

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar

Friday, Nov. 18

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, lime pear
Jell-O.

School Breakfast: Biscuit and Jelly

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, peas.

State A Volleyball Tourney in Sioux Falls

JH GBB hosts Milbank (7th at 4 p.m. followed by
8th grade game)

Saturday, Nov. 19

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court,
10 a.m.

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

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

State A Volleyball Tourney in Sioux Falls

Groton Legion Turkey Party, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 20

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion
(League Pie Auction following worship), 9 a.m.;
Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

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

UMC: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30
a.m.; Sunday school and Christmas Program Prac-
tice, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS
Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45
a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

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

Monday, Nov. 21

Senior Menu: Baked chicken, rice pilaf, cauliflower
and pea salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken stir fry, rice.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Com-
munity Center.

Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. John's Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

JH GBB at Langford (7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th
grade game)

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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Those helping to pack up boxes for people in need in Groton for Thanksgiving are pictured above. In back, left to right, are David Miller, Drew Reetz, Diane Warrington, Deb Fredrickson, Topper Tastad, Bailey McCarthy, Wendy Monson and Brenda McCarthy; in front, left to right, are Pat Miller, Kari Bartling, Darlene Daly, April Abeln, Julie Shilhanek, Judith Fliehs, Connie Stauch and Charlotte Martin. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Thanksgiving Food Boxes

Enrich Groton SoDak Inc. was created by six individuals all with the same mission in mind, to "Serve the needs of our community through acts of giving and enrichment." This event was another wonderful example of just how great our Groton SD Community is! Enrich Groton SoDak Inc. volunteers worked together to sort items that were donated to the Groton FC-CLA food drive. Thanksgiving foods will be added and boxes will be given to local families in need! This project was also supported by a Thrivent Action Team.

If you are in need or know of someone that could use some assistance from The Pantry - Groton, SD, please don't hesitate to utilize its services. The Pantry - Groton, SD is open Mondays from 11am-3pm and Tuesdays 4-8pm at the Groton Community Center.

- April Abeln



Nancy Larsen goes over a couple of details with Darlene Daly. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Connie Stauch and April Abeln pick up canned goods to put in the boxes. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The workers were dividing up the 200 pounds of potatoes. Pictured are Charlotte Martin, April Abeln, Brenda McCarthy, Wendy Monson and Topper Tastad. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Volunteers were busy unpacking the bags that the FCCLA had gathered from its food drive Wednesday evening. (Photo by April Abeln)

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Groton Post No. 39 American Legion



Annual



Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 19, 2022

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

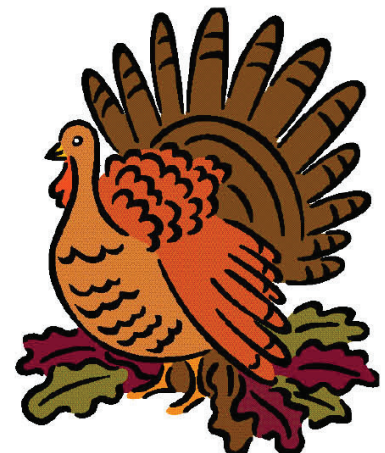
Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Review spurs updates to Black Hills sustainable harvest report

Challenges from industry carry through,
but conclusions on need for harvest reductions remain

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 17, 2022 4:26 PM

That 2020 document's conclusions – namely that a reduction in logging is likely to be necessary to sustain the long-term health of the forest – remain in place.

The General Technical Report (GTR-422), was twice challenged by the timber industry through the federal Data Quality Act.

The issue at the heart of the challenge is a figure that appeared in the original report without clear context: that the forest lost 50% of its inventory since 1999.

In reality, that "loss" was largely the result of a move to delineate "suitable" from "unsuitable" acres for timber harvesting. That shift, as well as a shrinking of overall tallied acres, reduced harvestable volumes by half when compared to 1999. But the actual reduction in acres, after accounting for the delineation, was closer to 18-20%.

Backers and detractors of more robust logging in the forest both said this week that the clarifications to the report are positive developments, although the opposing sides have differing opinions about what the adjustments ought to mean for logging in the hills.

**'TIS THE
SEASON TO
SHOP LOCAL**

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce



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The industry would like to see expanded logging, according to Ben Wudtke, executive director for the Black Hills Forest Resources Association (BHFRA). The BHFRA authored the challenges to the federal report.

Harvest reductions not only have an impact on the 1,100 people employed by the forest products industry in western South Dakota, Wudtke said, but also on the long-term health of the forest. He argues that thinning is the answer to the threats of wildfire or pine beetle damage that accompany an overly thick forest, and that sustainable harvest is the timber industry's primary concern for the national forest.

"Anybody who's been in the Black Hills for any period of time recently knows that we went through about a 20-year mountain pine beetle infestation. The tool to fight back against that infestation is the timber industry," Wudtke said.

The independent review panel concluded that three of the BHFRA's challenges to the GTR were inadequately addressed by the first review, which was requested one year ago. The second review was initiated in April.

In a letter addressed to Wudtke dated Nov. 1, the USDA review panel said that the GTR failed to properly define "suitable" acres, and that it ought to be updated.

"In the view of the panel, the ambiguity of the terms 'sustainable harvest' and 'suitable timberland' is a significant source of confusion that reduces the GTR's utility and clarity," the USDA letter reads.

Dave Mertz is among those who hope to see reduced logging in the Black Hills National Forest. Timber sales have fallen 20% from last year, and a Hill City sawmill recently closed. Those changes were moves in the right direction, according to Mertz, a retired natural resource staff officer for the Black Hills National Forest.

The changes to the GTR, Mertz said, do not amount to anything like a substantial shift in guidance.

"This is all clarification," Mertz said of the recommended changes. "It's nothing that changed the analysis, and the determinations stand the same."

The report will not be retracted, and it still refers to current harvest levels as unsustainable, Mertz noted.



Restoration work on the old McVey Fire burn area in Black Hills National Forest. (USDA Forest Service photo)



JOHN HULT ✉ 🐦

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux falls Argus Leader.

Social Studies standards revision meeting draws nearly 900 public comments before deadline

Public comment registration due by Friday afternoon
BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - NOVEMBER 17, 2022 10:48 AM

The South Dakota Board of Education Standards will hold its second meeting since revealing the revised social studies standards that drew controversy again this summer.

A day before the official deadline to register or submit public comments, the Board had received nearly 900 comments from teachers, school board members, parents, school administrators and more. The Belle Fourche School Board approved a resolution Monday opposing the proposed social studies standards as well.

The standards originally drew criticism in 2021 after the state removed more than a dozen references for the Oceti Sakowin in the first draft. Gov. Kristi Noem ordered the standards revision process to restart in 2022.

The DOE released its revised standards in August, but quickly drew criticism again after the South Dakota Education Association said that the standards discourage inquiry-based learning and emphasize rote memorization, adding that Native American history and South Dakota history are “afterthoughts or lumped in with other standards.”

“They wildly deviate from current social studies standards and will upend the curriculum for every teacher, every classroom and every school,” the association stated shortly after the revised standards were released. “The proposed standards are too time specific and only focus on events from 1492 to 2008 raising many questions about how teachers would approach teaching current events.”

An Argus Leader review of the document found that the 2015 standards are less specific than the detailed 2022 document, which is nearly twice as long, among other notable differences.

The revised standards are “politicized,” said Tim Graf, superintendent of the Harrisburg School District — one of South Dakota’s fastest growing school districts. The changes involved a 15-member committee and were influenced by a conservative college, according to the Associated Press. Of the three educators on the committee, all three opposed the revised standards, Graf added.

Graf won’t be making public comments at Monday’s meeting, since he already took a personal day in September to drive three hours to Aberdeen and make public comments at the first Board revision meeting. His public comments were short but focused on his concern for the future of South Dakota public education with the state government involving itself in picking standards and curriculum.

“This concerns me greatly about what the future of public education is if this just becomes a political football for any future curriculum and options,” Graf told South Dakota Searchlight on Thursday.

The Board normally approves and is involved in curriculum and standards for public education across the state. But not to this degree of interference and control.



Educators at Harrisburg Freedom Elementary School hold signs opposing the revised social studies standards from the South Dakota Board of Education Standards at a walk-in on Nov. 16, 2022.

(Courtesy of Harrisburg Freedom Elementary)

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This is far bigger than just social studies standards.

"I believe this is just another example of South Dakota taking its teachers for granted and not respecting the work they do as professionals," Graf said. "What concerns me is if we lose teachers over this ... There is nothing more important than having a great teacher in classrooms and we're having more and more trouble being able to fill our classrooms with teachers. This will exacerbate those concerns further."

Another Harrisburg School District representative and a Harrisburg School Board member plan to make public comments on Monday. Graf encourages parents of South Dakota students to read through the revisions themselves.

The South Dakota Board of Education Standards' next meeting on the topic will take place Monday at 9 a.m. at the Sioux Falls Convention Center, where board members will hear public comments on the issue.

The BOE's first public meeting on the revision was held in Aberdeen and included 707 written public comments ahead of the meeting, with the majority opposed to the standards and only 67 proponents.

People interested in presenting in-person or remote public comment must register with the Department of Education by 2 p.m. on Nov. 18 by emailing Ferne.Haddock@state.sd.us. Those interested in submitting written comments must do so online for the Social Studies standards or the CTE standards by end-of-day Nov. 18.

Opponents and proponents will each receive 90 minutes for public comment. With 35 opponents who were signed up to speak in Aberdeen in September, only 27 of them fit into the 90-minute section.



MAKENZIE HUBER  

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

Town of Hermosa fined for spraying too much wastewater over farm fields

\$13,000 penalty addresses numerous water quality violations

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - NOVEMBER 17, 2022 4:54 PM

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) has fined Hermosa \$13,000 for Surface Water Discharge permit violations.

The city of 373, located about 20 miles south of Rapid City, failed to submit documentation before spraying wastewater on agricultural land, the DANR said. It also failed to monitor that wastewater and went over the allowable spraying limits.

Some towns rely on lagoons for storing wastewater. Those lagoons tend not to fill because of evaporation. However, loading wastewater into trucks and spraying it onto agricultural land is an option if they do.

"Hermosa has addressed these violations," DANR Secretary Hunter Roberts said in a statement. "However, this penalty reinforces the need for permit compliance to protect the public and the environment."

Hermosa also received the fine for violation of E. coli limits that can be in public waters and failure to submit water quality monitoring reports.

The department says Hermosa is required to submit an updated management plan for spraying wastewater and obtain permission prior to spraying going forward. In addition, Hermosa is not allowed to add any chemicals to its wastewater without written approval from DANR.

Starting on April 1, 2023, the town will be required to submit quarterly progress reports on the status of the upgrades.

Hermosa is working on a project that will increase wastewater capacity – reducing the need to spray excess wastewater onto land.

The penalties go into a state fund used to respond to environmental emergencies.



Wastewater treatment plant in Buena Vista, Georgia, on July 29, 2020. (USDA photo courtesy of Phillip A Read)

COMMENTARY

Refugees, immigrants to South Dakota need our compassion

BRAD JOHNSON

NOVEMBER 17, 2022 3:52 PM

During the past two months, I have emceed three benefit concerts to raise awareness of a statewide effort to bring 5,000 to 10,000 Ukrainian war refugees to our state.

The concerts in Watertown, Rapid City and Sioux Falls raised about \$50,000 to support a fund that will help defray expenses for those who sponsor refugees.

The concerts by South Dakota native and international composer Calvin Jones featured stories from different refugees who essentially were bombed out of their homes by Russian forces on Feb. 24.

They made a long, sometimes harrowing journey to South Dakota, where they are building new lives. They have inspired many people across the state to become part of the new Freedom's Haven for a New American Workforce program.

That refugee effort was kicked off as the result of a work-force development meeting earlier this spring between Lake Area Technical College President Mike Cartney and Rapid City real estate developer Hani Shafai.

The two met to brainstorm how South Dakota can grow its workforce, as there are more than 27,000 jobs open and less than 1,000 people on unemployment. Additionally, our state's workforce, like that across the country, is aging.

According to an August 2022 report by the South Dakota Department of Labor, all baby boomers will have reached 65 or older by 2030, at which time the state will need about 40,000 more workers than it does now. The initial workforce discussion was how to engage more Native Americans and get other immigrants into the state's labor pool.

But when bombs started falling in Ukraine, the emphasis shifted to a dual humanitarian and workforce issue.

More than 7 million Ukrainian refugees have poured into Europe, and about 2.6 million more are unemployed inside their country. Europe does not have the capacity or jobs to support all of these people for the long-term.

The United States is welcoming 100,000 through a new program, and Canada is welcoming about 500,000. Canada also needs workers.

Refugees already have started trickling into South Dakota. Lutheran Social Services is working with about



BORODIANKA, UKRAINE – APRIL 21: In this aerial view, a destroyed apartment building is seen next to an area of heavily damaged houses on April 21, 2022 in Borodianka, Ukraine.

(Photo by Alexey Furman/Getty Images)

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120 Ukrainians, of which about 75% are in the Sioux Falls area, with the rest mostly in the Black Hills.

But South Dakota has the compassion and capability to host many more. Unfortunately, the federal Uniting for Ukraine refugee program is burdensome.

Refugees must have a sponsor in the United States "who agrees to provide them with financial support" essentially for up to two years. Basically, someone, or an organization such as a church, must help them get settled, find housing, navigate the federal aid programs, obtain work permits and more.

To assist in that responsibility the new Freedom's Haven program has created a fund at the South Dakota Community Foundation to raise money to help defray unexpected expenses sponsors and refugees may encounter. About \$150,000 is in that fund so far.

Volunteers also are needed across the state to coordinate local refugee efforts.

But South Dakota's workforce needs won't be met just with Ukrainian refugees. We need to roll out the welcome mat to all legal immigrants.

That requires an immigration system that works. Congressman Dusty Johnson and Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds all personally have been engaged, or sent staffers to meetings, regarding the Ukrainian refugees.

They understand our businesses need more workers.

With the election now over, let's hope they and their Congressional colleagues seriously address the issue.

Ukrainians aren't the only people experiencing hardships. There are good reasons about 2.76 million migrants have crossed the border this year. Venezuelans, Cubans, Nicaraguans and Guatemalans, as well as Mexicans.

Life is miserable in their home countries – no hope and no future.

Like us, they seek a better life for their families.

They are looking for a hand up, not a handout. They work hard and are good family members. South Dakota needs them. Look around and see who is building our roads, our apartments, driving trucks and milking the cows.

South Dakotans are descendants of immigrants. We are compassionate people. Let's simultaneously solve our workforce needs and be good neighbors as well.



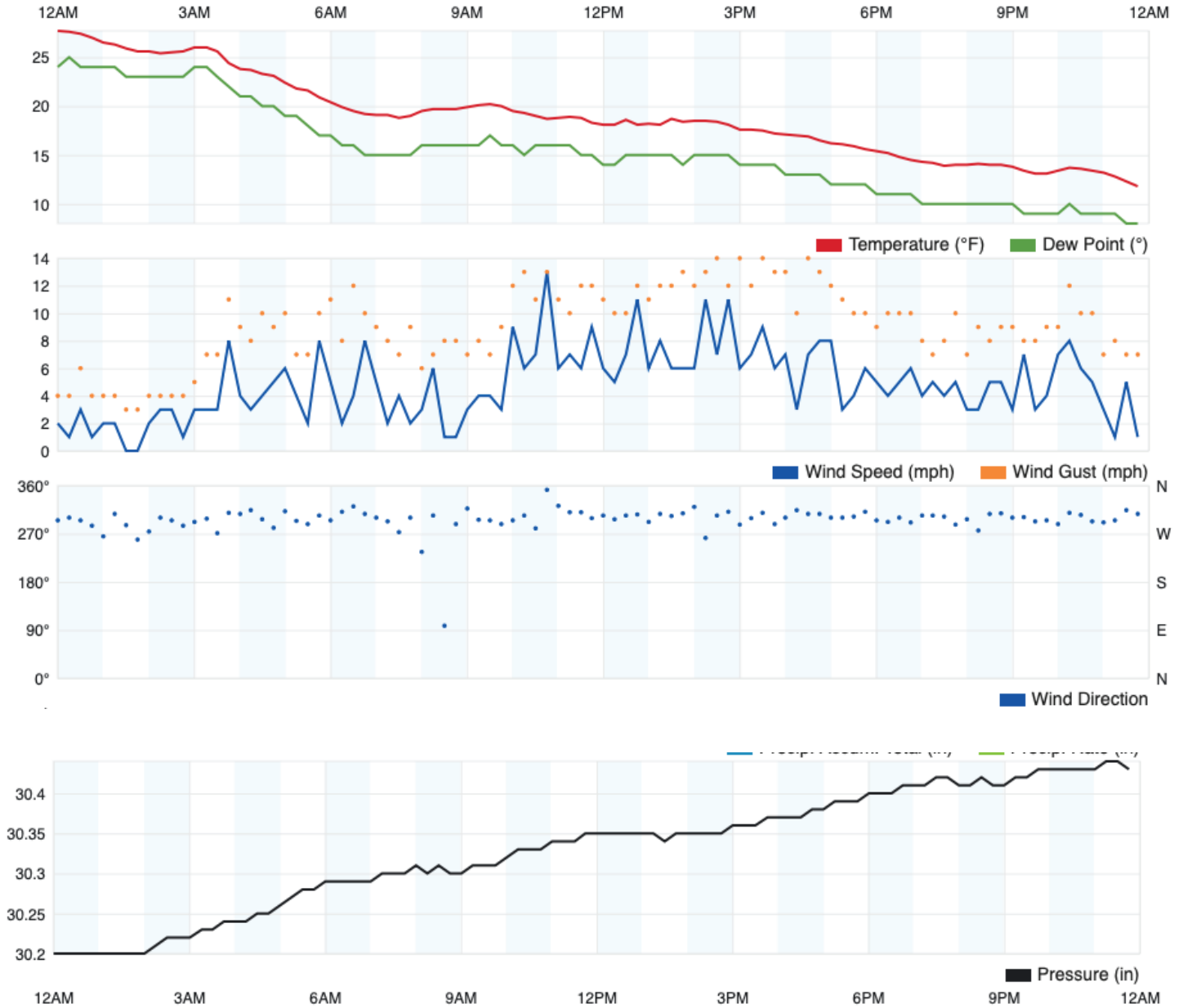
BRAD JOHNSON

Brad Johnson is a Watertown real estate appraiser and journalist whose previous career was as a Colorado newspaper reporter and editor. He has been writing regularly appearing opinion columns for at least 20 years.

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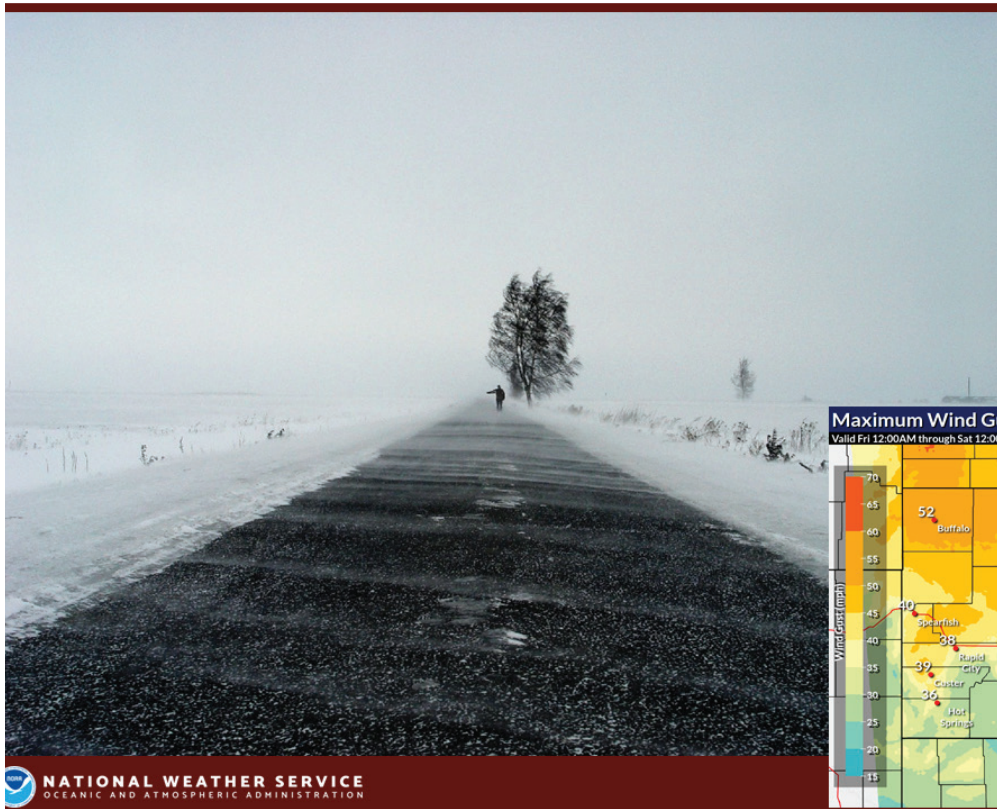
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Partly Sunny then Chance Flurries and Patchy Blowing Snow	Chance Flurries and Patchy Blowing Snow	Chance Flurries	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 21 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 17 °F	Low: 5 °F	High: 31 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 28 °F



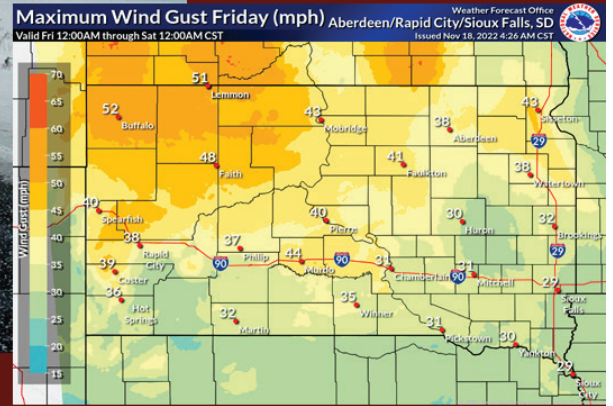
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Today:

Increasing clouds in the afternoon. Breezy to windy. Scattered snow showers late. Highs: 16 to 26°

Tonight:

Breezy. Scattered snow showers or flurries. Lows: 4 to 13°



Morning flurries will exit early. Then another round of scattered snow showers moves in later today along with another push of cold air. Combined with some gusty northwest winds, occasionally reduced visibilities are possible, especially across the northern tier.

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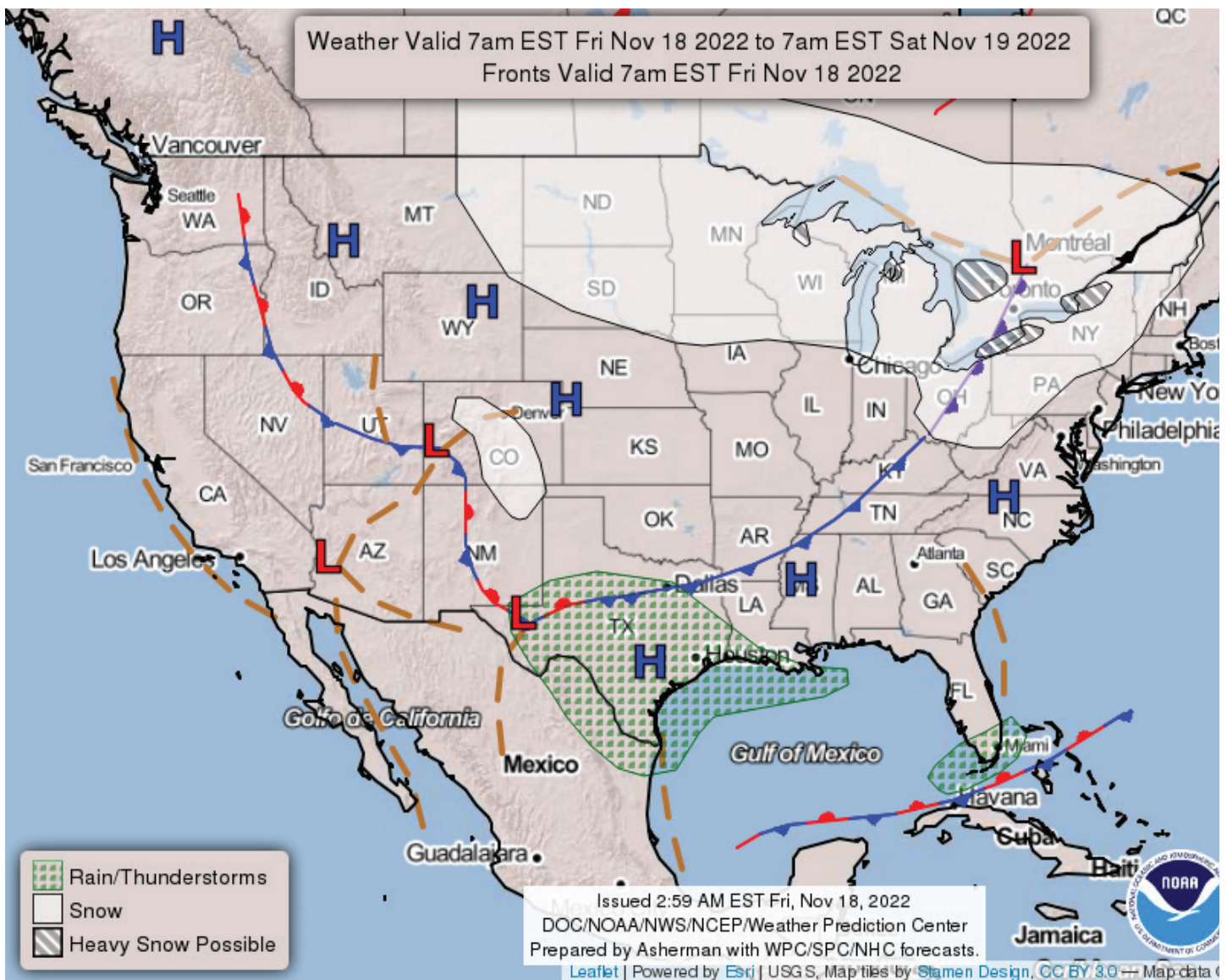
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 27.7 °F at Midnight
Low Temp: 11.8 °F at 11:45 PM
Wind: 14 mph at 3:30 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 71 in 1908
Record Low: -13 in 1896
Average High: 41°F
Average Low: 18°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.49
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 20.96
Precip Year to Date: 16.50
Sunset Tonight: 5:01:07 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:35:25 AM

Day length: 9 hours, 24 minutes



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Today in Weather History

November 18, 1985: Snowfall of 3-8 inches fell over western, central and northern South Dakota, with the most significant amount of 8 inches at Huron in Beadle County and White River in Mellette County. Strong winds exceeding 40 mph over the area produced near-blizzard conditions at times, with considerable blowing and drifting snow. Additional storm total snowfall amounts included; 6.0 inches in Murdo; 5.5 inches at Gettysburg, 5.0 inches near Stephan, in Eureka, and 12SSW of Harrold; and 4.0 inches in McLaughlin.

November 18, 1992: Three to eleven inches of snow fell in the northeast third of South Dakota and into west central Minnesota from the 18th into the 19th. Storm total snowfall amounts included; 11.0 inches in Browns Valley and near Bryant, 9 inches near Sisseton, Summit and Wheaton MN, 8 inches near Victor and Wilmot, 7.9 inches at Artichoke Lake MN, and 7.0 inches in Clear Lake.

1421: The notorious St. Elizabeth's flood occurred during the night of November 18, to November 19 in what is now known as the Netherlands. A strong storm on the North Sea coast caused several dikes to break allowing the lower lands to flood. Some villages around Dordrecht were lost, causing an estimated 6,000 casualties.

1873 - A severe storm raged from Georgia to Nova Scotia causing great losses to fishing fleets along the coast. In Maine, the barometric pressure reached 28.49 inches at Portland. (David Ludlum)

1929: A magnitude 7.2 earthquake off the coast of the Grand Banks, Newfoundland caused a submarine landslide that triggered a tsunami that killed people on the Burin Peninsula of Newfoundland. The under-sea landslide damaged several miles of transatlantic telegraph cables, resulting in much of the \$400,000 in damage. South Carolina and Portugal felt this tsunami.

1955 - An early season cold snap finally came to an end. Helena, MT, experienced 138 consecutive hours of subzero temperatures, including a reading of 29 below zero, which surpassed by seven degrees their previous record for the month of November. Missoula MT broke their November record by 12 degrees with a reading of 23 below zero, and Salt Lake City UT smashed their previous November record of zero with a reading of 14 below. Heavy snow in the Great Basin closed Donner Pass CA, and total crop damage from the cold wave amounted to eleven million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1957 - A tornado, 100 yards in width, travelled a nearly straight as an arrow 27-mile path from near Rosa AL to near Albertville AL, killing three persons. A home in the Susan Moore community in Blount County was picked up and dropped 500 feet away killing one person. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - The first of two successive snowstorms struck the northeastern U.S. The storm produced up to 20 inches of snow in southern New Hampshire. Two days later a second storm produced up to 30 inches of snow in northern Maine. (Storm Data)

1987 - It was a windy day across parts of the nation. Gale force winds whipped the Great Lakes Region. Winds gusting to 80 mph in western New York State damaged buildings and flipped over flatbed trailers at Churchville. In Montana, high winds in the Upper Yellowstone Valley gusted to 64 mph at Livingston. Strong Santa Ana winds buffeted the mountains and valleys of southern California. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a warm front drenched Little Rock AR with 7.01 inches of rain, smashing their previous record for the date of 1.91 inches. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A second surge of arctic air brought record cold to parts of the north central U.S. Eleven cities in the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date, including Rochester MN with a reading of 4 degrees below zero. Strong winds ushering the arctic air into the north central U.S. produced squalls in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Snowfall totals in northern Ohio ranged up to twenty inches in Ashatabula County and Geauga County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

PROCLAIM HIS MIGHTY ACTS!

Not many people have ever heard of Mithridates the Great, King of Pontus, from northern Asia Minor, in 88 B.C. He was famous for his size, his strength, and his skill of mastering the languages of the twenty-five nations that he ruled. There's also Cardinal Mezzofanti, who was born in Bologna, Italy who spoke more than one hundred languages and dialects. Language is important. It connects us.

Today, philologists claim that there are between 6,000 and 7,000 different languages that people use to communicate with one another. The majority of the languages in our world flow from one person to another. Some languages exist that have never been reduced to writing. Every one of them evolves and changes over time. When people connect with other people in other places, languages become richer and more inclusive. Some languages add new words while other words are deleted when they no longer make sense. Some words lose their meaning and are soon forgotten.

Yet, no matter how many words there may be or how many languages are spoken, the Psalmist put things into the proper context when he asked, "Who can proclaim the mighty acts of God, or fully declare His praise?"

We will never be able to praise God as much as He deserves, but we can praise Him with a heart that is sincere. If we ever begin to realize the magnitude of God's love and mercy that saved us, and now sustains us, our hearts will be filled with such joy that our voices will never cease to express our gratitude and thanks!

Prayer: Father, we lift our voices in praise and thanksgiving to You for Your love for us and the gift of Your Son, our Savior. May our humble offering be acceptable to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD or fully declare his praise? Psalm 106:2



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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News from the Associated Press

Mississippi State's defense shuts down South Dakota 79-42

STARKVILLE, Miss. (AP) — Tolu Smith scored 16 points, Cameron Matthews made all six of his shots and added 14 points, and Mississippi State beat South Dakota 79-42 on Thursday night.

South Dakota had 17 turnovers and 16 field goals against a Mississippi State defense ranked eighth nationally by allowing just 48.33 points per game. The Bulldogs also entered with opponents shooting 31%, ranking 11th. The Coyotes finished 16 of 54 for 30%.

After South Dakota opened the scoring, Mississippi State scored the next 13 points and led by double figures the rest of the way. It was 38-15 at halftime after Mississippi State shot 49% from the floor with 15 points off turnovers and 26 points in the paint.

