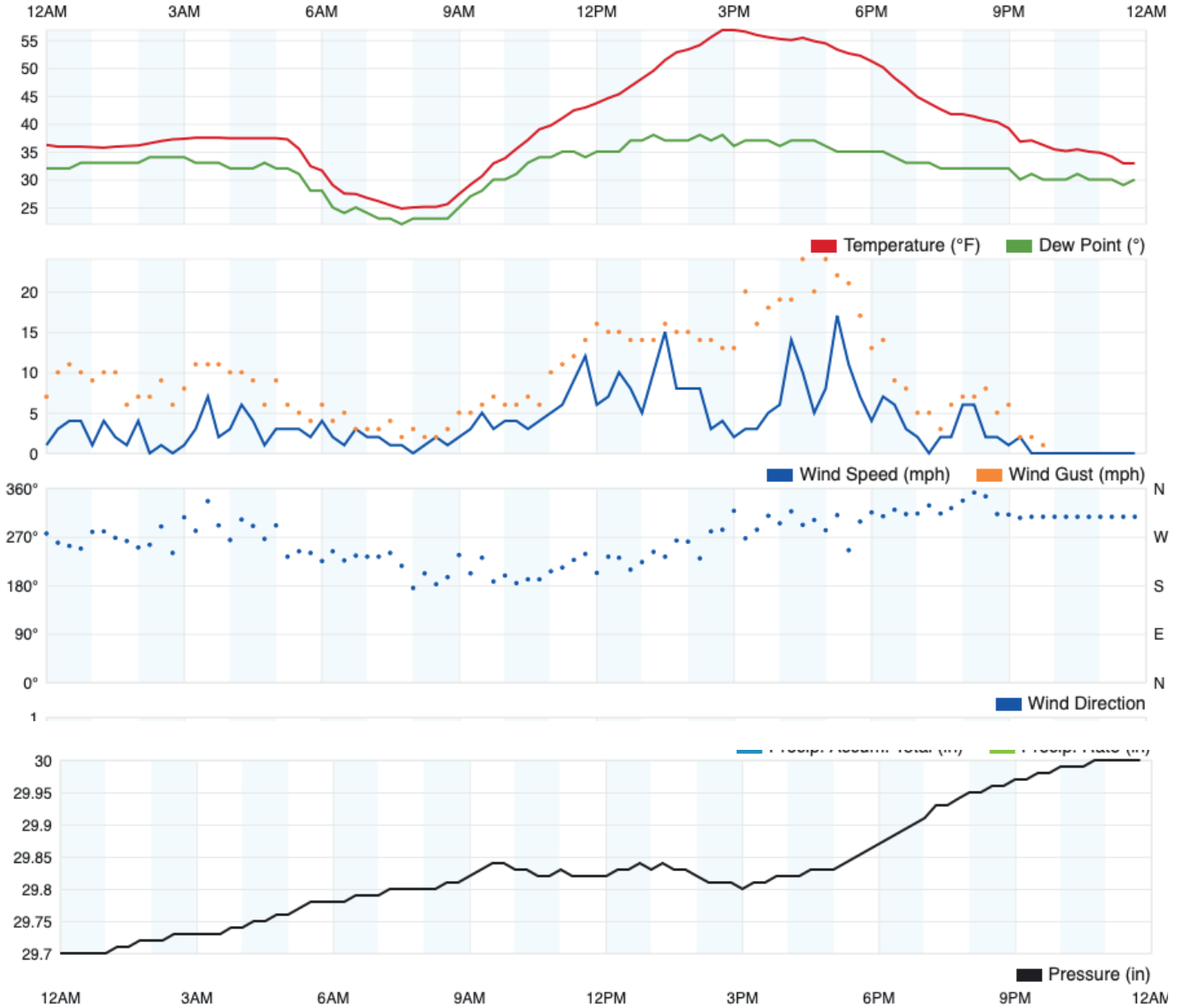
Women's High Games: Michelle Johnson 187, Vickie Kramp 180, Joyce Walter 171

Women's High Series: Vickie Kramp 474, Joyce Walter 435, Michelle Johnson 430

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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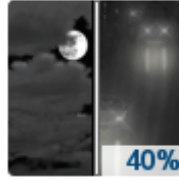
Today



Patchy Fog
then Sunny

High: 59 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Rain

Low: 39 °F

Thursday



Slight Chance
Rain

High: 55 °F

Thursday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 34 °F

Friday



Sunny

High: 63 °F

Above Average Temperatures will Continue

Today:

Highs 56-62°F

Becoming Cloudy

Some Showers Moving In Tonight

Thursday:

Highs 52-56°F

Cloudy Becoming Clear Over West

Breezy South Winds

Friday:

Highs 58-65°F

Sunny

Some areas could have patchy fog early this morning so please be careful if you are out on the road. Above average temperatures can be expected the next few days with some clouds. Tonight, we are expecting some rain to move across the area. Central SD could see up to 0.05 inches of accumulation. Rain chances continue into Thursday morning.

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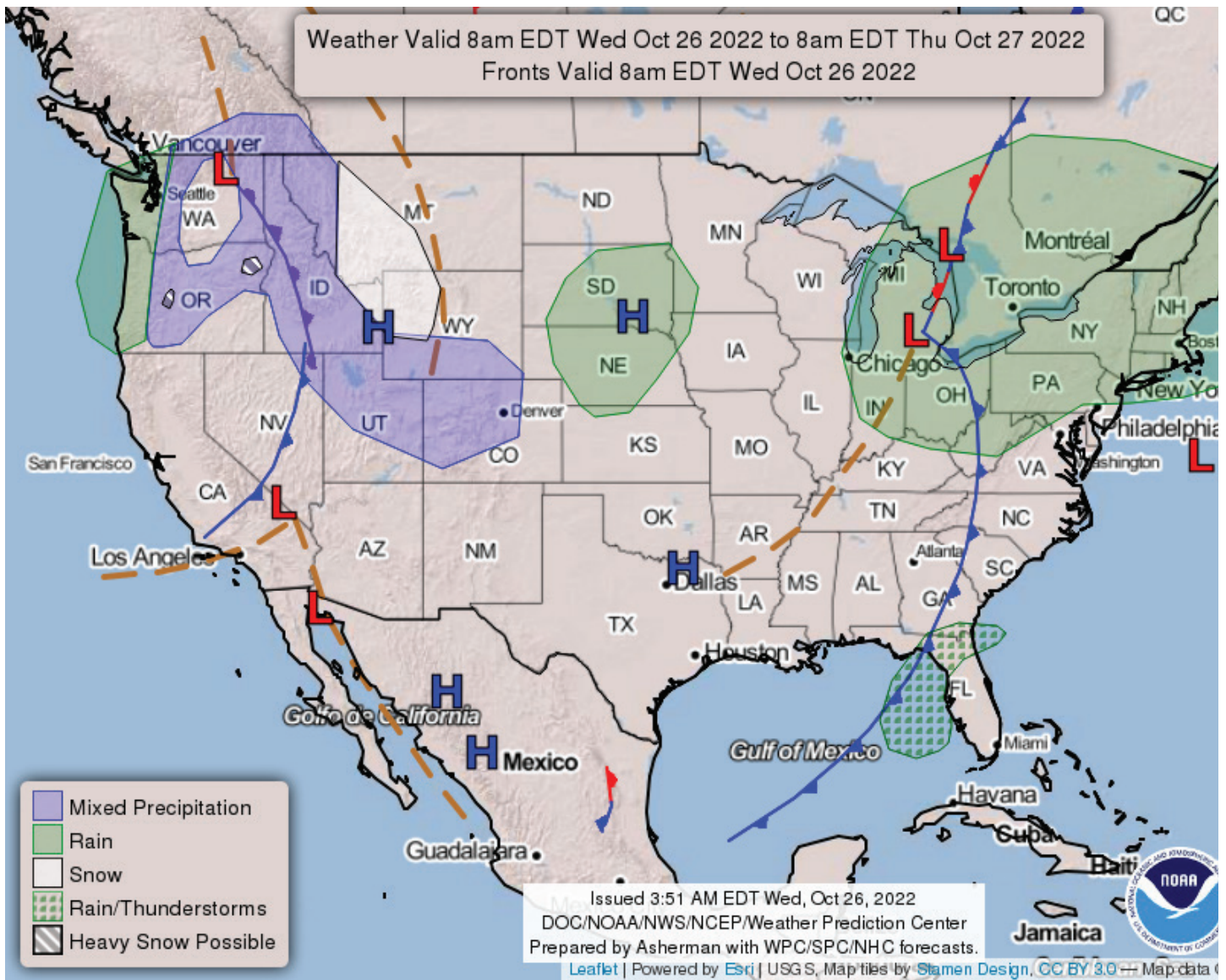
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 57 °F at 2:59 PM
Low Temp: 25 °F at 7:56 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 4:19 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 27 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 83 in 1922
Record Low: -3 in 2020
Average High: 54°F
Average Low: 29°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.89
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.45
Average Precip to date: 20.22
Precip Year to Date: 16.50
Sunset Tonight: 6:30:19 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:03:42 AM



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Today in Weather History

October 26, 1919: Record cold occurred across the area on this day in 1919. Temperatures fell below zero at many locations across central and northeast South Dakota and into west-central Minnesota. The record lows were 3 degrees below zero at Aberdeen, 4 degrees below zero at Wheaton, 5 degrees below zero at Kennebec, 8 degrees below zero at McIntosh, and a much below average low of 10 degrees below zero at Miller.

October 26, 1996: A rare and significant late-season tornado outbreak took place as a low-pressure system trekked across the North-Central US. A series of low-topped supercells during the morning and afternoon hours produced a total of 26 tornadoes; 3 in Nebraska, 9 in northeastern South Dakota, and 14 across west-central and central Minnesota. Five of these were rated F2, and while no fatalities resulted, 15 people were injured, and there was a good deal of property damage. To help put the extraordinary timing of this event in perspective, in the 66 years of record-keeping from 1950-2015, Minnesota has only recorded 15 other October tornadoes, and South Dakota 9.

October 26, 2010: A record-breaking surface low-pressure area moved across the Northern Plains and brought high winds to all of central and northeast South Dakota from the early morning of the 26th into the early evening of the 27th. Big Fork, Minnesota, measured a surface low pressure of 955.2 millibars. Sustained northwest winds of 40 to 50 mph with gusts to 60 to 75 mph caused scattered property damage across the region along with blowing several vehicles off the road. Along with the high winds came snowfall of 1 to 5 inches, which resulted in treacherous driving conditions. Several schools started late on the 27th due to the slippery roads and strong winds. The high winds, combined with slick roads at times, blew several semis and other vehicles off the road on Interstate-29 and other locations across the region. Only minor injuries occurred with these incidents. The high winds damaged many traffic signs and signals, downed many power lines and poles, along with downing branches and several trees. As a result, several hundred customers were without power for a time across the area. The high winds caused roof and siding damage to many buildings along with damaging some fences. A shed was also destroyed near Sisseton.

1865: A hurricane sank the steamship USS Mobile off the Georgia coast. The wreck, laden with 20,000 gold coins, was found in 2003.

1952: There have been thousands of weather reconnaissance and research flights into hurricanes in the Atlantic and Pacific since the mid-1940s. There have been several close calls, but only four flights have been lost. A B-29 Super-fortress flight into Super Typhoon Wilma 350 miles east of Leyte in the Philippines disappeared on this date. No trace was ever found of the plane or crew. In the last report, the flight was in the Super typhoon's strongest winds, which were around 160 mph.

1997: An autumn snowstorm pummeled central and south-central Nebraska with record early season snows. Wind-driven snowfall amounts totaled as much as two feet by storms' end. Several highways were closed, including Interstate 80, as near-blizzard conditions developed. Once the snow subsided, the record early season snow totals were tallied. Guide Rock measured twenty-four inches of snow, Clay Center twenty-three inches, and Hastings seventeen inches. A fifty-mile wide swath of snow more than fifteen inches fell from near Alma to York. Amounts further north averaged from four to eight inches. The heavy, wet snow was responsible for many power outages in the area as tree limbs broke and fell on power lines. At one point, the town of Hardy had no power and could not be accessed by vehicles due to the snow. Numerous schools and businesses remained closed several days following the storm. Many highways, including Interstate 80, closed at the height of the storm. On Highway 136 east of Alma, road crews worked for ten hours carving through a ten-foot drift that covered the road. Record cold accompanied the snow as temperatures dropped to the single digits on the morning of the 26th.

1998: Hurricane Mitch, the second deadliest hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean, reached Category 5 strength on this day.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRAY HAIR

Hair care products have become a major industry in most developed countries in the world. In fact, in 2021, men spent more money on hair care products than on shaving products. It's not that beards are becoming more popular. It's simply the fact that "manscaping" or "anti-aging" products for male hair care have increased very dramatically.

Evidently, hair care was not important to Solomon. But gray hair was. "Gray hair is a crown of splendor, it is attained by a righteous life," he once wrote. He also wrote that "gray hair is a crown of glory."

Looking for Solomon in a men's hair care salon, no doubt, would be a waste of time. He would probably be found at his desk pouring over the law and prophets looking for wisdom and insight. And for good reason.

Throughout the book of Proverbs, there is an important theme: the righteous are rewarded with a long life! How times have changed. Today, bodybuilding and "flat-abs" are much more important than understanding the word of God. Mirror-lined walls in health clubs are everywhere. They are filled night and day with individuals who want to "tone-up their muscles" by weight training and other forms of bodybuilding.

There is nothing wrong with caring for our bodies. They are the temple of the Holy Spirit. But if we neglect the importance of "soul-building," what good would the most perfect body be if it was not dedicated to the glory of God to bring men and women into His Kingdom?

Prayer: Father, help us to care for our bodies and use them to bring honor and glory to Your name! May we be more concerned with what's inside than the outside! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life. Proverbs 16:31



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

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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
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest
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)

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

21-30-35-45-66, Mega Ball: 21, Megaplier: 3

(twenty-one, thirty, thirty-five, forty-five, sixty-six; Mega Ball: twenty-one; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$64,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 680,000,000

Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Watertown, 28-26, 25-18, 19-25

Arlington def. DeSmet, 25-20, 25-13, 25-19

Avon def. Bon Homme, 25-21, 25-17, 25-23

Baltic def. Deubrook, 23-25, 26-24, 25-14, 25-17, 15-7

Bridgewater-Emery def. Centerville, 25-22, 25-23, 25-17

Britton-Hecla def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-11, 25-20, 25-18

Burke def. Parkston, 25-13, 25-16, 25-23

Canton def. Lennox, 25-20, 25-10, 25-21

Corsica/Stickney def. Colome, 25-17, 16-25, 25-20, 25-14

Crow Creek def. Todd County, 25-17, 28-26, 25-21

Dell Rapids def. Beresford, 25-23, 25-19, 25-18

Douglas def. St. Thomas More, 16-25, 25-15, 25-19, 26-24

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Sioux Valley, 25-18, 25-11, 25-16

Flandreau Indian def. Marty Indian, 0-0

Florence/Henry def. Waubay/Summit, 25-11, 25-15, 25-15

Freeman def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-17, 25-18, 25-19

Garretson def. Madison, 25-21, 22-25, 13-25, 25-14, 15-12

Great Plains Lutheran def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-14, 25-14, 25-19

Hamlin def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-16, 25-18, 25-13

Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, 25-21, 25-16, 25-17

Howard def. Irene-Wakonda, 34-32, 25-22, 25-18

Huron def. Mitchell, 25-9, 25-14, 25-21

Ipswich def. North Central Co-Op, 25-16, 25-9, 25-15

James Valley Christian def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-7, 25-10, 25-13

Lakota Tech def. Kadoka Area, 25-8, 24-26, 17-25, 25-18, 15-5

Lemmon def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-14, 25-23, 25-17

Lower Brule def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 14-25, 25-20, 21-25, 25-11, 15-11

Menno def. Scotland, 25-18, 27-25, 20-25, 28-26

Miller def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-5, 25-15, 25-10

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-23, 25-12, 25-14

New Underwood def. Philip, 25-22, 25-20, 25-12

Pierre def. Brookings, 25-16, 25-16, 17-25, 25-18

Platte-Geddes def. Ethan, 25-11, 25-17, 25-11

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Potter County def. Leola/Frederick, 25-13, 25-14, 25-10
Rapid City Stevens def. Sturgis Brown, 25-18, 25-9, 25-7
Redfield def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 23-25, 25-16, 22-25, 25-18, 15-12
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-18, 25-21, 25-22
Sioux Falls Washington def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-15, 25-17, 25-23
Spearfish def. Rapid City Central, 25-18, 25-22, 23-25, 25-21
St. Francis Indian def. Oelrichs, 12-25, 25-21, 25-16, 19-25, 15-10
Tea Area def. Yankton, 14-25, 25-23, 20-25, 25-16, 15-10
Timber Lake def. Wall, 25-18, 25-13, 13-25, 19-25, 15-13
Vermillion def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-16, 28-30, 25-23, 11-25, 15-12
Warner def. Langford, 25-15, 25-7, 25-9
Webster def. Milbank, 24-26, 25-23, 25-18
Wessington Springs def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-21, 22-25, 23-25, 25-15, 15-13
West Central def. Parker, 25-22, 25-10, 25-7
Wolsey-Wessington def. Faulkton, 25-16, 25-14, 25-15

PREP FOOTBALL=

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 62, Crazy Horse 20
Lower Brule 60, Marty Indian 0
Omaha Nation, Neb. 38, Crow Creek 22
Tiospa Zina Tribal 58, Flandreau Indian 6
Todd County 48, St. Francis Indian 0
All Nations A=
Red Cloud 52, Pine Ridge 0
Standing Rock, N.D. 50, McLaughlin 0
Winnebago, Neb. 40, Little Wound 0

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

South Dakota prosecutor: No charges for Noem's airplane use

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota prosecutor who was overseeing an investigation into Gov. Kristi Noem's use of state government aircraft announced Tuesday that the investigation found nothing to support a criminal prosecution.

Hughes County State's Attorney Jessica LaMie said in a short statement that there was "no basis to pursue" any actions on the allegations that the Republican governor had misused the state plane or that the plane's flight records had been altered. She called an allegation that flight records had been tampered with "frivolous."

Noem, a potential 2024 White House contender, had used the plane to attend events hosted by political organizations in 2019. Former Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, a Republican, had filed a complaint on the plane's use to the state's Government Accountability Board. And the board in August requested the state's Division of Criminal Investigation to probe Noem's use of the plane.

State law bars the aircraft from being used for anything other than state business.

Noem used the state plane six times to fly to out-of-state events hosted by political organizations, including the Republican Governors Association, Republican Jewish Coalition, Turning Point USA and the National Rifle Association. Raw Story, an online news site, first reported the trips, which the governor's office defended as part of her work as the state's "ambassador" to bolster the state's economy.

Noem also argued that Ravnsborg filed the complaint as political retribution. She had pushed for Ravnsborg to resign for his conduct surrounding a 2020 car crash in which he struck and killed a pedestrian.

Ravnsborg was impeached and removed from office earlier this year.

"An independent prosecutor has confirmed what we have known all along. This was nothing but a political attack in retaliation from a disgraced attorney general," said Ian Fury, a spokesman for Noem's reelection campaign.

LaMie said she had informed the Government Accountability Board of her decision and referred the matter back to it. She said she would not comment further on the investigation.

LaMie was tasked with overseeing the investigation after Attorney General Mark Vargo recused himself. He was appointed by Noem after Ravnsborg was removed from office.

Dodge, deny or fib: Candidates stay vague on 2024 plans

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — They dodge. They hedge. And, yes, they sometimes even fib — or at least flip-flop. Presidential aspirants dreaming of the White House while running for reelection to congressional or state posts often face an uncomfortable question: Whatever your higher hopes — and the timing they might demand — will you commit to serving out a full term for the folks who vote for you now?

Some, like Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, evade the question, as he did at a Monday night debate. Rather than answer directly whether he might leave the state, he took a dig at both President Joe Biden and his own Democratic opponent, Rep. Charlie Crist, whom he called "the only worn-out old donkey I'm looking to put out to pasture."

Others, like South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, leave wiggle room, saying her "plans" are to serve for four more years.

Not so long ago, there also was Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, who famously pledged, "I will serve out my full six-year term," only to announce his presidential bid 13 months later. He had just won his seat when he made the vow and wasn't facing imminent reelection.

It's always a high-stakes question, though, and one that often makes for awkward answers — especially when political circumstances are ever-shifting.

"You don't run for president unless you've got completely unabashed ambition. Some people hide it better than others," said Reed Galen, deputy campaign manager for John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign against Obama. He's co-founder of The Lincoln Project, a GOP group opposing former President Donald Trump, who himself is poised to seek the presidency again in 2024.

DeSantis' carefully crafted dodge at Monday's debate both sidestepped the question and offered a chance to swipe at Biden, the oldest president in history. DeSantis is favored for reelection and may mount a 2024 presidential run as a GOP primary alternative to Trump.

Amid speculation that she could mount her own White House bid, Noem recently told The Associated Press, "I am running to be reelected as governor. My plans are to stay here for four years. Absolutely. That's what I want to do."

Still another future possible presidential contender, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, spent Tuesday in Iowa — which will kick off the 2024 GOP primary. Haley campaigned with Gov. Kim Reynolds, who is heavily favored to win reelection, but noted only that she expects to decide whether or not to run by January.

"If it looks like there's a place for me, I've never lost a race," said Haley, who was also U.S. ambassador to the United Nations during the Trump administration. "I'm not going to start now."

Others have taken a different tack. California Gov. Gavin Newsom declared last weekend that he would serve his full four-year term should he win reelection, as expected. That's despite Newsom sparking speculation about a 2024 presidential run should Biden not seek reelection, running ads slamming Republican leadership in Florida and Texas.

Arizona Republican governor candidate Kari Lake has vowed to serve "eight years" as governor amid chatter she could be a vice presidential candidate for Trump.

But even seemingly ironclad responses don't always hold up.

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Obama was elected to the Senate in 2005 and told NBC in January 2006 that he'd serve his full term, adding "I will not" run for president in 2008. He kicked off his presidential bid in February 2007 and eventually bested onetime Democratic primary favorite Hillary Clinton — who herself had forgone a possible presidential run four years earlier, saying she would serve her full term as New York senator.

Democrat Martin O'Malley was Maryland's governor for eight years until 2015, then ran unsuccessfully for president. He suggested governors going back to Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton saw their presidential aspirations hurt their popularity back home, where voters "can be resentful and twice as hard on a candidate that they've grown up with and that they've seen."

"What we call it here in Maryland is the crab pot effect," O'Malley said. "When one crab's trying to escape out of the pot, the other ones will pull him back in."

While running for Senate in Texas in 2018, Democrat Beto O'Rourke slammed incumbent Republican Ted Cruz for having spent so much time traveling outside the state running for president in 2016. O'Rourke also committed then to serving a full term if he won, even as Cruz didn't hide his post-Trump administration White House aspirations.

Cruz was reelected — and then O'Rourke mounted a brief 2020 presidential bid.

Cruz may again seek the White House in 2024. O'Rourke, meanwhile, is now running for Texas governor against Republican incumbent Greg Abbott, who himself could run for president in two years.

Potential presidential campaign can scramble home-state politics even before they get off the ground.

In 1998, George W. Bush was cruising to reelection as Texas governor and hadn't formally announced a widely anticipated 2000 presidential run. But his family campaigned hard for Republican Rick Perry — then seeking the lieutenant governorship in a tight race — so that the governorship would remain in GOP hands if Bush eventually left for the White House.

