

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 1 of 85

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Groton Area wins four of the seven games at Hamlin](#)
- [3- Chamber Ad](#)
- [4- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [5- Harry Implement Ad](#)
- [6- Drought Monitor](#)
- [7- NSU Men's Basketball](#)
- [8- NSU Wrestling](#)
- [9- NSU Women's Basketball](#)
- [10- SD Searchlight: Sudden low water in Rapid Creek frustrates anglers, water users](#)
- [13- SD Searchlight: Students in four SD districts to build electric vehicles from scratch](#)
- [16- SD Searchlight: With budget, Noem plays Santa and the Grinch](#)
- [18- SD Searchlight: FarmBots to train students in precision agriculture](#)
- [19- SD Searchlight: Noem budget sets aside \\$3.5 million for state fingerprint, criminal history database](#)
- [20- Weather Pages](#)
- [25- Daily Devotional](#)
- [26- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [27- Subscription Form](#)
- [28- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Groton Community Calendar

### Saturday, Dec. 10

- Wrestling Invitational at LaMoure, 10 a.m.
- Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Santa Day in Groton at Professional Management Services, 9 a.m.
- City Holiday Lighting Contest, 7 p.m.
- Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

### Sunday, Dec. 11

- Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.
- St. John's Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Christian Lit. Circle, 9:45 a.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.
- United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45



a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.  
Open Gym: Grade JK-8, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.;  
Grades 6-12, 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### Monday, Dec. 12

- Senior Menu: Hearty vegetable beef soup, chicken salad sandwich, Mandarin oranges, peanut butter cookie.
- School Breakfast: Egg bake.
- School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, try taters.
- Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
- JHGBB at Warner. 7th grade at 5:30 p.m. followed by 8th grade
- School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Senior Citizens meet at the community center, 1 p.m.
- The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Groton UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

## Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

**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

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 2 of 85

## Groton Area wins four of the seven games at Hamlin

It was a very busy night for basketball action at Hamlin as seven games were played during the night. The Tigers finished the night with the upper hand, winning four of the seven games.

Hamlin won the boys varsity game, 68-57. Groton Area had the early lead at 14-5, before the Chargers scored eight straight points and then took the lead at 19-17 and never trailed after that. The Charger offense ran around the perimeter and that opened up Brenna Keszler under the basket who had several dunks during the game. Groton Area made 33 percent of its field goals while Hamlin made 52 percent.

Hamlin led at the quarterstops at 19-18, 34-25 and 48-38.

Lane Tiez led the Tigers with 31 points including 12 of 12 free throws and three three-pointers, he had eight rebounds, two assists and five steals. Tate Larson had nine points, eight rebounds, one assist and one steal. Jacob Zak added seven points, had four rebounds, two assists and three steals. Ryder Johnson had four points, two rebounds and one assist. Cole Simon and Teylor Diegel each had two points, one rebound and one steal. Logan Ringgenberg had two points and Cade Larson had one rebound and one assist.

The Tigers made 12 of 31 two-pointers for 39 percent, three of 15 three-pointers for 20 percent, made 24 of 30 free throws for 80 percent off of Hamlin's 23 team fouls, had 25 rebounds, 12 turnovers, eight assists and 11 steals.

Four players hit double figures for Hamlin with Easton Neuendorf leading the way with 20 points followed by Brennan Keszler with 18, Tyson Stevenson 15 and Zac VanMeeteren 12 points, then Rylan Bawdon and Jackson Wadsworth each had two points. The Chargers made 25 of 48 field goals for 52 percent, were 15 of 16 from the line for 94 percent and had 13 turnovers.

Hamlin also won the girls varsity game, 57-41. The Chargers led at the quarterstops at 13-4, 30-15 and 43-24.

Brooke Gengerke led the Tigers with 10 points, four rebounds and two assists. Jaedyn Penning had nine points, three rebounds and one assist. Kennedy Hansen had eight points, three rebounds, four assists and one steal. Sydney Leicht had seven points and two rebounds. Jerica Locke had five points, six rebounds, two assists and one steal. Rylee Dunker had two points and one rebound. Aspen Johnson had two rebounds and one assist. Brooklyn Hansen had one steal. Laila Roberts had one assist and Faith Traphagen had two rebounds and one steal. Making three-pointers were Leicht, Kennedy Hansen and Locke with one each and Gengerke made two three-pointers.

The Tigers played without Gracie Traphagen as she suffered an injury at the Sisseton game.

Groton Area made 11 of 25 two-pointers for 44 percent, five of 15 three-pointers for 33 percent, four of eight free throws for 50 percent, had 23 rebounds, 14 turnovers, 11 assists, four steals and 16 team fouls.

Addison Neudendorf led the Chargers with 24 points while Kami Wadsworth had 19, Ally Abraham had eight and Marissa Bawdon had six points. Hamlin made 20 of 51 for 39 percent, nine of 12 free throws for 75 percent, had 16 team fouls and five turnovers.

Both varsity games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Chamber of Commerce, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Locke Electric, Spanier Harvesting & Trucking, Bahr Spray Foam, Thunder Seed with John Wheeting.

Thanks to Shane Clark who did the play-by-play calling of the girls varsity game. Becky Erickson gathered the stats from the broadcast and provided them to GDI.

The boys won the junior varsity game, 36-33. Hamlin had the early lead before Groton Area scored seven straight points to take a 16-12. Hamlin would then score 12 unanswered points to take a 26-20 lead. The Tigers battled back with a nine-point rally to take a 34-28 lead and held off a late Hamlin rally for the win.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 3 of 85

Ryder Johnson led the Tigers with nine points followed by Braxton Imrie with eight, Colby Dunker and Teylor Diegel each had seven and Keegen Tracy, Turner Thompson and Logan Ringgenberg each had two points. Johnson and Diegel each made one three-pointer while Imrie made two.

Jaden Olsen led Hamlin with 10 points followed by Boden Stevenson with nine, Turner Stevenson had eight, Aiden Abraham four and Ted Smith had two points.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Weber Landscaping.

Groton Area won the girls junior varsty game, 28-8. The Tigers led at the quarterstops at 8-0, 11-6 and 18-8. Jaedyn Penning led Groton Area with seven points followed by Kennedy Hansen with five, Laila Roberts, Talli Wright and Mia Crank each had four points and Elizabeth Flihs and Rylee Dunker each had two points.

Thanks to Shane Clark for calling the game on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Adam and Nicole Wright.

Groton Area boys won the C game, 43-31. Kegan Tracy led the Tigers with 12 points, Gage Sippel had 10, Turner Thompson had six, Blake Paulie five, and adding two points each were JD Schwan, Logan Warrington, Kaden McInerney, Karter Moody and Logan Pearson. Thanks to Darcy Moody for running the camera on GDILIVE.COM. The broadcast was sponsored by Hefty Seed.

And the two girls junior high games were also streamed on GDILIVE.COM sponsored by Locke Electric and Weber Landscaping. The eight grade girls won their game, 31-25, and Hamlin won the seventh grade game, 32-28.

- Paul Kosel



**'TIS THE  
SEASON TO  
SHOP LOCAL**

**GROTON**  
Chamber Of Commerce

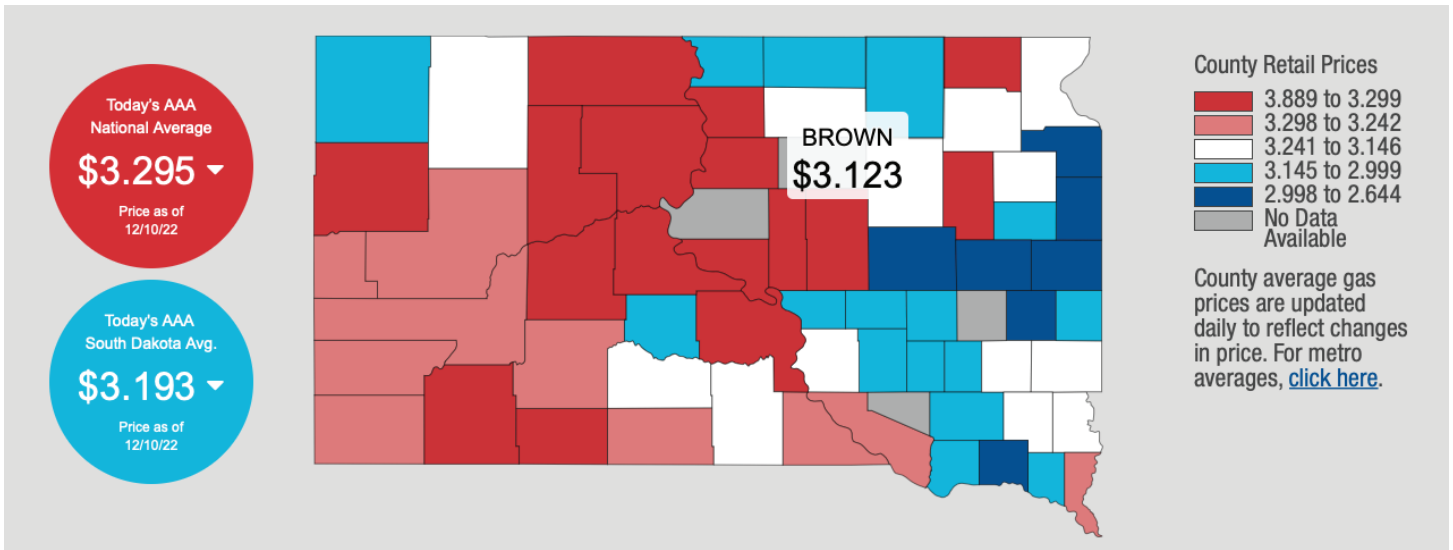
# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 4 of 85

