

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 1 of 78

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Social Security Column](#)
- [2- Tour of Homes Ad](#)
- [3- Harry Implement Ad](#)
- [4- SD Searchlight: Juvenile justice reform group reports success, in spite of moves to get tougher on kids](#)
- [6- SD Searchlight: Attorney general makes new hires to address human trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons](#)
- [7- SD Searchlight: Federal government opens grassland conservation program to tribes](#)
- [8- SD Searchlight: U.S. House votes to avert calamitous rail strike, but Senate prospects murky](#)
- [11- SD Searchlight: At tribal summit, Biden pledges federal commitment to Indian Country](#)
- [13- SD Searchlight: Albertsons-Kroger mega-deal raises questions from lawmakers about higher food prices](#)
- [15- Groton Chamber Ad](#)
- [16- Weather Pages](#)
- [21- Daily Devotional](#)
- [22- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [23- Subscription Form](#)
- [24- News from the Associated Press](#)

Groton Community Calendar

Thursday, Dec. 1

Senior Menu: Chicken and rice casserole, green beans, spinach salad, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins

School Lunch: Spaghetti

Emmanuel Lutheran Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

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



Friday, Dec. 2

Senior Menu: Swiss steak with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage

School Lunch: Cheese breadstick, marinara sauce.

North Area Honor Band at NSU

JH GBB at Britton, 7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade game.

Saturday, Dec. 3

North Area Honor Band at NSU

Wrestling Tournament at Clark, 10 a.m.

Junior High GBB Jamboree in Groton, 10 a.m.
(Schools Participating: Clark/Willow Lake, Enemy Swim Day School (K-8), Mobridge-Pollock Schools, Waubay-Summit, Groton Area)

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

Olive Grove Tour of Homes, 4 p.m.

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

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 2 of 78

THIS NEW YEAR, LEARN ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY ONLINE

Social Security programs touch the lives of more than 70 million people. We work hard to ensure critical benefits and other services are accessible to you. Consider the start of the new year as an opportunity for you to engage with Social Security online. This begins with creating your free and secure personal my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Once you create an account, you can:

- Apply for retirement, spouses, or disability benefits.
- Apply for Medicare.
- Check your application status.
- Request a replacement Social Security number card.

If you do not receive Social Security benefits, you can use your personal my Social Security account to:

- Get personalized retirement benefit estimates.
- Get your Social Security Statement.
- Get estimates for spouse's benefits.
- Get instant proof that you do not receive benefits.

If you receive benefits, you can use your personal my Social Security account to:

- Change your address (Social Security benefits only).
- Set up or change your direct deposit information (Social Security benefits only).
- Instantly get proof of benefits.
- Print your SSA-1099.

Your personal my Social Security account has a secure Message Center. You can choose to receive

*Olive Grove's
6th Annual*

Christmas Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

**Charlie & Jenn Dirks
Tigh & Adrienne Flieds
Tom & Barb Paepke
Wage Memorial Library & City Office**

**SATURDAY,
DEC. 3, 2022**

**TOUR OF
HOMES
4-7 P.M.**

**HOLIDAY
PARTY**

4-CLOSE

Silent Basket Items

Bidding closes at 8:30 p.m.

Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.

Coffee, Apple Cider and Goodies at the Club House

A variety of snacks served.

**\$15 tickets available at
Lori's Pharmacy, Groton
Groton Ford**

**Hair & Company, Aberdeen
Olive Grove Golf Clubhouse**

**Come on out for a fun evening!
Support your local golf course!**

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 3 of 78

the annual cost-of-living adjustments and the income-related monthly adjustment amount online. Unless you opt-out of receiving notices by mail that are available online, you will receive both mailed and online notices.

Your personal my Social Security account offers easy access to features that save you time when you do business with us online. Check out our other resources available at www.ssa.gov/onlineservices for your convenience.

X SERIES | Cub Cadet

BREAK DOWN SNOW IN QUICK TIME.



3X THREE-STAGE POWER

HD TRAC

The heavy-duty 3X® is the ace of the X Series® line. With a patented three-stage system, the 3X clears deep snowfall faster than a Cub Cadet® 2X® two-stage snow blower. Easily remove up to 23 inches of snowfall and bust through the wall of winter at the end of your driveway. When you have 3X strength, nothing is in your way.

ENGINEERED FOR

SNOWFALL	DRIVEWAY	SURFACES
Up to 18-23"	Up to 8-15+ cars	Smooth & gravel



3X 26"

Bust through the snow with the 3X 26" snow blower featuring a 357cc Cub Cadet OHV engine.

- ▶ 21" intake height
- ▶ OVH crank chute control w/ high-arc steel chute
- ▶ Heated hand grips
- ▶ Dual LED in-dash headlights
- ▶ Heavy-duty cast aluminum gear box backed by 5-year limited warranty**

MSRP
\$1,599*



3X 30" HD

Gear up for the worst of winter weather with the 3X 30" HD powered by a 420cc Cub Cadet OHV engine.

- ▶ Heavy-duty 14-gauge steel auger housing and side plates
- ▶ LED light bar on auger housing plus dual LED in-dash headlights
- ▶ 23" intake height
- ▶ Heated hand grips
- ▶ OVH crank chute control w/ high-arc steel chute
- ▶ Heavy-duty cast aluminum gear box backed by 5-year limited warranty**

MSRP
\$1,999*



3X 26" TRAC

Clear it all with the strength of the 3X 26" Trac featuring a powerful 357cc Cub Cadet OHV engine.

- ▶ Tract drive ideal for slopes, inclines and gravel driveways
- ▶ Heavy-duty 14-gauge steel auger housing and side plates
- ▶ 23" intake height
- ▶ Heated hand grips
- ▶ OVH crank chute control w/ high-arc steel chute
- ▶ LED light bar on auger housing plus dual LED in-dash headlights
- ▶ Heavy-duty cast aluminum auger gear box w/ 5-year limited warranty**

MSRP
\$2,099* * Indicates step-up feature

INDEPENDENT DEALER
Cub Cadet

YOUR INDEPENDENT DEALER – EXPERT SERVICE. LOCALLY OWNED.
The advice, service, selection and support you need to find the right fit for you.

HARRY IMPLEMENT INC.
109 CENTER ST
FERNEY, SD 57439
www.harrysinc.com
605-395-6421

Restrictions apply. See dealer or cubcadet.com/en_US/financing for details.

* When compared to the same engine without IntelliPower® technology. Improvements vary depending on engine models and specific operating conditions.

** Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes are additional and vary by location. Freight and PDI charges may be additional and vary by dealer. Models subject to limited availability. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or unit specifications.

† See owner's manual for warranty details and information. Certain restrictions apply.

© 2022 Cub Cadet SNOW_3X_QUARTER

EXCEPTIONAL FINANCING
OFFERS AVAILABLE





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Juvenile justice reform group reports success, in spite of moves to get tougher on kids

Proposed 'three strikes' rule for repeat offenders would affect 23 children

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 30, 2022 5:51 PM

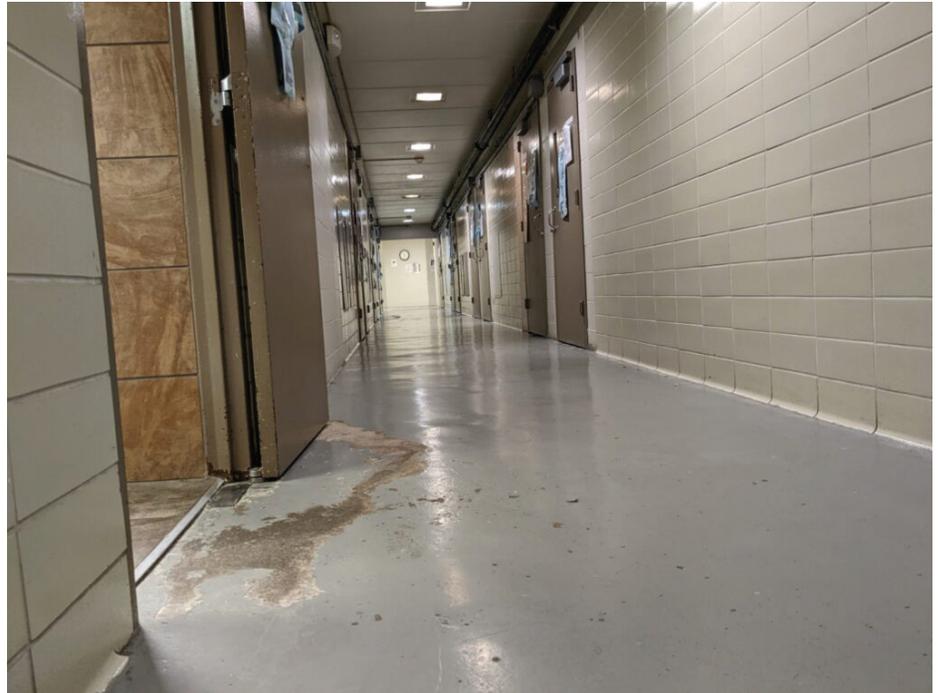
A quick look at the annual report from an oversight council might suggest that the 2015 juvenile justice reform act that created the group has been a smashing success.

The 2015 reforms were meant to keep non-violent offenders out of Department of Corrections (DOC) custody, in the interest of improving outcomes for both kids and public safety.

The Juvenile Justice Public Safety Improvement Act Oversight Council's statutory charge is to monitor the impact of those changes.

The group's 2022 report runs through the number of young offenders who finish probation without a new charge (93%), the jump in offenders who don't reoffend within three years (79%), the reduction in misdemeanor charges since 2015 (40%), and the drop in children on probation overall since 2015 (43%).

On Wednesday, however, the oversight council spent much of its time during a Zoom meeting talking about a series of legislative proposals that could make it easier to incarcerate children. The annual legislative session begins in January.



A hallway and secured room doors at the Minnehaha County Juvenile Center in Sioux Falls, as pictured on Oct. 21, 2022.

Three strikes proposal

One proposal in particular stood out for the council: a "three strikes" rule that would commit a child to the DOC if they commit three offenses in six months.

The change was one of several advanced by a legislative summer study on juvenile justice, all of which could be rewritten prior to the session or amended during it.

The general idea of a three strikes rule, though, earned plenty of support from the summer study group.

Wade Pogany of the Associated School Boards of South Dakota told the study group that a period of nine months – the length of the school year – might be more helpful for the teachers who see repeat offenders back in the classroom.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 5 of 78

If a child is charged three times in six months, "that probably signals that there's something going on with that individual," Greg Sattizahn, state court administrator and member of the oversight council, said on Wednesday.

Sattizahn had testified in favor of advancing the three strikes rule earlier this month, but he also told the study group it wouldn't affect many children.

He reiterated that data point to the oversight council this week, this time with additional details. In the last fiscal year, 35 South Dakota kids faced a charge three or more times in the space of six months. Of those, 12 were placed in DOC custody.

In total, 2,849 kids were adjudicated for a misdemeanor, felony, or as a child in need of supervision (CHINS) during the 2022 fiscal year.

The fact that 12 of the 35 repeat offenders wound up in DOC custody in the absence of a three strikes rule is telling, according to Kristi Bunkers, the head of juvenile services for the DOC and a member of the council. The reform law already gives judges the discretion to consider repeat offenses and public safety, she said.

There were 63 kids committed to DOC custody in the last fiscal year. More than half, Bunkers said, got there after a judge overrode the presumption of probation attached to most non-violent offenses after the 2015 reforms passed.

The draft bill doesn't account for the severity of an offense, Bunkers said, only the frequency. That approach would be a mistake, she said.

"That's not a policy we use in adult criminal justice sentencing that I'm aware of. I'm not sure it makes sense for children," said Bunkers, who also testified in opposition to the proposal earlier this month.

School district complaints

Statistics might not tell the whole story, however, at least according to Wayne Steinhauer, an oversight council member and outgoing state senator from Hartford who sat on the summer study group that pitched the three strikes idea.

During the group's rundown of its annual report, Steinhauer told the council that the study group learned about school districts that no longer bother to report some offenses.

"Our second largest district in Rapid City doesn't write citations for truancy, because the kids have figured out, 'Gee, all I've got to do is pay a fine and I don't have to go to school,'" Steinhauer said.

Superintendents across the state are among the most vocal proponents of a push for an easier path to DOC custody, said Rep. Kevin Jensen of Canton. The 2015 reforms came on the heels of a pilot project in Sioux Falls called the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, or JDAI, which Jensen said has earned the ire of educators.

"What we heard last year was that JDAI has turned the school system into the law enforcement system," Jensen said.

The council took pains not to talk about taking a position as a group on any proposals at such an early stage, however. The group's charge is to monitor data, not make policy recommendations, though its members may well testify on behalf of their own agency.

A lack of communication on best practices has been a throughline for many of the struggles that have put the 2015 reforms in the crosshairs of some lawmakers, according to South Dakota Supreme Court Justice Janine Kern.

The reforms were evidence-based, she said, but police, educators and mental health providers weren't on the same page as to how they might play out in practice.

When the pitch for tougher penalties arrives in January, she said, those stakeholders will need to help lawmakers refine the proposals in a way that addresses their public safety concerns and also preserves the benefits of diversion programs.

"Some of that's going to have to be vetted by the Legislature to find that balance," Kern said.



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.

Attorney general makes new hires to address human trafficking, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - NOVEMBER 30, 2022 3:26 PM

Attorney General Mark Vargo announced two new hires Wednesday to address human trafficking and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons.

Allison Morrisette is the state's inaugural Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons coordinator. Morrisette is an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe who last served as adult diversion coordinator for the Pennington County State's Attorney's Office, which Vargo headed before becoming attorney general.

"I am excited to begin this work," Morrisette said in a news release. "A lot of my relatives feel they are overlooked. My job with the Attorney General's Office is to ensure that is not true. In my culture we live by the words 'Mitakuye Oyasin,' which means 'all my relations' or 'we are all related.' I carry that belief with me into this new role."

The state's new human trafficking coordinator is Mary Beth Holzwarth. For the past 13 years, she has served as the CEO of Endeavor 52, a grassroots organization dedicated to child sexual assault prevention.

"Joining the Attorney General's Office in this new role gives me the opportunity to carry on my work combatting childhood sexual abuse and widen my focus to address other manifestations of exploitation, including sexual and labor trafficking," Holzwarth said.

Vargo said he looks forward to the positive impact these two coordinators can make for South Dakota.

"I am thrilled to welcome the breadth and depth of expertise Allison and Mary Beth bring to the Attorney General's Office and am confident they will help the office live up to its motto of 'Equal Justice Under the Law,'" Vargo said.

The Legislature approved the creation of the coordinator positions in 2021, but then-Attorney General Jason Ravensborg did not fill the positions prior to his impeachment and removal from office this year. Vargo began seeking to fill the positions after Gov. Kristi Noem appointed him as attorney general in June. Vargo did not run for election to the job and will yield it in January to Marty Jackley, who ran uncontested in November. Vargo will return to his prior job as state's attorney in Pennington County.



Allison Morrisette, left, the state's new Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons coordinator, and Mary Beth Holzwarth, right, the state's new human trafficking coordinator. (Courtesy of Attorney General's Office)

Federal government opens grassland conservation program to tribes

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 30, 2022 2:32 PM

Three South Dakota tribal nations have a new opportunity to partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to conserve and improve grasslands.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program pays landowners to set aside environmentally sensitive land for a specific conservation concern. Landowners get money, and the public gets benefits like cleaner water and more wildlife habitat. Grasslands also fight climate change by removing heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in the soil.

The Cheyenne River, Oglala and Rosebud Sioux tribes will soon enter into agreements with the USDA to enroll eligible lands within the boundaries of their reservations, according to a USDA news release. These are the first-ever CREP agreements in partnership with tribal nations.

Scott Marlow, a USDA deputy administrator for farm programs, met with tribal leaders at Western Dakota Technical College in Rapid City to discuss the CREP agreements.

"It is vital that programs like CREP are not just available but also accessible to all agricultural communities," Marlow said in a statement. "These agreements underscore not only our strong commitment to equity, but also the vital contribution Native communities make to our country's agriculture and conservation efforts."

The agreement authorizes enrollment of up to 1.5 million acres by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, 1 million acres by the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and 600,000 acres by the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.

Through the program, land owned by the tribes and individual tribal farmers or ranchers will be voluntarily entered into contracts with the federal government for 10 to 15 years, under a vegetative cover of grasses and legumes.

Farmers and ranchers retain the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding. In return, the USDA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance for establishing permanent fencing and livestock watering facilities needed to support livestock grazing.

The tribal CREPs do not require participants to enroll in the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks' sponsored habitat and access program. As a result, the enrolled land will not be open to public hunting.

The USDA will accept tribal enrollments in the coming weeks.



(John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)



JOSHUA HAIAR  

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

U.S. House votes to avert calamitous rail strike, but Senate prospects murky

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - NOVEMBER 30, 2022 6:11 PM

The U.S. House moved Wednesday to avoid an economically disastrous nationwide rail strike, voting to codify an agreement that members of some unions had already rejected and separately add paid sick leave that workers had demanded.

The two-track approach allows Democrats to avert a strike that could cost the U.S. economy up to \$2 billion per day, while also acknowledging they sympathized with union members' request for more sick leave.

Prospects in the Senate, where progressive stalwart Bernie Sanders, an independent from Vermont, and other members of the Democratic caucus have asked that sick leave be added to any deal imposed by Congress, remained murky Wednesday.

As the House votes closed Wednesday, Sanders was on the Senate floor urging support for the sick leave proposal.

"I hope very much that in a bipartisan way we can do the right thing and tell the rail workers and tell every worker in America that the United States Congress is prepared to stand with them and not just the people on top who are doing extraordinarily well," he said.

Several Republicans have also signaled their support for adding sick leave, but it's unclear if there are 10 Republicans needed to approve that measure.

The congressional action comes after President Joe Biden convened a panel of arbitrators to secure a deal between railroads and union leaders in September. That deal provided a 24% increase in total compensation to rail workers, but did not affect sick leave policies that unions said were unworkable.

Four of the 12 rail unions declined to endorse the deal. They are legally able to strike on Dec. 9, though rail service is likely to be affected if a work stoppage is not avoided by week's end. Thousands of businesses would feel the impact in the weeks before the holidays.

Democrats say they must act

Biden, who fashioned himself "a proud pro-labor president," said this week he would have preferred not to wade into the dispute, but that the economic consequences necessitated federal action.

"I am reluctant to override the ratification procedures and the views of those who voted against the agreement," he said. "But in this case — where the economic impact of a shutdown would hurt millions of other working people and families — I believe Congress must use its powers to adopt this deal."

House Democrats took similar positions this week, appearing reluctant to approve a deal that unions had rejected, but doing so anyway to avoid economic catastrophe.

"Congress has the authority to act," U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen, a Washington Democrat who is a senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said Wednesday. "Not because we want to, but we have to avoid a work stoppage. And we have to recognize that the tentative agreement falls well short of what is necessary for paid leave for rail workers."

Republicans took the opportunity to blast Biden for failing to avert the rail shutdown with the September negotiation. Congress shouldn't have to be involved, they said.

"Congress should be a last resort," U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, a Republican of Iowa, said. "Biden and this ad-



The U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. (Jane Norman/States Newsroom)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 9 of 78

ministration, they need to be more engaged in this. This is not our business. We shouldn't be negotiating union contracts."

Bipartisan vote

Wednesday's 290-137 House vote to approve the tentative agreement — without added sick time — was bipartisan, with only eight Democrats voting against and more than one-third of Republicans voting to approve it.

The vote to add the sick leave provision passed, 221-207, mostly along party lines, with three Republicans — Don Bacon of Nebraska, Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania and John Katko of New York — joining all House Democrats in voting to approve.

Avoiding a rail shutdown should be the priority, House Transportation and Infrastructure ranking Republican Sam Graves of Missouri said, not mollifying union members.

Congress stepping in to override private negotiations and the recommendation of a neutral mediation board undermined future collective bargaining, he said.

"It's nothing more than a political stunt," Graves said. "It's pandering ... Today my colleagues are acting very recklessly and are setting a terrible precedent."

U.S. Rep. Donald Payne, the New Jersey Democrat who chairs the panel's rail subcommittee, responded that the proposal would only right the wrong of rail workers' insufficient paid sick leave.

"This is not pandering," Payne responded. "This is seeing a situation and addressing it."

Uncertainty in Senate

After House passage, the measure will move to the Senate, where it's unclear if the tentative agreement, the resolution with added sick time or neither would pass.

The chamber will likely vote either Thursday or Friday.

Colorado's John Hickenlooper was among the Senate Democrats joining Sanders in calling for seven days of added sick leave — the same amount required of federal contractors — to be included in a congressional resolution.

"Railroad companies are holding the American economy hostage over 56 annual hours of sick leave," Hickenlooper said in a statement. "Just seven days. We can keep our economy humming, our supply chains open, AND treat workers with dignity.

"Any bill should include the SEVEN days of sick leave rail workers have asked for."

Several Republicans gave varying levels of support to the prospect of adding sick leave to a bill. Ten would be needed to pass such a bill if every Democrat voted in favor. West Virginia Democrat Joe Manchin III, considered the caucus' most conservative member, has not said how he would vote on the sick leave proposal.

Ernst said her party was "debating this heavily."

But since Congress is involved, she said she would base her vote on the views of union members — not necessarily their leaders. Union leaders negotiated the September agreement that lacked all the sick time members sought.

Florida Republican Sens. Marco Rubio and Rick Scott said they wouldn't vote for the tentative agreement that was opposed by workers.

Leaders of the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, a major transportation union, on Wednesday morning prior to the vote endorsed the bill to add seven days of sick leave.

"Right now, every Member of Congress has an opportunity to be a champion of the working class," TTD President Greg Regan and Secretary-Treasurer Shari Semelsberger said in a statement.

"We implore these elected leaders to stand with essential workers who are the backbone of our nation's supply chain. We urge the House and the Senate to vote in favor of guaranteeing seven days of paid sick leave to rail workers."

In a statement, Biden thanked the House for passing its bill and called on the Senate to follow suit "immediately."

"Without action this week, disruptions to our auto supply chains, our ability to move food to tables, and

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 10 of 78

our ability to remove hazardous waste from gasoline refineries will begin," he said. "The Senate must move quickly and send a bill to my desk for my signature immediately."

\$2 billion per day

The Association of American Railroads, the trade group for the leading rail service providers, estimated that a nationwide shutdown would mean daily losses of \$2 billion for the U.S. economy.

Tens of thousands of businesses depend on rail to deliver goods, with 75,000 carloads beginning shipping every day, according to a September AAR report.

Other industries would not be in a position to replace rail transport, the report said. It would take 467,000 additional long-haul trucks to replace rail carriers.

There was unanimity among elected officials in Washington that a shutdown would be calamitous.

In a statement Monday, Biden called on Congress to approve the tentative agreement "to avert a potentially crippling national rail shutdown."

"A shutdown is unacceptable," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said at Monday's press briefing. "It will hurt families, communities across the country. It will hurt jobs. It will hurt farms. It will hurt businesses."

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg also called Monday evening for Congress to adopt the agreement to prevent "a rail shutdown that would have devastating impacts on our economy."

Democrats and Republicans in the House noted that a shutdown would worsen inflation, driving up energy and other costs.

And because of the complexity of the supply chain, any stoppage in service could take much longer to unfurl, Ed Mortimer a former vice president for transportation and infrastructure at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said in an interview.

"Any type of disruption — it could only last a week, but it could take a month or two to get back to whatever normal was," he said.

—Jennifer Shutt contributed to this report.



JACOB FISCHLER

Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

At tribal summit, Biden pledges federal commitment to Indian Country

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - NOVEMBER 30, 2022 4:52 PM

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Wednesday said he is poised to designate Avi Kwa Ame, a sacred site for Native American tribes in southern Nevada, as a national monument that would ensure the preservation of ancestral lands for those 12 tribes.

"I'm committed to protecting this sacred place that is central to the creation story of some many tribes," Biden said during the second White House Tribal Nations Summit.

It was not an official designation, which tribal leaders pointed out, the Nevada Current reported.

The announcement took place at the U.S. Department of Interior, where the president also announced economic, climate and land management actions the administration is taking to foster a strong federal relationship with Indian Country.

Spirit Mountain, named Avi Kwa Ame by the Mojave tribe, is considered sacred to 10 Yuman-speaking tribes, and the Hopi and Chemehuevi Paiute tribes, because the area is the center of the Yuman tribe's creation story and ancestral lands.

Those Yuman-speaking tribes are the Mojave, Hualapai, Yavapai, Havasupai, Quechan, Maricopa, Pai Pai, Halchidhoma, Cocopah and Kumeyaay.

Local leaders and tribes have petitioned for the land to become a national monument to ensure its protection.

"The Yuman Tribes believe the mountain is the spiritual birthplace of the tribes, the place where ancient ancestors emerged into this world," according to the petition.

Biden added that he looked forward to visiting the site in person and also said he plans to make an official presidential visit to Indian Country, but did not elaborate on when that would take place.

He also thanked the Democratic members of the Nevada congressional delegation — Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen and Reps. Dina Titus, Susie Lee and Steven Horsford — for their involvement in lobbying for a national monument designation for Avi Kwa Ame.

In a statement, Cortez Masto said that the land that is sacred to a dozen tribes is also a "critical habitat for a wide range of wildlife, provides world-class outdoor recreation opportunities, and contains some of the most stunning landscapes in Nevada."

"Across Nevada, this national monument has widespread support and is a key part of our work to protect our environmental and cultural resources," she said.

Tribal summit

U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Native American Cabinet secretary, a former member of Congress from New Mexico and a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, outlined at the tribal summit some of the commitments and investments the Biden administration has made in Indian Country.

She said her agency and the federal government were committed to addressing intergenerational trauma in Indian Country, ensuring that Native American children are able to learn their ancestral languages in



Members of the Wambli Ska Society perform a Lakota drum song at a ceremony on Sept. 13, 2022, in Pierre to celebrate the launch of a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons liaison within the South Dakota Attorney General's Office. (Courtesy of Attorney General's Office)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 12 of 78

schools, and providing access to \$13 billion in federal funding through the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

More than 13% of tribal homes do not have access to water or sanitation, compared to fewer than 1% of U.S. households. Many Native Americans have to rely on water trucks brought onto reservations.

Haaland said she was pleased to work with U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona to ensure that Native American youth have access to their culture and the preservation of tribal languages.

"Our children deserve to inherit the knowledge our ancestors sought to pass down," she said.

Haaland added that the Interior Department has invested more than \$45 billion in Indian Country from the American Rescue Plan, the bipartisan infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act.

"This agency once charged with assimilating our people through family separation is now leading the work to heal those broken promises and to strengthen Indian Country," she said.

Administration initiatives

Biden said he was proud of Haaland's work at the agency, and highlighted some initiatives the White House was putting in place.

Some of those actions include a new memorandum that Biden is signing that would set guidelines across all federal agencies regarding tribal consultations, and increasing tribal participation in the management and stewardship of federal lands and waters that are significant to those communities. This agreement between Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture would be a co-stewardship.

Biden added that other top priorities include climate resiliency, as some tribes "are at risk of being washed away" due to climate change, and investigations into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

"The spirit of friendship, stewardship and respect have taken too long for us to recognize ... and it's the only way to move forward," Biden said.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack also announced initiatives the agency is taking to help Indian Country.

"We continue to make our programs and services more accessible and include Indigenous viewpoints in program design and delivery," Vilsack said in a statement.

The agency will form a permanent Tribal Advisory Committee, which will advise the USDA secretary on issues important to tribal producers. Applications for that committee will be open in the coming weeks, Vilsack said.

USDA is also working to improve broadband issues through the ReConnect Program, which provides grants and loans for communities to construct infrastructure needed for broadband, to increase tribal access to high speed internet.

The agency will also partner with Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College in North Dakota for research about the integration of Western and Indigenous knowledge about Indigenous plants that are important to local tribes in the region.



ARIANA FIGUEROA  

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

Albertsons-Kroger mega-deal raises questions from lawmakers about higher food prices

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - NOVEMBER 30, 2022 10:40 AM

WASHINGTON — Members of a U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee panel raised concerns during a Tuesday hearing that a proposed merger between two of the largest U.S. supermarket chains could mean a monopoly on groceries and lead to higher food prices for Americans.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat who chairs the Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights, along with the top Republican on the panel, Sen. Mike Lee of Utah, grilled the CEOs of the Kroger Co., based in Cincinnati, and Albertsons Companies, Inc., based in Boise, Idaho. The two companies are attempting to merge.