Bush later did just that and Perry succeeded him and served as governor for 14-plus years, eventually mounting two unsuccessful White House bids of his own in 2012 and 2016.

Ray Sullivan, who worked on both Bush's and Perry's campaigns, said Perry was a "hard, definitive no" on running for president until late summer 2011. But then he began to see support building and had close friends and relatives urging him to jump into the White House race.

Perry announced that August but dropped out by January, reflecting how little groundwork his team had been able to do because of the condensed decision-making process, Sullivan said.

"We did not give ourselves enough time to fully prepare for the rigors of a presidential campaign," he said. "And running for president is, physically, emotionally, mentally, the most taxing thing that a human being can do."

South Dakota medical pot cards rise with 'pop-up clinics'

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has seen a rapid rise in people registering to use medical marijuana in recent months, as many obtain their patient cards through temporary consultation sites rather than their regular medical providers, a state health official told lawmakers Tuesday.

Chris Qualm, who administers the state's medical pot program, told a legislative oversight committee that there are now more than 4,000 people registered to use the drug. That's a rapid rise from this summer, when the state tracked several hundred people registering each month.

Many of those cardholders are getting certified to use medical marijuana at so-called pop-up clinics where physicians certify they have a medical condition that qualifies them for medical pot use. The quick consultations — sometimes lasting as little as five minutes — prompted some members of the legislative committee to voice concern that the process was not thorough enough.

Advocates for medical marijuana access said patients were turning to the temporary consultation sites because established health care systems have not embraced the drug.

"The problem is not pop-up clinics," said Melissa Mentele, who organized the 2020 ballot initiative that legalized medical cannabis. "It's our health systems refusing to participate in the program."

The health care systems are operating in a legal gray area because the federal government has not

legalized pot for medical use, said state Sen. Erin Tobin, the Republican chair of the committee.

Meanwhile, the committee on Tuesday approved a bill proposed by the Department of Health that would list specific medical conditions that would qualify someone for a medical marijuana card. It also would strike a provision that allows residents to petition the Department of Health to add specific medical conditions to the list of qualifying conditions.

Lawmakers on the committee unanimously approved the bill, but medical cannabis advocates voiced opposition.

Sioux Falls man acquitted of manslaughter in fatal shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A jury in South Dakota has acquitted a man of manslaughter in a fatal shooting that happened during a struggle for a gun.

Jurors deliberated late into Monday night before finding 34-year-old Marcus Anderson guilty of possession of a firearm as a felon, but acquitting him of first-degree manslaughter and aggravated assault.

The Sioux Falls man was caring for his girlfriend's child at her place in October 2020. The child's father, Jerell King, went to the home after finding out his son was under the supervision of Anderson instead of daycare and the two men got into an altercation.

Anderson argued that he was justified in using deadly force to defend himself against King. Defense attorney Jason Adams pointed to threatening messages left by King to Anderson's girlfriend and to Anderson prior to the shooting, the Argus Leader reported.

The defense argued King intended to take his son and cause harm to Anderson.

"Lives changed that day because (King) let his anger get the best of him," Adams said.

A sentencing date for Anderson has not been set. The gun possession charge carries a maximum two years imprisonment and a fine of \$4,000.

Exhumations resume for DNA to ID Tulsa Race Massacre victims

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

Some of the 19 bodies exhumed for testing in an effort to identify victims of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and then reburied in an Oklahoma cemetery will be removed again starting Wednesday to gather more DNA.

The latest exhumations of bodies, some of which were taken last year from Oaklawn Cemetery, will be followed by another excavation for additional remains.

"There were 14 of the 19 that fit the criteria for further DNA analysis," city spokesperson Michelle Brooks said. "These are the ones that will be re-exhumed."

The 14 sets of remains were sent to Intermountain Forensics in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Brooks said two sets have enough DNA recovered to begin sequencing.

It wasn't immediately clear how many of the 14 will be exhumed a second time, Brooks said.

The remains will be reburied at Oaklawn, where the previous reburial was closed to the public, drawing protests from about two dozen people who said they are descendants of massacre victims and should have been allowed to attend.

Intermountain Forensics is seeking people who believe they are descendants of massacre victims to provide genetic material to help scientists find potential matches.

The exhumations will be followed by another search for bodies in an area south and west of the areas previously excavated in 2020 and 2021.

None of the remains recovered thus far are confirmed as victims of the massacre in which more than 1,000 homes were burned, hundreds were looted and a thriving business district known as Black Wall Street was destroyed. Historians have estimated the death toll to be between 75 and 300.

Victims were never compensated, however a pending lawsuit seeks reparations for the three remaining known survivors of the violence.

The latest search is expected to end by Nov. 18.

Afraid of needles? China rolling out oral COVID-19 vaccine

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The Chinese city of Shanghai started administering an inhalable COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday in what appears to be a world first.

The vaccine, a mist that is sucked in through the mouth, is being offered for free as a booster dose for previously vaccinated people, according to an announcement on an official city social media account.

Scientists hope that such “needle-free” vaccines will make vaccination more accessible in countries with fragile health systems because they are easier to administer. They also may persuade people who don’t like getting a shot in the arm to get inoculated.

China wants more people to get booster shots before it relaxes strict pandemic restrictions that are holding back the economy and are increasingly out of synch with the rest of the world. As of mid-October, 90% of Chinese were fully vaccinated and 57% had received a booster shot.

A video posted by an online Chinese state media outlet showed people at a community health center sticking the short nozzle of a translucent white cup into their mouths. The accompanying text said that after slowly inhaling, people hold their breath for five seconds, with the entire procedure completed in 20 seconds.

“It was like drinking a cup of milk tea,” one Shanghai resident said in the video. “When I breathed it in, it tasted a bit sweet.”

A vaccine taken in the mouth could also fend off the virus before it reaches the rest of the respiratory system, though that would depend in part on the size of the droplets, one expert said.

Larger droplets would train defenses in parts of the mouth and throat, while smaller ones would travel further into the body, said Dr. Vineeta Bal, an immunologist in India.

Chinese regulators approved the vaccine for use as a booster in September. It was developed by Chinese biopharmaceutical company CanSino Biologics Inc. as an aerosol version of the company’s one-shot adenovirus vaccine, which uses a relatively harmless cold virus.

The traditional one-shot vaccine has been approved for use in more than 10 markets including China, Hungary, Pakistan, Malaysia, Argentina and Mexico. The inhaled version has received a go-ahead for clinical trials in Malaysia, a Malaysian media report said last month.

Regulators in India have approved a nasal vaccine, another needle-free approach, but it has yet to be rolled out. The vaccine, developed in the U.S. and licensed to Indian vaccine maker Bharat Biotech, is squirted in the nose.

About a dozen nasal vaccines are being tested globally, according to the World Health Organization.

China has relied on domestically developed vaccines, primarily two inactivated vaccines that have proven effective in preventing death and serious disease but less so than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines at stopping the spread of the disease.

Chinese authorities also have not mandated vaccination — entering an office building or other public places requires a negative COVID-19 test, not proof of vaccination. And the country’s strict “zero-COVID” approach means that only a small proportion of the population has been infected and built immunity that way, compared to other places.

As a result, it’s unclear how widely COVID-19 would spread if restrictions were lifted. The ruling Communist Party has so far shown no sign of easing the “zero-COVID” policy, moving quickly to restrict travel and impose lockdowns when even just a few cases are discovered.

Authorities on Wednesday ordered the lockdown of 900,000 people in Wuhan, the city where the virus was first detected in late 2019, for at least five days. In remote Qinghai province, the urban districts of Xining city have been locked down since last Friday.

In Beijing, Universal Studios said it would close its hotels and attractions “to comply with pandemic prevention and control.” The city of more than 21 million people reported 19 new cases in the latest 24-

hour period.

Fetterman faces Oz at Senate debate 5 months after stroke

By MARC LEVY and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — More than five months after experiencing a stroke, Pennsylvania Democrat John Fetterman struggled at times to explain his positions and often spoke haltingly throughout a highly anticipated debate Tuesday against Republican Dr. Mehmet Oz as they vie for a critical Senate seat.

In the opening minutes of the debate, Fetterman addressed what he called the “elephant in the room.” “I had a stroke. He’s never let me forget that,” Fetterman said of Oz, who has persistently questioned his ability to serve in the Senate. “And I might miss some words during this debate, mush two words together, but it knocked me down and I’m going to keep coming back up.”

When pressed to release his medical records later in the debate, he refused to commit.

Oz, a celebrity heart surgeon, ignored his opponent’s health challenges throughout the debate, instead seizing on Fetterman’s policies on immigration and crime and his support for President Joe Biden. At one point, Oz said Fetterman, the state’s lieutenant governor, was “trying to get as many murderers out of jail as possible.”

“His extreme positions have made him untenable,” he charged.

The forum had many of the trappings of a traditional debate, complete with heated exchanges and interruptions. But the impact of the stroke was apparent as Fetterman used closed-captioning posted above the moderator to help him process the words he heard, leading to occasional awkward pauses.

The biggest question coming out of the debate was whether it would have a lasting impact coming two weeks before the election and more than 600,000 ballots already cast. The stakes of the race to succeed retiring GOP Sen. Pat Toomey are huge: It represents Democrats’ best chance to flip a Senate seat this year — and could determine party control of the chamber and the future of Biden’s agenda.

But rather than watch the full hour as the candidates debated abortion, inflation and crime, many Pennsylvanians may only see clips of the event on social media. And both parties are preparing to flood the airwaves with television advertising in the final stretch.

Independent experts consulted by The Associated Press said Fetterman appears to be recovering remarkably well. Stroke rehabilitation specialist Dr. Sonia Sheth, who watched the debate, called Fetterman an inspiration to stroke survivors.

“In my opinion, he did very well,” said Sheth, of Northwestern Medicine Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital in suburban Chicago. “He had his stroke less than one year ago and will continue to recover over the next year. He had some errors in his responses, but overall he was able to formulate fluent, thoughtful answers.”

Problems with auditory processing do not mean someone also has cognitive problems, the experts agreed. The brain’s language network is different from regions involved in decision making and critical thinking.

Oz, a longtime television personality, was more at home on the debate stage. He cast himself as a moderate Republican looking to unite a divided state, even as he committed to supporting former President Donald Trump should he run for president again in 2024.

“I’m a surgeon, I’m not a politician,” Oz said. “We take big problems, we focus on them, and we fix them. We do it by uniting, by coming together, not dividing.”

Fetterman similarly committed to supporting Biden should he run again in 2024.

The Democratic president campaigned with Fetterman in Pittsburgh during the Labor Day parade and just last week headlined a fundraiser for Fetterman in Philadelphia. There, Biden said the “rest of the world is looking” and suggested a Fetterman loss would imperil his agenda.

While backing Biden, Fetterman also said, “he needs to do more about supporting and fighting about inflation.”

Abortion was a major dividing line during the debate.

Oz insists he supports three exceptions — for rape, incest and to protect the life of the mother. When pressed Tuesday night, he suggested he opposes South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham’s bill to impose a

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nationwide ban on abortion after 15 weeks because it would allow the federal government to dictate the law to states.

"I don't want the federal government involved with that at all," Oz said. "I want women, doctors, local political leaders letting the democracy that always allowed our nation to thrive, to put the best ideas forward so states can decide for themselves."

Fetterman delivered a blunt message to women: "If you believe that the choice for abortion belongs with you and your doctor, that's what I fight for."

Fetterman is a star in progressive politics nationwide, having developed a loyal following thanks in part to his blunt working-class appeal, extraordinary height, tattoos and unapologetic progressive policies. On Tuesday, the 6-foot-9-inch Democrat swapped his trademark hoodie and shorts for a dark suit and tie.

But even before the debate, Democrats in Washington were concerned about Fetterman's campaign given the stakes.

For much of the year, it looked as if Fetterman was the clear favorite, especially as Republicans waged a nasty nomination battle that left the GOP divided and bitter. But as Election Day nears, the race has tightened. And now, just two weeks before the final votes are cast, even the White House is privately concerned that Fetterman's candidacy is at risk.

Fetterman's speech challenges were apparent throughout the night. He often struggled to complete sentences.

When pressed to explain his shifting position on fracking, a critical issue in a state where thousands of jobs are tied to natural gas production, his answer was particularly awkward.

"I do support fracking. And I don't, I don't. I support fracking, and I stand and I do support fracking," Fetterman said.

At another point, the moderator seemed to cut off Fetterman as he struggled to finish an answer defending Biden's student loan debt forgiveness program. He also stumbled before finishing a key attack line: "We need to make sure that Dr. Oz and Republicans believe in cutting Medicare and Social Security ..."

The Pennsylvania Senate hopefuls faced each other inside a Harrisburg television studio. No audience was allowed, and the debate host, Nexstar Media, declined to allow an AP photographer access to the event.

Oz had pushed for more than a half-dozen debates, suggesting Fetterman's unwillingness to agree to more than one was because the stroke had debilitated him. Fetterman insisted that one debate is typical — although two is more customary — and that Oz's focus on debates was a cynical ploy to lie about his health.

Fetterman refused to commit to releasing his full health records when asked repeatedly Tuesday by the moderator.

"My doctor believes that I'm fit to be serving. And that's what I believe is where I'm standing," Fetterman said.

While it is customary for presidential candidates to release health records, there is no such custom in races for the U.S. Senate. Some senators have, in the past, released medical records when running for president.

Democrats noted that the televised debate setting likely would have favored Oz even without questions about the stroke. Oz hosted "The Dr. Oz Show" weekdays for 13 seasons after getting his start as a regular guest on Oprah Winfrey's show in 2004. Fetterman, by contrast, is a less practiced public speaker who is introverted by nature.

Many Republicans were thrilled by the debate's outcome, although most — including Oz — tried to avoid piling on to concerns about Fetterman's health.

Donald Trump Jr. was less cautious.

"If Fetterman is some sort of leftist decoy to make Biden actually sound somewhat intelligent and articulate he's doing a great job," the former president's son tweeted.

UK leader Sunak faces opposition in Parliament for 1st time

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak held the first meeting of his new Cabinet before facing the opposition in Parliament on Wednesday for the first time as leader.

Sunak took office on Tuesday and appointed a government mixing allies with experienced ministers from the governments of his two immediate predecessors, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, as he tries to tackle Britain's multiple economic problems.

Sunak's office said the lineup "reflects a unified party" and aims to ensure "that at this uncertain time, there is continuity at the heart of government."

But during the regular House of Commons session known as Prime Minister's Questions, opposition politicians are likely to focus on the baggage the new ministers carry from the governments of Johnson — who quit in July after a slew of ethics scandals — and Truss, whose government lasted just seven weeks.

A package of unfunded tax cuts Truss unveiled last month spooked financial markets with the prospect of ballooning debt, drove the pound to record lows and forced the Bank of England to intervene — weakening Britain's fragile economy and obliterating Truss' authority within the Conservative Party.

Sunak is seen by Conservatives as a safe pair of hands they hope can stabilize an economy sliding toward recession — and stem the party's plunging popularity.

Sunak brought in people from different wings of the Conservative Party for his Cabinet. He removed about a dozen members of Truss' government but kept several senior figures in place, including Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and Defense Secretary Ben Wallace.

He faces a backlash for reappointing Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who resigned last week after breaching ethics rules by sending a sensitive government email from a private account. She used her resignation letter to criticize Truss, hastening the then-prime minister's demise.

A leading light of the Conservatives' right wing who infuriates liberals, Braverman is tasked with fulfilling a controversial, stalled plan to send some asylum-seekers arriving in Britain on a one-way trip to Rwanda.

Opponents expressed astonishment that Braverman could be back in her job less than a week after her resignation and before an investigation of her breach of the ethics rules.

Cleverly defended the choice.

"People make mistakes in their work," he told the BBC. "No one goes to work with the intention of making a mistake."

Sunak also kept in place Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt, whom Truss appointed two weeks ago to steady the markets. His removal likely would have set off new tremors.

Hunt is scheduled to set out soon how the government plans to come up with billions of pounds (dollars) to fill a fiscal hole created by soaring inflation and a sluggish economy, and exacerbated by Truss' destabilizing plans.

The government has not confirmed whether Hunt's statement, due on Oct. 31, will be delayed because of the change of prime minister.

French TV star scrutinized in book about sex abuse, #MeToo

By SYLVIE CORBET and JADE LE DELEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — "At a certain level of fame, no French man has ever been convicted for sexual abuse."

These words are from the book "Impunity," by H el ene Devynck, who says she was raped by France's most famous TV presenter.

Devynck is among dozens of women who have spoken out recently to accuse Patrick Poivre d'Arvor of rape, sexual abuse or harassment from 1981 to 2018. Her book, published last month, investigates accusations against Poivre d'Arvor, denounces France's historically lax attitude toward sexual abuse allegations and questions why the #MeToo movement in her country has had such limited impact.

Poivre d'Arvor, who hosted France's most popular news program for more than two decades and remains

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a revered personality, denies sexual wrongdoing and insists relations with his accusers were consensual. Now 75 and retired, Poivre d'Arvor has sued 16 of his accusers — including Devynck — and a French newspaper that reported on the allegations.

Most accusations are now too old to prosecute, but French magistrates opened an investigation that examines alleged abuses by Poivre d'Arvor. French media report that over 20 women have filed legal complaints, although no charges have been brought.

In the United States, several high-profile sexual assault trials are unfolding across the country: movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, actor Danny Masterson and filmmaker Paul Haggis all face accusations linked to #MeToo. All deny wrongdoing.

France, meanwhile, has not seen any major figure prosecuted in the #MeToo era, and has had a more fraught relationship with the movement. Even as more and more people in France are standing up against sexual misconduct, debate continues about where seduction ends and sexual harassment and abuse begins, especially in a context where the myth of the "French lover" remains popular and positively perceived.

The book by Devynck, 55, comes after multiple recent accounts of women accusing Poivre d'Arvor in French media outlets.

Devynck said she was raped in 1993 by Poivre d'Arvor when she was working as an assistant to him at TF1, a leading European broadcaster. At the time, Poivre d'Arvor drew in up to 10 million viewers every night.

Poivre d'Arvor's accusers told Devynck that his fame and power made it seem futile to speak out when he abused them because they felt nobody would believe them and it would ruin their careers.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Devynck said the point of her book "is to show how that impunity was built, forged, maintained. And since we have spoken out... impunity continues."

Accusations poured in after author Florence Porcel, now 39, first filed a complaint in February 2021 against Poivre d'Arvor, accusing him of raping her in 2004 and 2009.

The AP generally does not identify those who say they have been sexually assaulted, except when they publicly identify themselves.

Devynck said she spoke with about 60 women accusing Poivre d'Arvor of sexual misconduct while writing the book. Since its publication, she said about 30 more women have come forward with allegations against him. Not all have spoken to police, she said, because some prefer to remain anonymous and avoid a long, difficult judicial process.

A few of the women knew each other through work, though most did not.

Poivre d'Arvor was the star presenter of TF1's evening newscast "20 Heures" between 1987 and 2008 and one of the most famous people in France, where he is widely known as just "PPDA." An author, he also used to anchor a prestigious TV literary program.

A couple of weeks after Porcel's complaint, in his only interview about the allegations to date, Poivre d'Arvor acknowledged "small kisses in the neck, sometimes small compliments or sometimes some charm or seduction" — things that he said are not accepted anymore by younger generations.

"Never in my life, ever, have I accepted a relation that would not be consensual," he added, speaking on TMC, a channel that belongs to the TF1 group.

Devynck said she noticed strong similarities between the accounts of the women she spoke to.

"We all tell the same story, he was using the same words. He was starting with, 'Are you in a relationship? Are you faithful?' And then, he was doing the same gestures and he had a very well-oiled process," she told the AP.

Poivre d'Arvor used to offer women to watch "20 Heures" in the television studio, then invite them into his office, Devynck said. "Not all were raped. Some were abused, others harassed. But every time, all those who speak out say he tried (sexually-oriented acts)," she said.

That, she described in her book, is exactly what happened to her.

"I remained silent. I did not speak while I was working at TF1. If I had spoken, it was the end of my professional life and I had absolutely no chance to make my voice heard," she told the AP.

Devynck decided to make her story public 28 years later. She filed a complaint to police last year after

seeing Poivre d'Arvor's interview on French television, following Porcel's complaint.

"The image shown by that man compared to what I knew, me, about him, was so wrong that the next day, I called investigators to give my testimony," she recalled in her interview with the AP.

"I spoke to defend other women," she added.

She argued in her book that the image of Poivre d'Arvor, often described as a charmer, helped protect him. Because he was known to try to seduce lots of women, people assumed that all relations were consensual, Devynck said.

Poivre d'Arvor's lawyer, Jacqueline Laffont, declined to speak to the AP about the case. She referred to previous comments she made last year after Porcel's case was initially closed following the preliminary investigation.

Closing the case without pressing charges was "the only possible decision" after a "thorough investigation," Laffont said at the time. She said that Poivre d'Arvor had been able to bring "evidence" for his defense showing that Porcel "was lying."

Porcel then filed another complaint, leading a magistrate to reopen a judicial investigation. The Nanterre prosecutors' office said several other accusations made more recently were combined with that investigation.

Only 12% of alleged victims of rape or attempted rape file a complaint — and only a small proportion of those cases lead to a trial, according to French government statistics.

The French Interior ministry said, however, that there was a 33% increase in 2021 in the number of sexual abuse complaints reported to police, a trend it partly attributes to the #MeToo movement prompting women to go public with incidents from their past.

"Before #MeToo, women were even more afraid of saying what happened to them," said Violaine de Filippis, a lawyer and activist who specializes in women's rights.

"So now, to say 'No, it's not meant to be, it's not normal, it's illegal and it's serious,' that's very important," she said.

She did not specifically refer to Poivre d'Arvor's case.

France's justice minister Eric Dupont-Moretti sent a note last year to prosecutors encouraging them to investigate sexual abuse allegations even if they appear too old to prosecute. One goal, he said, is to find other potential victims; another is for magistrates to be able to hear from the people accused.

Devynck said she would like to see Poivre d'Arvor in a courtroom.

"I hope there will be a trial one day, but that I don't know," she said.

Government awarding \$1 billion to schools for electric buses

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 400 school districts spanning all 50 states and Washington, D.C., along with several tribes and U.S. territories, are receiving roughly \$1 billion in grants to purchase about 2,500 "clean" school buses under a new federal program.

The Biden administration is making the grants available as part of a wider effort to accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicles and reduce air pollution near schools and communities.

Vice President Kamala Harris and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan are set to announce the grant awards Wednesday in Seattle. The new, mostly electric school buses will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save money and better protect children's health, the White House said.

As many as 25 million children ride familiar yellow school buses each school day and will have a "healthier future" with a cleaner fleet, Regan said. "This is just the beginning of our work to ... reduce climate pollution and ensure the clean, breathable air that all our children deserve," he said.

Only about 1% of the nation's 480,000 school buses were electric as of last year, but the push to abandon traditional diesel buses has gained momentum in recent years. Money for the new purchases is available under the federal Clean School Bus Program, which includes \$5 billion from the bipartisan infrastructure law President Joe Biden signed last year.

The clean bus program "is accelerating our nation's transition to electric and low-emission school buses

while ensuring a brighter, healthier future for our children,” Regan said in a statement.

The EPA initially made \$500 million available for clean buses in May but increased that to \$965 million last month, responding to what officials called overwhelming demand for electric buses across the country. An additional \$1 billion is set to be awarded in the budget year that began Oct. 1.