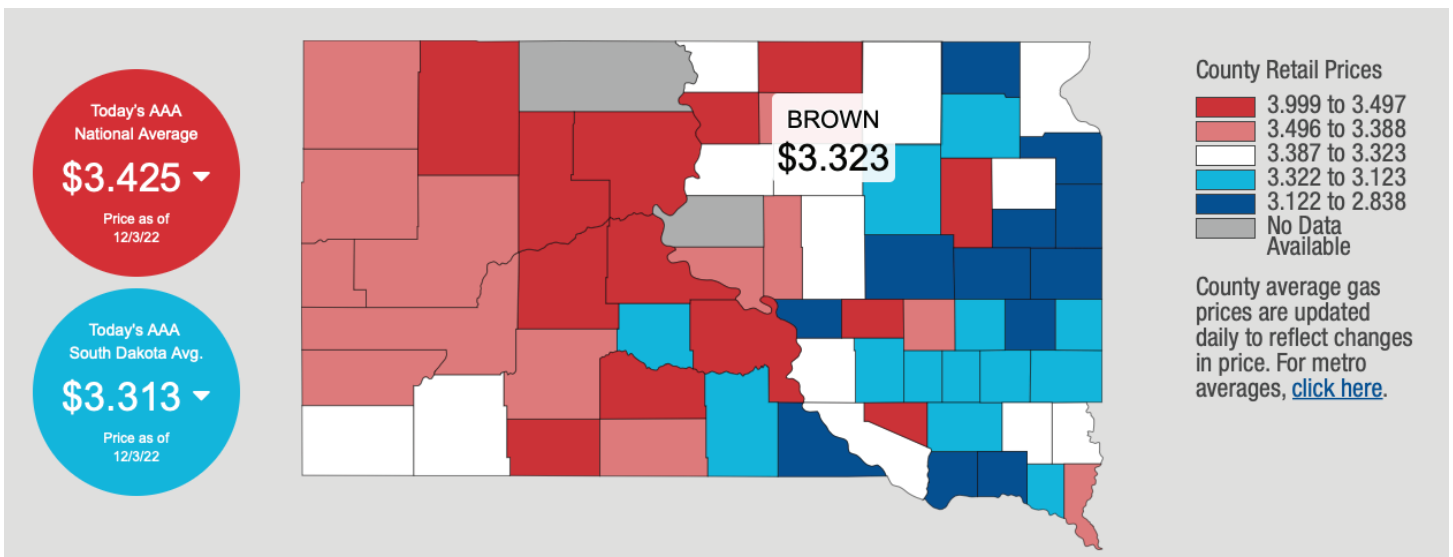
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.193	\$3.417	\$3.882	\$4.531
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.220	\$3.405	\$3.879	\$4.587
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.313	\$3.503	\$3.977	\$4.798
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.659	\$3.830	\$4.327	\$5.157
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.248	\$3.353	\$3.712	\$3.499

### This Week



### Last Week



**X SERIES** | *Cub Cadet*

## PUT WINTER IN ITS PLACE



### **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.

- Track 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\***



### **2X** 30" MAX

Take on winter with the commercial-grade durability of the 357cc Cub Cadet 2X 30" MAX snow blower

- Heavy-duty 14-gauge steel side plates and auger housing
- 14" augers and impeller
- Sealed ball bearings on auger and wheel shafts
- LED light bar on auger housing
- 23" intake height
- Heated hand grips
- 16"x6.5" X-Trac tires
- High-arc steel chute
- Heavy-duty cast aluminum auger gear box w/ 5-year limited warranty

MSRP  
**\$1,899\***

■ Indicates step-up feature



**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](http://www.harrysinc.com)  
605-395-6421

<sup>1</sup> Restrictions apply. See dealer or [cubcadet.com/en\\_US/financing](http://cubcadet.com/en_US/financing) for details.

<sup>†</sup> 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

**EXCEPTIONAL FINANCING  
OFFERS AVAILABLE!**



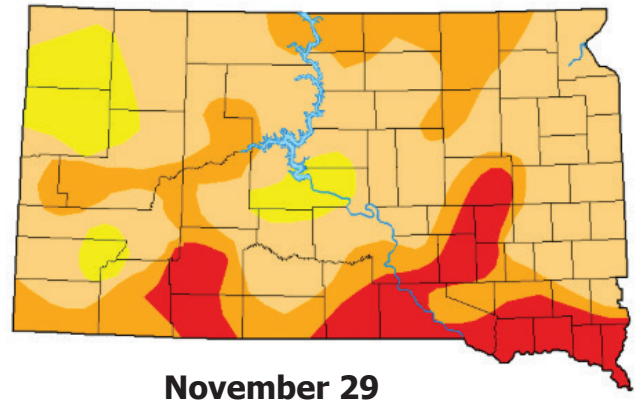
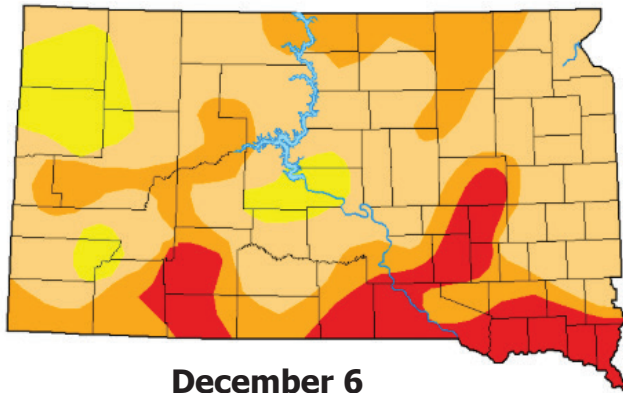
# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 6 of 85

## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



On this week's map, improvements were made in northwestern Colorado and Wyoming. In Wyoming, recent storms delivered beneficial snowfall to the Teton and Wind River ranges leading to reduction in areas of Moderate Drought (D1). Moreover, the drainage basins in those ranges, the Snake Headwaters and Upper Green, were reporting SWE percentage of median levels of 129% and 114%, respectively. Additionally, areas of Moderate Drought (D1) were reduced in northwestern Colorado in response to improving conditions from recent storms and above-normal snowpack conditions including in the White-Yampa Basin (122% of median). In Kansas, continued dry conditions led to minor expansion of areas of Extreme Drought (D3) and Exceptional Drought (D4) in western Kansas. Looking at the past 9-month period in the western half of Kansas, precipitation deficits ranged from 3 to 12+ inches. For the week, average temperatures were mainly below normal, with the greatest departures (10 to 15 deg F below normal) observed in North Dakota and north-central Wyoming. In terms of precipitation, the region was generally dry, although some significant mountain snowfall was observed in western Wyoming and in the Rockies of Colorado, while lesser accumulations were reported in areas of the Dakotas.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 7 of 85

## Northern State Holds Down the Fort in Wachs Arena Win over UMC

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team bounced back Friday evening, defeating Minnesota Crookston, 81-62, from Wachs Arena. The Wolves tallied 19 points off 21 offensive boards in the 19-point victory.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 81, UMC 62

Records: NSU 7-3 (3-1 NSIC), UMC 1-9 (0-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 2534

### HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern led 34-27 at the half and ran away with the game in the second, scoring 47 total points and shooting 46.3% from the floor
- The Wolves tallied a game high 51 rebounds, 17 assists, nine blocks, nine made 3-pointers, and six steals in the win
- They scored 38 points in the paint, 19 second chance points, 18 points off the bench, 15 points off 13 turnovers, and eight fast break points
- In total the Wolves shot 37.7% from the floor, 28.1% from the 3-point line, and 70.0% from the foul line, but took care of the ball when needed, giving up a season low four turnovers
- Jackson Moni led four Wolves in double figures, notching 23 points, as well as a team leading four blocks
- Jordan Belka pulled down a team leading ten rebounds, as five Wolves tallied six rebounds or more in the win

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Jackson Moni: 23 points, 56.3 field goal%, 7 rebounds, 4 blocks, 2 steals
- Sam Masten: 17 points, 53.9 field goal%, 6 rebounds, 6 assists
- Michael Nhial: 11 points, 50.0 field goal%, 6 rebounds
- Josh Dilling: 11 points, 6 rebounds, 2 steals

### UP NEXT

The Wolves are back in action today from Wachs Arena hosting Bemidji State. Tip-off is set for 6 p.m. against the Beavers.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 8 of 85

## No. 20 Wolves Out Run No. 23 Mustangs in NSIC Dual Win

Marshall, Minn. – Seven victories, including two bonus point wins led No. 20 Northern State wrestling over No. 23 Southwest Minnesota State on Friday evening. The win was the first NSIC victory of the season for the Wolves.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 25, SMSU 10

Records: NSU 2-2 (1-1 NSIC) SMSU 0-1 (0-1 NSIC)

### HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern opened the dual with four straight victories, taking a 16-0 lead
- Landen Fischer kicked things off with an 18-2 technical fall over Ben Emrich, notching one take down, two reversals, and 12 nearfall points
- Teagan Block followed suit, adding his first league victory of the season in a 2-1 decision over Hunter Pfantz
- Robert Coyle III meant business at 141-pounds, working over Hayden Straumann in a 17-1 technical fall which included four takedowns, eight nearfall points and an escape
- Seventh ranked, Wyatt Turnquist tallied a 9-2 decision win over Luke Peterson, his seventh of the 2022-23 season
- Southwest broke through with a decision win at 157 pounds, however Chase Bloomquist quickly answered back
- Bloomquist tallied a 2-1 win over Lucas Hodges, followed by a 6-5 decision victory by Kelby Hawkins, defeating Elijah Sterner
- The Mustangs only ranked wrestler on roster, Caden Steffen tallied a win at 184, leaving the scoreboard reading 22-7 in favor of the Wolves
- No. 3 Cole Huss tallied the final victory of the evening for NSU in the regulation weights, defeating Carter Marx in a 9-4 decision
- Nathan Schauer added a 5-0 decision victory over German Fitzgerald in the 285 extra match, capping off the evening

### UP NEXT

Northern State returns to action next Saturday and Sunday from Indianapolis and the Midwest Classic. Competition kicks off at 10 a.m. each day.