"Over the last decade, the grocery industry has become increasingly consolidated, with the top four chains now making up more than two-thirds of all grocery sales," Klobuchar said. "A lack of competition in the industry means higher prices and lower quality."

After Kroger announced a \$24.6 billion proposed purchase of its rival Albertsons last month, Klobuchar and Lee announced they planned to convene a hearing on the merger, citing concerns about already high food prices due to inflation, and their worry that a potential merger could worsen the problem.

Another concern senators expressed was layoffs and store closures that could follow the merger. Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, pressed Kroger CEO Rodney McMullen on how many workers would be laid off if the two companies merged.

McMullen said Kroger had no plans to lay off workers or close stores and pointed to a previous acquisition of Harris Teeter in 2014 where there were no layoffs or store closures.

"We've ended up not laying off anybody because what we found is that merged companies do things better than we do," he said.

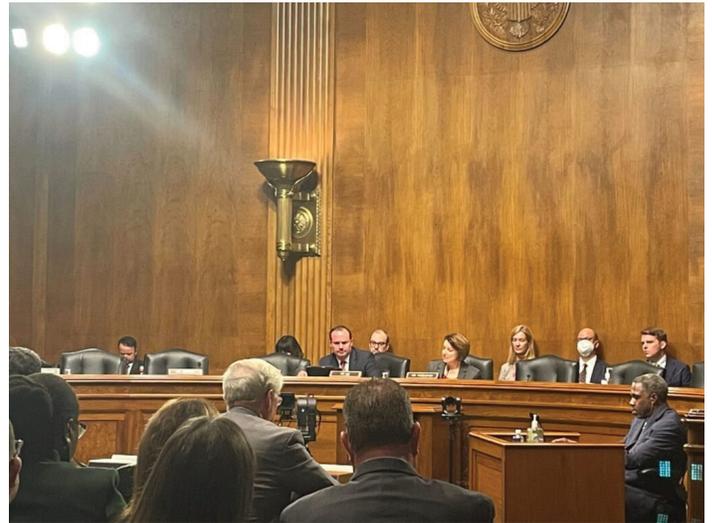
Congress would not be able to stop the merger, as those dealings are reviewed by the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department. It would likely take until 2024 to complete the merger. If deemed necessary, the FTC can take legal proceedings to stop mergers, either in federal courts or before an FTC administrative law judge.

Competing with Walmart

Kroger leaders have argued that the deal will help them compete with top grocery retailers like Walmart, and online behemoths like Amazon. Walmart controls about 21% of the grocery market share, followed by Kroger at 10% and Costco at 7%, according to Business Insider. Albertsons controls about 5.8% of the grocery market share.

Albertsons is the second-largest supermarket company, owning 2,300 stores and employing 290,000 people. Kroger is the largest supermarket operator in the U.S., with more than 2,700 stores and 450,000 employees and owns other supermarket chains like Harris Teeter, Fred Meyer and Ralphs.

Labor unions have also raised concerns. The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which represents more than 1 million grocery workers, said in a statement following the hearing that Kroger and Albertsons have not been transparent about wages, jobs and benefits for workers.



U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., and U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, at a U.S. Senate hearing on the proposed merger of grocery chains Kroger and Albertsons, Nov. 29, 2022. (Ariana

Figueroa/States Newsroom)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 14 of 78

"Now, more than ever, Kroger and Albertsons executives must provide the answers and information needed to address the serious concerns our members and the American people have about this proposed merger," according to the statement.

Klobuchar and Lee wrote a joint letter to Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan, asking for her assurance that the commission will thoroughly investigate the merger.

They asked the agency to include findings from its investigation last fall "into grocery prices and the availability of food products, sending data requests to a number of companies, including Kroger," in its proposed analysis of the new merger.

According to the Consumer Price Index, food-at-home, such as grocery store or supermarket food purchases, increased 0.5% from September to October and was 12.4% higher than October of last year.

Keeping prices low

Klobuchar and Sen. Alex Padilla, a California Democrat, grilled McMullen on how he expected Kroger to keep its grocery prices low if the company took out its biggest competitor, Albertsons, arguing that Kroger would not have an incentive to keep prices low without competition.

"I just don't see less competition going forward," McMullen said, adding that his company would still compete with Costco, Walmart and Amazon.

Sumit Sharma, a senior researcher of technology competition at Consumer Reports, disagreed with that assessment.

"The most likely outcome is increased prices, fewer choices for consumers, and reduced supermarket access for some consumers," he said.

Padilla said that in California alone there are several areas where Albertsons and Kroger are the only supermarkets and if this merger goes through, his constituents will only have one option to do their food shopping.

"That's the concern," he said. "With less competition, prices go up."

Cotton questions Kroger uniforms

Sen. Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican, did not ask questions about the implications of the merger for food prices and instead took issue with the uniform that Kroger employees wear, which is an apron.

He cited a religious discrimination lawsuit that Kroger recently settled in late October, in which the store paid \$180,000 to employees who were fired months after they were given new apron uniforms displaying a heart patch with rainbow colors.

The former employees interpreted the aprons as supportive of the LGBTQ+ community, and said the aprons violated their religious beliefs.

"If this merger goes through, who's going to be making decisions about uniforms?" Cotton asked.

McMullen said that uniforms are put together by an associate resource group that designs them.

"The heart is a symbol of our fundamental purpose ... to be in community spirit," McMullen said about the patch. "And part of being the human spirit is the heart and that heart is our fundamental strategy to support our purpose. The colors were not tied to any specific thing."

2015 Merger

Klobuchar and Lee said they were skeptical the merger would not increase food prices, following what happened in a 2015 merger between Albertsons and Safeway.

In 2015, as part of that merger, Albertsons had to participate in a divestiture and was required to sell 168 stores before it was allowed to merge with Safeway, per an order by the FTC.

Haggen bought most of the Albertsons stores, but in less than a year, the company filed for bankruptcy and Albertsons ended up buying back most of the stores.

"I think this weighs heavily on the minds of a lot of people who have concerns about this agreement, just looking at the immediate past and what happened," Klobuchar said.

Blocked dividend payout

Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a lawsuit earlier this month to block Albertsons from giving its shareholders a \$4 billion dividend payout before the proposed merger with Kroger until the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 15 of 78

merger can be reviewed by state and federal antitrust officials.

Ferguson argued that the \$4 billion dividend payments exceeded what Albertsons had on hand, which according to SEC filings was \$2.5 billion. Albertsons was prepared to borrow the rest for the dividend payments.

By reducing Albertsons' cash on hand, Ferguson argued, it would make it difficult for Albertsons to keep up with inventory orders, "forcing customers to go to other grocery stores when shelves are not stocked with the products they seek," and that less "inventory to stock could also impact employee hours."

"Paying out \$4 billion before regulators can do their job and review the proposed merger will weaken Albertsons' ability to continue business operations and compete," Ferguson said in a statement. "Free enterprise is built on companies competing, and that competition benefits consumers. Corporations proposing a merger cannot sabotage their ability to compete while that merger is under review."

A King County Superior Court commissioner granted Ferguson's motion on Nov. 3.



ARIANA FIGUEROA  

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

**'TIS THE
SEASON TO
SHOP LOCAL**

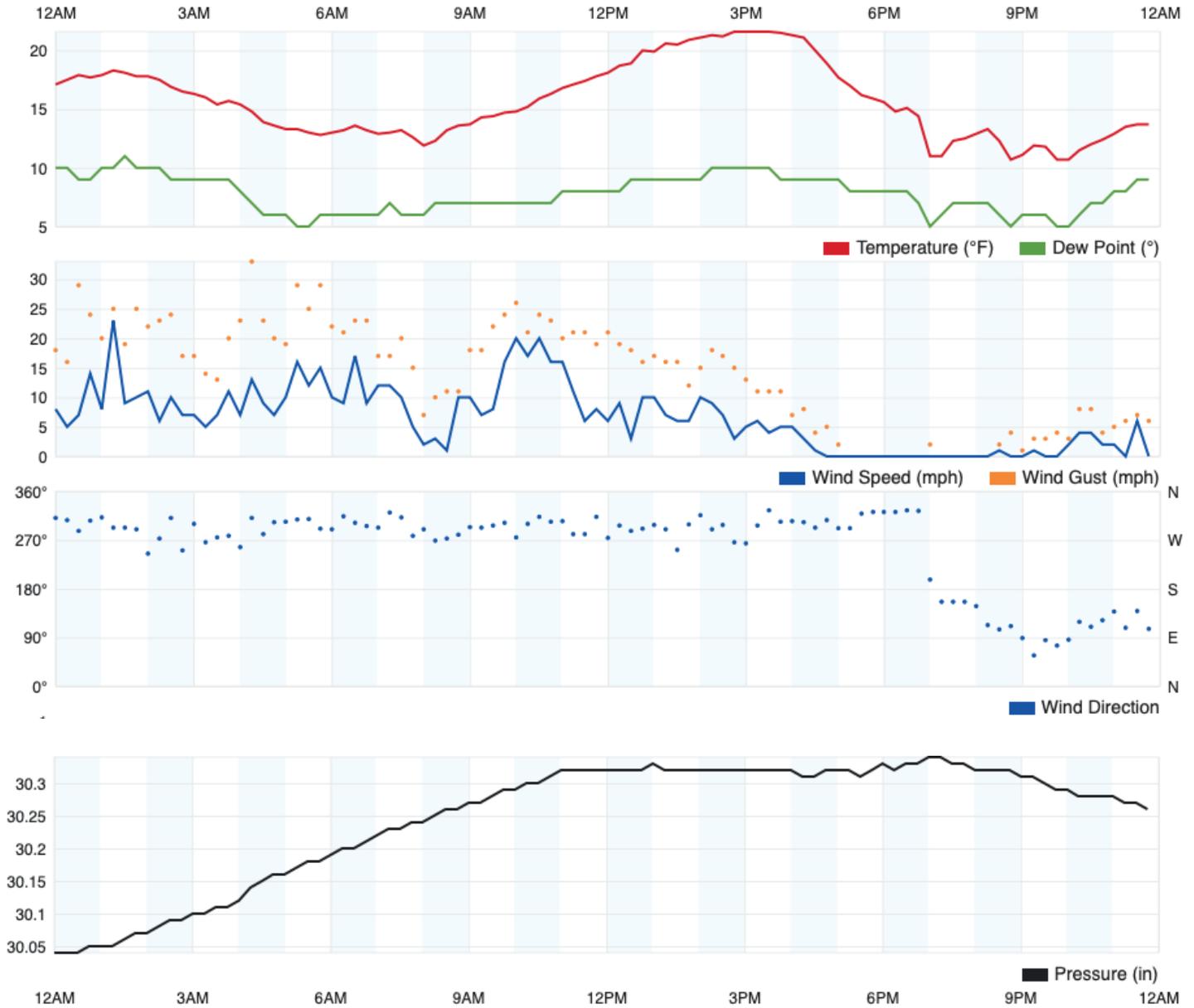
GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 16 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 17 of 78

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Decreasing Clouds and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Blustery. Cloudy then Snow Likely	Slight Chance Snow and Blustery then Mostly Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 43 °F	Low: 21 °F	High: 28 °F↓	Low: -3 °F	High: 26 °F	Low: 8 °F	High: 28 °F

Winds Today & Friday

	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast																	
	12/1 Thu						12/2 Fri						12/3 Sat					
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am
Aberdeen	40↑	36↑	28↑	24↑	21↑	22↑	22↓	24↓	23↓	36↓	39↓	40↓	38↓	35↓	29↓	24↓	15↓	20↓
Britton	30↑	36↑	33↑	26↑	22↑	23↑	24↑	21↓	22↓	32↓	38↓	38↓	40↓	38↓	33↓	25↓	16↓	23↓
Eagle Butte	17↓	16↓	17↑	17↑	18↑	22↑	25↑	31↑	36↑	40↑	41↑	44↑	35↑	30↑	21↓	17↓	17↑	22↑
Eureka	24↓	23↓	21↑	17↑	15↓	16↓	20↓	24↓	28↓	38↓	44↓	44↓	40↓	37↓	29↓	20↓	15↓	21↑
Gettysburg	28↓	26↓	21↑	21↑	20↑	21↑	23↑	28↑	31↑	43↑	46↑	46↑	38↑	33↑	26↓	22↓	16↓	23↑
Kennebec	28↑	26↑	26↑	22↑	25↑	25↑	23↑	28↑	26↑	40↑	45↑	45↑	32↑	31↑	26↓	20↓	15↓	22↑
McIntosh	17↓	17↓	16↓	16↑	15↓	20↓	30↓	32↓	37↓	41↓	45↓	45↓	39↓	31↓	22↓	15↓	17↓	24↑
Milbank	24↓	35↑	32↑	26↑	18↓	24↑	24↑	22↓	20↓	26↓	35↓	41↓	46↓	45↓	37↓	32↓	20↓	18↓
Miller	44↑	36↑	26↓	23↓	26↑	28↑	25↑	21↓	24↓	33↓	41↓	43↓	39↓	38↓	29↓	24↓	16↓	22↑
Mobridge	26↓	20↓	17↑	17↑	15↓	15↓	21↓	26↓	29↓	37↓	41↓	40↓	37↓	31↓	21↓	16↓	14↓	21↑
Murdo	26↑	29↑	31↑	26↑	26↑	28↑	30↑	30↑	32↑	40↑	44↑	44↑	30↑	28↑	23↓	18↓	17↑	23↑
Pierre	25↓	16↓	17↑	17↑	16↓	17↑	18↓	23↓	26↓	36↓	39↓	41↓	32↓	26↓	22↓	16↓	13↓	18↑
Redfield	36↓	36↑	31↑	25↑	22↓	22↓	21↓	23↓	23↓	36↓	43↓	44↓	40↓	38↓	30↓	24↓	14↓	18↑
Sisseton	25↓	31↑	31↑	25↑	16↓	20↓	21↓	22↓	21↓	30↓	36↓	38↓	44↓	44↓	38↓	33↓	21↓	21↑
Watertown	38↑	44↑	38↑	32↑	30↑	30↑	29↑	23↑	21↑	25↑	38↑	43↑	45↑	44↑	38↑	33↑	20↑	21↑
Webster	41↑	46↑	37↑	31↑	28↑	30↑	29↑	24↑	24↑	32↑	43↑	45↑	43↑	41↑	38↑	33↑	22↑	23↑
Wheaton	32↓	35↓	31↓	25↓	20↓	18↓	16↓	17↓	17↓	25↓	32↓	35↓	43↓	43↓	37↓	32↓	20↓	18↓

Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/abr



Graphic Created
12/1/2022 4:47 AM

Expect to wake up to the winds howling out there with strong south winds through much of the day. Winds will weaken a little before shifting to the northwest and picking back up with the passage of a cold front tonight. Winds will slacken early Saturday.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 18 of 78

Temperatures

	Maximum Temperature Forecast																	
	12/1 Thu						12/2 Fri						12/3 Sat					
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am
Aberdeen	28	32	42	43	37	33	33	33	30	23	20	16	12	9	5	2	2	14
Britton	22	30	38	39	33	32	32	32	28	25	21	17	11	7	4	2	1	11
Eagle Butte	19	33	43	44	37	38	39	35	26	14	14	14	11	8	6	4	6	19
Eureka	20	28	39	40	33	29	28	26	21	16	15	13	7	3	0	-3	0	13
Gettysburg	22	32	43	45	38	36	34	33	28	16	15	15	11	7	5	2	3	17
Kennebec	25	40	54	57	48	41	41	40	39	25	22	21	17	13	10	8	9	24
McIntosh	17	26	36	37	31	26	24	22	16	13	12	12	7	3	1	0	3	15
Milbank	19	31	39	39	32	32	35	36	35	33	30	22	16	12	8	6	6	14
Miller	24	37	46	48	41	42	43	41	39	27	22	20	14	9	7	5	6	19
Mobridge	26	32	43	44	37	33	31	28	24	19	18	17	12	9	6	4	6	18
Murdo	30	43	55	58	49	43	44	44	41	23	21	21	16	13	10	8	10	26
Pierre	27	40	52	55	49	45	43	43	39	22	21	21	18	14	13	10	10	24
Redfield	23	32	43	45	39	36	37	36	35	26	23	20	15	9	6	4	3	15
Sisseton	19	31	39	40	33	32	33	34	33	30	24	20	13	11	7	5	5	14
Watertown	19	30	36	37	34	34	34	34	32	31	28	21	15	9	6	3	2	12
Webster	21	29	36	37	33	34	34	34	32	27	21	17	11	8	5	2	2	11
Wheaton	16	26	35	37	32	29	30	31	29	27	23	19	13	10	7	4	2	10

Light Snow

- Develops West to East During The Morning Friday
- Wraps Up Friday Afternoon
- Dusting to 1 Inch Accumulation (Though locally 'heavier' amounts are possible 😊)

Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/abr



Graphic Created
12/1/2022 4:51 AM

Mild temperatures thanks to the winds mixing out cold air, however a cold front tonight will bring in another arctic airmass. Snow accumulation with this system will be light, though a few spots may see up to two inches when all is said and done.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 19 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 22 °F at 2:35 PM

Low Temp: 10 °F at 7:03 PM

Wind: 33 mph at 4:08 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 2 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 65 in 2021

Record Low: -24 in 1893

Average High: 35°F

Average Low: 13°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.02

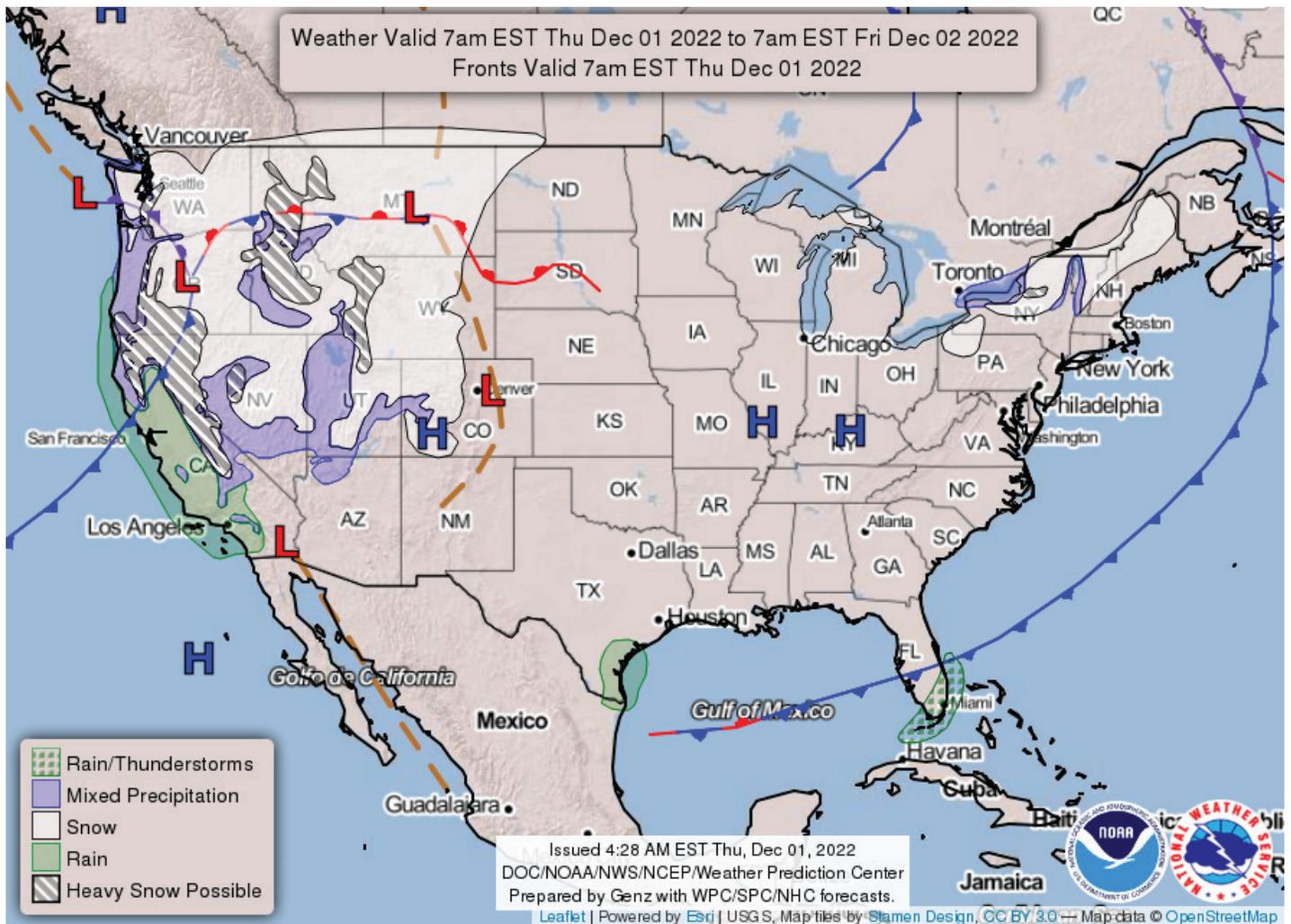
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.23

Precip Year to Date: 16.50

Sunset Tonight: 4:52:35 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51:33 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 20 of 78

Today in Weather History

December 1, 1985: A storm system with heavy snow, strong winds, and blizzard conditions visited the region on December 1st through 2nd. Most of the snow fell in Minnesota. Snowfall across Minnesota increased from the south during the early morning of December 1st and had spread across most of the state by late morning. Winds in the west-central and southwest parts of the state increased to 40 to 50 mph, causing blizzard conditions. By late morning, drifts had reached 3 feet, and snowplows were pulled off roads from the southwest into central Minnesota due to restricted visibilities. The winds continued through the evening, gradually diminished during the morning of December 2nd. High winds and cold temperatures broke power lines and caused power outages over portions of southern and west-central Minnesota during the afternoon of December 1st and December 2nd. Many highways were impassable, and numerous businesses and schools were closed on the morning of December 2nd until residents could dig out. There were a few travelers that became stranded for up to 6 hours in their vehicles. Traffic accidents also accounted for some injuries and a few deaths. Further west, in South Dakota, strong winds gusted to around 40 mph and produced ground blizzard conditions over most of the state. The low visibilities, road conditions, and strong winds stranded a family for 25 hours south of Colome in Tripp County and another family for eight hours near Lee's Corner in Brule County. Many roads were blocked in the state's central and western parts, and no travel was advised in the east. The blowing and drifting snow reduced visibilities to near zero, and many accidents were reported. The strong winds, along with the previous day's snowfall, caused some damage, including the collapse of the roof of a large barn south of Bemis in Deuel County. Many church services were canceled on December 1, as were many schools on December 2. Temperatures became frigid during the morning of December 2 in the northwest part of the state. Camp Crook in Harding County reported a low of -36 F. Pierre had 2 inches of snow, Aberdeen, Castlewood, Clark, and Redfield had 3 inches, Bryant had 4 inches, Clear Lake, Milbank, and Wilmot had 8 inches. Timber Lake fell to -24F on the 2nd while McLaughlin fell to -30F.

December 1, 1992: A storm system caused numerous traffic accidents and stranded several hundred travelers on December 1st across northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota as Interstate 29 was closed between Watertown and Sisseton. Slush on roadways became ice as high wind gusts were up to 60 mph, and snowfall of one to four inches brought blizzard conditions to some areas. Several semi-trucks jackknifed, and many cars ran into ditches, causing minor injuries. Simultaneously, strong northwest winds further west in central and north-central South Dakota gusted up to 67 mph on the 1st. The high winds shattered windows and blew down trees and signs. The wind rolled a van into a car, causing damage to both vehicles. A wind-blown dumpster damaged another vehicle. The wind also blew toppers off several pickup trucks, causing some damage.

December 1, 2007: A strong low-pressure area moving across the central plains brought widespread snowfall of 6 to 12 inches across northeast South Dakota. The snow began between 4 and 8 am and ended between 7 and 9 p.m. on December 1st. The heavy snow mainly affected travel and Saturday activities. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Clark, Conde, Faulkton, Redfield, and Watertown, 7 inches at Groton, Roscoe, and Sisseton, 8 inches at Britton, Summit, Bryant, 9 inches at Aberdeen and Kidder, and 12 inches at Big Stone City.

1962: The 50th Grey Cup was played in Toronto, Ontario, between the Hamilton Tiger-Cats and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Severe lakefront fog halts the game with 9:22 left to play on December 1st. Winnipeg wins the Fog Bowl the following day by a score of 28-27.

1970: Four tornadoes impacted east-central Wisconsin during the morning hours. The strongest tornado, an F3, formed at 10:15 AM near Medina in Outagamie County. The twister moved northeast at 50 mph and destroyed twenty barns and five houses.

2006: A winter storm produced more than 6 inches of snow along a 1,000-mile-long path from central Oklahoma to northern Michigan from November 30-December 1st. The storm also produced significant freezing rain, which impacted the St. Louis area. An estimated 500 or more homes and businesses were without power in the St. Louis area after this storm.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

ARE YOU READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

Hal and Matt, two longtime friends, accidentally met in a department store a few weeks before Christmas. They gave each other a forced smile – as if they were happy to see each other – but wished their meeting was under different circumstances.

“You know,” said Hal, “I’ve come to the conclusion that Christmas has become a wrap race.”

“I agree,” replied Matt. “And I’ll tell you something else. I’ve finally discovered the real meaning of the word Yule.”

“Oh,” responded Hal. “What is it? I’d like to know myself.”

“It’s my wife saying in a very convincing voice, ‘You’ll buy me this and then you’ll buy me that!’ I feel like I have no choice but to buy her whatever she asks for,” replied Matt. “Everything seems to be about things.”

It would be a wise investment of our time this Christmas to try to imagine what God might have seen when He looked into the manger. Certainly it was more, much more, than a Baby. Did He see the crowds ridiculing and mocking His Son? Did He turn His head when He saw the “kiss of betrayal” from Judas? Was His mind troubled by the trial that unjustly condemned His Son? Did He weep when He saw Jesus hanging from the cross? Certainly.

But let’s not forget to see the smile that was on His face and the peace that flooded into His heart when He saw the empty tomb.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to get ready for Christmas by seeing its sights and sounds through Your eyes. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”



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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 22 of 78

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)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 23 of 78

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul



News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

02-06-09-13-19

(two, six, nine, thirteen, nineteen)

Estimated jackpot: \$205,000

Lotto America

12-21-35-42-45, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 2

(twelve, twenty-one, thirty-five, forty-two, forty-five; Star Ball: six; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$30,690,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 333,000,000

Powerball

04-19-24-47-66, Powerball: 10, Power Play: 2

(four, nineteen, twenty-four, forty-seven, sixty-six; Powerball: ten; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$81,000,000

Oklahoma citizen-led initiative would codify abortion access

By ACACIA CORONADO and SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Roger Coody has no legal training and his political experience until recently had been limited to registering people to vote. Now, the Oklahoma hairstylist is pushing a ballot proposal he wrote that would make abortion access a constitutional right in his deeply red state, where Republican lawmakers have banned the procedure in nearly all circumstances.

It's part of a growing trend across the nation to put reproductive freedom to a popular vote after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade, which had guaranteed the right to abortion nationwide for nearly 50 years.

"I don't ever want to see anybody else's right stripped away from them, because you never know when it is going to be yours," said Coody, who said women who have been instrumental in his life inspired his foray into politics. "I am just trying to do my best to change things."

It won't be easy. Having overcome the initial hurdle where someone can protest a petition's legality, the Tulsa man now needs approval from the secretary of state's office. He then will have 90 days to gather more than 173,000 signatures of registered voters who want to put abortion rights to a vote. Campaigns for ballot questions can cost millions of dollars, and each signature must be verified before the governor schedules an election.

Republican state Rep. Jim Olsen, who wrote the bill to make it a felony crime to perform an abortion in Oklahoma, said he recognizes the right of citizens to launch an initiative petition, but added that "basic morality should not be argued from a standpoint of majority vote."

Coody's effort comes after voters in six other states this year rejected measures to restrict abortion access or supported efforts to protect it. Those states included liberal California and Vermont, but also more conservative Kansas and Kentucky, as well as swing-state Michigan. In Montana, voters rejected a measure that would have required health providers to take steps to save the life of an infant born alive, including after an attempted abortion.