The EPA said it received about 2,000 applications requesting nearly \$4 billion for more than 12,000 buses, mostly electric. A total of 389 applications worth \$913 million were accepted to support purchase of 2,463 buses, 95% of which will be electric, the EPA said. The remaining buses will run on compressed natural gas or propane.

School districts identified as priority areas serving low-income, rural or tribal students make up 99% of the projects that were selected, the White House said. More applications are under review, and the EPA plans to select more winners to reach the full \$965 million in coming weeks.

Districts set to receive money range from Wrangell, Alaska, to Anniston, Alabama; and Teton County, Wyoming, to Wirt County, West Virginia. Besides Washington, major cities that won grants for clean school buses include New York, Dallas, Houston, Atlanta and Seattle.

Harris and Regan are expected to announce the awards at an event in Seattle with Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Gov. Jay Inslee. Murray is running for reelection against Republican Tiffany Smiley.

Gas crunch eases in Europe — but the respite might not last

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Natural gas and electricity prices in Europe have plunged from summer peaks thanks to mild weather and a monthslong scramble to fill gas storage ahead of winter and replace Russian supplies during the war in Ukraine. It’s a welcome respite after Russia slashed natural gas flows, triggering an energy crisis that has fueled record inflation and a looming recession.

Yet experts warn it’s too soon to exhale, even as European governments roll out relief packages for people struggling with high utility bills and work on longer-term ways to contain volatile gas and electricity prices that have shrunk household budgets and forced some businesses to shut down.

Uncertainties include not only the weather but how responsive people will be to appeals to turn down their heating and how much demand there will be from Asian economies for scarce energy supplies. And the war a few hours east is a cauldron of possible unpleasant surprises that could cut energy supplies needed for electricity, heating and factory work and send prices sharply higher.

Persistent unknowns are leaving energy-intensive businesses jittery. They are appealing to governments to help them and their customers weather the energy storm so that disruptions in supplies of everything from glass to plastics to clean hospital sheets do not cascade through the economy.

“We must remember that we are still in a tense situation — an economic war between the European Union and Russia in which Russia has weaponized energy supplies,” said Agata Loskot-Strachota, an energy policy expert at the Center for Eastern Studies in Warsaw, Poland.

The good news is natural gas prices on Europe’s TTF benchmark fell on Monday below 100 euros (dollars) per megawatt-hour for the first time since June, a 70% drop from late August highs of nearly 350 euros per megawatt-hour. Electricity prices also fell.

While analysts say lower gas prices are allowing European fertilizer producers to restart operations, there’s no sense of relief for business owners like Sven Paar. His commercial laundry in the German town of Wallduern will use around 30,000 euros worth of natural gas this year to run 12 heavy-duty machines that can wash eight tons of hospital and hotel bedsheets and restaurant tablecloths each day.

His local utility says the bill is rising to 165,000 euros next year. On top of that, Paar says he’s unsettled by a lack of clarity from the German government on whether laundries like his would be considered essential to the economy and spared cutbacks in case of state-imposed rationing. Reports that the utility regulator is working on sorting out the question aren’t enough.

“The problem is, everyone has heard something, and just hearing something doesn’t bring me any planning security,” he said. A letter he sent to the regulator went unanswered.

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"That's the problem, you hope every day that you don't get a call from someone that says, 'Tomorrow you aren't getting any gas,'" he said.

Germany's hospital association has taken up the issue on behalf of laundries like his, saying hospitals have mostly outsourced their laundry services and would run out of sheets and surgical drapes within a few days without them.

The German government is working to roll out plans to cap gas prices for hard-hit businesses. The association representing smaller businesses says its understanding is that the government would focus any possible rationing on the 2,500 largest gas users in Germany and mostly spare businesses the size of Paar's.

Helping ease the possibility of rationing is Europe's underground storage getting filled to 94%, compared with 77% at this time last year, which energy expert Loskot-Strachota called "quite a success." A big assist has come from mild weather across Europe, with Warsaw, for example, a relatively balmy 18 degrees Celsius (64 degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday.

Germany, once heavily dependent on Russian gas, has filled storage to 97% of capacity, France to 99% and Belgium and Portugal both to 100%. That was achieved by importing record quantities of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, which comes by ship from the U.S. and Qatar instead of by pipeline from Russia, and by increasing pipeline supplies from Norway and Azerbaijan.

The scramble to line up more LNG has led to a backup of tankers off the coast of Spain, a major processor, as orders collide with reduced demand and limited capacity at the country's import terminals, which turn boatloads of supercooled LNG back into gas that then flows to homes and businesses.

Spanish gas company Enagas warned last week that it may have to delay or stop tankers from unloading LNG because its storage was almost full. Vessel positioning maps showed at least seven LNG tankers anchored close to Spanish shores Tuesday, though it wasn't clear how many were waiting to unload.

Despite an abundance of LNG and falling prices, Loskot-Strachota said the energy situation remains volatile. She warns that prices for gas to be delivered in December and the 2023 winter months are higher than prices now.

Russian gas has dwindled to a trickle through pipelines in Ukraine and under the Black Sea to Turkey, but losing even the small amount that remains could roil markets. Moscow has blamed the reductions on technical reasons or a refusal to pay in rubles, while European leaders call it blackmail for supporting Ukraine.

EU governments also have been working on proposals including buying gas as a bloc or limiting price swings to ease the energy crisis, although the measures would largely affect next year's purchases.

Gas use is down 15% in Europe, but that is mostly from factories simply abandoning production that has become unprofitable.

"This is dangerous — this hurts the economy, this hurts Europe," Loskot-Strachota said.

Whether households will join businesses in cutting back by lowering thermostats and turning off lights cannot be determined until the cold weather comes in earnest. Russia's willingness to destroy Ukrainian heating and electrical plans shows that Russia is ready to escalate despite battlefield defeats.

The market also is less flexible because gas reserves will be increasingly used as day-to-day base fuel for heating and generating electricity, rather than as a "swing" fuel during times of peak demand such as cold snaps.

"Every event, every problem, weather problem, Russia problem, becomes a factor which sends prices very very high," Loskot-Strachota said. "I'm very happy that we're in a calm situation now, but it is nothing that will last for the whole winter."

Low-wage workers bear financial brunt of denied abortions

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writers

A Texas mother of a toddler, scraping by on her husband's income, was desperate to return to work but struggling to afford child care. A young Florida warehouse worker had barely left behind a turbulent past of homelessness and abuse only to be mired in debt.

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When both women learned they were pregnant, they came to the agonizing conclusion they couldn't go through with it.

"When you try to discuss the alternatives, you find the problems. If we could do this, where is the baby going to stay?" said Alyssa Burns, the warehouse worker who makes \$16 an hour and was sharing two-bedroom apartment with her boyfriend and another couple when she found out she was pregnant last year. "We both work full-time jobs. My mom works. We can't afford child care."

There are wide-ranging reasons why women may seek to terminate their pregnancies but for those struggling to make ends meet, finances are inevitably part of the calculation. Now many of them will be thrust into a circumstance they can't afford as abortion bans and restrictions take hold in half the country after the Supreme Court overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling guaranteeing abortion rights.

Three-quarters of women who seek abortions were low-income, meaning they had a family income below or up to double the federal poverty level, according to a 2014 study by the Guttmacher Institute, a science-based research group that supports abortion rights. More than half already had children and many worked in physically demanding roles with fewer labor protections and less flexibility than higher-wage jobs.

"A salaried employee with benefits is the type of person who generally does find a way with or without their employer support," said Caitlin Myers, an economist at Middlebury College, who studies reproduction and the economy. "We are talking about a really economically fragile group of workers, often hourly workers, often shift workers with very unpredictable schedules for whom this becomes really overwhelming."

Burns, 24, was able to swiftly end her just over six-week old pregnancy in March 2021 because Florida had no law against it at the time and the state's current law bans most abortions after 15 weeks. But she said she is haunted by the idea that in a different state and a different time, she might have been forced to have the baby.

The Texas mother panicked at the same possibility. She learned she was pregnant in September of last year just as a Texas law banning all abortions after roughly six weeks of pregnancy took effect.

"I was so broken. I couldn't fathom that it was happening," said the 30-year-old hairstylist who, like Burns, shared her story through the women's advocacy group MomsRising but requested anonymity for fear of facing harassment in her conservative Corpus Christi community. "I can't afford this child. I am struggling with a child I already have."

In the end, she was able to have an abortion in New Mexico with financial help from Planned Parenthood. Even so, she and her husband incurred \$1,000 in expenses, including \$500 in car rental. Her husband had to take unpaid time from his job as a cell phone tower maintenance worker.

If it hadn't been for the Texas ban, she said she could have gone to a clinic 20 minutes away. Indeed, for many women living in states that would ban abortions, the average travel distance to the nearest clinic would rise from 35 miles to 272 miles, according to Myers' analysis of a national database of abortion facilities, revised monthly.

Many anti-abortion advocates say the answer is not to make it easier to terminate a pregnancy but to widen the safety net and make it easier to have children. They argue Roe v. Wade hurt working women by discouraging employers and the government enact more generous benefits for parents.

"Abortion has been the privileged response to female poverty and the plight of low-wage workers in this country," said Erika Bachicho, an anti-abortion legal scholar who believes more pressure should be applied on conservative states to strengthen policies around parental leave and child care.

But research tells a different story. Carrying an unwanted pregnancy quadruples the odds that a woman and her child will live below the federal poverty line, according to The Turnaway Study, a University of California San Francisco research project that tracked women who got access to abortions versus those who'd been denied them over a 10-year period. It triples the chances of the woman being unemployed.

Being denied an abortion often leads to increased rates of unpaid debt, poverty, evictions, and bankruptcies over the next five years, according to a recent study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research, which used the Turnaway study data to exam the credit history of women who couldn't get abortions.

Those were some of the risks facing Burns, who left home at 18 and finished high school while living

homeless. Although she had found some stability by the time she got pregnant, she was still paying off more than \$7,000 in debt from breaking her rental lease a few years earlier when she left an abusive relationship.

Earlier this year, the Texas hairstylist moved in with her parents in Corpus Christi because life had become too expensive in Austin, where her monthly rent rose from \$1,400 to \$1,600 and putting her daughter in child care would have cost \$600 a week. Her husband, who earns \$50,000 a year with overtime, will join her once their lease term ends. With their parents able to watch her child, she was able to go back to work two days a week.

"We've been playing catch up for the longest time," she said.

Catherine R. Pakaluk, an anti-abortion assistant professor of social research and economic thought at the Catholic University of America, acknowledges the unique difficulties for low-income women but does not believe abortion is the right answer.

"Having a baby is harder when you're poor. But I don't think the poor's interest or the elite's interest are served by eliminating a child conceived into difficult circumstances," Pakaluk said. "That's why the poor should be 100% the focus of any kind of policymaking."

In reality, however, states with some of the nation's strictest abortion laws are among the hardest places to raise children, especially for the poor, according to an analysis of federal data by The Associated Press. In Mississippi, for instance, access to pre- and post-natal care has dwindled since the Supreme Court ruling in June, making childbirth even more dangerous for poor women and children.

There is also a big disparity between the benefits that employers offer low-income workers versus high-income workers. Roughly 6% of private industry workers with an average wage in the lowest 10% had access to paid family leave, compared with 43% workers in the top 10%, according to the most recent survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, conducted last year. And only 38% of private industry workers with wages at the bottom 10% get paid sick leave, compared with 96% in the top 10%, according to a labor department study done in March.

Burns said she and her boyfriend dream of eventually having a family but they need stability first. She has been able to go to the dentist for the first time in her life, getting cavities filled, wisdom teeth removed and some crowns put in, accruing more debt that would have been difficult to handle with a baby.

"We have spent the last year and a half trying to get our financial stuff together and trying to get our health together, trying to get to the point where we could probably do it and not damage the child with our own problems," Burns said.

Arab voters key to breaking deadlock in Israeli election

By TIA GOLDENBERG and SAM McNEIL Associated Press

UMM AL FAHM, Israel (AP) — The voices of Israel's Palestinian citizens are often drowned out or delegitimized in the country's noisy politics. Yet in the upcoming parliament election, they could hold the key to breaking an entrenched political deadlock.

Israelis vote Tuesday for the fifth time in under four years. The country remains divided over former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fitness to serve while on trial for corruption. Polls show those numbers have barely budged.

What could tip the scales is the vote of one-fifth of Israelis who are of Palestinian descent, with family ties in adjacent territories Israel captured in 1967.

Turnout among these voters will be key: High numbers could swing the election in favor of Netanyahu's opponents, while a drop could pave the way for Netanyahu's return.

"I can hardly remember a single election campaign that all depended on the vote of Arab citizens," said Arik Rudnitzky, who studies Arab voting patterns at the Israel Democracy Institute, a think tank.

Most polls predict a historically low turnout among Arab voters, even though the outgoing coalition government included an Arab party, a first in Israel's history.

That first-time participation in government hasn't generated much excitement among voters disillusioned

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by rampant crime, the rising cost of living and a loss of hope for change from within a slow-moving political system.

This could be a boon for Netanyahu, who in his lengthy political career has both played on ethnic tensions to drum up support for his nationalist Likud party and sought support from the same Arab voters he derided to bolster his party's chances.

Arab parties are expected to win eight seats in the 120-member parliament, down from a high of 15 in 2020, polls have suggested. Some pollsters predict even less. If the polls are correct, Netanyahu could be in charge of a hard-line government that includes extremists who call Arab lawmakers "terrorists" and want to deport them.

Sensing the urgency, Arab lawmakers are making a last-minute effort to rally their supporters. Signs around Arab areas implore residents to vote.

"People have lost hope," said Sami Abu Shehadeh, head of the nationalist Balad party. "We tell them that voting for Balad now, it's not another vote." Instead, he said, it "can change the whole political map."

In the arithmetic that transforms ballots into parliamentary seats, lower Arab turnout could hobble the current coalition's chances to return to power, or else grant the Netanyahu camp more seats.

"The only thing that is ambiguous in this whole story is the Arabs, and therefore they are the only thing that this time can decide the elections, for better or worse," said Mohammad Magadli, a political analyst with the Arabic language Nas Radio and Israeli Channel 12 TV.

If a coalition doesn't coalesce, Israel could head toward a sixth vote.

Since the political crisis began in 2019, Netanyahu has struggled to form a viable government. Israel's fragmented politics require coalition building to govern and former allies have refused to sit under him as long as he is battling corruption charges. Arab parties have historically been shunned by or refused to join Israeli governments. But that tradition was shattered last year when a small Arab Islamist party joined the coalition formed by Prime Minister Yair Lapid, sending Netanyahu packing after 12 years in office. Their government, a hodgepodge of parties with little in common, ultimately collapsed after one year due to infighting.

That Arab party, United Arab List, is polling at four seats. A separate Arab list also is set to capture four seats. The third party, Balad, may not even cross the electoral threshold to enter parliament. Balad opposes joining a coalition.

Balad leader Abu Shehadeh sees no policy differences between Netanyahu and his opponents that could benefit his constituents. He was out recently in the Arab city of Umm al Fahm, trying to convince people to vote for the sake of Arab representation in parliament.

Seated in a circle and flanked by two olive trees, Abu Shehadeh made his case to a group of residents sipping coffee. He met potential voters outside a mosque and pled his case with elderly voters.

Shadiya Mahajneh, an Umm al-Fahm resident, said she would not be voting. "We don't feel that there are achievements," she said. "The crime levels in the Arab sector are increasing and they (Arab politicians) are not doing anything."

Palestinians in Israel enjoy the rights of citizens and some have reached the highest echelons of government and business. Yet they also face discrimination in housing, jobs and public services. Their communities tend to be poorer and less educated than those of Jewish Israelis.

Voter turnout among Arabs has generally been lower than among Jews. In next week's election, turnout among Arabs is expected to be in the low 40s, and among Jews in the mid-60s.

Many Arab voters are skeptical of their leaders' ability or desire to bring about change. They also feel their standing in the country was downgraded with a 2018 law that codified Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. And they're frustrated by the never-ending cycle of Israeli-Palestinian violence that has cast them as a fifth column because of their solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem, the lands Israel captured in 1967.

Disillusionment has been fueled by the entry of Mansour Abbas' United Arab List into the coalition. While the move was initially welcomed, Abbas was unable to prove to voters that he could deliver results,

deepening their sense that the political game is rigged against them.

"After 75 years being a minority inside Israel, people want to have ready-made or quick solutions," said Dalia Fadila, an educator who promotes Arab integration into Israeli society. "They are very much sick and bored of all the promises."

UN: World "nowhere near" hitting emissions targets

BERLIN (AP) — The United Nations says current pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions put the planet on course to blow past the limit for global warming countries agreed to in the 2015 Paris climate accord.

The U.N. climate office said Wednesday that its latest estimate based on 193 national emissions targets would see temperatures rise to 2.5 degrees Celsius (4.5 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial averages by the end of the century.

That's a full degree higher than the ambitious goal set in the Paris pact to limit warming by 1.5 C (2.7 F).

The report found that emissions will also increase by 10.6% by 2030 from 2010 levels, a slight decrease from the 13.7% estimates last year.

Scientists say emissions of planet-heating gases actually need to be cut by 45% by the end of the decade.

"We are still nowhere near the scale and pace of emission reductions required to put us on track toward a 1.5 degrees Celsius world," the head of the U.N. climate office, Simon Stiell, said in a statement. "To keep this goal alive, national governments need to strengthen their climate action plans now and implement them in the next eight years."

The report was released ahead of next month's U.N. climate summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, where countries will again try to ratchet up their targets.

Russia's chaotic draft leaves some out in cold, without gear

By The Associated Press undefined

The mobilized reservists that Russian President Vladimir Putin visited last week at a firing range southeast of Moscow looked picture-perfect.

Kremlin video of the young men headed for the war in Ukraine showed them in mint-condition uniforms, equipped with all the gear needed for combat: helmets, bulletproof vests and sleeping bags. When Putin asked if they had any problems, they shook their heads.

That stands in stark contrast with the complaints circulating widely on Russian news outlets and social media of equipment shortages, poor living conditions and scant training for the new recruits.

Since Putin announced the mobilization Sept. 21, independent media, human rights activists and those called up have painted a bleak picture of a haphazard, chaotic and ethnically biased effort to round up as many men as possible and push them quickly to the front lines, regardless of skill, training and equipment.

Videos on Russian social networks showed conscripted men complaining of cramped, filthy accommodations, toilets overflowing with trash and a lack of food and medicine. Some showed men displaying rusty weapons.

In one video, a group of draftees milled in a field, claiming they had been left there with no food or shelter. Other clips depicted men forced to sleep on bare benches or tightly packed on the floor.

"We didn't seek you out; you called us. Here, look at this! How long can this go on?" an exasperated voice says in a video.

Putin's decree on the partial mobilization didn't outline the criteria for draftees or say how many would be called up. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has said it will affect only about 300,000 reservists with relevant combat or service experience.

Conscription protests have been harshly put down, and tens of thousands of men fled Russia to neighboring countries to avoid being pressed into service.

In the week after the decree, a young man opened fire on a recruitment officer in the Siberian city of Ust-Ilimsk, seriously wounding him. On Oct. 15, a shootout at a training camp in the southern Belgorod region killed 11 people and wounded 15 others. Enlistment offices and other administrative buildings also

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have been set on fire.

It's now clear that in a country where almost all men under 65 are registered as part of the reserve, the mobilization process wasn't carried out carefully. There has been a flood of reports of call-up summonses being served to those with no military experience. Police rounded up men in the streets of Moscow and other cities, or raided hostels to apprehend guests of fighting age. Enlistment offices often skipped required health checks.

The hasty call-up will hardly achieve anything other than "slowing down the advances" of Ukrainian troops in the 8-month-old war, military analyst Pavel Luzin said in an interview.

Moscow is simply "prolonging the agony" in Ukraine, said Luzin, a visiting scholar at The Fletcher School at Tufts University.

Activists also say ethnic minorities in some regions were drafted in disproportionate numbers. Videos circulated of protests in the Muslim majority region of Dagestan, with relatives complaining that the area was providing more recruits than elsewhere.

Vladimir Budaev of the Free Buryatia Foundation told AP that Indigenous people in Russia's Far North and along the Mongolian border were "rounded up in their villages" in the drive.

In remote regions of Sakha and Buryatia, enlistment officers scoured the taiga for potential draftees, and "handed out summonses to anyone they met," he said.

According to Yekaterina Morland, an ethnic Buryat volunteer at the Asians of Russia Foundation, Buryatia has seen mobilization rates up to six times higher than Russia's European regions.

In the first two weeks of the call-up, authorities in some regions reported sending home hundreds of men who were drafted despite not meeting the criteria.

"The task of a military enlistment office is to recruit — recruit whoever they can grab," says Elena Popova, the coordinator of the Movement of Conscientious Objectors.

Putin himself publicly acknowledged "mistakes" in the process and demanded its improvement.

But even when the summonses went to those who had served in the army, it didn't necessarily mean that they had battlefield skills. Some former conscripts often don't get proper military training when they serve and instead are engaged in menial labor.

A woman who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because she feared reprisals said her 31-year-old husband did his mandatory service six years ago and had "no training at a firing range, or any combat drills in the field," but authorities tried to draft him anyway.

In fact, he had only held a weapon once, when they were taught how to strip down and reassemble an automatic rifle, she said. Mostly, she added, "they were sweeping (the compound), cleaning the snow."

Relatives of conscripts reported having to spend their own money on gear and basic necessities. Online groups were formed to raise funds for equipment.

One campaign was run by Kremlin-backed lawmaker and state TV host Yevgeny Popov, who said reservists in the Taman artillery division got shoes and clothes, but had "an acute shortage of drones, walkie-talkies, smartphones with maps (for gunners), binoculars, headlamps (and) power banks," he said.

Russian media reported multiple deaths of reservists in Ukraine, with their relatives telling news outlets that they had received very little training.

When asked by a reporter why several reservists had died in Ukraine only three weeks after being called up, Putin confirmed that training could last as few as 10 days and as many as 25.

Luzin, the military analyst, said Russia isn't able to train hundreds of thousands of men. "The army was not ready for mobilization. It never prepared for it," he said.

Putin has promised to finish the mobilization drive by November, when the regular fall draft is scheduled. Military experts and rights groups say enlistment offices and training camps can't process both at the same time, warning that the call-up may resume months later.

As of mid-October, 222,000 reservists have been recruited, Putin said. Whether it will be possible to enlist another 80,000 in the remaining two weeks is unclear.

Even though masses of Russian men are no longer fleeing the country and street protests have all but halted, there are still those resisting the effort.

Independent and opposition-leaning media have published instructions on how to avoid the call-up legally. Rights groups advise men not to sign the summons – which is required for it to be considered legally served – and not to go near enlistment offices.

Some men are seeking alternative civil service, a right that lawyers say is guaranteed by the constitution. Kirill Berezin, 27, responded to a call-up notice shoved under the door of his St. Petersburg apartment by going to an enlistment office to apply for the alternative civil service, but he was taken to a military unit anyway, according to his friend, Marina Tsyganova.

Berezin, who has since been sent to a training facility in southern Russia, submitted a document to his commanders that said he “can’t serve with weapons, can’t kill people and help people who do it” because it was “contrary to my conscience.”

Tsyganova told AP that she represented him in a St. Petersburg court, which last week rejected Berezin’s lawsuit, saying only regular conscripts under 27 are eligible for alternative civil service. His defense team plans to appeal, she said, and at the very least, she hoped he won’t be sent to Ukraine while the legal battle proceeds.