### MATCH RESULTS

Wt		SMSU	NSU
125	Landen Fischer (NSU) over Ben Emrich (SMSU) (TF 18-2 5:41)	0	5
133	Teagan Block (NSU) over Hunter Pfantz (SMSU) (Dec 2-1)	0	3
141	Robert Coyle III (NSU) over Hayden Straumann (SMSU) (TF 17-1 5:55)	0	5
149	#7 Wyatt Turnquist (NSU) over Luke Peterson (SMSU) (Dec 9-2)	0	3
157	Sean Howk (SMSU) over Izaak Hunsley (NSU) (Dec 2-0)	3	0
165	Chase Bloomquist (NSU) over Lucas Hodges (SMSU) (Dec 2-1)	0	3
174	Kelby Hawkins (NSU) over Elijah Sterner (SMSU) (Dec 6-5)	0	3
184	#2 Caden Steffen (SMSU) over Tyson Lien (NSU) (MD 10-1)	4	0
197	#3 Cole Huss (NSU) over Carter Marx (SMSU) (Dec 9-4)	0	3
285	Jacob Dykes (SMSU) over George Bolling (NSU) (Dec 5-1)	3	0
184	Kevin Bostwick (SMSU) over Samuel Stroup (NSU) (Fall 5:00)	0	0
285	Nathan Schauer (NSU) over German Fitzgerald (SMSU) (Dec 5-0)	0	0
	<b>Team Score:</b>	10	25



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 9 of 85

## Wolves Unable to Keep Pace with Golden Eagles

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State women’s basketball team fell to Minnesota Crookston on Friday evening, dropping a 61-50 contest in Wachs Arena. The Golden Eagles raced out to a 21-point lead at the halftime break behind eight first half 3-pointers. The Wolves were able to claw back into the game with a 20-3 scoring run in the second half, however, were unable to get any closer than four points.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 50, UMC 61

Records: NSU 6-4 (1-3 NSIC), UMC 3-7 (2-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 2,058

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State and Minnesota Crookston battled in a back-and-forth first quarter, however UMC’s Emma Miller knocked down a 3-pointer with 21 seconds remaining to give the Golden Eagles a 16-14 lead at the quarter break

Miller led a hot-shooting UMC team to a 21-point halftime lead as the Golden Eagles held a 23-4 advantage in the second period, Crookston shot 6-9 from beyond the arc during the quarter

A zone defense by the Wolves stifled the Golden Eagle offense in the third quarter as Northern State used a pair of fast break baskets to out-score Minnesota Crookston 12-5 in the period

A jumper by Laurie Rogers extended the NSU scoring run to 20-3 midway through the fourth quarter, the scoring run extended from the 6:02 mark in the third quarter all the way to the 5:55 mark of the fourth quarter

After trailing by as many as 22 points in the third period, a pair of free throws by Olivia Hanson cut the lead to four points with 4:38 remaining in the game, however that would be the closest the Wolves would get as the Golden Eagles closed the game on an 11-4 run

The freshmen trio of Madelyn Bragg, Olivia Hanson, and Morgan Fiedler combined to score 20 of Northern’s 32 second half points

Bragg set a new career high mark points (12) while Hanson scored her first career points and set career high marks in points (8), rebounds (4) and steals (4)

Rogers record her fourth game of the season with double digit rebounds, grabbing 12 boards in the game (6 offensive, 6 defensive); Rogers also recorded her fourth game of the season with multiple blocked shots with two against UMC

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Madelyn Bragg: 12 points, 2 rebounds

Rianna Fillipi: 8 points, 4 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 steals

Olivia Hanson: 8 points, 4 rebounds, 4 steals

### UP NEXT

Northern State will play their final home contest of the 2022 calendar year when they host Bemidji State this afternoon. The Wolves and Beavers are scheduled for a 4 p.m. tip-off in Wachs Arena.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

# Sudden low water in Rapid Creek frustrates anglers, water users

**After Pactola managers close dam gate, lower flows threaten trout and system pumps**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - DECEMBER 9, 2022 9:35 AM**

Anglers and water users are criticizing a Black Hills dam's government managers for a lack of communication about sudden low-water flows threatening downstream fish and domestic water supplies.

Rapid Creek flows dropped from 40 to 12 cubic feet per second on Nov. 30. That imperiled brown trout spawning, which occurs during the fall, and created a water pumping problem for some who rely on the creek as a water source.

The cause of the drop in flow was the closure of a dam gate at the Pactola Reservoir, which allows water to flow into Rapid Creek below the dam. The creek flows east out of the Black Hills through Rapid City to the Cheyenne River.

Pactola is the largest and deepest reservoir in the Black Hills. The dam was constructed in 1952 and is managed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The bureau maintains and controls releases in conjunction with the city of Rapid City.

Pactola feeds the bureau's Rapid Valley Unit, which provides multiple benefits, including irrigation for about 8,900 acres of farmland, water for municipal and industrial users in Rapid City and at Ellsworth Air Force Base, and flood control.

### **Problem discovered**

Crystal Lesmeister, a civil engineer in Rapid City with the bureau, said a dam gate was closed after a routine inspection revealed the need for a repair at the dam.

"We needed to do some repair work on the gate, and in order to do that work, we switched to a bypass pipe," Lesmeister said.



**Left: The flow on Rapid Creek while a dam gate was closed at Pactola Reservoir. Right: The bypass pipe used to keep some water flowing at Pactola while the dam gate was closed.** (Photos courtesy of David Hanna)

The bypass pipe resulted in lower creek flows, because the pipe allows less water to pass through than the dam gate.

Evaporated liquid was building up to the point of cracking part of the dam's gate system. The problem was identified during an inspection in November. Repair work began on Nov. 28, and the bypass pipe was opened to allow continued flows while repairs were being made.

"Reclamation, in coordination with the city, began repairs to concrete infrastructure and to prevent possible damage to the left regulating gate," Joe Hall, the bureau's Dakotas area manager, said in a written statement. "After investigation of the cracking, special bonding was ordered to repair these damages."

The bureau said the repairs are necessary due to the location of the problem and cracking, and waiting longer could lead to more extensive repairs.

Some of the materials needed to complete the repair were not on hand and are now being shipped. Meanwhile, flow rates rose back to over 30 cubic feet Thursday evening.

### Water users affected

An association of 197 homeowners draws drinking water from the section of Rapid Creek where flow rates dropped. Hisega Meadows Water manages that water.

Additionally, about 400 people in the unincorporated area on Highway 44 – 10 miles or so downstream of Pactola – individually rely on the creek for water, according to Scott Licht, Hisega Meadows' water operator.

Licht said pumping water typically costs \$27.71 and requires two hours of labor a day. At the lower flow rate, Licht said it costs \$129.32 and eight hours of work.

"The danger is it can get to the point where we can't pump water," Licht said. "We've got just under 500 people who wouldn't have clean, safe water."

### Brown trout spawning impacted

David Hanna, a Hisega Meadows resident and president of Black Hills Fly Fishers, is worried about the negative effects on fish.

"There are a lot of brown trout eggs between Pactola Reservoir and Canyon Lake that have been exposed to air, and we will lose a large portion of this age class of fish," Hanna said.

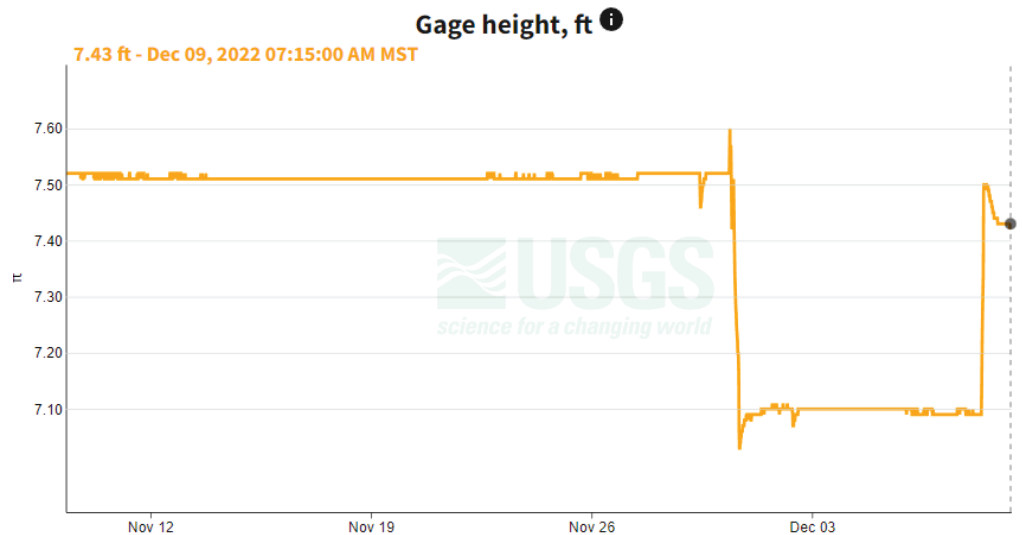
Jake Davis, Game, Fish and Parks fisheries program administrator, said in a written statement, "there is a relationship between trout numbers and stream flow in Rapid Creek and the potential exists for negative impacts to the population as a result of low flows."

Davis said it's still too early to tell if a regional fishery will need to release brown trout to get numbers up. "We still need to determine what the need will or won't be," Davis said.

### Lack of communication

The Bureau of Reclamation did not communicate with GF&P about the closure.

Crystal Lesmeister with the bureau said if it had waited much longer, there would be too much ice to conduct the repair. And if the bureau had waited until after the winter snow melted, there would be too



**USGS streamflow data for Rapid Creek during a dam repair at Pactola Reservoir.**

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 12 of 85



**A brown trout.** (Courtesy of Kevin Woster)

much water to close the gates.

"We wanted to get repairs done now, ahead of big releases in spring and before the creek freezes over," Lesmeister said. "And we clearly didn't communicate that very well. The last time we had to go in and make a repair like this was probably seven or eight years ago."

Lesmeister said a cost-benefit analysis takes place when these decisions are made.

"We do have operating procedures that we follow," Lesmeister said. "We do try and balance the needs of everybody on the creek. I do think we could have communicated this better."

Hans Stephenson, the owner of Dakota Angler & Outfitter in Rapid City, hopes the controversy results in better communication going forward.

"If there had been some advance notice, it would have looked a lot better for the Bureau of Reclamation than it's looking right now," Stephenson said.



## 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.

## Students in four SD districts to build electric vehicles from scratch

**EV kits will compliment career and technical education programs**

**BY: JOHN HULT - DECEMBER 9, 2022 2:44 PM**

There aren't many electric vehicles (EVs) on the road in South Dakota just yet, which means there isn't a huge demand for EV-specific mechanics.

That's bound to change as more South Dakotans begin buying EVs.

At least four South Dakota school districts are banking on it.

High school students in Dell Rapids, Aberdeen, Sturgis and Platte-Geddes will soon be building dune buggy-like EVs from scratch, thanks to awards from the Governor's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Innovative Equipment Grants program. The awards represent four of 17 announced recently, totaling \$3 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and passed through the South Dakota Department of Education.