The American Civil Liberties Union has been contacted by partners in at least a dozen states regarding similar campaigns, said Carolyn Ehrlich, a senior political strategist with the group. Such ballot initiatives can serve as a "roadmap in states where the legislature is a roadblock," she said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 25 of 78

Supporters of abortion access have also started the process of trying to get measures on the ballot in New York in 2023 and South Dakota — which has an abortion ban — in 2024.

In Virginia, Democrats who control the state Senate plan to advance legislation that would start a multi-year effort to enshrine the right to an abortion into the state constitution. But it would almost certainly be voted down in the GOP-controlled House.

Democrats who control New Jersey's state government have wrestled over putting a question on the ballot next year.

The Oklahoma effort is different than in many other places because Coody is looking to overturn an existing ban.

He tailored the proposal to follow state requirements while mimicking aspects of this year's successful proposals, he said.

"If these states can get it done, then I know that we can too," Coody said.

Citizens and advocacy groups in Oklahoma have had several successes in recent years using the initiative petition process, which is outlined in the state constitution, to bypass the Republican-controlled Legislature and put progressive ideas popular with voters on the ballot.

In one of the most surprising policy shifts in the conservative state, marijuana supporters in 2018 managed to successfully pass one of the country's most liberal medical marijuana programs. The question was approved by 57% of voters and opened the state to a booming industry.

Other ballot measures have enshrined Medicaid expansion into the state's constitution and reduced penalties for drug possession and low-level property crimes, in both cases circumventing the Legislature.

Any successful ballot initiative, particularly for a constitutional amendment, would be very difficult to pull off without significant financial support and a well-developed infrastructure that includes volunteers and attorneys or other experts familiar with the legal process, said Amber England, a political consultant in Oklahoma who successfully spearheaded an initiative to enshrine Medicaid expansion into the Oklahoma Constitution.

"Oklahoma's initiative petition process is one of, if not the most difficult, in the country, specifically because they give us 90 days to collect the number of signatures necessary," England said. "It's a very difficult process, and it's one of the reasons it's been done so few times."

England said supporters of Medicaid expansion in Oklahoma likely spent more than \$5 million on the effort.

Oklahoma state Rep. Mickey Dollens, a Democrat, said timing and strategy will be important in getting fundraising and support. Dollens plans to file a resolution to put abortion access on the ballot in an effort to gain momentum for the citizen-led movement.

"Oklahoma is arguably the reddest state in the country, but the people of Oklahoma love liberal ideas," Dollens said. "This is why the people have to pretty much do the politicians' jobs and take measures into their own hands."

Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined

Yankton Press & Dakotan. November 28, 2022.

Editorial: Questionable Changes In SD Vote Counting

To the best of our knowledge, there have never been any serious questions raised about the South Dakota election process in general.

And yet, Secretary of State-elect Monae Johnson is apparently determined to make some crucial systemic changes in this arena that may cause more problems than they seem to address.

Johnson was tabbed as the Republican nominee for the post, ousting incumbent Secretary of State Steve Barnett at the party convention last June, by promoting her vow to secure the state's elections from possible fraud and hacking. This echoes the viewpoints of those who deny the validity of the 2020 presidential election, and this prompted calls that Johnson was an election denier. During her successful fall campaign, she was evasive on this topic, and in an interview for a South Dakota Searchlight story

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 26 of 78

published in Friday's Press & Dakotan, she put the issue of the 2020 election off-limits. That would seem to suggest an answer to a straightforward question, as does her agenda for "securing" state elections.

According to the Searchlight story, she wants her office to push for county auditors to do hand counts of all ballots and may ask lawmakers to consider barring the use of tabulator machines, which would not only slow the vote counting dramatically but also be prone to less accurate results, according to veteran election officials.

"You'd never get an accurate count (with a hand count)," said Julie Pearson, a former Pennington County auditor who helped with the transition from hand-counted ballots to tabulation. "Plus, the time. Our scanners, I think, run 200 ballots a minute."

This was indicated in Tripp County, which went to hand-counting this election. Some races needed re-counts, and the ensuing process was described by Tripp County Auditor Barb Desersa as a "nightmare." Ultimately, a mismatch of votes that did occur in one audit were accounted for by a voter tabulation machine.

"(I) guarantee you 99.9% of the time your machine count is more accurate than a hand count is ever going to be," Pearson noted. "They're gonna lose track of where they're at. And when all you're doing is doing little sticks (to keep count), you know, one two, three four five, how do you not lose track of where you're at?"

Also, Johnson wants to pull back from such things as online voter registration, which Barnett advocated and which many other states are pursuing.

What all this suggests is an agenda that, we fear, will push this state backward in terms of vote tabulation and a timely reporting of results. (There is an irony in the latter in that some national politicians are demanding that all election results be known on election night. These changes would guarantee that would never come close to happening.)

It's possible to use technology to aid in counting votes as well as make it more convenient for voters to register or to change their registration information. Resisting that approach would be counterproductive and set this state's voting process back a couple decades.

END

S. Dakota AG hires missing Indigenous, trafficking positions

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's attorney general on Wednesday announced that he has filled a position to coordinate efforts from state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations, to tackle alarming rates of Indigenous people going missing or having their deaths remain unsolved.

The attorney general's office has put a new focus on crimes against Native American people, recently hiring two women to address problems Vargo described as interrelated: human trafficking and missing or murdered Indigenous people.

The state's Native American communities suffer from what advocates describe as crisis-level rates of people going missing or killed. Currently, 57% of people who are listed in the attorney general's database of missing people are Native American, despite them representing less than 9% of the state's total population. It's a problem that is not restricted to South Dakota. Tribes, federal agencies and state governments nationwide are trying to tackle a decades-long crisis of missing and murdered Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Allison Morrisette, a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe who previously worked in the Pennington County State's Attorney's office, will be South Dakota's new Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Coordinator. Mary Beth Holzwarth, who previously directed an organization dedicated to child sexual assault prevention called Endeavor 52, will be the Human Trafficking Coordinator.

Vargo said they would focus on pulling together resources to address crimes that often cross tribal and state boundaries.

"No single entity or agency can solve the problems that we face," he said at a news conference. "We all face some of the same problems and we have to face them together."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 27 of 78

The hirings, however, come almost two years after the Legislature created the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Coordinator in the attorney general's office.

Rep. Peri Pourier, a Democratic state lawmaker who spearheaded the effort to create the position, said at the news conference that she was frustrated that it had taken so long to hire someone, though she credited Vargo with making it a priority once he was appointed to the office in June.

"I am actually glad it took Attorney General Vargo to come to the table," she said. "This is a problem that is going to take all of us."

Vargo has also proposed a commission, made up of advocates, state leaders and tribal officials, to advise the attorney general's office.

The hiring delay had come under the previous attorney general, Jason Ravnsborg. He had told the Legislature that he was supportive of the position, but he had not received the funding from the Legislature to do it.

Native Hope, an organization affiliated with St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, stepped in to fund the position with a grant for the first three years. Vargo said the funding will help the position get started and anticipated the state would fund the position after that.

Morrisette, the new Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Coordinator said in a statement she was determined to change how Native Americans see the state's law enforcement.

"A lot of my relatives feel they are overlooked," she said. "My job with the Attorney General's Office is to ensure that is not true."

Prayers? Bombs? Hawaii history shows stopping lava not easy

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Prayer. Bombs. Walls. Over the decades, people have tried all of them to stanch the flow of lava from Hawaii's volcanoes as it lumbered toward roads, homes and infrastructure.

Now Mauna Loa — the world's largest active volcano — is erupting again, and lava is slowly approaching a major thoroughfare connecting the Big Island's east and west sides. And once more, people are asking if anything can be done to stop or divert the flow.

"It comes up every time there's an eruption and there's lava heading towards habited areas or highways. Some people say 'Build a wall' or 'Board up' and other people say, 'No don't!,'" said Scott Rowland, a geologist at the University of Hawaii.

Humans have rarely had much success stopping lava and, despite the world's technological advances, doing so is still difficult and dependent on the force of the flow and the terrain. But many in Hawaii also question the wisdom of interfering with nature and Pele, the Hawaiian deity of volcanoes and fire.

Attempts to divert lava have a long history in Hawaii.

In 1881, the governor of Hawaii Island declared a day of prayer to stop lava from Mauna Loa as it headed for Hilo. The lava kept coming.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, Princess Regent Lili'uokalani and her department heads went to Hilo and considered ways to save the town. They developed plans to build barriers to divert the flow and place dynamite along a lava tube to drain the molten rock supply.

Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani approached the flow, offered brandy and red scarves and chanted, asking Pele to stop the flow and go home. The flow stopped before the barriers were built.

More than 50 years later, Thomas A. Jagger, the founder of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, asked U.S. Army Air Services to send planes to bomb a Mauna Loa vent to disrupt lava channels.

Lt. Col. George S. Patton (who later became famous as a general in Europe during World War II) directed planes to drop 20 600-pound (272-kilogram) demolition bombs, according to a National Park Service account of the campaign. The bombs each had 355 pounds (161 kilograms) of TNT. The planes also dropped 20 smaller bombs that only had black powder charge.

Jagger said the bombing helped to "hasten the end of the flow," but Howard Stearns, a U.S. Geological Survey geologist onboard the last bombing run, was doubtful. In his 1983 autobiography, he wrote: "I am

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 28 of 78

sure it was a coincidence.”

According to the park service, geologists today also are doubtful the bombing stopped the lava flow, which didn't end with the bombing. Instead, the flows waned over the next few days and didn't change paths.

Rowland said authorities could use a bulldozer to pile a big berm of broken rock in front of Daniel K. Inouye Highway. If the terrain is flat, then lava would pile up behind the wall. But the lava may flow over it, like it did when something similar was attempted in Kapoho town in 1960.

Rapidly moving lava flows, like those from Kilauea volcano in 2018, would be more difficult to stop, he said.

“It would have been really hard to hard to build the walls fast enough for them. And they were heading towards groups of homes. And so you would perhaps be sacrificing some homes for others, which would just be a legal mess,” he said.

He said he believes most people in Hawaii wouldn't want to build a wall to protect the highway because it would “mess with Pele.”

If lava crosses the highway, Rowland said officials could rebuild that section of the road like they did in 2018 when different routes were covered.

Hawaii County's director of civil defense, Talmadge Magno, said Wednesday the county has no current plans to try to divert the flow, though he has had some discussions about it.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige, who was governor during the 2018 Kilauea eruption, told reporters his experience showed him it's not possible to overcome nature and Pele.

Thinking you should physically divert lava is a Western idea rooted in the notion that humans have to control everything, said Kealoha Pisciotta, a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner. She said people need to adjust to the lava, not the other way around.

“We are not separate from nature,” she said. “We are a part of nature.”

Racism row erupts as William and Kate visit Boston

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince William's office said “racism has no place in our society” as he sought to prevent the backlash over his godmother's treatment of a Black advocate for survivors of domestic abuse from overshadowing his trip to the United States.

Lady Susan Hussey, 83, resigned Wednesday as an honorary member of the royal household after the chief executive of an east London women's refuge said Hussey repeatedly asked her where she “really came from” after she told the older woman that she was British. The exchange took place at a Buckingham Palace reception for those working to end domestic violence.

“Racism has no place in our society,” his Kensington Palace office said. “These comments were unacceptable, and it's right that the individual has stepped aside with immediate effect.”

The incident reignited allegations of “institutional racism” at the palace on the first day of the Prince and Princess of Wales' visit to Boston. While the trip is focused on the Earthshot Prize, William's initiative to support entrepreneurs working on solutions to climate change and other environmental problems, the royal couple are also trying to show that the monarchy remains relevant in a multicultural world.

The episode is a reminder of last year's comments by Meghan, the duchess of Sussex, in an interview with American TV host Oprah Winfrey. Meghan, a biracial American married to William's brother, alleged that a member of the royal family inquired about the color of her baby's skin when she was pregnant with her first child.

The latest incident took place at a reception on Tuesday hosted by Camilla, the queen consort, for women working to fight domestic violence.

Ngozi Fulani, chief executive of Sistah Space, an east London refuge that provides specialist support for women of African and Caribbean heritage, detailed her exchange with a member of the royal household in lengthy Twitter post.

Fulani said that when she told the woman she was from east London, she responded, “No, what part of Africa are YOU from?”

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 29 of 78

The questioner has since been identified as Hussey, who served as the late Queen Elizabeth II's lady in waiting for more than 60 years and is one of William's godmothers. She has apologized for "unacceptable and deeply regrettable comments," Buckingham Palace said in a statement.

But the incident comes at a big moment for the royal couple — their first overseas trip in eight years and their first since becoming Prince and Princess of Wales following the death of the queen.

The highlight of the three-day visit to Boston will come on Friday, when William hosts the Earthshot Prize awards ceremony headlined by entertainers including Billie Eilish.

But the trip will also include visits to an anti-poverty program, child development researchers and local flood defenses, demonstrating the couple's commitment to important issues facing the modern world.

The visit comes less than three months after the death of Elizabeth, whose personal popularity dampened criticism of the crown during her 70-year reign. King Charles III, William's father, has made clear that his will be a slimmed-down monarchy, with less pomp and ceremony than its predecessors.

William and Kate arrived Wednesday at Boston Logan International Airport, where they were greeted by Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker and Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. The couple later attend a Boston Celtics basketball game.

Upon landing, William thanked local residents "for their many tributes paid to the late queen," noting that his grandmother recalled her 1976 bicentennial visit to Boston "with great fondness."

Obama heads to Ga. as Warnock seeks big early vote advantage

By BILL BARROW and JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia voters have cast more than 1 million ballots ahead of the Dec. 6 U.S. Senate runoff between Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock and Republican challenger Herschel Walker, with Warnock looking to juice an apparent Democratic head start in early voting with a visit Thursday from Barack Obama.

The former president will campaign with Warnock on the eve of the final day of early voting. The rally, which promises to be the largest event of Warnock's four-week runoff blitz, underscores the two parties' different approaches to early voting in the final contest of the 2022 election.

Democrats have employed an all-hands-on-deck push to bank as many votes as possible while Republicans, especially Walker, have taken a less aggressive approach that could leave the GOP nominee heavily dependent on runoff Election Day turnout.

"I think the turnout we're seeing is good, and I want to encourage people to stick with it," Warnock said as he campaigned this week, comparing voting to waiting in line at a popular Atlanta lunch spot. "The other day I went to the Slutty Vegan, and the line was wrapped around the block, and folks still waited and got their sandwiches," he said. "I went and voted yesterday, and it was pretty painless."

Walker, meanwhile, is expected to vote on the runoff's Election Day, as he did in November for the midterms.

Warnock led Walker by about 37,000 votes out of almost 4 million cast in the general election but fell short of the majority required under Georgia law. That triggered a four-week runoff blitz, with a shorter early voting window than occurred during the first round.

Statewide early voting data, including some weekend and Thanksgiving weekdays in certain counties, shows higher overall turnout in the most heavily Democratic counties and congressional districts. Still, both parties are finding data to tout as they jockey for any advantage in the final contest of the 2022 midterm election cycle, and both campaigns agree generally that Warnock will lead among early voters, as he did in the first round, while Walker will have the advantage in Election Day ballots, as he did in November. The respective margins will determine the eventual winner.

TargetSmart, a Democratic data firm, analyzed the identities of the 830,000-plus voters who'd cast ballots by the end of Tuesday and concluded that Democrats have increased their advantage by 14 percentage points over what it was with six days to go before the Nov. 8 election. That analysis did not include the 240,000-plus additional ballots cast Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 30 of 78

Walker's campaign manager, Scott Paradise, pushed back on notions of Democrats' domination. He argued that their advantage comes only because it was heavily Democratic metro-area counties that held weekend early voting, while more Republican areas waited until the statewide mandatory early voting window that began Monday. Republicans had sued, unsuccessfully, in state court trying to block Saturday early voting for the runoff.

Paradise said a Walker campaign analysis found that nine of the 10 counties with the highest turnout Monday were counties Walker won in November with a combined 70% of the vote. He added that of the state's most populous counties -- those with more than 100,000 registered voters -- it was two Republican strongholds, Hall and Forsyth, that posted the highest turnout percentages Monday. Paradise said those trends reflect high enthusiasm among Republicans.

Still, Republicans have catching up to do.

According to state voting data compiled by Ryan Anderson, an independent analyst in Atlanta, four of the state's five Democratic-held congressional districts had already seen advance turnout through Tuesday of at least 43% of the total early vote for the November election, when every Georgia county had at least 17 days of early in-person voting. Just one of Georgia's nine Republican-held congressional districts had eclipsed that 43% mark.

Warnock first won the seat as part of concurrent Senate runoffs on Jan. 5, 2021, when he and Jon Ossoff prevailed over Republican incumbents to give Democrats narrow control of the Senate for the start of President Joe Biden's tenure. Warnock won a special election and now is seeking a full six-year term.

This time, Senate control is not in play: Democrats have already secured 50 seats and have Vice President Kamala Harris' tiebreaking vote. That puts pressure on both Warnock's and Walker's campaigns to convince Georgia voters that it's worth their time to cast a second ballot, even if the national stakes aren't as high.

Warnock got about 70% of his overall first-round votes from advance voting; for Walker, it was about 58%. That translated to an advantage of more than 256,000 votes for Warnock. Walker answered with an Election Day advantage of more than 200,000.

The senator's campaign, Democratic Party committees and aligned political action committees have tailored their voter turnout efforts toward early voting. Republicans have countered with their own wide-ranging push, including a direct-mail push from one super political action committee featuring Gov. Brian Kemp, who got 200,000 more votes than Walker to win a second term comfortably.

Yet Republicans are battling some internal party narratives, including from former President Donald Trump, that question some advance voting, especially mail-in ballots, pushing some Republicans toward an Election Day ballot. As recently as Tuesday, Trump declared on social media that "YOU CAN NEVER HAVE FAIR & FREE ELECTIONS WITH MAIL-IN BALLOTS - NEVER, NEVER NEVER. WON'T AND CAN'T HAPPEN!!!"

Walker himself does not mention early in-person voting or mail-in ballots at all as he urges his supporters to vote.

Democrats, meanwhile, see Obama as a key figure in repeating Warnock's advance voting lead, because the former president remains intensely popular among core Democrats and has a solid standing among independents.

Viewers flock to watch glowing lava ooze from Hawaii volcano

By CALEB JONES, JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

KAILUA-KONA, Hawaii (AP) — The world's largest volcano oozed rivers of glowing lava Wednesday, drawing thousands of awestruck viewers who jammed a Hawaii highway that could soon be covered by the flow.

Mauna Loa awoke from its 38-year slumber Sunday, causing volcanic ash and debris to drift down from the sky. A main highway linking towns on the east and west coasts of the Big Island became an impromptu viewing point, with thousands of cars jamming the highway near Volcanoes National Park.

Anne Andersen left her overnight shift as a nurse to see the spectacle Wednesday, afraid that the road would soon be closed.

"It's Mother Nature showing us her face," she said, as the volcano belched gas on the horizon. "It's

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 31 of 78

pretty exciting.”

Gordon Brown, a visitor from Loomis, California, could see the bright orange lava from the bedroom of his rental house. So he headed out for a close-up view with his wife.

“We just wanted ... to come see this as close as we could get. And it is so bright, it just blows my mind,” Brown said.

The lava was tumbling slowly down the slope and was about 6 miles (10 kilometers) from the highway known as Saddle Road. It was not clear when, or if, it would cover the road, which runs through old lava flows.

The road bisects the island and connects the cities of Hilo and Kailua-Kona. People traveling between them would need to take a longer coastal road if Saddle Road becomes impassable, adding several hours of drive time.

Ken Hon, scientist in charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, said at current flow rate, the soonest the lava would get to the road is two days, but it will likely take longer.

“As the lava flow spreads out, it will probably interfere with its own progress,” Hon said.

Kathryn Tarananda, 66, of Waimea set two alarms to make sure she didn’t oversleep and miss her chance to see sunrise against the backdrop of eruptions at Mauna Loa.

“It’s a thrill,” she said. “We’re out in the middle of raw nature. It’s awe inspiring that we live in this place. ... I feel really, really fortunate to be an islander.”

Mauna Loa last erupted in 1984. The current eruption is its 34th since written record keeping began in 1843. Its smaller neighbor, Kilauea, has been erupting since September 2021, so visitors to the national park were treated to the rare sight of two simultaneous eruptive events: the glow from Kilauea’s lava lake and lava from a Mauna Loa fissure.

Abel Brown, a visitor from Las Vegas, was impressed by the natural forces on display. He planned to take a close-up helicopter tour later in the day — but not too close.

“There’s a lot of fear and trepidation if you get really close to it,” Brown said. “The closer you get, the more powerful it is and the more scary it is.”

Officials were initially concerned that lava flowing down Mauna Loa would head toward the community of South Kona, but scientists later assured the public the eruption had migrated to a rift zone on the volcano’s northeast flank and wasn’t threatening communities.

The smell of volcanic gases and sulfur was thick along Saddle Road, where people watched the wide stream of lava creep closer.

Gov. David Ige issued an emergency proclamation to allow responders to arrive quickly or limit access as needed.

Ige, who has dealt with multiple volcanic eruptions during his eight years as governor, said it’s impossible to redirect Mauna Loa’s molten rock as it heads for the highway.

“There is no physical way or technological way to change the course of where the lava flows,” Ige told a news conference. He remembers wishing that could be done in 2018, when Kilauea sent lava pouring across homes, farms and roads.

“But as we saw in that event, the power of Mother Nature and Madam Pele overwhelms anything that we can do,” Ige said, referring to the Hawaiian deity of volcanoes and fire.

Ige said that if lava does cross the highway, the Hawaii National Guard could help plan for alternatives and try to set up bypass routes.

Lava crossed the Mauna Loa Observatory access road Monday night and cut off power to the facility, Hon said. It’s the world’s premier station that measures heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The federal government is looking for a temporary alternate site on the Hawaiian island and is contemplating flying a generator to the observatory to get its power back so it can take measurements again.

Meanwhile, scientists are trying to measure the gas emitted from the eruption.

In new role as G-20 chair, India set to focus on climate

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 32 of 78

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

BENGALURU, India (AP) — India officially takes up its role as chair of the Group of 20 leading economies for the coming year Thursday and it's putting climate at the top of the group's priorities.

Programs to encourage sustainable living and money for countries to transition to clean energy and deal with the effects of a warming world are some of the key areas that India will focus on during its presidency, experts say. Some say India will also use its new position to boost its climate credentials and act as a bridge between the interests of industrialized nations and developing ones.

The country has made considerable moves toward its climate goals in recent years but is currently one of the world's top emitters of planet-warming gases.

The G-20, made up of the world's largest economies, has a rolling presidency with a different member state in charge of the group's agenda and priorities each year. Experts believe India will use the "big stage" of the G-20 presidency to drive forward its climate and development plans.

The country "will focus heavily on responding to the current and future challenges posed by climate change," said Samir Saran, president of the Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi-based think tank. The ORF will be anchoring the T-20 — a group of think tanks from the 20 member countries whose participants meet alongside the G-20.

Saran said that India will work to ensure that money is flowing from rich industrialized nations to emerging economies to help them combat global warming, such as a promise of \$100 billion a year for clean energy and adapting to climate change for poorer nations that has not yet been fulfilled and a recent pledge to vulnerable countries that there will be a fund for the loss and damage caused by extreme weather.

He added that India will also use the presidency to push its flagship "Mission Life" program that encourages more sustainable lifestyles in the country, which is set to soon become most populous in the world.

When outgoing chair Indonesia symbolically handed the presidency to India in Bali last month by passing the gavel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the opportunity to promote the program, saying it could make "a big contribution" by turning sustainable living into "a mass movement."

The impact of lifestyle "has not received as much attention in the global discourse as it should," said RR Rashmi, a distinguished fellow at The Energy Research Institute in New Delhi. He added that the issue "may get some prominence" at the G-20 which would be a success for the Indian government, but critics say the focus on lifestyle changes must be backed by policy to have credibility.

India has been beefing up its climate credentials, with its recent domestic targets to transition to renewable energy more ambitious than the goals it submitted to the U.N. as part of the Paris Agreement, which requires countries to show how they plan to limit warming to temperature targets set in 2015.

Analysts say nations' climate ambitions and actions — including India's — are not in line with temperature targets.

Many of India's big industrialists are investing heavily in renewable energy domestically as well as globally, but the Indian government is also preparing to invest in coal-based power plants at the cost of \$33 billion over the next four years.

At the U.N. climate conference last month, India — currently the world's third largest emitter of greenhouse gases — proposed a phaseout of all fossil fuels and repeatedly emphasized the need to revamp global climate finance. The country says it cannot reach its climate goals and reduce carbon dioxide emissions without significantly more finance from richer nations, a claim which those countries dispute.

Navroz Dubash, author of several U.N. climate reports and professor at the Centre for Policy Research, said that a key question for many countries is how "emerging economies address development needs and do it in a low carbon pathway" with several in the global south, like India, pointing to a need for outside investment.

As the chair of the G-20, India is a good position "to say what it will take for us to develop in ways that don't lock up the remaining carbon budget," Dubash added, referring to the amount of carbon dioxide the world can emit while still containing global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) compared with preindustrial levels.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 33 of 78

"Developing countries are making a convincing case that green industrial policies are actually quite dependent on having public money to throw at the problems," said Dubash. Some experts say more than \$2 trillion is needed each year by 2030 to help developing countries cut emissions and deal with the effects of a warming climate, with \$1 trillion from domestic sources and the rest coming from external sources such as developed countries or multilateral development banks.

"This public money can also be a way of getting in private money, which is what the U.S. has done in its Inflation Reduction Act," Dubash added. The U.S.'s flagship climate package that passed earlier this year includes incentives for building out clean energy infrastructure.

The G-20 will also be looking closely at alternative means to getting climate finance, experts say. The group could potentially take a leaf out of the Bridgetown initiative proposed by the prime minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, which involves unlocking large sums of money from multilateral development banks and international financial institutions to help countries adapt to climate change and transition to cleaner energy.

ORF's Saran said that as G-20 chair India can help move forward the conversation on the initiative. Developing countries are often charged higher rates of interest when borrowing from global financial institutions. Rejigging global finance to make renewable energy more affordable in the developing world is key to curbing climate change, Saran said.

The idea has recently gained traction amongst developed nations, with France's Macron recently vocalizing his support.

"A large share of emissions will come from the developing world in the future," Saran said. "If we make it easier for them to shift to clean energy, then these emissions can be avoided."

Biden hosts Macron amid friction over US climate law

By SYLVIE CORBET, MATTHEW DALY and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Presidents Joe Biden and Emmanuel Macron are celebrating the longstanding U.S.-French relationship — but these are friends with differences. The French president is using his visit to Washington to sharply criticize aspects of the U.S. president's signature climate law as a bad deal for Europe.

Biden is set to honor Macron with the first state dinner of his presidency on Thursday evening. First, the two leaders will sit down in the Oval Office for morning talks that officials from both sides said were expected to largely center on the leaders' efforts to stay united in their response to Russia's war in Ukraine and to coordinate their approach to an increasingly assertive China.

But ahead of Thursday's meeting, Macron made clear that he and other European leaders remain deeply concerned about the incentives in a sweeping new climate-related law that favor American-made climate technology, including electric vehicles.

Macron on Wednesday criticized the legislation, known as the Inflation Reduction Act, during a luncheon with U.S. lawmakers and again during a speech at the French embassy. The French president said that while the Biden administration's efforts to curb climate change should be applauded, the subsidies would be an enormous setback for European companies.

"The choices that have been made ... are choices that will fragment the West," Macron said at the French embassy. He added that the legislation "creates such differences between the United States of America and Europe that all those who work in many companies (in the U.S.), they will just think, 'We don't make investments any more on the other side of the Atlantic.'"

Separately, at the luncheon with members of Congress from both parties, along with business leaders and diplomats, Macron said that major industrial nations need to do more to address climate change and promote biodiversity.

He criticized a deal reached at a recent climate summit in Egypt in which the United States and other wealthy nations agreed to help pay for the damage that an overheating world is inflicting on poor countries. The deal includes few details on how it will be paid for, and Macron said a more comprehensive approach

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 34 of 78

is needed — “not just a new fund we decided which will not be funded and even if it is funded, it will not be rightly allocated.”