D.J. Jeffries had 12 points and nine rebounds for Mississippi State (4-0).

Paul Bruns scored 11 points for South Dakota (2-2).

Both teams play in the Fort Myers Tip-Off next week. Mississippi States starts against Marquette on Monday and South Dakota faces Long Island University on Tuesday.

Thursday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

SDHSAA Playoff=

Class AA=

Quarterfinal=

Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 20-25, 25-16, 25-23, 25-17

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Pierre, 25-15, 24-26, 25-21, 25-21

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Huron, 25-14, 25-19, 25-18

Sioux Falls Washington def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-11, 25-20, 25-20

Class A=

Quarterfinal=

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Belle Fourche, 25-20, 25-17, 25-22

Miller def. Platte-Geddes, 24-26, 25-27, 25-17, 25-20, 15-8

Sioux Falls Christian def. Dakota Valley, 25-14, 25-16, 25-21

Wagner def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-21, 25-23, 23-25, 27-25

Class B=

Quarterfinal=

Burke def. Castlewood, 13-25, 25-21, 25-19, 17-25, 15-13

Chester def. Colman-Egan, 25-13, 25-16, 16-25, 25-20

Warner def. Freeman, 25-21, 25-27, 25-16, 25-11

Wolsey-Wessington def. Northwestern, 25-19, 25-20, 14-25, 21-25, 19-17

South Dakota Rep. Johnson touts policy over 'angry tweets'

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Republicans will hold a House majority for the first time since Rep. Dusty Johnson entered Congress in 2018, yet that's unlikely to change the South Dakota Republican's political style of focusing on conservative policy over hot takes on cable news or Twitter, he told The Associated Press Thursday.

Johnson will start his third term next year after an easy reelection campaign in which he didn't face a Democratic opponent in the heavily-red state. It was in part an acknowledgment from the state's Democrats

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that Johnson can attract moderate voters. And now, with his party in the majority for the first time since he went to Washington, the 46-year-old said he expects to chair a subcommittee on either agriculture or transportation infrastructure.

"That'll give us a real opportunity to help drive a policy agenda," he told AP in an interview during which he touted policy wins on making the meatpacking industry more competitive as well as a strategy to tamp down inflation.

"Unlike a lot of my colleagues, I don't spend a ton of time yelling on cable news or firing off angry tweets. I am somebody who reads the bills and drafts the bills," he said.

Though Johnson celebrated the GOP's hold on the House, it will be a narrow one. They are on track to cobble together what could be the party's thinnest majority of the 21st century. But even that hold could give House Republicans an opportunity to investigate the overseas business dealings of President Joe Biden's son, Hunter.

At the same time, the White House is preparing to defend the Democratic president from any allegations of wrongdoing and make the case that Republicans are driven by opportunism. It's a showdown that could explode into a new level of enmity between the House and Biden.

Johnson expressed support for investigating Hunter Biden.

"I'm not saying anybody's guilty because I don't think you can rush to that judgment until you have the facts," he said. "But how do you have the facts if you don't ask the questions?"

Asked if that would torpedo any hope for cooperation between Biden and House Republicans, the congressman turned it on the president, saying that it would be Biden's problem if he refused to find areas of policy agreement during an investigation into his family.

Before those clashes develop with the new Congress next year, however, Johnson said he will tend to at least one more piece of business of the lame-duck Congress — the Jan. 6 committee's final report. The committee has revealed how former President Donald Trump amplified his false claims of election fraud after he lost the 2020 election until they crescendoed into an insurrection at the Capitol that sent Johnson and his colleagues fleeing.

Any further action to address the attack and shore up the democratic process would require a willingness from Republicans like Johnson to take action. But he wasn't making commitments on taking action after the Jan. 6 committee issues its report: "I'm a guy that always likes to read the bills, read the reports, and examine the evidence before making my mind up. So I'd like to see the report before having an opinion."

Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined

Yankton Press & Dakotan. November 14, 2022.

Editorial: IM27 Loses This Time, But Problems Remain

Perhaps it only seemed like a little trolling last week when, on the day after South Dakota's recreational marijuana measure, Initiated Measure 27 (IM27), was defeated at the polls, a spokesman for Protecting South Dakota Kids, which opposed the measure, triumphantly declared in a press release, "The will of the people spoke."

Of course, IM27 only came about after voters approved recreational marijuana in 2020, but it was then challenged in court at the encouragement of the governor and was scrapped by the state Supreme Court a year ago next week. When the will of the people spoke then, some people refused to heed it.

While the measure was defeated this year, it will likely come back again. Last week, two more states (Maryland and Missouri) voted to legalize recreational cannabis, while North and South Dakota as well as Arkansas voted to keep it illegal. As of now, 21 states, two territories and the District of Columbia have legalized cannabis for recreational use, while 37 states have legalized medical marijuana. That suggests the issue will come up again as the perception of recreational marijuana continually changes.

In South Dakota, opponents of IM27 cited the threat that marijuana expansion posed to the state. Protecting South Dakota Kids said their effort was to "help prevent recreational marijuana from destroying

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our families, communities and quality of life.”

The impact of marijuana legalization is (and will continue to be) something THAT lawmakers and community leaders have to address. It is a legitimate concern.

On the other hand, such statements by IM27 foes neglect the blunt fact that what we as a state and a nation are doing now regarding marijuana clearly isn't working.

One thing IM27 proponents noted during the campaign was that legalization of recreational cannabis would allow the state to regulate the product, as well as collect tax revenue from it. And it would also permit resources to shift from prosecuting and incarcerating those found in possession to other efforts.

Again, what we have been doing has a poor record. The National Institute of Health reported that cannabis use was at an all-time high among college students, as well as young adults in general, in 2020. According to the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use, more than 48 million Americans reported using cannabis at least once in the previous year, with 22.2 million saying they used it every month.

“Marijuana is also surprisingly available to youths, even in middle school,” a report on the study noted. “In 2019, nearly one-third of eighth graders said it would be ‘fairly easy’ or ‘very easy’ to get marijuana. Nearly 60% of 10th graders and over three-quarters of 12th graders said the same.”

One must acknowledge, as the report notes, that efforts to legalize both recreational and medical marijuana in recent years have sent “mixed signals” about the safety and/or dangers of cannabis.

However, perception is one thing; increasing access to cannabis, even at the middle school level, is something else, and this has been an issue for many years.

Also, the legal war on marijuana has resulted in a lot of money and resources being poured into a criminalization/punishment effort that is, frankly, failing. This was evident even before the wave of marijuana legalization began sweeping the country.

A new approach is needed to replace the wreckage of the current policy.

Whether recreational marijuana legalization is the right path — or, how much regulation is needed under legalization — is an open question.

We do know that prohibition and prosecution have not worked.

Among other things, the defeat of IM27 keeps a failing status quo in place. In the long run, that is simply unacceptable. At some point, new approaches must be found.

END

Sale of beer with alcohol banned at World Cup stadiums

By GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — The sale of all beer with alcohol at the eight World Cup stadiums was banned Friday, only two days before the soccer tournament is set to start.

Non-alcoholic beer will still be sold at the 64 matches in the country.

“Following discussions between host country authorities and FIFA, a decision has been made to focus the sale of alcoholic beverages on the FIFA Fan Festival, other fan destinations and licensed venues, removing sales points of beer from ... stadium perimeters,” FIFA said in a statement.

Champagne, wine, whiskey and other alcohol is still expected to be served in the luxury hospitality areas of the stadiums. Outside of those places, beer is normally the only alcohol sold to regular ticket holders.

Ab InBev, the parent company of World Cup beer sponsor Budweiser, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

AB InBev pays tens of millions of dollars at each World Cup for exclusive rights to sell beer and has already shipped the majority of its stock from Britain to Qatar in expectation of selling its product to millions of fans. The company's partnership with FIFA started at the 1986 tournament and they are in negotiations for renewing their deal for the next World Cup in North America.

While a sudden decision like this may seem extreme in the West, Qatar is an autocracy governed by a hereditary emir, who has absolute say over all governmental decisions.

Qatar, an energy-rich Gulf Arab country, follows an ultraconservative form of Islam known as Wahhabism

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like neighboring Saudi Arabia. However, alcohol sales have been permitted in hotel bars for years.

Qatar's government and its Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy did not immediately respond to request for comment.

Already, the tournament has seen Qatar change the date of the opening match only weeks before the World Cup began.

When Qatar launched its bid to host the World Cup, the country agreed to FIFA's requirements of selling alcohol in stadiums, and again when signing contracts after winning the vote in 2010.

At the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, the host country was forced to change a law to allow alcohol sales in stadiums.

Ronan Evain, the executive director of the fan group Football Supporters Europe, called the decision to ban beer sales at the stadiums in Qatar "extremely worrying."

"For many fans, whether they don't drink alcohol or are used to dry stadium policies at home, this is a detail. It won't change their tournament," Evain wrote on Twitter. "But with 48 (hours) to go, we've clearly entered a dangerous territory — where 'assurances' don't matter anymore."

AB InBev's deal with FIFA was renewed in 2011 — after Qatar was picked as host — in a two-tournament package through 2022. However, the Belgium-based brewer has faced uncertainty in recent months on the exact details of where it can serve and sell beer in Qatar.

An agreement was announced in September for beer with alcohol to be sold within the stadium perimeters before and after games. Only alcohol-free Bud Zero would be sold in the stadium concourses for fans to drink in their seats in branded cups.

Last weekend, AB InBev was left surprised by a new policy insisted on by Qatari organizers to move beer stalls to less visible locations within the perimeter.

Budweiser was also to be sold in the evenings only at the official FIFA fan zone in downtown Al Bidda Park, where up to 40,000 fans can gather to watch games on giant screens. The price was confirmed as \$14 for a beer.

The company will be based at an upscale hotel in the West Bay area of Doha with its own branded nightclub for the tournament.

At the W Hotel in Doha, workers continued putting together a Budweiser-themed bar planned at the site. Its familiar AB logo was plastered on columns and walls at the hotel, with one reading: "The World Is Yours To Take."

Crunch time for UN climate talks as Friday deadline looms

By FRANK JORDANS, SAMY MAGDY and KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — Global climate talks approached crunch time on Friday, the final scheduled day of negotiations that are expected to go past their deadline as chances of a deal still looked unclear.

A new draft cover decision from the Egyptian presidency came out Friday morning, half the size of Thursday's 20-page document that was criticized for being vague and bloated. But this new 10-page one still has little new compared to previous years and plenty of places with yet-to-be-decided options. And some of the most talked about proposals, from the European Union, Barbados and India aren't in it, reflecting the Egyptian presidency's priorities.

The EU made a surprise proposal late Thursday that could help buoy chances of an agreement. The proposal would tie compensation for climate disasters to tougher emissions cuts, two of the thorniest issues at the meeting.

EU climate chief Frans Timmermans said Friday that the bloc's proposal on funding for loss and damage and mitigation is "a final offer" that seeks to "find a compromise" between countries as negotiators work out a way forward at the United Nations climate talks in Egypt.

In climate negotiations, loss and damage refers to the idea that rich nations, which have historically done the most to contribute to climate change, should compensate developing countries most impacted. Mitigation refers to efforts to slow global warming, like drastically reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

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Timmermans said he was "encouraged" by immediate reaction to the proposal and more engagement was expected on Friday.

"This is about not having a failure here," said Timmermans. "We we cannot afford to have a failure. Now, if our steps forward are not reciprocated, then obviously there will be a failure. But I hope we can avoid that."

The proposal from the 27-nation EU offers a two-pronged approach that would create a pot of money for poor countries and push for steeper cuts of heat-trapping emissions by all countries, as well as the phasing down of all fossil fuels, including natural gas and oil.

The reception wasn't quite as glowing as Timmermans' portrays. Antigua and Barbuda's environment minister says they have concerns about the EU proposal, while the environmental advocacy group Action Aid called it a "wolf in sheep's clothing" because it doesn't go far enough.

Molwyn Joseph, who spoke on behalf of small island sates, said there are parts of the EU's proposal that need "adjusting," without offering more details.

"We need an agreement at COP right now. That's what we need, an agreement among all the parties," he said, adding there is a "strong possibility" to achieve an agreement on loss and damage funding by Saturday.

Former Irish President Mary Robinson, chair of The Elders, a group of retired leaders, praised the two options on loss and damage that German climate envoy Jennifer Morgan and Chilean Environment Minister Maisa Rojas have been hammering out, saying "it puts us on the cusp of a historic breakthrough. We've gone from not even having loss and damage finance on the agenda at COP27 to having a fund, a mechanism, and a flow of finance all within our grasp."

Other big players were staking out their positions after the EU's offer.

China, which had been quiet during much of the talks, and Saudi Arabia both said the money for a loss and damage fund shouldn't come from them. Developed countries should foot the bill, China said. Both also insisted that the 2015 Paris Agreement that aims to limit global warming to an ambitious 1.5 Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) increase should not be altered.

As for the United States, there was "a deafening silence" after the EU revealed their proposal, said Preeti Bhandari, senior adviser on climate finance at the World Resources Institute. "So I assume overnight and during the course of the day there will be a lot of diplomatic outreach across various parties to finally help us land the decision on funding for loss and damage here at COP27."

The U.S. and China are the world's top two sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Friday's draft from the Egyptian presidency includes some vague references to reform to multilateral development banks but did not include or make reference to the detailed Bridgetown Initiative on financial reform from Barbados and its Prime Minister Mia Mottley.

Also missing is a controversial proposal by India to change the Glasgow pact language that calls for a phase down of coal to a phase down of all fossil fuels, including oil and natural gas. The idea behind that is that a coal-only phase down hurts mostly developing nations and this attacks the problem of emissions more directly and across the board, according to longtime negotiations analyst Alden Meyer of the think tank E3G.

The idea of a fossil fuel-wide phase down is also in the European Union proposal.

Barbados spearheads push on climate disaster financing

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — At the U.N. climate summit in Egypt, leaders of developing nations have repeatedly said it's not fair to expect them to cover the costs of rebuilding from devastating weather events in a warming world, plus invest in cleaner industry while they also pay much higher interest rates on loans than rich nations.

A plan put forward by Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley would overhaul the way much of development lending works. It is also giving voice to developing nations struggling under rising debt from climate

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damage.

"We were the ones whose blood, sweat, and tears financed the Industrial Revolution," Mottley said in a scathing address. "Are we now to face double jeopardy by having to pay the cost as a result of those greenhouse gases from the Industrial Revolution?"

Debt has been growing in developing countries, sapping funds for education, health and clean energy. Much of the increase in debt in some Caribbean countries is related to extreme storms, Mottley said in a recent essay. The plan would make it easier for countries in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and Asia to get funds to beef up defenses against warming and put off debt payments when disasters strike.

Here's a look at the Barbados plan, dubbed the Bridgetown Initiative for the island nation's capital. Advocates say it could be a pathway to unlocking \$1 trillion in climate financing.

THE BIG IDEA

The plan calls for special loan clauses that allow for suspending payments when a country is hit by a natural disaster or pandemic. That would immediately free up millions of dollars for governments to spend on relief and rebuilding. Barbados has been a pioneer in such clauses, last month issuing its first sovereign bond with a provision allowing for payments to creditors to be deferred for up to two years if the country experiences a "pre-defined natural disaster."

The initiative includes a push to expand lending by international development banks such as the World Bank. The bank and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, were set up after the Second World War with the aim of financing reconstruction and reducing poverty. The power of rich countries such as the United States and Germany is built into the institutions. But the World Bank in particular has been criticized for being too risk averse in lending. The Barbados plan would change risk ratings, crucially lowering interest rates.

Another idea is setting up a Climate Mitigation Trust backed by \$500 billion worth of Special Drawing Rights, dues that member countries pay in to the IMF that can be drawn in times of crisis. Much of it is held by countries that don't need it, said Avinash Persaud, Mottley's special envoy for climate. The trust could be used to borrow a further \$500 billion from the private sector that could be lent out at low rates for investment in big climate mitigation infrastructure projects. Up to \$5 trillion in private financing could be unlocked this way, the plan's architects say.

Other proposals include a levy on fossil fuel production or an international carbon border tax.

CREDITWORTHY

Mottley's plan takes aim at a central problem: Poorer nations face much steeper borrowing costs.

When most wealthy countries borrow money, they pay 1 to 4% in interest, while countries in the so-called Global South face rates of 12-14%, Mottley told reporters.

"You begin to see the disparity," Mottley said. "The system is broken."

Following World War II, she said, victorious Allied nations agreed to cap Germany's debt costs so that it could rebuild. Britain refinanced its First World War debt, paying off the last of it only in 2014.

"We are simply saying in the developing world that we also need the space to be able to finance our development in the case of climate," Mottley said. Wealthy nations account for four fifths of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Hanan Morsy, chief economist at the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, told The Associated Press that a number of the Bridgetown Initiative's ideas also have been advanced by African finance ministers. He pointed out another financial inequity: The green bond market which helps finance environmental projects has reached \$500 billion, but only one percent reaches Africa.

RICH NATIONS

Mottley first unveiled her idea at the COP26 meeting a year ago in Glasgow, Scotland. Over the summer she and Persaud convened economists, other academics and civil society groups to work on it.

Now, she said, momentum for her ideas is gathering.

French president Emmanuel Macron was the first leader from a rich country to give his backing.

"We need a huge financial shock of concessional financing," Macron said in a speech at the opening of COP27. "We must change the rules, the rules of our major international banks, the development banks,

the IMF and the World Bank," he said. "We can't wait for the next COP."

To support Mottley's plan, "a group of wise minds at the highest level" has been set up, tasked with drawing up climate financing solutions by spring 2023, when the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund hold their annual meetings, Macron said.

As climate-amped disasters ratchet up the suffering, the staid international system for finance designed for an earlier age may be on the brink of change, driven by those on the front lines.

Germany, the World Bank's fourth largest shareholder, has been among those pushing for "fundamental reform," including "climate lending on better terms." Federal Reserve chief Janet Yellen said multilateral development banks need to "evolve" and move beyond their traditional work of poverty reduction to tackle climate and other complex global challenges.

World Cup could mean redemption for Brazil forward Neymar

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

When Neymar was preparing to play for Brazil at his first World Cup back in 2014, the hype surrounding him was considerable.

He had just moved from Santos to Spanish club Barcelona as one of the most promising young players in the world. And he had impressed early on with the Catalan club, quickly gaining the status of star in the world of soccer.

The common questions surrounding Neymar at the time were about when — not if — he would be crowned the best in the world.

Fast forward eight years, though, and things have changed considerably. The Brazilian remains one of the top players in the world, but he has failed to fully meet the expectations that came along his high-profile move to Europe.

Neymar lost visibility after joining Paris Saint-Germain in 2017, and it's been a while since he has been in consideration for the best player of the year awards.

His performances with Brazil in World Cups have mostly disappointed since the 2014 tournament at home, when he was carried off on a stretcher because of a back injury in the quarterfinals. At the 2018 World Cup in Russia, Neymar crouched on the field and stared in disbelief as the Belgium players celebrated their victory over Brazil in the last eight.

He was crucial for Brazil when the country won its first Olympic gold medal at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games, a feat that was celebrated widely nationwide and earned him widespread praise.

But at 30 years old, the questions surrounding Neymar ahead of the World Cup in Qatar are a bit different.

Did he make a mistake by leaving Barcelona to join PSG? Is he being overshadowed by Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé? Is he past his peak?

But for Neymar, the only question that really matters is whether he can come through for Brazil and lead the national team to its first World Cup title in 20 years.

"I don't want to let this World Cup get away from me," Neymar said earlier this year. "I don't want to let this opportunity slip through my hands. I'm doing everything possible to prepare for it, physically and mentally. It is my biggest dream right now. I'm focused on winning this title."

This year's World Cup could mean redemption for Neymar, and if he does find a way to lead Brazil to the title in Qatar, his name will most likely be back at the top of the award lists.

"I'll give my life at the World Cup," Neymar said in a chat with former Brazil midfielder Diego Ribas. "It's a unique moment. I've been through two World Cups and I now how it works. Everything happens really fast, and if you are not at your 100%, if you are not prepared, the opportunity passes by you."

Neymar, who said as a youngster his dream was to be the best player in the world, has been doing well this season again and is one of the leaders of a PSG team that hopes to finally win its first Champions League title. He enters the World Cup — which he doesn't rule out as being his last one — as one of the most in-form players.

"He is flying right now," Brazil coach Tite said.

Neymar apparently hasn't been affected by the recent fraud trial regarding his 2013 transfer from Santos to Barcelona, where he and his father are among those accused of hiding the real cost of the transfer. He is facing a prison sentence of more than two years if found guilty, though some of the chargers against him have been dropped.

Tite is undoubtedly relying on Neymar to take the helm and lead Brazil in Qatar, hoping that his talent — and now his maturity — will finally make the difference and give the national team a chance to win its first World Cup title since 2002, when Neymar was still only 10.

And hopefully for Brazil, instead of leaving the field on a stretcher like in 2014 or watching opponents celebrate like in 2018, Neymar will end his World Cup run by lifting the trophy for his team and his people.

Elizabeth Holmes faces judgment day for her Theranos crimes

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

A federal judge on Friday will decide whether disgraced Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes should serve a lengthy prison sentence for duping investors and endangering patients while peddling a bogus blood-testing technology.

Holmes' sentencing in the same San Jose, California, courtroom where she was convicted on four counts of investor fraud and conspiracy in January marks a climactic moment in a saga that has been dissected in an HBO documentary and an award-winning Hulu TV series about her meteoric rise and mortifying downfall.

U.S. District Judge Edward Davila will take center stage as he weighs the federal government's recommendation to send Holmes, 38, to federal prison for 15 years. That's slightly less than the maximum sentence of 20 years she could face, but far longer than her legal team's attempt to limit her incarceration to no more than 18 months, preferably served in home confinement.

Her lawyers have argued that Holmes deserves more lenient treatment as a well-meaning entrepreneur who is now a devoted mother with another child on the way. Their arguments were supported by more than 130 letters submitted by family, friends and former colleagues praising Holmes.

A probation report also submitted to Davila recommended a nine-year prison sentence for Holmes.

Prosecutors also want Holmes to pay \$804 million in restitution. The amount covers most of the nearly \$1 billion that Holmes raised from a list of sophisticated investors that included software magnate Larry Ellison, media mogul Rupert Murdoch, and the Walton family behind Walmart.

While wooing investors, Holmes leveraged a high-powered Theranos board that included former U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis, who testified against her during her trial, and two former U.S. Secretaries of State, Henry Kissinger and the late George Shultz, whose son submitted a statement blasting Holmes for concocting a scheme that played Shultz "for the fool."

Davila's judgment — and Holmes' reporting date for a potential stint in prison — could be affected by the former entrepreneur's second pregnancy in two years. After giving birth to a son shortly before her trial started last year, Holmes became pregnant at some point while free on bail this year.

Although her lawyers didn't mention the pregnancy in a 82-page memo submitted to Davila last week, the pregnancy was confirmed in a letter from her current partner, William "Billy" Evans, that urged the judge to be merciful.

In that 12-page letter, which included pictures of Holmes doting on their 1-year-old son, Evans mentioned that Holmes participated in a Golden Gate Bridge swimming event earlier this year while pregnant. He also noted Holmes suffered through a case of COVID in August while pregnant. Evans didn't disclose Holmes' due date in his letter.

Duncan Levin, a former federal prosecutor who is now a defense attorney, predicted that Davila's sentencing decision won't be swayed by the pregnancy, but expects the judge to allow her to remain free until after the baby is born.

"She will be no more of a flight risk after she is sentenced than she was while awaiting sentencing," Levin said. "We have to temper our sentences with some measure of humanity."

The pregnancy makes it more likely Davila will be criticized no matter what sentence he imposes, pre-

dicted Amanda Kramer, another former federal prosecutor.

"There is a pretty healthy debate about what kind of sentence is needed to effect general deterrence to send a message to others who are thinking of crossing that line from sharp salesmanship into material misrepresentation," Kramer said.

Federal prosecutor Robert Leach emphatically declared Holmes deserves a severe punishment for engineering a scam that he described as one of the most egregious white-collar crimes ever committed in Silicon Valley. In a scathing 46-page memo, Leach told the judge he has an opportunity to send a message that curbs the hubris and hyperbole unleashed by the tech boom of the past decade.

Holmes "preyed on hopes of her investors that a young, dynamic entrepreneur had changed healthcare," Leach wrote. "And through her deceit, she attained spectacular fame, adoration, and billions of dollars of wealth."

Even though Holmes was acquitted by a jury on four counts of fraud and conspiracy tied to patients who took Theranos blood tests, Leach also asked Davila to factor in the health threats posed by Holmes' conduct.

Holmes' lawyer Kevin Downey painted her as a selfless visionary who spent 14 years of her life trying to revolutionize health care with a technology that was supposed to be able to scan for hundreds of diseases and other ailments with just a few drops of blood.

Although evidence submitted during her trial showed the tests produced wildly unreliable results that could have steered patients in the wrong direction, her lawyers asserted Holmes never stopped trying to perfect the technology until Theranos collapsed in 2018. They also pointed out that Holmes never sold any of her Theranos shares — a stake valued at \$4.5 billion in 2014 when Holmes was being hailed as the next Steve Jobs on the covers of business magazines.

Defending herself against criminal charges has left Holmes with "substantial debt from which she is unlikely to recover," Downey wrote, suggesting that she is unlikely ever to pay any restitution that Davila might order as part of her sentence.

"Holmes is not a danger to society," Downey wrote.

Downey also asked Davila to consider the alleged sexual and emotional abuse Holmes suffered while she was romantically with Ramesh "Sunny" Balwani, who became a Theranos investor, top executive and eventually an accomplice in her crimes. Balwani, 57, is scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 7 after being convicted in a July trial on 12 counts of fraud and conspiracy.

Alabama calls off execution after difficulties inserting IV

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

ATMORE, Ala. (AP) — Alabama's execution of a man convicted in the 1988 murder-for-hire slaying of a preacher's wife was called off Thursday just before the midnight deadline because state officials couldn't find a suitable vein to inject the lethal drugs.

Alabama Department of Corrections Commissioner John Hamm said prison staff tried for about an hour to get the two required intravenous lines connected to Kenneth Eugene Smith, 57. Hamm said they established one line but were unsuccessful with a second line after trying several locations on Smith's body. Officials then tried a central line, which involves a catheter placed into a large vein.

"We were not able to have time to complete that, so we called off the execution," Hamm said.

It is the second execution since September the state has canceled because of difficulties with establishing an IV line with a deadline looming.

The U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way for Smith's execution when at about 10:20 p.m. it lifted a stay issued earlier in the evening by the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. But the state decided about an hour later that the lethal injection would not happen that evening.

The postponement came after Smith's final appeals focused on problems with intravenous lines at Alabama's last two scheduled lethal injections. Because the death warrant expired at midnight, the state

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must go back to court to seek a new execution date. Smith was returned to his regular cell on death row, a prison spokesperson said.

Prosecutors said Smith was one of two men who were each paid \$1,000 to kill Elizabeth Sennett on behalf of her husband, who was deeply in debt and wanted to collect on insurance. The slaying, and the revelations over who was behind it, rocked the small north Alabama community

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey blamed Smith's last-minute appeals for the execution not going forward as scheduled.

"Kenneth Eugene Smith chose \$1,000 over the life of Elizabeth Dorene Sennett, and he was guilty, no question about it. Some three decades ago, a promise was made to Elizabeth's family that justice would be served through a lawfully imposed death sentence," Ivey said. "Although that justice could not be carried out tonight because of last minute legal attempts to delay or cancel the execution, attempting it was the right thing to do."

Alabama has faced scrutiny over its problems at recent lethal injections. In ongoing litigation, lawyers for inmates are seeking information about the qualifications of the execution team members responsible for connecting the lines. In a Thursday hearing in Smith's case, a federal judge asked the state how long was too long to try to establish a line, noting at least one state gives an hour limit.

The execution of Joe Nathan James Jr. took several hours to get underway because of problems establishing an IV line, leading an anti-death penalty group to claim the execution was botched.

In September, the state called off the scheduled execution of Alan Miller because of difficulty accessing his veins. Miller said in a court filing that prison staff poked him with needles for more than an hour, and at one point they left him hanging vertically on a gurney before announcing they were stopping. Prison officials have maintained the delays were the result of the state carefully following procedures.

Sennett was found dead on March 18, 1988, in the home she shared with her husband on Coon Dog Cemetery Road in Alabama's Colbert County. The coroner testified that the 45-year-old woman had been stabbed eight times in the chest and once on each side of the neck. Her husband, Charles Sennett Sr., who was the pastor of the Westside Church of Christ, killed himself when the murder investigation focused on him as a suspect, according to court documents.

John Forrest Parker, the other man convicted in the slaying, was executed in 2010. "I'm sorry. I don't ever expect you to forgive me. I really am sorry," Parker said to the victim's sons before he was put to death.

According to appellate court documents, Smith told police in a statement that it was "agreed for John and I to do the murder" and that he took items from the house to make it look like a burglary. Smith's defense at trial said he participated in the attack but he did not intend to kill her, according to court documents.

In the hours before the execution was scheduled to be carried out, the prison system said Smith visited with his attorney and family members, including his wife. He ate cheese curls and drank water, but declined the prison breakfast offered to him.

Smith was initially convicted in 1989, and a jury voted 10-2 to recommend a death sentence, which a judge imposed. His conviction was overturned on appeal in 1992. He was retried and convicted again in 1996. The jury recommended a life sentence by a vote of 11-1, but a judge overrode the recommendation and sentenced Smith to death.

In 2017, Alabama became the last state to abolish the practice of letting judges override a jury's sentencing recommendation in death penalty cases, but the change was not retroactive and therefore did not affect death row prisoners like Smith. The Equal Justice Initiative, an Alabama-based nonprofit that advocates for inmates, said Smith stands to become the first state prisoner sentenced by judicial override to be executed since the practice was abolished.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday denied Smith's request to review the constitutionality of his death sentence on those grounds.

High energy prices lead to coal revival in Czech Republic

By KAREL JANICEK Associated Press

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OSTRAVA, Czech Republic (AP) — In this part of northeastern Czech Republic, huge piles of coal are stacked up ready to sell to eager buyers and smoke belches from coal-fired plants that are ramping up instead of winding down.

Ostrava has been working for decades to end its legacy as the most polluted area of the country, transitioning from an industrial working-class stronghold to a modern city with tourist sights. But Russia's war in Ukraine has triggered an energy crisis in Europe that has paved the way for coal's comeback, endangering climate goals and threatening health from increased pollution.

Households and businesses are turning to the fuel once considered obsolete as they seek a cheaper option than natural gas, whose prices have surged as Russia slashed supplies to Europe.

Demand for brown coal — the cheapest and most energy inefficient form — used by Czech households jumped by almost 35% in the first nine months of 2022 over a year earlier.

In the same period, production rose more than 20%, the first increase after an almost continuous, decades-long decline, the Czech Industry and Trade Ministry said.

"We're worried," said Zdenka Němečková Crkvenjaš, who is responsible for environment as a member of the governing council of the Moravian-Silesian region. "If the prices won't go down, what might happen is that we'll be facing an increased pollution."

The region is part of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin, a large industrialized area straddling the Czech-Polish border with rich deposits of coal and factories producing steel, power and the type of coal used for steel-making that date to the 19th century.

A combination of burning coal for residential heating and industrial plants resulted in "catastrophic" air pollution at the end of the communist era in 1989, said Petr Jančík from Technical University Ostrava, an air pollution expert who cooperated on the Air Tritia project that recently produced an online model of the polluted air on the Czech-Polish-Slovak border.

Coal-fired power is not only disastrous for climate, it's also a health hazard, releasing heavy particle emissions, nitrogen oxides and mercury, which contaminates fish in lakes and rivers.

A decline of industrial and mining activities and advent of new environmental standards after the Czech Republic joined the European Union in 2004 vastly improved air quality.

But big challenges remain.