The purchase of Switch vehicle kits is reflective of an overall push in the state's CTE programs to integrate emerging and future technologies into current programs. Two of the schools on the list of 17 will use the money for "FarmBots," programmable systems that serve to plant, water, weed and harvest crops in greenhouses.

Sturgis CTE Instructor Cyle Miller hopes to introduce students to the basics of the technologies that seep into new sectors of the economy with each passing year.

"It's become more and more apparent that interaction with electronics, or what's commonly called mechatronics or automation, are going to become as commonplace as interaction with automobiles is today," Miller said.

### **Robots, electric vehicles everywhere**

The future isn't far off, Miller said. Robots served thousands of athletes at the winter Olympics in Beijing earlier this year. Precision agriculture drives planting, monitoring and harvest operations across South Dakota. Employers already need technicians for those systems across South Dakota.

Electric vehicles aren't far off from the mainstream. Heavy investments in electric vehicle infrastructure by the federal government, meanwhile, as well as electric vehicle manufacturing targets from automakers are likely to translate into a need for more EV-certified mechanics, even in states whose residents latch onto electrification more slowly.

The Switch vehicles will serve as an introduction to electronic transportation systems and double as an introduction to electrical systems, Miller said.

"It basically comes in a box," he said of the Switch kits. "You'll start out talking about basic electronics, as basic as 'this is A/C, this is D/C.'"

The Switch kits should arrive in about 60 days in Aberdeen, along with a company-provided curriculum on how to build, test, then break down the street-legal vehicles. The kits will serve to complement the school's existing engine coursework, according to CTE Instructor Joshua Jensen.

"It looks like electric is the way vehicles are starting to go," he said. "We already have a strong program



**A Switch vehicle. The vehicle can be built and re-built by high school students.** (Submitted photo)

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 14 of 85



**Students work on a Switch vehicle. The vehicles can be built and re-built by high school students.**

(submitted photo)

for his students to build something together.

His students build CO<sub>2</sub>-powered vehicles and flyable model airplanes already, and they work in teams to design materials for the school's 3D printer.

"All of my classes will connect to this, because really it's just another tool" Jorgensen said. "I look at all our classes as opportunities to teach problem-solving."

## **EV mechanics in demand soon**

Graham Ferguson of Sioux Falls could use an EV-certified mechanic right now. He won't see one this year.

Ferguson's Tesla Model 3 was struck on the driver's side in a Wichita, Kansas, parking lot in October. February was the earliest opening for a Tesla-certified mechanic at ABRA North in Sioux Falls, which is the only shop Ferguson is aware of to offer complete EV service.

"I can definitely see how it would be valuable to have more people able to work on electric vehicles," Ferguson said.

His story points to the importance of the integration that Miller and Jensen called out as important aspects of the upcoming EV curricula. The Model 3 has a 360-degree camera system for security, which allowed the responding officer to download a video of the crash to attach to the accident report.

High-tech tie-ins with links to software programming and networking are becoming more common in vehicles of all kinds, but are especially common in Teslas and other high-end electric vehicles.

Sioux Falls resident Clement Smith hasn't needed EV-specific services just yet, but the question of what might happen if and when he does looms large. Smith drives a 2012 Nissan

with gas-powered vehicles, but we were missing this piece."

The innovation grants opened the door to curriculum updates, which are particularly important for CTE programs, according to Aberdeen School District Curriculum Coordinator Camille Kaul.

Industry change comes at a faster clip than instructional changes to mathematics, reading or writing programs. For those more traditional disciplines, Kaul said, updates might come every six years or so.

"You can't do that with CTE," Kaul said. "You have to make changes to it just about every year."

Dell Rapids Technical Education Instructor Craig Jorgensen is looking forward to the arrival of the two Switch vehicles to that school because they offer training in EVs, but also because they represent another opportunity



**A Tesla being charged on Nov. 2, 2022, near AI's Oasis in Oacoma.** (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 15 of 85

Leaf for in-town trips to pick up his kids from school. So far, he's only needed tire rotations, which a standard shop can handle.

But Smith would like to swap out his vehicle's battery at some point to replace any range lost to degradation and to extend its original 73-mile range to something closer to that of a newer-model Leaf or a more expensive Tesla.

Businesses are popping up to handle jobs like that in states like California that have a larger share of EV drivers, but Smith hasn't heard about any such third-party servicing companies in South Dakota.

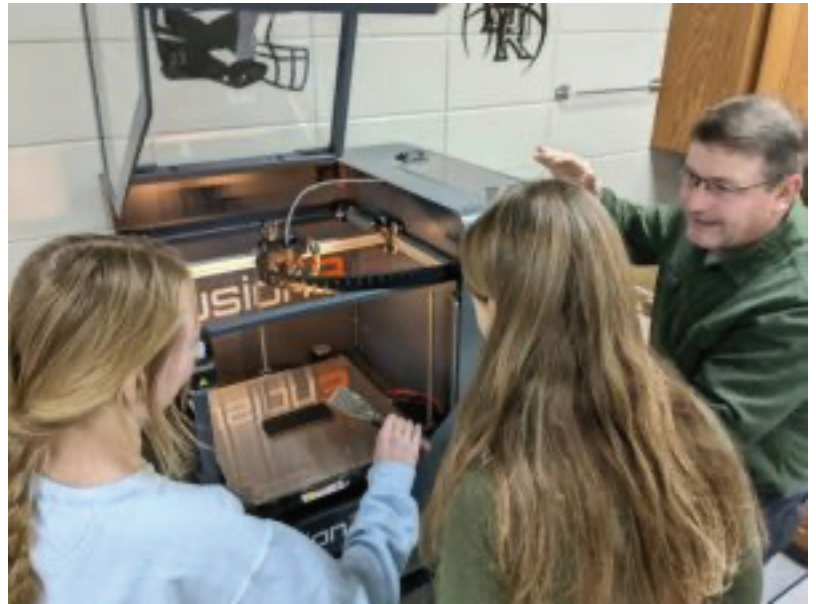
"It would be nice if there were someplace locally that could replace the battery pack for a newer one that hasn't lost its capacity," Smith said. "One of these kids in these pilot programs might be the one to introduce something like that to our area."

Innovation and career inspiration are goals for Daniel Daum, a CTE and science teacher in Platte-Geddes. As Daum awaits the arrival of that school's Switch vehicle, Daum is working through the possibilities for integration of electrical training for his students.

Daum wants to guide the Platte-Geddes youngsters through the construction of a home next year. Wiring a house and wiring a vehicle may be different jobs, but they each give students a sense of the value of a solid foundation in the trades.

Students who learn the trades can apply their skills to a host of modern problems, opening doors to a wider range of careers.

"There are so many opportunities for students beyond the typical career path," Daum said. "We just want to expose those students to as many of those possibilities as we can. That way they can pursue them if they'd like to."



**Dell Rapids Technical Education Instructor Craig Jorgensen assists senior Makenzy LeBrun (left) and junior Adisen Stadem with the school's 3D printer.**

(John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)



**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.

## COMMENTARY

# With budget, Noem plays Santa and the Grinch

BRAD JOHNSON

DECEMBER 9, 2022 11:57 AM

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem played Santa Claus and the Grinch during her budget address Tuesday.

Listening closely were state legislators who know they must pay the bills once the thrill of new gifts has faded.

Particularly excited on Tuesday were Democrats, a small minority in the Legislature. Noem delivered their Christmas morning dreams come true.

They quickly praised her speech as if she was one of their own.

Noem first proposed eliminating the state's sales tax on food. It has been a top goal of Democrats' since about 2004. They'd replace it with a state income tax.

She advocated expanding family leave – another issue generally championed by the left. It's good for families, but not so much for employers. She didn't mention child care, a real problem for working parents.

She called for free college tuition for National Guard members – another priority for Democrats, although they'd prefer free tuition for all.

She played both Santa and the Grinch when it came to describing the state's voters.

"On November 8th the people of this great state gave us a mandate," she said. "They turned out in record breaking numbers to make sure we in this building heard from them loud and clear. They demand low taxes, less regulation and more freedom. They were also clear that they want us to take care of people and create opportunities to succeed. As governor, I will continue to listen to our people."

But she was an annoyed Grinch when it came to the 56 percent who voted to expand Medicaid.

"Make no mistake, the expansion of Medicaid – as passed on the November ballot by the people of this state – is an expansion of a government program that will give free health care to a population of the state that the majority are able-bodied, single males."

Boo on you, voters.

As for taking care of people, she was a bit cheap on gifts given state employees, educators and health care employers.

At a time when "Our state is bringing in incredible revenue," she offered only 5 percent pay raises when inflation is running above 8 percent. Social Security recipients will do much better with an 8.7 percent increase in 2023.

On top of last year's 6 percent increase, which also failed to match inflation, those workers will continue to fall behind.

Given that there are about 500 unfilled teaching jobs caused by low salaries and large classes, one might think a bold solution would be offered. And nursing homes have lost 1,000 employees because of low pay and burnout.

Speaking of nursing homes, Noem offered \$21 million, even though a September study for her Depart-



**Gov. Kristi Noem delivers her annual budget address Dec. 6, 2022, at the Capitol in Pierre.** (Makenzie Huber/SD Searchlight)



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 17 of 85

ment of Human Services said \$62 million is needed to bring funding to 92-93 percent of what the state should pay for Medicaid and maintain our aging buildings.

So, nursing facilities will continue to struggle, or people who can afford to pay will continue subsidizing a state that doesn't pay its bills.

Legislators also are gasping as they consider up to \$1 billion in new state prisons, not to mention the unfunded need for several new county jails.

There also are many building projects now under construction that are costing much more than anticipated. Noem recommended spending \$25 million extra to finish those.

The real bill likely will be higher.

Although Noem claims "our revenues are strong because we have grown our economy," legislators know that's only partially true. Significant revenue growth is directly attributed to billions in recent federal spending in South Dakota. Inflation also counts for a part of it.

And the trillions in federal spending nationally is driving demand for many of the products manufactured in South Dakota.

Three years down the line, that federal money likely will be gone. That is what worries legislators.

Fortunately, legislative leadership is vowing to solve the state's pressing problems first.

Only then will Noem's proposed \$100 million sales tax cut be discussed.

Just like parents eager to please their children on Christmas morning, legislators know there is a cost for that temporary joy.