Zimbabwe’s focus on wheat set to yield biggest-ever harvest

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe says it is on the brink of its biggest wheat harvest in history, thanks in large part to efforts to overcome food supply problems caused by the war in Ukraine. But bush fires and impending rains are threatening crops yet to be harvested.

Like other African countries, Zimbabwe has for decades relied on imports to offset low local production. After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine resulted in global shortages and price hikes, the country wanted to ensure “self-sufficiency at all costs,” Deputy Agriculture Minister Vangelis Haritatos told The Associated Press this week.

The country expects to harvest 380,000 tons of wheat, “which is 20,000 more than we require as a country,” Haritatos said. That is up from about 300,000 tons produced last year.

“We are most likely to get the highest tonnage since 1962, when wheat was first introduced to Zimbabwe. A lot of countries are facing shortages, but the opposite is happening in Zimbabwe,” Haritatos said.

While other hunger-stricken African countries are struggling with reduced wheat imports due to the war in Ukraine, Zimbabwe is looking at using its anticipated surplus of the grain to build “a small strategic reserve” for the first time in its history, agriculture minister Anxious Masuka told journalists earlier this month. This would cushion Zimbabwe against future shocks.

Masuka said Zimbabwe plans to bump up wheat production to about 420,000 tons next season, giving the country room to keep building its strategic reserve and become an exporter of the grain. Wheat is Zimbabwe’s most important strategic crop after corn.

African countries — which imported 44% of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine between 2018 and 2020, according to U.N. figures — were hit hard by the global shortages and price hikes of grains as a result of the war. The African Development Bank has reported a 45% increase in wheat prices on the continent.

African nations were at the center of Western efforts to reopen Ukraine’s ports as the United States and allies accused Russia of starving the world by denying exports from Ukraine, a key global grain exporter. African leaders also visited Russia to meet with Putin over the issue.

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa in April described the war in Ukraine as a “wake-up call” for countries to grow their own food.

The answer in Zimbabwe has been to empower local farmers, said Haritatos, the deputy agriculture minister.

That included roping in hundreds of small-scale, rural farmers to start growing a crop that was traditionally reserved for large-scale commercial farmers, improving water supply infrastructure and distributing fertilizers to small-scale farmers as well as increasing private-sector participation. The crop was introduced for the first time to areas and farmers who had never grown wheat before.

Winter corn production has given way to wheat in many areas, with Zimbabwe banking on corn reserves to meet demand for the staple food. Land used for growing wheat increased from 66,000 hectares (163,089 acres) in 2021 to 75,000 hectares this year and will grow to 100,000 hectares next season.

"A lot of countries discount small-scale farmers because they are so small that individually they cannot effect much change," Haritatos said. "But we organized them into clusters and convinced them that it was possible. The quality of most of their crops is premium."

He said the war in Ukraine had made Zimbabwe "realize that we shouldn't rely on other countries for food that we can grow on our own."

However, Zimbabwe's wheat is predominantly soft, and there is a need to blend it with imported hard wheat varieties to produce quality flour for bread, according to the Grain Millers Association of Zimbabwe. But the government has ruled out imports amid the surplus, saying a special permit would be needed.

The wheat harvest runs from October to December. However, both farmers and the government are concerned by the threat of raging bush fires and imminent rains. They say the fires are more devastating than in previous years as climate change contributes to an extended dry season.

"Farmers are increasingly getting worried about the time factor. It looks like the rains will be upon us soon. Wheat should be out of the fields," said Paul Zakariya, director of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union, which represents small-scale growers.

Officials said bush fires destroyed wheat worth nearly \$1 million in a single week in mid-October. Zimbabwe is amid the "fire season," characterized by severe heat and strong windy and arid conditions that precede the rainy season.

The government says it has deployed more combine harvesters to help farmers speed up the harvest and is carrying out fire prevention awareness programs. The country's environmental management agency has described bush fires as "one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time."

LA police investigating if racist recording taped illegally

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles detectives are investigating whether a recording last year that captured city councilmembers' racist remarks was made illegally, the police chief said Tuesday.

The recording's disclosure earlier this month unleashed a growing scandal in the nation's second-largest city just weeks before Election Day. The councilmembers' bigoted discussion — laden with crude insults — laid bare the unequal representation and divided political power along racial lines in Los Angeles.

The council president, Nury Martinez, resigned in disgrace, while two other councilmembers have resisted widespread calls — from the White House down — for their ousters.

The uproar began with the release nearly two weeks ago of a previously unknown recording of a 2021 private meeting involving Martinez and Councilmen Kevin de León and Gil Cedillo, as well as powerful labor leader Ron Hererra, head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

"The department has initiated a criminal investigation into an allegation of eavesdropping," Los Angeles Police Chief Michel Moore said Tuesday during a media availability in response to a question from The Associated Press.

The group, all Latino Democrats, was captured on the recording scheming to protect their political clout in the redrawing of council districts during an hourlong, closed-door meeting that was laced with bigoted comments. They used racist language to mock colleagues — as well as one councilman's young Black son — while they planned to protect Latino political strength in council districts.

It's not known who made the tape, or why.

Under California law, all parties must consent to the recording of a private conversation or phone call. Otherwise, the person who made the recording could face criminal and civil penalties. The state's wire-tapping statutes are among the strongest in the nation and allow the "injured party" — the person being recorded without their permission — to sue.

Martinez, de León, Cedillo and Herrera approached the Los Angeles Police Department on Friday —

more than two weeks after the recording, which had been posted on Reddit, was first reported by the Los Angeles Times — and asked for the agency to open an investigation, Moore said.

“This (request) was done by the principals — this wasn’t done through some intermediary or otherwise,” he added.

Detectives have since interviewed the group about why they believe the recording was made “unlawfully and surreptitiously,” the chief said.

But Pete Brown, a spokesperson for de León, said Tuesday night that the councilman had not been involved in the report to police and had not been interviewed by detectives.

“Councilmember de León did not make a request for an investigation,” Brown told AP hours after Moore said that all four had been involved.

Martinez’s spokesperson during her time in office did not immediately respond to requests for comment late Tuesday, nor did a spokesperson for Cedillo or the county labor federation.

The labor federation previously called the leak of the recording illegal and unsuccessfully attempted to halt the LA Times’ publication of the discussion’s details.

No suspects have been identified, Moore said.

“We’ll also look, as far as possible, to understand how such a recording was made and identify, if possible, the person or persons responsible,” he said.

Detectives will consult with the city attorney — whose office handles misdemeanors — and county prosecutors for felony charges if needed, the chief said.

Other questions remain about what the investigation could entail and whether other recordings were made at the labor federation’s headquarters.

The state is separately investigating how the council districts were drawn and whether the process was rigged. Attorney General Rob Bonta, a Democrat, has said his investigation could lead to civil liability or criminal charges, depending on what is found.

The fallout has left City Hall in turmoil and President Joe Biden has called on de León and Cedillo to step down. Noisy protesters at City Council meetings have provided a steady backdrop of chants and shouting as they try to increase pressure on the duo to resign.

Nevada county set for conspiracy-inspired ballot hand count

By GABE STERN Associated Press/Report for America

PAHRUMP, Nev. (AP) — A county in Nevada is scheduled to start an unprecedented hand count of its midterm ballots Wednesday, a process fueled by voting machine conspiracy theories that raises concerns about early results being leaked ahead of Election Day.

Nye County, a scrub brush-dotted old silver mining region about halfway between Las Vegas and Reno, got clearance for the count from the state supreme court last week. The approval came with conditions that it had to take numerous steps to prevent early vote tallies in any race from being reported publicly.

Nevada is home to one of the most closely watched U.S. Senate races in the country, as well as high-stakes contests for governor and the office that oversees elections.

The secretary of state’s office is reviewing Nye County’s written proposal, which includes scrapping plans to livestream the hand count. In addition, five-member teams will be separated into four to six different rooms so anyone observing the count of early in-person and mailed ballots will not know the “totality of returns.”

Observers also must sign a form saying they won’t release any results they overhear. Anyone doing so could be charged with a gross misdemeanor.

The hand-count of all paper ballots will run parallel to the county’s machine tabulation process.

The secretary of state’s office, which oversees county clerks, has the power to approve or reject Nye County’s plan. It had not decided by late Tuesday whether the proposal was sufficient to meet the requirements set out in the supreme court order.

When asked if the count would go forward, Deputy Secretary of State for Elections Mark Wlaschin re-

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plied "TBD."

The concern over safeguarding the early voting tallies is because the process is so unusual. Ballots cast early, either in-person or by mail, are typically counted by machine on Election Day, with results released only after polls close. In most places, hand counts are used after an election on a limited basis to ensure the machine tallies are accurate.

In hand counts, teams work together to verify the results, calling out voters' selections race by race, ballot by ballot.

Nye County commissioners voted to run a hand count of all its ballots after being bombarded with complaints by residents who have been subjected to nearly two years of conspiracy theories related to voting machines and false claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

Trump won 69% of the vote in Nye County even as President Joe Biden won Nevada by about 33,500 votes.

Nye County wanted to start counting its early ballots before Election Day because the process is so arduous and time-consuming. Waiting until Election Day to begin a full hand count would risk the county — which has about 33,000 registered voters — missing the state's certification deadline.

Nye is the most prominent county in the U.S. to change its vote-counting process in reaction to the conspiracy theories — even though there has been no evidence of widespread fraud or manipulation of machines in the 2020 election, including in Nevada. The decision earlier this year prompted the long-time county clerk to resign.

Nye County's interim clerk, Mark Kampf, has described the county's Dominion tabulator machines as a "stop-gap" measure while it decides how to handle tallies for future elections.

The Republican's nominee for secretary of state, Jim Marchant, said he wants to spread hand-counting to every county. During a county commission meeting in March, he said he would try to have the state's 15 rural counties adopt hand-counting and then "force Clark and Washoe" — home to Las Vegas and Reno — to hand-count.

Marchant has repeated unsubstantiated election claims and told audiences that elections are corrupt, saying candidates are "selected" through a rigged process rather than elected.

Nevada's least populous county, Esmeralda, used hand-counting to certify its primary results in June, when officials spent more than seven hours counting just 317 ballots. The most populous county in the continental U.S. to rely exclusively on hand-counting is Owyhee County, Idaho, which has just a fifth of the registered voters as Nye County.

GOP eyes Indiana upset amid national push to diversify party

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

GARY, Ind. (AP) — After a lunchtime roundtable with Indiana Sen. Todd Young and Utah Rep. Burgess Owens, Republican congressional candidate Jennifer-Ruth Green suggested she appreciated "serving alongside my peers."

"Not my peers," she quickly corrected. "I misspoke."

Green isn't their congressional colleague yet, but her slip might not be all that premature.

Democrats have represented this industrial, union-friendly corner of northwest Indiana in Congress for nearly a century. But their grip on the seat is in question as the party faces headwinds around the U.S. this year, buffeted by President Joe Biden's low approval ratings and high inflation.

The contours of this district, encompassing Gary, have been redrawn to be slightly more friendly to Republicans. Green, meanwhile, offers a compelling biography that includes 20-plus years of Air Force service. She's still active in the Indiana Air National Guard.

The GOP hopes Green will be at the forefront of a more diverse party in Washington. If elected, she would be the only Black Republican woman serving in the House — and just the second Black Republican woman in history elected to the chamber.

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Republicans say they're breaking party records for diversity, with 80 women who are House incumbents or candidates on midterm ballots nationwide. The GOP also has 28 Black nominees, 33 Hispanic Americans, 13 Asian Americans and three American Indians running, according to the National Republican Campaign Committee, the party's House campaign arm.

And, of the 74 districts the committee is targeting for victory, 24 GOP candidates are military veterans. In all, 125 Republican House incumbents and challengers say they have military experience, compared to 61 Democrats, according to the Pew Research Center.

"I'm grateful that that's a demographic that, when you look at polling, everything works," Green, who was stationed in Iraq as a captain and identifies as both Black and Asian, said of her embodying backgrounds her party has prioritized.

But she added, "If I was who I was without any thoughtful leadership or character attached to it, I would not be effective in this role."

Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer says that, when he became head of the National Republican Campaign Committee in 2018, he sought to empower members of Congress to recruit strong candidates in their states.

"The goal is not so much to diversify, as we wanted to identify candidates from communities (where) we want Republicans represented," Emmer said.

Even as the GOP attempts to diversify its field of candidates, the party's base is still overwhelmingly white. AP VoteCast, a survey of the national electorate, shows that 86% of Donald Trump's voters in the 2020 presidential election were white, compared to 63% of Joe Biden's voters. Nineteen percent of Biden voters were Black, while just 2% of Trump voters nationwide were.

In Indiana, the percentages of Black voter support for each were the same, 19% to 2% in favor of Biden.

This year's national slate for House Democrats is also far more diverse. Incumbents and challengers include 175 women, 97 Black nominees, 50 Hispanic nominees, 18 who are Asian or Pacific Islander and at least seven who are American Indian, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee says.

Democrats also accuse some prominent Republicans of promoting racism, including Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and others talking up the "great replacement theory."

Emmer balks at such criticism, saying Democrats want "to talk about anything but the issues that matter most."

He predicts victory for Jennifer-Ruth Green in Indiana, despite the district being Democratic since 1931. It elected Rep. Frank Mrvan for the first time in 2020, and backed Biden by nearly 9 percentage points.

Though the new maps make the district slightly more Republican, a Green win would nonetheless be an early sign of a strong election night for the GOP.

Even Green supporters aren't sure that'll happen, however. While she was knocking on doors last weekend in Munster, near Indiana's border with Illinois, Susan and Bart Cashman spotted her and hurried over to chat. They're both Green supporters but cautioned that the area remains deeply blue.

"It's Lake County, so, we don't know," Susan Cashman said.

Their county includes Gary, where nearly 80% of residents are Black. The city, known as the hometown of Michael Jackson and his family, saw unemployment spike in the 1970s with the closing of many area steel mills. It has experienced rising violent crime more recently.

Green won a crowded Republican House primary as a Trump supporter and is a frequent Fox News guest. She said her campaign can keep the race with Mrvan tight by capturing 20% support from Black voters.

"We'll have the opportunity to tell people, 'Hey, this is where we are. Is it producing good opportunity for you?'" she said of her pitch to Black voters. "Or do you want something different?"

Former Utah Rep. Mia Love was elected in 2014 as the House's first Black Republican woman but lost four years later. The chamber now has just two Black Republican men, Florida Rep. Byron Donalds and Owens, who attended the Gary roundtable with Green.

"What Jennifer represents are American values," Owens said of the possibility of Green becoming the GOP's second Black female House member. "I think that actually really overcomes all the other stuff."

Darquia and Gordon Biffle co-own Big Daddy's barbeque in Gary and hosted the recent roundtable. They

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said inflation has increased the price of a case of fries from \$17 to as high as \$29.

"Even all the help we got, that all got flushed down the toilet as we tried to keep our workers," Gordon Biffle said of previous, Democrat-championed COVID-19 federal aid. "Whether it's Democrat or Republican, we've got to side with the people that's going to help us."

Former Indiana state lawmaker Charlie Brown, a Democrat from Gary, noted that Green doesn't mention party affiliation on many of her campaign materials, which he said may "fool" some Black voters into supporting her without knowing she's a Republican.

Green's bumper stickers and yard signs feature military-looking star insignia and don't list party. Her fliers promise "battle-proven leadership," middle-class tax cuts and protections for Social Security and Medicare without mentioning the GOP.

Mrvan's yard signs are emblazoned with "Democrat," and he has been endorsed by area unions. During the United Steel Workers convention this summer, he pointed to outside conservative political groups spending big to oppose him in the district and said, "I'm under attack because I stand for working men and women."

"Any person can give a great speech for five minutes," Mrvan said. "It's in your deeds, it's in what you accomplish, is what matters."

Mrvan rallied Monday in Gary with House Majority Whip James Clyburn, the highest-ranking Black member of Congress. New York Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, chair of the House Democratic Caucus, has also visited the district.

Former state lawmaker Brown said the best way to prevent the seat from flipping is boosting Democratic turnout, but it's "pretty obvious that the Democratic machine even has some concerns for Mrvan" especially given "this factor involving an African-American female Republican."

"Usually, people yawn over that because they know this has been a Democratic stronghold for years and years," Brown said of the congressional election. "But, they've got to be aware, that this is somewhat different this time."

Superstorm Sandy legacy: Recovery far from equal on NY shore

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Even before Superstorm Sandy's floodwaters surged over New York City's Rockaway Peninsula, there was an air of decay in Edgemere, a far-flung seaside neighborhood long pockmarked with boarded-up homes and vacant lots with waist-high weeds.

When the water receded, even more of Edgemere's homes lay in ruin. But there was hope, too, that in the rebuilding effort the predominantly Black neighborhood would finally get the boost it needed to recover from decades of neglect. In the decade since Sandy swamped the coast, those hopes have been dashed.

There is little sign of the development promised along block after block of worn homes, some long unoccupied. Meanwhile, mostly white communities further west on the peninsula have flourished, with recovery funds bringing new housing, businesses, places to gather.

"They tell me that we're one peninsula — no, we're not. It's a tale of two peninsulas," said Edgemere resident Sonia Moise, whose home filled with seawater during Sandy, her car carried off by the tide.

"You go west, what do they have? They have a skatepark. They have a dog park. They have concession stands," Moise said. "What do we have? We have homeless shelters. We have hotels that house homeless people."

When Sandy hit the northeastern U.S. coastline on Oct. 29, 2012, the storm did not discriminate as it caused about \$65 billion in damage — much of it in New York and New Jersey. Luxurious vacation homes on the Jersey Shore were torn apart; small homes in working-class sections of Staten Island were submerged up to their eaves.

But the rebuilding effort has been anything but equal. The woes in Edgemere are a case study in disparities that play out across the U.S. after natural disasters: The billions of dollars in recovery money that pour in make their way last to, and have their weakest impact in, communities of color. In New Orleans, the remarkable post-Katrina recovery made for a whiter, more expensive city where poor Black neighbor-

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hoods still struggle. In Florida, there are already grumblings along rows of crumpled mobile homes that help has been swiftest in resort beach communities in the wake of Hurricane Ian.

Public spending after disasters has led to increased inequality, said Junia Howell, a sociologist at the University of Illinois in Chicago who researches race, housing and disasters.

"Communities that are whiter and wealthier actually are not only recovering from disaster, but in many cases, they're doing better," Howell said. "What you're doing is giving resources to those who already have the most resources and further leaving everyone else behind."

In Edgemere, the contrast is perhaps sharpest just to the west, in Arverne by the Sea. Like most of the Rockaway Peninsula — an 11-mile long sliver of barrier beaches that is home to around 124,000 people — both communities were almost entirely underwater after Sandy hit. But Edgemere residents say they've watched as Arverne and predominantly white communities got more help, and sooner.

There's already a new grocery store and a Dunkin' Donuts in a new commercial strip. Next door to Arverne, in Rockaway Beach, is a new skatepark, rebuilt after Sandy tore apart the old one. Construction of a community amphitheater is in progress.

Neighbors admit it's not a perfect comparison. Some Arverne investment was underway before Sandy. Six years prior, a \$1 billion development drew more white families to the neighborhood — which is still majority Black, though that number is dropping — and sprouted 2,300 homes, some now being resold for as much as \$1.7 million. The development was mostly unscathed by winds and flooding, prompting grumbling by Edgemere residents that their homes weren't built to last.

What's clear, community board leader Moise and others say, is that Edgemere has never gotten its fair share.

"We have been fighting for years to get the same thing that the rest of our surrounding neighborhoods have gotten. We have been ignored," Moise said.

Unlike Arverne, Edgemere has no coffee shops or concession stands. Along Beach Channel Drive, the main thoroughfare, there's a bodega and a Chinese takeout restaurant. Next door, a smoke shop is moving in. Up the street is a massive public housing project.

There's little sign here of the Rockaways' history as a beach resort community. The peninsula's grand hotels didn't survive into the automobile age. The 1950s brought urban renewal; officials tore down thousands of bungalows that were home to Black and Puerto Rican families, replacing some of that lost housing stock with high-rise housing projects while leaving other razed blocks to nature.

Edgemere and other communities on the eastern end of the Rockaways became dumping grounds for the city's poorest residents, pushed out across a wide bay to the very end of the land, a 70-minute subway ride from Manhattan.

But just before Sandy, there was hope that things were getting better — even if neighboring communities were seeing faster progress.

Edgemere was growing. People were moving in. City officials promised to build some 800 new homes to fill vacant lots.

Sandy brought those small signs of hope to a halt. And residents say they saw a familiar story, with priority given to white neighborhoods around them.

The city says it's working to bring change to Edgemere. Earlier this year, it finalized a development plan dubbed "Resilient Edgemere." Every member of the community board urged the City Council and mayor to reject it. But the community didn't have the political clout to stop it.

The plan includes vows of affordable housing near the beach, and high-rise apartments with 1,200 residential units above retail space. There's \$14 million earmarked to buttress the shoreline with an elevated berm to protect Edgemere against 30 inches of sea level rise, and \$2.3 million to upgrade sewage and drainage lines.

But residents worry the low-income units will add to the neighborhood's longtime burden of housing the poor. More than a quarter of Edgemere residents live in poverty, the highest among Rockaways communities, according to a recent state report that highlighted longstanding inequalities in the area.

Those who have money spend it elsewhere because the community has few amenities.

And while the plan's shoreline work might be welcome news, many say it's another case of being last in line. In other places along the peninsula, sand dunes were beefed up quickly to keep tides from intruding as they did during Sandy. Edgemere's beach restoration only began weeks ago.

Instead of the city's plan, community board members want more duplexes and townhomes to fit in with existing housing stock. They want a new school and grassy inland parks that could help absorb the next flood. They want amenities like the fully-stocked grocery stores found in neighboring, wealthier communities.

City officials insist they've made progress — they cite wetland restoration and the raising of 100-plus homes against flooding. Stretches of the wooden boardwalk have been replaced with a concrete promenade along the beach. Headquarters for a nature preserve is being built, but construction has limited community access to the boardwalk and beach.

Dexter Davis, a former NYC police officer whose Edgemere home was flooded with more than a yard of water during Sandy, says his community needs more than what's outlined so far.

"The things that they pump into the other communities around us are more positive. They give them more leisure things, better quality," Davis said. "Here, they do things — but it's not up to the same par."

Experts such as NYU sociologist Jacob Faber say it's not just the storm or natural disaster that has affected Edgemere and other poorer communities — it's the lingering impact of years of neglect.

"You have these geographically and socially and economically isolated communities that are in a position to just get hammered, over and over again," Farber said.

Russian court rejects Griner appeal of her 9-year sentence

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian court on Tuesday rejected an appeal by U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner of her nine-year prison sentence for drug possession, a step that could move her closer to a possible high-stakes prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington.

The eight-time all-star center with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury and a two-time Olympic gold medalist was convicted Aug. 4 after police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.

Griner, 32, was not at the Moscow Regional Court hearing but appeared via video link from a penal colony outside the capital where she is held.

At her trial, Griner admitted to having the canisters in her luggage but testified she packed them inadvertently in her haste to make her flight and had no criminal intent. Her defense team presented written statements saying she had been prescribed cannabis to treat chronic pain.

The nine-year sentence was close to the maximum of 10 years, and Griner's lawyers argued after the conviction that the punishment was excessive. They said in similar cases defendants have received an average sentence of about five years, with about a third of them granted parole.