Airborne dust emissions — PM10 particles — now meet environmental limits in the region, but concentrations of smaller PM2.5 particles that can reach deep into the lungs and bloodstream still do not hit World Health Organization standards.

A 2021 study of more than 800 European cities by Spain's Barcelona Institute for Global Health, or ISGlobal, puts the regional capital of Ostrava and the nearby towns of Karviná and Havířov among the top 10 most polluted European cities. It estimated that 529 deaths a year could be avoided in those three cities if air quality guidelines are met.

Burning coal also spews the dangerous substance benzo(a)pyrene, whose levels are still high despite government programs that pay to replace old furnaces with more effective ones that reduce pollution.

Some 50,000 furnaces still need to be replaced in the Ostrava region, said Němečková Crkvenjaš, estimating that figure at 500,000 in a more populated and polluted area across the border in Poland.

"I'm afraid this winter won't be ideal as far as the air pollution is concerned," she said. "I'll be delighted if I'm wrong."

Roman Vank, a board member for coal seller Ridera in Ostrava, said coal sales went up some 30% compared with last year. The cheapest form — brown coal — was most in demand.

Jančík, the scientist, said the impact to air quality is hard to predict right away, especially if it's another mild winter, and that pollution "might get only slightly worse."

He said a positive development is that high natural gas and electricity prices force people to acquire solar panels, more effective heating systems and try to become less dependent on sources of energy.

"There are two opposing trends: The first one is that people have been trying to use better and more efficient furnaces, and the second one is they consider using more coal and wood," Jančík said. "That's

perhaps a result of a shock or worries, and they want to get supplies ready.”

Czech Greenpeace spokesman Lukáš Hrábek expected a negative impact in the near future.

“We see conflicting trends right now. We see higher coal consumption, but at the same time, we see a massive investment in renewable energies, in heat pumps, in insulation,” Hrábek said. “So it’s hard to say what the long-term effect will be, but the short-term effect is quite obvious, the air pollution will be worse because of the higher coal consumption.”

In another sign of coal’s revival, the Czech Republic has reversed plans to completely halt mining near Ostrava to help safeguard power supplies amid the energy crunch.

The state-owned OKD company will extend its mining activities in in the Ostrava region until at least the end of next year, citing “enormous” demand. It will be mostly used for generating power and household heating, with coal-fired power plants producing almost 50% of the country’s electricity.

The decision came after the European Union agreed to ban Russian coal starting in August over the war in Ukraine and as it works to reduce the bloc’s energy ties to Russia.

The Czech government aims to phase out coal in energy production by 2033 and increase its reliance on nuclear power.

High energy prices lead to coal revival in Czech Republic

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The Czech government aims to phase out coal in energy production by 2033 and increase its reliance on nuclear power.

Where's Putin? Leader leaves bad news on Ukraine to others

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — When Russia's top military brass announced in a televised appearance that they were pulling troops out of the key city of Kherson in southern Ukraine, one man missing from the room was President Vladimir Putin.

As Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Gen. Sergei Surovikin, Russia's chief commander in Ukraine, stiffly recited the reasons for the retreat in front of the cameras on Nov. 9, Putin was touring a neurological hospital in Moscow, watching a doctor perform brain surgery.

Later that day, Putin spoke at another event but made no mention of the pullout from Kherson — arguably Russia's most humiliating withdrawal in Ukraine. In the days that followed, he hasn't publicly commented on the topic.

Putin's silence comes as Russia faces mounting setbacks in nearly nine months of fighting. The Russian leader appears to have delegated the delivery of bad news to others — a tactic he used during the coronavirus pandemic.

Kherson was the only regional capital Moscow's forces had seized in Ukraine, falling into Russian hands

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in the first days of the invasion. Russia occupied the city and most of the outlying region, a key gateway to the Crimean Peninsula, for months.

Moscow illegally annexed the Kherson region, along with three other Ukrainian provinces, earlier this year. Putin personally hosted a pomp-filled Kremlin ceremony formalizing the moves in September, proclaiming that "people who live in Luhansk and Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia become our citizens forever."

Just over a month later, however, Russia's tricolor flags came down over government buildings in Kherson, replaced with the yellow-and-blue banners of Ukraine.

The Russian military reported completing the withdrawal from Kherson and surrounding areas to the eastern bank of the Dnieper River on Nov. 11. Since then, Putin has not mentioned the retreat in any of his public appearances.

Putin "continues to live in the old logic: This is not a war, it is a special operation, main decisions are being made by a small circle of 'professionals,' while the president is keeping his distance," political analyst Tatyana Stanovaya wrote in a recent commentary.

Putin, who was once rumored to personally supervise the military campaign in Ukraine and give battlefield orders to generals, appeared this week to be focused on everything but the war.

He discussed bankruptcy procedures and car industry problems with government officials, talked to a Siberian governor about boosting investments in his region, had phone calls with various world leaders and met with the new president of Russia's Academy of Science.

On Tuesday, Putin chaired a video meeting on World War II memorials. That was the day when he was expected to speak at the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia — but he not only decided not to attend, he didn't even join it by video conference or send a pre-recorded speech.

The World War II memorial meeting was the only one in recent days in which some Ukrainian cities — but not Kherson — were mentioned. After the meeting, Putin signed decrees awarding the occupied cities of Melitopol and Mariupol the title of City of Military Glory, while Luhansk was honored as City of Labor Merit.

Independent political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin attributed Putin's silence to the fact he has built a political system akin to that of the Soviet Union, in which a leader — or "vozhd" in Russian, a term used to describe Josef Stalin — by definition is incapable of making mistakes.

"Putin and Putin's system ... is built in a way that all defeats are blamed on someone else: enemies, traitors, a stab in the back, global Russophobia — anything, really," Oreshkin said. "So if he lost somewhere, first, it's untrue, and second — it wasn't him."

Some of Putin's supporters questioned such obvious distancing from what even pro-Kremlin circles viewed as a critical developments in the war.

For Putin to have phone calls with the leaders of Armenia and the Central African Republic at the time of the retreat from Kherson was more troubling than "the very tragedy of Kherson," said pro-Kremlin political analyst Sergei Markov in a post on Facebook.

"At first, I didn't even believe the news, that's how incredible it was," Markov said, describing Putin's behavior as a "demonstration of a total withdrawal."

Others sought to put a positive spin on the retreat and weave Putin into it. Pro-Kremlin TV host Dmitry Kiselev, on his flagship news show Sunday night, said the logic behind the withdrawal from Kherson was "to save people."

According to Kiselev, who spoke in front of a large photo of Putin looking preoccupied with a caption saying, "To Save People," it was the same logic the president uses — "to save people, and in specific circumstances, every person."

That's how some ordinary Russians can view the retreat, too, analysts say.

"Given the growing number of people who want peace talks, even among Putin's supporters, any such maneuver is taken calmly or even as a sign of a possible sobering up — saving manpower, the possibility of peace," said Andrei Kolesnikov, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment.

For Russia's hawks — vocal Kremlin supporters who have been calling for drastic battlefield steps and weren't thrilled about the Kherson retreat — there are regular barrages of missile strikes on Ukraine's power grid, analyst Oreshkin said.

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Moscow launched one Tuesday. With about 100 missiles and drones fired at targets across Ukraine, it was the biggest attack to date on the country's power grid and plunged millions into darkness.

Oreshkin believes that such attacks don't inflict too much damage onto Ukraine's military and don't change much on the battlefield.

"But it is necessary to create an image of a victorious 'vozhd.' So it is necessary to carry out some kind of strikes and scream about them loudly. That's what they're doing right now, in my opinion," he said.

Russian strikes force Ukraine to face hours-long power cuts

JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's electricity grid operator warned of hours-long power outages Friday as Russia zeroed in on Ukraine's energy infrastructure with renewed artillery and missile attacks that have interrupted supply to as much as 40% of the population at the onset of winter.

Grid operator Ukrenergo said outages could last for several hours with colder temperatures putting additional pressure on energy networks.

You always need to prepare for the worst, we understand that the enemy wants to destroy our power system in general, to cause long outages," Ukrenergo's chief executive Volodymyr Kudrytskyi told Ukrainian state television Friday. "We need to prepare for possible long outages, but at the moment we are introducing schedules that are planned and will do everything to ensure that the outages are not very long."

Kudrytskyi added that the power situation at critical facilities such as hospitals and schools has been stabilized.

In the northeastern Kharkiv region, overnight shelling and missile strikes targeted "critical infrastructure" and damaged energy equipment, according to regional governor Oleh Syniehubov. Eight people including energy company crews and police officers were injured trying to clear up the debris, he said.

Moscow's attacks on Ukraine's energy and power facilities in the past weeks have left millions without heating and electricity, fueling fears of what the dead of winter will bring. Energy infrastructure had again been targeted Thursday after Russia two days earlier unleashed a nationwide barrage of more than 100 missiles and drones that knocked out power to 10 million people.

Those attacks have also had a knock-on effect on neighboring countries like Moldova where a half-dozen cities across that country experienced temporary blackouts.

Russian forces unleashed the breadth of their arsenal to attack Ukraine's southeast employing drones, rockets, heavy artillery and warplanes resulting in the death of at least six civilians and the wounding of an equal number in the past 24 hours, the office of the president reported.

In the Zaporizhzhia region, part of which remains under Russian control, artillery pounded ten towns and villages. The death toll from a rocket attack on a residential building in the city of Vilniansk Thursday climbed to nine people, the deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office Kyrylo Tymoshenko posted on Telegram.

In Nikopol, located across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, 40 Russian missiles damaged several high-rise buildings, private houses, outbuildings and a power line.

In the wake of its humiliating retreat from the southern city of Kherson, Moscow intensified its assault on the eastern Donetsk region where Russia's Defense Ministry said Friday its forces took control of the village of Opytne and repelled a Ukrainian counteroffensive to reclaim the settlements of Solodke, Volodymyrivka and Pavlivka.

The city of Bakhmut, a key target of Moscow's attempt to seize the whole of Donetsk and score a demonstrable victory after a string of battlefield setbacks, remains the scene of heavy fighting, said regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko.

The Russian Defense Ministry also said that Ukrainian troops were pushed back from Yahidne in Ukraine's eastern Kharkiv province, and Kuzemivka in the neighboring Luhansk province. Donetsk and Luhansk were among the four Ukrainian provinces illegally annexed by Moscow in September, together with Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

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At the same time, Moscow is fortifying its defenses in the southern region to thwart further Ukrainian advances. Russian troops have built new trench systems near the border of Crimea, as well as near the Siversky-Donets River between Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, according to a British Ministry of Defense report.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian and international investigators continue their work on uncovering suspected war crimes committed by Russian forces during the Karkhiv region's near seven month-old occupation. Ukraine's National Police said in a statement Friday that its officers had initiated over 3,000 criminal proceedings over what it said were "violations of the laws of customs of war" by Russian troops.

A lighting Ukrainian counteroffensive in September reclaimed the Kharkiv region and pushed Russian forces back toward the Donbas, the country's eastern industrial heartland, and regain strategically located cities including Iziium and Kupiansk.

Reports of torture and other atrocities committed by Russian troops have also emerged from the Kherson region where Ukrainian officials said they have opened more than 430 war crimes cases and are investigating four alleged torture sites.

Alesha Babenko, from the village of Kyselivka said he arrested by the Russians in September and locked in a basement. The 27-year-old said he was regularly beaten by Russian soldiers while bound, blindfolded and threatened with electric shocks.

"I thought I was going to die," he told The Associated Press.

Kherson residents continued to line up for food from a charity with many saying they had nothing to eat and are making do without heating or electricity. One man said "all the fridges have defrosted, we have nothing to eat."

Despite the hardship, a small sign of a return to normality was news that the first train from the capital Kyiv to Kherson would be departing Friday night. Ukraine's state rail network Ukrzaliznytsia said around 200 passengers will travel on the train – the first in nine months.

Dubbed the "Train to Victory", the train's carriages were painted in eclectic designs by Ukrainian artists and the tickets were sold as part of a "Tickets to Victory" charity project.

In Vienna, the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors approved a resolution calling, among other things, for Russia to withdraw from the Zaporizhzhia plant, Ukraine's and Europe's biggest.

British ambassador Corinne Kitsell tweeted that 24 countries voted for and two against the resolution, which was led by Canada and Finland, on Thursday evening. Russian ambassador Mikhail Ulyanov identified the two countries that voted against as Russia and China, and said seven states abstained.

Politics, climate conspire as Tigris and Euphrates dwindle

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

DAWWAYAH, Iraq and ILISU DAM, Turkey (AP) — Next year, the water will come. The pipes have been laid to Ata Yigit's sprawling farm in Turkey's southeast connecting it to a dam on the Euphrates River. A dream, soon to become a reality, he says.

He's already grown a small corn patch on some of the water. The golden stalks are tall and abundant. "The kernels are big," he says, proudly. Soon he'll be able to water all his fields.

Over 1,000 kilometers (625 miles) downstream in southern Iraq, nothing grows anymore in Obeid Hafez's wheat farm. The water stopped coming a year ago, the 95-year-old said, straining to speak.

"The last time we planted the seed, it went green, then suddenly it died," he said.

The starkly different realities are playing out along the length of the Tigris-Euphrates river basin, one of the world's most vulnerable watersheds. River flows have fallen by 40% in the past four decades as the states along its length — Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq — pursue rapid, unilateral development of the waters' use.

The drop is projected to worsen as temperatures rise from climate change. Both Turkey and Iraq, the two biggest consumers, acknowledge they must cooperate to preserve the river system that some 60 million people rely on to sustain their lives.

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But political failures and intransigence conspire to prevent a deal sharing the rivers.

The Associated Press conducted more than a dozen interviews in both countries, from top water envoys and senior officials to local farmers, and gained exclusive visits to controversial dam projects. Internal reports and revealed data illustrate the calculations driving disputes behind closed doors, from Iraq's fears of a potential 20% drop in food production to Turkey's struggles to balance Iraq's and its own needs.

"I don't see a solution," said former Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi.

"Would Turkey sacrifice its own interests? Especially if that means that by giving more (water) to us, their farmers and people will suffer?"

A FARMER'S DREAM

Turkey has been harnessing the river basin with a massive project to boost agriculture and generate hydroelectricity. Under its Southeast Anatolia Project, or GAP by its Turkish acronym, it has built at least 19 dams on the Euphrates and Tigris and several more are envisaged for a total of 22.

It aims to develop the southeast, long an economic backwater and the wellspring of the Kurdistan Worker's Party, or PKK, a Kurdish separatist movement that Ankara considers a terrorist organization.

For the farmer, Yigit, the project will be transformative.

Until now, his reliance on well water only permitted half his land to be irrigated.

But in June, the irrigation pipes finally reached his farm in Mardin province. Next year, his entire 4,500 acres will be watered via the Ataturk Dam on the Euphrates River.

Lower water availability forced a revision in the area that GAP will irrigate, down to 1.05 million hectares, from an original 1.8 million. Half the reduced goal has been met. The rest depends on how quickly authorities can install infrastructure linking villages to the dams.

Farmers benefitting from GAP must use advanced irrigation techniques that Turkish authorities say use two-thirds less water.

But for an anxious Iraq, every drop of water diverted for irrigation means less downstream.

Still, in Yigit's world, the future is finally bright.

"Next year, the canals will be open."

"A SINGLE TRUTH"

Iraq is the downstream prisoner of geography, relying almost entirely for its water on the twin rivers and tributaries originating outside its borders.

In 2014, Iraq's Water Ministry prepared a confidential report that spelled out a "single truth:" In two years, Iraq's water supply would no longer meet demand, and the gap would keep widening. The report, seen by the AP, warned that by 2035, the water deficit would cause a 20% reduction in food production.

The doomsday predictions are playing out in 2022. Lakes have dried up, crops have failed and thousands of Iraqis are migrating. An author of the report, who spoke anonymously because it is not public, said the predictions were "remarkably accurate."

They show Iraqi officials knew how bleak the future would be without the recommended \$180 billion in investment and an agreement with neighbors. Neither transpired.

Decades of talks have still not found common ground on water-sharing.

Turkey approaches the water issue as if it were the river basin's benevolent owner, assessing needs and deciding how much to let flow downstream. Iraq considers ownership shared and wants a more permanent arrangement with defined portions.

In a rare interview, Turkey's envoy on water issues with Iraq, Veysel Eroglu, told the AP that Turkey cannot accept to release a fixed amount of water because of the unpredictability of river flows in the age of climate change.

Eroglu said Turkey could agree to setting a ratio to release — but only if Syria and Iraq provide detailed data on their water consumption.

"That is the only way to share water in an optimal and fair manner," Eroglu said.

The question of Syria is a major obstacle. Turkey insists it must be part of any broad agreement but that

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for the time being it has no interlocutor in war-torn Syria.

Both sides treat some data like state secrets, fueling mistrust.

"I like to keep it to myself," Eroglu's Iraqi counterpart, Mahdi Hamdani, said regarding his country's water consumption data. "They are tools in our negotiations."

Hamdani stepped down from his position after a new government was voted into power in October, underscoring another gripe from Turkey: The frequent changing of Iraqi interlocutors in the water talks.

One Iraqi ambassador said it was "a mistake" that his side once informed the Turks they were aware that 70% of their water is effectively wasted on ancient farming practices then discharged to the Persian Gulf, leading Ankara to double down on demands that Iraq reform itself first.

Turkey is relatively forthcoming with Tigris data but reveals little about the Euphrates, particularly the vital question of how much water will be diverted to irrigation under GAP. It says only that diversion will be minimal.

It also argues that, if it's shared water, Iraq must be more responsible with it and introduce greater efficiency, like Turkey.

Iraq bristles at being told how to use its water.

"Sometimes they ask us why Iraq cultivates (water-intensive) rice," Hamdani said. "I ask them, why are you cultivating cotton? And they say it's part of their history, civilization. And I tell them yes, we also have our history, our civilization."

"If we keep talking like this, we will never reach an agreement."

YOUR EYES, YOUR SCALE

Sheikh Thamer Saeedi decided enough is enough. The streams were dry in his village in southern Iraq. Despairing families were abandoning their farms for the city after crops failed.

What he did next underscores rising anger among farmers following devastating, back-to-back droughts — and the Iraqi government's weaknesses that make managing water nearly impossible.

"One week," Saeedi told local water authorities in Dhi Qar province. Release more water to his district, Dawwayah, he threatened, or else he would take matters into his own hands.

In Iraq's south, tribal allegiance transcends government authority. As a tribal leader, Saeedi had to guarantee water for his people to safeguard his legitimacy.

The authorities were in a bind. Water levels in the Gharraf River, the Tigris' branch here, were so low it didn't reach the diversion gates, designed in the 1970s when flows were twice as high. Districts like Dawwayah, further along the irrigation network, were left dry.

At the same time, the government had cut the province's water allocation by 60%.

Time ran out.

Saeedi marched with dozens of followers to the irrigation regulator on the riverbank, armed with a long pipe and shovels. They dug until a water corridor was secured to his district.

"My people are thirsty," he said.

To ensure he left enough water for other communities, Saeedi invoked the Arabic idiom: "Your eyes, your scale." That is, he took a wild guess.

Rival tribal leaders were enraged, fearing for their own water supplies. Security officials rushed to put a halt to the diversion. Many feared gun battles if they hadn't.

"It was a destructive act," said Ghazwan Kadhim, head of Dhi Qar's Water Resources Directorate. "The Gharraf River has 154 gates to different areas. If anyone does anything like that, the entire river would become unfit for distributing water."

But authorities are having a harder time keeping a lid on fights over water. Threats of lawsuits do little to stop tribal leaders diverting flows or digging illegal wells; using security forces risks escalation.

"We are terrified of conflict breaking out in central and southern Iraq over the water shortages," said Issa Fayadh, an official at the Environment Ministry in Baghdad.

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Straddling between ridges in southeast Turkey, the Ilisu Dam is — for Iraqis — a stark reminder of an irretrievable past.

Before Turkey began operating the dam in May 2020, all the waters of Tigris River flowed into Iraq. Now how much water comes down depends on Ankara's consideration of Iraq's month-to-month requests for a minimum flow, weighed against Turkey's own needs.

The AP was given an exclusive tour of the dam facility in October by Turkey's State Hydraulics Works, known by the Turkish acronym DSI, and given figures for the first time detailing flow rates and electricity production over two years.

A decade ago, Iraq received an average flow of 625 cubic meters of water per second from the Tigris. Today, the rate averages only 36% of that because of less precipitation combined with the dam's effect, Iraqi water ministry officials say.

The dam is used for hydroelectricity, not irrigation, so eventually water must be let through for the turbines. But how much and when are another matter. Turkish officials must maintain a minimum reservoir level of 500 meters above sea level to produce electricity, even as they face a lower, less predictable flow into the reservoir.

In 2021, Ilisu discharged 20% more water than it received and had to draw on water stored from previous years, according to figures from Eroglu.

In January, the reservoir's level dropped below the 500-meter mark. Power production this year fell 20%, compared to 2021. Ilisu on average produces less than half its potential.

Turkish officials argue that with the dam, they can regulate flow for Iraq's benefit, storing more during floods and discharging more during drought.

Data provided by DSI shows that Turkey respected a request made by Iraq that it release at least 300 cubic meters per second down the Tigris during summer months, when shortages are common.

But Iraqi officials say depending on such ad hoc arrangements makes planning difficult.

"They can cut water, they can release water. We urgently need a water agreement just to satisfy Iraq's minimum requirements," said Hatem Hamid, head of the National Centre for Water Resources Management.

Once the Tigris waters reach Mosul Dam, Hamid decides how much goes where in Iraq. The impact of his calculations can be monumental.

With dire shortages anticipated in 2022, Hamid had to make severe cuts, slicing water quotas in half for agriculture. Water rationing was enforced with military patrols.

That also reduced the Tigris' water entering the marshlands of southern Iraq. What Hamid could not have predicted was that water-stressed Iran then diverted tributaries feeding the marshes.

The result was an environmental emergency: Not enough fresh water was entering the marshes to wash away salinity.

Hamid scrambled to divert more water, but the damage was done.

"LIFE HAS ENDED"

In the famed Chibayish marshes, the carcasses of water buffalos float along the riverbanks, poisoned by the salty water.

Herders circulate the iconic wetland, fabled to have been the biblical Garden of Eden, looking for trickles of fresh water to save their animals.

Over the past two years, the lush greenery of the marshes has degenerated and yellowed, killed by salinity building up from two years of insufficient fresh-water inflow.

It is a haunting vision of the future. Along with dying livestock, harvests are declining for a second year in a row; both are the principal employers in rural Iraq. At least 62,000 in south-central Iraq have migrated to congested urban centers due to drought, the U.N. reported in September.

Obeid Hafez, the elderly farmer, once produced nearly 2,500 acres of wheat. Today his lands in southern Iraq are barren.

Portraits of Hafez's forefathers hang in his spartan living room. Their stern faces look down on him as

he speaks.

He inherited the lands from them, one generation to another.

But there will be no one to come after him. His sons have gone, looking for work in the cities.

"Life has ended here," he said.

Bio of Polish statesman holds lessons on today's Ukraine

By JOHN DANISZEWSKI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One hundred years ago, a revolutionary Polish patriot argued that Russia's hunger for territory would continue to destabilize Europe unless Ukraine could gain independence from Moscow.

Poland's Marshal Józef Piłsudski never managed to fulfil his hope for an independent Ukraine connected to Europe. But the farsighted and analytical statesman did manage to wrest his own homeland from the grip of czarism and from two other powers, Austria and Prussia.

At a time when many Poles had given up on the dream for full independence, Piłsudski put a sovereign Polish state back on the map of Europe at the end of World War I, after more than a century's erasure.

Piłsudski's story, complete with flaws, accomplishments and echoes of today's war in Ukraine, is brought to life in a recent biography, "Józef Piłsudski Founding Father of Modern Poland," by Joshua D. Zimmerman, a professor of Holocaust Studies and eastern European history at New York's Yeshiva University. The book, published by Harvard University Press, also reexamines Piłsudski's relationship to Ukraine.

Thickly mustached, with heavy brows and a hawk-like visage, Piłsudski lived modestly and inspired his troops by leading them in battle. He was celebrated at home and abroad in his day, but his memory outside of Poland has faded.

After proclaiming a new Polish republic, Piłsudski and his legionnaires fought a series of wars to define, secure and defend its borders, culminating with his greatest victory: turning back a Bolshevik army in 1920 that was threatening to drive all the way to Berlin and carry a Communist revolution to the heart of industrial Europe.

Before that battle, known as the "Miracle on the Vistula," Piłsudski's forces had marched deep into Ukraine and occupied Kyiv in an alliance with nationalist leader Symon Petliura, who also was fighting the Bolsheviks, amid Ukraine's short-lived independence in 1918-21.

As Zimmerman recounts, Piłsudski had a vision of a multilingual and multiethnic Poland that respected the rights of minorities, especially Jews. That earned him the enmity of nationalists who wanted a Poland run for ethnic Poles.

After World War I, Piłsudski hoped Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine could form an alliance to counter Russia in the style of the Polish-Lithuanian union that existed for centuries prior to 1795. But Ukrainians and Lithuanians were wary of Polish claims on their territories, and Piłsudski's vision of an anti-Russian alliance never became reality.

In language that might be applied to today's discourse, Piłsudski conceived of a sovereign Ukraine not merely to prevent Russian aggression but as an outpost of Western liberal democracy.

"There can be no independent Poland," he is quoted as saying in 1919, "without an independent Ukraine."

Piłsudski launched a military campaign in 1920 to support Ukrainian nationalists against Bolshevik rule, an action condemned by some as an overreach. Zimmerman believed he had a rationale that echoes today, when Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic countries, as well as Finland and Sweden, feel that Russia under President Vladimir Putin must be contained.

On May 7, 1920, Piłsudski's cavalry entered Kyiv, followed by Polish and Ukrainian infantry. At the peak of his Ukrainian campaign, he ordered his commanders to withdraw "as soon as possible" in order to establish friendly relations with the new Ukrainian state, according to Zimmerman.

"My view is that he clearly championed an independent Ukraine, one that would be a democratic outpost on Russia's border, a buffer between Russia and the West, but also a staunch Polish ally that shared Piłsudski's democratic values and the values of at least his followers," the author said.

Poland and Lithuania — two countries that emerged from Soviet rule — are among Ukraine's strongest

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diplomatic champions against Putin's Russia.

Zimmerman's book makes a balanced and "significant contribution" to the understanding of Piłsudski, said Michael Fleming, a historian and director of the Institute of European Culture at the Polish University Abroad in London.

"Piłsudski was well aware of the challenges posed by Poland's geography and concluded that an independent Ukraine would share Poland's interest in limiting Russia's expansionist tendencies," Fleming said by email. "At the same time, however, it is important to remember that western Galicia (including Lviv) was much contested" between Poles and Ukrainians.

Indeed Polish and Ukrainian nationalists clashed in the early 1900s and again during and after World War II, and some ethnic animosities have lingered.

During Russia's civil war between the Red Army and the anti-Bolshevik White Army, Piłsudski resisted pleas for Poland to help the Whites. No matter who won, he believed, Russia would remain "fiercely imperialistic."

There was little to gain from negotiations because "we cannot believe anything Russia promises," Piłsudski is quoted as saying.

Piłsudski, born in 1867 and raised in present-day Lithuania, was steeped in the romanticism of Polish independence. He acquired a burning hatred of czarist authority that held Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine in its grip, and he and his brother were implicated in a plot to assassinate the czar and imprisoned.

Zimmerman traces how, upon his release, Piłsudski became the leading activist of the banned Polish Socialist Party, published its newspaper for years, made a daring escape from a second Russian imprisonment after he was caught — by pretending to be insane — and then turned to creating a military force in Austrian-ruled Poland that eventually fought against Russia during World War I.

Although they fought under Austria and Germany, Piłsudski's insistence on Polish independence ultimately led to his imprisonment by the Germans, a sacrifice that enhanced his legend among his fellow Poles. Upon his release, he was acclaimed the country's leader and the de facto founder of modern Poland on Nov. 11, 1918, now celebrated as Polish independence day.

After Poland's borders were secured and a civil government established, Piłsudski mostly stepped back from public life. But after several years, he followed with his own turn to strongman rule.

Concerned that a democratic Poland was slipping away and disgusted by 13 failed Polish governments, he led a 1926 military putsch to restore order. After imposing a system of "managed" democracy and soft dictatorship, Piłsudski's final years were burdened by declining health and growing worries about how to position Poland between a rising Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany.

Zimmerman captures the difficulties of knitting together Poland and details its conflicts, including pogroms against Jews by some of Piłsudski's troops. Yet he views Piłsudski as a defender of Jews and pluralism.

The author makes the case that Piłsudski, although flawed, possessed the judgment and skills to defend Poland's interests. His death in 1935 left Poland with a vacuum in leadership, unable to stave off the German and Soviet invasions of 1939.

Yet Piłsudski's creation of an independent Poland after World War I helped ensure that when World War II ended and Soviet rule receded, there would be no question that an independent Poland would reemerge.

To heal after parade tragedy, the Grannies must march again

By ADAM GELLER AP National Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The high winds forecasters warned about are blasting down Wisconsin Avenue, but 15 grandmothers lining up in the street are ready to march.

They're dressed for this morning's parade in wide-brimmed hats held on tight with elastic chin straps. And they've subbed out red pom-poms for white ones so the dye won't run in rain that is teasing its return from a leaden November sky.

"This is like my calling," says Kathi Schmeling, a retired human resources assistant, her grin framed by the crimson lipstick that is a signature of the women who call themselves the Milwaukee Dancing Gran-

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nies. "This is my happy place."

Given where she and the others have come from, it's no small accomplishment that they're here at all. A year ago, a driver plowed an SUV through a Christmas parade in the nearby suburb of Waukesha, killing six people and scarring many more. Four of the victims were from the Dancing Grannies, including their longtime leaders, threatening to extinguish the tight-knit band of women — not old, they say, just well-seasoned — first drawn together by the aerobics craze of the 1980s.

Somehow, they held on. They drew on resilience banked well before the tragedy, during bouts with cancer and divorce, the loss of jobs and loves ones. They accepted that to keep going would require taking a risk on new ways of doing things, with new dancers who had not lived their history.

Soon, though, the calendar will come full circle. And to keep moving forward, the group has made a decision. When the parade returns to Main Street in Waukesha, they need to go back.

Today, when the speakers atop the group's sound truck erupt in downtown Milwaukee, the Grannies sashay to a carefree beat: "We are family! I've got all my sisters with me!"

Pom poms and lipstick, though, distract from conflicted feelings about the parade a few weeks ahead.

"If we go past that spot, if we (stop to) remember it, if I lose it and start crying ..." says Kathy Zdarstek, 77, whose line partner, dancing a few feet away, was killed that night last November.

Others are anxious to return.

"That fool thought he could take my Main Street away from me," says Donna Kalik, 61, who was a spectator when the Grannies were mowed down right in front of her, then weeks later applied to join the ranks of the survivors. "He doesn't know who he's messing with."

Regardless, every step today brings Waukesha that much closer.

On the phone last Nov. 21, Tamara Durand sounded ecstatic. "I got an earlier flight! I can be in the parade!"

Durand, a teacher and long-ago cheerleader, was the newest Granny. When she showed up in the blue velvet jacket, long skirt and white fur hat reserved for winter parades, though, leader Virginia Sorenson sounded mildly annoyed.

"What are you doing here?" asked Sorenson, 79, who'd already arranged the dancers in even rows.

In recent years, retirements had shrunk the group's ranks to fewer than a dozen dancers. And only eight were slated to march through Waukesha's cozy downtown, where the annual Christmas parade, cancelled the previous year because of the pandemic, had returned with a new theme: "Comfort and Joy."

Having a round number of dancers pleased Sorenson, a career nurse who had given up performing since a hip replacement, but remained the leader, equal parts demanding and doting.

"Ginny was our glue — she held the group together," one of the others dancing that day recently recalled.