Speaking after his prepared remarks and without cameras present, Macron took aim at the Inflation Reduction Act, calling the subsidies harmful to French companies and others in Europe, according to a person in the closed-door meeting. The person requested anonymity to discuss the private comments from Macron.

The European Union has expressed concern that tax credits in the climate law, including those aimed at encouraging Americans to buy electric vehicles, would discriminate against European producers and break World Trade Organization rules.

Germany’s Economy Minister Robert Habeck reiterated Wednesday that he believes parts of the law aren’t compatible with the WTO.

“I believe that this view is largely shared by those countries that are committed to a multilateral trading order,” he told reporters in Berlin. “The Americans know that we see it that way and the European Commission will have told them this too.”

Macron had planned to make his case to U.S. officials against the subsidies, underscoring that it’s crucial for “Europe, like the U.S., to come out stronger ... not weaker” as the world emerges from the tumult of the pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, according to a senior French government official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity to preview the private talks.

Biden administration officials have countered that the legislation goes a long way in helping the U.S. to meet global goals to curb climate change. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Wednesday made the case that the legislation will also provide new opportunities for French companies and others in Europe.

“There’s a number of provisions that will contribute to the growth of clean energy sector globally,” Jean-Pierre told reporters. “It presents significant opportunities for European firms, as well as benefits to EU energy security. And this is not a zero-sum game for us.”

Macron’s latest blunt comments come after he raised eyebrows earlier this month in a speech at a summit in Bangkok. He referred to the U.S. and China as “two big elephants” that are the cusp of creating “a big problem for the rest of jungle.” His visit also comes as both Washington and Paris are keeping an eye on China after protests broke out last weekend in several mainland cities and Hong Kong over Beijing’s “zero COVID” strategy.

“The issue of China will be very high on the agenda for the next couple of days,” White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Wednesday.

Macron on Wednesday met with Vice President Kamala Harris at NASA headquarters in Washington as both sides looked to highlight U.S.-French cooperation on space. In June, France signed the Artemis Accords, a NASA-led set of principles used to govern international civil use of space. The same month, the U.S. made good on a promise to join the France-led Space for Climate Observatory, which is meant to model and track climate change.

Macron also made a stop at Arlington Cemetery. He and his wife, Brigitte, later had a private dinner with Biden and first lady Jill Biden at a restaurant in Washington’s Georgetown neighborhood.

In addition to his Oval Office talk with Biden on Thursday, Macron will be hosted by Harris for a lunch at the State Department before the evening state dinner for some 350 guests, a glitzy gala to take place in an enormous tented pavilion constructed on the White House South Lawn.

Grammy winner Jon Batiste is scheduled to provide the evening’s entertainment.

China eases some virus controls, searches pedestrians

BEIJING (AP) — More Chinese cities eased some anti-virus restrictions as police patrolled their streets to head off protests Thursday while the ruling Communist Party prepared for the high-profile funeral of late leader Jiang Zemin.

Guangzhou in the south, Shijiazhuang in the north, Chengdu in the southwest and other major cities

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 35 of 78

announced they were easing testing requirements and controls on movement. In some areas, markets and bus service reopened.

The announcements didn't mention last weekend's protests in Shanghai, Beijing and at least six other cities against the human cost of anti-virus restrictions that confine millions of people to their homes. But the timing and publicity suggested President Xi Jinping's government was trying to mollify public anger after some protesters made the politically explosive demand that Xi resign.

With a heavy police presence, there was no indication of protests. Notes on social media complained that people were being stopped at random for police to check smartphones, possibly looking for prohibited apps such as Twitter, in what they said was a violation of China's Constitution.

"I am especially afraid of becoming the 'Xinjiang model' and being searched on the excuse of walking around," said a posting signed Qi Xiaojin on the popular Sina Weibo platform, referring to the northwestern region where Uyghur and other Muslim minorities are under intense surveillance.

Protesters have used Twitter and other foreign social media to publicize protests while the Communist Party deletes videos and photos from services within China.

On Thursday, the government reported 36,061 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, including 31,911 without symptoms.

Meanwhile, Beijing was preparing for the funeral of Jiang, who was ruling party leader until 2002 and president until the following year. The party announced he died Wednesday in Shanghai of leukemia and multiple organ failure.

No foreign dignitaries will be invited in line with Chinese tradition, the party announced. It has yet to set a date for the funeral or announce how it might be affected by anti-virus controls.

Xi's government has promised to reduce the disruption of its "zero COVID" strategy by shortening quarantines and making other changes. But it says it will stick to restrictions that have repeatedly shut down schools and businesses and suspended access to neighborhoods.

The protests began Friday after at least 10 people were killed in a fire in an apartment building in Urumqi in Xinjiang. That prompted questions about whether firefighters or victims trying to escape were blocked by locked doors or other controls. Authorities denied that, but the deaths became a focus for public frustration.

The government says it is making restrictions more targeted and flexible, but a spike in infections since October has prompted local officials who are threatened with the loss of their jobs if an outbreak occurs to impose controls that some residents say are excessive and destructive.

Chinese users play cat-and-mouse with censors amid protests

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Videos of hundreds protesting in Shanghai started to appear on WeChat Saturday night. Showing chants about removing COVID-19 restrictions and demanding freedom, they would only stay up for only minutes before being censored.

Elliot Wang, a 26-year-old in Beijing, was amazed.

"I started refreshing constantly, and saving videos, and taking screenshots of what I could before it got censored," said Wang, who only agreed to be quoted using his English name, in fear of government retaliation. "A lot of my friends were sharing the videos of the protests in Shanghai. I shared them too, but they would get taken down quickly."

That Wang was able to glimpse the extraordinary outpouring of grievances highlights the cat-and-mouse game that goes on between millions of Chinese internet users and the country's gargantuan censorship machine.

Chinese authorities maintain a tight grip on the country's internet via a complex, multi-layered censorship operation that blocks access to almost all foreign news and social media, and blocks topics and keywords considered politically sensitive or detrimental to the Chinese Communist Party's rule. Videos of or calls to protest are usually deleted immediately.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 36 of 78

But images of protests began to spread on WeChat, a ubiquitous Chinese social networking platform used by over 1 billion, in the wake of a deadly fire Nov. 24 in the northwestern city of Urumqi. Many suspected that lockdown measures prevented residents from escaping the flames, something the government denies.

The sheer number of unhappy Chinese users who took to the Chinese internet to express their frustration, together with the methods they used to evade censors led to a brief period of time where government censors were overwhelmed, according to Han Rongbin, an associate professor at the University of Georgia's International Affairs department.

"It takes censors some time to study what is happening and to add that to their portfolio in terms of censorship, so it's a learning process for the government on how to conduct censorship effectively," said Han.

In 2020, the death from COVID-19 of Li Wenliang, a doctor who was arrested for spreading rumors following an attempt to alert others about a "SARS-like" virus, sparked widespread outrage and an outpouring of anger against the Chinese censorship system. Users posted criticism for hours before censors moved to delete posts.

As censors took down posts related to the fire, Chinese internet users often used humor and metaphor to spread critical messages.

"Chinese netizens have always been very creative because every idea used successfully once will be discovered by censors the next time," said Liu Lipeng, a censor-turned-critic of China's censorship practices.

Chinese users started posting images of blank sheets of white paper, said Liu, in a silent reminder of words they weren't allowed to post.

Others posted sarcastic messages like "Good good good sure sure sure right right right yes yes yes," or used Chinese homonyms to evoke calls for President Xi Jinping to resign, such as "shrimp moss," which sounds like the words for "step down" and "banana peel," which has the same initials as Chinese President Xi Jinping.

But within days, censors moved to contain images of white paper. They would have used a range of tools, said Chauncey Jung, a policy analyst who previously worked for several Chinese internet companies based in Beijing.

Most content censorship is not done by the state, Jung said, but outsourced to content moderation operations at private social media platforms, who use a mix of human and AI. Some censored posts are not deleted, but may be made visible only to the author, or removed from search results. In some cases, posts with sensitive key phrases may be published after review.

A search on Weibo Thursday for the term "white paper" turned up mostly posts that were critical of the protests, with no images of a single sheet of blank paper, or of people holding white paper at protests.

It's possible to access the global internet from China by using technologies such as virtual private networks that disguise internet traffic, but these systems are illegal and many Chinese internet users access only the domestic internet. Wang does not use a VPN.

"I think I can say for all the mainlanders in my generation that we are really excited," said Wang. "But we're also really disappointed because we can't do anything. ... They just keep censoring, keep deleting, and even releasing fake accounts to praise the cops."

But the system works well enough to stop many users from ever seeing them. When protests broke out across China over the weekend, Carmen Ou, who lives in Beijing, initially didn't notice.

Ou learned of the protests only later, after using a VPN service to access Instagram.

"I tried looking at my feed on WeChat, but there was no mention of any protests," she said. "If not for a VPN and access to Instagram, I might not have found out that such a monumental event had taken place."

Han, the international affairs professor, said that censorship "doesn't have to be perfect to be effective."

"Censorship might be functioning to prevent a big enough size of the population from accessing the critical information to be mobilized," he said.

China's opaque approach to tamping down the spread of online dissent also makes it difficult to distinguish government campaigns from ordinary spam.

Searching Twitter using the Chinese words for Shanghai or other Chinese cities reveals protest videos,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 37 of 78

but also also a near-constant flood of new posts showing racy photos of young women. Some researchers proposed that a state-backed campaign could be seeking to drown out news of the protests with “not safe for work” content.

A preliminary analysis by the Stanford Internet Observatory found lots of spam but no “compelling evidence” that it was specifically intended to suppress information or dissent, said Stanford data architect David Thiel.

“I’d be skeptical of anyone claiming clear evidence of government attribution,” Thiel said in an email.

Twitter searches for more specific protest-related terms, such as “Urumqi Middle Road, Shanghai,” produced mainly posts related to the protests.

Israeli data analysis firm Cyabra and another research group that shared analysis with the AP said it was hard to distinguish between a deliberate attempt to drown out protest information sought by the Chinese diaspora and a run-of-the-mill commercial spam campaign.

Twitter didn’t respond to a request for comment. It hasn’t answered media inquiries since billionaire Elon Musk took over the platform in late October and cut back much of its workforce, including many of those tasked with moderating spam and other content. Musk often tweets about how he’s enacting or enforcing new Twitter content rules but hasn’t commented on the recent protests in China.

‘Do something:’ Ukraine works to heal soldiers’ mental scars

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Sleep plunges the soldier back into the horrors of Ukraine’s battlefields. He can hear bombs falling again and picture explosions. He imagines himself frantically running, trying to save himself and others. The nightmares are so vivid and frightening that he pleads with his doctor for help. “It will blow my mind,” he warns. “So do something.”

“Very, very, very stressful,” Witalij Miskow, 45, says of the night terrors he’s fighting with tranquilizers and therapy at a mental health treatment center for soldiers on the outskirts of Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv.

When peace eventually returns to Ukraine, many thousands of other soldiers are likely to come home like Miskow with a condition known as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Psychologists, veterans affairs officers and former combatants who have struggled with nightmares, distressing flashbacks and other PTSD symptoms are already working to head off a potential mental health crisis among soldiers and their families from the particularly gruesome, intense and grinding war.

Whether it’s increasing awareness and funding for mental health care or training counsellors to help soldiers talk through psychological traumas, the goal is to prevent potentially destructive PTSD-related problems, including suicides, family violence, alcohol and drug abuse, from taking root.

Ex-paratrooper Sgt. Maksym Pasichnyk says civilian life was “very complex” for him after years of fighting pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine and once Moscow then launched its full-blown invasion, now in its tenth month. His long exposure to combat, death and destruction left the 28-year-old with an array of PTSD symptoms. He fears many other servicemen and their families could likewise suffer.

“The repercussions come later. You have a din in your ears, you start vomiting, you come home and have constant shifts of blood pressure and you lash out at your family members, your kids, your wife,” he says.

“You constantly think that someone is watching you, you overthink, you abuse drugs and drink, you lose yourself,” he adds. “If you want to get help, you are interned in a psychiatric hospital, where they turn you into a vegetable. If you show flashes of anger, they give you tranquilizers and you just sit there.”

Pasichnyk saw his last combat at the very start of the Feb. 24 invasion. His unit was inserted by helicopter at night to defend an airfield on Kyiv’s outskirts. The firefights and ensuing long slog back to the capital butchered his feet. The bleeding, bruising and bone fractures were so severe that he was discharged from further service.

Outwardly, the muscular veteran looks a picture of health. But physical integrity can hide soldiers’ inner suffering, Pasichnyk cautions.

“They look fine,” he says, “but they’re not.”

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 38 of 78

On Nov. 12, Pasichnyk went back to the damaged Hostomel airbase where he fought, a return that again stirred flashbacks of the events he endured there. Setting off from the disemboweled remains of what before the battle had been the world's biggest aircraft, he ran a half-marathon to raise awareness of PTSD and to fund the treatment costs for 10 veterans with symptoms.

Pasichnyk says he worries not only about the risk of traumatized soldiers taking their own lives but also that they could turn guns on others and "might resort to terrorist acts."

Ukraine's Veterans Affairs Ministry spokeswoman Iulia Vorona says statistics on suicides and PTSD among veterans and their families aren't being made public during the war for security reasons.

But speaking five months before the invasion, the veterans affairs minister, Yuliia Laputina, said there had already been "great demand" from military families for psychological support as a result of fighting since 2014 against Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

The minister, who has a Ph.D. in psychology, expressed particular concern that many are going back to "remote villages where there is no psychologist."

"We must build a system where emergency psychological assistance will work in the most remote corners," she said.

In a subsequent interview this month with The Associated Press, one of her deputies, Eugen Kotyk, said the ministry is "actively working" on a suicide and alcohol risk-reduction program.

Based on figures from previous conflicts, around 20% of troops exposed to intense fighting in Ukraine could develop PTSD, estimates British psychiatrist Neil Greenberg, a professor of defense mental health at King's College university in London who previously served as a Royal Navy medical officer for 23 years, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the wake of the Russian invasion, he has also done online training for the Ukrainian military on managing traumatic events.

Unlike soldiers who fought in Afghanistan or U.S. troops in the Vietnam war, Ukrainian soldiers are fighting in and for their homeland, with evident public support, a clear enemy and solid goals and justifications. All that could help lessen the mental health fallout for Ukrainian veterans, says Greenberg, who describes it as "a psychologically good war for Ukraine."

But a victory for Ukraine, returning soldiers being well-treated afterward and reconstruction will also play roles in determining whether psychological illnesses cause "mass, mass casualties" among veterans "or just a large number," Greenberg adds.

Anticipating that many will need help, Ukrainian psychologist Andrii Omelchenko is training volunteers — 300 so far and aiming for a total of 2,000 — to provide counselling to soldiers.

Omelchenko also does hands-on counselling with troops in the field and continues that work online when he is back in Kyiv, talking them through battlefield traumas on video calls from his 17th-floor office. One recent call was with a frontline commander who was suffering from debilitating panic attacks, after he'd seen a missile strike that severely injured three soldiers.

Russia's heavy reliance on artillery bombardments is exacting a psychological toll on Ukrainian soldiers, Omelchenko says. He says social media are another psychological stress because they show soldiers that while they're in trenches, loved ones and friends may be enjoying comparatively normal lives.

"It's really painful," Omelchenko says. "Civilian life has a lot of good things which are not proper to show."

On the other hand, Omelchenko says he is also fielding calls from families asking how best to deal with soldiers who are coming back changed from battle — taciturn, distant, on edge and in their own worlds. Omelchenko previously experienced that himself with his grandfather, who'd fought as a young teenager in World War II.

"My grandfather never smiled," Omelchenko says.

At the Forest Glade rehabilitation clinic outside Kyiv, Miskow is continuing his recovery. As well as pharmaceuticals, the facility uses yoga, acupuncture, soothing sounds and other therapies on its 220 patients.

"I'm happy, I'm still alive," Miskow says.

Still, he then cries when talking about an artillery strike that killed several of his friends.

"I'm getting used (to) these feelings, but it's still very, very difficult," he says. "If you're not here, you

don't understand at all, you won't understand."

'Squid Game' actor indicted over indecent assault charges

By JUWON PARK Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Award-winning "Squid Game" actor Oh Young-soo will stand trial on charges of indecent assault after a woman accused him of inappropriately touching her in 2017, a South Korean court said.

The district court in Seongnam city said Thursday that prosecutors indicted the 78-year-old Emmy nominee last week over the allegations and that his trial will begin in February. Kim Myeong-un, an official at Seongnam's district prosecutors' office, said it could not confirm specific details about Oh's case, which was first reported by local media last week.

According to the reports, the unidentified woman originally filed a complaint against Oh in December 2021, accusing him of making unwanted physical contact during a meeting in 2017.

Oh did not answer multiple calls by the Associated Press seeking comments.

South Korean cable channel JTBC said Oh denied wrongdoing when reached by a reporter, saying that he had only held the woman's hands to "show her the way" as they walked around a lake. According to JTBC, Oh said he had offered the woman an apology, not because he acknowledged the accusations against him but because the woman allegedly told him she "wouldn't raise an issue" about the incident if he did.

Oh became the first South Korean actor to win a Golden Globe in January after he was named the top supporting actor for his role in "Squid Game," a brutal Netflix drama about a desperate group of adults competing in deadly children's games for a chance to escape severe debt.

Oh was also nominated for an Emmy for his performance as Oh Il-nam, a mysterious elderly contestant who joined the games after being diagnosed with terminal brain cancer.

Hong Kong publisher's national security trial postponed

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — The trial of a Hong Kong newspaper publisher who was arrested in a crackdown on a pro-democracy movement was postponed Thursday after the territory's leader asked China to effectively block him from hiring a British defense lawyer.

Jimmy Lai, 74, faces a possible life sentence if convicted under a national security law imposed by the ruling Communist Party on the former British colony. The government objected after judges on Monday approved Lai's plan to hire Timothy Owen, a veteran human rights lawyer.

Chief Executive John Lee asked China's Communist Party-controlled ceremonial legislature to decide whether foreign lawyers who didn't normally practice in Hong Kong could be rejected for national security cases.

Beijing imposed the security law after pro-democracy protests that started in 2019. If Beijing intervenes, that would mark the sixth time the Communist-ruled government has stepped into the city's legal affairs.

Lai, the founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily, is accused of conspiring together with others to call for an imposition of sanctions or blockade, or engage in hostile activities against Hong Kong or China. He also faces a charge of collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security, and a separate sedition charge under a colonial-era law that is increasingly used to snuff out dissent.

As of late November, 25 people have been convicted under the law, which prohibits subversion, pro-independence activity, collusion with "foreign forces" and terrorism, according to the security bureau.

The judges granted their approval to the application from the Department of Justice to postpone the trial for a short period as the city awaits Beijing's decision. The next hearing is scheduled for Dec. 13.

Lee, Hong Kong's former security chief who oversaw the crackdown, said Tuesday that Beijing was highly concerned and would act "as soon as possible," but gave no timeline for an interpretation that would overrule the court judgment.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 40 of 78

Hong Kong was promised a "high degree of autonomy" when it returned to China in 1997, but Beijing and its local allies have rolled back Western-style civil rights, eroding the territory's appeal as a global business center.

Owen did not appear in court because the immigration department withheld the barrister's application for an extension of his work visa, Lai's lawyer said. The British barrister currently has a visa for another case, he added.

The AP has reached out to the immigration department for comment.

Hong Kong's highest court on Monday rejected government objections against allowing Lai to hire Owen on security grounds as "undefined and unsubstantiated."

On Tuesday, Hong Kong Bar Association Chair Victor Dawes urged the mainland's standing committee of National People's Congress to exercise its power to interpret the law sparingly. He said local courts can clarify any ambiguities in the future.

Beijing's Liaison Office in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office supported Lee's position in statements Monday.

Abortion rights groups look to next fights after 2022 wins

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Emboldened by the results of November's midterms, abortion rights supporters say they are preparing for even bigger fights in state legislatures and pivotal elections to come, including 2024 races for Congress and president.

Victories for abortion rights ballot measures and candidates who support abortion provided a roadmap for how to win future campaigns, Democrats and leaders of several organizations say. Mobilization efforts brought together women of different races, ages and ideologies who disagreed with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision this summer to eliminate the constitutional right to abortion, forming more diverse and larger coalitions.

The election also changed the way people talk about abortion, they say. Long seen as a polarizing issue Democrats were advised to pivot away from, it's now considered a fundamental topic that must be addressed — and one that will help them win.

"We think, based on the enthusiasm and what we saw on our exit polling and in the election results, that this is an enduring issue," said Mini Timmaraju, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America. The group, along with Planned Parenthood Action Fund, and EMILY's List, committed \$150 million to the 2022 election.

"We got very, very far. But we could do a lot more and we'll have to build toward that for 2024," she said.

Heading into the November election, skeptics — including some within the Democratic Party — believed the Supreme Court's June ruling overturning Roe v. Wade had faded as a motivator for voters, overtaken by concerns about inflation, crime or President Joe Biden's unpopularity.

But in the first nationwide election since the ruling, voters protected abortion rights via ballot measures in five states. Democrats performed better than anticipated, keeping control of the Senate and winning races for governor and other top statewide offices, and among the biggest winners were Democratic candidates who made preserving abortion rights a centerpiece of their campaigns.

VoteCast, a broad survey of the midterm electorate, found 7 in 10 voters said the high court's ruling on abortion rights was an important factor in their midterm decisions. VoteCast also showed the decision 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 election showed how motivating this is for people and I don't think that is going away any time soon," Jen Klein, the Biden administration's Gender Policy Council director, said of abortion rights.

A key takeaway for supporters of abortion rights was that voters care about, and vote based on, more than a single issue. And for many women, reproductive rights is an economic issue, activists said.

House Democrats, who lost the majority but held more seats than expected to give the GOP a narrow advantage, mentioned abortion in 51% of the TV and radio ads the Democratic Congressional Campaign

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 41 of 78

Committee ran in its most competitive districts, according to a post-election DCCC memo. The economy, extremism and the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol also were mentioned, though less often, in DCCC ads.

"There were a lot of skeptics, a lot of pundits saying we're going to lose. They said abortion was polarizing, don't talk about it, it's not going to mobilize women," recalled Amanda Brown Lierman, executive director of Supermajority, a multiracial, progressive organization formed after Donald Trump's 2016 election to organize women and turn out the vote. "They could not have been more wrong. You now have an electorate that feels powerful."

With near-total bans on abortion in place in over a dozen states, abortion-rights groups expect many of their next efforts will be in state legislatures, where Republicans continue to push for restrictions. They also are active in the runoff for U.S. Senate in Georgia between Democratic incumbent Raphael Warnock and GOP football legend Herschel Walker.

Other next tests include a spring election for the Wisconsin Supreme Court that could shift the balance of the court in a state where abortion is banned, and the November 2023 governor's race in Kentucky. Several Republicans are vying to challenge Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear, who supports abortion rights, in a conservative-leaning state where voters in November rejected a Republican-backed ballot measure aimed at denying any constitutional protections for abortion.

Then will come 2024, when the nation will choose a president and which party controls Congress.

Abortion opponents, meanwhile, also are looking at what worked — and what didn't — in the midterms, and debating their strategy going forward.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, argued that to the extent abortion rights opponents lost, it was more a sign of how advertising money was spent than the direction the country is moving on the issue in light of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

Democrats, notably vulnerable incumbents in competitive U.S. House races, spent hundreds of millions of dollars on advertising pointing to their Republican opponents' strict opposition to abortion rights. Meanwhile, Republican campaigns and related groups spent a fraction on abortion-specific messaging, allowing attacks — at times misrepresentations of GOP positions and records — to receive little or no response.

"The lesson I hope is learned — some lessons are hard ones — is that that doesn't happen again," Dannenfelser said. "Our goal is for there to be a lessons-learned lightbulb moment, and that there is a shift from the ostrich strategy of putting your head in the sand."

The money bought what Dannenfelser called "unanswered lies."

For example, a national Democratic House campaign group aired ads to help two-term Minnesota Rep. Angie Craig, a Democrat who supports abortion rights, stating her Republican challenger Tyler Kistner supported banning abortion without exceptions for women who become pregnant as the result of rape or incest. That is despite Kistner stating he supported such exceptions in June.

Kistner's campaign aides protested during press interviews during the campaign. But neither Kistner nor Republican groups aired ads responding. Still, Kistner, who ran unsuccessfully against Craig in 2020, made no mention of his abortion position on his campaign website this year, unlike two years ago.

"When party committees and their leaders are saying, 'No matter what they say, don't talk about abortion,' then the lies stick," Dannenfelser said.

With a divided Congress, the focus for Dannenfelser's group shifts to closely evaluating Republican candidates for president, she said. That means sorting out of the field candidates who see no federal role to restrict abortion, she said.

"The one thing that is unacceptable is the idea that they have no job to do if they are elected," she said.

Other Republicans say the lesson may be that the GOP should move away from supporting strict prohibitions. They point to elections like one this summer in conservative Kansas, where voters overwhelmingly supported abortion rights.

"I think there are quiet conversations about whether the party at a national level should be paying careful attention about what happened for instance in a state like Kansas," said Jennifer Young, a Republican health care lobbyist.

Analysis: Under Jiang, China projected a more open image

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

He grinned, and — just eight years after the crackdown on democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square — the spectacle of China's ruler beaming and glad-handing people in the very heart of capitalism seemed at once charming and really, really odd.

It was an October morning in 1997 at the New York Stock Exchange, and Jiang Zemin, the powerful head of the Chinese Communist Party and government, was ringing the opening bell. "Good morning!" he boomed. "I wish you good trading!"

This was entirely in keeping with the image of Jiang, who died at age 96 on Wednesday a full generation after his rule and two Chinese leaders later. He leaves behind a country very different than the one he tried to shape. Now it's effectively Xi Jinping's nation — and a society in the throes of extraordinary protests against "zero-COVID" lockdowns that saw crowds in the streets of Beijing and Shanghai demanding an end to Xi's and the Communist Party's rule.

Jiang's death, smack in the middle of the most visible demonstrations since that 1989 bloodshed on Tiananmen Square, illuminates how much has changed between the China of the late 1990s and early 2000s — when he was at the height of his rule — and today's economic powerhouse and more powerful and dominant country.

At this micromoment in its history, China has this going on: Xi just orchestrated a third five-year term as Communist Party general secretary just a few weeks ago. And on Tuesday, his government vowed to "resolutely crack down on infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces" — by implication targeting crowds in major Chinese cities who protest COVID-19 lockdowns or pretty much anything else.

Jiang, a former Shanghai mayor and onetime soap factory manager, was appointed by paramount leader Deng Xiaoping — the architect of China's post-Mao "reform and opening up" — as general secretary three weeks after the bloody Tiananmen Square crackdown in which hundreds, perhaps thousands died.

In the ensuing years, Jiang helped guide the nation out of the isolation resulting from China's actions during that bloody saga. In doing so, he took pains to present himself to the world as a smiling bon vivant who liked to play piano, sing and find human touchpoints with other nations' leaders — a contrast to the generally dour technocrats who surrounded him.

Jiang was no pushover, though. He was a political pro, and that engaging persona was meticulously calibrated to reflect his nation's ambitions of the moment: not only its return from the diplomatic hinterlands but its desire to sit as an equal at the table of nations, to shepherd a peaceful handover of Hong Kong back to China, to join the World Trade Organization and, eventually, to secure the 2008 Summer Olympics for Beijing.

By contrast, China today — encouraged in no small measure by Xi himself — presents a robust, sometimes swaggering presence on the world stage and, perhaps even more so than a generation ago, bristles at any suggestion that the ghosts of Western nations' Cold War "containment" policies might be coming back to do some haunting.

"There was a feeling that there was more of an openness to China in the post-Tiananmen decade of the 1990s. Since then, it's clear that China has moved in a direction where political control is stronger from the top down," says Rana Mitter, a professor of the history and politics of modern China at Oxford University.

Jiang's pre-social media era of Chinese politics, Mitter says, was part of a period in which the authoritarian leadership would be willing to "incorporate a certain amount of space at the edges" when it came to freedom of expression.

No more, as the responses to this week's demonstrations suggest.

"The idea that there is this alternative, relatively slightly looser path within Chinese authoritarianism, at least for this generation, seems to have been laid to rest," Mitter said.