While upholding the sentence, the court said Griner's prison time will be recalculated to reflect what she has already served in pre-trial detention. One day in pre-trial detention will be counted as 1 1/2 days in prison, so she still will have to serve about eight years in prison.

Griner's lawyers Maria Blagovolina and Alexander Boykov said in an email that they were "very disappointed" with the decision because they still believe "the punishment is excessive and contradicts to the existing court practice."

"Brittney's biggest fear is that she is not exchanged and will have to serve the whole sentence in Russia," they said. "She had hopes for today, as each month, each day away from her family and friends matters to her."

They said they had to discuss with Griner what legal steps they should take next.

Griner's arrest in February came at a time of heightened tensions between Moscow and Washington, just days before Russia sent troops into Ukraine. At the time, Griner was returning to play for a Russian team during the WNBA's offseason.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the decision "another failure of justice, compounding the injustice of her detention," adding that "securing her release is our priority."

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President Joe Biden told reporters that his administration is in “constant contact” with Russian authorities on Griner and other Americans who are detained there. While there has not been progress on bringing her back to the U.S., Biden said, “We’re not stopping.”

Before her conviction, the U.S. State Department declared Griner to be “wrongfully detained” — a charge that Russia has sharply rejected.

U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in a statement that Biden “is willing to go to extraordinary lengths and make tough decisions to bring Americans home.”

WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said the decision “while unfortunate, was not unexpected. ... It is time to bring this case to an end and bring BG home.” The WNBA Players Association said the ruling was “further verification that BG is not just wrongfully detained — she is very clearly a hostage.”

Because of the growing pressure on the Biden administration to do more to bring Griner home, Blinken took the unusual step of revealing in July that Washington had made a “substantial proposal” to get Griner home, along with Paul Whelan, an American serving a 16-year sentence in Russia for espionage.

Blinken didn’t elaborate, but The Associated Press and other news organizations have reported that Washington has offered to exchange Griner and Whelan for Viktor Bout, a Russian arms dealer who is serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S. and once earned the nickname the “merchant of death.”

The White House said it has not yet received a productive response from Russia to the offer.

Russian diplomats have refused to comment on the U.S. proposal and urged Washington to discuss the matter in confidential talks, avoiding public statements. But some Russian officials have said a deal is more likely once appeals have been exhausted.

In September, Biden met with Cherelle Griner, the player’s wife, as well as her agent, Lindsay Colas. Biden also sat down separately with Elizabeth Whelan, Paul Whelan’s sister.

The White House said after the meetings that the president stressed to the families his “continued commitment to working through all available avenues to bring Brittney and Paul home safely.”

The U.S. and Russia carried out a prisoner swap in April. Moscow released U.S. Marines veteran Trevor Reed in exchange for the U.S. releasing a Russian pilot, Konstantin Yaroshenko, who was convicted in a drug trafficking conspiracy.

Moscow also has pushed for the release of other Russians in U.S. custody.

One of them is Alexander Vinnik, who was accused of laundering billions of dollars through an illicit cryptocurrency exchange. Vinnik was arrested in Greece in 2017 and extradited to the U.S. in August.

Vinnik’s French lawyer, Frederic Belot, told Russian newspaper Izvestia last month that his client hoped to be part of a possible swap.

The newspaper speculated that another possible candidate was Roman Seleznev, the son of a Russian lawmaker. He was sentenced in 2017 to 27 years in prison on charges from a hacking and credit card fraud scheme.

Adidas ends partnership with Ye over antisemitic remarks

By ALEXANDRA OLSON and ANNE D’INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Adidas ended a partnership that helped make the artist formerly known as Kanye West a billionaire and lent the German sportswear an edgy appeal, but ultimately couldn’t survive a mounting outcry over the rapper’s offensive and antisemitic remarks.

The split will leave Adidas searching for another transcendent celebrity to help it compete with ever-larger rival Nike, but will likely prove even costlier for Ye, as the rapper is now known. The sneaker giant became the latest company to cut ties with Ye, whose music career has been in decline as he courted controversy.

Adidas said it expected to take a hit of up to 250 million euros (\$246 million) to its net income this year from the decision to immediately stop production of its line of Yeezy products and stop payments to Ye and his companies. Its shares closed down more than 2% on Tuesday.

“Adidas does not tolerate antisemitism and any other sort of hate speech,” the company said in a statement Tuesday. “Ye’s recent comments and actions have been unacceptable, hateful and dangerous, and

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they violate the company's values of diversity and inclusion, mutual respect and fairness."

For weeks, Ye has made antisemitic comments in interviews and social media, including a Twitter post earlier this month that he would soon go "death con 3 on JEWISH PEOPLE," an apparent reference to the U.S. defense readiness condition scale known as DEFCON. He was suspended from both Twitter and Instagram.

Ye expressed some regret in an interview with podcaster Lex Fridman posted online Monday, in which he characterized his initial tweet as a mistake and apologized to "the Jewish community." An email message sent to a representative for Ye was not immediately returned.

Adidas has stuck with Ye through other controversies over his remarks about slavery and COVID-19 vaccines. But Ye's antisemitic comments stirred up the company's own past ties with the Nazi regime that the company had worked to leave behind. The World Jewish Congress noted that during World War II, Adidas factories "produced supplies and weapons for the Nazi regime, using slave labor."

Jewish groups said the decision to drop Ye was overdue.

"I would have liked a clear stance earlier from a German company that also was entangled with the Nazi regime," Josef Schuster, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the main Jewish group in the country where Adidas is headquartered.

Adidas, whose CEO Kasper Rorsted is stepping down next year, said it reached its decision after conducting a "thorough review" of its partnership with Ye, whose talent agency, CAA, as well as Balenciaga fashion house had already dropped the rapper. In the hours before the announcement, some Adidas employees in the U.S. had spoken out on social media about the company's inaction.

Despite the growing controversy, Allen Adamson, co-founder of marketing consultancy Metaforce, believes that Adidas' delayed response was "understandable."

"The positives are so substantial in terms of the audience it appeals to — younger, urban, trendsetters, the size of the business," Adamson said. "I'm sure they were hoping against hope that he would apologize and try to make this right."

Adidas doesn't break out Yeezy sales numbers, but the impact will be more severe than expected given that the brand has ended production of all Yeezy products and ceased royalty payments, according to Morningstar analyst David Swartz in a note published Tuesday.

Swartz projects overall Adidas revenues to reach \$23.2 billion euros (\$23.1 billion) this year, with the Yeezy brand generating 1.5 billion to 2 billion euros (\$1.99 billion), or nearly 10% of the total. The pricy brand accounts for up to 15% of the company's net income, Swartz said.

Forbes estimated that Adidas accounted for \$1.5 billion of Ye's net worth and without the deal, it will fall to \$400 million, including his music catalog, real estate, cash and a stake in ex-wife Kim Kardashian's shapewear company Skims. Forbes said it will no longer include Ye on its list of billionaires, though the rapper has long insisted the magazine underestimates his wealth.

Ye has alienated even ardent fans in recent years. Those close to him, like Kardashian and her family, have ceased publicly defending him after the couple's bitter divorce and his unsettling posts about her recent relationship with comedian Pete Davidson.

Carl Lamarre, Billboard's deputy director of R&B/Hip Hop, said many Ye fans have been disappointed by him, but the implosion of his business endeavors was difficult to watch for those who admired the rapper's ability to reach new heights of success beyond hip-hop.

"This is someone who potentially laid down the blueprint for a lot of musicians coming up," Lamarre said. "When you see someone graduate to his level of superstardom and transcend into business, into fashion and touches that billionaire point, for our community, for hip-hop, for African Americans, that's very aspirational.

"But the same kids, even myself who were once super-fans, you try to defend him but every day he gives you a reason not to be able to," Lamarre added.

The rapper, who has won 24 Grammy Awards, has been steadily losing audience on the radio and even his streaming numbers have declined slightly over the last month. According to data provided by Luminate,

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an entertainment data and insights company whose data powers the Billboard music charts, his airplay audience has slipped from 8 million in the week ending Sept. 22, to 5.4 million in the week ending on Oct. 20. The popularity of his songs on streaming on demand also went down in the same period, from 97 million to 88.2 million, about a 9% drop.

Ye has earned more of a reputation for stirring up controversy since 2016, when he was hospitalized in Los Angeles because of what his team called stress and exhaustion. It was later revealed that he had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

He has suggested slavery was a choice and called the COVID-19 vaccine the "mark of the beast," among other comments. He also was criticized earlier this month during Paris Fashion Week for wearing a "White Lives Matter" T-shirt to the show and putting models in the same design. After he was suspended from Twitter and Facebook, Ye offered to buy Parler, a conservative social network with no gatekeeper.

The fashion, music and apparel world continued to distance themselves from Ye on Tuesday.

Foot Locker said it was cutting ties with the Yeezy brand and pulling Yeezy shoes from its shelves and online sites. Gap said it will remove Yeezy Gap product from its stores shut down yeezygap.com. Universal Music Group, which owns the Def Jam label, said Tuesday in a statement that Ye's music and merchandise contracts ended last year. MRC studio had announced Monday that it is shelving a complete documentary about the rapper.

A Vogue spokesperson confirmed Tuesday that the magazine and its global editorial director, Anna Wintour, have no intentions of working with Ye again after his most recent controversial remarks and behavior.

Jewish groups have pointed to the danger of the rapper's comments at a time of rising antisemitism. Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League who on Tuesday applauded the decision by Adidas to drop Ye, said his organization has documented a tripling of harassment, vandalism or violence targeting Jews since 2015.

"We're operating in an environment today where antisemitism is empirically on the rise," Greenblatt said. "When people with large platforms give license to antisemitism and other forms of bigotry, it creates an environment where these kinds of activities have a degree of permission they might not have had before."

Lamarre said he understood that Ye was suffering from mental health and personal issues, but that only makes it more important to pause and reconsider giving him a platform for his offensive comments.

"We are watching someone who was a beloved superhero in the African American community spiral in front of our eyes," he said. "But this is someone who is kind of falling on his own sword."

Dodge, deny or fib: Candidates stay vague on 2024 plans

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — They dodge. They hedge. And, yes, they sometimes even fib — or at least flip-flop.

Presidential aspirants dreaming of the White House while running for reelection to congressional or state posts often face an uncomfortable question: Whatever your higher hopes — and the timing they might demand — will you commit to serving out a full term for the folks who vote for you now?

Some, like Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, evade the question, as he did at a Monday night debate. Rather than answer directly whether he might leave the state, he took a dig at both President Joe Biden and his own Democratic opponent, Rep. Charlie Crist, whom he called "the only worn-out old donkey I'm looking to put out to pasture."

Others, like South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, leave wiggle room, saying her "plans" are to serve for four more years.

Not so long ago, there also was Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, who famously pledged, "I will serve out my full six-year term," only to announce his presidential bid 13 months later. He had just won his seat when he made the vow and wasn't facing imminent reelection.

It's always a high-stakes question, though, and one that often makes for awkward answers — especially when political circumstances are ever-shifting.

"You don't run for president unless you've got completely unabashed ambition. Some people hide it better

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than others," said Reed Galen, deputy campaign manager for John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign against Obama. He's co-founder of The Lincoln Project, a GOP group opposing former President Donald Trump, who himself is poised to seek the presidency again in 2024.

DeSantis' carefully crafted dodge at Monday's debate both sidestepped the question and offered a chance to swipe at Biden, the oldest president in history. DeSantis is favored for reelection and may mount a 2024 presidential run as a GOP primary alternative to Trump.

Amid speculation that she could mount her own White House bid, Noem recently told The Associated Press, "I am running to be reelected as governor. My plans are to stay here for four years. Absolutely. That's what I want to do."

Still another future possible presidential contender, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, spent Tuesday in Iowa — which will kick off the 2024 GOP primary. Haley campaigned with Gov. Kim Reynolds, who is heavily favored to win reelection, but noted only that she expects to decide whether or not to run by January.

"If it looks like there's a place for me, I've never lost a race," said Haley, who was also U.S. ambassador to the United Nations during the Trump administration. "I'm not going to start now."

Others have taken a different tack. California Gov. Gavin Newsom declared last weekend that he would serve his full four-year term should he win reelection, as expected. That's despite Newsom sparking speculation about a 2024 presidential run should Biden not seek reelection, running ads slamming Republican leadership in Florida and Texas.

Arizona Republican governor candidate Kari Lake has vowed to serve "eight years" as governor amid chatter she could be a vice presidential candidate for Trump.

But even seemingly ironclad responses don't always hold up.

Obama was elected to the Senate in 2005 and told NBC in January 2006 that he'd serve his full term, adding "I will not" run for president in 2008. He kicked off his presidential bid in February 2007 and eventually bested onetime Democratic primary favorite Hillary Clinton — who herself had forgone a possible presidential run four years earlier, saying she would serve her full term as New York senator.

Democrat Martin O'Malley was Maryland's governor for eight years until 2015, then ran unsuccessfully for president. He suggested governors going back to Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton saw their presidential aspirations hurt their popularity back home, where voters "can be resentful and twice as hard on a candidate that they've grown up with and that they've seen."

"What we call it here in Maryland is the crab pot effect," O'Malley said. "When one crab's trying to escape out of the pot, the other ones will pull him back in."

While running for Senate in Texas in 2018, Democrat Beto O'Rourke slammed incumbent Republican Ted Cruz for having spent so much time traveling outside the state running for president in 2016. O'Rourke also committed then to serving a full term if he won, even as Cruz didn't hide his post-Trump administration White House aspirations.

Cruz was reelected — and then O'Rourke mounted a brief 2020 presidential bid.

Cruz may again seek the White House in 2024. O'Rourke, meanwhile, is now running for Texas governor against Republican incumbent Greg Abbott, who himself could run for president in two years.

Potential presidential campaign can scramble home-state politics even before they get off the ground.

In 1998, George W. Bush was cruising to reelection as Texas governor and hadn't formally announced a widely anticipated 2000 presidential run. But his family campaigned hard for Republican Rick Perry — then seeking the lieutenant governorship in a tight race — so that the governorship would remain in GOP hands if Bush eventually left for the White House.

Bush later did just that and Perry succeeded him and served as governor for 14-plus years, eventually mounting two unsuccessful White House bids of his own in 2012 and 2016.

Ray Sullivan, who worked on both Bush's and Perry's campaigns, said Perry was a "hard, definitive no" on running for president until late summer 2011. But then he began to see support building and had close friends and relatives urging him to jump into the White House race.

Perry announced that August but dropped out by January, reflecting how little groundwork his team had been able to do because of the condensed decision-making process, Sullivan said.

"We did not give ourselves enough time to fully prepare for the rigors of a presidential campaign," he said. "And running for president is, physically, emotionally, mentally, the most taxing thing that a human being can do."

Ukraine alleges Russian dirty bomb deception at nuke plant

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's nuclear energy operator said Tuesday that Russian forces were performing secret work at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, activity that could shed light on Russia's claims that the Ukrainian military is preparing a "provocation" involving a radioactive device.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu made an unsubstantiated allegation that Ukraine was preparing to launch a so-called dirty bomb. Shoigu leveled the charge over the weekend in calls to his British, French, Turkish and U.S. counterparts. Britain, France and the United States rejected it out of hand as "transparently false."

Ukraine also dismissed Moscow's claim as an attempt to distract attention from the Kremlin's own alleged plans to detonate a dirty bomb, which uses explosives to scatter radioactive waste in an effort to sow terror.

Energoatom, the Ukrainian state enterprise that operates the country's four nuclear power plants, said Russian forces have carried out secret construction work over the last week at the occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine.

Russian officers controlling the area won't give access to Ukrainian staff running the plant or monitors from the U.N.'s atomic energy watchdog that would allow them to see what the Russians are doing, Energoatom said Tuesday in a statement.

Energoatom said it "assumes" the Russians "are preparing a terrorist act using nuclear materials and radioactive waste stored at" the plant. It said there were 174 containers at the plant's dry spent fuel storage facility, each of them containing 24 assemblies of spent nuclear fuel.

"Destruction of these containers as a result of explosion will lead to a radiation accident and radiation contamination of several hundred square kilometers (miles) of the adjacent territory," the company said.

It called on the International Atomic Energy Agency to assess what was going on.

The U.N. Security Council held closed-door consultations Tuesday about the dirty-bomb allegations at Russia's request.

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia sent a five-page letter to council members before the meeting claiming that according to the Russian Ministry of Defense, Ukraine's Institute for Nuclear Research of the National Academy of Sciences in Kyiv and Vostochniy Mining and Processing Plant "have received direct orders from (President Volodymyr) Zelenskyy's regime to develop such a dirty bomb" and "the works are at their concluding stage."

Nebenzia said the ministry also received word that this work "may be carried out with the support of the Western countries." And he warned that the authorities in Kyiv and their Western backers "will bear full responsibility for all the consequences" of using a "dirty bomb," which Russia will regard as "an act of nuclear terrorism."

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky was asked by reporters after the council meeting what evidence Russia has that Zelenskyy gave orders to develop a "dirty bomb." He replied, "it is intelligence information."

"We shared it in our telephone conversation with counterparts who have the necessary level of clearance," he said. "Those who wanted to understand that the threat is serious, they had all the possibilities to understand that. Those who want to reject it as Russian propaganda, they will do it anyway."

Polyansky said the IAEA can send inspectors to investigate allegations of a "dirty bomb."

Britain's deputy U.N. ambassador James Kariuki told reporters after the meeting that "we've seen and heard no new evidence" and the U.K., France and the U.S. made clear "this is a transparently false alle-

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gation" and "pure Russian misinformation." He said, "Ukraine has been clear it's got nothing to hide" and "IAEA inspectors are on the way."

In a related matter, Russia asked the Security Council to establish a commission to investigate its claims that the United States and Ukraine are violating the convention prohibiting the use of biological weapons at laboratories in Ukraine.

Soon after Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, its U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, claimed that secret American labs in Ukraine were engaged in biological warfare — a charge denied by the U.S. and Ukraine.

Russia has called a Security Council meeting Thursday on Ukraine's biological laboratories and its allegations.

The Kremlin has insisted that its warning of a purported Ukrainian plan to use a dirty bomb should be taken seriously and criticized Western nations for shrugging it off.

The dismissal of Moscow's warning is "unacceptable in view of the seriousness of the danger that we have talked about," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Speaking during a conference call with reporters, Peskov added: "We again emphasize the grave danger posed by the plans hatched by the Ukrainians."

At the White House, U.S. President Joe Biden was asked Tuesday if Russia is preparing to deploy a tactical nuclear weapon after making its claims that Ukraine will use a dirty bomb.

"I spent a lot of time today talking about that," Biden told reporters.

The president was also asked whether the claims about a Ukrainian dirty bomb amounted to a false-flag operation.

"Let me just say, Russia would be making an incredibly serious mistake if it were to use a tactical nuclear weapon," Biden said. "I'm not guaranteeing you that it's a false-flag operation yet ... but it would be a serious, serious mistake."

Dirty bombs don't have the devastating destruction of a nuclear explosion but could expose broad areas to radioactive contamination.

School gunman had AR-15-style weapon, 600 rounds of ammo

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A 19-year-old who killed a teacher and a 15-year-old girl at a St. Louis high school was armed with an AR-15-style rifle and what appeared to be more than 600 rounds of ammunition, a police official said Tuesday.

Orlando Harris also left behind a handwritten note offering his explanation for the shooting Monday at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School, St. Louis Police Commissioner Michael Sack told reporters. Tenth-grader Alexzandria Bell and 61-year-old physical education teacher Jean Kuczka died and seven students were wounded before police killed Harris in an exchange of gunfire.

Sack read Harris' note in which the young man lamented that he had no friends, no family, no girlfriend and a life of isolation. Harris called it the "perfect storm for a mass shooter."

Sack said Harris had ammunition strapped to his chest and in a bag, and that additional magazines were found dumped in stairwells.

"This could have been much worse," Sack said.

The attack forced students to barricade doors and huddle in classroom corners, jump from windows and run out of the building to seek safety. One girl said she was eye-to-eye with the shooter before his gun apparently jammed and she was able to run out. Several people inside the school said they heard Harris warn, "You are all going to die!"

Harris graduated from the school last year. Sack, speaking at a news conference, urged people to come forward when someone who appears to suffer from mental illness or distress begins "speaking about purchasing firearms or causing harm to others."

Alexzandria was a bright, charismatic girl with a sassy personality who was working hard to improve her dancing and her grades, said Central's principal, Kacy Seals-Shahid. She was a member of the school's

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junior varsity dance team, her father said.

"Alexzandria was my everything," her father, Andre Bell, told KSDK-TV. "She was joyful, wonderful and just a great person."

"She was the girl I loved to see and loved to hear from. No matter how I felt, I could always talk to her and it was alright. That was my baby," he said.

The morning of the shooting, Alexzandria's mom brought her daughter's glasses to the school when she noticed the teenager had left them home. Her mom got to the school before Alexzandria arrived by school bus.

"When Alex got off her bus, I asked her, 'Aren't you going to need these because you can't see without those?'" Seals-Shahid said. "The family was super supportive of Alexzandria."

Abby Kuczka said her mother was killed when the gunman burst into her classroom and she moved between him and her students.

"My mom loved kids," Abbey Kuczka told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "She loved her students. I know her students looked at her like she was their mom."

The seven injured students are all 15 or 16 years old. Sack said four suffered gunshot or graze wounds, two had bruises and one had a broken ankle — apparently from jumping out of the three-story building. All were listed in stable condition.

The school in south St. Louis was locked, with seven security guards at the doors, St. Louis Schools Superintendent Kelvin Adams said. A security guard initially became alarmed when he saw Harris trying to get in one of the doors. He had a gun and "there was no mystery about what was going to happen. He had it out and entered in an aggressive, violent manner," Sack said.

That guard alerted school officials and made sure police were contacted.

Harris managed to get inside anyway. Sack declined to say how, saying he didn't want to "make it easy" for anyone else who wants to break into a school.

Police offered this timeline: A 911 call came in at 9:11 a.m. alerting police of an active shooter. Officers — some off-duty wearing street clothes — arrived at 9:15 a.m.

Police located Harris at 9:23 a.m. on the third floor, where he had barricaded himself inside a classroom. Police said in a news release that when Harris shot at officers, they shot back and broke through the door.

At 9:25 a.m., when Harris pointed his rifle at police, they fired several shots. He was secured by police at 9:32 a.m.

Police said Alexzandria was found in a hallway and died at the scene. Kuczka was found in a classroom and died at a hospital.

Central Visual and Performing Arts shares a building with another magnet school, Collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience. Central has 383 students, Collegiate 336.

It was the 40th school shooting this year resulting in injuries or death, according to a tally by Education Week — the most in any year since it began tracking shootings in 2018. The deadly attacks include the killings of 19 children and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, in May.

Matt Davis, president of the St. Louis Board of Education, said police and school officials acted quickly to Monday's shooting.

"And yet, we are still left with tragedy," Davis said.

For now, the survivors are dealing with the trauma.

The gunman pointed his weapon at Raymond Parks, a dance teacher at the school, but did not shoot him, Parks said. The kids in his class escaped outside and Parks stopped traffic and get someone to call the police. They came quickly.

"You couldn't have asked for better," Parks said of the police response.

Ashley Rench said she was teaching advanced algebra to sophomores when she heard a loud bang. Then the school intercom announced, "Miles Davis is in the building."

"That's our code for intruder," Rench said.

The gunman tried the door of the classroom but did not force his way in, she said. When police officers

started banging, she wasn't sure at first if it really was law enforcement until she was able to glance out and see officers.