With the sun dropping, Sorenson reshuffled the lineup. She would step in to help carry the banner, replacing a granddaughter unable to make it. Dancers arranged in alternating rows would follow the lead of 71-year-old Leanna Owen, the "little firecracker" who managed an apartment complex and was the group's longtime coach.

In the middle, Betty Streng, a retired systems analyst for the city of Milwaukee dancing in her second parade, would serve as one of the anchors. Durand and two others would bring up the rear.

Families thronged Main when the Grannies funneled into the procession behind a Girl Scout troop and a youth dance corps. At 4:38 p.m. they sauntered through an intersection to a crowd favorite, Winter Wonderland, swinging pom poms skyward.

In the din, they didn't hear the red SUV plowing down Main until it hit them.

"It was a flash," says Donna Kalik, who was watching the parade with her boyfriend from a coffee shop window. "And as I'm running out there's a body on the left of me and there's a body on the right ... It looked like a war zone."

At a restaurant next door, Brian Peterson, an off-duty paramedic, glanced out the window just as bodies clad in vivid blue were flung through the air.

"When I got out the front door the first thing that will stick with me forever, besides people lying every-

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where, is that it was absolutely dead silent," Peterson says. "And then the crescendo of screams started."

A few feet from the curb, Ginny Sorenson lay dead. Hurling to the sidewalk, the bodies of Owen and Durand, both killed instantly, would not be identified until hours later.

In the middle of the street, Streng, 64, lay unconscious and not breathing.

"Wake up, Betty! Wake up!" implored Schmeling, her fellow Granny.

Crouched on the pavement, Peterson cradled Streng's head, pushing back on her jaw to force open the airway. One touch and he knew the dancer's skull was shattered. When her eyes fluttered, he lay down to hold her head still until help could arrive. But there were so many victims and when rescuers finally came for Streng, Peterson rushed to aid others.

Nearby, Wilhelm Hospel, the husband of another Granny who was a regular volunteer, lay bruised and battered, and succumbed to his injuries the following day. Down Main, an 8-year-old who had been parading with his Little League team, and a 52-year-old woman marching with co-workers from a local bank were also killed.

Wandering through the chaos, Schmeling found fellow dancer Sharon Millard, a teacher's aide so invested in the group that she had called to sign up the night before the birth of her first grandchild.

"Kathi!" she said, dazed. "What's going to happen to the Grannies?"

The pain of the weeks after Waukesha was followed by doubt.

"There's no leaders. There's no history. There's nothing left," Jeannie Knutson, one of the Original Grannies, recalls thinking.

Two of the dancers were in the hospital, including Streng, comatose for five days afterward with a double skull fracture.

Others nursed hidden scars. Zdarstek kept replaying the choice she'd made to dance on the left side of the formation — leaving Durand a few feet to her right, in death's path. At work, Millard broke down when "Winter Wonderland" played over the school intercom.

Knutson, who had skipped the parade to watch her Green Bay Packers, pictured the spot she would have taken. Listening to survivors during a meetup at the home of a former Granny 10 days afterward, she mulled the route forward. It seemed like they owed it to those who'd died to keep the group going, or at least to try.

The group chose two Grannies to be their new leaders: Knutson, because of her work in human resources, and Jan Kwiatkowski, a family therapist and ordained chaplain.

The day of Sorenson's funeral, a group of 15 dancers, retirees and family members went from the chapel to a parade in nearby Franklin, walking silently, arm in arm, in memory of those lost.

"Milwaukee Dancing Grannies are gathering our thoughts, regrouping," Knutson posted online. The only way to regroup would be to rebuild.

Dozens of notes flooded the inbox of a group that had never added more than a couple of dancers at a time. When they reconvened in late January, 34 hopefuls showed up, forming a dance line that circled the tables of a fraternal hall.

"I felt like we were the rock that they could lean on," says Doreen Lopez, 66, a native New Yorker who came searching for a way to connect with others in a new hometown. "We all felt the grief and the sorrow for what had happened ... but we weren't emotionally involved, so we thought we could be the strong ones.

The only thing he could be certain of was that her name was Betty.

Ever since Waukesha, Peterson, the paramedic, had struggled to sleep. In 34 years of answering emergency calls he had never felt wired to a patient the way he did to the silver-haired dancer who'd been whisked away on a stretcher.

He did not know that, rushed into an operating room that night with blood pressing against her brain, Betty Streng had come within minutes of a permanent coma or death, according to the surgeon, Dr. Christopher Sarkiss.

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Streng had pulled through with no memory of what happened. But after Peterson contacted the group, her family reached out to him and a few nights before Christmas, he and his wife rang the Strengs' front bell.

The Betty at the door was missing half her hair, sutures crossed her shaven scalp, and she leaned hard on a walker. To Peterson, she looked "glorious," a "miracle."

A long winter of rehabilitation lay ahead. So, too, for the Grannies.

"Ginny always had this saying before parades: 'If you make a mistake, if you get off kilter, if you drop your pom poms, no matter what, you keep on dancing,'" says Kwiatkowski, 67, one of the new leaders. "And that's the mantra we all grabbed on to."

Inside the fraternal hall, leaders split new arrivals into two groups, dancing in turns to fit everyone in tight quarters. Some peeled away in the following weeks, reluctant to commit to months of practices and more than 20 parades a year. A few veterans, taxed by memories, retired.

Others moved to take on the coaching roles left vacant by Sorenson and Owen. But when poms poms were passed out, some new arrivals noticed theirs were marked with the names of those killed. It didn't feel right to use them.

When one of the new trainees, Donna Kalik, broke her leg a month in, the leaders told her not to worry about falling behind on routines. Eventually, she earned a spot as the volunteer coordinator.

Before Waukesha, many Grannies had followed what now seemed like an outdated ethic, keeping disagreements to themselves. To keep going, Kwiatkowski and Knutson decided, dancers needed to tell them about tensions surrounding the group's reorganization so they could be resolved in meetings after practice.

"We're like sisters," Streng says. "You get along or you don't get along. You agree or disagree. But you care about each other."

Returning to the hospital to start physical therapy, it took Streng nearly a half minute to cover 10 feet with the walker, her balance shaky. She spent weeks learning to steady herself, practicing tasks like getting in and out of a bed and raising herself off the floor.

"There was a lot of anxiety, fear of falling, fear of not being able to progress, fear of the unknown," therapist Lisa Miller says.

By late January, though, Streng started moving around the house without the walker. In February, she put it aside altogether. In March, the Grannies called.

Early on a frigid Saturday the group gathered in the lobby of a Milwaukee hotel, ready to dance in a parade for the first time since Waukesha. Ginny Sorenson would be so proud, her husband, Dave, told the dancers, before a toast.

When the Original Grannies joined the St. Patrick's Day procession, new arrivals wearing sashes identifying them as trainees walked alongside.

Just behind, slow and steady, came Streng and another injured Granny, backed up by family members with wheelchairs. Streng, though, walked the whole route on her own. And she was beaming.

By spring's end, the Grannies — increasingly seen as an embodiment of the region's "Waukesha Strong" motto — were fielding parade invites from around the state. In town after town, spectators shouted their thanks for the group's return, shaping hearts with outstretched hands.

"It's bittersweet at times," Knutson says. "I mean, before the tragedy you'd have crowds clapping and singing along, but now it's totally different."

The exhilaration was tempered. When sirens sounded to clear parades routes, some who'd been at Waukesha flinched and others teared up. At a Memorial Day parade, dancers glanced up to see police snipers on rooftops of surrounding buildings.

But as more trainees mastered the dance routines and were promoted to Granny status, there was much to celebrate.

The group's regular banner carrier, 14-year-old Ali Wachter, a family friend of a retired dancer, returned to processions "because I didn't want my fears to overcome me." At a parade in Ginny Sorenson's hometown of Muskego, her granddaughters were invited to lead the way.

On July 4, the group danced in a morning parade, then headed to Streng's house for a cookout before

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another march scheduled for afternoon's end. The celebration swelled when a fire engine carrying Peterson and his co-workers came by to join in.

Then phones began to buzz: a mass shooter in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park, barely an hour away, had turned another holiday parade into a bloodbath.

On television that night, seeing footage of the suburban street littered with lawn chairs and coolers abandoned by terrified spectators felt like a "gut punch," Kwiatkowski says. Shaken, two of the dancers who'd survived Waukesha stopped coming to practice.

The rest danced on. To Allenton in August with five new members promoted to their ranks. To the Wisconsin Dells in September, with the names of those they'd lost printed inside hearts on costumes echoing the Packers' green and gold.

Then October arrived and the memories of Waukesha were revived in a Milwaukee courtroom.

It had long been clear at least one of the Grannies would be called to testify at the trial of Darrell Brooks, 40, charged with murder and numerous other counts stemming from the violence at Waukesha, which came after he fled a heated dispute with his ex-girlfriend.

Prosecutors, calling witnesses from the length of the parade route and the pursuit that followed, did not divulge who would need to testify or how many. As testimony unfolded, the Grannies who lived through Waukesha were sequestered, barred from talking with one another about their recollections or the trial.

In the end only one now-retired dancer was called to testify. But some continued to keep their distance from the proceedings.

"I didn't want to hear about it," says Schmeling, recalling the anger that welled up inside when she recounted her memory of Waukesha for prosecutors before the trial. "I'm done with that chapter."

For others, watching the trial stirred intense feelings. During a parade weekend in northern Wisconsin, a few gathered around a laptop to watch jurors inspect the vehicle used in the crime. Seeing one of the Grannies' white fur hats hanging from a side-view mirror left some feeling shaky.

As the judge prepared to read the jury's verdict, Kwiatkowski was waiting to get off a plane. When Brooks was convicted of all 76 counts against him, she felt such relief she had to stop herself from shouting out loud in the aircraft's crowded aisle. The trial had been hard on some of the Grannies, but its completion put them over one more hurdle.

The storm blowing through Milwaukee this morning has kept away all but the hardiest spectators, leaving the Grannies to strut their stuff past block after block of nearly empty sidewalks.

But it takes little to visualize the crowds — and the memories — awaiting just a few weeks ahead.

"A year later and I can still break down talking about this ... It's like a demon I'm fighting," says Peterson, who plans to walk alongside Betty Streng in the Waukesha parade, scheduled for Dec. 4, to the place where he found her on the pavement.

"I know where the spot is," he says, "and I just hope I make it."

For banner carrier Ali Wachter, fears about the parade increase as the day gets closer, though she knows the group has retired "Winter Wonderland." But going back will also bring comfort, she hopes, proof that the recovery of the past year is permanent.

"We've got to get back out there," says Knutson, one of the Original Grannies.

When the speakers atop her group's sound truck short out a few blocks before the terminus of today's prelude, Knutson and the others know what to do.

They keep count of the beat, even without music. A few mouth the words of the song gone missing, while others maintain carefully lipsticked smiles.

They move to the message Ginny Sorenson long preached. No matter what, you've got to keep on dancing.

Panel OKs name change of Colorado mountain tied to massacre

By THOMAS PEIPERT Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A Colorado state panel recommended Thursday that Mount Evans, a prominent peak near Denver, be renamed Mount Blue Sky at the request of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.

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The Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board voted unanimously for the change. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis will weigh in on the recommendation before a final decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

Thursday's vote comes as part of national efforts to address a history of colonialism and oppression against Native Americans and other people of color after protests in 2020 called for racial justice reform.

The proposed name change recognizes the Arapaho were known as the Blue Sky People, while the Cheyenne hold an annual renewal-of-life ceremony called Blue Sky.

The 14,264-foot (4,348-meter) peak southwest of Denver is named after John Evans, Colorado's second territorial governor. Evans resigned after an 1864 U.S. cavalry massacre of more than 200 Arapaho and Cheyenne people — most of them women, children and the elderly — at Sand Creek in what is now southeastern Colorado.

Fred Mosqueda, a member of the Southern Arapaho tribe and a Sand Creek descendant, said during Thursday night's meeting that when he first realized Mount Blue Sky was a possible alternative, it "hit me like a bolt of lightning. It was the perfect name."

"I was asked once, 'Why are you so mean to the name Evans?'" he recalled. "And I told them, 'Give me one reason to be nice or to say something good. Show me one thing that Evans has done that I as Arapaho can celebrate.' And they could not."

Mosqueda, who has been actively involved in Mount Evans' renaming process, said Evans was in the perfect position as territorial governor to give the tribes a reservation, but "instead he went the genocide route."

Polis, a Democrat, revived the state's 15-member geographic naming panel in July 2020 to make recommendations for his review before they are forwarded to the federal group.

Last year, the federal panel approved renaming another Colorado peak after a Cheyenne woman who facilitated relations between white settlers and Native American tribes in the early 19th century.

Mestaa'éhehe Mountain, pronounced "mess-taw-HAY," honors and bears the name of an influential translator, also known as Owl Woman, who mediated between Native Americans and white traders and soldiers in what is now southern Colorado.

The mountain 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of Denver had been known as Squaw Mountain. Its renaming came after U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the nation's first Native American cabinet official, formally declared "squaw" a derogatory term and announced steps to remove it from federal government use and rename other derogatory place names.

Squaw, which is derived from the Algonquin language, may once have simply meant "woman." But over generations, the word changed into a misogynist and racist term to disparage Indigenous women.

Pelosi, dominant figure for the ages, leaves lasting imprint

By CALVIN WOODWARD and NANCY BENAC Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — There are two searing scenes of Nancy Pelosi confronting the violent extremism that spilled into the open late in her storied political career. In one, she's uncharacteristically shaken in a TV interview as she recounts the brutal attack on her husband.

In the other, the House speaker rips open a package of beef jerky with her teeth during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection, while on the phone with Mike Pence, firmly instructing the Republican vice president how to stay safe from the mob that came for them both. "Don't let anybody know where you are," she said.

That Pelosi, composed and in command at a time of chaos, tart but parochial-school proper at every turn, is the one whom lawmakers have obeyed, tangled with, respected and feared for two decades.

She is the most powerful woman in American politics and one of the nation's most consequential legislative leaders — through times of war, financial turmoil, a pandemic and an assault on democracy.

Now, at 82, in the face of political loss and personal trauma, she decided her era was ending.

Pelosi stood in the well of a rapt House on Thursday and announced she would not seek a Democratic leadership position in the Congress that convenes in January, when Republicans take control of the chamber. Pelosi, who will remain a member of the House, took her time revealing the news, looking back over

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an improbable career and recalling her first visit to the Capitol at age 6 with her congressman father.

"Never would I have thought that I would go from homemaker to House speaker," she allowed. On her future, she told reporters: "I like to dance, I like to sing. There's a life out there, right?"

Polarizing and combative, Pelosi nevertheless forged compromises with Republicans on historic legislation.

Across the policy spectrum, whether you liked the results or not, she delivered votes that touched ordinary lives in many ways. Among them: how millions get health care, the state of the roads, the lightened burden of student debt, the minimum wage, progress on climate change that took over a decade to bear fruit.

Even former Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich, a self-described "partisan conservative who thinks that most of her positions are insane," said Pelosi had a "remarkable" run. This, from a fellow "troublemaker with a gavel," as she called herself. He flamed out; she didn't.

"Totally dominant," Gingrich said of her in an interview. "She's clearly one of the strongest speakers in history. She has shown enormous perseverance and discipline."

FEW SURVIVE

Those qualities are essential if you don't want to be run out of town, as was a succession of modern Republican speakers, back to Gingrich. It's one thing to herd sheep. It's another thing altogether to herd Democrats and all their messy factions.

Pelosi dealt with conservative Blue Dog Democrats, the liberal women of the Squad, the Out of Iraq Caucus — not to mention old-guard legislators who treated their committees like fiefdoms.

Many of the above, at one point or another, earned her look of icy disapproval, well practiced and not always reserved just for the other side.

"Politics is tough," she said in 2015, "but intraparty? Oh, brother."

Squad member Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, not always Pelosi's biggest fan, spoke Thursday of how Pelosi had "served as a beacon of hope" to her and her family when they migrated from Somalia.

Omar, at times the subject of "send her back" chants during Donald Trump's rallies, recalled that Pelosi had invited her to join her on a 2019 trip to Africa "to represent how far we have come as a country."

Princeton political scientist Frances Lee said there's no doubt Pelosi was a "truly great legislative leader, among a handful truly in command. She's really had her party in the House of Representatives in hand. The difficulty of managing them should not be underrated. It didn't always look pretty but she held the party together."

Pelosi prevailed — for nearly 20 years as House Democratic leader including nearly eight as speaker in two separate stints — with hard-nosed sentiments like these:

"Whoever votes against the speaker will pay a price." — to Democrats who resisted her push for a select committee on climate change early in her speakership.

"Nobody's walking out of here saying anything, if they want to keep an intact neck." — to negotiators trying to work out a 2007 House-Senate compromise to restrain pork, according to the notes of John A. Lawrence, her then-chief of staff and author of a new insider book on her speakership, "Arc of Power."

Sometimes, she could snap her lawmakers into line without a word.

A flick of her hand was all it took to silence Democrats who cheered when the House first passed articles of impeachment against Trump. It was an occasion for sobriety and Pelosi was a stickler for institutional decorum. But not always.

She ripped up her copy of Trump's 2020 State of the Union speech, on the dais behind him, on camera. The theatrical protest at one of American democracy's prime rituals raised questions about whether Pelosi, in that moment, had become what she despised in Trump.

Afterward, she said she had extended her "hand of friendship" to him when he arrived but he did not take it. "He looked a little sedated," she added. As she read quickly through her copy of the speech while Trump delivered it, she stewed over the lines and decided to take action.

"He has shredded the truth in his speech, shredded the Constitution in his conduct — I shredded the address," she said crisply. "Thank you all very much."

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THE VILLAINIZATION

In 2007, Republican President George W. Bush opened his speech as the “first president to begin his State of the Union with these words: Madam Speaker.” He grinned, she beamed, an ovation followed.

Although she maintained a genial relationship with the Bush family — especially the elder George Bush — Republican campaigns seized on her as the perfect foil early on and never let go. She was pilloried as “Darth Nancy” in the 2006 campaign and the villainization got much uglier, complete with gun imagery, as the years passed and politics became more toxic.

“She was, she is, the personification of the San Francisco liberal,” Lawrence said in an interview. “It was made to order for them.”

But “with her there was a viciousness. The fact that she fit that bill so perfectly — a smart, attractive, effective woman ... they knew they could caricature and stigmatize things about her, her appearance and style, in a way that was a very effective dog whistle of misogyny.”

Republicans often did it simply to raise money, and it worked. Then they used her in ads to attack Democratic congressional candidates. Some of those worked, too,

At least publicly, she would never attribute the attacks to the fact she’s a woman, Lawrence said. “She would say, ‘They did it because I’m effective.’” Then “pretend to flick dust” off her immaculate jacket.

“Darth Nancy” was a quaint, faraway insult by the time the pro-Trump mob came looking for her that Jan. 6. Their sign at the Capitol said “Pelosi is Satan.”

Rifling through her desk in the abandoned speaker’s office, they found a pair of boxing gloves. Pink ones.

THE DO-LOTS CONGRESS

Over the years, Pelosi honed the art of aiming high, then disappointing one faction of her party or another without losing her core of support. Rare is the major achievement that was as far left as the party’s left wing wanted it to be.

But many are the major achievements. She settled for an “Obamacare” bill that did not give everyone the option of government health insurance, but did, over time, fundamentally expand access to health care.

As financial institutions and large segments of the economy sank into the Great Recession, with the 2008 election looming, she settled for a Bush-era stimulus package that essentially bailed out Wall Street — when liberal Occupy Wall Street activists had very different ideas.

She delivered Democratic votes to help even some Trump initiatives get over the line, like early COVID-19 pandemic relief, before swinging behind President Joe Biden on some of the most far-reaching legislation since Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society push in the 1960s.

And Bono, who worked with Pelosi over the years on combating AIDS, said in a statement to the AP after a performance Thursday night in Scotland: “When the story of the end of AIDS is written, Nancy Pelosi’s name will stand out in boldface.”

“I am honored to have learned so much from her grit and grace, and to call her a friend,” he added.

For all the accolades, Pelosi crushed a multitude of toes along the way.

“Her instincts are to find a path and if you happen to be standing in the hole, she’s going to treat you like a running back,” said political scientist Cal Jillson at Southern Methodist University. “If she can go through you, fine. If not, you’re headed to the medicine tent.”

Some of the toes squashed by Pelosi belong to Jane Harman, a fellow Californian who long ran in the same circles as the speaker. She returned to Congress in 2001 after a two-year gap, armed with a written promise from Democratic leaders that she could reclaim her seniority and become chair of the sought-after Intelligence Committee if the party took control of the chamber.

When Democrats did so in 2007 and Pelosi became speaker, she bumped Harman from the committee, citing term limits that had not always been evenly applied. Harman believes the real reason was that Pelosi was under pressure from liberals not to give the job to someone who had supported the war in Iraq.

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"I think, looking back, that she was under pressure from the left not to promote somebody who had voted for the war."

Still, Harman, who left Congress in 2011 to lead the Wilson Center think tank, allows that Pelosi has "a very good political radar and she has kept the caucus together."

When Pelosi entered Congress in 1987, men chaired all the House committees and no women had led one since the 1970s, by the reckoning of House historians. In the 1970s, the most popular committee chair appointment for women in the House was to lead the Select Committee on the House Beauty Shop before that panel vanished at the end of that decade.

Under Pelosi, women took over more panels and gained weightier assignments while the speaker worked to advance authority for minorities in her ranks as well as their numbers.

"She led in a way that did set the stage for other women and open the doors for their potential," said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Woman and Politics, at Rutgers University. "Things have moved. And she is a big part of that."

THE PELOSI CEILING

Because of the speaker's longevity, however, many other up-and-comers in the party besides Harman have discovered they could only rise so far before hitting the Pelosi ceiling. The top job simply hadn't been available.

Pelosi faced none of the questions about sharpness or stamina that dog Biden, 80 on Sunday. She still races around Congress, in high heels, at a pace that people half her age can find hard to match.

But even before the elections, concern had grown in the ranks about the crowd of older Democratic leaders from the same era still in charge. "No brewing rebellion," said Lee at Princeton, but "a sense that maybe it is time."

Leon Panetta, former CIA and Defense chief and chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, had nothing but praise for Pelosi's leadership and skill but said she "probably could have spent more time building a stronger bench in terms of leadership in the House and trying to make sure that others could follow in her path. That becomes a question mark now as to just exactly who's going to be able to replace her."

Panetta met her in the 1980s when he was a congressman from California and she was getting started as a Democratic fund-raiser extraordinaire after her family had moved to that state. She had already learned lessons about transactional politics as the politically engaged daughter of Thomas J. D'Alesandro Jr., a three-term Baltimore mayor and five-term member of Congress from Maryland.

Her prowess in persuading people to open their wallets on behalf of Democratic candidates was one of the keys to her success. Harman calls those dollars crucial to the "big tent" that Pelosi erected for her caucus and to her ability to hold sway over it — "a \$1.25 billion tent."

Michigan Rep. Fred Upton, a Republican who was in the same freshman class with Pelosi and is retiring from Congress, said of her: "This is why the Democrats had more money than God. She was magic, and I don't think she lost a vote."

Gingrich tacks on other elements of her power: "Her fundraising, her ability to inspire intense loyalty, her willingness to punish people who don't do what she wants."

"As a professional, you have to have great respect for her ability to acquire and wield power and her ability to build what was an effective machine," he said.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said in a statement that despite their many disagreements, "I have seen firsthand the depth and intensity of her commitment to public service. There is no question that the impact of Speaker Pelosi's consequential and path-breaking career will long endure."

In Pelosi's reign, nothing was left to chance — even her clothing was curated to send a message: She paired a black dress worn during the Trump impeachments with a gold pin depicting the mace of the House, a symbol of her power. When she swooshed out the doors of the White House after one particularly pointed encounter with Trump, her sunglasses and burnt-orange winter coat were quickly the stuff of social media memes.

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On Thursday, for the big reveal of her plans, Pelosi wore suffragette white and her mace brooch. Pelosi told reporters the attack on her husband, Paul, also 82, last month made her inclined to stay in leadership, so as not to give extremists the satisfaction of seeing her leave. She might have hung in, she indicated, if Democrats had won a majority.

The attacker, who police say had come looking for the speaker, fractured her husband's skull with a hammer. Pelosi said she is working through "survivor's guilt."

Could there be a third-generation Pelosi headed to Congress after the speaker and her father? It's long been thought that Nancy's daughter, Christine, would be at the front of the line for the congressional seat whenever Pelosi decided to retire.

In her time, Pelosi went beyond domestic politics to stake a claim to congressional influence in foreign policy on behalf of the House as an institution, pointing her gavel outward in a way speakers had rarely done.

Well beyond her annual Mother's Day visits to women in combat overseas, Pelosi traveled to foreign leaders with a mission to project U.S. stability, particularly during the unpredictable Trump years but also before and after.

She traveled secretly to Kiev early in the Russia-Ukraine war and caused some grief in the Biden administration with her diplomatically dicey visit to Taiwan this year.

Pelosi had a history of standing up to China. In her first foreign trip after being elected to Congress in 1987, she joined other U.S. lawmakers in 1991 in unfurling a banner at Tiananmen Square after Chinese authorities crushed pro-democracy demonstrations there in 1989. Her recent Taiwan visit was another slap at Beijing.

For all her clout in government, Pelosi was an unpopular figure in the country overall. In a Pew Research Center poll conducted in late June and early July, only about a third of respondents had a favorable opinion of Pelosi, while 6 in 10 were unfavorable toward her.

Most Democrats and Democratic leaners — about 6 in 10 — were thumbs up about her, though she lagged Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, both rated favorably by three-quarters of Democrats. About 9 in 10 Republicans viewed her unfavorably.

Through it all, she went at practically everything as if it had a best-before date. After all, she would say, "Power is perishable." Washington is "the perishable city."

Oath Keepers Jan. 6 sedition case moves to closing arguments

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal prosecutors are expected to make their final pitch to jurors Friday in the high-stakes seditious conspiracy case against Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes and four associates charged in the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Closing arguments will begin in Washington federal court after the final pieces of evidence were presented in the trial alleging Rhodes and his band of antigovernment extremists plotted for weeks to interrupt the peaceful transfer of power from Republican Donald Trump to Democrat Joe Biden.

Evidence presented by prosecutors shows Rhodes and his co-defendants discussing the prospect of violence and the need to keep Biden out of the White House in the weeks leading up to Jan. 6, before stashing a massive cache of weapons referred to as a "quick reaction force" at a Virginia hotel.

On Jan. 6, 2021, Oath Keepers wearing helmets and other battle gear were seen pushing through the pro-Trump mob and into the Capitol. Rhodes remained outside, like "a general surveying his troops on a battlefield," a prosecutor told jurors. After the attack, prosecutors say Rhodes and other Oath Keepers celebrated with dinner at an Olive Garden restaurant.

Closing arguments are expected to be Monday for the defense, which has focused on prosecutors' relative lack of evidence that the Oath Keepers had an explicit plan to attack the Capitol before Jan. 6. Rhodes, who is from Texas, testified that he and his followers were only in Washington to provide security to right-wing figures like Roger Stone. Those Oath Keepers who did enter the Capitol went rogue and

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were "stupid," he said.

Rhodes testified that the mountain of writings and text messages showing him rallying his band of extremists to prepare for violence and discussing the prospect of a "bloody" civil war ahead of Jan. 6 was only bombastic talk.

Two other defendants testified in the case. Jessica Watkins, of Woodstock, Ohio, echoed that her actions that day were "really stupid" but maintained she was not part of a plan but rather "swept along" with the mob, which she likened to a crowd gathered at a store for a sale on the popular shopping day known as Black Friday.

Defendant Thomas Caldwell, a Navy veteran from Virginia, downplayed a chilling piece of evidence: messages he sent trying to get a boat to ferry weapons from Virginia across the Potomac into Washington. He testified that he was never serious about his queries, though he struggled to explain other messages referencing violence on Jan. 6.

Two other defendants, Kelly Meggs and Kenneth Harrelson, both from Florida, did not testify.

The group is the first among hundreds of people arrested in the Capitol riot to stand trial on seditious conspiracy, a rare Civil War-era charge that calls for up to 20 years behind bars. The stakes are high for the Justice Department, which last secured such a conviction at trial nearly 30 years ago, and intends to try two more groups on the charge later this year.

Drexler surprises with 6 Latin Grammys; Rosalía best album

By BERENICE BAUTISTA Associated Press

Uruguay's Jorge Drexler was nominated for seven Latin Grammys and on Thursday he took home six, surprising those who took Bad Bunny's triumph for granted. The second surprise was Rosalía winning album of the year for "Motomami (Digital Album)."

"You have no idea how unexpected all this is for me," said Drexler as he received the song of the year award for "Tocarte" (Touch you) from his album "Tinta y tiempo" (Ink and Time) that he performs with Spanish urban musician C. Tangana.

The Uruguayan musician performed "Tocarte" live with British singer Elvis Costello during the ceremony at the Mandalay Bay Michelob Ultra Arena in Las Vegas. Drexler dedicated his award "to all those who make urban music in Spanish."

Bad Bunny, who was not present at the ceremony, was the biggest nominee with 10 mentions.

In the end, he won all the prizes in the urban music section: best fusion/urban performance for "Titi me preguntó" (Titi asked me); best reggaeton performance for "Lo siento BB:/" (I'm sorry BB:/) which he sings with Tainy and Julieta Venegas; best rap/hip hop song for "De museo" (Of museum), best urban song for "Titi me preguntó" (Titi asked me); and best urban music album for "Un verano sin ti" (A summer without you), which was also nominated for a Grammy in the album of the year category, the first album sung in Spanish to achieve this.

Visibly surprised at winning album of the year at the Latin Grammys, Rosalía said "Motomami" was the album that she had to fight the most to make, but which "has given me the most joy."

Rosalía thanked Latin America, Spain, her team and "the love of my life," she said looking at the Puerto Rican urban artist Rauw Alejandro, who was in the front row.

Rosalía, who also won the Latin Grammy for best alternative music album for "Motomami," performed "Hentai," "La Fama" and her summer hit "Despechá."

Drexler also won Latin Grammys for best pop song for "La guerrilla de la concordia" (Guerrilla of harmony), best alternative song for "El día que estrenaste el mundo" (The day you premiered the world), best singer-songwriter album for "Tinta y tiempo" (Ink and Time) and best song in the Portuguese language for "Vento sardo" with Marisa Monte.

"This is insane, this is a wonderful exaggeration," Drexler said.

For the first in the history of the Latin Grammys a tie was announced in the category of best new artist, with 95-year-old Cuban singer-songwriter Ángela Álvarez sharing the award with 25-year-old Mexican

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singer-songwriter Silvana Estrada.

In an emotional moment, the young Mexican singer said the award for best new artist "was already ours" because most of the candidates this year were women and "even more so because I have here this wonderful woman who has brought tears to my eyes ever since I saw her."

"What exists is to represent for the girls to come for the generations to know that it is worthwhile dreaming, fighting and working," she said.

Alvarez took the stage accompanied by her grandson Carlos Álvarez, who produced her self-titled debut album.

Christina Aguilera joined Mexico's Christian Nodal in a powerful interpretation their ranchera song "Cuando me dé la gana" (When I want to) from her album "Aguilera", which took the award for best traditional pop vocal album.

The American singer of Ecuadorian origins, whose previous album in Spanish was "Mi reflejo" in 2000, said she had longed to make another album in Spanish since then.

After tying Drexler for best pop song, Colombian star Sebastián Yatra won the second Latin Grammy of his career for "Dharma" in the category of best pop vocal album.

"I want to continue inviting composers, young people, all the people who make music to make the music that is always a reflection of their heart," said Yatra.

Yatra was recognized in the pop song category for his anthem "Tacones rojo" (Red Heels) whose Spanish and English version he performed with John Legend.

Mexican singer Angela Aguilar performed "En realidad" (In Reality) while Chiquis won the Latin Grammy for best band music album for "Abeja Reina" (Queen Bee).