## BRAD JOHNSON

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

## FarmBots to train students in precision agriculture

BY: JOHN HULT - DECEMBER 9, 2022 2:52 PM



**A Sturgis High School student works with a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) lathe. Students use computer-aided design (CAD) to design parts for a variety of equipment in the school's career and technical education program.** (Submitted photo)

students as broad of base of experiences as we can, so that they have a good opportunity to identify those new career paths."

The same is true in Aberdeen, where students in welding class built the greenhouse boxes that will soon be cared for by the FarmBots. Networking and broadcasting students will connect live-streaming cameras in the greenhouse to elementary school computer feeds to allow young students to direct their own plantings and watch their progress, according to CTE Instructor Joshua Jensen.

Ultimately, the work introduces students to the idea that technology and modern agriculture go hand-in-hand.

"It does it all automatically through a software program that our students will be able to modify and expand," Jensen said of the program, which he expects to be fully operational by next May. "We're looking at it more like precision agriculture to get the highest yields."

Four of the 17 South Dakota schools awarded grant funds for career and technical education (CTE) recently will use the money to buy electric vehicle kits.

Two of them will use grant funding to help train students in a more mature technology: precision agriculture. One of the schools that will soon have an EV kit, Aberdeen Central High School, used an earlier round of grant funding to purchase 10 "FarmBot" systems; Sturgis Brown High School will buy two of the systems with the recently announced grant funds.

Sturgis CTE instructor Cyle Miller's students will set up and program the FarmBots to plant, weed, and harvest greenhouse produce. They'll also use their programming and engineering know-how to convert manual lathes and milling machines into robotic versions of the farm tools.

The produce will be used by the culinary arts programs, Miller said. The goal is to prepare CTE students in varying courses for a world in which the hands-on jobs they might perform are tied to new and emerging technologies.

"They tell us as career and technical educators that as many as 60% of the jobs that our students are going to fill haven't even been created yet," Miller said. "We're really trying to reach out to give these



**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.

## Noem budget sets aside \$3.5 million for state fingerprint, criminal history database

BY: JOHN HULT - DECEMBER 9, 2022 12:13 PM

Lawmakers in Pierre will soon be asked to send \$3.5 million to the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) to update the software that catalogs arrest and fingerprint records that date back to 1937.

The ask is among the one-time line items tucked into Gov. Kristi Noem's 360-page proposed budget. The software upgrades to the DCI's criminal record system would be covered by \$2.5 million in state and \$1.2 million in federal funds.

The system catalogs all arrest and conviction information collected by or shared with the state, including fingerprints.

If the Appropriations Committee approves the spending, Interim DCI Director Chad Mosteller said, the agency would seek bids for a faster, simpler system that will integrate and communicate more efficiently with databases used by other agencies like the Unified Judicial System (UJS).

The DCI database software is primarily used by law enforcement in the field. Its foundation is fingerprint records, which Mosteller said makes it more accurate than other records repositories that rely on names or dates of birth, such as the UJS searches anyone can run on themselves or others at any county courthouse in the state.

"If someone is arrested today and gives a false name, that will ping in that criminal history check," Mosteller said. "It's the most accurate check you can get, because you're relying on fingerprints."

The DCI information is also used in background checks for some job applicants, such as day care providers, nurses or school employees, and is provided to the FBI for use in background checks for firearms purchases.

"We're protecting day cares, we're protecting the public with these vulnerable populations," Mosteller said.

The system still requires manual entry of certain records at this point, he said, so one goal is to automate and simplify the maintenance process.

The system may be out-of-date and unwieldy, but it's nowhere near as outdated as the state's 35-year-old accounting software. Noem's budget calls for a \$70 million overhaul of that system to modernize it and back up records in the commercial cloud.

If successful, the \$3.5 million pitch for a new criminal records system would replace one last upgraded in 2018.



**Interim DCI Director Chad Mosteller**

(courtesy photo)



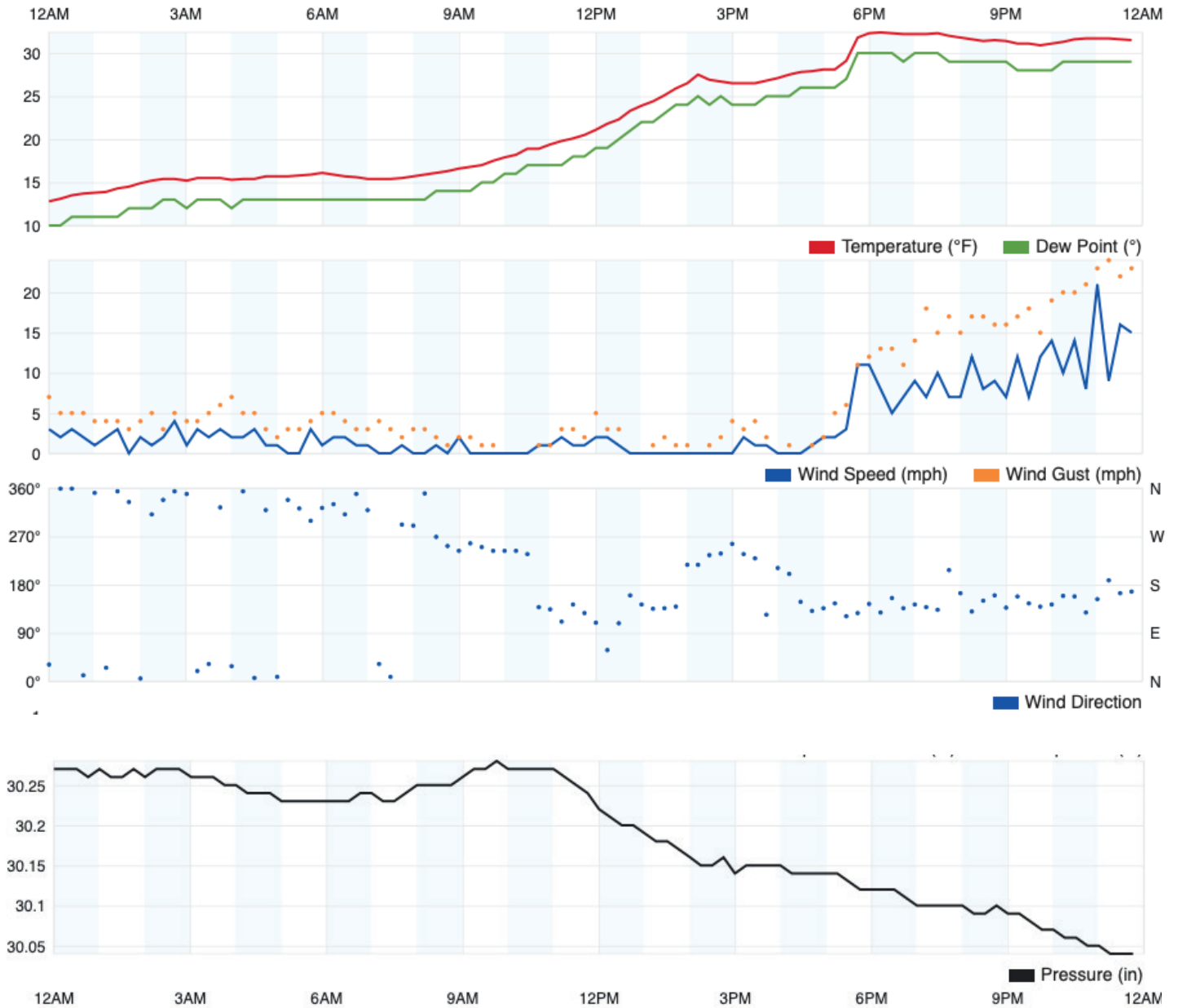
**JOHN HULT** ✉ 🐦

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

# Groton Daily Independent



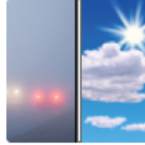




Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 20 of 85

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 21 of 85

Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Patched Fog then Sunny	Areas Fog	Patched Fog then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Cloudy then Chance Rain/Freezing Drizzle and Breezy	Wintry Mix and Breezy	Wintry Mix and Patchy Blowing Snow
High: 34 °F ↓	Low: 10 °F	High: 38 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 37 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 34 °F



## Potent Winter Storm Next Week

December 10, 2022  
4:26 AM

### Key Messages

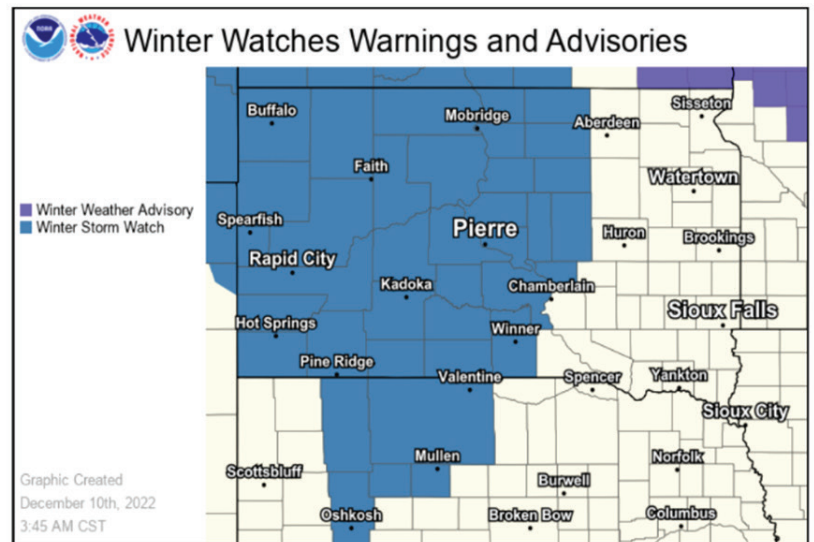
- Storms impact Monday night thru Wednesday
- Mixed precipitation with Heavy Snow, Rain & Ice, followed by Strong Winds & Blowing Snow
- Forecast trends in far eastern SD/western MN for more rain/ice and less snow.
- **Still quite a bit of uncertainty with forecast**

### NEW Important Updates

- Forecast storm track has shifted slightly west with slightly warmer/more humid air surging north

### Next Scheduled Briefing

- Saturday Afternoon



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Adjustments to the forecast reflect a western shift in the track, with a warmer and more humid airmass coming up into the region. The result is a trend towards more mixed precipitation, particularly for eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