The comparison of two eras, while instructive, goes only so far. By many standards, Jiang was hardly a permissive leader. He cracked down on the Falun Gong spiritual movement, maintained tight controls over

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 43 of 78

expression and saw to it that all manner of activists — for human rights, labor rights and democracy in general — were jailed.

He was, after all, leading the ruling party in a one-party country and had been installed by Deng at one of the nation's most difficult moments with a mandate to set things back on track. He had potent motivation, too: Jiang's predecessor as party general secretary, Zhao Ziyang, became famous around the world by chatting openly with protesters before the crackdown — and being purged and placed under years of house arrest afterward.

Nevertheless, comparing today's China to the Jiang era does offer a reminder of an old truth: The persona of a leader and that of a nation are always intertwined, particularly when power is deeply concentrated in that single leader's hands. And from Mao Zedong to Deng Xiaoping to Jiang Zemin, and now with Xi Jinping, even a behemoth like China can find itself reflecting the whims and personality traits of the person navigating its destiny.

Just before the stock exchange walkthrough in 1997, one of Jiang's English-speaking aides corralled reporters during a breakfast with former President George H.W. Bush in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The aide pointed to Jiang, chatting away with Bush, and said something to the effect of, "See? He's just a regular guy."

Today, 25 years later in a different era with a very different China, it's hard to imagine one of Xi Jinping's handlers ever wanting to convey something like that to anyone — much less daring to do so.

House votes to avert rail strike, impose deal on unions

By KEVIN FREKING and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. House moved urgently to head off the looming nationwide rail strike on Wednesday, passing a bill that would bind companies and workers to a proposed settlement that was reached in September but rejected by some of the 12 unions involved.

The measure passed by a vote of 290-137 and now heads to the Senate. If approved there, it will be signed by President Joe Biden, who urged the Senate to act swiftly.

"Without the certainty of a final vote to avoid a shutdown this week, railroads will begin to halt the movement of critical materials like chemicals to clean our drinking water as soon as this weekend," Biden said. "Let me say that again: without action this week, disruptions to our auto supply chains, our ability to move food to tables, and our ability to remove hazardous waste from gasoline refineries will begin."

Business groups including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Farm Bureau Federation have warned that halting rail service would cause a devastating \$2 billion per day hit to the economy.

The bill would impose a compromise labor agreement brokered by the Biden administration that was ultimately voted down by four of the 12 unions representing roughly 115,000 employees at large freight railroads. The unions have threatened to strike if an agreement can't be reached before a Dec. 9 deadline.

Lawmakers from both parties expressed reservations about overriding the negotiations. The intervention was particularly difficult for Democratic lawmakers who have traditionally sought to align themselves with the politically powerful labor unions that criticized Biden's move to intervene in the contract dispute and block a strike.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi responded to that concern by adding a second vote Wednesday that would add seven days of paid sick leave per year for rail workers covered under the agreement. However, it will take effect only if the Senate goes along and passes both measures. The House passed the sick leave measure as well, but by a much narrower margin, 221-207, as Republicans overwhelmingly opposed it, indicating that prospects for passage of the add-on are slim in the evenly divided Senate.

Business groups and the Association of American Railroads trade association praised the House vote to block the strike but urged senators to resist adding sick time to the deal.

"Unless Congress wants to become the de facto endgame for future negotiations, any effort to put its thumb on the bargaining scale to artificially advantage either party, or otherwise obstruct a swift resolution, would be wholly irresponsible," said Ian Jefferies, head of the AAR.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 44 of 78

On the other hand, the Transportation Trades Department labor coalition that includes all the rail unions praised the vote to add sick time and told lawmakers who voted against it they had "abandoned your working class constituents."

The focus now turns to the Senate where the timing for a vote is unclear. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg will meet with Democratic senators Thursday to discuss the rail negotiations. Some Democrats are insistent that the Senate vote on providing seven days of paid sick leave.

"A multibillion-dollar industry that is engaged in buybacks, that has doubled its profit margins during the pandemic should not be able to force its workers to come in when they are sick and injured," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

But most Republicans are reluctant to alter the tentative settlement reached in September.

"I think it's a bad precedent for us to get into the nuances and details of things like this that have been negotiated for three years," said Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.

The call for paid sick leave was a major sticking point in the talks along with other quality-of-life concerns. The railroads say the unions have agreed in negotiations over the decades to forgo paid sick time in favor of higher wages and strong short-term disability benefits.

Jefferies said Tuesday that railroads would consider adding paid sick time in the future, but said that change should wait for a new round of negotiations.

The unions maintain that railroads can easily afford to add paid sick time at a time when they are recording record profits. Several of the big railroads involved in these contract talks reported more than \$1 billion profit in the third quarter.

"Quite frankly, the fact that paid leave is not part of the final agreement between railroads and labor is, in my opinion, obscene," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

Most rail workers don't receive any paid sick time, but they do have short-term disability benefits that kick in after as little as four days and can replace some of their income for a year or more. Rail workers also receive vacation and personal leave days, but workers say it's difficult to use those for illnesses because they must typically be approved far ahead of time.

In the House, Republicans voiced support for the measure to block the strike, but criticized the Biden administration for turning to Congress to "step in to fix the mess." Some 79 Republicans voted with the overwhelming majority of Democrats for the bill binding the parties to the tentative settlement.

But Republicans criticized Pelosi's decision to add the sick leave bill to the mix, and only three of them voted for that resolution. They said the Biden administration's own special board of arbitrators recommended higher wages to compensate the unions for not including sick time in its recommendations.

"Why do we even have the system set up the way it is if Congress is going to come in and make changes to all of the recommendations?" said Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo.

Pelosi sought to position Democrats and the Biden administration as defenders of unions, but she said Congress needed to intervene to avoid a strike.

"Families wouldn't be able to buy groceries or life-saving medications because it would be even more expensive and perishable goods would spoil before reaching shelves," Pelosi said.

The compromise agreement that was supported by the railroads and a majority of the unions provides for 24% raises and \$5,000 in bonuses retroactive to 2020 along with one additional paid leave day. The raises would be the biggest rail workers have received in more than four decades. Workers would have to pay a larger share of their health insurance costs, but their premiums would be capped at 15% of the total cost of the insurance plan. The agreement did not resolve workers' concerns about schedules that make it hard to take a day off and the lack of more paid sick time.

On several past occasions, Congress has intervened in labor disputes by enacting legislation to delay or prohibit railway and airline strikes.

AP source: Rose Bowl clears way for 12-team CFP in 2024

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 45 of 78

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Rose Bowl game organizers cleared the way for the College Football Playoff to expand to 12 teams starting in the 2024 season, informing CFP officials Wednesday they are willing to alter agreements to accommodate a new format to decide the national champion.

A person with knowledge of the discussions between game organizers and CFP officials told The Associated Press the Rose Bowl is prepared to be flexible and wants to continue to be part of the playoff beyond 2025.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the presidents and chancellors who oversee the playoff still needed to give final approval on expansion. ESPN first reported the agreement between the Rose Bowl and the CFP.

An announcement from the CFP was expected by Thursday.

Eighteen months after a plan to expand the College Football Playoff from four teams to 12 was publicly unveiled, a process that was delayed and seemingly derailed numerous times is ready to cross the finish line.

An agreement with the 120-year-old bowl game held in Pasadena, California, and dubbed the Granddaddy of Them All was the last hurdle to clear.

The university leaders who make up the CFP board of managers were pushing for a decision from Rose Bowl officials by Wednesday about whether they would amend existing contracts for 2024 and '25 and allow the playoff to triple in size.

The Rose Bowl is scheduled to have a traditional Pac-12-Big Ten matchup in those seasons. To have a 12-team playoff, the Rose Bowl would need to host a quarterfinal in its traditional and valuable Jan. 1 time slot.

Rose Bowl officials had asked the CFP to guarantee the game would remain on New Year's Day, starting at 5 p.m. EST, in the new format for 2026 and beyond.

CFP leaders balked.

The original 12-year contract the CFP has with ESPN expires after the 2025-26 season. CFP officials have been unwilling to make any binding commitments about the College Football Playoff beyond 2025.

Expanding the College Football Playoff is expected to bring in an extra \$450 million in gross revenue over the final two years of the current contract to the conferences and schools that participate.

The Rose Bowl is one of six bowls that currently rotate as hosts of the CFP semifinals every three years. The five other bowls — Fiesta, Sugar, Peach, Cotton and Orange — and host cities for the championship games scheduled to be held after the 2024 and '25 seasons had already agreed to accommodate a new CFP format.

Two weeks ago, Rose Bowl organizers told The AP in a statement: "We have no intention of being the lone roadblock that would keep expansion from happening before the end of its current cycle."

Facing the possibility of being painted as an obstructionist and potentially being shut out of the expanded playoff when it would have been implemented in 2026, the Rose Bowl agreed to move forward on good faith.

UK royals arrive in Boston to showcase youthful monarchy

By DANICA KIRKA and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The Prince and Princess of Wales embarked Wednesday on their first overseas trip since the death of Queen Elizabeth II, aiming to showcase the younger face of a monarchy that is tackling important issues like climate change as it attempts to remain relevant in a modern, multicultural Britain.

The three-day trip to Boston is focused on Prince William's splashy initiative to award millions of dollars to a new generation of environmental entrepreneurs who are developing everything from cleaner burning stoves to alternatives to leather. It will include visits to a program for at-risk youth, a sustainability lab and a tour of Boston's shoreline to see the city's effort to combat climate change.

It will culminate Friday in the awarding of the prince's signature Earthshot Prize, a global competition aimed at finding new ways to protect the planet and tackle climate change.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 46 of 78

After their arrival, the beaming royal couple strolled onto a stage at City Hall Plaza — William wearing a single-vent navy suit and Kate radiant in a Burberry dress and Alexander McQueen coat, and earrings by designer Shyla London — amid tight security and a cheering crowd, many snapping photos and video.

Prince William told the crowd that one of President John F. Kennedy's speeches was the inspiration to hold the second Earthshot Prize in Boston.

"It was that moonshot speech that inspired me to launch the Earthshot Prize with the aim of doing the same for climate change as President Kennedy did for the space race. And where better to hold this year's awards ceremony than in President Kennedy's hometown," William said.

Later, the couple sat courtside for a Boston Celtics-Miami Heat game, joined by team managing partner Wyc Grousbeck, co-owner and president Steve Pagliuca and his wife, Judy, along with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and Massachusetts Gov.-elect Maura Healey.

The royal couple was announced to a cheering Garden crowd during a timeout in the second quarter and briefly shown on the video screen. But a security official stepped in front of the camera, eliciting a chorus of boos.

The visit comes less than three months after the death of Queen Elizabeth, whose personal popularity dampened criticism of the crown during her 70-year reign. King Charles III, William's father, has made clear that his will be a slimmed-down monarchy, with less pomp and ceremony than its predecessors.

"I think this is less about saving the Earth and more about saving the royal family," said Boston University professor Arianne Chernock, an expert in modern British history. "To be honest, we've seen Charles as king and his first months in that position trying to feel his way, find his way towards being a more relevant, more modern monarch. And I think we see something similar happening with William and Kate."

Part of that reset involves reclaiming the hearts and minds of people in America, where William's younger brother, Prince Harry, and sister-in-law, Meghan, have dominated the media since moving to California in 2020. Harry and Meghan have criticized the royal family for alleged racism and insensitive treatment and built their own media profile by making films and podcasts for Netflix and Spotify.

The Netflix series "The Crown" has also resurrected some of the more troubled times of the House of Windsor, including the collapse of Charles' marriage to the late Princess Diana, William's mother, amid mutual allegations of infidelity.

But William and Kate are keen to tell a different story, about their work on environmental issues, mental health and early childhood education.

During a gala concert celebrating the queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, William delivered a speech highlighting his grandmother's and father's pioneering work on the environment, as images of jungles and oceans were projected on the walls of Buckingham Palace behind him.

Kate last week wrote an opinion piece on the need to improve the lives of young children that appeared in The Daily Telegraph, one of Britain's most influential newspapers, alongside a photo of the princess sitting cross-legged among a group of elementary school students.

William and Kate's last visit to the United States was in 2014, not long after their wedding. During that trip, the glamorous young couple were feted as they toured the eastern U.S. Eight years later, now in their 40s and with three young children, the prince and princess are finally having a return engagement.

On Wednesday, they were greeted at the airport by Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker before heading to City Hall to meet Mayor Wu and Gov.-elect Healy ahead of a visit to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library and Museum. President Joe Biden planned to greet the couple later in the week.

City Hall, along with 15 other landmarks, was lit up in green to mark the kickoff of the Earthshot celebrations.

Andrew Warburton, who grew up in Bristol, England, praised their environmental work while waiting for the event. "They represent the future in that way," he said.

Pamela Spencer, a school teacher, waited with her two sisters in hopes of giving William and Kate a bouquet of flowers.

"They are following in the footsteps of her late majesty. I'm really here to show them they have a lot of

support in New England," Spencer said.

On Thursday, William and Kate will visit Roca Inc., highlighting the racial equity group's efforts to improve the lives of young people by addressing issues such as poverty, incarceration and trauma from urban violence. They will also visit Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, a leader in research into the long-term impact of early childhood experiences.

But throughout the trip, William's eye will be on the Earthshot Prize.

The ability of the royals to shine a light on the issue and fuse their fame with entertainers such as Billie Eilish, who is set to headline the awards show, is likely to make people pay attention.

Earthshot offers 1 million pounds (\$1.2 million) in prize money to each of the winners of five separate categories: nature protection, clean air, ocean revival, waste elimination and climate change. The winners and all 15 finalists also receive help in expanding their projects to meet global demand.

The winners are set to be announced Friday at Boston's MGM Music Hall as part of a glitzy show headlined by Eilish, Annie Lennox, Ellie Goulding and Chloe x Halle. The show will also feature videos narrated by naturalist David Attenborough and actor Cate Blanchett.

Mistrial after jury deadlock in Danny Masterson rape case

By BRIAN MELLEY and ANDREW DALTON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A judge declared a mistrial Wednesday at the rape trial of "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson after jurors, who were leaning strongly toward acquitting him, deadlocked following the monthlong trial in which the Church of Scientology played a supporting role.

Prosecutors said Masterson raped three women, including a former girlfriend, in his Hollywood Hills home between 2001 and 2003 and the church dissuaded them from going public for years. Masterson, 46, pleaded not guilty and his lawyer said the acts were all consensual.

"I find the jurors hopelessly deadlocked," Judge Charlene Olmedo declared after the jury foreman said there was nothing the court could do to move them closer to reaching a unanimous decision. She set a March date for a retrial in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Olmedo had ordered jurors to take Thanksgiving week off and keep deliberating after they said on Nov. 18 that they could not reach a consensus. A jury of six women and six men began deliberations anew Monday after alternates replaced two jurors who were diagnosed with COVID-19 over the break.

Jurors voted seven times Tuesday and Wednesday without being able to reach consensus on any of the three counts, the foreman said. Two jurors voted for conviction on the first count, four voted for conviction on the second count and five voted to convict on the third count.

The result was a serious setback for prosecutors, and for the three women who said they were seeking long overdue justice and provided emotional and graphic testimony over several days.

Two of the alleged victims in the case issued a statement saying they were disappointed "Masterson has evaded criminal accountability for his deplorable acts. However, we are collectively resolved to continue our fight for justice."

All three women were members of the church at the time, and Masterson remains one.

Two of the women and the husband of one are suing Masterson, the Church of Scientology, its leader David Miscavige and others for allegedly stalking, harassing and intimidating them after they sought to expose Masterson.

Masterson left court with his wife, actor and model Bijou Phillips, without speaking to reporters. He was accompanied to court many days by members of his showbiz family as well as his sisters-in-law: actor Mackenzie Phillips and singer and actress Chynna Phillips, and her husband, actor William Baldwin.

The proceedings took place amid a flurry of cases on both coasts with #MeToo connotations, including the Los Angeles trial of Harvey Weinstein just down the hall from Masterson's. In New York, Kevin Spacey won a sexual misconduct lawsuit brought by actor Anthony Rapp in New York, and a jury ordered director and screenwriter Paul Haggis to pay \$10 million in a civil case there.

But at the Masterson trial, as at the Haggis trial, #MeToo implications were largely eclipsed by the specter of Scientology, despite the judge's insistence that the church not become a de facto defendant.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 48 of 78

Deputy District Attorney Reinhold Mueller said the church had tried to silence the women and that was the reason it took two decades for the case to get to trial.

Masterson attorney Philip Cohen said the church was mentioned 700 times during trial and argued that it became an excuse for the prosecution's failure to build a believable case against Masterson, a prominent Scientologist.

Church spokesperson Karin Pouw said Mueller had misrepresented church doctrine and beliefs and the Jane Does made false allegations about Scientology.

"There is zero truth to any of the testimony that the church has harassed or stalked the Jane Does," Pouw said.

Cohen said he would file a motion to dismiss the case, based on the way the jury voted. He said jurors provided additional insights after the mistrial ruling that were helpful but wouldn't discuss what they told him.

"You always wonder as a lawyer if what you're doing in court every day is making any inroads ... with the jury," Cohen said. "Clearly we made inroads."

The district attorney's office said in a statement that it was disappointed with the outcome and would consider its next steps. It thanked the women for "bravely stepping forward and recounting their harrowing experiences."

Jurors were escorted out of the courthouse without speaking with reporters.

Masterson did not testify. Cohen presented no defense testimony and instead focused on inconsistencies in the accounts of the three accusers, who he said changed their stories over time and spoke with each other before going to police.

"The key to this case is not when they reported it," Cohen said during closing arguments. "It's what they said when they reported it. What they said after they reported it. And what they said at trial."

Mueller argued that Masterson was a man "for whom 'no' never meant 'no.'"

Two women said they were served drinks by Masterson and became woozy or passed out before being violently raped. One said she thought she would die as Masterson held a pillow over her face.

An ex-girlfriend said she awoke to finding Masterson having sex with her without her consent. The defense said her claims were undermined because she later had sex with him after they broke up.

Cohen told jurors they could acquit Masterson if they thought he "actually and reasonably believed" the women consented to having sex. Mueller countered that nobody would believe the acts described were consensual, reminding jurors that one woman repeatedly told him "no," pulled his hair and tried to get out from under him.

Mueller told jurors not to be swayed by defense speculation and said contradictions in the victims' testimony were signs of authenticity as opposed to accounts that had been scripted.

The charges date to a period when Masterson was at the height of his fame, starring from 1998 until 2006 as Steven Hyde on Fox's "That '70s Show." The show made stars of Ashton Kutcher, Mila Kunis and Topher Grace and is getting an upcoming Netflix reboot with "That '90s Show."

Masterson had reunited with Kutcher on the Netflix comedy "The Ranch" but was written off the show when an LAPD investigation was revealed in December 2017.

Ex-FTX CEO says he didn't 'knowingly' misuse clients' funds

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The former CEO of the failed cryptocurrency exchange FTX said Wednesday that he did not "knowingly" misuse customers' funds, and said he believes his millions of angry customers will eventually be made whole.

The comments from Sam Bankman-Fried came during an interview with Andrew Ross Sorkin at a conference put on by The New York Times. Bankman-Fried has done a handful of media interviews since FTX collapsed in mid-November, but Wednesday's was his first video interview since it filed for bankruptcy protection on Nov. 11.

"I didn't ever want to commit fraud on anyone. I was shocked at what happened this month," Bankman-

Fried said.

FTX failed in the cryptocurrency version of a bank run, when customers tried to withdraw their assets all at once because of growing doubts about the financial strength of the company and its affiliated trading arm, Alameda Research. Since its collapse, FTX's new management has called the cryptocurrency exchange's management a "complete failure of corporate controls."

Bankman-Fried said that he took responsibility for FTX's collapse and said he failed to grasp the amount of risk FTX and Alameda were taking on across both businesses. One of the accusations made against Bankman-Fried is that he arranged for Alameda to use customers' assets in FTX to place bets in the market. Bankman-Fried told Sorkin he did not "knowingly" co-mingle customers' assets with Alameda.

Exchanges like FTX are supposed to segregate customers' deposits from any bets they place in the markets. Other financial companies have gotten into legal hot water for misusing customers deposits, one example being MF Global roughly 10 years ago.

"Whatever happened, why it happened, I had a duty to our stakeholders, our customers, our investors, the regulators of the world, to do right by them," Bankman Fried said.

Sorkin pushed Bankman-Fried on how and when investors will get their money back, to which Bankman-Fried said he largely believed the U.S. affiliate of FTX was entirely solvent and could start processing withdrawals at once. As for the rest of FTX, which was significantly larger than the U.S. division, he said the fate of customers' funds were largely out of his control at this point.

Bankman-Fried, who was once one of the richest people in the world on paper, now says he likely has less than \$100,000 to his name after FTX's failure. He's getting by on one credit card while still in the Bahamas.

EU warns Musk to beef up Twitter controls ahead of new rules

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — A top European Union official warned Elon Musk on Wednesday that Twitter needs to beef up measures to protect users from hate speech, misinformation and other harmful content to avoid violating new rules that threaten tech giants with big fines or even a ban in the 27-nation bloc.

Thierry Breton, the EU's commissioner for digital policy, told the billionaire Tesla CEO that the social media platform will have to significantly increase efforts to comply with the new rules, known as the Digital Services Act, set to take effect next year.

The two held a video call to discuss Twitter's preparedness for the law, which will require tech companies to better police their platforms for material that, for instance, promotes terrorism, child sexual abuse, hate speech and commercial scams.

It's part of a new digital rulebook that has made Europe the global leader in the push to rein in the power of social media companies, potentially setting up a clash with Musk's vision for a more unfettered Twitter. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen also said Wednesday that an investigation into Musk's \$44 billion purchase was not off the table.

Breton said he was pleased to hear that Musk considers the EU rules "a sensible approach to implement on a worldwide basis."

"But let's also be clear that there is still huge work ahead," Musk said, according to a readout of the call released by Breton's office. "Twitter will have to implement transparent user policies, significantly reinforce content moderation and protect freedom of speech, tackle disinformation with resolve, and limit targeted advertising."

After Musk, a self-described "free speech absolutist," bought Twitter a month ago, groups that monitor the platform for racist, antisemitic and other toxic speech, such the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, say it's been on the rise on the world's de facto digital public square.

Musk has signaled an interest in rolling back many of Twitter's previous rules meant to combat misinformation, most recently by abandoning enforcement of its COVID-19 misinformation policy. He already reinstated some high-profile accounts that had violated Twitter's content rules and had promised a "general amnesty" restoring most suspended accounts starting this week.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 50 of 78

Twitter didn't respond to an email request for comment. In a separate blog post Wednesday, the company said "human safety" is its top priority and that its trust and safety team "continues its diligent work to keep the platform safe from hateful conduct, abusive behavior, and any violation of Twitter's rules."

Musk, however, has laid off half the company's 7,500-person workforce, along with an untold number of contractors responsible for content moderation. Many others have resigned, including the company's head of trust and safety.

In the call Wednesday, Musk agreed to let the EU's executive Commission carry out a "stress test" at Twitter's headquarters early next year to help the platform comply with the new rules ahead of schedule, the readout said.

That will also help the company prepare for an "extensive independent audit" as required by the new law, which is aimed at protecting internet users from illegal content and reducing the spread of harmful but legal material.

Violations could result in huge fines of up to 6% of a company's annual global revenue or even a ban on operating in the European Union's single market.

Along with European regulators, Musk risks running afoul of Apple and Google, which power most of the world's smartphones. Both have stringent policies against misinformation, hate speech and other misconduct, previously enforced to boot apps like the social media platform Parler from their devices. Apps must also meet certain data security, privacy and performance standards.

Musk tweeted without providing evidence this week that Apple "threatened to withhold Twitter from its App Store, but won't tell us why." Apple hasn't commented but Musk backtracked on his claim Wednesday, saying he met with Apple CEO Tim Cook who "was clear that Apple never considered" removing Twitter.

Meanwhile, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen walked back her statements about whether Musk's purchase of Twitter warrants government review.

"I misspoke," she said at The New York Times' DealBook Summit on Wednesday, referring to a CBS interview this month where she said there was "no basis" to review the Twitter purchase.

The Treasury secretary oversees the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, an inter-agency committee that investigates the national security risks from foreign investments in American firms.

"If there are such risks, it would be appropriate for the Treasury to have a look," Yellen told The New York Times.

She declined to confirm whether CFIUS is currently investigating Musk's Twitter purchase.

Billionaire Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal is, through his investment company, Twitter's biggest shareholder after Musk.

Deep South tornado outbreak: 2 dead from twister in the dark

By KIM CHANDLER and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — A twister roaring out of the darkness smashed through a small Alabama community early Wednesday during an outbreak of tornadoes across the Deep South, killing a 39-year-old woman and her 8-year-old son on a street where generations of one family lived.

One of dozens of tornadoes kicked up by a severe weather front that spent two days rolling from east Texas across several Southern states, the storm shocked people from their sleep in Flatwood, a sparsely populated community not far from the Alabama state capital of Montgomery.

In the early morning darkness, family members emerged from splintered homes to the sounds of screaming. Several homes in their community had been hit by falling trees, and a large pine tree crushed the bedroom of the mobile home where a father, mother and son were believed to be sleeping.

"The tree fell right slap in the middle of the bed while they were asleep. It fell on the wife and the kid," family member Norman Bennett said of the victims.

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office said the victims were a 39-year-old woman and her 8-year-old son, but did not release their names. A man, who is the woman's husband and boy's father, was injured and taken to the hospital.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 51 of 78

Bennett said the man was trapped under the tree and debris, and could not see what had happened to his wife and child. "He was hollering. 'Find my baby. Find my baby,'" Bennett said.

For one couple in Flatwood, a split-second decision may have just saved them.

Caroline Bankston said she and Tim Wiseman were at home watching news reports about the weather and trying to figure out where the twister was when she looked out the dining room window and realized it was already on top of them. They ran to a safer corner as their roof caved in, burying their sofa under debris.

"We just prayed, prayed, prayed, 'Please God Please take care of us. Please,' and he did. You can replace stuff, but you can't replace a person," Bankston said, her voice still trembling. "We were just sitting there on the couch. Thank God we moved."

The storm system fueled by record high temperatures spawned dozens of tornadoes on Tuesday and early Wednesday as it moved from east Texas through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and neighboring states. Tornadoes damaged homes, destroyed a fire station and ripped the roof off an apartment complex in Mississippi. In Alabama, the same storm system also destroyed a community center and left a mess of toppled trees, downed power lines and debris.

A total of 73 tornado warnings and 120 severe thunderstorm warnings were issued from Tuesday afternoon to Wednesday morning, said Matthew Elliott, a meteorologist at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

Montgomery County Sheriff Derrick Cunningham said a community center in Flatwood, on the same road where the fatalities occurred, was destroyed, and that search and rescue teams were going door to door Wednesday to account for all residents.

"We've got mobile homes that were flipped. We've got mobile homes that had trees fall across them. There is a lot of damage back there, a lot of power lines that are down," Cunningham said.

The National Weather Service Office in Birmingham classified the Flatwood storm as an EF-2 tornado, with winds estimated at 115 mph (185 kph).

Isaiah Sankey, who represents Flatwood as vice chairman of the Montgomery County Commission, expressed grief for the lives lost. He vowed that installing storm shelters would be a priority.

"When we do rebuild, we will have storm shelters," Sankey said.

Elsewhere, in the west Alabama town of Eutaw, large sections of the roof were missing from an apartment complex, displacing 15 families in the middle of the night, and power lines and trees were "all over the road," Eutaw Police Chief Tommy Johnson told WBRC-TV.

A suspected tornado also damaged numerous homes during the night in Hale County, Alabama, where the emergency director said more than a third of the people live in highly vulnerable mobile homes.

"I have seen some really nice mobile homes tied down, but they just don't stand a chance against a tornado," Hale County Emergency Management Director Russell Weeden told WBRC.

Two other people were injured as the storm tore apart homes in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana, Sheriff Clay Bennett told KNOE-TV.

The weather service confirmed that tornadoes also hit the ground in Mississippi. Images of the damage from Caledonia showed a grocery store damaged, a fire station shredded and a house toppled, but Lowndes County Emergency Management Agency Director Cindy Lawrence told WTVA-TV that everyone escaped injury.