US moves to shield Saudi crown prince in journalist killing

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration declared Thursday that Saudi Arabia's crown prince should be considered immune from a lawsuit over his role in the killing of a U.S.-based journalist, a turnaround from Joe Biden's passionate campaign trail denunciations of Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the brutal slaying.

The administration said the senior position of the crown prince, Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler and recently named prime minister as well, should shield him against a suit brought by the fiancée of slain Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi and by the rights group Khashoggi founded, Democracy for the Arab World Now.

The request is non-binding and a judge will ultimately decide whether to grant immunity. But it is bound to anger human rights activists and many U.S. lawmakers, coming as Saudi Arabia has stepped up imprisonment and other retaliation against peaceful critics at home and abroad and has cut oil production, a move seen as undercutting efforts by the U.S. and its allies to punish Russia for its war against Ukraine.

The State Department on Thursday called the administration's call to shield the Saudi crown prince from U.S. courts in Khashoggi's killing "purely a legal determination."

The State Department cited what it said was longstanding precedent. Despite its recommendation to the court, the State Department said in its filing late Thursday, it "takes no view on the merits of the present suit and reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the heinous murder of Jamal Khashoggi."

Saudi officials killed Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. They are believed to have dismembered him, although his remains have never been found. The U.S. intelligence community concluded Saudi Arabia's crown prince had approved the killing of the widely known and respected journalist, who had written critically of Prince Mohammed's harsh ways of silencing of those he considered rivals or critics.

The Biden administration statement Thursday noted visa restrictions and other penalties that it had meted out to lower-ranking Saudi officials in the death.

"From the earliest days of this Administration, the United States Government has expressed its grave concerns regarding Saudi agents' responsibility for Jamal Khashoggi's murder," the State Department said.

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Its statement did not mention the crown prince's own alleged role.

Biden as a candidate vowed to make a "pariah" out of Saudi rulers over the 2018 killing of Khashoggi. "I think it was a flat-out murder," Biden said in a 2019 CNN town hall, as a candidate. "And I think we should have nailed it as that. I publicly said at the time we should treat it that way and there should be consequences relating to how we deal with those — that power."

But Biden as president has sought to ease tensions with the kingdom, including bumping fists with Prince Mohammed on a July trip to the kingdom, as the U.S. works to persuade Saudi Arabia to undo a series of cuts in oil production.

Khashoggi's fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, and DAWN sued the crown prince, his top aides and others in Washington federal court over their alleged roles in Khashoggi's killing. Saudi Arabia says the prince had no direct role in the slaying.

"It's beyond ironic that President Biden has singlehandedly assured MBS can escape accountability when it was President Biden who promised the American people he would do everything to hold him accountable," the head of DAWN, Sarah Leah Whitson, said in a statement, using the prince's acronym.

Biden in February 2021 had ruled out the U.S. government imposing punishment on Prince Mohammed himself in the killing of Khashoggi, a resident of the Washington area. Biden, speaking after he authorized release of a declassified version of the intelligence community's findings on Prince Mohammed's role in the killing, argued at the time there was no precedent for the U.S. to move against the leader of a strategic partner.

The U.S. military long has safeguarded Saudi Arabia from external enemies, in exchange for Saudi Arabia keeping global oil markets afloat.

"It's impossible to read the Biden administration's move today as anything more than a capitulation to Saudi pressure tactics, including slashing oil output to twist our arms to recognize MBS's fake immunity ploy," Whitson said.

A federal judge in Washington had given the U.S. government until midnight Thursday to express an opinion on the claim by the crown prince's lawyers that Prince Mohammed's high official standing renders him legally immune in the case.

The Biden administration also had the option of not stating an opinion either way.

Sovereign immunity, a concept rooted in international law, holds that states and their officials are protected from some legal proceedings in other foreign states' domestic courts.

Upholding the concept of "sovereign immunity" helps ensure that American leaders in turn don't have to worry about being hauled into foreign courts to face lawsuits in other countries, the State Department said.

Human rights advocates had argued that the Biden administration would embolden Prince Mohammed and other authoritarian leaders around the world in more rights abuses if it supported the crown prince's claim that his high office shielded him from prosecution.

Prince Mohammed serves as Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler in the stead of his aged father, King Salman. The Saudi king in September also temporarily transferred his title of prime minister — a title normally held by the Saudi monarch — to Prince Mohammed. Critics called it a bid to strengthen Mohammed's immunity claim.

Jury convicts man who raped informant in unmonitored sting

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

A Louisiana jury Thursday convicted a career criminal of raping a police informant who had been sent into a drug house in a sting that went unmonitored and unprotected by law enforcement.

Jurors in Alexandria looked away at times as prosecutors played graphic footage of a sexual assault that happened as the woman went undercover to buy methamphetamine. She wore a hidden camera that recorded Antonio D. Jones forcing her to perform oral sex on him — twice — but the device did not transmit the attack in real time.

Jones, 48, was found guilty of two counts of third-degree rape. He had been scheduled for trial last

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month but skipped bail and was later captured in Mississippi.

"We think justice was served," Rapides Parish District Attorney Phillip Terrell told The Associated Press. "He is an incorrigible, violent criminal and we think the community is much safer now that he's going to be going to prison."

The conviction came two months after the attack on the woman was reported in an AP investigation that exposed the perils such informants can face seeking to "work off" criminal charges in often loosely regulated, secretive arrangements.

The woman testified against Jones during the trial, later telling AP in a text exchange "it was not easy but was rewarding." AP does not typically identify victims of sexual assault.

Despite the woman's cooperation, she was charged anyway just three weeks after the recorded assault with possession of drug paraphernalia. But prosecutors said late Thursday they plan to drop the pending charges against her.

"We certainly do not intend to prosecute a rape victim," Assistant District Attorney Brian Cespiva said in a telephone interview.

Jones' defense attorney, Phillip M. Robinson, said he will appeal Jones' conviction and earlier asked for a mistrial because the jurors were looking away from the video in disgust. The lengthy footage showed Jones forcing the woman into sex as she cried and said "no," and he even stopped at one point to conduct a separate drug deal.

Jones is scheduled for sentencing Dec. 12. Cespiva said he will ask that Jones be sentenced to 50 years in prison. Jones faces a separate trial next year on drug distribution charges.

The victim, meanwhile, is undergoing drug treatment.

"I'm convinced she's on her way to sobriety," prosecutor Terrell said.

More Twitter workers flee after Musk's 'hardcore' ultimatum

By MATT O'BRIEN, FRANK BAJAK and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writers

Twitter continued to bleed engineers and other workers on Thursday, after new owner Elon Musk gave them a choice to pledge to "hardcore" work or resign with severance pay.

Some took to Twitter to announce they were signing off after Musk's deadline to make the pledge. A number of employees took to a private forum outside of the company's messaging board to discuss their planned departure, asking questions about how it might jeopardize their U.S. visas or if they would get the promised severance pay, according to an employee fired earlier this week who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

While it's not clear how many of Twitter's already-decimated staff took Musk up on his offer, the newest round of departures means the platform is continuing to lose workers just as it is gearing up for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, one of the busiest events on Twitter that can overwhelm its systems if things go haywire.

"To all the Tweeps who decided to make today your last day: thanks for being incredible teammates through the ups and downs. I can't wait to see what you do next," tweeted one employee, Esther Crawford, who is remaining at the company and has been working on the overhaul of the platform's verification system.

Since taking over Twitter less than three weeks ago, Musk has booted half of the company's full-time staff of 7,500 and an untold number of contractors responsible for content moderation and other crucial efforts. He fired top executives on his first day as Twitter's owner, while others left voluntarily in the ensuing days. Earlier this week, he began firing a small group of engineers who took issue with him publicly or in the company's internal Slack messaging system.

Then overnight on Wednesday, Musk sent an email to the remaining staff at Twitter, saying that it is a software and servers company at its heart and he asked employees to decide by Thursday evening if they want to remain a part of the business.

Musk wrote that employees "will need to be extremely hardcore" to build "a breakthrough Twitter 2.0" and that long hours at high intensity will be needed for success.

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But in a Thursday email, Musk backpedaled on his insistence that everyone work from the office. His initial rejection of remote work had alienated many employees who survived the layoffs.

He softened his earlier tone in an email to employees, writing that "all that is required for approval is that your manager takes responsibility for ensuring you are making an excellent contribution." Workers would also be expected to have "in-person meetings with your colleagues on a reasonable cadence, ideally weekly, but not less than once per month."

As of 7 p.m. Pacific Time, the No. 1 topic trending in the United States was "RIPTwitter" followed by the names of other social media platforms: "Tumblr," "Mastodon" and "MySpace."

Twitter did not respond to a message seeking comment.

Ticketmaster canceling next Taylor Swift concert ticket sale

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Ticketmaster says it is canceling Friday's planned general public sale for Taylor Swift's upcoming stadium tour because it doesn't have enough tickets.

The decision came two days after a presale event caused the site to crash and left many fans without tickets. The ticketing company said in a statement Thursday two million tickets to The Eras tour next year were sold during presales on Tuesday, the most tickets ever sold on the platform in a single day.

Ticketmaster cited "extraordinarily high demands on ticketing systems and insufficient remaining ticket inventory to meet that demand" as a reason for calling off Friday's sale.

Questions remain about how remaining tickets — and how many — would be sold. But Ticketmaster said about 1.5 million fans who had gone through an early verification process — called Verified Fan — were invited to purchase tickets and the remaining 2 million were placed on a waiting list.

A company representative said Ticketmaster is not involved in ticket resales for Swift's shows.

It's been a record year for Swift after releasing her latest album "Midnights," which also broke a Billboard record.

The 52-date Eras Tour kicks off March 17 in Glendale, Arizona, and wraps up with five shows in Los Angeles ending Aug. 9. International dates will be announced as well. It's Swift's first tour since 2018.

But fans and families around the country battled it out with long queues and error messages to try to race to the checkout cart.

Ticketmaster said that the site was overwhelmed both by real people and bot attacks resulting in unprecedented traffic on their site. The statement said about 15 percent of interactions with the site had problems, including errors that caused people to lose tickets after they had waited in an online queue.

"While it's impossible for everyone to get tickets to these shows, we know we can do more to improve the experience and that's what we're focused on," the company statement said.

Judge wins AL MVP in runaway; Goldschmidt takes NL prize

By MIKE FITZPATRICK AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Aaron Judge's record-setting season with the New York Yankees turned that AL MVP debate into a decisive verdict.

Paul Goldschmidt's steady production for the St. Louis Cardinals made him the clear choice in the National League.

And after coming in second before, both prodigious sluggers powered their way to their first MVP awards Thursday night.

"It's tough to put in words," Judge said on MLB Network, surrounded by his beaming wife, parents and agents. "It's an incredible, incredible moment. A lot of hard work throughout the years to get to this point."

After hitting 62 home runs to break the American League record, Judge easily beat out Los Angeles Angels two-way phenom Shohei Ohtani in an MVP race some thought might be close.

The 6-foot-7 outfielder received 28 of 30 first-place votes and two seconds for 410 points from a Baseball Writers' Association of America panel. Ohtani, last year's winner, was picked first on two ballots and

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second on the other 28 for 280 points.

Yordan Alvarez of the World Series champion Houston Astros finished third.

Judge acknowledged feeling "extremely nervous" about the announcement, calling Ohtani "by far one of the best players on this planet."

"You never want to assume anything," Judge said. "Both those guys had incredible years."

Goldschmidt won the NL honor for the first time after a couple of close calls earlier in his career. The first baseman garnered 22 of 30 first-place votes and eight seconds for 380 points from a separate BBWAA panel.

"It's a great honor. But it isn't just about me," Goldschmidt said. "I mean, there's been so many people that have helped me."

San Diego Padres third baseman Manny Machado finished second with 291 points after getting seven first-place votes and 13 seconds.

Nolan Arenado, teammates with Goldschmidt on the NL Central champion Cardinals, came in third with 232 points. Arenado was picked first on one ballot, second on two and third on 15.

Goldschmidt gave the Cardinals their 18th MVP, second among big league teams to the Yankees (21).

Now a free agent, Judge broke the AL record of 61 homers set by Yankees slugger Roger Maris in 1961.

The tallest MVP in major league history, Judge also led the majors in runs (133), on-base percentage (.425), slugging percentage (.686), OPS (1.111), extra-base hits (90) and total bases (391) to help the Yankees win the AL East. He tied for the big league lead with 131 RBIs and was second in the AL with a .311 batting average.

Ohtani put together perhaps the greatest two-way season in baseball history for a third-place Angels team that finished 73-89.

The superstar from Japan went 15-9 with a 2.33 ERA and 219 strikeouts in 28 starts on the mound covering 166 innings. At the plate, he batted .273 with 34 homers, 95 RBIs and an .875 OPS.

Alvarez, the Houston slugger who launched a go-ahead homer in the clinching game of the World Series, hit .306 with 37 home runs, 97 RBIs and a 1.019 OPS.

Judge was AL Rookie of the Year in 2017, when he finished a distant second in MVP balloting to Houston second baseman Jose Altuve.

The 35-year-old Goldschmidt batted .317 with 35 home runs, 115 RBIs and a league-leading .981 OPS this season. He had 41 doubles and scored 106 runs while compiling a .404 on-base percentage and topping the league in slugging percentage (.578).

"I think definitely as you age, you have to adapt, and that's some of what I've tried to do. I've tried to get ahead of it," Goldschmidt said. "You can't just try to do the same thing you did the year before. But yeah, kind of the stigma that as you get older, you're going to keep getting worse. I mean, nobody likes that. They don't like being told you can't do something, so it's definitely motivation."

The seven-time All-Star and four-time Gold Glove winner was runner-up for NL MVP in 2013 and 2015, then finished third in 2017 — all with the Arizona Diamondbacks. He came in sixth last year with the Cardinals.

"I never felt like I was missing something," Goldschmidt said. "I felt like I had some great years throughout my career, and some other guys in those individual years had played better than me and won the MVP."

Machado batted .298 with 32 homers, 102 RBIs and an .898 OPS. He had 37 doubles and scored 100 runs to lead the Padres into the playoffs with a wild-card berth.

Arenado hit .293 with 30 homers and 103 RBIs, sparkling on defense at third base again to earn a 10th consecutive Gold Glove to begin his career. He had 42 doubles and an .891 OPS.

Powered by Goldschmidt, Arenado and a resurgent Albert Pujols, the Cardinals went 93-69 and won their second division title in the last four years. They were swept at home by the NL champion Philadelphia Phillies in the wild-card round.

Balloting was conducted before the postseason.

"Whether I won this or not, it was going to be a great year," Goldschmidt said. "This was my best year and the most fun I had, playing with Nolan and Albert and so many guys we had. So, it was just incredible."

Goldschmidt gets a \$1.5 million bonus in his contract for winning the MVP award, while Arenado earns \$50,000 for coming in third.

Alvarez nets \$75,000 for his third-place finish.

Western US cities to remove decorative grass amid drought

By SAM METZ and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A group of 30 agencies that supply water to homes and businesses throughout the western United States has pledged to rip up lots of decorative grass to help keep water in the over-tapped Colorado River.

The agreement signed Tuesday by water agencies in Southern California, Phoenix and Salt Lake City and elsewhere illustrates an accelerating shift in the American West away from well-manicured grass that has long been a totem of suburban life, having taken root alongside streets, around fountains and between office park walkways.

The grass-removal pledge targets turf that people don't work on, like in front of strip malls, in street medians or at the entrance to neighborhoods. It doesn't mean cities plan to rip up grass at golf courses, parks or in backyards, though some may pay homeowners to voluntarily replace their lawns with more drought-resistance landscaping.

Beyond reducing ornamental grass by 30%, the agencies say they'll boost water efficiency, add more water recycling and consider actions like changing how people pay for water to encourage savings.

"Recognizing that a clean, reliable water supply is critical to our communities, we can and must do more to reduce water consumption and increase reuse and recycling within our service areas," read the memo.

The agreement did not include details about the amount of water the agencies were collectively committing to save, but cities account for about one-fifth of Colorado River water use. The rest goes to agriculture.

"Cities — the 20% — can't solve the math problem. But we can certainly contribute to solving the problem," said John Entsminger, the Southern Nevada Water Authority's General Manager.

The commitments, light on details, could spur agencies to offer payment for property owners to tear out grass and replace it with drought-tolerant desert landscaping.

The commitment to tear out 30% marks the first time water agencies throughout the region have collectively committed to a numerical benchmark targeting one specific kind of water use. It comes as the states scramble to reduce their consumption to meet demands from federal officials who say cuts are needed to maintain river levels and protect public health, food systems and hydropower.

The letter adds additional signatories to an earlier agreement five large water districts reached in August. Water agencies in Albuquerque, Las Vegas and Denver are among those who signed.

Denver Water spokesperson Todd Hartman said the city hoped to replace roughly 75 million square feet (7 million square meters) of non-functional turf but didn't share how much water that would conserve. He said the agency hopes to roll out programs by 2024.

No matter the savings, the new commitments will amount to far less conservation than is needed to keep water flowing through the Colorado River and prevent its largest reservoirs from shrinking to dangerously low levels.

Phoenix wants its program up and running by the spring; it will be the city's first time offering payment for people to rip up grass, said Cynthia Campbell, the city's water resources management adviser. Even without a program, lots of people have removed grass anyway. In the 1970s, about 80% of homes had grass covering most of their property; today, it's 9%, but that doesn't include the sprawling suburbs outside of city boundaries, she said.

Like others, she stressed that water savings from cities won't solve the river's problems.

"There is no level of municipal conservation in the entire western United States that could make up for the water that's going to be needed to be" conserved, she said. But, "we are giving till it hurts, as much as we possibly can."

The letter doesn't include any commitments from agriculture, which uses about 80% of the allocated water in the seven states that rely on the river — Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

Lake Powell and Lake Mead, the river's two main reservoirs, are each about a quarter full.

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In June, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton warned the states needed to dramatically cut their use, but amid squabbles over who would shoulder what burden, officials failed to answer her call. The bureau has since offered varying levels of payment for water districts to reduce their use, through things like leaving farm fields unplanted or asking urban residents to use less at home.

Proposals for some of that money are due Nov. 21.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which supplies water for about half of California's residents, in October urged cities and water agencies in its territory to ban the addition of any new decorative grass in business parks, public spaces and neighborhoods. Its board also urged agencies to stop watering and consider removing such grass that's already planted.

Southern Nevada has for decades used a mixture of cash incentives and fines to discourage grass watering and limit both functional and non-functional turf. The agreement has little effect on the area because a state law passed last year requires 100% of the non-functional turf be torn out in the Las Vegas area by 2026.

Utah passed a statewide conservation program last year that included \$5 million to incentivize turf removal and has targeted decorative grass on public property. Yet some municipalities maintain ordinances passed for aesthetic reasons that prohibit residents from replacing grass with drought-tolerant landscaping.

Pelosi to step down from House leadership, stay in Congress

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday that she will not seek a leadership position in the new Congress, ending a historic run as the first woman with the gavel and making way for a new generation to steer the party after Democrats lost control of the House to Republicans in the midterm elections.

In a spirited speech on the House floor, Pelosi announced that she will step aside after leading Democrats for nearly 20 years and in the aftermath of the brutal attack on her husband, Paul, last month in their San Francisco home — and after having done “the people’s work.”

The California Democrat, a pivotal figure in U.S. history and perhaps the most powerful speaker in modern times, said she would remain in Congress as the representative from San Francisco, a position she has held for 35 years, when the new Congress convenes in January.

“I will not seek reelection to Democratic leadership in the next Congress,” she said. “For me, the hour has come for a new generation to lead the Democratic caucus that I so deeply respect.”

Now, she said, “we must move boldly into the future.”

Dressed in white in a nod to the suffragettes, Pelosi was greeted with cheers as she arrived for the hastily called address. She received a standing ovation when she closed, lawmakers and guests one by one crowding her with hugs, many taking selfies of a moment in history.

President Joe Biden, who had encouraged Pelosi to stay on as Democratic leader, spoke with Pelosi in the morning and congratulated her on her historic tenure as speaker of the House.

“History will note she is the most consequential Speaker of the House of Representatives in our history,” Biden said in a statement, noting her ability to win unity from her caucus and her “absolute dignity.”

It’s an unusual choice for a party leader to stay on after withdrawing from congressional leadership, but not without precedent and Pelosi has long defied convention in pursuing power in Washington.

In an interview with reporters after her announcement, Pelosi said she won’t endorse anyone in the race to succeed her and she won’t sit on any committees as a rank-and-file lawmaker. She said the attack on her husband “made me think again about staying.”

But in the end, after the election, she decided to step down.

“I quite frankly, personally, have been ready to leave for a while,” she said. “Because there are things I want to do. I like to dance, I like to sing. There’s a life out there, right?”

During her remarks on the House floor, Pelosi recapped her career, from seeing the Capitol the first time as a young girl with her father — a former New Deal congressman and mayor — to serving as speaker

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alongside U.S. presidents, noting three of the four, but not mentioning Donald Trump.

"Every day I am in awe of the majestic miracle that is American democracy," she said.

At one point, she compared the better-than-expected showing for Democrats in the midterms, the first national election after the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol, as "proof through the night that our flag was still there," drawing cheers from colleagues.

The American historian Jon Meacham helped Pelosi with her speech, but an aide said she added that impromptu line herself.

On short notice, lawmakers who have been waiting and wondering about the long-serving leader's plans filled the House, at least on the Democratic side, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer joined. He later joined a throng of lawmakers and hugged and kissed Pelosi on the cheek.

The Speaker's Gallery was filled with Pelosi's staff and guests. Some Republicans, including some newly elected members, also attended, though House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, who's seeking the speakership in the new Congress, did not, telling reporters afterward that he was "busy, unfortunately."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said in a statement late Thursday: "The Speaker and I have disagreed frequently and forcefully over the years, but I have seen firsthand the depth and intensity of her commitment to public service. There is no question that the impact of Speaker Pelosi's consequential and path-breaking career will long endure."

Pelosi was twice elected to the speakership and has led Democrats through consequential moments, including passage of the Affordable Care Act with President Barack Obama and the impeachments of President Donald Trump.

Her decision Thursday paves the way for House Democratic leadership elections next month when Democrats reorganize as the minority party for the new Congress.

Pelosi's leadership team, with Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Democratic Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina, has long moved as a triumvirate. All now in their 80s, the three House Democratic leaders have faced restless colleagues eager for them to step aside and allow a new generation to take charge.

Hoyer said after Pelosi's remarks that "it is the time for a new generation of leaders" and that he will also step down from leadership but stay in Congress. Clyburn, the highest-ranking Black American in Congress, has said he expects to stay in Congress next year and hopes to remain at the leadership table.

Democratic Reps. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, Katherine Clark of Massachusetts and Pete Aguilar of California have similarly moved as a trio, all working toward becoming the next generation of leaders. Jeffries could make history in the future if Democrats regain control, and he enters the race to become the nation's first Black speaker of the House.

First elected in 1987, Pelosi was among a dozen Democratic women in Congress. She was long ridiculed by Republicans as a San Francisco liberal while steadily rising as a skilled legislator and fundraising powerhouse. Her own Democratic colleagues have intermittently appreciated but also feared her powerful brand of leadership.

Pelosi first became speaker in 2007, saying she had cracked the "marble ceiling," after Democrats swept to power in the 2006 midterm elections in a backlash to then-President George W. Bush and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When she was poised in 2018 to return as speaker, in the Trump era, she vowed "to show the power of the gavel."

Pelosi has repeatedly withstood leadership challenges over the years and had suggested in 2018 she would serve four more years as leader. But she had not discussed those plans more recently.

Typically unsentimental, Pelosi let show a rare moment of emotion on the eve of the midterm elections as she held back tears discussing the grave assault on her husband of nearly 60 years.

Paul Pelosi suffered a fractured skull after an intruder broke into their home in the middle the night seeking the Democratic leader. The intruder's question — "Where is Nancy?" — echoed the chants of the pro-Trump rioters at the Capitol as they hunted for Pelosi and tried to stop Congress from certifying Joe

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Biden's election victory over Trump.

David DePape is being held without bail on attempted murder and other charges in what authorities said was a political attack.

Historians have noted that other consequential political figures had careers later as rank-and-file members of Congress, including John Quincy Adams, the former president, who went on to serve for nearly 18 years in Congress.

Lake refuses to concede in Arizona governor's race she lost

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Refusing to concede, Kari Lake, the defeated Republican candidate for Arizona governor, said Thursday she is assembling lawyers and collecting evidence of voters having trouble casting ballots on Election Day as she considers her next move.

Lake, who was endorsed by Donald Trump, traveled to the former president's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida on Thursday, her campaign spokesman told The Associated Press. The Washington Post first reported that she attended a luncheon held by the America First Policy Institute, an advocacy group created by former Trump advisers.

In a 2 1/2-minute video, Lake made no mention of giving up in her most extensive public comments since losing the election. Before the election, she had refused to say that she would concede if she lost the race to Democrat Katie Hobbs.

"Rest assured I have assembled the best and brightest legal team, and we are exploring every avenue to correct the many wrongs that have been done this past week," Lake said. "I'm doing everything in my power to right these wrongs."

She pointed to long lines at some polling places that were exacerbated by problems with ballot printers at about a third of the vote centers in Maricopa County, the largest county in the state. She said the problems disenfranchised voters who couldn't wait at the polls.

"What happened to Arizonans on Election Day is unforgivable," she said.

County election officials said that all ballots were counted and that voters could go to any polling place in the county, many of which had little to no line, with wait times posted online.

Election officials traced the problems to a printer setting that sometimes led to ballots printing too lightly for the on-site tabulators to read. They said they used the same settings in the August primary and for pre-election testing and there were no widespread issues.

About 17,000 ballots were not scanned at precinct-based vote counters and were instead placed in a collection box to be counted by more sophisticated machines at the county's election headquarters. The collection box has come to be known as "box three."

Bill Gates, the Republican chair of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, has blamed state GOP chair Kelli Ward and other prominent Republicans for causing delays and long lines because they told their supporters not to use box three.

"This team, we have accepted our responsibility in this," Gates said Monday. "But I'm not willing to accept responsibility for issues that were caused by others. And it is clear to me that those lines were longer because leaders in one political party were spreading misinformation."

Republicans asked a judge to extend the hours at polling places because of the issues. The judge declined, saying they presented no evidence anyone was disenfranchised.

Democrats voted overwhelmingly via ballots received in the mail. In-person Election Day votes heavily favored the GOP because Lake and other prominent Republicans had claimed it was more secure, which election experts dispute.

Lake has said little since The Associated Press and other news organizations called the race for Hobbs on Monday. Late Wednesday, she posted video with clips from the campaign trail set to the lyrics, "I won't back down."

Her video Thursday said Hobbs, who is currently secretary of state, should have recused herself from

any role in the election. The secretary of state creates election procedures and certifies equipment, but her office does not count ballots, a task that is done by the state's 15 counties.

Medical Examiner: Slain UVA students were shot in the head

By SARAH RANKIN and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Three University of Virginia football players who were shot on a bus as they returned from a field trip each died of a gunshot wound to the head, according to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

The cause of death for Lavel Davis Jr., D'Sean Perry and Devin Chandler was released in response to a request from The Associated Press on Thursday. LaKeshia Johnson, Central District Administrator of the medical examiner's office, also said in an email that the manner of death was homicide.

The students were shot late Sunday night as they returned to campus after traveling to Washington, where they saw a play and had dinner together. Authorities have said that Christopher Darnell Jones Jr., a UVA student and former member of the football team who was on the trip, began shooting students on the charter bus as it pulled to a stop at a campus parking garage.

Jones, 23, faces second-degree murder and other charges stemming from the shooting, which set off a manhunt and 12-hour campus lockdown before Jones was apprehended in suburban Richmond. Jones is being held without bond.

A witness told police the gunman targeted specific victims, shooting one as he slept, a prosecutor said Wednesday at Jones' first court appearance. Two other students were wounded. Neither Jones nor his attorney addressed the charges in court.

Officials said Thursday that an outside special counsel will assist the state attorney general in reviewing the shooting.

In a letter, University of Virginia President Jim Ryan and University Rector Whitt Clement asked Attorney General Jason Miyares to appoint outside counsel to investigate UVA's response to the shooting as well as efforts prior to the violence to assess the potential threat of the suspect.

"After a tragedy of this nature, it is important for the affected institution to take a hard look at what circumstances led up to the event and, how the University responded in the moment," Clement said in a statement.

Miyares granted the university's request for the outside review, saying he would enlist special counsel to assist his office.

"A public report will be shared with students, families, the larger UVA community, and government officials at the appropriate time," Miyares spokesperson Victoria LaCivita said in a statement.

UVA has said Jones had been on the radar of the school's threat-assessment team since the fall. The university also has provided sometimes-conflicting or erroneous statements about that team's work over the course of the week.

Davis, Perry and Chandler will be honored Saturday in a memorial service on campus. A female student who was injured has since been discharged from a hospital. Football player Mike Hollins, who was also injured, underwent surgery and is recovering in the hospital.

Hollins was "progressing positively" on Thursday and will hopefully begin to take some steps, according to Joe Gipson, a family spokesperson.

In an interview with ESPN Thursday, Hollins' mother said her son at first thought he heard balloons popping on the bus before he saw Jones. Hollins then yelled for the bus driver to stop and ran off the bus with two other students.

Hollins quickly realized that no other students had fled the bus and ran back to help, Brenda Hollins said. Her son encountered Jones pointing a gun at him on the bus's first stop, prompting Hollins to turn to run.

"All he remembers is he tried to turn, but he saw him lift the gun," Brenda Hollins said. "And he felt his back get hot ... And he pulled his shirt up as he ran, and he saw the bullet protruding from his stomach."

After assuming the lead in the criminal investigation from campus police, Virginia State Police on Thursday

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provided the most detailed accounting yet of what happened.

In a news release, the agency said Jones had traveled with other students and a professor to Washington for a theater performance at the Atlas Performing Arts Center. The group ate dinner together before a professor and 22 students returned to Charlottesville, state police said.

As the bus pulled up to the campus parking garage and students were getting up to leave, Jones "produced a weapon and began firing," the release said. As he exited the bus, he fired additional rounds, fled on foot and eventually left the area in a Dodge Durango, according to state police.

The news release said investigators are still "piecing together Jones' movements between the time he fled the shooting scene and was apprehended" in the Richmond area and couldn't comment on a motive.

A handgun was recovered in "relative proximity" to the bus and no firearms were recovered inside, state police said. A search warrant executed on Jones' residence in Charlottesville led to the recovery of a rifle and a handgun, according to the news release.

The university said earlier this week that Jones drew the attention of the university's threat-assessment team this fall in the context of a "potential hazing issue." UVA has declined to elaborate on the possible hazing incident.

During its threat-assessment review, university officials began investigating a report Jones had a gun and ended up discovering Jones had previously been tried and convicted of a misdemeanor concealed weapons violation in 2021, which he had failed to report, according to a statement.

The school initially said it "escalated his case for disciplinary action" on Oct. 27. But a spokesman, Brian Coy, revised the timeline Tuesday night. He said that likely due to either a human or technical error, the report had not actually been transmitted to the University Judiciary Committee, a student-run body, until Tuesday night after the shooting.

'Momentous:' US advances largest dam demolition in history

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — U.S. regulators approved a plan Thursday to demolish four dams on a California river and open up hundreds of miles of salmon habitat that would be the largest dam removal and river restoration project in the world when it goes forward.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's unanimous vote on the lower Klamath River dams is the last major regulatory hurdle and the biggest milestone for a \$500 million demolition proposal championed by Native American tribes and environmentalists for years. The project would return the lower half of California's second-largest river to a free-flowing state for the first time in more than a century.

Native tribes that rely on the Klamath River and its salmon for their way of life have been a driving force behind bringing the dams down in a wild and remote area that spans the California and Oregon border. Barring any unforeseen complications, Oregon, California and the entity formed to oversee the project will accept the license transfer and could begin dam removal as early as this summer, proponents said.