# Groton Daily Independent

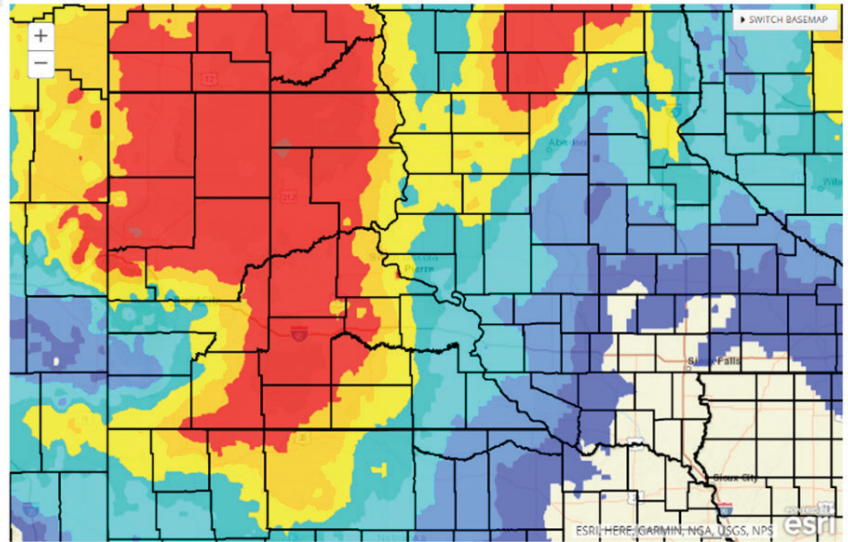
Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 22 of 85



## Potent Winter Storm Next Week

December 10, 2022  
4:22 AM

- ◆ **Uncertainties surrounding:**
  - precipitation start and end times
  - temperature's impact on precipitation type and when rain changes over to snow
  - snow and ice total accumulations
  - will winds/gusts be strong enough to promote blowing and drifting snow
- ◆ Now is the time to plan and prepare for potentially significant winter weather
- ◆ Stay tuned in to the forecast for updates and changes surrounding next week's potential winter system

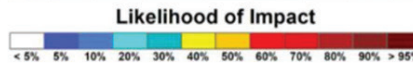


### Potential Winter Storm Impacts

#### Moderate Impacts

Expect disruptions to daily life.

- Hazardous driving conditions. **Use extra caution while driving.**
- Closures and disruptions to infrastructure may occur.



Forecast Valid Time: 6 AM CST  
Wednesday, December 14th



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Adjustments to the forecast reflect a western shift in the track, with a warmer and more humid airmass coming up into the region. The result is a trend towards more mixed precipitation, particularly for eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.



## Potential Timing of Rain, Freezing Rain, and Snow

December 10, 2022  
4:25 AM

- ➔ Forecasted precipitation types
- ➔ Much of the region will see a mix initially
- ➔ Longer period of mixed precipitation for eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota
- ➔ Central/North Central South Dakota trends more towards heavy snow

	Weather Forecast															
	12/12 Mon			12/13 Tue			12/14 Wed			12/15 Thu						
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	
<b>Aberdeen</b>	4%	38%	72%	95%	99%	96%	89%	70%	75%	69%	66%	57%	40%	24%	12%	
<b>Britton</b>	5%	35%	63%	91%	98%	93%	93%	74%	77%	73%	70%	64%	50%	34%	20%	
<b>Eagle Butte</b>		26%	79%	93%	98%	94%	94%	86%	87%	72%	66%	53%	32%	13%	6%	
<b>Eureka</b>	3%	41%	85%	97%	98%	97%	94%	82%	86%	75%	73%	58%	40%	19%	11%	
<b>Gettysburg</b>	2%	37%	83%	96%	98%	90%	90%	81%	85%	77%	70%	57%	37%	16%	7%	
<b>Kennebec</b>		28%	79%	95%	96%	96%	94%	81%	82%	77%	64%	55%	35%	15%	6%	
<b>McIntosh</b>		27%	82%	95%	96%	96%	96%	90%	90%	75%	72%	55%	34%	14%	8%	
<b>Milbank</b>	2%	23%	47%	82%	95%	97%	84%	54%	59%	62%	57%	57%	45%	33%	18%	
<b>Miller</b>	6%	45%	78%	97%	97%	90%	81%	74%	79%	75%	68%	60%	43%	22%	11%	
<b>Mobridge</b>		35%	84%	96%	98%	94%	94%	84%	87%	75%	70%	57%	36%	15%	8%	
<b>Murdo</b>		21%	75%	93%	96%	99%	89%	85%	84%	75%	62%	52%	36%	12%	7%	
<b>Pierre</b>		27%	79%	94%	97%	97%	89%	84%	85%	78%	67%	58%	38%	15%	7%	
<b>Redfield</b>	7%	46%	75%	96%	95%	94%	84%	69%	76%	72%	68%	57%	46%	27%	13%	
<b>Sisseton</b>	3%	26%	51%	84%	95%	97%	81%	66%	71%	70%	64%	64%	48%	36%	20%	
<b>Watertown</b>	5%	32%	56%	90%	98%	95%	80%	54%	64%	66%	61%	58%	48%	32%	16%	
<b>Webster</b>	5%	32%	59%	90%	98%	97%	87%	63%	71%	71%	66%	59%	48%	32%	17%	
<b>Wheaton</b>	2%	15%	41%	72%	87%	95%	92%	63%	65%	64%	58%	54%	42%	33%	18%	

\*Created: 2 am CST Sat 12/10/2022. Shows most impactful weather for the period beginning at the time shown. Weather symbols display where Probability of Precipitation > 0%.

- Rain + - Fz Rain + - Wintry Mix + - Snow +



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 23 of 85

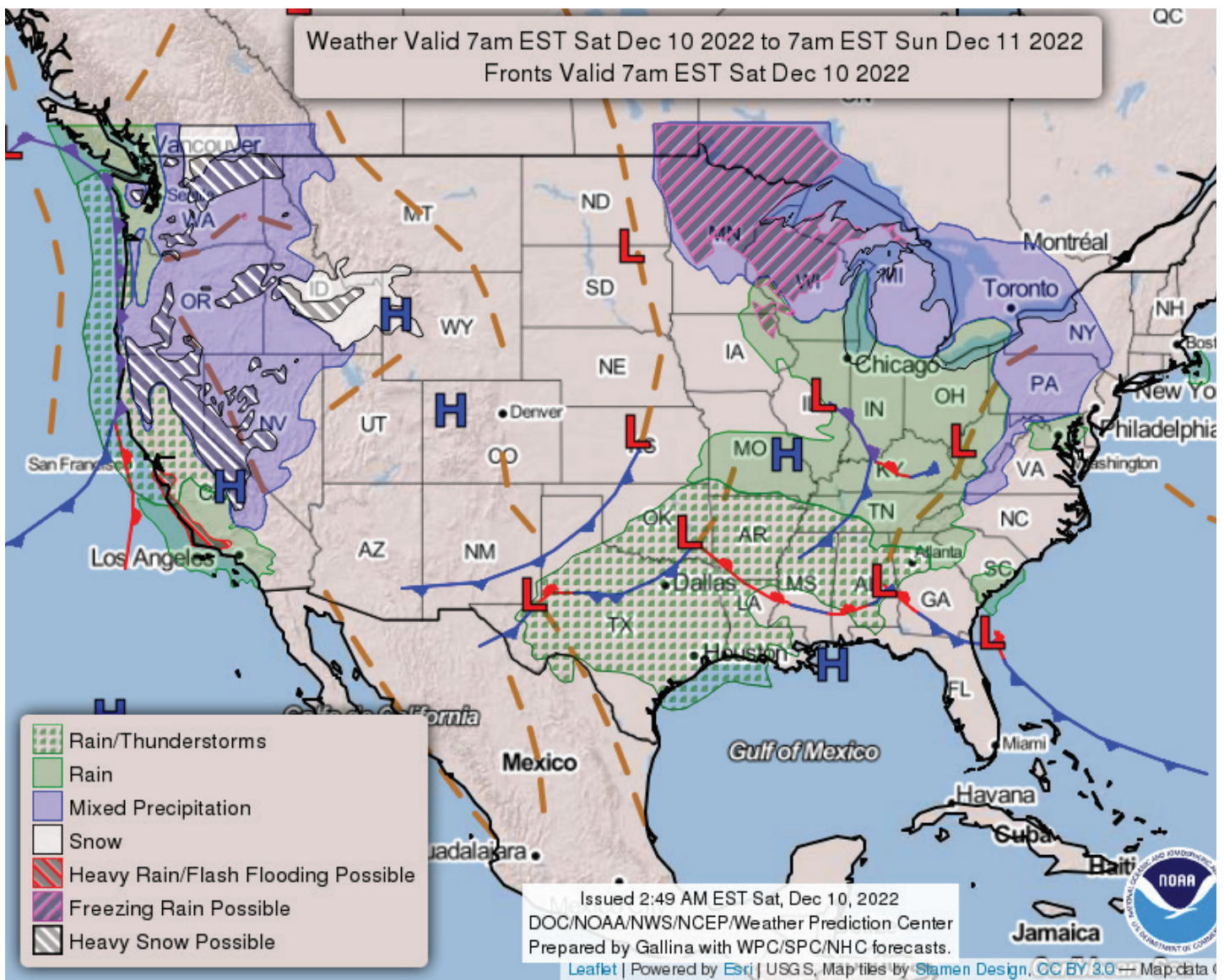
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 32.4 °F at 6:15 PM**  
**Low Temp: 12.8 °F at 12:00 AM**  
**Wind: 24 mph at 11:15 PM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 8 hours, 51 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 58 in 1979  
Record Low: -29 in 1972  
Average High: 31°F  
Average Low: 10°F  
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.20  
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 21.41  
Precip Year to Date: 16.50  
Sunset Tonight: 4:50:52 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:00:34 AM



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 24 of 85

## Today in Weather History

December 10, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across parts of Lyman and Jones Counties on the 10th and 11th. Some amounts included 6 inches at Kennebec and Okaton and 8 inches at Murdo.

December 10, 1699: A severe ice storm hit Boston, Massachusetts causing much damage to orchards.