Hail stones crashed against the windows of City Hall in the small town of Tchula, Mississippi, where sirens blared as the mayor and others took cover. "It was hitting against the window, and you could tell that it was nice-sized balls of it," Mayor Ann Polk said.

High winds downed power lines, and flooding was a hazard as more than 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain fell within hours in some places. More than 50,000 customers in Mississippi and Alabama were without electricity at one point Wednesday, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility outages.

Forecasters had been warning of a possible tornado outbreak for days. Elliott, who coordinates the warnings, said it took a lot of work to get the word out, and people seemed to take the threat seriously.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 52 of 78

"It's a very vulnerable part of the country for tornadoes -- especially tornadoes after dark," Elliott said.

Record high temperatures in Texas and Louisiana intensified the storm front before it moved into Mississippi and Alabama, forecasters said Wednesday.

Shreveport, Louisiana, heated up to 81 degrees (27.2 Celsius) on Tuesday; and Tyler, Texas, hit 82 degrees (27.8 Celsius), according to the National Weather Service in Shreveport. Both those marks broke the old record of 80, set in 1949, the weather service said.

Messi and Argentina advance at World Cup, beat Poland 2-0

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Rest easy, soccer fans. Lionel Messi will grace the World Cup stage at least one more time.

The Argentina great had a penalty saved but his team still beat Poland 2-0 Wednesday after second-half goals from Alexis Mac Allister and Julian Alvarez and advanced to the last 16.

After opening the World Cup with a shocking 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia in one of biggest upsets in the tournament's history, Argentina wound up finishing in first place in Group C and will next play Australia — a surprise qualifier for the knockout stage.

Messi rolls into Saturday's game suddenly in a strong position in likely his final World Cup.

"Now another World Cup begins," Messi said, "and hopefully we can continue to do what we did today."

As for Poland, it was ultimately a happy night, too, because the team went through as the group's second-place team — on goal difference ahead of Mexico — and will next play defending champion France.

Messi ended up relieved after failing to score a penalty for the second straight World Cup. It was awarded after he was hit in the face by the flailing hand of Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny, who made amends by diving to his left to block Messi's kick in the 39th minute.

"I'm upset that I missed the penalty, but the team came back stronger after my error," he said.

A largely pro-Argentina crowd, waving flags and scarfs and beating drums behind both goals, had been sweeping Messi and his team along at the 44,000-seat Stadium 974 and they didn't stop after the penalty. Within seconds, a chant of "MESSI! MESSI!" immediately reverberated around the venue in a bid to keep their idol's head high.

And the roars were even louder at the start of the second half, first after Mac Allister's goal — a scruffy finish from Nahuel Molina's cut-back from the right — in the first minute and soon after as news filtered through that Mexico had taken the lead against Saudi Arabia, which started the day in third place.

Playing an Argentine-record 22nd World Cup game, Messi never stopped surging forward and he was a menace all game to Poland with his dribbling ability and vision. One 40-meter solo run saw him weave past three opponents, drift past another only to miskick as he took aim.

The match was billed as a head-to-head between Messi and Poland striker Robert Lewandowski, perhaps the best center forward in the world, but it proved to be a mismatch.

"If Messi played with us and Robert played for Argentina, Robert would have scored five goals," Poland coach Czeslaw Michniewicz said. "Robert needs to be helped and the match was only played in our half."

Messi wasn't involved in either goal, though. For the second, Enzo Fernandez scooped a pass to Alvarez — starting ahead of regular striker Lautaro Martinez — and he took one touch before curling his shot into the top corner in the 67th minute.

Things couldn't have gone better for Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, who made more bold changes in bringing in Alvarez, Fernandez and Molina and seeing them play a part in the goals. Mac Allister, meanwhile, didn't start against Saudi Arabia and has added energy in midfield in the two games since.

Suddenly, Argentina looks more like the team which entered the World Cup on a 36-match unbeaten run and as one of the tournament favorites, a year after winning the Copa America.

"We wanted to make amends for that Saudi Arabia game because we knew we could play better," Mac Allister said. "We've managed to find that calm we needed ... we played well collectively and it fills us with confidence."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 53 of 78

The final whistle blew with Poland players still unsure if they were advancing, given the Mexico-Saudi Arabia game was ongoing. At one stage, Poland and Mexico were only separated by the number of yellow cards they had collected in the group stage — Poland had five compared to Mexico's seven — and Michniewicz was desperately urging his team to not give away fouls in the final minutes.

A stoppage-time goal by the Saudis meant their match finished 2-1 in favor of Mexico, whose goal difference was inferior by one to Poland.

Upon confirmation they had advanced, Poland's players squirted water from their bottles in the middle of the field and jumped up and down.

"Sometimes," Michniewicz said, "losses can be bittersweet."

CRAZY SCHEDULE

Scaloni criticized a schedule that will see Argentina have to play within three days of beating Poland. "We don't want to be euphoric because I think it's crazy, these conditions," he said.

PENALTY SAVES

Szczesny has now saved penalties in back-to-back games, having kept out Saudi Arabia forward Salem Aldawsari's spot kick in the 2-0 win on Friday.

Treasury making Trump taxes available to House committee

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Treasury Department said Wednesday it has complied with a court order to make former President Donald Trump's tax returns available to a congressional committee.

The Supreme Court last week rejected Trump's request for an order that would have prevented the Treasury Department from giving six years of tax returns for Trump and some of his businesses to the Democratic-controlled House Ways and Means Committee.

The court, without dissent, cleared the legal obstacle to disclosure of Trump's tax returns.

A department spokesperson said "Treasury has complied with last week's court decision" but declined to say whether the committee had accessed the documents. The spokesperson declined to be identified by name because of privacy constraints.

Trump refused to release his tax returns during his 2016 presidential campaign or his four years in the White House.

After the Supreme Court action, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., said in a statement that "since the Magna Carta, the principle of oversight has been upheld, and today is no different. This rises above politics, and the Committee will now conduct the oversight that we've sought for the last three and a half years."

Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In the dispute over his tax returns, the Treasury Department had refused to provide the records during Trump's presidency. But the Biden administration said federal law is clear that the committee has the right to examine any taxpayer's return, including the president's.

Lower courts agreed that the committee has broad authority to obtain tax returns and rejected Trump's claims that it was overstepping and only wanted the documents so they could be made public.

Chief Justice John Roberts imposed a temporary freeze on Nov. 1 to allow the court to weigh the legal issues raised by Trump's lawyers and the counter-arguments of the administration and the House of Representatives.

Just over three weeks later, the court lifted Roberts' order without comment.

Christine McVie, Fleetwood Mac singer-songwriter, dies at 79

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Christine McVie, the British-born Fleetwood Mac vocalist, songwriter and keyboard player whose cool, soulful contralto helped define such classics as "You Make Loving Fun," "Everywhere" and "Don't Stop," died Wednesday at age 79.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 54 of 78

Her death was announced on the band's social media accounts. No cause of death or other details were immediately provided, but a family statement said she "passed away peacefully at hospital this morning" with family around her after a "short illness."

"A few hours ago I was told that my best friend in the whole world since the first day of 1975, had passed away," bandmate Stevie Nicks said in a handwritten note posted to Instagram.

She added that one song has been "swirling around" in her head since she found out McVie was sick, quoting the lyrics to HAIM's "Hallelujah": "I had a best friend/But she has come to pass."

McVie was a steady presence and personality in a band known for its frequent lineup changes and volatile personalities — notably fellow singer-songwriters Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham.

Her death is the first among Fleetwood Mac's most famous incarnation of McVie, Nicks, Buckingham, drummer Mick Fleetwood and bassist John McVie, Christine's ex-husband. In recent years, the band had toured without Buckingham, who was kicked out in 2018 and replaced on stage by Mike Campbell and Neil Finn.

Fleetwood Mac started out as a London blues band in the 1960s, and evolved into one of the defining makers of 1970s California pop-rock, with the talents of McVie, Nicks and Buckingham anchored by the rhythm section of Fleetwood and John McVie. During its peak commercial years, from 1975-80, the band sold tens of millions of records and fascinated fans as it transformed personal battles into melodic, compelling songs. The McVies' breakup — along with the split of Nicks and Buckingham — was famously documented on the 1977 release "Rumours," among the bestselling albums of all time.

Everyone in the group played a distinctive role: Fleetwood and John McVie formed a deep and bluesy groove, Buckingham was the resident mad genius and perfectionist, Nicks the charismatic dramatist and idol to countless young women and Christine McVie the grounded counterpoint, her economy as a singer and player well suited to her birth surname: Perfect.

"I was supposedly like the Mother Teresa who would hang out with everybody or just try and (keep) everything nice and cool and relaxed," she told Rolling Stone earlier this year. "But they were great people; they were great friends."

Fleetwood Mac was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998, when at the ceremony they played McVie's "Say You Love Me." The group's many other hit singles included Nicks' "Dreams," Buckingham's "Go Your Own Way" and McVie's "Little Lies." One of McVie's most beloved works, the thoughtful ballad "Songbird," was a showcase for her in concert and covered by Willie Nelson, among others.

The midtempo rocker "Don't Stop," inspired by the end of her marriage, would gain unexpected political relevance when Bill Clinton adopted the song — and its "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow" refrain — as a theme to his 1992 presidential run. The band, which had essentially stopped making albums at the time, reunited to perform at his inauguration gala.

McVie's two marriages, to John McVie and Eduardo Quintela, both ended in divorce. Her boyfriends included the Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson, about whom she wrote "Only Over You."

McVie, born Christine Anne Perfect in Bouth, Lancashire, came from a musical family. Her father was a violinist and music teacher and her grandfather played organ at Westminster Abbey. She had been playing piano since childhood, but set aside her classical training once she heard early rock records by Fats Domino and others.

While studying at the Moseley School of Art, she befriended various members of Britain's emerging blues scene and, in her 20s, joined the band Chicken Shack as a singer and piano player. Among the rival bands she admired was Fleetwood Mac, which then featured the talents of blues guitarist Peter Green along with the rhythm section of Fleetwood and John McVie. By 1970, she had joined the group and married John McVie.

Few bands succeeded so well as Fleetwood Mac, which has sold well over 100 million records, against such long odds. Green was among the many performers who left the group, and at various times Fleetwood Mac seemed on the verge of ending, or fading away. It was rescued by unexpected returns and interventions and one of rock's most fortuitous and lucrative hunches.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 55 of 78

In the mid-1970s, Fleetwood Mac was down to just three members, Fleetwood and the two McVies. While spending time in Los Angeles, Fleetwood learned of a young duo from California, Buckingham and Nicks, that had recorded the little known album "Buckingham Nicks." Impressed by their sound, he initially planned to ask just Buckingham to join, but the guitarist insisted the band also include Nicks, his girlfriend at the time.

The new lineup proved almost instantly magical. Nicks and Christine McVie formed a lasting friendship, agreeing that as two of the rare women in rock they would always stand up for each other. And the harmonies and music making of Nicks, Buckingham and Christine McVie insured that such albums as "Fleetwood Mac," "Rumours" and "Mirage" had an enviable quality and variety of songwriting and vocal styles.

But the group's overwhelming success also led to inevitable conflicts and the desire for solo work. Over the following decades, Nicks became a star in her own right. McVie released solo albums, including "Christine McVie" and "Christine Perfect," as well as a 2017 collaboration with Buckingham, "Lindsey Buckingham/Christine McVie."

Fleetwood and John McVie were there at the founding of Fleetwood Mac and were the only ones to remain all the way through. McVie departed in the 1990s, when she was seemingly done forever with the rock star life. By 2014, she had changed her mind.

"I just wanted to embrace being in the English countryside and not have to troop around on the road. I moved to Kent, and I loved being able to walk around the streets, nobody knowing who I was," she said of her hiatus during a 2022 interview with the Guardian.

"Then of course I started to miss it. I called Mick and asked: 'How would you feel about me coming back to the band?'" she said. "He got in touch with everybody and we had a band meeting over the phone and they all went: 'Come baaaack!!' I felt regenerated and I felt like writing again."

AG: Penalize doctor who spoke of Ohio 10-year-old's abortion

By TOM DAVIES and ARLEIGH RODGERS Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indiana's Republican attorney general on Wednesday asked the state medical licensing board to discipline an Indianapolis doctor who has spoken publicly about providing an abortion to a 10-year-old rape victim who traveled from Ohio after its more-restrictive abortion law took effect.

The complaint alleges Dr. Caitlin Bernard violated state law by not reporting the girl's child abuse to Indiana authorities and violated patient privacy laws by telling a newspaper reporter about the girl's treatment.

That account sparked a national political uproar in the weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, with some news outlets and Republican politicians falsely suggesting Bernard fabricated the story and President Joe Biden nearly shouting his outrage over the case during a White House event.

Bernard and her lawyers maintain the girl's abuse had already been reported to Ohio police and child protective services officials before the doctor ever saw the child. A 27-year-old man has been charged in Columbus, Ohio, with raping the girl.

Bernard's lawyers argue Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita, who is stridently anti-abortion, has been spreading false or misleading information about the doctor with his investigation allegations for several months.

The attorney general's complaint asked the licensing board to impose "appropriate disciplinary action" but doesn't specify a requested penalty. State licensing boards ensure physicians have the appropriate training and education to practice in the state and can suspend, revoke or place on probation a doctor's license.

"Dr. Bernard violated the law, her patient's trust, and the standards for the medical profession when she disclosed her patient's abuse, medical issues, and medical treatment to a reporter at an abortion rights rally to further her political agenda," the office said in a statement. "Simply concealing the patient's name falls far short of her legal and ethical duties here."

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Wednesday condemned Rokita's request.

"This is not about the concerns of the victim," she said. "This is not about the victim at all. This is an elected official going after a doctor for helping a child who was raped and seeking health care."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 56 of 78

The attorney general's office filed the action as an Indianapolis judge considers whether to block the attorney general's office from trying to obtain patient medical records for its investigation. The judge's ruling is expected later this week.

Kathleen DeLaney, a lawyer for Bernard, pointed to testimony from that investigation, including from Bernard, who on Nov. 21 testified that both child abuse authorities and law enforcement in Ohio were involved in the case before the child came to Indiana for treatment.

Marion County Deputy Prosecutor Katharine Melnick also testified that day and said child abuse would be reported by hospital social workers, not doctors, and such reports would be referred to law enforcement where the crime occurred.

"Though I am disappointed he has put my client in this position, we are not surprised given Mr. Rokita's consistent efforts to use his office to seek to punish those with whom he disagrees at the expense of Indiana taxpayers," DeLaney said in a statement Wednesday.

Bernard treated the girl in Indianapolis in late June, as she said doctors determined the girl was unable to have an abortion in neighboring Ohio. That's because Ohio's "fetal heartbeat" law took effect with the Supreme Court's June 24 decision. Such laws ban abortions from the time cardiac activity can be detected in an embryo, which is typically around the sixth week of pregnancy, before many realize they are pregnant.

Deputy Attorney General Caryn Nieman-Szyper said during a court hearing last week that Bernard wouldn't be under investigation if she had not disclosed the girl's rape to a reporter to advance her own advocacy of abortion rights. Nieman-Szyper said Bernard had not shown she had permission from the girl's family to discuss her care in public, exposing the child to national attention.

Bernard testified that she spoke with an Indianapolis Star reporter about the girl's impending abortion at an event protesting the Supreme Court's abortion decision.

After the newspaper cited that case in a July 1 article about patients heading to Indiana for abortions because of more restrictive laws elsewhere, Rokita told Fox News that he would investigate Bernard's actions, calling her an "abortion activist acting as a doctor."

Rokita has kept the investigation going even after rape charges were filed in Ohio and public records obtained by The Associated Press show Bernard met Indiana's required three-day reporting period for an abortion performed on a girl younger than 16.

Volcano knocks Mauna Loa carbon monitoring station offline

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The eruption of Hawaii's Mauna Loa volcano has temporarily knocked off power to the world's premier station that measures heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, but officials Wednesday say it won't be a problem.

There are hundreds of other carbon dioxide monitoring sites across the globe. The federal government is looking for a temporary alternate site on the Hawaiian island and is contemplating flying a generator to the Mauna Loa observatory to get its power back so it can take measurements again, said officials at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Global Monitoring Lab in Colorado that operates the station.

The Hawaiian station goes back to 1958 and is the main site for the famous Keeling Curve that shows rising carbon dioxide levels from burning of coal, oil and natural gas that tracks with rising temperatures. Levels of carbon dioxide at Mauna Loa have increased 33% since 1958.

The station at 11,300 feet high (3,444 meters), has a 131-foot (40-meter) tower that collects air to measure levels of carbon dioxide, radiation and other materials. Even though the flow of lava isn't near the station it cut off power lines further down the mountain, officials said.

"This is sort of our flagship station," said Colm Sweeney, the monitoring lab's associate director. "The scientific value of Mauna Loa is really in what it stands for. It also is one of the cleanest signals that we have."

That's because it's on a mountain away from heavy populations and vegetation and is so high that it is like "poking your finger up in the atmosphere" to measure levels in the troposphere without contamination

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 57 of 78

from local activity, said Ariel Stein, the monitoring lab's director.

There are more than 300 stations worldwide, including more than 70 operated by NOAA, so the global measurement of greenhouse gases will continue, Sweeney said.

During the 1984 Mauna Loa eruption the station was knocked out for 36 days but the global monitoring continued and long-term records are still complete, Sweeney said.

Sweeney and Stein said it's unlikely that this Mauna Loa eruption will change global temperatures much, unlike 1991's eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines. Massive eruptions like Pinatubo can put enough sulfate aerosols high into the upper atmosphere that reflect sunlight and cool global temperatures temporarily.

Mauna Loa's eruption at the moment doesn't seem to be spewing nearly enough aerosols and its carbon dioxide emissions are nothing compared to the burning of fossil fuels, they said.

Powell: Fed to keep rates higher for longer to cut inflation

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve will push rates higher than previously expected and keep them there for an extended period, Chair Jerome Powell said Wednesday in remarks likely intended to underscore the Fed's single-minded focus on combating stubborn inflation.

Yet in a speech at the Brookings Institution, Powell also signaled that the Fed may increase its key interest rate by a half-point at its December meeting, a smaller boost after four straight three-quarter point hikes. Rate increases could then fall to a more traditional quarter-point size at its February and March meetings, based on previous Fed forecasts.

Powell said the Fed is seeking to increase its benchmark rate by enough to slow the economy, hiring, and wage growth, but not so much as to send the U.S. into recession.

It has lifted the rate six times this year to a range of 3.75% to 4%, the highest in 15 years. Those increases have sharply boosted mortgage rates, causing home sales to plunge, while also raising costs for most other consumer and business loans.

"We think that slowing down at this point is a good way to balance the risks," Powell said. "The time for moderating the pace of rate increases may come as soon as the December meeting," which will take place Dec. 13-14.

Financial markets rallied in response to Powell's suggestion that rate increases will slow. The S&P 500 jumped 122 points, or 3.1%. It had fallen before Powell spoke.

But Powell also stressed that smaller hikes shouldn't be taken as a sign the Fed will let up on its inflation fight anytime soon.

"It is likely that restoring price stability will require holding (interest rates) at a restrictive level for some time," Powell said. "History cautions strongly against prematurely loosening policy."

Powell acknowledged there has been some good news on the inflation front, with the cost of goods such as cars, furniture, and appliances in retreat. He also said that rents and other housing costs — which make up about a third of the consumer price index — were likely to decline next year.

But the cost of services, which includes dining out, traveling, and health care, are still rising at a fast clip and will likely be much harder to rein in, he said.

"Despite some promising developments, we have a long way to go in restoring price stability," Powell said.

The Fed chair singled out strong hiring and wage gains as the main driver keeping services costs high. Paychecks, on average, have jumped about 5% in the past year, before inflation, the fastest pace in four decades.

"We want wages to go up strongly, but they've got to go up at a level that is consistent with 2% inflation over time," Powell said. Wage growth at about 3.5% a year would fit that criteria, he said.

Slowing the increases in paychecks will likely be difficult, he said, because robust wage gains are largely being driven by a labor shortage that began during the pandemic and shows no sign of ending soon.

Fed officials had hoped to see the number of people working or looking for work rebound more strongly

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 58 of 78

as the pandemic waned, but that hasn't happened.

The lack of workers reflects a jump in early retirements, the deaths of several hundred thousand working-age people from COVID-19, and a sharp decline in immigration and slower population growth, Powell said.

With the supply of workers limited, the Fed's higher interest rate policies will have to reduce businesses' demand for new employees to meet the lower level of supply, he added.

Economists generally expect that will mean rising layoffs and a higher unemployment rate, with the economy potentially falling into recession.

But Powell, in remarks during a question-and-answer session, held out hope that employers could cut the near record-high number of job openings they have posted, rather than lay off large numbers of workers.

According to a government report earlier Wednesday, businesses have pared their job vacancies by about 1.5 million since March, though there are still about 1.7 open jobs for every unemployed worker. That ratio forces many companies to offer higher pay to attract and keep staff.

Still, Powell said that employers could cut those openings further, while engaging in only limited layoffs, as the Fed's rate hikes slow borrowing and spending.

"I do continue to believe there is a path to a soft or softish landing ... unemployment goes up, but it's not a hard landing, it's not a severe recession," he said.

Last month's inflation report showed that prices rose 7.7% in October from a year earlier, straining many families' budgets. That is down, however, from a 9.1% peak in June.

Fed officials hope that by tightening credit they can slow consumer and business spending, reduce hiring and wage growth, and cool inflation. Powell said the Fed's efforts have slowed demand, and will have to keep it slow "for an extended period."

Jeffries wins historic bid to lead House Dems after Pelosi

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats ushered in a new generation of leaders on Wednesday with Rep. Hakeem Jeffries elected to be the first Black American to head a major political party in Congress at a pivotal time as long-serving Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her team step aside next year.

Showing rare party unity after their midterm election losses, the House Democrats moved seamlessly from one history-making leader to another, choosing the 52-year-old New Yorker, who vowed to "get things done" in the new Congress, even after Republicans won control of the chamber. The closed-door vote was unanimous, by acclamation.

"We stand on their collective broad shoulders," Jeffries said afterward of Pelosi and her team.

"The best thing that we can do as a result of the seriousness and solemnity of the moment," he had said earlier, "is lean in hard and do the best damn job that we can for the people."

It's rare that a party that lost the midterm elections would so easily regroup and stands in stark contrast with the upheaval among Republicans, who are struggling to unite around GOP leader Kevin McCarthy as the new House speaker as they prepare to take control when the new Congress convenes in January.

Wednesday's internal Democratic caucus votes of Jeffries and the other top leaders came without challengers. Cheers broke out in the private meeting, where typically contested party elections unfolded instead like church service, a call-and-response affirming Democrats' confidence in their choices, some in the room said.

The trio led by Jeffries, who will become the Democratic minority leader in the new Congress, includes 59-year-old Rep. Katherine Clark of Massachusetts as the Democratic whip and 43-year-old Rep. Pete Aguilar of California as caucus chairman. The new team of Democratic leaders is expected to slide into the slots held by Pelosi and her top lieutenants — Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Democratic Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina — as the 80-something leaders make way for the next generation.

But in many ways, the trio has been transitioning in plain sight, as one aide put it — Jeffries, Clark and Aguilar working with Pelosi's nod these past several years in lower-rung leadership roles as the first woman to have the speaker's gavel prepared to step down. Pelosi, of California, has led the House Democrats for

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 59 of 78

the past 20 years, and colleagues late Tuesday granted her the honorific title of "speaker emerita."

"It an important moment for the caucus — that there's a new generation of leadership," said Rep. Chris Pappas, D-N.H., ahead of voting.

Democratic Rep. Cori Bush of Missouri called the leadership election "historic" and a "time for change."

While Democrats will be relegated to the House minority in the new year for the 118th Congress, they will have a certain amount of leverage because the Republican majority is expected to be so slim and McCarthy's hold on his party fragile.

The House's two new potential leaders, Jeffries and McCarthy, are of the same generation but have almost no real relationship to speak of — in fact, the Democrat is known for leveling political barbs at the Republican from afar, particularly over the GOP's embrace of former President Donald Trump. Jeffries served as a House manager during Trump's first impeachment.

Jeffries said Wednesday he will work with Republicans "whenever possible but we will also push back against extremism whenever necessary."

On the other side of the Capitol, Jeffries will have a partner in Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer as two New Yorkers are poised to helm the Democratic leadership in Congress. They live about a mile (1.6 kilometers) apart in Brooklyn.

"There are going to be a group, in my judgment, of mainstream Republicans who are not going to want to go in the MAGA direction, and Hakeem's the ideal type guy to work with them," Schumer said in an interview, referencing Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan.

Clark, elected for the No. 2 spot, extended the invitation to Republicans to work with Democrats on bipartisan projects.

"Our door is open for any member from across the aisle who wants to get to work for the American people," she said.

At the same time Aguilar, the third-ranking member, said Democrats emerged from the narrow midterm election with a mandate: "What we're fighting against is this MAGA extremism" that has captured the right flank of Trump's party.

Jeffries has sometimes been met with skepticism from party progressives, viewed as a more centrist figure among House Democrats.

But Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., a progressive and part of the "squad" of liberal lawmakers, said she has been heartened by the way Jeffries and his team are reaching out, even though they face no challengers.

"There's a genuine sense that he wants to develop relationships and working partnerships with many of us," she said.

Clyburn, now the highest-ranking Black American in Congress, is seeking to become the assistant Democratic leader, keeping a seat at the leadership table and helping the new generation to transition.

But Clyburn faces an unexpected challenge from Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., who is openly gay and argued Wednesday in a letter to colleagues that House Democrats should "fully respect the diversity of our caucus and the American people by including an LGBTQ+ member at the leadership table."

After Wednesday's hugging and high-fives, the elections Thursday for the assistant leader post and several others are expected to be more divisive.

Jeffries' ascent comes as a milestone for Black Americans, the Capitol built with the labor of enslaved people and its dome later expanded during Abraham Lincoln's presidency as a symbol the nation would stand during the Civil War.

His Brooklyn-area district was once represented by Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress, and he noted that she was born on the same day as his election, Nov. 30, in 1924.

Civil rights leader Rev. Al Sharpton called Jeffries' elevation a "long overdue moment in America," noting that "another barrier to equal representation has come down."

Pelosi and Hoyer plan to remain in office, an unusual but not unprecedented arrangement that Jeffries called a "blessing" the new leaders can seek their counsel.

While the House Democrats are a big, diverse and often "noisy" group, Jeffries said it's a good thing, and representative of the House as "the institution closest to the people."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 60 of 78

"At the end of the day, we always come together, find the highest common denominator and get the things done everyday Americans," he said.

Social media makes Jada Williams a face of high school NIL

By BERNIE WILSON AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — It's the middle of the afternoon and Jada Williams begins a live stream on Instagram. In a heartbeat, more than 1,000 of her 671,000 followers join the broadcast and begin typing in questions and comments.

Williams does her best to follow along as the comments and questions scroll past. She laughs and interacts with fans, whether the topic is her basketball career or what shoes and clothes she should wear on an upcoming trip.

If there's a face of the bold new frontier of name, image and likeness (NIL) at the high school level, it might as well be the 17-year-old Williams, who is a senior point guard at San Diego's La Jolla Country Day. Engaging and charismatic, she constantly updates her feed with photos and videos from her 6 a.m. basketball workouts, anything to do with her high school team and women's hoops and her flair for fashion.

Social media is a big part of NIL, which allows athletes to get paid without jeopardizing their eligibility. There are certainly bigger names in the prep ranks, like Bronny James, the son of LeBron James, and Arch Manning, the third generation of the first family of quarterbacks. James has more than 10 million followers on social media and Mikey Williams of San Diego's San Ysidro High and a Memphis commit has more than 5 million.

Jada Williams has been a fixture on social media since she was 11 and stands out because of her flair for engagement. With the advent of NIL, she has parlayed her basketball skills and social media presence into six major endorsement deals that bring in a total of six figures a year. Among them are Spalding, Gym Shark and Move Insoles, which was cofounded by NBA star Damian Lillard.

She moved with her mother, Jill McIntyre, and an older sister from a Kansas City suburb to enroll at the same high school that counts WNBA star Kelsey Plum among its alums, and take advantage of California being the first state to allow high school NIL.

Williams' videos of crazy basketball shots first got her noticed on social media and ultimately led to endorsement deals.