"Let's go!" she told the kids.

Doctors say 'fossil fuel addiction' kills, starves millions

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Extreme weather from climate change triggered hunger in nearly 100 million people and increased heat deaths by 68% in vulnerable populations worldwide as the world's "fossil fuel addiction" degrades public health each year, doctors reported in a new study.

Worldwide the burning of coal, oil, natural gas and biomass forms air pollution that kills 1.2 million people a year, including 11,800 in the United States, according to a report Tuesday in the prestigious medical journal Lancet.

"Our health is at the mercy of fossil fuels," said University College of London health and climate researcher Marina Romanello, executive director of the Lancet Countdown. "We're seeing a persistent addiction to fossil fuels that is not only amplifying the health impacts of climate change, but which is also now at this point compounding with other concurrent crises that we're globally facing, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, energy crisis and food crisis that were triggered after the war in Ukraine."

In the annual Lancet Countdown, which looks at climate change and health, nearly 100 researchers across the globe highlighted 43 indicators where climate change is making people sicker or weaker, with a new look at hunger added this year.

"And the health impacts of climate change are rapidly increasing," Romanello said.

In praising the report, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres put it even more bluntly than the doctors: "The climate crisis is killing us."

New analysis in the report blamed 98 million more cases of self-reported hunger around the world in 2020, compared to 1981-2010, on "days of extreme heat increasing in frequency and intensity due to climate change."

Researchers looked at 103 countries and found that 26.4% of the population experienced what scientists call "food insecurity" and in a simulated world without climate change's effects that would have only been 22.7%, Romanello said.

"Can I say that every bit of food insecurity is due to climate change? Of course not. But we think that in this complex web of causes, it is a very significant contributor and it's only going to get worse," said pediatrician Dr. Anthony Costello, Lancet Countdown co-chair and head of the University College of London's Global Health Institute.

Computerized epidemiology models also show an increase in annual heat related deaths from 187,000 a year from 2000 to 2004 to an annual average of 312,000 a year the last five years, Romanello said.

When there's a heat wave, like the record-shattering 2020 one in the Pacific Northwest or this summer's English heat wave, emergency room doctors know when they go to the hospital "we're in for a challenging shift," said study co-author Dr. Renee Salas, a Boston emergency room physician and professor at the Harvard School of Public Health.

The air pollution from burning coal, oil and gas also pollutes the air, causing about 1.2 million deaths a year worldwide from small particles in the air, the scientists and report said. The 1.2 million figure is based on "immense scientific evidence," Harvard's Salas said.

"Burning gas in cars or coal in electricity plants have been found to cause asthma in children and cause heart problems," Salas said.

"Prescribing an inhaler isn't going to fix the cause of an asthma attack for a young boy living next to a highway where cars are producing dangerous pollutants and climate change is driving increases in wildfire smoke, pollen and ozone pollution," Salas said.

Both air pollution and heat deaths are bigger problems for the elderly and the very young and especially the poor, said University of Louisville environmental health professor Natasha DeJarnett, a study co-author.

Sacoby Wilson, a professor of environmental health at the University of Maryland who wasn't part of the report, said the Lancet study makes sense and frames climate change's effects on health in a powerful way.

"People are dying now as we speak. Droughts, desertification, not having food, flooding, tsunamis," Wilson said. "We're seeing what happened in Pakistan. What you see happening in Nigeria."

Both Wilson and emergency room physician and professor of medicine at the University of Calgary Dr. Courtney Howard, who wasn't part of the study, said report authors are correct to call the problem an addiction to fossil fuels, similar to being addicted to harmful drugs.

The Lancet report shows the increasing deaths from air pollution and heat yet people are "continuing in habitual behavior despite known harms," which is the definition of addiction, Howard said. "Thus far our treatment of our fossil fuel addiction has been ineffective."

"This isn't a rare cancer that we don't have a treatment for," Salas said. "We know the treatment we need. We just need the willpower from all of us and our leaders to make it happen."

Condition of Texas teen shot eating hamburger 'touch and go'

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

A teen shot by a San Antonio police officer three weeks ago as he put his car in reverse while eating a hamburger is still hospitalized and his condition remains "very touch and go," his father said Tuesday in the family's first public comments since the shooting.

"He is getting slightly better, his wounds are healing, but the wounds that he's endured, they are great, there's a lot of them," Eric Cantu said at a news conference.

Family attorney Ben Crump — who has taken on some of the nation's most high-profile police killings of Black people — said the family has been told that the now-fired officer who shot 17-year-old Erik Cantu racially profiled him while searching for a Hispanic suspect.

Cantu was shot on Oct. 2 by Officer James Brennand in a McDonald's parking lot. After the shooting, the 27-year-old rookie officer was fired and charged with two counts of aggravated assault by a public official. Police said Brennand violated his training and police procedures after approaching the car.

In body camera footage released by police, Brennand opens the car door and tells Cantu to get out. The car drives backward with the door open, and the officer fires multiple times into the vehicle. He continues to shoot as the car drives away.

Police have said Brennand was responding to an unrelated disturbance when he saw Cantu inside a car he believed had evaded him the day before during an attempted traffic stop. Brennand said he suspected the car was stolen.

Police have said that although registration plates didn't match the vehicle Cantu was operating, the car itself was not stolen.

Crump said the Bexar County district attorney told the family that the officer was looking for a Hispanic teen with a bowl haircut and he profiled Cantu. The district attorney's office told The Associated Press on Tuesday that it does not publicly comment on the facts of pending cases.

"This is the part that hurts, is that he was profiled and he was violently injured over it," Eric Cantu said.

Crump said the teen "is continuing to fight for his life on life support."

The teen's mother, Victoria Casarez, said she doesn't know how many times her son was shot. She said four bullets were found in his body, including one lodged near his heart.

She said he has been wounded in his stomach, diaphragm, lungs, liver and arm.

"He's just mutilated and it hurts us to see our son this way," she said.

Brennand has been released from jail on bond. A message left with Brennand's attorney was not immediately returned Tuesday afternoon.

Brennand was charged with two counts of aggravated assault by a public official because there was also a passenger in Cantu's vehicle. The passenger was unharmed.

Partial solar eclipse takes a bite out of the sun

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By MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writer

Much of Europe and parts of Africa and Asia saw the moon take a bite out of the sun during the second and last solar eclipse of the year.

The partial eclipse took about four hours. At its peak, the eclipse covered more than 80% of the sun.

A solar eclipse happens when the moon's path crosses in between the Earth and the sun, blocking out the sun's light. In a partial eclipse, the three aren't perfectly aligned — so a crescent of the sun still peeks out.

The next solar eclipse is in April — a rare hybrid kind that will appear as a total eclipse across parts of Australia and Asia.

Brazilian voters bombarded with misinformation before vote

By DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazilian voters are being bombarded by online misinformation less than a week before they pick their next leader.

People on social media say, wrongly, that the leftist candidate in Brazil's presidential election plans to close down churches if elected. There are lies that Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva wants to let men use public-school restrooms next to little girls. And they're falsely alleging that right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro has made comments confessing to cannibalism and pedophilia.

Baseless and politically motivated rumors are whipping through social media in Latin America's largest democracy, roiling Brazilian politics much as U.S. politics has been roiled. The onslaught of fake rumors helped prompt Brazil last week to enact what some experts call the strictest limits on speech in the country's young democracy.

It's a conundrum posed by social media across the world, especially in countries wrangling with the intersection between modern technology and free speech. Brazil has adopted a particularly heavy-handed approach. Experts say that in doing so, authorities have raised questions about the country's commitment to free speech.

"What is happening in Brazil, on Facebook, on YouTube and other platforms looks awfully similar to what was happening in the U.S. around the 2020 election," said Vicky Wyatt, a campaign director at the U.S.-based activist group SumOfUs. "An individual post might not have that much reach, but cumulatively over time, having this constant drip-drip has negative consequences."

Overall, conservative channels produce more content — and more false, problematic content, too. According to a tally by the Igarape institute, in the eight days before and after the Oct. 2 first-round vote, far-right YouTube channels attracted 99 million views while leftist channels had 28 million views. Political analysts and the opposition have expressed fears that Bolsonaro's internet army may help him challenge the results if he loses, by spreading unfounded allegations of fraud.

The Superior Electoral Court, the country's top electoral authority, announced Thursday that it would be banning "false or seriously decontextualized" content that "affects the integrity of the electoral process." No request from a prosecutor or complainant is necessary for the court to take action.

In the days leading up to, and just after, the second round of the election on Oct. 30, social media companies like YouTube and Meta — owner of Facebook and Instagram — will be given just an hour, far less time than before, to remove problematic content. No company has commented.

Platforms that do not comply will face fines of up to 150,000 reals (\$28,000) per hour and possibly be blocked on Brazilian servers for up to 24 hours.

The electoral tribunal's president, Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, said "the aggressiveness of this information and of hate speech" merits the measure. Prosecutor-General Augusto Aras, a Bolsonaro appointee who is widely considered a government ally, filed a motion with the Supreme Court to reverse measures that he said were unconstitutional. Aras said they amounted to "prior censorship," infringing on the freedom of expression and the right to inform and to be informed in the Brazilian Constitution.

The Supreme Court sided with the electoral court in a hearing Tuesday. The Brazilian Constitution's take on freedom of expression is similar to that of the U.S. one, said Luis Claudio Araujo, a law professor at

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Ibmec University.

The tribunal also banned paid electoral advertising on the internet two days before, and a day after, the election.

The fresh measures angered many Bolsonaro supporters. Others said they were justified by the scale of the online dirty war.

Misinformation has become more radical — and organized — since the 2018 presidential campaign, when far-right groups were accused of spreading mass disinformation in support of Bolsonaro.

“In 2018 it was a kind of playground thing. It was more honest, in the sense that they ideologically believed in what was happening and simply created channels as a way to be part of the conversation,” said Guilherme Felitti, founder of Novelo Data, which monitors more than 500 conservative YouTube channels.

Some of those have since turned their online activism into businesses, relying on ad revenues and donations from their growing audience. Some ran for office themselves this year.

Enzo Leonardo Suzin, better known under his YouTube alias Enzuh, was one of them. He launched his channels in 2015.

When Bolsonaro began his campaign, Suzin used his own YouTube channel and created several WhatsApp groups — including one he named “memes factory” — to target Bolsonaro’s perceived rivals — mayors, governors and even de Moraes, the Supreme Court Justice.

He has been found guilty and fined as much as 50,000 reais (just under \$10,000) in five different defamation and libel lawsuits. He is also a target of a Supreme Court investigation into the spread of fake news online, which also include Bolsonaro and political allies.

With each legal process, Suzin gained a few more followers.

“I thought of YouTube like a game,” Suzin told the Associated Press. “It was my plan from the start: to be a provocateur, cursing about corrupt mobsters, them suing me and me growing on the back of that.”

His Facebook and Twitter accounts have been blocked — but not his YouTube channel, where he still posts every day. He lost his bid to become a state lawmaker this month.

Bolsonaro has long claimed the country’s electronic voting system has been used to commit fraud — though he has repeatedly failed to produce proof. He has cited the fact that hackers once penetrated the electoral commission’s computer system. The electoral court has said the hackers didn’t gain access to any vote-counting data.

As a result, false or misleading information on the reliability of the country’s electronic machines have also spread widely on social media.

Ordem Dourada do Brasil, a far-right group displaying nostalgia for the 1964-1985 military dictatorship, has posted videos vowing to go to war “if we need to,” questioning Brazil’s voting system and calling for Brazilians to take the streets in support of Bolsonaro.

The Supreme Court and some of its justices have also been victims of the disinformation war, with one post threatening violence against the daughters of justices. Many others have asked that the institution be shut down.

Last year, the court opened an inquiry into an online network that it accused of spreading defamatory news and threats against its justices, with police executing more than two dozen searches and seizure warrants.

Both campaigns this year have filed complaints with the electoral tribunal alleging disinformation — and have won court orders to have it blocked or removed. Complaints filed by the electoral court with online platforms have gone up 1,671% compared to the 2020 local elections, the electoral tribunal said last week.

A local treasurer in da Silva’s Workers’ Party was fatally shot in July. Since then, there have been near-weekly reports by Brazilian authorities of politically motivated attacks.

Tai Nalon, founder of the AoSFatos fact-checking agency, said that the great challenge in fighting online disinformation is making the right decisions. “There is no legislation regulating (online) platforms, or saying how the judiciary should act against them,” she said.

UK’s Sunak is first PM of color, but equality fight not over

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By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Harmeet Singh Gill was excited to hear that Rishi Sunak would become Britain's first prime minister of color — news that came as he celebrated the Diwali festival in a London neighborhood sometimes called Little India.

"It's almost a watershed moment," the 31-year-old said as he volunteered at the cavernous dome-topped house of worship that serves the Sikh community in west London's Southall neighborhood. "It's just a sign of 21st-century Britain, where it doesn't matter what background you're from now, that you can rise up the ranks to the positions of power."

But, for many people of color in the U.K., it's not so simple. Sunak, 42, will be the first Hindu and the first person of South Asian descent to lead the country, which has a long history of colonialism and has often struggled to welcome immigrants from its former colonies — and continues to grapple with racism and wealth inequality.

King Charles III asked Sunak, whose parents moved to Britain from Africa in the 1960s, to form a new government Tuesday, a day after he was chosen leader of the governing Conservative Party.

The milestone is doubly significant for many people with Asian roots because it comes during Diwali, the five-day festival of light celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains.

Earlier this year, Sunak, a practicing Hindu, spoke about the significance of lighting Diwali candles outside the official Downing Street residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the post he held for two years until he resigned in July.

"It was one of my proudest moments that I was able to do that on the steps of Downing Street," he told the Times of London. "And it meant a lot to a lot of people and it's an amazing thing about our country."

It wasn't always that way in Britain.

In 1968, Conservative lawmaker Enoch Powell delivered his infamous "rivers of blood" speech decrying mass migration and advocating assistance for immigrants to "return home."

As recently as 1987, there were no people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the House of Commons. One Asian and three Black members were elected to Parliament that year.

Numbers have increased steadily since, with 65 people from ethnic minority groups, or 10% of the House of Commons, elected during the last general election in 2019. That still isn't fully representative of the U.K. as a whole, where 13% of the population identify as ethnic minorities.

Sunak's win is evidence of this progress — a step toward something better, said Tariq Modood, director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol.

"I would say the most important thing about today is that the majority, the overwhelming majority of Conservative members of Parliament, chose as their first choice a youngish man of Indian descent, making him the first British prime minister of color," he said Monday. "And I think that other parties will note that, the Labour Party most certainly, and will want to catch up with that, if not try and do better."

But Sunak isn't typical of the millions of people from Asian, African and Caribbean backgrounds who still face barriers in employment and education.

The son of a doctor and a pharmacist, Sunak earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Oxford and a master's in business administration from Stanford University before going to work for Goldman Sachs and then moving into the hedge fund industry, where he made a fortune in finance. He is married to Akshata Murty, daughter of Indian billionaire N.R. Narayana Murthy, founder of the global information technology company Infosys.

Sunak was criticized earlier this year when British news media reported that his wife took advantage of rules allowing her to avoid U.K. taxes on her foreign income. She has since promised to give up her "non-domiciled" status and pay all her taxes in Britain.

On a broader level, Indians have fared better economically than other minority groups in Britain.

Indians earned an average of 14.43 pounds (\$16.29) an hour, or 15.5% more than white British residents, in 2019, the latest figures available from the Office for National Statistics. By contrast, people from Pakistan and Bangladesh earned about 15% less than white people, and Black people earned 6.9% less.

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Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, the first Muslim woman to attend Cabinet when she served in former Prime Minister David Cameron's government, said she thought Sunak would be a unifying figure for all British Asians.

"But there has been a huge debate on whether or not this is something that we should celebrate, and I think we do celebrate the fact that this is visible diversity," Warsi told the BBC.

"But it has to go beyond visible diversity. There have to be young children today from poor homes, going to ordinary state schools, who say that they, too, could become prime minister."

Sunder Katwala, director of British Future, a think tank focused on immigration, identity and race, called Sunak's victory a "historic moment" that wouldn't have been possible just a decade ago. But, he said, the struggle to end discrimination isn't over.

"I hope that Sunak will acknowledge that not everybody has enjoyed his advantages in life," Katwala said. "Rishi Sunak reaching 10 Downing Street does not make Britain a perfect meritocracy. While there is more to do, this is a hopeful sign of progress against the prejudices of the past."

Sathnam Sanghera, a columnist for the Times of London, said Sunak's promotion was "amazing" as he recalled the hatred and violence faced by Black and Asian people in Britain in the past.

Immigrants of his parents' generation still remember the white gangs that roamed the streets "looking for West Indians, Africans or Asians to assault," and coming home to find excrement stuffed through their mailboxes.

"Some people on the left appear to be reluctant to say it, but it is undeniably a great thing that, in Rishi Sunak, Britain has its first brown prime minister," Sanghera wrote. "Frankly, I never expected to see such a thing in my lifetime."

But while Sunak's success will boost the aspirations of young people throughout Britain, more work needs to be done, Sanghera said.

"Just because we have one British Hindu in charge, and just because some brown ethnic groups are doing well, it doesn't mean that Britain has defeated racism," he wrote. "No more than Barack Obama's election as president represented the defeat of racism in America."

Those challenges are on display in Southall, where two-thirds of the people have roots in South Asia and real incomes are about 20% of the London average, according to the local governing council.

That means people in this community will be disproportionately hit by soaring energy prices and rising food bills that have pushed inflation to a 40-year high of 10.1%.

But shopkeeper Pratik Shah was optimistic as he stood before a wall of saris in glittering pink, mint and silver and talked about the potential for progress he sees in Sunak's leadership.

"It might help the country in getting to a higher position," he said. "And I feel that the whole Asian community has that trust in him."

'They took my big love': Ukraine woman searches for answers

By ERIKA KINETZ Associated Press

OZERA, Ukraine (AP) — Tetiana Boikiv peered from the doorway of the cellar at the Russian soldiers questioning her husband about his phone.

"Come up," her husband, Mykola Moroz, called to her. "Don't be afraid."

Moroz — Kolia to his friends — was trying to explain that the surveillance video they'd found was from his job as an electrician, all taken before the Feb. 24 invasion.

"I am a religious person," Kolia said. "I haven't hurt anyone."

But the two soldiers and their commander weren't listening. They put a bag over his head. Despairing, Boikiv demanded to know what they would do with the man she called her big, big love.

"Shoot him," one of the soldiers replied. They took him away.

She would never see Kolia again.

While atrocities in the nearby town of Bucha have captured the world's attention and become case number one for Ukraine's prosecutors, the slaughter there was not an aberration. Rather, it was part of

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a trail of violence that spread far and wide, often under the radar of prosecutors, to ordinary villages like Zdvizhivka, a half hour north of Bucha.

Much of the violence was systemic, not random, conceived and implemented within the command structures of the Russian military, an investigation by The Associated Press and the PBS series Frontline found.

This story is part of an AP/Frontline investigation that includes the War Crimes Watch Ukraine interactive experience and the upcoming documentary "Putin's Attack on Ukraine: Documenting War Crimes," which premieres 10/9c Oct. 25 on PBS.

Troops were instructed to block and destroy vestiges of "nationalist resistance," according to Russian battle plans obtained by the Royal United Services Institute, a prominent defense and security think tank in London. They did so with consistent brutality, hunting potential enemies on Russian intelligence lists and torturing and killing volunteer fighters, veterans and civilians suspected of assisting Ukrainian troops. The AP and Frontline interviewed dozens of witnesses and survivors, and reviewed audio intercepts and surveillance camera footage to document what happened.

These cleansing operations — *zachistka*, in Russian — took on a sharper edge as the line between civilians and combatants blurred. Ukraine has made it breathtakingly easy for anyone with a cell phone connection to report the position of Russian troops, and many civilians do. As Russian soldiers fought to suppress what has effectively become a crowdsourced resistance, they've swept up many civilians who have done nothing at all.

Ukrainian prosecutors say they will address every crime committed in this war, but they are scrambling to triage more than 40,000 war crimes investigations. Right now, their most pressing priorities are cases with promising evidence and high body counts, places like Bucha that gripped the public imagination. Kolia would die in a garden not far away, possibly at the hands of troops commanded by the same man who led the Bucha operation, but his death has gone largely unnoticed.

That left Boikiv on her own to find her missing husband and struggle to make sense of his death.

Each time a new body turned up in Zdvizhivka — a bucolic village an hour north of Kyiv that Russians turned into a major forward operating base for their assault on the capitol — Father Vasyl Bentsa's phone would ring.

The village priest had taken it upon himself to document the deaths.

On Mar. 30, as Russian troops withdrew, the bodies of two unknown men, marked by torture, were found in the back garden of one of the biggest, ritziest houses in town. Bullets had ripped through the red wood fence nearby and casings littered the ground. By the next morning, when Bentsa arrived, three more bodies had appeared in the same spot.

There were no police, no prosecutors, no ballistics experts, no Ukrainian military around to call for help. There were just five men who needed names.

"We did not know at all who to contact," Bentsa said. "To leave the bodies like that for a long time was stupid. Clearly, we all know physiology — the human will decompose and smell. What would we do with them?"

Father Bentsa put on medical gloves and searched through the pockets of the corpses, looking for identification. He found none.

It didn't seem like the men had been dead very long. A woman from town who helped remove the blindfold from one of the corpses got fresh blood on her hands.

Bentsa snapped photographs and helped haul the bodies to a graveyard at the edge of the forest. He buried them together in a sandy pit, taking care to mark the spot with a rough wooden cross. "March 31, 2022," he scratched into the wood. "5 unknown men."

"It's a good thing someone had a pen," he said.

Fifteen minutes south, in Oзера, Boikiv kept hoping Kolia would reappear.

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They'd met at the botanical garden in Kyiv on a church outing for singles. Boikiv had moved from her home in the city to the village of Ozera just a few months before Russia's invasion to build a new life with Kolia.

Their house had bright blue doors and rough wood siding painted in cheerful blues and green. Friends said Kolia had golden hands and could fix anything. Their back yard was stacked with construction materials to replace the roof, add brick cladding and build a new barn.

Kolia got up before dawn to bring Boikiv fresh flowers from the fields. When they were apart, he sent her photos of flowers on her phone.

"He was like a child deep inside," said Boikiv, who goes by Tania.

He liked to collect small, beautiful things — stones, stamps, postcards, pieces of glass. In the evenings they'd take turns cooking. He baked better apple pie than she did.

"Once Kolia said to me, Tania, what's the point in living for oneself? It's when you have somebody next to you, you can feel happy," she recalled. "Somebody to live for, somebody to bake for, somebody to work for."

After the Russians left, word went round that a priest from Zdvizhivka had photos of people who'd been killed.

As soon as the roads were clear of landmines, Boikiv and two neighbors went to talk with him. They found Father Bentsa in a large, hushed room filled with gilded Orthodox icons, where he had just finished mass.

Bentsa scrolled through the images of the dead on his phone.

At the third man, Boikiv froze. There was Kolia, dressed in his own clothes, with his own face, bloodied and beaten but intact. His hands were curled into fists and his body was fixed in a fetal position. The joints of his legs were bent at strange angles. One eye was swollen shut, and his skull had been crushed.

"My Kolia! Kolia!" she cried, grabbing the priest's phone.

Father Bentsa told her police had exhumed Kolia and four others from their common grave six days earlier. Boikiv and her neighbors drove home in silence.

Where was Kolia now?