"The Klamath salmon are coming home," Yurok Chairman Joseph James said after the vote. "The people have earned this victory and with it, we carry on our sacred duty to the fish that have sustained our people since the beginning of time."

The dams produce less than 2% of PacifiCorp's power generation — enough to power about 70,000 homes — when they are running at full capacity, said Bob Gravely, spokesperson for the utility. But they often run at a far lower capacity because of low water in the river and other issues, and the agreement that paved the way for Thursday's vote was ultimately a business decision, he said.

PacifiCorp would have had to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in fish ladders, fish screens and other conservation upgrades under environmental regulations that were not in place when the aging dams were first built. But with the deal approved Thursday, the utility's cost is capped at \$200 million, with another \$250 million from a California voter-approved water bond.

"We're closing coal plants and building wind farms and it all just has to add up in the end. It's not a one-to-one," he said of the coming dam demolition. "You can make up that power by the way you operate the

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rest of your facilities or having energy efficiency savings so your customers are using less.”

Approval of the order to surrender the dams’ operating license is the bedrock of the most ambitious salmon restoration plan in history and the project’s scope — measured by the number of dams and the amount of river habitat that would reopen to salmon — makes it the largest of its kind in the world, said Amy Souers Kober, spokesperson for American Rivers, which monitors dam removals and advocates for river restoration.

More than 300 miles (483 kilometers) of salmon habitat in the Klamath River and its tributaries would benefit, she said.

The decision is in line with a trend toward removing aging and outdated dams across the U.S. as they come up for license renewal and confront the same government-mandated upgrade costs as the Klamath River dams would have had.

Across the U.S., 1,951 dams have been demolished as of February, including 57 in 2021, American Rivers said. Most of those have come down in the past 25 years as facilities age and come up for relicensing.

Commissioners on Thursday called the decision “momentous” and “historic” and spoke of the importance of taking the action during National Native American Heritage Month because of its importance to restoring salmon and reviving the river that is at the heart of the culture of several tribes in the region.

“Some people might ask in this time of great need for zero emissions, ‘Why are we removing the dams?’ First, we have to understand this doesn’t happen every day ... a lot of these projects were licensed a number of years back when there wasn’t as much focus on environmental issues,” said FERC Chairman Richard Glick. “Some of these projects have a significant impact on the environment and a significant impact on fish.”

Glick added that, in the past, the commission did not consider the effect of energy projects on tribes but said that was a “very important element” of Thursday’s decision.

Members of the Yurok, Karuk and Hoopa Valley tribes and other supporters lit a bonfire and watched the vote on a remote Klamath River sandbar via a satellite uplink to symbolize their hopes for the river’s renewal.

“I understand that some of those tribes are watching this meeting today on the (river) bar and I raise a toast to you,” Commissioner Willie Phillips said.

The vote comes at a critical moment when human-caused climate change is hammering the Western United States with prolonged drought, said Tom Kiernan, president of American Rivers. He said allowing California’s second-largest river to flow naturally, and its flood plains and wetlands to function normally, would mitigate those impacts.

“The best way of managing increasing floods and droughts is to allow the river system to be healthy and do its thing,” he said.

The Klamath Basin watershed covers more than 14,500 square miles (37,500 square kilometers) and the Klamath itself was once the third-largest salmon producing river on the West Coast. But the dams, constructed between 1918 and 1962, essentially cut the river in half and prevent salmon from reaching spawning grounds upstream. Consequently, salmon runs have been dwindling for years.

The smallest dam, Copco 2, could come down as early as this summer. The remaining dams — one in southern Oregon and two in California — will be drained down very slowly starting in early 2024 with the goal of returning the river to its natural state by the end of that year.

Plans to remove the dams have not been without controversy.

Homeowners on Copco Lake, a large reservoir, vigorously oppose the demolition plan and rate payers in the rural counties around the dams worry about taxpayers shouldering the cost of any overruns or liability problems. Critics also believe dam removal won’t be enough to save the salmon because of changing ocean conditions the fish encounter before the return to their natal river.

“The whole question is, will this add to the increased production of salmon? It has everything to do with what’s going on in the ocean (and) we think this will turn out to be a futile effort,” said Richard Marshall, head of the Siskiyou County Water Users Association. “Nobody’s ever tried to take care of the problem by taking care of the existing situation without just removing the dams.”

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U.S. regulators raised flags about the potential for cost overruns and liability issues in 2020, nearly killing the proposal, but Oregon, California and PacifiCorp, which operates the hydroelectric dams and is owned by billionaire Warren Buffett's company Berkshire Hathaway, teamed up to add another \$50 million in contingency funds.

PacifiCorp will continue to operate the dams until the demolition begins.

The largest U.S. dam demolition to date is the removal of two dams on the Elwha River on Washington's Olympic Peninsula in 2012.

US agent, suspected smuggler killed off Puerto Rico coast

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent and a suspected smuggler died during a shootout Thursday off the Puerto Rico coast, authorities said. Two other U.S. officers were injured.

CBP's Air and Marine Operations unit was on routine patrol around 8 a.m. Thursday when the shots were fired about 12 miles (19 kilometers) off the coast from Cabo Rojo, a major drug smuggling corridor for cocaine coming out of South America known as the Mona Passage, the agency said. It lies between Puerto Rico's western coastline and the Dominican Republic.

Three CBP Marine Interdiction Agents exchanged gunfire with two people who were aboard the suspected smuggling ship, officials said. All three agents were shot and airlifted to local hospitals in Puerto Rico.

One of the agents was later pronounced dead. The agent's identity was not immediately released and the condition of the other two agents was not immediately clear.

One of the people aboard the suspected smuggling ship was also killed, officials said. The second person on that vessel was arrested.

After the shooting, another U.S. marine interdiction crew intercepted another boat nearby, finding fire-arms and other contraband onboard, Customs and Border Protection said. The two people on that ship were also arrested.

The FBI is leading the investigation into the shooting.

Speaking to reporters in Puerto Rico, CBP spokesman Jeffrey Quiñones said it was too early to know where the vessel originated from, the nationality of its two passengers and whether it was carrying narcotics or servicing another suspected drug vessel in the Caribbean.

Typically, drug cartels recruit poor fishermen from Colombia and Venezuela to transport large amounts of cocaine northward to the Dominican Republic where it is broken down into smaller bales and transferred at sea to waiting vessels manned by better-paid, sometimes well-armed Puerto Rican drug runners.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in testimony before a Senate committee that an Air and Marine Operations agent was killed and several other agents were "gravely wounded."

"These are brave members of our Air and Marine Operations within U.S. Customs and Border Protection," Mayorkas said. "So the difficulty of this job cannot be compared to the difficulty that our frontline personnel face every day. Their bravery and selfless service should be recognized."

Air and Marine Operations employs about 1,650 people and is one of the smaller units of CBP, the largest law enforcement agency in the United States that also includes the Border Patrol. It works to stop the illegal movement of people, drugs and other goods.

The unit detected 218 "conventional aircraft incursions" on U.S. soil in the 2021 fiscal year, seized 1.1 million pounds of narcotics, \$73.1 million in illicit currency, made more than 122,000 arrests and recued 518 people, according to CBP.

Pelosi's big decision: 'There's a life out there, right?'

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the attack on her husband, Paul, by an intruder in their family home made her think about staying on as the House Democratic leader because she "couldn't give them that satisfaction" of intimidating her out of politics.

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But Pelosi said Thursday she was ready to step aside and felt “balanced” about her decision to make way for a new generation of leaders.

She’s staying as the congresswoman of San Francisco but has no plans to endorse a successor or meddle with the new leaders.

“I have no intention of being the mother-in-law in the kitchen saying, ‘My son doesn’t like the stuffing that way,’” Pelosi said in a wide ranging interview with reporters at the Capitol.

“They will have their vision, they will have their plan.”

As for the future direction of the House Democrats, she said: “That’s up to them, I want it to be whatever they want it to be.”

Pelosi, who is 82, spoke to reporters in the “The Board of Education” Room, a historic space once frequented after hours only by the men in Congress, after she announced her decision to step down after 20 years as the party leader. Her action followed the midterm elections that gave Republicans control of the House.

First elected in 1987, when there were just 12 Democratic women in Congress, Pelosi said she chose to wear white to deliver her speech on the House floor Thursday in a nod to the suffragettes — noting a painting of the women with the 19th Amendment she had installed in the gilded meeting room alongside one of San Francisco’s Golden Gate bridge.

Digging into a package of cookies — chocolate chip, of course — the speaker would not say exactly when she made her decision to step aside.

She keeps a close hold on her most important decisions, and even now, once it had spilled out in the open, said how she finally arrived at her choice was something she might have to think more about. It was known that she took two versions of her speech home with her for review Wednesday night.

“I, quite frankly, personally, have been ready to leave for a while,” she said. “Because there are things I want to do. I like to dance, I like to sing. There’s a life out there, right?”

Pelosi said that after 20 years, “I don’t feel sad about not having a leadership position. ...I feel balanced about it.”

She has said that the attack on Paul Pelosi, who suffered a fractured skull when an intruder broke into their home weeks before the election searching for her, had weighed on her decision. But she said Thursday that it had the “opposite effect” from what some had interpreted.

“It made me think again about staying,” she said. “I couldn’t give them that satisfaction.”

Had Democrats been able to retain majority control of the House, she indicated, that too might have prompted a different outcome: “I would have prayed over it.”

Pelosi insisted she has much to do representing her California district, but said she won’t likely be taking any committee assignments typically coveted by other lawmakers — particularly a seat on the Appropriations Committee that crafts federal funding bills that are important for states.

And she plans to get to work reviewing the 2022 election results and preparing for the next big votes in 2024.

Long seen as a powerful figure, one who controls and even micromanages many aspects of House leadership — from the way the bills are written to the timing of votes to the running of congressional campaigns — she said she expects to play no role guiding the next generation of leaders.

“They have to bring their own fresh perspective, thinking entrepreneurially,” she said.

She won’t be endorsing a successor ahead of party elections at the end of the month — “I didn’t think that was the right approach, to anoint somebody,” she said. She said it’s “really important for people to have the legitimacy that they were chosen” by their colleagues.

Her advice to those who follow her leadership: “Be yourself.”

As for upcoming political battles, she questioned whether Republican Kevin McCarthy, a fellow Californian, would have the support needed to become speaker.

And she said she doesn’t “take any responsibility” for the political divisions in Congress, blaming it on Republican extremism: “They do not believe in governance.”

While Pelosi expressed some regret that Democrats were unable to make permanent an expanded child

tax credit or paid family medical leave as they had considered at the start of Joe Biden's presidency, she believes her party will have some leverage in the new Congress because of the House Republicans' slim majority.

"There has to be work for other people to do," she said.

Pelosi said her husband of nearly 60 years continues to recover from the assault — the intruder struck him in the head with a hammer — but that the road ahead is long.

Sitting still, without too many people — limiting visits with the children and grandchildren — and avoiding recurring memories of the assault are key, she explained.

"It's really hard," she said, acknowledging a form of "survivor's guilt" since the attack was aimed at her and turned their home into a "crime scene."

But the leader long reviled by Republicans as a San Francisco liberal announced she was off to do the most very un-California thing she does most workdays: "I will now have a very nutritious hot dog for lunch."

EU shakes up climate talks with surprise disaster fund offer

By SETH BORENSTEIN, SAMY MAGDY and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — Climate talks appeared stalled late night Thursday on major issues going into the final day, but possibilities for a deal were buoyed by an unexpected proposal by the European Union on two of the thorniest issues, tying compensation for climate disasters to tougher emissions cuts.

Minutes after the United Nations summit's chairman warned delegates that "we are not where we need to be in order to close this conference with tangible and robust outcomes," the EU's top climate official made a surprise offer. To applause, he proposed a two-pronged approach that would create a pot of money for poor countries and push for steeper cuts of heat-trapping emissions by all countries, as well as the phasing down of all fossil fuels, including natural gas and oil.

The issues of compensation and pollution-cutting "are two sides of the same coin as far as the European Union is concerned," said European Union Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans, making clear that the 27-nation bloc won't offer more money unless there are concessions on emissions targets.

"If we do not perform enough on mitigation, there is no money on Earth enough to address the consequences of the climate crisis," Timmermans told The Associated Press. "The amounts of losses and damages will be such that we could never repair them."

"So we absolutely need high ambition on mitigation if we want to have a fighting chance also to help the most vulnerable and face these challenges," he added.

Vulnerable nations called for a deal to be sealed before the end of the talks.

"This is a historic opportunity that can't be lost and that must be seized now," Maldives Environment Minister Aminath Shauna said.

Poorer countries that bear the brunt of climate change, from rising sea levels to extreme flooding, stepped up the urgency, accusing richer polluters of stalling and said they cannot wait another year for the creation of a fund to pay for damages.

Before Timmermans sprung the two-page proposal, special teams of ministers said they made progress on major issues, including loss and damage.

But the mood was somewhat grim.

United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell urged negotiators to get cracking.

"There is an outcome where we all come out of this having done our jobs and with something that protects our planet," Stiell said. "Let's do that."

Then Timmermans came out with his proposals and negotiators, including U.S. Special Envoy John Kerry, dashed about trying to figure out what to do next.

Problems quickly popped up.

China, which had been quiet during much of the talks, insisted that the 2015 Paris Agreement should not be changed and money for the new fund should come from developed countries, not them. Saudi Arabia also said it was important "to not go beyond what we have" in the Paris pact and was reluctant to

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pony up to a compensation fund.

Asked to comment on the EU proposal, Kerry said he hadn't had a chance to read it yet.

"We'll take a look at it," he told The AP. "You know, we'll see."

Egypt's leadership of the summit, called COP27, came under criticism earlier Thursday presenting what some negotiators described as a 20-page "laundry list" of wide-reaching ideas.

"It is evidently clear that at this late stage of the COP27 process, there are still a number of issues where progress remains lacking," Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, the president of the summit, said late Thursday.

U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who had flown in for the final stage of negotiations, warned of a "breakdown in trust between North and South, and between developed and emerging economies."

"The world is watching and has a simple message: stand and deliver," he told leaders, adding that there was "no time for finger pointing."

Negotiators were surprised by several ideas in the Egyptian draft that they said were never discussed at the two-week talks.

Among them was a call for developed countries to achieve "net-negative carbon emissions by 2030" — a far tougher target than any major nation has so far committed to and which would be very hard to achieve. The EU and U.S., for example, have said they aim to reach net zero emissions by 2050, China by 2060.

The head of the European Parliament Bas Eirrhout said it was "too broad, too many topics, too vague language and too many items, which I don't think have to be in a cover decision."

The conference is supposed to end Friday, but past gatherings have been extended to reach a deal.

Longtime negotiations analyst Alden Meyer of E3G said that unlike in previous years, the president of the conference delayed putting together special teams of ministers to push through solutions on big issues, except loss and damage, and that's putting everything behind.

There were at least half a dozen instances where nations were "taking negotiations hostage" by taking hardline, seemingly inflexible stances, Meyer said. The biggest was on the compensation fund for climate disasters, known as "loss and damage" in negotiators' parlance.

The United States has resisted any fund that would suggest liability and compensation — let alone reparations — for decades of greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized nations.

European countries have backed calls by island nations for a "mosaic" of financial arrangements drawing on public and private sources of money.

But there are big differences over who should pay.

German officials said the money should not come only from the industrialized nations, but also major emerging economies whose greenhouse gas emissions have increased sharply in recent decades.

Heavy polluters China and India, however, argue they should not have to contribute because they are still officially considered developing nations.

The issue of loss and damage is one of three financial aid pots discussed. Rich nations agreed in past conferences to spend \$100 billion a year to help poorer countries develop cleaner energy systems and adapt to prevent future disasters — though they have lagged in giving the funds.

One longtime participant in the climate talks, Yamide Dagnet of the Open Society Foundation, said developed countries were showing more openness on "loss and damage."

"But fear of compensation and liability remains a Damocles sword that needs to be overcome," said Dagnet, a former EU negotiator at the talks.

"The United States is probably the most nervous about how much it can give in on loss and damage after decades of delaying tactics, backed by other developed countries," she said.

Timmermans, the EU climate chief, expressed cautious hope that an agreement might be achieved yet in Egypt.

"I am by nature an optimistic person, but I'm also realist," he told The AP. "I think it is possible, but I grant you, it's not going to be easy."

His comments were echoed by Chilean Environment Minister Maisa Rojas.

"I think we're making progress. We heard a lot of goodwill in particular on the financing for loss and

damage," she told The AP.

The EU offer on climate financing "looks promising. So, I think there will be good advances."

Confusion, finger-pointing, opposing views at Egypt's COP27

By PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

SHARM el-SHEIKH, Egypt (AP) — A day before UN climate talks were supposed to wrap up, negotiators appeared to be far apart on all the major issues being discussed.

Will countries get behind a proposal to phase down all fossil fuels? Will the demands of developing nations that rich countries compensate them for climate impacts be part of a final deal? What about calls to lower interest rates and overhaul how world financing works so that developing nations can invest in green energies?

The resounding answer to all of these questions appeared to be "no" for most of Thursday, at least if one carefully parses rhetoric and readouts from closed-door meetings. That was not to say that a significant deal couldn't be reached, however. There would be another round of talks on Friday with extensions into the weekend a possibility.

A look at where things stand late Thursday.

LOSS AND DAMAGE

From the start of the climate conference, the dominating issue, both from many leaders and protesters, has been the question of whether rich nations should provide compensation to developing nations. Rich, high-carbon producing countries like the United States have historically done most to create global warming while developing nations have contributed little but are often most impacted by extreme weather events. While the idea has been around for years, until this year it was mostly on the fringes. For the first time, it made the official agenda.

Negotiators from countries that support the idea, called "loss and damage" in climate negotiations, have said some industrialized nations are blocking efforts at a deal.

But late Thursday, the European Union surprised everyone by proposing a pot of money for poorer nations more vulnerable to climate change. The EU executive vice president also put forward an extra push to cut down carbon dioxide emissions by all countries.

The move was welcomed by many developing countries, but its prospects were unclear.

Earlier on Thursday, Lia Nicholson of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda, speaking on behalf of the Association of Small Island States, said the issue of loss and damage wasn't getting serious consideration. She said there was no text on it that delegates could haggle over.

"Mr. President, where is the text?" she said to Shoukry, Egypt's foreign minister the president of COP27. Shoukry, presiding over the session, told Nicholson she was mistaken and that there were informal discussions about the issue.

Despite the setbacks, leaders of many developing nations say they won't give up, threatening to refuse to sign any document that doesn't include progress on the issue.

BLAME GAME

Amid many happenings in the world — the war in Ukraine, recent U.S. elections, the Group of 20 summit in Bali, among other things — trying to build consensus between so many nations was always going to be tough. That said, many long-time observers of the annual climate conference said negotiations shouldn't have been in such a poor state at this juncture.

Longtime negotiations analyst Alden Meyer of E3G told The Associated Press that unlike in previous years, the president of the conference, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, delayed putting together special teams of ministers to push through solutions on big issues, except loss and damage, and that's putting everything behind. Several other analysts and negotiators laid blame at the feet of the COP27 presidency.

U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, arriving in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from the G20 meeting in Bali, issued a statement calling for calm and a willingness to work together to confront climate change.

"This is no time for finger pointing," said the statement. "The blame game is a recipe for mutually as-

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sured destruction.”

CONFUSING RELEASE

Adding to a feeling of confusion and chaos among negotiators was an Egyptian draft that had ideas which hadn't been discussed during the summit, which began Nov. 6.

The lengthy document released early Thursday included a call for developed countries to achieve “net-negative carbon emissions by 2030.” That target goes further than any major nation has so far committed to and which would be very hard to achieve. The EU and U.S., for example, have said they aim to reach net zero emissions by 2050, China by 2060.

Negotiators were quick to make clear it was just a draft, both criticizing it and making clear it wasn't their guide.

The head of the European Parliament at the U.N. climate conference, Bas Eirkhout, described it as “a bit of wish list” with “all the topics” thrown in.

It was “too broad, too many topics, too vague language and too many items, which I don't think have to be in a cover decision,” said Eirkhout.

EXTERNAL BOOSTS

Up to this point, arguably the two most important developments to limiting climate change have come from outside developments. First, the victory of Brazilian President-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in last month's election gave hope that his administration would crack down on illegal deforestation in the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest. Da Silva, president between 2003 and 2010, has promised as much. On Tuesday and Wednesday, da Silva got rockstar treatment as he met with Indigenous groups, climate activists and several ministers, including U.S. Climate Envoy John Kerry.

Speaking of Kerry, he began talks with his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua during the conference. Relations between the U.S. and China have been tense because of several things, most recently the visit by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan. As such, talks between Xie and Kerry had broken down.

U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping met at the G20 meetings in Bali on Monday. They both said they were committed to having high-level officials from their administrations resume talks on several issues, including climate change.

China and the U.S. are the world's No. 1 and 2 climate polluters. Climate experts say cooperation between the two nations is critical if major cuts to global emissions can happen.

Slain Idaho students leave behind bright memories, big goals

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Ethan Chapin's last day was spent with his siblings, dressed up and dancing.

Chapin — one of four University of Idaho students stabbed to death last weekend, the police still searching for a killer — was a triplet. His brother and sister also attend the scenic state school tucked away in the rolling hills of north-central Idaho.

“He was our our daughter Maizie's date, and his brother was Maizie's roommates date,” Chapin's mother, Stacy Chapin, said in an interview Wednesday. The group was attending a dance hosted by Maizie's sorority. “They all spent their last day together, all dressed up, and had a great time. We're all thankful that they spent that time together.”

Ethan Chapin captured photos of the event on his phone, but the family has yet to see them. The device is being held by law enforcement as potential evidence in the homicide investigation.

Chances are, the photos will show the waves in his dark hair and the dimple that emerges when he smiles. What they won't show is Ethan's knack for making people laugh, or that he never cared what restaurant the family was headed to, so long as they were going there together.

“He could read any situation and make it better,” Stacy Chapin said. “He was just so carefree.”

Ethan, a 20-year-old member of the Sigma Chi fraternity who loved sports, was dating 20-year-old Xana Kernodle, a junior who was majoring in marketing and a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. Both were killed in the violent attack Sunday, stabbed by a killer or killers inside Kernodle's rental home, which was

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steps away from the university campus.

Two of Kernodle's roommates and friends, 21-year-old Madison Mogen and 21-year-old Kaylee Goncalves, were also killed in the attack. The four students' bodies were discovered hours later, and police have yet to find a suspect or a murder weapon.

Kernodle was lighthearted — the kind of person who always lifted up a room, her older sister Jazzmin Kernodle said.

"You rarely get to meet someone like Xana," her sister said via text message. "She was so positive, funny and was loved by everyone who met her."

Xana Kernodle went to high school in the scenic northern Idaho city of Post Falls. For her graduation in 2020, she decorated her mortarboard with flower and butterfly cut-outs and the words, "For The Lives That I Will Change."

During a candlelight vigil in northern Idaho on Wednesday, one of her high school friends, Garrett Scortino, was overwhelmed by emotion. But he couldn't help but laugh when recounting stories about their time together, the Coeur d'Alene Press reported.

Mogen was also a member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority. She and Kernodle both had jobs at the Mad Greek restaurant in downtown Moscow.

Ethan Chapin and Xana Kernodle were friends before they began dating, his mother said. By this summer, Kernodle was spending time with the entire Chapin family.

Mogen and Goncalves grew up together in northern Idaho, such close friends that they were practically sisters. Goncalves chronicled some of their history in an Instagram post celebrating Mogen's 21st birthday in May.

Pictures of the pair as tweens making silly faces for the camera, wearing matching navy-and-khaki school-style uniforms and carefully laced sneakers, and side-by-side in high school graduation gowns were accompanied with a heartfelt caption.

"I wouldn't have wanted anyone else to be the main character in all my childhood stories," Goncalves wrote.

"I love you more than life! My best friend forever and more," Mogen replied, adding a heart emoji.

Mogen, a marketing major, was using those skills to run a social media campaign for the Greek restaurant where she worked. She loved the color pink and planned to move to Boise after graduating this spring, family friend Jessie Frost told The Idaho Statesman.

Goncalves, who had joined the Alpha Phi sorority and was a senior majoring in general studies, also had big plans. She'd recently bought a 2016 Range Rover, planned a trip to Europe next year, and expected to move to Texas after graduation, her sister Alivea Goncalves told NBC's "Today" show.

"She had everything going for her, absolutely everything," her sister said. "She had her job lined up. She had worked really hard for it."

Along with photos, Mogen collected quotes on her Instagram page.

"It's not all sunshine and rainbows, but a good amount of it actually is," read one brightly colored post. For now, friends and family are trying to find refuge in the light they left behind.

Talking about Ethan Chapin, memorializing him in conversation, has been cathartic, his mother said, during a time when complete strangers have been spreading speculation and conjecture about the family's greatest tragedy. Shortly after learning of the murders, the family escaped to the privacy of a vacation home for a time.

"We realized yesterday morning, watching information about our son being posted that didn't come from us personally, that the greatest gift we could do for our son in this moment is be his voice," Stacy Chapin said.

As the Chapins drove home, they braced themselves for what lay ahead: The funeral planning, the interminable wait for answers. The uniquely difficult burden of holding their own, unfathomable loss inside a community that is also grieving.

"We can't go back and change the outcome. We really have to focus on just memorializing our own son," said Stacy Chapin. "We're grieving as a family, but I can see so many hurt kids, like the fraternity which

has all these kids flying in for the funeral.

"I have continually tried to remind Maizie and Hunter that we are grieving, but we have to be aware of everybody else who needs to grieve this as well," she explained.

Fired SpaceX employees accuse company of violating labor law

By HALELUYA HADERO and STEPHEN GROVES The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Several SpaceX employees who were fired after circulating an open letter calling out CEO Elon Musk's behavior have filed a complaint accusing the company of violating labor laws.

The complaint, made Wednesday to the National Labor Relations Board, details the aftermath of what allegedly happened inside SpaceX after employees circulated the letter in June, which, among other things, called on executives to condemn Musk's public behavior on Twitter — including making light of allegations he sexually harassed a flight attendant — and hold everyone accountable for unacceptable conduct.

The letter was sent weeks after a media report surfaced that Musk paid \$250,000 to the flight attendant to quash a potential sexual harassment lawsuit against him. The billionaire has denied the allegations.

Employees in their letter urged SpaceX to uniformly enforce its policy against unacceptable behavior and commit to a transparent process for responses to claims of misconduct. A day later, Paige Holland-Thielen and four other employees who participated in organizing the letter were fired, according to the filing, which was made by Holland-Thielen to a regional NLRB office in California. Four additional employees were fired weeks later for their involvement in the letter.

A company spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Musk, who is the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX and is currently running Twitter, prefers to do things his own way even if that means running afoul of rules and regulations. He's currently in a defiant fight with Civil Rights department, a California regulator that is suing Tesla for rampant racial discrimination.

Some view Musk's management style as autocratic and demanding, as evidenced by a recent email he sent to Twitter staff giving them until Thursday evening to decide whether they want to remain a part of the business. Musk wrote that employees "will need to be extremely hardcore" to build "a breakthrough Twitter 2.0" and that long hours at high intensity will be needed for success.

A number of engineers also said on Twitter they were fired last week after saying something critical of Musk, either publicly on Twitter or on an internal messaging board for Twitter employees.

In a statement, Holland-Thielen said as a woman engineer at SpaceX, she experienced "deep cultural problems" and comforted colleagues who had experienced similar issues.

"It was clear that this culture was created from the top level," she said.

Still, she said part of what she liked about the company was that any person could escalate issues to leadership and be taken seriously.

"We drafted the letter to communicate to the executive staff on their terms and show how their lack of action created tangible barriers to the long term success of the mission," Holland-Thielen said. "We never imagined that SpaceX would fire us for trying to help the company succeed."

The firings coincide with Musk's \$44 billion buyout of Twitter. Around the same time, the billionaire used a sexual term to make fun of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates' belly and also posted a poop emoji during an online discussion with then-Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal.

After terminating the first set of employees, SpaceX allegedly interrogated dozens of others over the next two months in private meetings, telling them they couldn't disclose those conversations to anyone else due to attorney-client privilege, according to the complaint. Four additional employees who helped draft or share the letter were fired in July and August, the filing said, adding up to nine terminations in total.

"Management used this 'ends justifies the means' philosophy to turn a blind eye to the ongoing mistreatment, harassment, and abuse reported by my colleagues, much of which was directly encouraged and inspired by the words and actions of the CEO," said Tom Moline, who was also fired from SpaceX after organizing the letter.

Jeffery Pfeffer, a professor who specializes in organizational behavior at Stanford University's business

school, said that the allegations were hardly a surprise given Musk's leadership style at Twitter. Musk's success at companies like Tesla and SpaceX have created what he labeled as hubris under the false notion that it was "all about individual genius."

"Powerful people get to break the rules. They don't think they are bound by the same conventions as other people," Pfeffer said, criticizing Musk's behavior. He said it showed the arrogance of Musk, one of the world's richest men: "Why would he think he is a mere mortal?"

Trump Org.'s longtime CFO chokes up, says he betrayed trust

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's longtime finance chief choked up on the witness stand Thursday, saying he betrayed the Trump family's trust by scheming to dodge taxes on \$1.7 million in company-paid perks, including a Manhattan apartment and luxury cars.

Allen Weisselberg, a senior adviser and former chief financial officer at the ex-president's Trump Organization, said he conspired with a subordinate to hide more than a decade's worth of extras from his taxable income, but that neither Trump nor the family were involved.

The Trump Organization is now on trial, accused of helping Weisselberg and other executives avoid paying income taxes on compensation in addition to their salaries. Prosecutors argue the company is liable because Weisselberg was a "high managerial agent" entrusted to act on its behalf.

"It was my own personal greed that led to this," said Weisselberg, who pleaded guilty to tax crimes and agreed to testify against the company in exchange for a five-month jail sentence.

Asked if he was embarrassed by what he did, a somber Weisselberg said: "More than you can imagine."

His emotional testimony came on his second day as the prosecution's star witness, as a company lawyer reminded him on cross-examination of the faith that the Trump family had put in him for decades.

Weisselberg started working for Trump's father in 1973 and joined Trump as an executive at his then-fledgling Trump Organization in 1986. He wielded immense power as the company, buoyed by Trump's celebrity, grew from a modest New York City developer into a global golf, hotel and real estate empire.

Weisselberg also recalled helping Trump through the company's dark times in the early 1990s, including casino bankruptcies and the failure of his Trump Shuttle airline. He reminisced about watching Trump's three eldest children — Donald Jr., Ivanka and Eric — grow up before his eyes, admitting he was "among the most trusted people they knew."

The Trump Organization denies wrongdoing. The company could be fined more than \$1 million if convicted, but a guilty verdict could also hamper its ability to get loans and make deals and lead to attempts by governments, such as New York City, to cancel contracts with Trump entities.

The Trump Organization continues to employ Weisselberg, paying his usual \$640,000 salary even after he went on a leave of absence last month. In court, though, the company's lawyers have portrayed him as a loyal lieutenant who went rogue and concocted the tax dodge scheme on his own without Trump or the Trump family knowing.

Some of Weisselberg's testimony appeared to underscore that point. But the 75-year-old executive refuted the defense's contention that his scheme didn't help the company's bottom line too. He also detailed another financial arrangement, involving holiday bonuses, that had saved the company money for years.

Weisselberg testified that he conspired to hide his perks with the company's senior vice president and controller, Jeffrey McConney, by fudging payroll records to deduct their cost from his salary. The arrangement reduced Weisselberg's tax liability, while also saving the company money because it didn't have to give him a hefty raise to cover the cost of the perks and additional income taxes he would have incurred.

"I didn't do an analysis, but I knew there was a benefit to the company," Weisselberg said. "I knew in my mind that there was a benefit to the company."

The company's chief operating officer, Matthew Calamari Sr., also reduced his salary to deduct the cost of a company-paid apartment and cars for him and his wife, but Weisselberg denied they were in cahoots. He said he had no knowledge of or involvement in what Calamari was doing.