"As a young kid everyone just expected the boys to do all the crazy stuff," Williams said. "I was doing 360 layups and between-the-legs layups and people haven't seen that from a girl. It made a lot of people realize, 'Oh my.'"

"So then a lot of girls started doing it and then we just all created a women's basketball community that we're now fighting for to get equal rights and stuff. It's kind of cool to see."

Williams began mixing in her interest in fashion. "I am Jada without basketball as well," she said. "And then it kind of took on a life of its own. I had to get used to it at a young age. But now it's something fun. I don't stress out about it but it also does help me get a lot of endorsement deals. That's my platform that I use to kind of spark that."

She decommitted from UCLA and then committed to Arizona late in the summer, announcing her decision during an Instagram live. At one point, she had some current Wildcat athletes join her.

One of her former club coaches, James Parker, remembers seeing up to 60 kids gathered along one baseline at a game a year ago, all hoping to meet Williams. She's managed not to be overwhelmed by the attention, saying she considers her social media followers more like family than fans.

"That's kind of how I got here, and so I make sure I continue to thank them because they're also following me," she said.

Higher food prices worsen hunger crisis this holiday season

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Staffers at Bread for the City, a venerable charity in the nation's capital, thought they were prepared for this year's annual pre-Thanksgiving Holiday Helpers food giveaway. The pandemic

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 61 of 78

had faded, but inflation was high, so they budgeted to give out 12,000 meals, 20% higher than normal pre-pandemic levels.

But they were quickly overwhelmed, with long lines of clients waiting hours to receive a free turkey and a \$50 debit card for groceries. They were forced to shut down three days early after helping 16,000 people, many more than anticipated.

"We don't want to retraumatize our community by having them wait outside four hours for a turkey," said Ashley Domm, the charity's chief development officer. "We are not set up to have hundreds of people lined up on a city street."

Bread for the City's experience reflects a larger dynamic playing out across the country. What many Americans hoped would be the first normal holiday season in three years has instead been thrown into a heightened hunger crisis once again, with Christmas on the horizon.

A September report by the Urban Institute estimated that about 1 in 5 adults experienced household food insecurity last summer, about the same as during the first year of the pandemic but a sharp increase from the spring of 2021. Black and Hispanic adults reported higher rates of food insecurity than their white counterparts, according to the report.

"In the pandemic, nobody had jobs and nobody had money," said Nancy Murphy, a 45-year old caregiver picking up a frozen turkey and groceries last week from a giveaway at the Redeemed Christian Church of God New Wine Assembly church in northeast Washington. "Now they're back at their jobs but the money isn't going far enough. It's still hard."

The government estimates food prices will be up 9.5% to 10.5% this year. And that's squeezing the budgets of many Americans and the food banks that have helped them, especially with the expiration of the massive flow of pandemic relief aid.

"Inflation has been the story of the year," said Michael Altfest, director of community engagement at the Alameda County Food Bank in Oakland, California.

Altfest said the level of community need remains 50% to 70% higher than pre-pandemic levels, and about 30% of calls to the food bank's emergency helpline are from first-time callers.

In multiple cases, charities and food banks had prepared for increased numbers due to inflation, only to find the level of need had far exceeded their projections.

The Capital Area Food Bank in Washington originally projected it would need to distribute about 43 million meals during the July 2022-June 2023 budget year. Now four months into that fiscal year, it already is 22% ahead of those predictions.

"That was an educated prediction with a good four or five months of information," said the food bank's CEO, Radha Muthiah. "We are always thinking about Thanksgiving and Christmas right when everybody's heading to the beach in summer."

In Illinois, Jim Conwell of the Greater Chicago Food bank says the need remains elevated. "So we're purchasing more and we're spending more on what we do purchase," he said.

His organization's network served about 30% more households in August 2022, compared to the previous August.

"Families that were just getting their feet back underneath them are experiencing a whole new challenge or even if they have employment, or have several jobs or sources of income, it's just not going as far as it was two years ago," he said.

Higher prices are forcing people to make "sacrifices on their food," Altfest said.

For example, he said, the price of chicken has more than doubled — from 78 cents per pound last year to \$1.64 per pound this year. Estimates from the Farm Bureau set the cost of turkey as 21 percent higher than last year. And market researcher Datasembly estimates that a 16-ounce box of stuffing costs 14% more than last year, while a 5-pound bag of Russet potatoes averages 45.5% more.

Mike Manning, president of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in Louisiana, draws a distinction between the increased hunger levels sparked by the pandemic and the current crisis. During the pandemic, millions of people's jobs and incomes essentially disappeared, creating an immediate wave of need that

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 62 of 78

he compared to the aftermath of a hurricane.

But the current crisis has been a slow and steady rise, starting in late February and still climbing. Manning said his food bank has seen a 10% to 15% rise in local food insecurity in just the past two months.

"You're talking to people who are on lower incomes and they're working multiple jobs — just think of the cost of them to get from one job to the other with the gas eating up whatever extra they're trying to make," he said. "What are they going to do? Do they give up gas so they can't get to work or sacrifice on food and come back and ask us for help?"

And with no clear signs on when the long-term inflation wave might ease, "This almost feels like more of a marathon with no finish line in sight," said Conwell of the Chicago food bank.

Domm recalls the lines at Bread for the City that "just stayed overwhelmingly long," for weeks.

The fact that clients were willing to stand outside for hours for a turkey and a debit card speaks to "the intensity and depth of the need," she said.

Domm also believes there's a psychological element at play as well; after two consecutive holiday seasons warped by the pandemic, families are intensely eager to have something closer to normal.

"People have avoided their families for the last two years. So this year, there's more pressure to really get groceries and have a group meal," she said.

Iran win another step as US soccer tries to boost interest

By RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — American soccer hopes to be ascendant, to challenge the NFL, Major League Baseball and the NBA in the competition for U.S. market share.

Reaching the final 16 with Tuesday night's 1-0 win over Iran was another step for a team whose success is measured in television viewers and buzz along with final scores.

"I don't know the final numbers, but I'm sure there was a lot of people watching," U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter said. "You see how resilient this group is. You see how unified this group is. You see what type of energy and output they put into every single game. And then along the way, there's some pretty good soccer. That's the American spirit, the way this group plays, and I think people will appreciate that, especially back home."

The Americans opened with a 1-1 draw with Wales that was seen by 11.7 million on English- and Spanish-language U.S. broadcasts and followed with a 0-0 tie against England that was viewed by 19.98 million on Black Friday, when schools were off and many offices closed.

President Joe Biden took note of the victory over Iran when speaking in Bay City, Michigan.

"They did it! God love 'em," Biden said.

A victory on Saturday against the Netherlands would put the U.S. in the quarterfinals for the first time since 2002. The status of Christian Pulisic is uncertain after he bruised his pelvis crashing into the goalkeeper while scoring against Iran. The U.S. Soccer Federation did not make Pulisic available to media on Wednesday but posted a video of him dribbling a ball.

"We may be the underdog," said Brenden Aaronson, who replaced Pulisic at the start of the second half. "The Dutch are a world power and they've been that for many, many tournaments. So I think for us, it's just going in there with no fear and playing the way we have been this entire tournament. And I think good things will come out of it."

Matt Turner, the first U.S. goalkeeper with consecutive World Cup shutouts since 1930, was overcome with emotion at the final whistle. Turner thought back to how the U.S. performance in 2010 helped convert him to soccer.

He was a high school baseball player who played soccer fulltime, then switched emphasis. Turner's journey took him to a Major League Soccer debut in 2018, a transfer to Arsenal last summer and now success on soccer's biggest stage.

"This is just an unbelievable experience for me, given my story," he said. "Almost everything is a carbon copy of the feelings that I felt as a fan in 2010. And to be able to have a say in the result that gets us

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 63 of 78

through to the next round is huge — it was just very emotional for a lot of reasons for me.”

The American lineup against Iran was the youngest of any team at this year’s tournament and the youngest for the Americans since 1990, averaging 24 years, 321 days. Iran coach Carlos Queiroz, a former U.S. Soccer Federation adviser, praised their pace, which forced his team to adjust.

“When we play a team with Ferraris who need space to accelerate, the best way to play against them is to close the highways so they can’t gain speed,” he said.

A daunting task against the Dutch is ahead: The U.S. has five losses and six draws in 11 World Cup matches against European opponents since upsetting Portugal 3-2 in a 2002 opener.

“It’s a great opportunity but it’s not something that we’re going into it thinking it’s an honor. We deserve to be in the position we’re in and we want to keep going,” Berhalter said. “So for us, it’s about how we recover from this game and prepare to play against a very good Dutch, very well coached, ton of quality all over the field, and we have to come up with an idea of how to beat them.”

No longer the fringe: Small-town voters fear for America

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

HUDSON, Wis. (AP) — A word -- “Hope” -- is stitched onto a throw pillow in the little hilltop farmhouse. Photographs of children and grandchildren speckle the walls. In the kitchen, an envelope is decorated with a hand-drawn heart. “Happy Birthday, My Love,” it reads.

Out front, past a pair of century-old cottonwoods, the neighbors’ cornfields reach into the distance.

John Kraft loves this place. He loves the quiet and the space. He loves that you can drive for miles without passing another car.

But out there? Out beyond the cornfields, to the little western Wisconsin towns turning into commuter suburbs, and to the cities growing ever larger?

Out there, he says, is a country that many Americans wouldn’t recognize.

It’s a dark place, dangerous, where freedom is under attack by a tyrannical government, few officials can be trusted and clans of neighbors might someday have to band together to protect one another. It’s a country where the most basic beliefs -- in faith, family, liberty -- are threatened.

And it’s not just about politics anymore.

“It’s no longer left versus right, Democrat versus Republican,” says Kraft, a software architect and data analyst. “It’s straight up good versus evil.”

He knows how he sounds. He’s felt the contempt of people who see him as a fanatic, a conspiracy theorist.

But he’s a hero in a growing right-wing conservative movement that has rocketed to prominence here in St. Croix County.

Just a couple years ago, their talk of Marxism, government crackdowns and secret plans to destroy family values would have put them at the far fringes of the Republican Party.

But not anymore. Today, despite midterm elections that failed to see the sweeping Republican victories that many had predicted, they remain a cornerstone of the conservative electoral base. Across the country, victories went to candidates who believe in QAnon and candidates who believe the separation of church and state is a fallacy. In Wisconsin, a U.S. senator who dabbles in conspiracy theories and pseudoscience was reelected - crushing his opponent in St. Croix County.

They are farmers and business analysts. They are stay-at-home mothers, graphic designers and insurance salesmen.

They live in communities where crime is almost nonexistent and Cub Scouts hold \$5 spaghetti-lunch fundraisers at American Legion halls.

And they live with something else.

Sometimes it’s anger. Sometimes sadness. Every once in a while it’s fear.

All of this can be hard to see, hidden behind the throw pillows and the gently rolling hills. But spend some time in this corner of Wisconsin. Have a drink or two in the small-town bars. Sit with parents cheering kids at the county rodeo. Attend Sunday services.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 64 of 78

Try to see America through their eyes.

There's a joke people sometimes tell around here: Democrats take Exit 1 off I-94; Republicans go at least three exits farther.

The first exit off the freeway leads to Hudson, a onetime ragged-at-the-edges riverside town that has become a place of carefully tended 19th-century homes and tourists wandering main street boutiques. With 14,000 people, it's the largest town in St. Croix County. It's also replete with Democrats.

The Republicans start at Exit 4, the joke says, beyond a neutral zone of generic sprawl: a Target, a Home Depot, a thicket of chain restaurants.

"For some people out here, Hudson might be (as far away as) South Dakota or California," says Mark Carlson, who lives off exit 16 in an old log cabin now covered in light blue siding. He doesn't go into Hudson often. "I don't meet many liberals."

Carlson is a friendly man who exudes gentleness, loves to cook, rarely leaves home without a pistol and believes despotism looms over America.

"There's a plan to lead us from within toward socialism, Marxism, communism-type of government," says Carlson, a St. Croix County supervisor who recently retired after 20 years working at a juvenile detention facility and is now a part-time Uber driver.

He was swept into office earlier this year when insurgent right-wing conservatives created a powerful local voting bloc, energized by fury over COVID lockdowns, vaccination mandates and the unrest that shook the country after George Floyd was murdered by a policeman in Minneapolis, just 45 minutes away.

In early 2020 they took control of the county Republican Party, driving away leaders they deride as pawns of a weak-kneed establishment, and helped put well over a dozen people in elected positions across the county.

In their America, the U.S. government orchestrated COVID fears to cement its power, the IRS is buying up huge stocks of ammunition and former President Barack Obama may be the country's most powerful person.

But they are not caricatures. Not even Carlson, a bearded, gun-owning white guy who voted for former President Donald Trump.

"I'm just a normal person," he says, sitting on a sofa, next to a picture window overlooking the large garden that he and his wife tend. "They don't realize that we mean well."

He's a complicated man. While even he admits he might accurately be called a right-wing extremist, he calls peaceful Black protesters "righteous" for taking to the streets after Floyd's murder. He doubts there was fraud in the midterm elections. He drives a Tesla. He loves AC/DC and makes his own organic yogurt. In an area where Islam is sometimes viewed with open hostility, he's a conservative Christian who says he'd back the area's small Muslim community if they wanted to open a mosque here.

"Build your mosque, of course! That's the American way!"

He believes, deeply, that America doesn't need to be bitterly divided.

"Liberalism and conservatism aren't that far apart. You can be pro-American, pro-constitutional. You just want bigger government programs. I want less."

"We can work together," he says. "We don't have to, like, hate each other."

Repeatedly, he and the county's other right-wing conservatives insist they don't want violence.

But violence often seems to be looming as they talk, hazy images of government thugs or antifa rioters or health officers seizing children from parents.

And weapons are a big part of their self-proclaimed "patriot" movement. The Second Amendment and the belief that Americans have a right to overthrow tyrannical governments are foundational principles.

"I'm not a big gun guy," says Carlson, whose weapons include pistols, a shotgun, an AR-15 rifle, 10 loaded magazines and about 1,000 additional rounds. "For a lot of people that's just a start."

That cocktail of weaponry and politics concerns plenty of people outside of their circles.

Liberal voters, along with many establishment Republicans, worry that men in tactical clothing can now

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 65 of 78

occasionally be seen at public gatherings. They worry that some people are now too afraid to be campaign volunteers. They worry that many locals think twice about wearing Democratic T-shirts in public, even in Hudson.

Paul Hambleton, who lives in Hudson and works with the county Democratic Party, found comfort in the midterm election results, which even some Republicans say could signal a repudiation of Trump and his most extreme supporters.

"I don't feel the menace like I was feeling it before" the vote, Hambleton says. "I think this election showed that people can be brave, that they can stick their necks out."

He spent years teaching in small-town St. Croix County, where the population has grown from 43,000 in 1980 to about 95,000 today. He watched over the years as the student body shifted. Farmers' children gave way to the children of people who commute to work in the Twin Cities. Racial minorities became a small but growing presence.

He understands why the changes might make some people nervous.

"There is a rural way of life that people feel is being threatened here, a small town way of life," he says.

But he's also a hunter who saw how hard it was to buy ammunition after the 2020 protests, when firearm sales soared across America. For nearly two years, the shelves were almost bare.

"I found that menacing," says Hambleton. "Because no way is that deer hunters buying up so much ammunition."

When the newly empowered conservatives get together it's often at an Irish bar in a freeway strip mall. Next door is the little county GOP office where you can pick up Republican yard signs and \$15 travel mugs that proclaim "Normal Is Not Coming Back -- Jesus Is."

Paddy Ryan's is the closest thing they have to a clubhouse. One afternoon in late summer, Matt Rust was there talking about the media.

"I think they're an arm of a much larger global effort by very rich powerful people to control as much of the world as possible," says Rust, a designer and product developer who can quote large parts of the U.S. Constitution from memory. "And I don't think that's anything new. It's always been that way," from ancient Persian rulers to Adolf Hitler.

"Is that a conspiracy or is that just human nature?" he asks. "I think it's just human nature."

Today, polls indicate that about 60% of Republicans don't believe President Joe Biden was legitimately elected. Around a third refuse to get the COVID vaccine.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia Republican known for her conspiratorial accusations and violent rhetoric, is a political star. Trump has embraced QAnon and its universe of conspiracies. In Wisconsin, Sen. Ron Johnson, a fierce denier of the 2020 election who has suggested the dangers of COVID are overblown, won his third term on Nov. 8.

This seems impossible to many Americans. How can you dismiss the avalanche of evidence that voter fraud was nearly non-existent in 2020? How do you ignore thousands of scientists insisting vaccines are safe? How do you believe QAnon, a movement born from anonymous internet posts?

But news in this world doesn't come from the Associated Press or CNN. It only rarely comes from major conservative media, like Fox News.

Where does it come from?

"The internet," said Scott Miller, a 40-year-old sales analyst and a prominent local gun-rights activist. "That's where everybody gets their news these days."

Very often that means right-wing podcasts and videos that bounce around in social media feeds or on the encrypted messaging service Telegram.

It's a media microcosm with its own vocabulary -- Event 201, the Regime, democide, the Parallel Economy -- that invites blank stares from outsiders.

While many reports are little more than angry recitations of right-wing talking points, some are sophisticated and believable.

Take "Selection Code," a highly produced hour-long attack on the 2020 election underwritten by Trump

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 66 of 78

ally Mike Lindell, the MyPillow CEO. It has the look of a "60 Minutes" piece, tells a complex story and uses unexpected sources to make some of its main points.

Like Hillary Clinton.

"As we look at our election system, I think it's fair to say there are many legitimate questions about its accuracy, about its integrity," the then-senator is shown saying in a 2005 Senate speech, questioning the reelection of former President George W. Bush.

Miller laughs.

"I'll give the Democrats credit. At least they had the courage to stand up and point it out."

Cornfields come right up to the country church, deep in rural St. Croix County and just down the road from a truck stop Denny's. The closest town, Wilson, is little more than a half-dozen streets, a post office and the Wingin' It Bar and Grill.

From the pulpit of Calvary Assembly of God, Pastor Rick Mannon preaches a Christianity that resonates deeply among this type of conservatives, with strict lines of good and evil and little hesitation to wade into cultural and political issues. He pushed back hard against COVID restrictions.

It's an outpost in the culture wars tearing at America, and a haven for people who feel shoved aside by a changing nation.

"If Christians don't get involved in politics, then we shouldn't have a say," Mannon says in an interview. "We can't just let evil win."

Religion, once one of America's tightest social bonds, has changed dramatically over the past few decades, with the overall number of people who identify as Christian plunging from the early 1970s, even as membership in conservative Christian denominations surged.

From churches like Calvary Assembly, they've watched as gay marriage was legalized, as trans rights became a national issue, as Christianity, at least in their eyes, came under attack by pronoun-proclaiming liberals.

It's hard to overstate how much cultural changes have shaped the right wing of American conservatism.

Beliefs about family and sexuality that were commonplace when Kraft was growing up in a Milwaukee suburb in the late 1970s and early 1980s, tinkering with electronics with his father, now can mark people like him as outcasts in the wider world.

"If you say anything negative about trans people, or if you say 'I feel sorry for you. This is a clinical diagnosis' ... Well, you are a bigot," says Kraft, 58, a member of Mannon's congregation. "People with normal, mainstream family values-- churchgoing, believing in God -- suddenly it's something they should be ostracized for."

But in today's world, words like "normal" don't mean what they once did.

That infuriates Kraft, who energized the Republican Party of St. Croix County as its leader but stepped down last year after a quote on the party's website - "If you want peace, prepare for war" - set off a public firestorm. He moved to a neighboring county earlier this year.

He ticks off the accusations leveled at people like him: sexist, homophobic, racist.

But such talk, he says, has lost its power.

"Now it's just noise. It's lost all its meaning."

The plans, if they are mentioned at all, are spoken of quietly.

But sit in enough small-town bars, drive enough small-town roads, and you'll occasionally hear people talk about what they intend to do if things go really bad for America.

There are the solar panels if the electricity grid fails. There's extra gasoline for cars and diesel for generators. There are shelves of non-perishable food, sometimes enough to last for months.

There are the guns, though that is almost never discussed with outsiders.

"I've got enough," says one man, sitting in a Hudson coffee shop.

"I would rather not get into that with a reporter," says Kraft.

The fears here are mostly about crime and civil unrest. People still talk about the 2020 protests, when

they say you could stand in Hudson and see the distant glow of fires in Minneapolis. That frightened many people, and not just conservative Republicans.

But there are other fears, too. About government crackdowns. About firearm seizures. About the possibility that people might have to take up arms against their own government.

Those prospects seem distant, murky, including to the self-declared patriots. The most dire possibilities are spoken about only theoretically.

Still, they are spoken about.

"I pray it will always be that the overthrow is at the ballot box," says Carlson, who seems genuinely pained at the idea of violence.

"We don't want to use guns," he continues. "That would be just horrible."

Drug slows Alzheimer's but can it make a real difference?

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

An experimental Alzheimer's drug modestly slowed the brain disease's inevitable worsening — but the anxiously awaited new data leaves unclear how much difference that might make in people's lives.

Japanese drugmaker Eisai and its U.S. partner Biogen had announced earlier this fall that the drug lecanemab appeared to work, a badly needed bright spot after repeated disappointments in the quest for better treatments of the incurable disease.

Late Tuesday, the companies provided full results of the study of nearly 1,800 people in early stages of the mind-robbing disease. The data was presented at an Alzheimer's meeting in San Francisco and published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Lecanemab delayed patients' worsening by about five months over the course of the 18-month study, Eisai's Dr. Michael Irizarry told *The Associated Press*. Also, lecanemab recipients were 31% less likely to advance to the next stage of the disease during the study.

"That translates to more time in earlier stages" when people function better, Irizarry said.

Every two weeks, study participants received intravenous lecanemab or a dummy infusion. Researchers tracked them using an 18-point scale that measures cognitive and functional ability.

The study's key finding: Those given lecanemab declined more slowly, a difference of not quite half a point on that scale over the 18 months, concluded the research team led by Dr. Christopher van Dyck at Yale University.

Doctors are divided over how much difference that may make for patients and families -- especially as the drug carries some worrying potential safety risks including brain swelling.

"It is unlikely that the small difference reported in this trial will be noticeable by individual patients," said Dr. Madhav Thambisetty of the National Institute on Aging, who noted he wasn't speaking for the government agency.

He said many researchers believe a meaningful improvement would require at least a difference of a full point on that 18-point scale.

But Dr. Ron Petersen, an Alzheimer's expert at the Mayo Clinic, said the drug's effect was "a modest one but I think it's clinically meaningful" -- because even a few months' delay in progression could give someone a little more time when they're functioning independently.

The trial is important because it shows a drug that attacks a sticky protein called amyloid -- considered one of several culprits behind Alzheimer's -- can delay disease progression, said Maria Carrillo, chief science officer for the Alzheimer's Association.

"We all understand that this is not a cure and we're all trying to really grasp what it means to slow Alzheimer's, because this is a first," Carrillo said.

But any delay in cognitive decline early on could be meaningful for "how much time we have with our loved ones in a stage of disease where we can still enjoy family and outings, vacations, bucket lists," she said.

Amyloid-targeting drugs can cause side effects that include swelling and bleeding in the brain, and lec-

anemab did as well. One type of this swelling was seen in about 13% of recipients. Eisai said most were mild or asymptomatic.

Also, two deaths have been publicly reported among lecanemab users who also were taking blood-thinning medications for other health problems. Eisai said Tuesday the deaths can't be attributed to the Alzheimer's drug.

But Mayo's Petersen said if lecanemab is approved for use in the U.S., he'd avoid prescribing it to people on blood thinners at least initially.

And Thambisetty said the death reports raise concern about how the drug may be tolerated outside of research studies "where patients are likely to be sicker and have multiple other medical conditions."

The Food and Drug Administration is considering approving lecanemab under its fast-track program, with a decision expected in early January. If approved, it would be the second anti-amyloid drug on the market.

Nearly all treatments available for the 6 million Americans with Alzheimer's — and millions more worldwide with the most common form of dementia — only temporarily ease symptoms. Scientists don't yet know exactly how Alzheimer's forms but one theory is that gunky amyloid buildup plays a key role, although drug after drug that targets it has failed.

In a contentious move last year, the FDA approved the first amyloid-targeting drug, Biogen's Aduhelm, despite lack of evidence of better patient outcomes. Insurers and many doctors have hesitated to prescribe the pricey drug -- another reason experts have anxiously awaited word of how well the newer lecanemab may work.

If the FDA approves lecanemab, patients and their families will need a voice in deciding whether it's worth the hassle of IV infusions and the risk of side effects for the chance of at least some delay in progression, Petersen said.

"I don't think we're going to stop the disease in its tracks" with just amyloid-targeting drugs, he added, saying it will take a combination of medications that target additional Alzheimer's culprits.

Researchers are preparing to test lecanemab with other experimental drugs, and how it works in high-risk people before they show the first signs of memory problems.

World Cup Viewer's Guide: Germany must win for last-16 shot

By JENNA FRYER AP National Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — It's a simple task for Germany in its final game of group stage: beat Costa Rica on Thursday or the four-time World Cup champions will go home early for a second consecutive tournament.

Germany was knocked out as reigning World Cup champions in group play four years ago in Russia.

But even a victory might not be enough. Germany is in last place in Group E and, depending on the outcome of Japan versus Spain, goal difference deficit might come into play. Germany has scored two goals through its two games, a 2-1 loss to Japan in its opening match and 1-1 draw against Spain.

"We have a lot of humility," Germany midfielder Thomas Müller said. "There isn't much reason to be really euphoric."

Germany had the same struggles in Russia in 2018 after opening with a 1-0 loss to Mexico before beating Sweden 2-1. Germany would have advanced with a win over South Korea in the final group game, but the defending champions lost 2-0 and went home.

"Now we have to do it differently," Müller said. "When the football world looks at Germany versus Costa Rica, I think we're the favorite for those looking from the outside. It's clear we have to win. Naturally we have respect."

Costa Rica earned a surprise win over Japan last week and now control its own fate. Costa Rica will advance with a victory over Germany, and even a draw would be enough for Costa Rica to reach the knockout stages if Spain beats Japan in the group's other game being played at the same time.

"We didn't come to sit around and take pictures of Qatar," Costa Rica coach Luis Fernando Suárez said before the tournament.

JAPAN-SPAIN

Spain still has some work left to do.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 69 of 78

The 2010 World Cup champions routed Costa Rica 7-0 in their opening match in Qatar, but a 1-1 draw against Germany in the second game made things interesting again.

The Spanish will face Japan on Thursday and the winner will be guaranteed of reaching the round of 16. Spain could also advance with a loss, depending on the result of Germany's match against the Costa Ricans.

If Spain wins the group, the team would face the second-place from Group F. That could be Croatia, Belgium or Morocco. After that, a match against Brazil is possible.

"We are not thinking about our opponents in the knockout rounds," Spain midfielder Koke Resurrección said. "We need to beat Japan first and then we'll see which team we'll have to play against. If it's Brazil in the quarterfinals, so be it, and we'll try to prepare for it as best as possible."

Spain coach Luis Enrique is expected to rotate some of his players after making only one change from the first to the second game — Dani Carvajal coming in for César Azpilicueta at right back.

Teenager Gavi, who started the first two matches, trained separately from the group after the 1-1 draw with Germany because of a minor knee injury. He was expected to be available for Thursday's match, but wasn't likely to start.

Another midfielder expected to be rested is 34-year-old Sergio Busquets, the only remaining player from Spain's World Cup-winning squad in 2010. Striker Álvaro Morata, who scored a goal in each of the first two matches after coming off the bench, could get a spot in the starting lineup against Japan.

The Japanese are trying to advance to the knockout round for the second straight World Cup. They could see Ayase Ueda and Junya Ito playing together in attack from the start for the first time.

CROATIA-BELGIUM

There should be some young faces on the field when two veteran teams meet in a decisive Group F match.

Croatia, which reached the World Cup final four years ago but lost to France, needs only a draw against Belgium to ensure its place in the round of 16. The Belgians and their aging "Golden Generation" likely need a victory, but a draw may be enough depending on the result in the other group game between Morocco and Canada.

The youngsters could make the difference.

Joško Gvardiol is a 20-year-old center back who joined the national team last year. Nicknamed "Little Pep" because of the similarities between his last name and that of Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola, the physical Gvardiol has already become a mainstay in the defense for Croatia.