Two other men from Ozera were also swept up by Russians looking for spotters and died together in the garden with Kolia. One actually was a spotter, reporting detailed information about the location of Russian troops to the Ukrainian military.

On March 21 — six days after Kolia was taken — Serhii Kucher heard someone hollering his name outside the house he'd taken refuge in, just around the corner from Boikiv's. When he walked outside, he saw his friend — a local driver named Andrii Voznenko — kneeling, shirtless in the cold, surrounded by Russians.

Kucher said a soldier held a gun to Voznenko's head and he confessed to acting as a spotter.

The soldiers demanded to know if Kucher was a spotter too and forced him to strip so they could search him for tattoos. They threatened to shoot him in the knees.

"They searched the house, every room, every crevice," Kucher said. "They threatened that if any data gets sent from anywhere within the village, 'We will come back and shoot you on sight.'"

Around 1 p.m., the Russians put a bag over Voznenko's head and drove him away. Two other eyewitnesses corroborated Kucher's account. They never saw Voznenko alive again.

Ivan Boiko, an Ozera local who works for the emergency services of Ukraine, told AP and Frontline that Voznenko was skilled at identifying Russian planes and vehicles.

"I was sending all of this information to the headquarters of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Army was hitting these positions," Boiko said.

Boiko said he lost contact with Voznenko around March 10, nearly two weeks before the Russians picked him up.

The day after Voznenko was taken, another Ozera man, named Mykhailo Honchar, was picked up. Eyewitnesses said Russian soldiers blindfolded him, bound his hands and legs and took him away after finding electronics equipment in his backpack.

In Syria and during the Arab Spring, civilians used their phones to document conflict. But never before has a government mobilized technology to gather information in such an organized, widespread way, as

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President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on every citizen to help the war effort.

With a touch of the button from the start screen of Diia, Ukraine's e-government app, anyone can report Russian troop movements via a Telegram bot set up by the Ministry of Digital Transformation. Mykhailo Fedorov, the Minister of Digital Transformation, said on Twitter in April that in just five weeks the bot had collected 257,000 reports on military hardware, troops and war criminals.

The Security Service of Ukraine created its own Telegram bot and sent out SMS messages encouraging people to report Russian troop movements: "We will win together!"

"It does concern me because you are effectively turning citizens into intelligence assets," said Eliot Higgins, the founder of Bellingcat, an investigative group that has been working with crowdsourced documentation of atrocities for years. "It creates a risk for those civilians. ... Do we really want a government putting civilians in that position?"

Oleksiy Danilov, the head of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, acknowledged the risks for civilians, but said the volunteers felt empowered by contributing to the defense of their country.

"The engagement of the locals was very important," Danilov said. "They risked their lives. They were helping their country."

Under the laws of war, civilians who pose a security threat can be detained, and soldiers could target civilians actively participating in hostilities, international human rights lawyers say. But under no circumstances is it legal to torture and kill civilians or combatants held as prisoners of war.

The degree of crowdsourced intelligence in Ukraine presents new legal questions.

"This really is a novel kind of issue," said Clint Williamson, a former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues. "It's not contemplated under international humanitarian law."

But, he added, the Ukrainian government has every right to mobilize the population.

"It is still the choice of each individual as to whether they participate," he said.

Russian soldiers were sloppy about deciding who would live and who would die. Perhaps fear or rage clouded their judgment. Perhaps they didn't really care that much.

Three people picked up and tortured by Russian soldiers near Kyiv admitted to the AP, relatives or friends that they had been passing information about Russian troop positions to Ukrainian authorities. Two were later killed.

The day before Kolia was abducted, drone footage shows a fiery cloud bloom from the woods just outside Ozera as a Ukrainian rocket hit Russian artillery munitions. The strike was so accurate that it was "perfectly logical" for Russians to suspect a spotter who gave information, said Pierre Vaux, an expert in digital investigations at the Center for Information Resilience in London who analyzed the video.

But it looks like Kolia told the truth about not being involved. Cell phone tower records for Kolia's mobile phone numbers obtained by The AP show that his phone was last active on Feb. 25 — making it extremely unlikely that he sent in coordinates from the occupied town in the 18 days before his abduction.

Boikiv's first stop in her effort to find Kolia was the Bucha morgue.

By the time she arrived, spring was settling in over Bucha. Daffodils bloomed in front of ravaged houses. As the sun warmed the earth back to life, the bodies of Bucha began to stink.

The thick, sticky stench of the dead lingered around the morgue for weeks. The only immediate relief came from the scent of fresh cut pine wood in a small room packed with coffins.

Anna Dolid, a psychologist on duty at the morgue, tried to ease things by explaining, step by step, the process of reclamation when evidence of crimes must be gathered. All corpses needed to be exhumed so proper investigations could be done. There would be autopsies at one of a half dozen local morgues, and only then could a body be handed over for burial.

People watched in horror as loved ones were dug up from their yards.

"It was chaos. No one understood what was happening," Dolid said.

She kept smelling salts on hand to revive those who fainted from the trauma and handed out rafts of prescriptions for sedatives.

The question that rips through people's grief, Dolid said, is why. Why did this happen? "It takes years to

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search for answers to these questions," she said.

If Boikiv couldn't get a why, she would settle for a where. But Kolia's name wasn't on the lists of bodies at the morgue. There were three large refrigerated trucks parked outside. Her Kolia was probably inside one of them.

Boikiv's friend from church opened each body bag and peered in at each dead face. He called her over once in a while to examine possible matches. She said they went through dozens of bodies.

They did not find Kolia.

A few days later, she got word that two unidentified bodies from Zdvizhivka had come in. But the Bucha morgue was farming out overflow corpses to a half dozen other morgues. By the time Boikiv got back to Bucha, the Zdvizhivka bodies were at the bottom of a stack of body bags in a refrigerated truck about to leave for the nearby town of Bila Tserkva.

Boikiv began to weep. If she couldn't hitch a ride on the truck, she threatened, she would climb in the back with all the dead people. She couldn't let Kolia slip away again. The driver made space for her in the cab.

When the truck was unloaded in Bila Tserkva, Boikiv peered in at the corpses from Zdvizhivka. They were in such poor shape that it was hard to be sure. A nurse told Tania to look not just at the clothes, but also at the teeth.

"I opened the mouth and looked at the teeth," she said, flinching at the memory. "It wasn't him."

She kept looking, then spotted Kolia's shoe peeking out from a partially open bag.

By the time Boikiv set eyes on her husband again, Kolia had been dead for a month. His eyeballs had liquified into a kind of white jelly. His skin was stretched and dry, disintegrating. The stench was piercing.

"I asked the nurse what's with the eyes," Boikiv said. "She told me the eyes rot first."

She recognized her husband by the shape of his skull and his beard. She peered into Kolia's mouth and looked at his fillings.

"I didn't want to bring someone else to my house," Boikiv explained. "Even without the eyes, I could tell it was my husband."

The day of the funeral, friends from church trickled into the yard and stood around Kolia's coffin. The sky threatened rain.

"We will meet again, Kolia," Boikiv said, running her work gloves along the top of the casket. "I will give him a hard time for not listening to me, and not leaving when we had a chance. And how much time was I searching for him? How much I've travelled."

She felt a stab of panic. "I double-checked if it's him or not," she said in a low voice. "I am calm. I am calm."

The mourners sang, deep and slow, about coming closer to God, finding a place without sorrow. Under low slate clouds, they walked in a short procession to the cemetery behind the church.

Overhead, majestic storks circled instead of warplanes. As Boikiv went back home, neighbors embraced and sat together in front of their fences. They had survived, so far. They would bury their dead and life, somehow, would begin again.

"Everything is beautiful here. But Kolia is gone," Boikiv said, looking at a row of tall red tulips her neighbor had planted. Fat, warm drops of spring rain splattered the dirt.

"They took my big love," she said.

All that's left now is the search for justice. For those who have lost loved ones, it is everything, and it is also nothing.

Around the time of the funeral, Father Bentsa knelt on the forest floor next to the pit where he had buried Kolia, Voznenko and Honchar. He still doesn't know the names of the other two men found in the garden. Police had left things behind when they took away the corpses, and Bentsa matched them with his photographs of the mangled bodies.

Here, Honchar's purple scarf.

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There, the bloody cloth that bound Voznenko's eyes.
Kolia's black winter hat.
"Maybe one day it will be useful," he said. "If I bury them in the ground and there are no pictures, there's no evidence, no investigation."
How does one death – as deep a loss as the next – jump the line in the search for justice?
All across Ukraine, gardens and courtyards and basements were filling up with bodies. It was far from clear whether Kolia's would count.
The early signs did not reassure Boikiv. The only official documentation of his death she had was a slim strip of paper summarizing the autopsy, which struck her as deeply inadequate. It said her husband died of multiple gunshot wounds on March 25, 2022.
Boikiv had seen the photographs of Kolia's body and doubted it was bullets that killed him.
She gave a statement to Ukrainian authorities, but she said she hasn't heard from anyone since. She thinks she'd be able to identify the soldiers who took him, but no one has come around to ask. Most of what she learned about her husband's last days came from Father Bentsa.
If she believed that finding Kolia would bring her a measure of relief, it didn't turn out that way. Her search was over, but Kolia was still gone, and her house rang with silence.
She said the people responsible for her husband's death should be identified and punished. But she's not optimistic that will happen. Nor is she convinced it would matter much.
"You will not bring him back," she said. "It won't change anything."
She sat at home in the darkening light surrounded by reminders of what she has lost. The bed she'd brought to share with Kolia. The water from the well Kolia dug. The little blue and white plastic butterflies Kolia pinned to their buckling wallpaper.
She was thinking of leaving Ožera, but then who would eat the fruit from Kolia's garden?
"I understand that everything is in the hands of God," she said. "And the time will come when people will be punished for this. The judgment day is awaiting them."

Sunak takes over as UK prime minister amid economic crisis

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press
LONDON (AP) — Rishi Sunak became Britain's third prime minister this year on Tuesday, tasked with taming an economic crisis that has left the country's finances in a precarious state and millions struggling to pay their food and energy bills.
Sunak, who is the U.K.'s first leader of color, met King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, where the monarch officially asked the new leader of the governing Conservative Party to form a government, as is tradition.
Sunak clinched the leadership position Monday, seen by his party as a safe pair of hands to stabilize an economy sliding toward recession — and stem its own plunging popularity, after the brief, disastrous term of Liz Truss.
Her package of unfunded tax cuts spooked financial markets with the prospect of ballooning debt, drove the pound to record lows and forced the Bank of England to intervene — weakening Britain's fragile economy and obliterating Truss' authority within her party.
In one of his first acts, Sunak announced he would retain Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt, appointed by Truss to steady the markets two weeks ago amid the turmoil. His removal would have set off new tremors.
Sunak — at 42 the youngest British leader in more than 200 years — acknowledged the scale of his challenge as well as the skepticism of a British public alarmed at the state of the economy and weary of a Conservative Party soap opera that has chewed through two prime ministers in as many months.
"I fully appreciate how hard things are," Sunak said outside the prime minister's 10 Downing Street residence. "And I understand, too, that I have work to do to restore trust after all that has happened. All I can say is that I am not daunted."

Sunak immediately set about appointing a Cabinet, aiming to put his stamp on the government while

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bringing in people from different wings of the Conservative Party.

He removed about a dozen members of Truss' government, but kept several senior figures in place besides Hunt, including Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and Defense Secretary Ben Wallace.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who resigned last week in a move that helped trigger Truss' downfall, got her job back. A leading light of the Conservatives' right wing, Braverman is charged with fulfilling a controversial, stalled plan to send some asylum seekers arriving in Britain on a one-way trip to Rwanda.

Sunak also brought back faces from the era of Truss' predecessor, Boris Johnson, including Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab and Cabinet veteran Michael Gove.

Sunak aims to assemble an experienced Cabinet whose competence can erase memories of the missteps and U-turns of the past months. But the right-of-center party's divisions over immigration, relations with Europe and other big issues, remain deep. Allies of Truss and the scandal-plagued Johnson who have been sidelined or demoted from government can now nurture grievances from Parliament's back benches.

"This is not a fresh start. It's the same Conservative cabinet of chaos," opposition Labour Party lawmaker Rosena Allin-Khan said on Twitter.

When he was Treasury chief, Sunak became popular with the public by handing out billions in support to shuttered businesses and laid-off workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But now he will have to oversee tax hikes and public spending cuts as he tries to bring inflation and government debt under control. A wave of strikes over pay that has already seen walkouts by railway staff, telecoms workers, garbage collectors, lawyers and dockworkers is likely to spread.

Acknowledging "difficult decisions to come," Sunak tried to draw a line under the chaos that engulfed Truss and Johnson. He said his government "will have integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level."

Opponents already depict Sunak as out of touch with the concerns of ordinary people because of his privileged private school background, previous career as a hedge fund manager and vast wealth.

Much of Sunak's fortune comes through his wife Akshata Murty, whose father is the billionaire founder of Indian IT firm Infosys. The couple is worth 730 million pounds (\$826 million), according to the Sunday Times Rich List.

In April 2022, it emerged that Murty did not pay U.K. tax on her overseas income. The practice was legal — and Murty soon agreed to relinquish it — but it looked bad at a time when millions of Britons were struggling to make ends meet.

Sunak's victory is a remarkable reversal of fortune just weeks after he lost to Truss in a Conservative election to replace Johnson.

Sunak was chosen as Conservative leader on Monday after becoming the only candidate to clear the nomination threshold of 100 lawmakers. Sunak defeated House of Commons Leader Penny Mordaunt — who keeps that job in his government — and Johnson, who failed to rally enough support for a comeback bid.

Next Sunak has to prepare for a budget statement, scheduled to be delivered by Hunt on Oct. 31, that will set out how the government plans to come up with billions of pounds (dollars) to fill a fiscal hole created by soaring inflation and a sluggish economy — and exacerbated by Truss' destabilizing plans.

Truss announced her resignation last week and departed Tuesday after making a defiant public statement in Downing Street, seven weeks to the day after she was appointed prime minister.

Truss offered a defense of her low-tax vision, saying she was "more convinced than ever that we need to be bold and confront the problems we face."

She leaves a Conservative Party trailing the left-of-center Labour Party in opinion polls. Sunak has at most two years to turn its fortunes around. There does not need to be an election until the end of 2024, though public pressure to call an early poll is growing.

Jill Rutter, of the Institute for Government, said Sunak's task was to show the Conservatives "are capable of governing in a fair way in the national interest."

"If they continue to look like a party that is incapable of making decisions, incapable of making those decisions stick, then they will probably deserve to be punished by the electorate next time round," she said.

Jan. 6 panel interviews former Trump aide Hope Hicks

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Jan. 6 committee is interviewing Hope Hicks, a longtime aide to former President Donald Trump, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

Tuesday's interview comes as the investigation is winding down and as the panel has subpoenaed Trump for an interview in the coming weeks. The person requested anonymity to discuss the closed-door meeting.

Hicks did not play a major role in the White House response to the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection, in which hundreds of Trump's supporters broke into the U.S. Capitol and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden's victory. The longtime Trump communications aide was still working there at the time but left the White House in the days afterward.

Still, Hicks had been one of Trump's most trusted aides. And she was looped in on some texts and emails that day ahead of the then-president's speech outside the White House and before the violence unfolded, according to CNN, which obtained copies of texts turned over by former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows.

Hicks is no stranger to investigations of her former boss. She was a key witness in former special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, delivering important information to the special counsel's office about Trump's attempts to obstruct that investigation. But she declined to answer questions about her time in the White House to House Democrats who were investigating the former president in 2019, after Mueller's report came out, citing privilege concerns.

The New York Times first reported Hicks' interview.

The Jan. 6 panel has interviewed more than 1,000 witnesses, including multiple White House aides, and has established that Trump was repeatedly told by some of his closest advisers that he had lost the 2020 election. But he continued to spread false claims of widespread election fraud, and his supporters who stormed the Capitol repeated them.

The nine-member panel issued a letter to Trump's lawyers late last week demanding his testimony, either at the Capitol or by videoconference, "beginning on or about" Nov. 14 and continuing for multiple days if necessary. The letter also outlined a sweeping request for documents, including personal communications between Trump and members of Congress as well as extremist groups.

Trump has not yet responded to the subpoena.

The committee held nine hearings this year and is expected to come out with a final report by the end of the year.

Review: 'Wendell & Wild' is a dark and cold animated ride

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

Just in time for Halloween comes a film that isn't afraid to lean into the darkness, one frame at a time.

In the first five minutes of "Wendell & Wild," our teen heroine loses her parents in a car accident, her town is economically gutted and she ends up in the back of a prison bus, her legs shackled and her hands cuffed.

This is cold stuff. Director Henry Selick's return to stop-motion animation is icy, from the slushy potholes on the roads to the vapor clouds that emerge from characters' mouths. His script with Jordan Peele is equally chilly, a place where alienation, backstabbing and plots abound.

Selick, whose previous films include "The Nightmare Before Christmas," "James and the Giant Peach" and "Coraline," has attracted a starry lineup of actors to supply voices this time: Ving Rhames, James Hong, Angela Bassett, David Harewood and Peele, reunited with his old comedy partner Keegan-Michael Key.

Peele and Key play the titular characters, a pair of mid-level, none-too-smart demon brothers who hope to escape drudgery in hell by escaping to the world of the living and opening a fun fair. Unfortunately, their banter is a little hemmed in, a little less hysterical than anticipated.

They think they've found their way out of hell in the form of 13-year-old Kat Elliott (Lyric Ross), a goth-like rebellious orphan who has green hair, eyebrow piercings, knee-length platform boots and fingerless

studded gloves. She carries a boombox and a doesn't-play-with-others vibe. "I don't do friends," she says. "Bad things happen to people I'm close to."

It is a dark tale, with the action never far from the town's cemetery and coffins seemingly always being cracked open. There is a stab at social criticism involving an ominous for-profit company that wants to build a prison so badly it raises the dead to get the city council votes, and a parochial school willing to make a deal with these devils to stay open.

Throughout is Selick's idiosyncratic vision. It takes a certain kind of ghoulish humor to bring a Catholic priest back from the dead with a hair-regrowth cream while our two demon brothers celebrate with high-fives as the soundtrack plays "You Sexy Thing" by Hot Chocolate. In many ways, this film has the creepiness of "The Nightmare Before Christmas fused with the girl-power of "Coraline" but for less pay-off than either.

The animation style includes the hyper-realism of backgrounds and thrilling details like a messy, bubbling pot of sauce or a rusted bulldozer to human characters who have seams on their faces and often long, skinny legs. A pair of nuns resemble strange fat birds and skeletons with worms in their eyes stumble along. The nifty character designs are credited to designer Pablo Lobato.

Beneath it all is the story of a child's love and guilt — and an education and judicial system letting her down — which propels her to bring her parents back from the dead, but that gets a little lost in the gross-out humor, Addams Family-level weirdness and shock-for-shock's sake visual gags like a demonic teddy bear. For all the lovingly crafted spectacle, Selick's agonizing, shot-by-shot film, is as overstuffed as that bear.

"Wendell & Wild," a Netflix release, is rated PG-13 for some thematic material, violence, substance use and brief strong language. Running time: 106 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Boston, Clark headline AP women's hoops All-America team

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Aliyah Boston of South Carolina and Caitlin Clark of Iowa were unanimous picks for The Associated Press preseason women's basketball All-America team released Tuesday.

Boston led South Carolina to its second national championship and swept nearly ever major award last season. Expectations are high once again for the top-ranked Gamecocks and Boston, who was on all 30 ballots from the national media panel that selects the AP Top 25 each week.

"I don't think all the awards define who she is but also puts her in a position of she's in a more relaxed mode because she accomplished those things. She's still in a place of hunger," South Carolina coach Dawn Staley said. "She still wants to be the best. When you've proven that at such an early stage of your career, you want more and more. She's entered a phase of wanting more yet is confident in who she is, since she was able to accomplish it."

Seniors Haley Jones of Stanford, Ashley Joens of Iowa State and Elizabeth Kitley of Virginia Tech were also selected for the team as was sophomore Aneesah Morrow of DePaul.

Boston, who averaged 16.8 points and 12.4 rebounds, and Clark were both on the preseason team last year. Clark followed up a fantastic first season with an even better one as a sophomore, averaging 27 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Hawkeyes, who are ranked fourth in the preseason poll for their best mark since 1994.

"She worked on a little bit more emotional control in her leadership. I think that's really important," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said. "You want those officials to be your best friends let's treat them like that."

Bluder also said Clark has added some post moves to her game: "That may sound silly with Monika (Czinano) on the block. She's almost 5-foot-10 and no reason she can't post up. She's looking for that a lot more."

Joens opted to stay at Iowa State for another year, passing up a chance to enter the WNBA draft. She averaged 20.3 points and 9.5 rebounds last season and is the first preseason All-American in school history.

"This is a great honor for Ashley and the entire Iowa State program," coach Bill Fennelly said. "To be recognized with such a great group of players is an outstanding accomplishment. I know she will continue to work hard to play at an All-American level this season."

Jones helped Stanford go 32-4 before falling to UConn in the Final Four. She averaged 13.2 points, 7.9

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rebounds and 3.7 assists for the Cardinal. Last season, coach Tara VanDerveer called her star the "Magic Johnson of women's basketball."

Kitley had a stellar year, averaging 18.1 points and 9.8 rebounds for the Hokies. Her return is a big reason why the team is ranked No. 13 in the preseason, its best mark since the final poll of 1999 when the school was also 13th.

She is the first player from the school to be honored as a preseason All-American.

"She's the hardest working kid I've been around," Virginia Tech coach Kenny Brooks said. "If she doesn't do something, she has FOMO (fear of missing out). She's added so much to her game to make us the best we can be. My responsibility is to prepare her for the next level."

Morrow had an incredible first season, averaging 21.9 points and 13.5 rebounds for the Blue Demons. She is the first DePaul player to earn preseason honors since Latasha Byears did it in 1995.

"She earns it through her daily work ethic and competitiveness," DePaul coach Doug Bruno said of Morrow.

All six players were honored last spring on the AP All-America teams. Boston, Clark and Jones were on the first team while Joens and Morrow were on the second. Kitley made the third team.

The AP started choosing a preseason All-America team before the 1994-95 season.

The Associated Press' 2022-23 preseason All-America women's basketball team, with school, height, year and votes from a 30-member national media panel (key 2021-22 statistics in parentheses):

Aliyah Boston, South Carolina, 6-5, senior, 30 of 30 votes (16.8 ppg, 12.5 rpg, 2.4 bpg.)

Caitlin Clark, Iowa, 6-0, junior, 30 of 30 votes (27.0 ppg, 8.0 apg, 8.0 rpg)

Haley Jones, Stanford, 6-1, senior 28 of 30 votes (13.2 ppg, 7.9 rpg, 3.7 apg)

Ashley Joens, Iowa State, 6-1, senior, 24 of 30 votes (20.3 ppg, 9.5 rpg, 2.0 apg)

Elizabeth Kitley, Virginia Tech, 6-6, senior, 9 of 30 votes (18.1 ppg, 9.8 rpg, 2.4 bpg)

Aneesah Morrow, DePaul, 6-1, sophomore, 9 of 30 votes (21.9 ppg, 13.5 rpg, 3.0 spg)

Others receiving votes: Cameron Brink, Stanford; Rori Harmon, Texas; Hailey Van Lith, Louisville; Olivia Miles, Notre Dame; Angel Reese, LSU; Maddy Siegrist, Villanova; Azzi Fudd, UConn; Jade Loville, Arizona; Jordan Horston, Tennessee; Deja Kelly, North Carolina; Tamari Key, Tennessee.