1946 - The temperature at New York City soared to 70 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1949 - The barometric pressure at Las Vegas, NV, reached a record low reading of 29.17 inches (987.8 millibars). (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought high winds to the eastern slopes of the Northern and Central Rockies. Winds gusted to 97 mph at Mines Peak CO. In Wyoming, up to a foot of snow blanketed the Teton Village Ski Resort, northwest of Jackson. Strong chinook winds in the Central High Plains Region, gusting to 61 mph at Scottsbluff NE, warmed temperatures to near 70 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Squalls produced heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Totals in northeastern Ohio ranged up to 14 inches at Harpersfield, and totals in western New York State ranged up to 14 inches at Sodus. In the snowbelt of Upper Michigan, the Ontonogon area reported two feet of snow in two days. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Heavy snow fell across the northern and central mountains of Colorado, with 24 inches reported at Steamboat Springs. Six to twelve inches of snow fell in the Denver and Boulder area delaying plane flights and snarling traffic. Heavy snow also spread across the Central Plains into the Mississippi Valley. Winner SD received 11 inches of snow, and more than ten inches of snow was reported north of Sioux City IA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992 - A slow-moving Nor'easter storm batters the northeast U.S. coast killing 19 people.

December 10, 2002: A shower of tiny fish rained down on Korona, a village in the mountains of northern Greece. A Greek television reported a waterspout caused the incident on Lake Doirani.



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 25 of 85

Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### WHOSE PARTY?

Competent! Outstanding! Careful! Friendly! Supportive! Bright! Cheerful! Caring! Gracious! And the list of words to describe Beth, the secretary to the president of the company, could go on and on. She was loved by everyone who knew her.

When it came time for her birthday one year, her co-workers decided to honor her with a lavish party. They rented a beautiful ballroom, hired the best caterer, designed a special cake, had special napkins with her name printed on them, and collected money to buy a gift.

All went well. The tables were beautifully set, the caterer was on time, the guests arrived, and there was excitement in the room. Everyone kept looking at the entrance awaiting the arrival of Beth. After waiting for fifteen minutes, the co-worker who organized the event said to Beth's best friend, "Where is she?"

"I'm not sure," she replied. "I'll phone her."

She did – and discovered that she was at her favorite sandwich shop enjoying her lunch - alone. No one thought to invite Beth to her own celebration!

There will be many parties this Christmas. And as usual, the Guest, Whose birthday we celebrate, will not be invited. Tables will be set, lights will blink, guests will arrive, laughter will ring out, gifts will be exchanged, everyone will have fun – but Jesus will not be present. No one will think to invite Him – the One who should be the main attraction.

Prayer: Lord of the season, may we place Your Son, our Savior, at the center of everything we do this Christmas. May we never forget, "It's all about Him." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Matthew 2:11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



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

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 26 of 85

## 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

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 27 of 85

## 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](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent

[www.397news.com](http://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](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 28 of 85

News from the  Associated Press

## Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Alcester-Hudson 42, Gayville-Volin 38  
Avon 64, Marty Indian 63  
Belle Fourche 59, Spearfish 55  
Bennett County 54, Lead-Deadwood 36  
Beresford 32, Baltic 28  
Britton-Hecla 42, Tiospa Zina Tribal 40  
Burke 47, Kimball/White Lake 42  
DeSmet 48, Deubrook 32  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 46, Howard 42  
Edgemont 39, New Underwood 36, OT  
Elk Point-Jefferson 65, Canton 60  
Evergreen Lutheran, Wash. 60, Great Plains Lutheran 26  
Flandreau Indian 45, Sioux Falls Lutheran 19  
Hamlin 60, Groton Area 41  
Harding County 41, Newell 25  
Harrisburg 46, Yankton 19  
Hay Springs, Neb. 51, Hot Springs 44  
Kadoka Area 57, Philip 39  
Mitchell 47, Huron 44  
Parkston 56, Tri-Valley 45  
Pierre 58, Rapid City Stevens 46  
Rapid City Central 41, Aberdeen Central 30  
Sioux Falls Christian 50, Lennox 29  
Sioux Falls Jefferson 56, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 26  
Sully Buttes 55, North Central Co-Op 20  
Tea Area 58, Dakota Valley 26  
Timber Lake 59, Lemmon 43  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 46, Menno 21  
Viborg-Hurley 60, Freeman 44  
Wagner 73, Winner 26  
Watertown 59, Brookings 54  
Gillette Early Bird Tournament=  
St. Thomas More 48, Thunder Basin, Wyo. 35

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Alcester-Hudson 49, Gayville-Volin 31  
Beresford 55, Baltic 44  
Brandon Valley 57, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 51  
Bridgewater-Emery 63, Corsica/Stickney 54  
Brookings 54, Watertown 32  
Canistota 63, Centerville 54  
Crazy Horse 75, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 40  
DeSmet 71, Deubrook 51

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 29 of 85

Dell Rapids 57, West Central 44  
Deuel 69, Florence/Henry 48  
Edgemont 75, New Underwood 10  
Ethan 50, Hanson 49  
Flandreau Indian 52, Sioux Falls Lutheran 36  
Freeman Academy/Marion 61, Mitchell Christian 37  
Great Plains Lutheran 59, Evergreen Lutheran, Wash. 48  
Hamlin 65, Groton Area 57  
Hot Springs 39, Alliance, Neb. 37  
Lead-Deadwood 55, Bennett County 31  
McLaughlin 49, Herreid/Selby Area 36  
Mitchell 75, Huron 57  
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 61, Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op 53  
Parkston 40, Tri-Valley 36  
Pierre 59, Rapid City Stevens 41  
Rapid City Central 57, Aberdeen Central 52  
Redfield 54, Aberdeen Roncalli 52  
Sioux Falls Christian 93, Lennox 68  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 60, Sioux Falls Washington 58  
South Sioux City, Neb. 62, Vermillion 50  
Spearfish 64, Belle Fourche 44  
Tea Area 67, Dakota Valley 43  
Timber Lake 63, Lemmon 42  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 58, Britton-Hecla 43  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 56, Menno 32  
Viborg-Hurley 64, Freeman 34  
Waverly-South Shore 55, Wilmot 26  
White River 83, Jones County 44  
Winner 57, Wagner 33  
Yankton 66, Harrisburg 61  
Gillette Early Bird Tournament=  
St. Thomas More 56, Thunder Basin, Wyo. 38  
Upton Tournament=  
Sundance, Wyo. 51, Custer 39

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

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

08-19-53-61-69, Mega Ball: 19, Megaplier: 4

(eight, nineteen, fifty-three, sixty-one, sixty-nine; Mega Ball: nineteen; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$400,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 116,000,000

## Federal data: Kansas oil spill biggest in Keystone history

By JOHN HANNA, RYAN J. FOLEY and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — A ruptured pipe dumped enough oil this week into a northeastern Kansas creek to nearly fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool, becoming the largest onshore crude pipeline spill in nine years and surpassing all the previous ones on the same pipeline system combined, according to federal data.

The Keystone pipeline spill in a creek running through rural pastureland in Washington County, Kansas, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) northwest of Kansas City, also was the biggest in the system's history, according to U.S. Department of Transportation data. The operator, Canada-based TC Energy, said the pipeline that runs from Canada to Oklahoma lost about 14,000 barrels, or 588,000 gallons.

The spill raised questions for environmentalists and safety advocates about whether TC Energy should keep a federal government permit that has allowed the pressure inside parts of its Keystone system — including the stretch through Kansas — to exceed the typical maximum permitted levels. With Congress facing a potential debate on reauthorizing regulatory programs, the chair of a House subcommittee on pipeline safety took note of the spill Friday.

A U.S. Government Accountability Office report last year said there had been 22 previous spills along the Keystone system since it began operating in 2010, most of them on TC Energy property and fewer than 20 barrels. The total from those 22 events was a little less than 12,000 barrels, the report said.

"I'm watching this situation closely to learn more about this latest oil leak and inform ways to prevent future releases and protect public safety and the environment," Democratic U.S. Rep. Donald Payne Jr., of New Jersey, tweeted.

TC Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said the spill has been contained. The EPA said the company built an earthen dam across the creek about 4 miles downstream from the pipeline rupture to prevent the oil from moving into larger waterways.

Randy Hubbard, the county's emergency management director, said the oil traveled only about a quarter mile and there didn't appear to be any wildlife deaths.

The company said it is doing around-the-clock air-quality checks and other environmental monitoring. It also was using multiple trucks that amount to giant wet vacuums to suck up the oil.

Past Keystone spills have led to outages that lasted about two weeks, and the company said it still is evaluating when it can reopen the system.

The EPA said no drinking water wells were affected and oil-removal efforts will continue into next week. No one was evacuated, but the Kansas Department of Health and Environment warned people not to go into the creek or allow animals to wade in.

"At the time of the incident, the pipeline was operating within its design and regulatory approval requirements," the company said in a statement.

The nearly 2,700-mile (4345-kilometer) Keystone pipeline carries thick, Canadian tar-sands oil to refineries in Illinois, Oklahoma and Texas, with about 600,000 barrels moving per day from Canada to Cushing, Oklahoma. Concerns about spills fouling water helped spur opposition to a new, 1,200-mile (1,900 kilometers) Keystone XL pipeline, and the company pulled the plug last year after President Joe Biden canceled a permit for it.

Environmentalists said the heavier tar sands oil is not only more toxic than lighter crude but can sink in water instead of floating on top. Bill Caram, executive director of the advocacy Pipeline Safety Trust, said cleanup even sometimes can include scrubbing individual rocks in a creek bed.

"This is going to be months, maybe even years before we get the full handle on this disaster and know the extent of the damage and get it all cleaned up," said Zack Pistora, a lobbyist for the Sierra Club at the Kansas Statehouse.

Pipelines often are considered safer than shipping oil by railcar or truck, but large spills can create significant environmental damage. The American Petroleum Institute said Friday that companies have robust monitoring to detect leaks, cracks, corrosion and other problems, not only through control centers but with employees who walk alongside pipelines.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 31 of 85

Still, in September 2013, a Tesoro Corp. pipeline in North Dakota ruptured and spilled 20,600 barrels, according to U.S. Department of Transportation data.

A more expensive spill happened in July 2010, when an Enbridge Inc. pipeline in Michigan ruptured and spilled more than 20,000 barrels into Talmadge Creek and the Kalamazoo River. Hundreds of homes and businesses were evacuated.

The Keystone pipeline's previous largest spill came in 2017, when more than 6,500 barrels spilled near Amherst, South Dakota, according to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report released last year. The second largest, 4,515 barrels, was in 2019 near Edinburg, North Dakota.