"At the age of 20 he has demonstrated that he can play at a great level," Croatia teammate Mateo Kovačić said. "He just needs to continue doing that."

On the other side is 21-year-old midfielder Charles De Ketelaere. The baby-faced De Ketelaere, or "CDK" as he's referred to, has only played off the bench so far at this tournament. But he has been impressive with Italian champion AC Milan this season, drawing comparisons to former club great Kaká for his dribbling ability and precise crosses in the playmaker position.

"Some of the young players that haven't been in the game, they are growing behind the scenes. I can feel that they can be called on when needed," Belgium coach Roberto Martínez said. "I thought the players that came on against Morocco, they did their jobs, they performed well."

CANADA-MOROCCO

Morocco is on the verge of reaching the knockout stage of the World Cup for the first time since 1986 and coach Walid Regragui made it clear why the team is in such a position.

The players.

"There are other coaches that like to make you think that they're magicians, they're the ones, they're puppeteers," Regragui said through an interpreter on Wednesday. "The players are the ones that make the coach and not the other way around."

Morocco would advance with a victory or a draw on Thursday against already-eliminated Canada and also could reach the round of 16 with a loss depending on the result of Belgium's match with Croatia.

Regragui, who replaced Vahid Halilhodžić in August, said if his tactics hadn't worked against Belgium, "it was something that probably would have had plenty of Morocco after my skin."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 70 of 78

Canada has lost all five World Cup matches it has played in its history, failing to score in its only other appearance in 1986. After outplaying Belgium for most of their opener this year, but losing 1-0, they took an early lead against Croatia but lost 4-1.

China vows crackdown on 'hostile forces' as public tests Xi

BEIJING (AP) — China's ruling Communist Party has vowed to "resolutely crack down on infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces," following the largest street demonstrations in decades by citizens fed up with strict anti-virus restrictions. A massive show of force by the security services Wednesday sought to deter further protests.

The statement from the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission released late Tuesday followed protests that broke out over the weekend in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and several other cities.

While it did not directly address the protests, the statement was a reminder of the party's determination to enforce its rule.

Hundreds of SUVs, vans and armored vehicles with flashing lights were parked on city streets while police and paramilitary forces conducted random ID checks and searched people's mobile phones for photos, banned apps or other potential evidence that they had taken part in the demonstrations.

The number of people detained at the demonstrations and in follow-up police actions is not known.

While reports and video of the protests have flourished online before being scrubbed by government censors, they have been ignored entirely by the strictly controlled state media.

Further diverting attention was Wednesday evening's national news dominated by the death of former president and Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin at the age of 96.

Jiang was installed as leader just ahead of the bloody suppression of the 1989 student-led pro-democracy movement centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square, and later presided over an era of breakneck economic growth during the 1990s and early 2000s while still maintaining rigid party control.

The commission's statement, issued after an expanded session Monday presided over by its head Chen Wenqing, a member of the party's 24-member Politburo, said the meeting aimed to review the outcomes of October's 20th party congress.

At that event, Xi granted himself a third five-year term as secretary general, potentially making him China's leader for life, while stacking key bodies with loyalists and eliminating opposing voices.

"The meeting emphasized that political and legal organs must take effective measures to ... resolutely safeguard national security and social stability," the statement said.

"We must resolutely crack down on infiltration and sabotage activities by hostile forces in accordance with the law, resolutely crack down on illegal and criminal acts that disrupt social order and effectively maintain overall social stability," it said.

Yet, less than a month after seemingly ensuring his political future and unrivaled dominance, Xi, who has signaled he favors regime stability above all, is facing his biggest public challenge yet.

He and the party have yet to directly address the unrest, which spread to college campuses and the semi-autonomous southern city of Hong Kong, as well as sparking sympathy protests abroad.

Most protesters focused their ire on the "zero-COVID" policy that has placed millions under lockdown and quarantine, limiting their access to food and medicine while ravaging the economy and severely restricting travel. Many mocked the government's ever-changing line of reasoning, as well as claims that "hostile outside foreign forces" were stirring the wave of anger.

Yet bolder voices called for greater freedom and democracy and for Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, as well as the party he leads, to step down — speech considered subversive and punishable with long prison terms. Some held up blank pieces of white paper to demonstrate their lack of free speech.

The weekend protests were sparked by anger over the deaths of at least 10 people in a fire on Nov. 24 in China's far west that prompted angry questions online about whether firefighters or victims trying to escape were blocked by anti-virus controls.

Authorities eased some controls and announced a new push to vaccinate vulnerable groups after the demonstrations, but maintained they would stick to the "zero-COVID" strategy.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 71 of 78

The party had already promised last month to reduce disruptions, but a spike in infections swiftly prompted party cadres under intense pressure to tighten controls in an effort to prevent outbreaks. The National Health Commission on Wednesday reported 37,612 cases detected over the previous 24 hours, while the death toll remained unchanged at 5,233.

Beijing's Tsinghua University, where students protested over the weekend, and other schools in the capital and the southern province of Guangdong sent students home in an apparent attempt to defuse tensions. Chinese leaders are wary of universities, which have been hotbeds of activism including the Tiananmen protests.

Police appeared to be trying to keep their crackdown out of sight, possibly to avoid encouraging others by drawing attention to the scale of the protests. Videos and posts on Chinese social media about protests were deleted by the party's vast online censorship apparatus.

"Zero COVID" has helped keep case numbers lower than those of the United States and other major countries, but global health experts including the head of the World Health Organization increasingly say it is unsustainable. China dismissed the remarks as irresponsible.

Beijing needs to make its approach "very targeted" to reduce economic disruption, the head of the International Monetary Fund told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Economists and health experts, however, warn that Beijing can't relax controls that keep most travelers out of China until tens of millions of older people are vaccinated. They say that means "zero COVID" might not end for as much as another year.

On Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns said restrictions were, among other things, making it impossible for U.S. diplomats to meet with American prisoners being held in China, as is mandated by international treaty. Because of a lack of commercial airline routes into the country, the embassy has to use monthly charter flights to move its personnel in and out.

"COVID is really dominating every aspect of life" in China, he said in an online discussion with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

On the protests, Burns said the embassy was observing their progress and the government's response, but said, "We believe the Chinese people have a right to protest peacefully."

"They have a right to make their views known. They have a right to be heard. That's a fundamental right around the world. It should be. And that right should not be hindered with, and it shouldn't be interfered with," he said.

Burns also referenced instances of Chinese police harassing and detaining foreign reporters covering the protests.

"We support freedom of the press as well as freedom of speech," he said.

In Tokyo, scores of protesters took to the streets Wednesday to support the Chinese demonstrations. Dozens of them, mostly Chinese, held signs in Japanese, Chinese and English that said "Xi Jinping step down" and "Crush the Communist Party."

Asked about the foreign expressions of support for the protesters, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian defended his country's COVID-19 measures and said other nations should mind their own business.

"We hope they will first heed their own peoples' voices and interests instead of pointing fingers at others," Zhao said at a daily briefing.

US revises up last quarter's economic growth to 2.9% rate

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite high interest rates and chronic inflation, the U.S. economy grew at a 2.9% annual rate from July through September, the government said Wednesday in a healthy upgrade from its initial estimate.

Last quarter's rise in the U.S. gross domestic product — the economy's total output of goods and services — followed two straight quarters of contraction. That decline in output had raised fears that the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 72 of 78

economy might have slipped into a recession in the first half of the year despite a still-robust job market and steady consumer spending.

Since then, though, most signs have pointed to a resilient if slow-moving economy, led by steady hiring, plentiful job openings and low unemployment. Wednesday's government report showed that the restoration of growth in the July-September period was led by solid gains in exports and consumer spending that was stronger than originally reported.

"Despite higher borrowing costs and prices, household spending – the driver of the economy – appears to be holding, which is a positive development for the near-term outlook," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

It marked the second of three estimates the Commerce Department will provide of economic expansion in the third quarter. In its initial estimate, the department had estimated that the economy grew at a 2.6% annual rate last quarter.

Economists expect the economy to eke out modest 1% annualized growth from October through December, according to a survey of forecasters conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. The nation's manufacturing sector is slowing despite an easing of supply chains that had been backlogged since the economy began rebounding from the pandemic recession two years ago. And inflation is threatening to weaken the crucial holiday shopping period. Retailers say inflation-weary shoppers are shopping cautiously, with many holding out for the most attractive bargains.

But a recession, if likely a mild one, is widely expected in 2023, a consequence of the Federal Reserve's drive to tame the worst bout of inflation in four decades by aggressively raising interest rates. The Fed has raised its benchmark short-term rate six times this year — including four straight hefty hikes of three-quarters of a percentage point. The central bank is expected to announce an additional half-point hike in its key rate when it next meets in mid-December.

Because the Fed's benchmark rate influences many consumer and business loans, its series of hikes have made most loans throughout the economy sharply more expensive. That has been particularly true of mortgage rates, which have proved devastating to the U.S. housing market. With mortgage rates having doubled over the past year, housing investment shrank in the July-September period at a 26.8% annual pace, according to Wednesday's GDP report.

Chair Jerome Powell has stressed that the Fed will do all that it takes to curb the spikes in consumer prices, which shot up 7.7% in October from a year earlier — a slowdown from a year-over-year peak of 9.1% in June but still significantly above the Fed's 2% target.

Economists had shrugged off the contraction in GDP in the first half of the year because it didn't reflect any major fundamental weakness in the economy. Instead, it was caused mainly by an influx of imports and by a reduction in companies' inventories.

In the meantime, the job market has remained surprisingly durable. Employers have added a healthy average of 407,000 jobs a month so far in 2022. And according to a survey by the data firm FactSet, economists predict that the nation gained an additional 200,000 jobs this month. The government will issue the November jobs report on Friday.

Landmark same-sex marriage bill wins Senate passage

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate passed bipartisan legislation Tuesday to protect same-sex marriages, an extraordinary sign of shifting national politics on the issue and a measure of relief for the hundreds of thousands of same-sex couples who have married since the Supreme Court's 2015 decision that legalized gay marriage nationwide.

The bill, which would ensure that same-sex and interracial marriages are enshrined in federal law, was approved 61-36 on Tuesday, including support from 12 Republicans. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said the legislation was "a long time coming" and part of America's "difficult but inexorable march towards greater equality."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 73 of 78

Democrats are moving quickly, while the party still holds the majority in both chambers of Congress. The legislation now moves to the House for a final vote, likely next week.

President Joe Biden praised the bipartisan vote and said he will sign the bill "promptly and proudly" if it is passed by the House. He said it will ensure that LGBTQ youth "will grow up knowing that they, too, can lead full, happy lives and build families of their own."

The bill has gained steady momentum since the Supreme Court's June decision that overturned the federal right to an abortion, a ruling that included a concurring opinion from Justice Clarence Thomas that suggested same-sex marriage could also come under threat. Bipartisan Senate negotiations got a kick-start this summer when 47 Republicans unexpectedly voted for a House bill and gave supporters new optimism.

The legislation would not force any state to allow same-sex couples to marry. But it would require states to recognize all marriages that were legal where they were performed, and protect current same-sex unions, if the court's 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision were to be overturned. It's a stunning bipartisan endorsement, and evidence of societal change, after years of bitter divisiveness on the issue.

A new law protecting same-sex marriages would also be a major victory for Democrats as they relinquish their two years of consolidated power in Washington, and a massive win for advocates who have been pushing for decades for federal legislation. It comes as the LGBTQ community has faced violent attacks, such as the shooting last weekend at a gay nightclub in Colorado that killed five people and injured at least 17.

"Our community really needs a win, we have been through a lot," said Kelley Robinson, the incoming president of Human Rights Campaign, which advocates on LGBTQ issues. "As a queer person who is married, I feel a sense of relief right now. I know my family is safe."

Robinson was in the Senate chamber for the vote with her wife, Becky, and toddler son. "It was more emotional than I expected," she said.

The vote was personal for many senators, too. Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat who is the first openly gay senator and was the lead sponsor of the bill, tearfully hugged Schumer and others as the final vote was called. Baldwin, who has been working on gay rights issues for almost four decades, tweeted thanks to the same-sex and interracial couples who she said made the moment possible.

"By living as your true selves, you changed the hearts and minds of people around you," she wrote.

Schumer said on Tuesday that he was wearing the tie he wore at his daughter's wedding, "one of the happiest moments of my life." He also recalled the "harrowing conversation" he had with his daughter and her wife in September 2020 when they heard that liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had passed away. "Could our right to marry be undone?" they asked at the time.

With conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett replacing Ginsburg, the court has now overturned Roe v. Wade and the federal right to an abortion, stoking fears about Obergefell and other rights protected by the court. But sentiment has shifted on same-sex marriage, with more than two-thirds of the public now in support.

Still, Schumer said it was notable that the Senate was even having the debate after years of Republican opposition. "A decade ago, it would have strained all of our imaginations to envision both sides talking about protecting the rights of same-sex married couples," he said.

Passage came after the Senate rejected three Republican amendments to protect the rights of religious institutions and others to still oppose such marriages. Supporters of the legislation argued those amendments were unnecessary because the bill had already been amended to clarify that it does not affect rights of private individuals or businesses that are currently enshrined in law. The bill would also make clear that a marriage is between two people, an effort to ward off some far-right criticism that the legislation could endorse polygamy.

Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, who has been lobbying his fellow GOP senators to support the legislation for months, pointed to the number of religious groups supporting the bill, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some of those groups were part of negotiations on the bipartisan amendment.

"They see this as a step forward for religious freedom," Tillis says.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 74 of 78

The nearly 17-million member, Utah-based faith said in a statement this month that church doctrine would continue to consider same-sex relationships to be against God's commandments.

Most Republicans still oppose the legislation, saying it is unnecessary and citing concerns about religious liberty. And some conservative groups stepped up opposition in recent weeks, lobbying Republican supporters to switch their votes.

"Marriage is the exclusive, lifelong, conjugal union between one man and one woman, and any departure from that design hurts the indispensable goal of having every child raised in a stable home by the mom and dad who conceived him," the Heritage Foundation's Roger Severino, vice president of domestic policy, wrote in a recent blog post arguing against the bill.

In an effort to win the 10 Republican votes necessary to overcome a filibuster in the 50-50 Senate, Democrats delayed consideration until after the midterm elections, hoping that would relieve political pressure on GOP senators who might be wavering.

Eventual support from 12 Republicans gave Democrats the votes they needed.

Along with Tillis, Maine Sen. Susan Collins and Ohio Sen. Rob Portman supported the bill early on and have lobbied their GOP colleagues to support it. Also voting for the legislation were Republican Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina, Todd Young of Indiana, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Mitt Romney of Utah, Joni Ernst of Iowa, Roy Blunt of Missouri, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming and Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska.

Just before passage, Collins thanked her fellow Republicans who supported it. "I know it has not been easy, but they have done the right thing," Collins said.

Lummis, one of the more conservative members of the Senate, spoke ahead of the final vote about her "fairly brutal self soul searching" before supporting the bill. She said that she accepts her church's beliefs that a marriage is between a man and a woman, but noted that the country was founded on the separation of church and state.

"We do well by taking this step, not embracing or validating each other's devoutly held views, but by the simple act of tolerating them," Lummis said.

Baldwin said earlier this month that the newfound openness from many Republicans on the subject reminds her "of the arc of the LGBTQ movement to begin with, in the early days when people weren't out and people knew gay people by myths and stereotypes."

"And slowly laws have followed," she said. "It is history."

Rolling Stones to release star-stuffed 2012 live recording

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — The Rolling Stones plan to release what they're calling their "ultimate live greatest hits album," with appearances by Lady Gaga, Bruce Springsteen, Gary Clark Jr. and The Black Keys, early next year.

"GRRR Live!" contains songs recorded live on Dec. 15, 2012, at Newark, New Jersey's Prudential Center. That night saw guest appearances by The Black Keys ("Who Do You Love?"), Clark and John Mayer ("Going Down"), Lady Gaga ("Gimme Shelter"), Mick Taylor ("Midnight Rambler") and hometown hero Bruce Springsteen ("Tumbling Dice").

Shown on pay-per-view in 2012, the concert has not otherwise been available to fans until now.

It also features some of the band's greatest hits, including "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll (But I Like It)," "Honky Tonk Women," "Start Me Up," "Sympathy For the Devil" and "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction."

The 24-track collection will be released on Feb. 10 in vinyl, CD, DVD, digital and Blu-ray formats.

Not much room for youth in Croatia vs Belgium at World Cup

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

DOHA , Qatar (AP) — When Belgium's "Golden Generation" meets Croatia's accomplished veterans in a

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 75 of 78

decisive World Cup match on Thursday, there won't be much room on the field for younger players.

Croatia, which reached the final four years ago, and Belgium, which finished third in 2018, each rely on a vast array of experienced players.

Croatia's 20-year-old Joško Gvardiol and 25-year-old Nikola Vlašić, plus Belgium's 21-year-old Charles De Ketelaere, are some of the exceptions — with Belgium's 21-year-old midfielder Amadou Onana suspended for the game after picking up two yellow cards.

Nicknamed "Little Pep" because of the similarities between his last name and that of Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola, the physical Gvardiol has already become a fixture at center back for Croatia and Leipzig, which recently extended his contract to 2027.

Despite the contract extension, Gvardiol has been linked with a possible transfer to Chelsea, where he could join Croatia teammate Mateo Kovačić.

"At the age of 20 he has demonstrated that he can play at a great level," Kovačić said. "He just needs to continue doing that."

Nikola Vlašić, the younger brother of former high jump world champion Blanka Vlašić, usually plays as an attacking midfielder. But on a Croatia team featuring the likes of Luka Modrić, Marcelo Brozović and Kovačić in midfield, Vlašić is used as a winger.

Statistically one of the best midfielders in Serie A this season with Torino, where he is on loan from West Ham, Vlašić is often involved in the buildup to goals and also puts a lot of shots on target.

Vlašić exited Croatia's opening 0-0 draw with Morocco at halftime after picking up a knock, but returned as a substitute in a 4-1 win over Canada.

"Everyone thinks about the three midfielders, and rightly so, but this team now carries even more threat," Belgium coach Roberto Martínez said of Croatia.

"(Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić) highlights new players that are coming in around those three players."

Belgium also relies on a veteran attacking core of Eden Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku — who hasn't been 100% physically — in attack, meaning that the baby-faced De Ketelaere, or "CDK" as he's referred to, has only played off the bench so far at this tournament.

But De Ketelaere impressed upon his arrival at Italian champion AC Milan in August, drawing comparisons to former Rossoneri standout Kaká for his dribbling ability and precise crosses in the playmaker position.

"Some of the young players that haven't been in the game, they are growing behind the scenes. I can feel that they can be called on when needed," Martínez said. "I thought the players that came on against Morocco, they did their jobs, they performed well."

Croatia can secure a round-of-16 spot with either a win or a draw, while Belgium needs to win to be sure of advancing.

Croatia and Morocco lead Group F with four points each, Belgium has three points and Canada has zero and is already eliminated.

If Canada beats Morocco, it's possible that both Croatia and Belgium will advance.

"It's very difficult to go into the game looking just for a point — that's not our mentality," Vlašić said. "We need to go for a win because if you just look for a point, you concede a goal and you are in panic mode all of a sudden. So we are going for the win."

Hawaii volcano eruption has some on alert, draws onlookers

By CALEB JONES and JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HILO, Hawaii (AP) — The first eruption in 38 years of the world's largest active volcano is attracting onlookers to a national park for "spectacular" views of the event, and it's also dredging up bad memories among some Hawaii residents who have been through harrowing volcanic experiences in the past.

It was just four years ago that Nicole Skilling fled her home near a community where more than 700 residences were destroyed by lava. She relocated to the South Kona area, only to find herself packing her car with food and supplies this week after Mauna Loa erupted late Sunday.

Officials were initially concerned that lava flowing down the side of the volcano would head toward South

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 76 of 78

Kona, but scientists later assured the public that the eruption migrated to a rift zone on Mauna Loa's northeast flank and wasn't threatening any communities.

Still, the uncertainty is somewhat unnerving.

"It just happened last night, so I really haven't had a lot of time to worry about it yet, basically," Skilling said Monday. "And thankfully, right now, it's at the northeast rift zone. But if it breaks on the west side, that's when we're talking about coming into a large populated area. ... That's why I do have a little bit of PTSD."

Even though there were no evacuation orders, some people decided to leave their homes, prompting officials to open shelters in the Kona and Kau areas. Very few if any stayed in them overnight, Hawaii County Mayor Mitch Roth said, and they would be closing Tuesday.

Despite that, some in the area were preparing for unpredictable changes.

Kamakani Rivera-Kekololio, who lives in the south Kona community of Hookena, was keeping supplies like food and blankets in his car.

"We're being makaukau for anything," Rivera-Kekololio said, using the Hawaiian word for "ready."

Ken Hon, scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, said Tuesday that the lava was flowing "not super fast" at less than 1 mph, though the exact speed wasn't yet clear. It was moving downhill about 6 miles (10 kilometers) from Saddle Road, which connects the east and west sides of the island. The flow was likely to slow down about 4 miles (6.4 kilometers) from the road when it hits flatter ground.

It was not clear when or if the lava will reach the road. It could hit flatter ground later Tuesday or Wednesday, according to Hon.

"We're not even sure it will reach the highway, but that is certainly the next step in progress if it continues on these trends," he said, adding that it's also possible a fissure could open up and drain away some of the supply feeding the flow.

The smell of volcanic gases and sulfur was thick in the air Tuesday along Saddle Road, where people were watching a wide stream of lava creep closer. Clouds cleared to reveal a large plume of gas and ash rising from an open summit vent above the flow.

Gov. David Ige issued an emergency proclamation.

"We're thankful the lava flow is not affecting residential areas at this time, allowing schools and businesses to remain open," he said in a statement. "I'm issuing this Emergency Proclamation now to allow responders to respond quickly or limit access, if necessary, as the eruption continues."

Hon said lava crossed the Mauna Loa Observatory access road Monday night and cut off power to the facility. It could move toward the county seat of Hilo, he added, but that could take a week or longer.

Meanwhile, scientists are trying to measure the gas emitted from the eruption.

"It's just very early in this eruption right now," Hon said.

The eruption is drawing visitors to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which is open 24 hours a day. "The viewing has been spectacular" especially before sunrise and at night, park spokeswoman Jessica Ferracane said.

Visitors there are currently able to witness two eruptive events: the glow from Kilauea's lava lake and lava from a Mauna Loa fissure.

"This is a rare time where we have two eruptions happening simultaneously," Ferracane said.

People in the northern Hilo neighborhood closest to the Mauna Loa eruption were cautious, but not overly scared Tuesday.

Lindsay Cloyd, 33, said it makes her a bit nervous, but she feels safe and is also in awe of the forces of nature happening in her backyard.

Originally from Utah and living in Hawaii for only a few years, she has never been part of an eruption.

"I feel so humbled and small," she said, adding that "it's a profound, incredible experience to get to be here while that's happening."

Down the street, Thomas Schneider, 38, an optical engineer at the Gemini Observatory on Mauna Kea, just finished building his new home in the neighborhood.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 77 of 78

The threat of lava never came up when he was buying the property, but he'd lived in Hilo for over a decade and knew the risks.

"If you were to look around my property you would see lava rock formations sticking out," he said. "We live on an active volcano, so everywhere is kind of a lava zone."

Mauna Loa's last eruption came close to his neighborhood but stopped short.

He said he's not afraid.

"I've been waiting since I moved here to see Mauna Loa go off, it's supposed to be spectacular," he said. "It's kind of exciting that it's finally erupting."

Today in History: December 1, Ukraine chooses independence

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 1, the 335th day of 2022. There are 30 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 1, 1991, Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union.

On this date:

In 1824, the presidential election was turned over to the U.S. House of Representatives when a deadlock developed among John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William H. Crawford and Henry Clay. (Adams ended up the winner.)

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln sent his Second Annual Message to Congress, in which he called for the abolition of slavery, and went on to say, "Fellow-citizens, we can not escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves."

In 1941, Japan's Emperor Hirohito approved waging war against the United States, Britain and the Netherlands after his government rejected U.S. demands contained in the Hull Note.

In 1942, during World War II, nationwide gasoline rationing went into effect in the United States; the goal was not so much to save on gas, but to conserve rubber that was desperately needed for the war effort by reducing the use of tires.

In 1952, the New York Daily News ran a front-page story on Christine Jorgensen's sex-reassignment surgery with the headline, "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty".

In 1955, Rosa Parks, a Black seamstress, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus; the incident sparked a year-long boycott of the buses by Blacks.

In 1965, an airlift of refugees from Cuba to the United States began in which thousands of Cubans were allowed to leave their homeland.

In 1969, the U.S. government held its first draft lottery since World War II.

In 1974, TWA Flight 514, a Washington-bound Boeing 727, crashed in Virginia after being diverted from National Airport to Dulles International Airport; all 92 people on board were killed. Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 6231, a Boeing 727, crashed near Stony Point, New York, with the loss of its three crew members (the plane had been chartered to pick up the Baltimore Colts football team in Buffalo, New York).

In 2005, a roadside bomb killed 10 U.S. Marines near Fallujah, Iraq.

In 2009, President Barack Obama ordered 30,000 more U.S. troops into the war in Afghanistan but promised during a speech to cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to begin withdrawals in 18 months.

In 2020, disputing President Donald Trump's persistent, baseless claims, Attorney General William Barr told The Associated Press that the U.S. Justice Department had uncovered no evidence of widespread voter fraud that could change the outcome of the 2020 election. Trump filed a lawsuit in Wisconsin seeking to disqualify more than 221,000 ballots in a longshot attempt to overturn Democrat Joe Biden's win in the battleground state.

Ten years ago: Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher fatally shot his girlfriend, Kasandra Perkins, then drove to Arrowhead Stadium and took his own life in front of the team's coach and general manager.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 01, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 146 ~ 78 of 78

Enrique Pena Nieto took the oath of office as Mexico's new president, vowing to restore peace and security.

Five years ago: Retired general Michael Flynn, who served as President Donald Trump's first national security adviser, pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about reaching out to the Russians on Trump's behalf. (Flynn would be pardoned by Trump after twice pleading guilty to lying to the FBI.)

One year ago: As the Supreme Court heard arguments on a challenge to a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy, members of the court's conservative majority signaled that they would allow states to ban abortion much earlier in pregnancy and possibly even overturn the nationwide right that had existed for nearly 50 years. (In June 2022, the court would use the Mississippi case to overturn its Roe v. Wade decision and remove women's constitutional protections for abortion.) The U.S. recorded its first confirmed case of the omicron variant of the coronavirus, in a vaccinated traveler who returned to California after a trip to South Africa.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Woody Allen is 87. World Golf Hall of Famer Lee Trevino is 83. Singer Dianne Lennon (The Lennon Sisters) is 83. Television producer David Salzman is 79. Rock singer-musician Eric Bloom (Blue Oyster Cult) is 78. Rock musician John Densmore (The Doors) is 78. Actor-singer Bette Midler is 77. Singer Gilbert O'Sullivan is 76. Former child actor Keith Thibodeaux (TV: "I Love Lucy") is 72. Actor Treat Williams is 71. Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., is 70. Country singer Kim Richey is 66. Actor Charlene Tilton is 64. Actor-model Carol Alt is 62. Actor Jeremy Northam is 61. Actor Katherine LaNasa is 56. Producer-director Andrew Adamson is 56. Actor Nestor Carbonell is 55. Actor Golden Brooks is 52. Actor-comedian Sarah Silverman is 52. Actor Ron Melendez is 50. Contemporary Christian singer Bart Millard (MIL-urd) is 50. Actor-writer-producer David Hornsby is 47. Singer Sarah Masen is 47. Rock musician Brad Delson (Linkin Park) is 45. Actor Nate Torrence is 45. Rock/Christian music singer-songwriter Mat Kearney is 44. Actor Riz Ahmed (Film: "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story") is 40. Actor Charles Michael Davis is 38. Actor Ilfenesh Hadera is 37. R&B singer-actor Janelle Monae is 37. Actor Ashley Monique Clark is 34. Pop-rock-rap singer Tyler Joseph (Twenty One Pilots) is 34. Actor Zoe Kravitz is 34. Pop singer Nico Sereba (Nico & Vinz) is 32. Actor Jackson Nicoll is 19.