Israeli troops raid gunmen's hideout; 5 Palestinians killed

By MAJDI MOHAMMED Associated Press

NABLUS, West Bank (AP) — Israeli forces raided a stronghold of an armed group in the occupied West Bank's second-largest city, blowing up a bomb lab and engaging in a firefight, the military said Tuesday. Five Palestinians were killed and 20 were wounded, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The overnight raid in the old city, or kasbah, of Nablus, was one of the deadliest in the West Bank in 2022 and comes at a time of escalating tensions.

Television footage showed flames and smoke rising in the night sky over Nablus. The army said it used shoulder-launched missiles. Local residents reported a large explosion that rocked the old city and surrounding neighborhoods.

The target of the raid was a group of Palestinian gunmen calling themselves the Lions' Den. The group was responsible for the recent fatal shooting of an Israeli soldier and several attempted attacks, the army said.

The five men killed in the raid were in their 20s and 30s, the Health Ministry said. Several of the wounded were in serious condition, the ministry said.

Israel's caretaker prime minister, Yair Lapid, confirmed that Wadie Houh, a leader of the Lion's Den group, was killed in a shootout with Israeli troops overnight. In remarks at a conference, he said the operation was "an accurate and deadly strike at the heart of terror infrastructure trying to carry out attacks."

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip staged a general strike in protest of Tuesday's killings. Stores remained shuttered throughout the day in Nablus, Ramallah, Gaza City and other Palestinian cities.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, the army said troops fired at a suspect who threw an explosive at them

during an arrest raid near the village of Nebi Saleh. The Palestinian Health Ministry reported the death of 19-year-old Qusai al-Tamimi.

Later on Tuesday, dozens of Palestinians gathered near the perimeter fence separating the Gaza Strip and Israel to protest the Israeli military raid in Nablus. The protesters waved Palestinian flags and burned dozens of tires, sending columns of black smoke into the air. The protest ended at sunset and there were no reports of injuries.

The location of the protest in east Gaza City was one of five that saw weekly protests in 2018 and 2019 in which dozens of Palestinians were killed by Israeli snipers. Gaza's Hamas rulers launched those protest to demand an easing of the blockade. The protests wound to a halt with unofficial understandings reached between the two sides via regional mediators.

Ongoing Israeli arrest raids in the West Bank pose a serious challenge to the Palestinian self-rule government, which administers just over one-third of the territory.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas relies on security cooperation with Israel, particularly against his Islamic militant rivals, to remain in power. At the same time, this cooperation is deeply unpopular among Palestinians who chafe against Israel's open-ended occupation, now in its 56th year.

Younger Palestinians are particularly disillusioned. Small bands of gunmen have formed in some areas, first in the Jenin refugee camp, a stronghold of militants, and now in Nablus. These groups challenge the Palestinian Authority and carry out attacks against Israeli targets.

In Tuesday's raid, Israeli forces blew up a bomb lab in an apartment in Nablus, the military said. The statement said a number of militants were targeted and noted that Palestinians were reporting casualties. From the wording of the statement it was not immediately clear if some of those killed and wounded were hit in an initial ambush rather than a subsequent firefight.

Abbas' spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeneh, issued a statement in which he described the ongoing Israeli raids as a war crime.

More than 125 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli-Palestinian fighting in the West Bank and east Jerusalem this year. The fighting has surged since a series of Palestinian attacks killed 19 people in Israel in the spring. The Israeli army says most of the Palestinians killed have been militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war and has built more than 130 settlements there, many of which resemble small towns, with apartment blocks, shopping malls and industrial zones. The Palestinians want the West Bank to form the main part of their future state. Most countries view the settlements as a violation of international law.

Editors at Bartlett's work to keep up with what's quotable

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Books and speeches, lyrics and interviews, impulsive tweets and sworn testimony: Keeping up with all the words issued over the past decade might overwhelm anyone, but even more so if it's your job to keep up.

"Clearly, the speed of events meant that no matter when we went to press, we would be cutting off in the middle of the story," says Geoffrey O'Brien, the general editor of Bartlett's Familiar Quotations.

The 19th edition of the 170-year old reference work has just been published. It's the first volume since 2012 and the second under the guidance of O'Brien, an author, poet and cultural historian and the former editor-in-chief of the Library of America. The new book welcomes thousands to the unofficial canon of quotability, including author Ta-Nehisi Coates, the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elon Musk and President Joe Biden.

"With the Internet and cable news, you have the constant manufacturing of statements of one kind or another," O'Brien says, identifying his challenge as to choose quotations that have staying power beyond ephemeral news cycles.

Among the current class, none were more obvious, more problematic and more representative than

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former President Donald Trump, listed straightforwardly in the index as "Trump, Donald J(ohn), 1946-".

Trump became a kind of test case for the proliferation of quotes in the 24/7 age and for the difficulty of sorting them. From launching his presidential campaign in 2015 through the end of his presidency and beyond, Trump has been an unending source of newsmaking words, spoken or tweeted at all hours.

"It became clear a certain amount of culling would be involved to pick out things that seemed crucial or sufficiently memorable," O'Brien says. "It's guesswork at best since nobody knows how anything is going to turn out. That's why Bartlett's has evolved over time."

Trump's quotes originate everywhere from a speech in Nevada ("I love the poorly educated!") to one of his debates with Hillary Clinton ("Such a nasty woman"). One selection originates not directly from him, but from a conversation with then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions as documented in the Mueller Report: "Oh my God. This is terrible. This is the end of my presidency. I'm f—ked."

Bartlett's was founded in the 1850s by Cambridge, Massachusetts, bookstore owner John Bartlett. It has always been a subjective, even eccentric project. The initial editions were almost entirely dedicated to white, male English-language poets, statesmen and prose writers. The choices were unpredictable even within those limited boundaries: Bartlett included Benjamin Franklin, but not Thomas Jefferson; Thomas Paine, but not John Adams; John Keats, but not Percy Bysshe Shelley; the editor and translator "Mrs. Sarah Austin," but not Jane Austen.

In recent decades, O'Brien and his immediate predecessor, Justin Kaplan, have opened up Bartlett's to voices from around the world and from a broad range of backgrounds. Bartlett's now includes words from Beyoncé, Usain Bolt, climate activist Greta Thunberg and writer Azar Nafisi. Bartlett's also features Russian proverbs ("Live with wolves, howl like a wolf"), sea shanties and a Navajo hunting song ("Blessed am I/In the luck of the chase").

O'Brien and his editorial team faced the challenge of broadening Bartlett's while keeping its length around 1,400 pages. Some older entries — from Alfonso the Wise to Anthony Burgess — had to go and O'Brien said he was personally sorry to reduce the space for a favorite writer, English poet John Dryden.

Former Vice President Dan Quayle's mangling of a United Negro College Fund advertising slogan, "What a waste it is to lose one's mind," has, perhaps mercifully, been dropped. So has best actress winner Sally Field's seemingly immortal soundbite from the 1985 Academy Awards: "You like me!"

Fame does not guarantee quotability, and infamy does not lead to exclusion.

Bob Hope, a name once seemingly universally known, is not included. Neither is Johnny Carson, a U.S. cultural touchstone for decades. Contemporary celebrities left out include Oprah Winfrey, Jimmy Fallon, Trevor Noah, Howard Stern and the late Rush Limbaugh. At the same time, Woody Allen, Garrison Keillor and others whose standing has fallen during the #MeToo era remain. Kanye West and his unusual praise for Trump ("We are both dragon energy," he told Time magazine in 2018) make the new edition.

O'Brien expressed regret over some of those left out, notably the late Rep. John Lewis. He explained that the goal was to be representative, but not encyclopedic. Among contemporary songwriters, for instance, Merle Haggard is in, but not Willie Nelson; Leonard Cohen, but not Randy Newman or John Prine. Dolly Parton is cited for the first time, although not for "Jolene" or any other song, but for her tagline, "It takes a lot of money to look this cheap."

Not all of those newly included were satisfied with how the editors represented them. The longtime music critic Robert Christgau now joins such peers as Greil Marcus and Lester Bangs in Bartlett's but personally would not have chosen a passage which begins "Punk nostalgia ... is a grotesque oxymoron."

"I'm not crazy about that sentence, there are hundreds if not thousands better," he told The Associated Press, preferring a sentence he wrote for the Village Voice in 1969: "In the worst of times, music is a promise that times were meant to be better."

Author and essayist Leslie Jamison was pleasantly surprised by the two excerpts Bartlett's selected, calling them "central concepts" for her: one in which she refers to empathy as not "just something that happens to you" but a "choice we make: to pay attention, to extend ourselves," and another in which she writes "Unconditional love was insulting, but conditional love was terrifying."

Author Rachel Kushner likes the idea of Bartlett's ongoing evolution, saying to the AP that it's a way of

converting "writing into both a conversation and people talking over one another, which is true to what people do." Her novel from 2013, "The Flamethrowers," is listed for a passage about love and how "People who want their love easy don't really want love."

For future editions, should she be included, Kushner suggested a quote from a 2021 essay: "To become a writer is to have left early no matter what time you got home."

She also mentioned a more urgent priority, that her "birthdate be followed in the biographical index by an em dash, and then a blank space."

Sleep apnea device recall drags on, stoking frustration

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A massive recall of millions of sleep apnea machines has stoked anger and frustration among patients, and U.S. officials are weighing unprecedented legal action to speed a replacement effort that is set to drag into next year.

Sound-dampening foam in the pressurized breathing machines can break down over time, leading users to potentially inhale tiny black particles or hazardous chemicals while they sleep, manufacturer Philips warned in June 2021.

Philips initially estimated it could repair or replace the units within a year. But with the recall expanding to more than 5 million devices worldwide, the Dutch company now says the effort will stretch into 2023.

That's left many patients to choose between using a potentially harmful device or trying risky remedies, including removing the foam themselves, buying second-hand machines online or simply going without the therapy.

The devices are called continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, machines. They force air through a mask to keep passageways open during sleep.

Untreated sleep apnea can cause people to stop breathing hundreds of times per night, leading to dangerous drowsiness and increased heart attack risk. The problem is more common in men than women, with estimates ranging from 10% to 30% of adults affected.

Most patients are better off using a recalled device because the risks of untreated sleep apnea still outweigh the potential harms of the disintegrating foam, physicians say. But doctors have been hard pressed to help patients find new machines, which generally cost between \$500 and \$1,000, and were already in short supply due to supply chain problems.

"What happened is the company just said, 'Talk to your doctor.' But doctors can't manufacture new machines out of the blue," said Dr. John Saito, a respiratory specialist near Los Angeles.

Risks from the foam include headache, asthma, allergic reactions and cancer-causing effects on internal organs, according to the Food and Drug Administration. The recalled devices include Dreamstation and SystemOne CPAP models and several other Philips machines, including Trilogy ventilators.

Last March, the FDA took the rare step of ordering Philips to expand its communication effort, including "clearer information about the health risks of its products." Regulators estimated then that only half of U.S. consumers affected had registered with the company.

The agency hadn't issued such an order in decades.

In a statement, Philips said ongoing testing on the recalled devices is "encouraging" and shows low levels of particles and chemical byproducts emitted by its leading brand of machine. Philips said its initial communication about the dangers posed by the foam was "a worst-case scenario for the possible health risks." The deterioration appears to worsen with unauthorized cleaning methods, the company noted.

The FDA has received more than 70,000 reports of problems attributed to the devices, including pneumonia, infection, headache and cancer. Such reports aren't independently confirmed and can't prove a causal connection. They can be filed by manufacturers, patients, physicians or attorneys.

Jeffrey Reed, of Marysville, Ohio, had been using his Philips machine for about a year when he began seeing black specks in the tubing and mask. His equipment supplier said the debris was caused by improper cleaning, so he continued using it.

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Over the next seven years, Reed says he experienced persistent sinus infections, including two bouts of pneumonia, that didn't resolve with antibiotics. After hearing about the recall, he suspected the foam particles might be playing a role.

"Once I got off their machine, all of that cleared right up," said Reed, 62, who obtained a competitor's device after several months. Like other users, Reed can't definitively prove his problems were caused by Philips' device.

More than 340 personal injury lawsuits against Philips have been consolidated in a Pennsylvania federal court and thousands more are expected in coming months. Reed isn't part of the litigation.

Like the vast majority of U.S. CPAP users, Reed got his device through a medical equipment supplier contracted by his insurer. The company went out of business before the recall and he never heard from them about a replacement.

Even in normal circumstances, those companies typically don't track patients long term.

"After a couple years, you're just forgotten in the system," said Ismael Cordero, a biomedical engineer and CPAP user. "I stopped hearing from my supplier about three years after I got my machine."

Cordero learned that his Philips machine had been recalled through his work at ECRI, a nonprofit that reviews medical device safety.

In May, the FDA put Philips on notice that it was considering a second order that would force the company to improve and accelerate its repair-and-replace program.

Medical device companies typically conduct recalls voluntarily, and former FDA officials say the agency has never actually used its authority to force additional steps.

"The FDA shares the frustrations expressed by patients who are awaiting a resolution for this recall," the agency said in a statement. Philips still hasn't provided "all information we requested to evaluate the risks from the chemicals released from the foam."

Philips disclosed earlier this year that it received a Department of Justice subpoena over the recall. The agency hasn't publicly commented on the matter, per federal rules.

But an FDA inspection of Philips' Pennsylvania offices uncovered a spate of red flags last fall, including emails suggesting the company was warned of the problem six years before the recall. In an October 2015 email, one customer appeared to warn Philips that the polyester polyurethane foam could degrade, according to FDA.

Between 2016 and early 2021, FDA found 14 instances where Philips was made aware of the issue or was analyzing the problem internally. "No further design change, corrective action or field correction was conducted," the FDA inspectors repeatedly note.

In a May 2018 email, foam supplier William T. Burnett wrote to Philips in an email: "We would not recommend use of polyester foam in such an environment. ... It will eventually decompose to a sticky powder," according to an affidavit filed as part of a lawsuit over the foam.

Since the recall, Philips has been using a new type of foam made from silicone to refurbish machines.

But FDA alerted consumers last November that the new material had failed one safety test. And regulators asked the company to perform more testing to clarify any health risks with both the new foam and the recalled material. Philips says independent testing has not identified any safety issues.

The company says it has replaced or repaired about 69% of recalled devices globally and aims to ship 90% of those requested by year's end. On average, the company produces about 1 million sleep devices annually.

"We have scaled up by more than a factor of three, but inevitably it still takes time to remediate 5.5 million devices globally," the company said. About half are in the U.S.

Jeffrey Reed is among those still waiting.

Reed registered for a replacement device in June 2021 — within a week of the recall. This month, he received an email from Philips indicating that his device has been discontinued and isn't available for immediate replacement. Instead, the company offered him \$50 to return the machine or an option of providing additional information to get a newer one.

"For them to wait until October to tell me that my machine is too old, when they've known exactly what device I have since the day I registered — that's frustrating," Reed said. "It's disappointing that a provider of life-saving equipment treats people like this."

Analysis: Joe Dumars was made for his new role at the NBA

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Joe Dumars might have been destined for this job.

He played with the Bad Boys, those Detroit Pistons teams that were physical, aggressive and intimidating. And even in those rough-and-tumble times, he wound up becoming the first recipient of the NBA's sportsmanship award — now called the Joe Dumars Trophy.

He's now tasked with ensuring that players don't act like his old teammates often did. Dumars became Executive Vice President and Head of Basketball Operations for the NBA in May, making him a major decider in all things related to player discipline for on-court actions.

His first big decisions related to player discipline came earlier this week, when the NBA suspended Miami Heat teammates Caleb Martin and Nikola Jovic for their roles in a scuffle during a game against the Toronto Raptors.

"You want to do something where you really feel like you're contributing," Dumars said. "Basically, this is the only place I haven't contributed to in this game."

At 59, with two championships as a player, another as an executive and a lifetime within the game, he doesn't have to be working. He could be spending his days playing and watching tennis, the sport he started playing as a 10-year-old and has loved ever since. Instead, he's moved to New York, with office views from a high-rise not far from Rockefeller Center and Radio City Music Hall, smack in the middle of Manhattan.

"I tell people that we are stewards of the game," Dumars said. "And people go, 'What does that mean?' Well, we make sure that the trains are taking off on time. We make sure that the game stays clean. We make sure that there's any time there's any disruption or things that should not be, we are here to clean this up and make sure we are presenting a great product and presenting it the right way."

When an altercation happens like the one Saturday in Miami, the players involved are asked to consent to an interview with league officials, video is reviewed, and Dumars and other top executives decide the best course of action.

It's reasonable to think this call by Dumars and his team was easy: Martin drove Toronto's Christian Koloko into some baseline seats — thankfully unoccupied at the time — and Jovic, even though he didn't really appear to do much to add fuel to the fire, clearly left the bench area and therefore broke one of the NBA's absolute no-no's.

Martin missed Monday's game against the Raptors and will lose roughly \$45,000 in salary.

"I definitely don't disagree with it," a contrite Martin, who reached out to Koloko to apologize and promised him that he'd be picking up a future dinner check.

Jovic also had to sit out Monday, meaning the Heat rookie has now been suspended for more games (one) than he has played (zero).

What happened Saturday could have been much worse, since Martin, Koloko and about a dozen other people all wound up where fans were. Martin ended up next to a woman in the second row; her halftime acquisition of a large popcorn, somehow, was not spilled.

But things didn't escalate, Dumars acted swiftly, and case closed.

Not everything has been that easy for the league in recent weeks — Phoenix owner Robert Sarver will likely sell his NBA and WNBA franchises before his one-year suspension for boorish behavior ends, Boston coach Ime Udoka will miss this entire season because of an inappropriate workplace relationship, Golden State had to deal with Draymond Green punching teammate Jordan Poole in practice and video of that exchange leaking, and Detroit assistant general manager Rob Murphy was placed on leave following allegations of misconduct made by a female former team employee.

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Sarver was suspended by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. The other incidents have been handled at the team level. On-court matters, those rise to Dumars' desk high above Manhattan.

"I'm super excited to work with him, and to learn from him, and to collaborate with him," said Monty McCutchen, the NBA vice president overseeing referee operations. "The best collaborations are collaborations that both people, both groups, both departments benefit from. And in this short time, Joe has really proven to be a collaborator and to be a builder of relationships. I'm excited about what that means for the future."

Dumars knows what it's like to be on the receiving end of the player-discipline side of stories. He might not have had the full "Bad Boy" reputation earned by Pistons teammates like Bill Laimbeer, Dennis Rodman, Rick Mahorn, Isiah Thomas and John Salley. But he certainly wasn't immune to scuffles; he was fined twice in December 1990 alone for dustups with twin brothers Harvey and Horace Grant, the second of those coming in a Christmas game. And as a Pistons executive, he was once fined \$500,000 for leaking memos to a reporter.

He thinks having been on all sides of the NBA will only help him in this new gig.

"If I didn't have the career I had, maybe my mentality would be different," Dumars said. "But when you've done stuff at the highest level in this in this business, that's kind of where you want to live."

Today in History: October 26, Amy Coney Barrett confirmed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 26, the 299th day of 2022. There are 66 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On October 26th, 2020, Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed to the Supreme Court by a deeply divided Senate, with Republicans overpowering Democrats to install President Donald Trump's nominee days before the election and secure a likely conservative court majority for years to come.

On this date:

In 1774, the First Continental Congress adjourned in Philadelphia.

In 1825, the Erie Canal opened in upstate New York, connecting Lake Erie and the Hudson River.

In 1861, the legendary Pony Express officially ceased operations, giving way to the transcontinental telegraph. (The last run of the Pony Express was completed the following month.)

In 1921, the Chicago Theatre, billed as "the Wonder Theatre of the World," first opened.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of Leyte (LAY'-tay) Gulf ended in a major Allied victory over Japanese forces, whose naval capabilities were badly crippled.

In 1979, South Korean President Park Chung-hee was shot to death by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, Kim Jae-kyu.

In 1982, the medical drama "St. Elsewhere" premiered on NBC.

In 1984, "Baby Fae," a newborn with a severe heart defect, was given the heart of a baboon in an experimental transplant in Loma Linda, California. (Baby Fae lived 21 days with the animal heart.)

In 2000, the New York Yankees became the first team in more than a quarter-century to win three straight World Series championships, beating the New York Mets 4-2 in game five of their "Subway Series."

In 2001, President George W. Bush signed the USA Patriot Act, giving authorities unprecedented ability to search, seize, detain or eavesdrop in their pursuit of possible terrorists.

In 2002, a hostage siege by Chechen rebels at a Moscow theater ended with 129 of the 800-plus captives dead, most from a knockout gas used by Russian special forces who stormed the theater; 41 rebels also died.

In 2010, Iran began loading fuel into the core of its first nuclear power plant.

Ten years ago: After leaving nearly five dozen people dead in the Caribbean, Hurricane Sandy headed toward the eastern United States, with forecasters warning that it would merge with two winter storm systems to create a megastorm. The National Hockey League announced that its labor dispute would force

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the cancellation of all games through the end of November.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump declared opioid abuse a national public health emergency and announced new steps to combat what he described as the worst drug crisis in U.S. history. At the request of the FBI and CIA, the president blocked the release of hundreds of records on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy while allowing 2,800 other files to come out. After a decade as manager that produced just one World Series title, Joe Girardi was fired by the New York Yankees.

One year ago: The U.S. moved a step closer to expanding COVID-19 vaccinations for millions more children as government advisers endorsed kid-size doses of Pfizer's shots for 5- to 11-year-olds. A San Francisco-area police officer, Andrew Hall, was convicted of assault with a firearm in the 2018 fatal shooting of an unarmed mentally ill man, Laudemer Arboleda, who was shot nine times while driving away from police. (Hall was sentenced to six years in prison.) Jorge Soler became the first player to begin a World Series with a home run and the Atlanta Braves beat the Houston Astros 6-2 in Game 1; Braves pitcher Charlie Morton left the game with a broken leg from a batted ball by Yuli Gurriel. Satirist Mort Sahl, who helped revolutionize stand-up comedy during the Cold War with his running commentary on politicians and current events, died at his California home at the age of 94.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Jaclyn Smith is 77. TV host Pat Sajak is 76. Hillary Rodham Clinton is 75. Musician Bootsy Collins is 71. Actor James Pickens Jr. is 70. Rock musician David Was is 70. Rock musician Keith Strickland (The B-52s) is 69. Actor Lauren Tewes is 69. Actor D.W. Moffett is 68. Actor-singer Rita Wilson is 66. Actor Patrick Breen is 62. Actor Dylan McDermott is 61. Actor Cary Elwes is 60. Singer Natalie Merchant is 59. Actor Steve Valentine is 56. Country singer Keith Urban is 55. Actor Tom Cavanagh is 54. Actor Rosemarie DeWitt is 51. Actor Anthony Rapp is 51. Writer-producer Seth MacFarlane (TV: "Family Guy") is 49. TV news correspondent Paula Faris is 47. Actor Lennon Parham is 47. Actor Florence Kasumba is 46. Actor Hal Ozsan is 46. Actor Jon Heder is 45. Singer Mark Barry (BBMak) is 44. Actor Jonathan Chase is 43. Actor Folake Olowofoyeku (foh-LAH'-kay oh-low-wow-foh-YAY'-koo) is 39. Olympic silver medal figure skater Sasha Cohen is 38. Rapper Schoolboy Q is 36. Actor Beulah Koale (TV: "Hawaii Five-0") is 31.