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Calamari has not been charged with a crime. McConney, who was granted immunity, testified for the first five days of the trial in state court in Manhattan.

Weisselberg told jurors that Trump signed off on his apartment lease and, until becoming president in 2017, personally paid private school tuition for his two grandchildren.

The company, however, did have a longstanding practice to avoid taxes on the lucrative Christmas bonuses that Trump handed out each year to his company's executives.

Weisselberg said the company ducked taxes for decades by drawing some bonus checks signed by Trump from subsidiary entities and paying executives as independent contractors, allowing the company to avoid payroll taxes and the subsidiaries to deduct the bonuses as expenses.

Weisselberg said the practice began before he started at the Trump Organization and was only abandoned after a tax lawyer audited the company's pay practices once Trump became president in 2017.

Trump "always wanted to sign the bonus checks," Weisselberg said — applying his distinct, seismograph-like signature to a stack of 70 or more made out to key company officials, including Weisselberg and Calamari.

The checks would then be stuffed into Christmas cards, also signed by Trump, who handed them out like Santa Claus to executives around the building.

The Trump Organization switched to paying executive bonuses entirely as taxable employee income once Trump went to the White House.

"We were going through an entire cleanup process at the company. With Mr. Trump now president, we wanted to make sure everything was done properly," Weisselberg said.

Griner has begun serving sentence in Russian penal colony

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — WNBA star Brittney Griner has begun serving her nine-year sentence for drug possession at a Russian penal colony, her lawyers and agent said Thursday.

Griner was transferred to a penal colony in Mordovia, about 350 kilometers (210 miles) east of Moscow, after a Russian court last month rejected her appeal of her sentence.

Her lawyers said they visited her earlier this week.

"Brittney is doing as well as could be expected and trying to stay strong as she adapts to a new environment," her lawyers said in a statement.

The all-star center with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury and two-time Olympic gold was detained in February when customs agents said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.

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.

She was convicted in August and sentenced to nine years in prison.

The Biden administration has been trying for months to negotiate the release of Griner and another American jailed in Russia, Michigan corporate security executive Paul Whelan, including through a possible prisoner swap with Moscow. Whelan was also sent to a penal colony in Mordovia after being convicted of espionage-related charges in 2020 and sentenced to 16 years in prison.

President Joe Biden told reporters last week that he hopes Russian President Vladimir Putin will be more willing to negotiate the release of Griner now that the U.S. midterm elections are over.

"My hope is that now that the election is over, that Mr. Putin will be able to discuss with us and be willing to talk more seriously about a prisoner exchange," Biden said.

Robert Clary, last of the 'Hogan's Heroes' stars, dies at 96

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — Robert Clary, a French-born survivor of Nazi concentration camps during World War II who played a feisty prisoner of war in the improbable 1960s sitcom “Hogan’s Heroes,” has died. He was 96.

Clary died Wednesday of natural causes at his home in the Los Angeles area, niece Brenda Hancock said Thursday.

“He never let those horrors defeat him,” Hancock said of Clary’s wartime experience as a youth. “He never let them take the joy out of his life. He tried to spread that joy to others through his singing and his dancing and his painting.”

When he recounted his life to students, he told them, “Don’t ever hate,” Hancock said. “He didn’t let hate overcome the beauty in this world.”

“Hogan’s Heroes,” in which Allied soldiers in a POW camp bested their clownish German army captors with espionage schemes, played the war strictly for laughs during its 1965-71 run. The 5-foot-1 Clary sported a beret and a sardonic smile as Cpl. Louis LeBeau.

Clary was the last surviving original star of the sitcom that included Bob Crane, Richard Dawson, Larry Hovis and Ivan Dixon as the prisoners. Werner Klemperer and John Banner, who played their captors, both were European Jews who fled Nazi persecution before the war.

Clary began his career as a nightclub singer and appeared on stage in musicals including “Irma La Douce” and “Cabaret.” After “Hogan’s Heroes,” Clary’s TV work included the soap operas “The Young and the Restless,” “Days of Our Lives” and “The Bold and the Beautiful.”

He considered musical theater the highlight of his career. “I loved to go to the theater at quarter of 8, put the stage makeup on and entertain,” he said in a 2014 interview.

He remained publicly silent about his wartime experience until 1980 when, Clary said, he was provoked to speak out by those who denied or diminished the orchestrated effort by Nazi Germany to exterminate Jews.

A documentary about Clary’s childhood and years of horror at Nazi hands, “Robert Clary, A5714: A Memoir of Liberation,” was released in 1985. The forearms of concentration camp prisoners were tattooed with identification numbers, with A5714 to be Clary’s lifelong mark.

“They write books and articles in magazines denying the Holocaust, making a mockery of the 6 million Jews — including a million and a half children — who died in the gas chambers and ovens,” he told The Associated Press in a 1985 interview.

Twelve of his immediate family members, his parents and 10 siblings, were killed under the Nazis, Clary wrote in a biography posted on his website.

In 1997, he was among dozens of Holocaust survivors whose portraits and stories were included in “The Triumphant Spirit,” a book by photographer Nick Del Calzo.

“I beg the next generation not to do what people have done for centuries — hate others because of their skin, shape of their eyes, or religious preference,” Clary said in an interview at the time.

Retired from acting, Clary remained busy with his family, friends and his painting. His memoir, “From the Holocaust to Hogan’s Heroes: The Autobiography of Robert Clary,” was published in 2001.

“One Of The Lucky Ones,” a biography of one of Clary’s older sisters, Nicole Holland, was written by Hancock, her daughter. Holland, who worked with the French Resistance against Germany, survived the war, as did another sister. Hancock’s second book, “Talent Luck Courage,” recounts Clary and Holland’s lives and their impact.

Clary was born Robert Wideman in Paris in March 1926, the youngest of 14 children in the Jewish family. He was 16 when he and most of his family were taken by the Nazis.

In the documentary, Clary recalled a happy childhood until he and his family was forced from their Paris apartment and put into a crowded cattle car that carried them to concentration camps.

“Nobody knew where we were going,” Clary said. “We were not human beings anymore.”

After 31 months in captivity in several concentration camps, he was liberated from the Buchenwald death camp by American troops. His youth and ability to work kept him alive, Clary said.

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Returning to Paris and reunited with his two sisters, Clary worked as a singer and recorded songs that became popular in America.

After coming to the United States in 1949, he moved from club dates and recording to Broadway musicals, including "New Faces of 1952," and then to movies. He appeared in films including 1952's "Thief of Damascus," "A New Kind of Love" in 1963 and "The Hindenburg" in 1975.

In recent years, Clary recorded jazz versions of songs by Ira Gershwin, Stephen Sondheim and other greats, said his nephew Brian Gari, a songwriter who worked on the CDs with Clary.

Clary was proud of the results, Gari said, and thrilled by a complimentary letter he received from Sondheim. "He hung that on the kitchen wall," Gari said.

Clary didn't feel uneasy about the comedy on "Hogan's Heroes" despite the tragedy of his family's devastating war experience.

"It was completely different. I know they (POWs) had a terrible life, but compared to concentration camps and gas chambers it was like a holiday."

Clary married Natalie Cantor, the daughter of singer-actor Eddie Cantor, in 1965. She died in 1997.

Deadly missile strike adds to Ukraine war fears in Poland

By VASILISA STEPANENKO and MONIKA SCISLOWSKA Associated Press

PRZEWODOW, Poland (AP) — Since the invasion of Ukraine more than eight months ago, Poland has aided the neighboring country and millions of its refugees — both to ease their suffering and to help guard against the war spilling into the rest of Europe.

But a missile strike that killed two men Tuesday in a Polish village close to the Ukrainian border brought the conflict home and added to the long-suppressed sense of vulnerability in a country where the ravages of World War II are well remembered.

"The thing that I dread most in life is war. I don't want to ever experience that," said Anna Grabinska, a Warsaw woman who has extended help to a Ukrainian mother of two small children.

One of the men killed in Przewodow was actively helping refugees from Ukraine who had found shelter in the area.

NATO and Polish leaders say the missile was most likely fired by Ukraine in defense against a Russian attack.

Now shaken Poles fear for their future, and political commentators warn that the strike should not be allowed to hurt relations with Ukraine, which have recently grown closer through Poland's solidarity.

"There is fear, anxiety for what will happen the next night or the next day," villager Kinga Kancir said.

When Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, millions of Poles dropped what they were doing to help. They took time off work and rushed to the border to offer strangers rides in their cars and places in their homes. They stood in the cold and served soup. Polish mothers left baby prams at a railway station at the border for fleeing Ukrainian mothers they would never meet.

People acted on humanitarian impulse, but their generosity was also a conscious contribution to the Ukrainian war effort. By keeping Ukrainian women and children safe, the Poles ensured more men could fight Russian forces.

Poland has a long history of conflict with Moscow.

Russia was one of the three powers that divided Poland in the 18th century and — jointly with Austria and Prussia — erased it from Europe's maps for more than 100 years, brutally suppressing drives for freedom. After World War II, Poland was an unwilling part of the East Bloc and remained under Moscow's domination for over four decades, until the Poles peacefully toppled the communist government.

In their current solidarity with Ukraine, many Poles put aside historical grievances rooted in ethnic conflict, including oppression of Ukrainians by Poles and a brutal massacre by Ukrainians of some 100,000 Poles during World War II in regions not far from Przewodow.

The Polish government offered temporary accommodations and financial aid to refugees and gave money to Poles who housed them. The refugees also receive access to free state medical care, school for their

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children and help finding jobs.

The war changed a lot for Poland too. It drew the world's attention to Warsaw, where top leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden came to show their support for Ukraine and for Poland's aid efforts.

The conflict has strengthened Poland's ties with its NATO allies, especially with the U.S., which sent thousands of troops to southeast Poland, close to the Ukrainian border, as Poland became a conduit for weapons sent from the West to Ukraine. The world's humanitarian and medical efforts also pass through Poland.

Russia's aggression has pushed Warsaw to increase the country's defense budget and spend billions of dollars on weapons from the U.S. and South Korea. Poland is also actively supporting Ukraine's aspirations to strengthen its ties with the West and become part of the European Union.

But as the war has dragged on, some Poles have become exhausted. Many are tired of hosting strangers in their homes and paying skyrocketing energy costs. They complain that Ukrainians have taken jobs from Poles and left some families without places in public kindergartens. The huge demand for housing has pushed up rents in big cities.

As winter approaches, there are concerns that the grumbling could grow louder.

The deputy editor of Rzeczpospolita, a major daily newspaper, voiced concerns that bitterness over the missile deaths could become a pretext to weaken Poland's commitment to Ukraine or to drive a wedge between the two neighbors.

"Unfortunately, there are already voices that would like to use this tragedy to make Poland and Ukraine quarrel. And that would be absolutely against our national interest," Michal Szuldrzynski wrote in an opinion piece published Thursday.

"By defending their independence, Ukrainians defend the West, including Poland. Therefore, our response to the tragedy in Przewodow should be not sulking at Ukraine, but even stronger support to increase its chances of driving the aggressor out of its country," Szuldrzynski wrote.

A spokesman for Poland's main ruling party, Radoslaw Fogiel, on Thursday reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine and stressed that responsibility for the war rests entirely with Russia.

Fogiel warned that any discord between Warsaw and Kyiv would be in Moscow's interests.

Polish President Andrzej Duda visited the site of the missile strike and talked to investigators.

"There is a war across our border. Russia fired hundreds of missiles, Ukraine was defending itself. Nobody wanted to hurt anyone in Poland," Duda said. "This is our common tragedy."

In Przewodow, a farming community of some 500 people about 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the border with Ukraine, villagers were in shock when the missile killed two employees of a grain-drying facility, men they had known, at least by sight.

"Today we have a new situation that is very hard for us, and especially difficult for our children," said Ewa Byra, the director of the village school.

The children kept asking: "Are we safe here so close to the border?" and "Are our parents safe?" Byra told The Associated Press.

The primary school suspended classes and offered psychological counseling for families.

"There is sadness because two people were killed here, and that is not a regular thing to happen in such a small village," observed Kancir, 24, a mother of two small children who said one of the men who was killed lived just across the road from her apartment building.

The two men, ages 60 and 62, shared the same first name: Bogdan. One was the husband of a school staff member, and the other the father of a recent pupil. One was a warehouseman at the grain-drying facility; the other was the tractor driver.

One of them helped bring food and clothes to Ukrainian refugees and drive them to local offices to help them with the paperwork, said Stanislaw Staszczuk, the county secretary.

In the aftermath, villagers are intimidated by the huge police presence in their usually quiet home.

"It is very hard to accept this, what happened, because it has always been quiet, quiet. Nothing was ever going on here, and all of a sudden there is a world sensation," Kancir said.

The AP Interview: Whitmer has 'no interest in going to DC'

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Fresh off a commanding reelection victory in one of the nation's premier swing states, Democratic Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer says she will remain focused on her post and not growing speculation she could mount a future presidential run.

In an interview with The Associated Press just over a week after winning a second term, Whitmer insisted she's "never had interest in going to D.C." and said she'll "be here for four more years."

Whitmer didn't explicitly rule out running for president at some point in the future. She's also planning to travel to Washington in coming weeks to discuss her state's priorities. But the governor also said of trying to tamp down questions about whether she will mount a 2024 bid, "It's just a practical decision. I just won reelection. This is the job that I want."

"My whole focus is on the state of Michigan," Whitmer said Thursday.

A rising star in her party, the 51-year-old Whitmer has proven she can win tough races in one of the states that's been among the most decisive in deciding the presidency since 2016. Whitmer has been frequently mentioned as a future White House candidate, especially if President Joe Biden opts not to seek a second term.

The governor said she'd been approached in the past about running for Congress, or other federal offices, but said "anyone who's familiar with my career" knows that "I've never been interested in going to DC. I love state government."

Biden turns 80 on Sunday and has said he plans to run for reelection, though he has not yet formally announced a bid. Former President Donald Trump kicked off his third campaign for the White House with a speech at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida on Tuesday.

Michigan has had "an outsized role in national elections and a voice and I think that's a good thing," Whitmer said. She didn't watch Trump's announcement, and while Biden called her after the election, he simply congratulated her briefly and didn't touch on other topics, Whitmer said.

"What I have said is, President Biden says he's going to run again. If he runs again, he's got my support," she said. "That's it."

Whitmer beat Republican Tudor Dixon, who had been endorsed by Trump, by a comfortable 11 points in last week's midterm election. Biden only won the state by about 3 percentage points two years ago.

Michigan voters also approved a referendum amending the state constitution to protect abortion rights after the Supreme Court overturned the landmark Roe v. Wade decision.

Democrats won majorities in both chambers of Michigan Legislature, giving the party full control of the body for the first time since 1984. Whitmer said she'd work with state lawmakers to codify same-sex marriage rights statewide, and to fully rescind a 1931 law banning abortion that the midterm referendum sought to invalidate.

"We need to clean old laws off the books," she said, adding of the 1931 law, "It doesn't have effect right now. But we don't want it to ever threaten to come back alive."

Whitmer called Michigan a safe haven for abortion and said patients have been coming to have the procedure from neighboring red states, including Ohio and Indiana. The governor said her state's defense of abortion rights could even attract new residents. That's especially important after Michigan lost a congressional seat this cycle because its population, while growing, did not keep pace with other booming places.

"There are a lot of businesses in states that are anti-choice — that have extreme laws on the books — that have vowed not to continue to invest there. They should move to Michigan," Whitmer said. "As should every young person who's graduated from school."

Four people accused of conspiring to kidnap Whitmer in 2020 — when she became a national face of restrictions to slow the spread of the coronavirus — pleaded guilty or were convicted by a federal jury. Three others connected to the scheme were convicted in state court in October.

Whitmer said the threat against her was downplayed relative to the arrest last summer of someone near

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Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's home and "perhaps gender plays into that."

The suspect in that case "turned himself in and it was covered as an assassination plot," she said. "In Michigan, we had over a dozen people, training for months, staking out my cottage, running drills on how to shoot me. And it was covered as a kidnapping plot."

"It's striking when you think about how many people were involved, how many months it occurred and all the lengths to which they took to execute their plan, and how big it was treated," Whitmer said. "Is it 'cause I'm a woman? Is it 'cause I'm a Democrat? I don't know. But it's different and it's not right."

During the midterm race, Dixon had championed Trump's lies about the 2020 presidential election being marred by widespread fraud that did not occur.

Whitmer noted Thursday that Dixon called her to concede after the election, which was "important" and "gracious of her." But she also said some Republican lawmakers had attended the same kind of rallies protesting the 2020 election results and COVID restrictions that those involved in her kidnapping plot did.

"And yet I've still got to get a budget done. I've still got to negotiate," she said. "So there's no room for my feelings to get involved."

'I thought I was going to die': Abuses widespread in Ukraine

By SAM MEDNICK and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYSELIVKA, Ukraine (AP) — For 10 days, Alesha Babenko was locked in a basement and regularly beaten by Russian soldiers. Bound, blindfolded and threatened with electric shocks, the 27-year-old pleaded for them to stop.

"I thought I was going to die," he told The Associated Press.

In September, Babenko and his 14-year-old nephew, Vitaliy Mysharskiy, were arrested by Russian soldiers who occupied his village of Kyselivka in Ukraine's southern region of Kherson. They had been taking photos of destroyed tanks and sending them to the Ukrainian army.

Seated this week on a bench outside his home, Babenko was visibly shaken as he recounted the trauma of being thrown into a car, driven to the city of Kherson and interrogated until he confessed.

As violence escalates in Ukraine, abuses perpetrated by Russia have become widespread, according to the United Nations and human rights groups. The situation is particularly concerning in the Kherson region, where hundreds of villages, including the main city, were liberated from Russian occupation in early November. It was one of Ukraine's biggest successes in the nearly 9-month-old war, dealing another stinging blow to the Kremlin.

The U.N. says it is attempting to verify allegations of nearly 90 cases of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions in Kherson, and is trying to understand if the scale of abuse is larger than already documented.

Ukrainian officials have opened more than 430 war crimes cases from the Kherson region and are investigating four alleged torture sites, Denys Monastyrskyi, Ukraine's minister of internal affairs, told state television.

Authorities have found 63 bodies bearing signs of torture near Kherson, Monastyrskyi said. He did not elaborate, saying the investigation into potential war crimes in the region was just beginning.

On Wednesday, Associated Press reporters saw the inside of one of these alleged torture sites in a police-run detention center in Kherson.

Russian soldiers appeared to have left hastily, leaving flags and portraits of Russian President Vladimir Putin scattered under broken glass on the floor. Neighbors described a steady flow of people in handcuffs being brought in, with bags over their heads. The ones who were allowed to leave walked out without shoes or personal effects.

Maksym Nehrov spent his 45th birthday in the jail, detained by Russians because he was a former soldier.

"The most terrifying thing was to hear other people being tortured all day," he said.

Walking along the corridor of the now-empty prison, he recalled that every time he somehow disobeyed the Russians they would hit him with an electric shock to the neck and head.

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Throughout the war, liberated Ukrainian villages have revealed thousands of human rights atrocities perpetrated by Russian soldiers. Bodies were strewn across the streets in Bucha and Irpin, suburbs of the capital, Kyiv, after Russia withdrew in April.

Rights groups say it's too early to know if the abuses in Kherson were on the same level as in other liberated areas but that it's very likely.

"In all occupied areas that we've been able to access, we've documented incidents of torture, extrajudicial killings and torture. And we're very concerned Kherson will be no different," Belkis Wille, senior crisis and conflict researcher at Human Rights Watch, told the AP.

The group has documented unlawful attacks on civilians, torture and forcible disappearances of civilians in occupied areas around the country.

Since Russian forces pulled back on Nov. 10, residents in the nondescript town of Kyselivka who endured abuses are struggling to pick up the pieces of their lives.

After Babenko and his nephew returned home — at a time when his village was still under Russian occupation — he was too terrified to leave the house. He was haunted by what he'd endured. While detained, Russian soldiers interrogated him repeatedly, kicking and punching his ribs, nose and stomach almost daily, he said.

His young nephew escaped such abuse but was told he would become a Russian citizen and be protected. The two were released after confessing to what they'd done on video, they said.

But others in their village haven't been as lucky.

Two months ago, the godfather of Alla Protsenko's son was taken from his home by Russian soldiers and hasn't been seen since. Walking through the partially destroyed school where she used to teach before the Russians turned it into an army base, Protsenko said she has combed the country looking for him, to no avail.

The last time the 52-year-old saw him was on her birthday, one week before he disappeared.

"I remember him smiling as if to say: 'Hold on, everything will be fine,'" she said. "For me, he is still alive. I can't accept that now (perhaps), he is gone."

Average long-term US mortgage rates tumble to 6.61%

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The average long-term U.S. mortgage rate tumbled by nearly a half-point this week, but will likely remain a significant barrier for potential homebuyers as Federal Reserve officials have all but promised more rate hikes in the coming months.

Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported Thursday that the average on the key 30-year rate fell to 6.61% from 7.08% last week. A year ago the average rate was 3.1%.

The rate for a 15-year mortgage, popular with those refinancing their homes, fell to 5.98% from 6.38% last week. It was 2.39% one year ago.

Late last month, the average long-term U.S. mortgage rate breached 7% for the first time since 2002.

Two weeks ago, the Fed raised its short-term lending rate by another 0.75 percentage points, three times its usual margin, for a fourth time this year as part of its inflation-fighting strategy. Its key rate now stands in a range of 3.75% to 4%.

There had been some hope that the Fed would begin to dial the rate increases down as more evidence comes in that prices may have peaked. However, recent comments by Fed officials have turned knocked down that optimism.

James Bullard, who leads the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, said Thursday that the Fed may have to raise its benchmark interest rate much higher than it has previously projected to get inflation under control.

The Fed's next two-day rate policy meeting wraps up on Dec. 14.

The Labor Department reported last week that consumer inflation reached 7.7% in October from a year earlier, the smallest year-over-year rise since January. Excluding volatile food and energy prices, "core" inflation rose 6.3% in the past 12 months. On Wednesday, Labor reported that prices at the wholesale

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level fell for the fourth straight month.

Those figures were all lower than economists had expected, but it remains to be seen whether it's enough to get the Fed to ease off the jumbo rate hikes.

Three weeks ago, the average long-term U.S. mortgage rate topped 7% for the first time in more than two decades, which combined with sky-high home prices, have crushed homebuyers' purchasing power by adding hundreds of dollars to monthly mortgage payments.

Sales of existing homes have declined for eight straight months as borrowing costs have become too big of an obstacle for many Americans already paying more for food, gas and other necessities. On top of that, homeowners seeking to upgrade or change locations have held off listing their homes because they don't want to jump into a higher rate on their next mortgage.

The sagging housing market has prompted real estate companies to dial back their financial outlooks and shrink their workforces. Online real estate broker Redfin is letting go of 862 employees and shutting down its instant-cash-offer subsidiary RedfinNow.

Redfin also laid off 470 employees in June, blaming slowing home sales. Through attrition and layoffs, Redfin has slashed more than a quarter of its workforce on the assumption that the housing downturn will last "at least through 2023," it said in a regulatory filing.

Another online real estate broker, Compass, has laid off hundreds of workers this year.

While mortgage rates don't necessarily mirror the Fed's rate increases, they tend to track the yield on the 10-year Treasury note. The yield is influenced by a variety of factors, including investors' expectations for future inflation and global demand for U.S. Treasuries.

UK push to restore finances means higher taxes, energy bills

By DANICA KIRKA, JILL LAWLESS and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Millions of people across Britain face higher taxes and energy bills after the government on Thursday announced an emergency budget focused on restoring the country's financial credibility and bolstering an economy battered by soaring inflation.

Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt unveiled a 55 billion-pound (\$65 billion) package of tax increases and spending cuts designed to demonstrate that Britain is committed to paying its bills after his predecessor spooked financial markets by proposing tax cuts without saying how they would be paid for.

Hunt sought to cushion the blow by pledging to protect the most vulnerable, announcing that he would increase welfare benefits and state pension payments in line with inflation and help low-income residents with their energy bills. The government will also maintain investment in energy and infrastructure projects to boost economic growth, he said.

Even so, the government's fiscal watchdog warned that Britons face a painful 7% fall in living standards over the next two years.

"The British people are tough, inventive and resourceful. We have risen to bigger challenges before," Hunt told the House of Commons. "We aren't immune to these headwinds, but with this plan for stability, growth and public services, we will face into the storm."

Hunt and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who took office less than a month ago, face the challenge of tackling inflation and a growing deficit while helping millions of people slammed by a cost-of-living crisis as Russia's war in Ukraine pushes up food and energy prices.

That task was made more difficult by former Prime Minister Liz Truss, who in September announced 45 billion pounds (\$53 billion) in unfunded tax cuts that sent the pound to a record low against the U.S. dollar, boosted government borrowing costs and forced the central bank to intervene to stabilize bond markets. Truss was forced to resign six weeks after taking office.

A biggest criticism was that Truss' policies were introduced before being reviewed by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility, a mistake Hunt and Sunak took pains to avoid.

The agency said Hunt's proposals would help slow inflation, boost economic growth and rein in government spending over the next five years.

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Even so, soaring prices will cut real wages and living standards by 7% over the next two years, even as the government spends an additional 100 billion pounds on support programs, the OBR said in its analysis of the budget and the state of the economy.

"This type of contraction has never been recorded in Britain's postwar history," said Barret Kupelian, a senior economist at PwC.

Declining incomes, rising interest rates and a drop in home prices will tip the economy into a recession lasting more than a year from the third quarter of this year through the middle of 2023, the OBR predicted. A recession is an extended period of economic contraction, often defined as two consecutive quarters of shrinking output.

Britain doesn't have an independent body that declares recessions like in the U.S. and Europe, which use other data like rising unemployment and job losses in their assessments.

The OBR said U.K. unemployment is likely to rise to 4.9% in the third quarter of next year from 3.5% now. Inflation, which reached a 41-year high of 11.1% in October, will fall sharply over next year, dropping below zero in the middle of the decade before returning to the Bank of England's 2% target in 2027, it predicted.

The grim economic picture is weighing on government finances, reducing tax revenue, driving up welfare spending and increasing borrowing costs. As a result, the OBR estimates that government borrowing will jump by a third to 177 billion pounds, or 7.1% of economic output, in the current fiscal year.

Borrowing will begin dropping after that, declining to 2.4% of gross domestic product in the 2027-28 fiscal year. That means government debt will rise to a 63-year high of 98% of GDP over the next three years before it begins to decline, the OBR forecast.

In an effort to close the gap, Hunt said he would ask "more from those who have more" and lower the threshold for the highest tax bracket — 45% — by almost 25,000 pounds a year, costing high-earners about 1,200 pounds annually.

The government also will freeze the income levels at which taxpayers move into higher tax brackets, effectively raising taxes for hundreds of thousands of workers as inflation pushes up their wages.

"This, along with a double whammy of high inflation and higher taxes could mean a potential pay cut rather than a pay rise," said Faye Church, a chartered financial planner at Investec Wealth & Investments.

The government also bowed to public pressure to increase taxes on the huge profits of energy producers. Hunt raised the windfall tax on oil and gas companies to 35% from 25% and extended it to March 2028. Electricity firms will have to pay a new temporary levy of 45%.

Hunt said the taxes would raise a combined 14 billion pounds next year.

He promised to protect public spending on key areas such as health and education as well as investment in energy and infrastructure projects. He delayed major spending cuts until 2025 — after the next general election — and deferred key decisions such as whether to stick to the previous government's promise to increase defense spending to 3% of economic output.

Pensioners and people on welfare benefits will see their payments increase in line with inflation, while millions of workers on minimum wage will get a 9.7% increase in April, Hunt said.

Millions of households face higher energy bills, however, when a price cap rises from 2,500 pounds a year for the average household to 3,000 pounds in April.

Hunt said he would soften the blow by increasing support payments for low-income families and those with disabilities.

Rachel Reeves, economy spokeswoman for the opposition Labour Party, said the budget would leave Britain in a "doom loop where low growth leads to higher taxes, lower investments and squeezed wages, with the running down of public services."

Among those who are looking to the government for help is Magdalena Prosenic, a single mom of two young children who was waiting in line at a community food pantry in south London.

For 5 pounds, people can buy 20 items of fresh fruit, vegetables and essential items like tinned beans and pasta. But eggs, which have shot up in price, are in high demand, and there are only enough for those who come early.

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"We are on benefits, but it's hard to provide for two children without help," Prosenic said Wednesday. "The kids need fruit, they need nappies and formula."

Anna Sjovorr-Packham, who runs the pantry, said the numbers of families buying food from them is creeping up "slowly but steadily." And the cold winter months are coming, when families need to spend more on heating.

"I think there was once an idea that people who access food pantries may need the service as a last-case scenario — there may be a stigma about the type of person," she said. "But now the pantries are definitely utilized by everybody."

Exec who cleaned up Enron calls FTX mess 'unprecedented'

By KEN SWEET and MICHELLE CHAPMAN The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The man who had to clean up the mess at Enron says the situation at FTX is even worse, describing what he calls a "complete failure" of corporate control.

The filing by John Ray III, the new CEO of the bankrupt cryptocurrency firm, lays out a damning description of FTX's operations under its founder Sam Bankman-Fried, from a lack of security controls to business funds being used to buy employees homes and luxuries.

"Never in my career have I seen such a complete failure of corporate controls and such a complete absence of trustworthy financial information as occurred here," Ray said. "From compromised systems integrity and faulty regulatory oversight abroad, to the concentration of control in the hands of a very small group of inexperienced, unsophisticated and potentially compromised individuals, this situation is unprecedented."

Ray was appointed CEO on November 11, after the company was near collapse and its previous management sought legal counsel on what to do next. Bankman-Fried was persuaded to give up control of the company by his lawyers as well as his father, Joseph Bankman, a professor at Stanford Law School, according to Thursday's filing.

Since his resignation, Bankman-Fried has sought out news outlets for interviews and has been active on Twitter trying to explain himself and the firm's failure.

In an interview with the online news outlet Vox, Bankman-Fried admitted that his previous calls for regulation of cryptocurrencies were mostly for public relations.

"Regulators, they make everything worse," Bankman-Fried said, using an expletive for emphasis.

In a terse statement, Ray said that Bankman-Fried's statements have been "erratic and misleading" and "Bankman-Fried is not employed by the Debtors and does not speak for them."

Ray noted that many of the companies in the FTX Group, particularly those in Antigua and the Bahamas, didn't have appropriate corporate governance and many had never held a board meeting. Ray also addressed the use of corporate funds to pay for homes and other items for employees.

"In the Bahamas, I understand that corporate funds of the FTX Group were used to purchase homes and other personal items for employees and advisors. I understand that there does not appear to be documentation for certain of these transactions as loans, and that certain real estate was recorded in the personal name of these employees and advisors on the records of the Bahamas," he said.

So far, debtors have found and secured "only a fraction" of the group's digital assets that they hope to recover, with about \$740 million of cryptocurrency secured in new cold wallets, which is a way of holding cryptocurrency tokens offline, said Ray.

Ray was named CEO of FTX less than a week ago when the company filed for bankruptcy protection and its CEO and founder Bankman-Fried resigned. The embattled cryptocurrency exchange, short billions of dollars, sought bankruptcy protection after the exchange experienced the crypto equivalent of a bank run.

In its bankruptcy filing, FTX listed more than 130 affiliated companies around the globe. The company valued its assets between \$10 billion to \$50 billion, with a similar estimate for its liabilities.

Bankman-Fried was recently estimated to be worth \$23 billion. His net worth has all but evaporated, according to Forbes and Bloomberg, which closely track the net worth of the world's richest people.

FTX's failure goes beyond finance. The company had major sports sponsorships as well, including For-

mula One racing and a sponsorship deal with Major League Baseball. Miami-Dade County decided Friday to terminate its relationship with FTX, meaning the venue where the Miami Heat play will no longer be known as FTX Arena. Mercedes was planning to remove FTX from its race cars starting last weekend.

Poll: Religious Americans less worried about climate change

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Most adults in the United States — including a large majority of Christians and people who identify with other religions — consider the Earth sacred and believe God gave humans a duty to care for it.

But highly religious Americans — those who pray daily, regularly attend religious services and consider religion crucial in their lives — are far less likely than other U.S. adults to express concern about global warming.

Those are among the key findings in a comprehensive report released Thursday by the Pew Research Center, which surveyed 10,156 U.S. adults from April 11 to April 17. It's margin of error for the full sample of respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

The survey says religious Americans tend to be less concerned about climate change for several reasons. "First and foremost is politics: The main driver of U.S. public opinion about the climate is political party, not religion," the report says.

"Highly religious Americans are more inclined than others to identify with or lean toward the Republican Party, and Republicans tend to be much less likely than Democrats to believe human activity (such as burning fossil fuels) is warming the Earth or to consider climate change a serious problem."

Responding to the findings, the Rev. Richenda Fairhurst, steward of climate at the non-profit Circle Faith Future, said the siloed culture in America sows further division instead of inspiring teamwork.

"I don't know who that serves," she said. "But it's not serving the community — and it's certainly not serving the planet."

The poll found that about three-quarters (74%) of religiously affiliated Americans say the Earth is sacred. A larger share, (80%), feel a sense of stewardship — and fully or mostly agree with the idea that "God gave humans a duty to protect and care for the Earth, including the plants and animals."

Religious Americans who show little or no concern about climate change also say "there are much bigger problems in the world, that God is in control of the climate, and that they do not believe the climate is actually changing."

Many religious Americans are also concerned about the potential consequences of environmental regulations, including the loss of individual freedoms, fewer jobs or increased energy prices, the report says.

The survey also found that two-thirds of U.S. adults who are religiously affiliated say their faith's scriptures include lessons about the environment, and about four-in-ten say they've prayed for the environment in the past year.

The views, the report says, are common across a range of religious traditions.

Three-quarters of both evangelical Protestants and members of historically Black Protestant churches say the Bible includes lessons about the environment. Eight in ten U.S. Catholics and mainline Protestants say the Earth is sacred and so do 77% of non-Christian religions, according to the poll.

But Christians, and more broadly, religiously affiliated Americans, are divided in their views about climate change, the report says.

Those who consider climate change "an extremely or very serious problem" range from 68% of adults who identify with the historically Black Protestant tradition, to 34% of evangelical Protestants.

In none of the major Protestant traditions did a majority say the Earth is getting warmer mostly because of human activity; only 32% of evangelicals felt that way.

The report says the religiously unaffiliated — the fastest-growing group in surveys asking Americans about their religious identity — are much more likely to say that climate change is an extreme or very serious problem (70%) than religiously affiliated Americans (52%).

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Commonly known as the “nones,” they describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or “nothing in particular.” The report says they are far more likely to say the Earth is getting warmer mostly because of human-induced activity (66%) than those who are religiously affiliated (47%).

The survey offers clues as to why religious Americans are less likely to care about climate change than those with no religion despite seeing a link between their beliefs and caring for the environment:

- For U.S. congregations, climate change doesn’t seem to be a major focus. The report says that among all U.S. adults who attend religious services at least once or twice per month, only 8% say they “hear a great deal or quite a bit about climate change in sermons.”

- One in five say they hear some discussion of the topic from the pulpit.

- And just 6% of American congregants say they talk about climate change with other people at their congregation a great deal or quite a bit.

Highly religious Americans are also less likely to view inefficient energy practices as morally wrong, the report says. This same pattern is also seen when asked about eating food that takes a lot of energy to produce.

The Rev. Fletcher Harper, an Episcopal priest, and executive director of GreenFaith, a global multi-faith environmental organization based in New York, said he was not surprised by the findings since he doesn’t see culturally and politically conservative Americans prioritizing climate action.

“What this study doesn’t tell us, though, is the role that religion, when utilized effectively, can play in moving people who are concerned but inactive into public action on the climate’s behalf,” Harper said. “This warrants further research so that we can all understand better what positive role religion can play in the fight against climate change.”

Universities focus on athletes’ mental health after crises

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Police awoke Indiana State athletic director Sherard Clinksdale early on Aug. 21 with tragic news. Two of the university’s football players, and another student, had died in a car accident.

Clinksdale immediately began devising a plan to console and support the teammates and friends of the deceased teenagers.

“There is no playbook for something like this,” Clinksdale said.

But those who have experienced the unexpected death of a college athlete under their supervision say the increased emphasis on mental health care in athletic departments and universities at large — spurred in part by the pandemic and lessons learned from other tragedies — helps when responding to a crisis.

Grief struck the University of Virginia earlier this week. Three members of the football team were shot and killed on a bus returning to the Charlottesville campus from Washington. Two other students, one of them also a football player, were wounded.

The suspect in police custody, Christopher Darnell Jones Jr., 22, is a Virginia student and former walk-on member of the football team.

Classes, academic activities and the university’s Saturday home game against Coastal Carolina were canceled, and the school made counselors and therapy dogs available. Temporary memorials with flowers and stuffed animals have sprung up on campus throughout the week, including at Scott Stadium, where the Cavaliers football team plays. Classes resumed Wednesday though the university said undergraduate students won’t have to complete any graded assignments or take exams before the Thanksgiving break.

Virginia athletic director Carla Williams said Tuesday the department has three psychologists available for grieving teammates.

“In our first meeting with the student athletes, we had a lot of counselors on hand that were there and available to work with the student athletes,” Williams said. “And not only our football student athletes — with all of our student athletes.”

Clinksdale said after he was informed that Christian Eubanks, 18, and Caleb VanHooser, 19, had been killed in a single-vehicle wreck just outside of Indiana State’s Terre Haute campus, he went to the home

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of head coach Curt Mallory to break the sad news to him.

Mallory took on the difficult task of informing the players' families that their sons had been killed.

The players and staff were gathered just a few hours later, with a familiar face there to provide help: Dr. Ken Chew, director of Indiana State's Student Counseling Center.

"He's been in front of our team before," Mallory said. "This wasn't a first-time introduction."

While university leaders have pointed to increased focus on student mental health services, athletes appear less convinced. A 2019 survey of college and university presidents published by Higher Education Today found 80% indicating that mental health was being prioritized on campus more than it was three years ago. About 7 in 10 college and university leaders said they were putting more funds toward addressing mental health issues among students.

But only half of the 9,808 NCAA athletes who took a survey in late 2021 said they believe mental health is a priority to their athletics department — even after universities worked to shore up services during the pandemic as isolation to prevent the spread of coronavirus kept students from accessing resources. Among the athletes surveyed by the NCAA, 53% said they believe their coaches are taking mental health concerns seriously.

The NCAA does not have the power to mandate how schools invest and address mental health within their athletic departments, but its Sport Science Institute offers resources such as mental health best practices, workshop templates and planning tools.

In the last five years at Washington State, Cougars quarterback Tyler Hilinski killed himself on Jan. 16, 2018, and a little more than a year later, defensive back Bryce Beekman died of an accidental overdose. Dr. Sunday Henry, head team physician, was part of the response to both tragedies.

"Your primary care medical team and your mental health team immediately activate and assess the situation and how to respond," Henry said. "What just happened? What do we need to do? For us it was get everyone together. Tell them the news. And here's the resources available."

Henry said she believes coaches generally have become better at encouraging athletes, who at times can conflate vulnerability for weakness, to be more willing to seek help if they are struggling with mental health.

Communication and interaction with the students is vital. Henry said athletic trainers, who spend so much time around the athletes, can play an integral role in trying to determine which students might need extra help.

At Virginia's news conference on Tuesday, coach Tony Elliot talked about "having eyes" on the players.

"Nothing can prepare you for this situation, and we just want to be there to support the guys," Elliott said.

Toledo athletic director Bryan Blair was a deputy athletic director at Washington State. He was hired shortly after Hilinski's death and was part of the staff when Beekman died. He said all members of the department who came into regular contact with athletes were required to take a Mental Health First Aid course.

"All of us have a certain amount of responsibility to be able to be a resource to the student athletes," Blair said.

Mallory, whose late father Bill was a longtime Division I college football coach, has been coaching since the early 1990s. He said even before the tragedy at Indiana State, he spent one-on-one time on Mondays with players away from the field. Over the years he's set more and more time aside for those meetings.

"Even if I felt like they were doing OK, I still wanted to get them in front. You just don't know," he said.

At San Jose State, freshman running back Camdan McWright was killed last month when he was hit by a bus while riding a scooter near campus.

Athletic director Jeff Konya said head coach Brent Brennan delivered the news to McWright's family and it was Brennan and assistant coaches closest to the player who talked with his relatives throughout the week as a memorial was planned.

"And so that was an additional burden, and rightly so that was placed on our coaches, who had the best relationship with the family through the recruitment of Camdan," Konya said.

The team's game against New Mexico State was postponed and, instead, the players and coaches spent time together watching football. The next week, before the Spartans' homecoming game, McWright was

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honored in a ceremony with his loved ones in attendance. San Jose State beat Nevada 35-28 in a cathartic victory.

Konya, who has been a college athletics administrator for 36 years, said he has seen mental health care become more of a priority on campus and in athletic departments.

"We're in a better position now," Konya said. "But it's not foolproof and events like what happened here and what unfortunately happened at Virginia, those kinds of extreme cases are going to require really particular attention."

A 'barbed wire curtain' rises in Europe amid war in Ukraine

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — The long border between Finland and Russia runs through thick forests and is marked only by wooden posts with low fences meant to stop stray cattle. Soon, a stronger, higher fence will be erected on parts of the frontier.

Earlier this month, Polish soldiers began laying coils of razor wire on the border with Kaliningrad, a part of Russian territory separated from the country and wedged between Poland and Lithuania. Cameras and an electronic monitoring system also will be installed on the area that once was guarded only by occasional patrols of border guards.

The fall of the Berlin Wall more than 30 years ago symbolized hope for cooperation with Moscow. Now, Russia's war in Ukraine has ushered in a new era of confrontation in Europe — and the rise of new barriers of steel, concrete and barbed wire. These, however, are being built by the West.

"The Iron Curtain is gone, but the 'barbed wire curtain' is now unfortunately becoming the reality for much of Europe," said Klaus Dodds, a professor of geopolitics at Royal Holloway, University of London. "The optimism that we had in Europe after 1989 is very much now gone."

Fear and division have replaced the euphoria when Germans danced atop the Berlin Wall and broke off chunks of the barrier erected in 1961 by Communist leaders. It stretched for 155 kilometers (nearly 100 miles), encircling West Berlin until 1989, when East German authorities opened crossings following mass protests. Within a year, East and West Germany were reunited.

Some countries in the European Union began building border fences as a response to more than 1 million refugees and other migrants entering southern Europe from the Middle East and Africa in 2015 alone. In 2015 and 2016, Russia ushered thousands of asylum-seekers, also mostly from the Middle East, to border checkpoints in northern Finland.

When relations with Belarus deteriorated after its authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko was declared the winner of the 2020 election widely seen as fraudulent, the government in Minsk sent thousands of migrants across the EU's frontiers in what Dodds called "hybrid warfare." In response, Poland and Lithuania erected walls along their borders with Belarus.

Michal Baranowski, head of the Warsaw office of the German Marshall Fund think tank, said most security analysts believe Belarus coordinated its effort with Moscow, "in effect destabilizing our borders ahead of war in Ukraine."

Fearing another migration crisis as a response to sanctions against Moscow because of the nearly nine-month war in Ukraine, European leaders have begun hardening their borders.

Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin announced plans to fortify parts of her country's 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border — the longest with any EU member. Moscow has threatened "serious military-political consequences" against Finland and Sweden for seeking to join NATO, and Marin said the fortifications would help defend the nation against the "hybrid threat" of possible large-scale and irregular migration orchestrated by the Kremlin.

The new barriers offer little protection from missiles or tanks. Governments instead expect the walls, fences and electronic surveillance to provide better control of their borders and to stop large migrant surges.

Dodds says Russia has been weaponizing migration for several years as it engages in a "civilization conflict with its European neighbors."

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Russia bombed and harassed Syria's population in 2015 "in a deliberate attempt to create a humanitarian crisis," he said.

"I think one of the difficulties we sometimes have outside of Russia is in actually appreciating quite how cynical, quite how calculating, quite how deliberate some of this work is," said Dodds, author of "The New Border Wars: The Conflicts that Will Define Our Future."

Russia's use of migrants to create social discord in places like Poland, Lithuania and Latvia has led to those governments not offering them the chance to apply for asylum and refusing them entry in many cases — as has happened in other European countries like Greece and Hungary.

Those pushed back to Belarus have been subjected to abuse by Belarusian guards who initially helped them cross the borders, according to human rights groups.

Human rights activists in Poland have protested the the 5½-meter (18-foot) steel wall erected along 186 kilometers (115 miles) of its border with Belarus, arguing that it keeps out the weakest people but not the most determined.

Anna Alboth of the Minority Rights Group has spent months at that border and said she has seen people use ladders to scale the fence or tunnel under it.

Since the wall was finished last summer, about 1,800 migrants who made it inside Poland and found themselves in forests desperate for food, water or medicine have called Grupa Granica, an umbrella organization Alboth co-founded.

"It's very difficult territory, the east of Poland," she said. "There are a lot of animals. I had a situation where I went to one group and I stepped on people who were half-conscious. I am sure there were many people like this."

She said she recently encountered groups of women from Sudan who appeared to be human trafficking victims, as well as medical students from Africa who were in their fifth year of studies in Russia.

"They said 'Russia is falling apart and we want to live in a normal country,'" Alboth said.

A Polish government security official, Stanislaw Zaryn, acknowledged the border wall doesn't stop everyone seeking to cross illegally, but added: "It does allow our forces to act rapidly and more efficiently, without the need to deploy as much manpower as before."

Both that wall and the fence with Kaliningrad "convey a strong message to Minsk and Moscow that Poland takes the security and integrity of its borders extremely seriously," Zaryn said. "I believe that Belarus and Russia will think twice before pursuing again the weaponization of migration."

Dodds said he understands the impulse to build walls but warns that they rarely work as intended, often pushing migrants onto more hazardous journeys.

While militarized borders might be popular, they also tend to dehumanize desperate migrants, who often are willing to risk the danger of border crossings for a better life.

Building such walls and fences "sucks empathy and compassion from our societies," Dodds said.

Republicans win back control of House with narrow majority

By WILL WEISSERT, SARA BURNETT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans won control of the U.S. House on Wednesday, returning the party to power in Washington and giving conservatives leverage to blunt President Joe Biden's agenda and spur a flurry of investigations. But a threadbare majority will pose immediate challenges for GOP leaders and complicate the party's ability to govern.

More than a week after Election Day, Republicans secured the 218th seat needed to flip the House from Democratic control. The full scope of the party's majority may not be clear for several more days — or weeks — as votes in competitive races are still being counted.

But they are on track to cobble together what could be the party's narrowest majority of the 21st century, rivaling 2001, when Republicans had just a nine-seat majority, 221-212 with two independents. That's far short of the sweeping victory the GOP predicted going into this year's midterm elections, when the party hoped to reset the agenda on Capitol Hill by capitalizing on economic challenges and Biden's

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lagging popularity.

Instead, Democrats showed surprising resilience, holding on to moderate, suburban districts from Virginia to Minnesota and Kansas. The results could complicate House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy's plans to become speaker as some conservative members have questioned whether to back him or have imposed conditions for their support.

McCarthy, R-Calif., celebrated his party having "officially flipped" the House on Twitter on Wednesday night, writing, "Americans are ready for a new direction, and House Republicans are ready to deliver."

Current House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., released a statement Wednesday night saying, "In the next Congress, House Democrats will continue to play a leading role in supporting President Biden's agenda — with strong leverage over a scant Republican majority."

Biden congratulated McCarthy, saying he is "ready to work with House Republicans to deliver results for working families."

"Last week's elections demonstrated the strength and resilience of American democracy. There was a strong rejection of election deniers, political violence, and intimidation," Biden said in a statement. "There was an emphatic statement that, in America, the will of the people prevails."

He added, that "the future is too promising to be trapped in political warfare."

The narrow margins have upended Republican politics and prompted finger-pointing about what went wrong. Some in the GOP have blamed Donald Trump for the worse-than-expected outcome. The former president, who announced his third White House bid Tuesday, lifted candidates during this year's Republican primaries who often questioned the results of the 2020 election or downplayed the mob attack on the U.S. Capitol last year. Many of those struggled to win during the general election.

Despite the GOP's underwhelming showing, the party will still have notable power. Republicans will take control of key committees, giving them the ability to shape legislation and launch probes of Biden, his family and his administration. There's particular interest in investigating the overseas business dealings of the president's son Hunter Biden. Some of the most conservative lawmakers have raised the prospect of impeaching Biden, though that will be much harder for the party to accomplish with a tight majority.

Any legislation that emerges from the House could face steep odds in the Senate, where Democrats won the barest of majorities Saturday. Both parties are looking to a Dec. 6 Senate runoff in Georgia as a last chance to pad their ranks.

With such a potentially slim House majority, there's also potential for legislative chaos. The dynamic essentially gives an individual member enormous sway over shaping what happens in the chamber. That could lead to particularly tricky circumstances for GOP leaders as they try to win support for must-pass measures that keep the government funded or raise the debt ceiling.

The GOP's failure to notch more wins — they needed a net gain of five seats to take the majority — was especially surprising because the party went into the election benefiting from congressional maps that were redrawn by Republican legislatures. History was also on Republicans' side: The party that holds the White House had lost congressional seats during virtually every new president's first midterm of the modern era.

The new majority will usher in a new group of leaders in Washington. If elected to succeed Pelosi in the top post, McCarthy would lead what will likely be a rowdy conference of House Republicans, most of whom are aligned with Trump's bare-knuckle brand of politics. Many Republicans in the incoming Congress rejected the results of the 2020 presidential election, even though claims of widespread fraud were refuted by courts, elections officials and Trump's own attorney general.

McCarthy won the nomination for House speaker on Tuesday, with a formal vote to come when the new Congress convenes in January.

"I'm proud to announce the era of one-party Democrat rule in Washington is over," McCarthy said after winning the nomination.

Republican candidates pledged on the campaign trail to cut taxes and tighten border security. GOP lawmakers also could withhold aid to Ukraine as it fights a war with Russia or use the threat of defaulting on the nation's debt as leverage to extract cuts from social spending and entitlements — though all such

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pursuits will be tougher given how small the GOP majority may end up being.

As a senator and then vice president, Biden spent a career crafting legislative compromises with Republicans. But as president, he was clear about what he viewed as the threats posed by the current Republican Party.

Biden said the midterms show voters want Democrats and Republicans to find ways to cooperate and govern in a bipartisan manner, but also noted that Republicans didn't achieve the electoral surge they'd been betting on and vowed, "I'm not going to change anything in any fundamental way."

AP VoteCast, a broad survey of the national electorate, showed that high inflation and concerns about the fragility of democracy had heavily influenced voters. Half of voters said inflation factored significantly, with groceries, gasoline, housing, food and other costs that have shot up in the past year. Slightly fewer — 44% — said the future of democracy was their primary consideration.

Counter to the GOP's expectations, Biden didn't entirely shoulder the blame for inflation, with close to half of voters saying the higher-than-usual prices were more because of factors outside his control. And despite the president bearing criticism from a pessimistic electorate, some of those voters backed Democratic candidates.

Democrats also likely benefited from anger over the Supreme Court overturning the landmark Roe v. Wade decision cementing a woman's constitutional right to an abortion. Voters in Michigan voted to amend their state constitution to protect abortion rights while far more reliably Republican Kentucky rejected a constitutional amendment declaring no right to an abortion.

Overall, 7 in 10 voters said the high court's ruling overturning the 1973 decision enshrining abortion rights was an important factor in their midterm decisions. VoteCast also showed the reversal was broadly unpopular. About 6 in 10 say they are angry or dissatisfied by it. And roughly 6 in 10 say they favor a law guaranteeing access to legal abortion nationwide.

The AP Interview: Pence says voters want new leadership

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday that voters are "looking for new leadership" following the disappointing midterm elections for Republicans, who are now openly debating whether his onetime boss, Donald Trump, should maintain a leading role in the party.

In an interview with The Associated Press just hours after Trump announced another White House run, Pence declined to say whether he thinks the former president is fit to return to his old job. But he implicitly positioned himself as a potential alternative for Republicans seeking conservative leadership without the chaos of the Trump era.

"I think we will have better choices in 2024," Pence said. "I'm very confident that Republican primary voters will choose wisely." He said that he and his family will gather over the holidays "and we'll give prayerful consideration to what our role might be in the days ahead."

Asked whether he blamed Trump for this week's Republican losses, he said, "Certainly the president's continued efforts to relitigate the last election played a role, but ... each individual candidate is responsible for their own campaign."

Pence, while considering a presidential campaign of his own, has been raising his profile as he promotes his new memoir, "So Help Me God," which was released on the same day that Trump made official his long-teased White House bid. If Pence moves forward, he would be in direct competition with Trump, a particularly awkward collision for the former vice president, who spent his four years in office defending Trump, refusing to criticize him publicly until after Jan. 6, 2021.

That's when a mob of Trump's supporters — driven by Trump's lie that Pence could somehow reject the election results — stormed the Capitol building while Pence was presiding over the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory. The vice president was steered to safety with his staff and family as some in the mob chanted, "Hang Mike Pence!"

Still, Pence on Wednesday remained largely reticent to criticize Trump beyond the insurrection. That

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hesitance reflects the reality that the former president remains enormously popular with the GOP base that Pence would need to win over to be competitive in primary contests.

"It wasn't exactly the style of presidency that I would have advanced had I been the first name on the ballot," Pence said of his unlikely partnership with Trump. "But it was his presidency and I was there to support him and help him. And until that fateful day in January 2021, I sought to do just that."

Pence said he hadn't watched Trump's full announcement speech on Tuesday, but made the case that voters are looking for a new, less contentious direction.

"You know, the president has every right to stand for election again," he said. But after traveling the country campaigning with midterm candidates, "I have a genuine sense that the American people are looking for new leadership that could unite our country around our highest ideals and that would reflect the respect and civility the American people show to one another every day, while still advancing the policies that we advanced during those years of service," he said.

Trump's campaign launch comes as Republicans grapple with fallout from elections in which they failed to wrest control of the Senate and are on track to win only the narrowest majority in the House. Those results came despite voters' deep concerns over inflation and the direction of the country under Democrat Biden.

Trump endorsed a long list of candidates in competitive states including Pennsylvania and Arizona who then lost their general election races. While Pence said he was pleased Republicans were taking the House, he acknowledged the election "wasn't quite the red wave that we all had hoped for."

"My conclusion," he said, "is the candidates that were focused on the future, focused on the challenges the American people are facing today and solutions to those challenges did quite well." But those still questioning the 2020 results — as Trump demanded — "did not do as well."

In his new book, Pence writes in detail about his experience on Jan. 6, and he expounded on that Wednesday.

"I'll never forget the simmering indignation that I felt that day, seeing those sights on the cellphones as we gathered in the loading dock below the Senate chamber. I couldn't help but think not this, not here, not in America," he said.

In the interview, he recalled his reaction to Trump's tweets "that criticize me directly at a time that a riot was raging in the Capitol hallways."

"The president's words were reckless, and they endangered my family and everyone at the Capitol building," he said. "The president had decided to be a part of the problem. I was determined to be a part of the solution."

Asked what consequences Trump should face for his actions, however, Pence punted.

"That's up to the American people," he said he believes. "I truly do. And look, I'll always be proud of the record of the Trump administration for four-and-a-half years. President Trump was not just my president. He was my friend. And we worked closely together to advance the policies that we'd been elected to serve."

"It didn't end well," he acknowledged, in an understatement. "And that tragic day in January will always be a day of great sadness for me, a sadness about what had happened to our relationship, to the bad advice the president was accepting from a group of lawyers that, as I write in my book, should never have been allowed on the White House grounds, let alone in the Oval Office."

Pence and Trump were always an odd couple — a pugilistic, crude New York celebrity and a staid Midwestern evangelical who once wrote an essay on the evils of negative campaigning and who, as a rule, says he will not dine alone with a woman who is not his wife. Asked why he so rarely spoke up when Trump launched deeply personal insults against figures such as the late Sen. John McCain, Pence said, in effect, that that was what he had signed up for.

"As his vice president, I believed it was my role to be loyal to the president," he said. "And so every step of the way, the way I squared it was I believe that I had been elected vice president to support the presidency that Donald Trump had been elected to advance."

Indeed, Pence in the book writes that even after Jan. 6, the two men "parted amicably when our service to the nation drew to a close."

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"And in the weeks that followed, from time to time, he would call me and to speak and check in," Pence said in the interview. "But when he returned to criticizing me and others who had upheld the Constitution that day, I just decided I'd be best to go our separate ways. And we have."

Asked why he would part "amicably" with Trump given the president's actions — including his decision not to call Pence to check in on his safety while the riot was underway — Pence said he believed the president had been genuinely regretful when they met for the first time after the 6th.

"For the balance of about 90 minutes, we sat, we talked. I was very direct with the president. I made it clear to him that I believe that I did my duty that day, and I sensed genuine remorse on his part," Pence recalled. "The president and I had forged not only a good working relationship, but a friendship over four-and-a-half years. We worked together literally every day. But he was different in that time. I encouraged him to take the matter to prayer."

As for his plans for the future, as everyone asks whether he plans to run, he and his family will gather over the holidays "and we'll give prayerful consideration to what our role might be in the days ahead."

Obama to announce expansion of young leaders program to US

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Obama Foundation program that has trained hundreds of young leaders across Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Europe is being expanded to include the United States.

Former President Barack Obama is expected to announce the new program on Thursday during a two-day democracy forum the foundation is co-sponsoring in New York City.

The Obama Foundation Leaders United States program is a six-month leadership development program for emerging leaders between the ages of 24 and 45. The program will serve more than 100 leaders from the U.S. in its first year. Participants will be chosen through a competitive application process.

In remarks prepared for delivery on Thursday at the forum, Obama cites "consistently high interest" in the foundation's programs as a reason for the expansion.

"The creativity, determination and passion of these leaders are already making an impact — in lives saved, environments restored, children educated," he says. "They're creating new models for clean energy generation and poverty alleviation. It's remarkable and inspiring — and a little humbling, since I sure wasn't making such an impact at their age."

"And the good news is, we're just scratching the surface of what this next generation is capable of," Obama says.

The Obama Foundation Leaders program has worked with more than 700 people in Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Europe since it was launched in 2018 after Obama, a Democrat, left the White House following two terms as president, according to the foundation.

Valerie Jarrett, a longtime Obama adviser and CEO of the Obama Foundation, said the U.S. extension of the leaders program is a "continuation of our efforts to pay it forward by helping the next generation."

The foundation, in partnership with Columbia University and the University of Chicago, is holding its first democracy forum in New York on Thursday and Friday. Democracy thinkers, leaders and activists from across the globe will discuss how to advance and strengthen democracy in the United States and abroad.

Obama is scheduled to close the first day of the forum with a speech and a conversation with a group of foundation leaders.

Today in History: November 18, deaths at Jonestown

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Nov. 18, the 322nd day of 2022. There are 43 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 18, 1978, U.S. Rep. Leo J. Ryan of California and four others were killed on an airstrip in Jonestown, Guyana, by members of the Peoples Temple; the killings were followed by a night of mass

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murder and suicide resulting in the deaths of more than 900 cult members.

On this date:

In 1883, the United States and Canada adopted a system of Standard Time zones.

In 1936, Germany and Italy recognized the Spanish government of Francisco Franco.

In 1963, the Bell System introduced the first commercial touch-tone telephone system in Carnegie and Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1966, U.S. Roman Catholic bishops did away with the rule against eating meat on Fridays outside of Lent.

In 1976, Spain's parliament approved a bill to establish a democracy after 37 years of dictatorship.

In 1985, the comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes," created by Bill Watterson, was first published. (The strip ran for 10 years.)

In 1987, the congressional Iran-Contra committees issued their final report, saying President Ronald Reagan bore "ultimate responsibility" for wrongdoing by his aides. A fire at London King's Cross railway station claimed 31 lives.

In 1991, Shiite (SHEE'-eyet) Muslim kidnappers in Lebanon freed Anglican Church envoy Terry Waite and Thomas Sutherland, the American dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut.

In 1999, 12 people were killed when a bonfire under construction at Texas A-and-M University collapsed. A jury in Jasper, Texas, convicted Shawn Allen Berry of murder for his role in the dragging death of James Byrd Jr., but spared him the death penalty.

In 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled 4-to-3 that the state constitution guaranteed gay couples the right to marry.

In 2005, eight months after Robert Blake was acquitted at a criminal trial of murdering his wife, a civil jury decided the actor was behind the slaying and ordered him to pay Bonny Lee Bakley's children \$30 million.

In 2020, President Donald Trump filed for a recount of Wisconsin's two largest Democratic counties, paying the required \$3 million cost and alleging that they were the sites of the "worst irregularities" although no evidence of illegal activity had been presented. (The recounts resulted in a slightly larger lead for Democrat Joe Biden.)

Ten years ago: In the deadliest single attack in Israel's offensive against Islamic militants, 12 people were killed when an Israeli missile ripped through a two-story home in a residential area of Gaza City. Justin Bieber dominated the American Music Awards in Los Angeles, winning three trophies, including artist of the year.

Five years ago: Large crowds of demonstrators turned Zimbabwe's capital into a carnival ground, showing disdain for President Robert Mugabe and urging him to quit immediately; Mugabe was now powerless and had been placed under house arrest by the military command. After heading Northern Ireland's Sinn Fein party for more than 30 years, Gerry Adams announced that he was stepping down.

One year ago: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation requiring private businesses in the state to let workers opt out of coronavirus vaccine mandates. More than half a century after the assassination of Malcolm X, two of his convicted killers were exonerated; a New York judge dismissed the convictions of Muhammad Aziz and the late Khalil Islam, after prosecutors and the men's lawyers said a renewed investigation had found new evidence that undermined the case against them. Los Angeles Angels star Shohei Ohtani was unanimously voted American League MVP for a hitting and pitching season not seen since Babe Ruth, and Bryce Harper earned the National League honor for the second time.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Brenda Vaccaro is 83. Author-poet Margaret Atwood is 83. Actor Linda Evans is 80. Actor Susan Sullivan is 80. Country singer Jacky Ward is 76. Actor Jameson Parker is 75. Actor-singer Andrea Marcovicci is 74. Rock musician Herman Rarebell is 73. Singer Graham Parker is 72. Actor Delroy Lindo is 70. Comedian Kevin Nealon is 69. Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Warren Moon is 66. Actor Oscar Nunez is 64. Actor Elizabeth Perkins is 62. Singer Kim Wilde is 62. Actor Tim Guinee is 60. Rock musician Kirk Hammett (Metallica) is 60. Rock singer Tim DeLaughter (dee-LAW'-ter) is 57. Author and lecturer Brené Brown is 57. Actor Romany Malco is 54. Actor Owen Wilson is 54. Actor Dan Bakkedahl is 54. Singer Duncan Sheik is 53. Actor Mike Epps is 52. Actor Peta Wilson is 52. Actor Chloe Sevigny (SEH'-

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ven-ee) is 48. Country singer Jessi Alexander is 46. Actor Steven Pasquale is 46. Rapper Fabolous is 45. Actor-director Nate Parker is 43. Rapper Mike Jones is 42. Actor Mekia Cox is 41. Actor-comedian Nasim Pedrad (nah-SEEM' peh-DRAHD') is 41. Actor Allison Tolman is 41. Actor Christina Vidal is 41. Actor Damon Wayans Jr. is 40. Country singer TJ Osborne (Brothers Osborne) is 38. U.S. Olympic track star Allyson Felix is 37. Fashion designer Christian Siriano is 37. Actor Nathan Kress is 30.