The Petroleum Institute said pipelines go through tests before opening using pressures that exceed the company's planned levels and are designed to account for what they'll carry and changes in the ground they cover. An arm of the U.S. Department of Transportation oversees pipeline safety and permitted TC Energy to have greater pressures on the Keystone system because the company used pipe made from better steel.

But Caram said: "When we see multiple failures like this of such large size and a relatively short amount of time after that pressure has increased, I think it's time to question that."

In its report last year to Congress, the GAO said Keystone's accident history was similar to other oil pipelines, but spills have gotten larger in recent years. Investigations ordered by regulators found that the four worst spills were caused by flaws in design or pipe manufacturing during construction.

TC Energy's permit included more than 50 special conditions, mostly for its design, construction and operation, the GAO report said. The company said in response to the 2021 report that it took "decisive action" in recent years to improve safety, including developing new technology for detecting cracks and an independent review of its pipeline integrity program.

The company said Friday that it would conduct a full investigation into the causes of the spill.

The spill caused a brief surge in crude prices Thursday. Benchmark U.S. oil was up more modestly -- about 1% -- on Friday morning as fears of a supply disruption were overshadowed by bigger concerns about an economic downturn in the U.S. and other major countries that would reduce demand for oil.

The pipeline runs through Chris and Bill Pannbacker's family farm. Bill Pannbacker, a farmer and stockman, said the company told him that the issues with the pipeline there probably will not be resolved until after the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

The hill where the breach happened was a landmark to locals and used to be a popular destination for hayrides, Pannbacker said.

## Soccer writer Grant Wahl dies at World Cup match in Qatar

LUSAIL, Qatar (AP) — Grant Wahl, one of the most well-known soccer writers in the United States, died early Saturday while covering the World Cup match between Argentina and the Netherlands. He was 48.

U.S. media seated near him said Wahl fell back in his seat in a section of Lusail Stadium reserved for journalists during extra time of the game, and reporters adjacent to him called for assistance.

Emergency services workers responded very quickly, treated him for 20 or 30 minutes on the spot and then took him out on a stretcher, said Keir Radnedge, a veteran British sports journalist who was working nearby at the time.

The World Cup organizing committee said he was taken to Doha's Hamad General Hospital, but it did not state a cause of death. "We are in touch with the US Embassy and relevant local authorities to ensure the process of repatriating the body is in accordance with the family's wishes," it said in a statement.

Wahl, who wrote for Sports Illustrated for a decade then started his own website, was a major voice in introducing professional soccer to an American public more used to seeing the sport as a school-level game. He also brought a critical eye to the organizational bodies of the international sport.

He "really helped put soccer on the mainstream sports map in the States," Radnedge said.

"Grant had a strong moral compass, on where sports should be and how sport ... should help set standards for people," he said. "There was never any doubt that Grant was on the side of the good guys in

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 32 of 85

wanting soccer to make the best of itself.”

Wahl was covering his eighth World Cup. He wrote Monday on his website that he had visited a medical clinic while in Qatar.

“My body finally broke down on me. Three weeks of little sleep, high stress and lots of work can do that to you,” Wahl wrote. “What had been a cold over the last 10 days turned into something more severe on the night of the USA-Netherlands game, and I could feel my upper chest take on a new level of pressure and discomfort.”

Wahl wrote that he tested negative for COVID-19 and sought treatment for his symptoms.

“I went into the medical clinic at the main media center today, and they said I probably have bronchitis. They gave me a course of antibiotics and some heavy-duty cough syrup, and I’m already feeling a bit better just a few hours later. But still: No bueno,” he wrote.

Wahl tweeted on Wednesday that he had celebrated his birthday that day.

“We could always count on Grant to deliver insightful and entertaining stories about our game, and its major protagonists,” the U.S. Soccer Federation said in a statement. “Grant’s belief in the power of the game to advance human rights was, and will remain, an inspiration to all. Grant made soccer his life’s work, and we are devastated that he and his brilliant writing will no longer be with us.”

Wahl’s wife, Dr. Celine Gounder, tweeted that she was thankful for the support of her husband’s “soccer family” and friends who had reached out.

“I’m in complete shock,” wrote Gounder, who is an associate professor at New York University School of Medicine, an attending physician at Bellevue Hospital Center and a CBS News contributor.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a tweet that American officials were in touch with Qatari authorities “to see to it that his family’s wishes are fulfilled as expeditiously as possible.”

Wahl wore a rainbow T-shirt in support of LGBTQ rights to the United States’ World Cup opener against Wales on Nov. 21 and wrote that security refused him entry and told him to remove the shirt. Gay and lesbian sex is criminalized in Qatar, a conservative Muslim emirate.

Wahl wrote he was detained for 25 minutes at Ahmed Bin Ali stadium in Al Rayyan, then was let go by a security commander. Wahl said FIFA apologized to him.

Among Wahl’s work before he began covering soccer exclusively was a Sports Illustrated cover story about LeBron James in 2002, when James was a junior at St. Vincent-St. Mary High in Akron, Ohio.

“He was always pretty cool to be around. He spent a lot of time in my hometown of Akron,” James said in Philadelphia after the Los Angeles Lakers lost in overtime to the 76ers. “Any time his name would come up, I’ll always think back to me as a teenager having Grant in our building down at St. V’s. It’s a tragic loss. It’s unfortunate to lose someone as great as he was. I wish his family the best. May he rest in paradise.”

A voter at times in FIFA’s annual awards, Wahl was among 82 journalists honored last week by FIFA and the international sports press association AIPS for attending eight or more World Cups.

“His love for football was immense and his reporting will be missed by all who follow the global game,” FIFA president Gianni Infantino said.

Wahl graduated from Princeton in 1996 and worked for Sports Illustrated from 1996 to 2021, known primarily for his coverage of soccer and college basketball. He then launched his own website.

Wahl also worked for Fox Sports from 2012-19.

His death at the World Cup left fellow journalists covering the games stunned.

“You come to a World Cup as a journalist to work, to share the stresses, the pressures but also the enjoyments and the fascination of it — and to share that with your readers, your listeners, your viewers. That’s what Grant was doing, that’s what he enjoyed doing. Everybody recognized that enthusiasm in him,” Radnedge said.

“So for him to not be with us anymore at such a young age, that’s an immense shock.”



## Russia grinds on in eastern Ukraine; Bakhmut 'destroyed'

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces have “destroyed” the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, while Ukraine’s military on Saturday reported missile, rocket and air strikes in multiple parts of the country that Moscow is trying to conquer after months of resistance.

The latest battles of Russia’s 9 1/2 month war in Ukraine have centered on four provinces that Russian President Vladimir Putin triumphantly — and illegally — claimed to have annexed in late September. The fighting indicates Russia’s struggle to establish control of those regions and Ukraine’s persistence to reclaim them.

Zelenskyy said the situation “remains very difficult” in several frontline cities in eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. Together, the provinces make up the Donbas, an expansive industrial region bordering Russia that Putin identified as a focus from the war’s outset and where Moscow-backed separatists have fought since 2014.

“Bakhmut, Soledar, Maryinka, Kreminna. For a long time, there is no living place left on the land of these areas that have not been damaged by shells and fire,” Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address, naming cities that have again found themselves in the crosshairs. “The occupiers actually destroyed Bakhmut, another Donbas city that the Russian army turned into burnt ruins.”

Zelenskyy didn’t specify what he meant by “destroyed” — and some buildings remain standing and residents still mill about in city streets.

The Ukrainian military General Staff reported missile attacks, about 20 airstrikes and more than 60 rocket attacks across Ukraine between Friday and Saturday. Spokesperson Oleksandr Shtupun said the most active fighting was in the Bakhmut district, where more than 20 populated places came under fire. He said Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks in Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk.

Russia’s grinding eastern offensive succeeded in capturing almost all of Luhansk during the summer. Donetsk eluded the same fate, and the Russian military in recent weeks has poured manpower and resources around Bakhmut in an attempt to encircle the city, analysts and Ukrainian officials have said.

After Ukrainian forces recaptured the southern city of Kherson nearly a month ago, the battle heated up around Bakhmut, demonstrating Putin’s desire for visible gains following weeks of clear setbacks in Ukraine.

Taking Bakhmut would rupture Ukraine’s supply lines and open a route for Russian forces to press on toward Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, key Ukrainian strongholds in Donetsk. Russia has battered Bakhmut with rockets for more than half of the year. A ground assault accelerated after its troops forced the Ukrainians to withdraw from Luhansk in July.

But some analysts have questioned Russia’s strategic logic in the relentless pursuit to take Bakhmut and surrounding areas that also came under intense shelling in the past weeks, and where Ukrainian officials reported that some residents were living in damp basements.

“The costs associated with six months of brutal, grinding, and attrition-based combat around #Bakhmut far outweigh any operational advantage that the #Russians can obtain from taking Bakhmut,” the Institute for the Study of War, a think tank in Washington, posted on its Twitter feed on Thursday.

On Friday, Putin lashed out at recent comments by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who said a 2015 peace deal for eastern Ukraine negotiated by France and Germany had bought time for Ukraine to prepare for war with Russia this year.

That deal was aimed to cool tensions after pro-Russia separatists seized territory in the Donbas a year earlier, sparking a war with Ukrainian forces that ballooned into a war with Russia itself after the Feb. 24 full-scale invasion.

Ukraine’s military on Saturday also reported strikes in other provinces: Kharkiv and Sumy in the northeast, central Ukraine’s Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia in the southeast and Kherson in the south. The latter two, along with Donetsk and Luhansk, are the four regions Putin claims are now Russian territory.

In Odesa, a key Black Sea port city to the west, drone attacks overnight left much of its region without electricity, local government head Maxim Marchenko said.

## **EXPLAINER: What's at stake in Turkey's new Syria escalation**

By BASSEM MROUE and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — After weeks of deadly Turkish airstrikes in northern Syria, Kurdish forces and international players are trying to gauge whether Ankara's threats of a ground invasion are serious.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly warned of a new land incursion to drive Kurdish groups away from the Turkish-Syrian border, following a deadly Nov. 13 bombing in Istanbul. Turkish authorities blamed the attack on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and on the Syria-based People's Protection Units, or YPG. Both have denied involvement.

On Nov. 20, Ankara launched a barrage of airstrikes, killing dozens, including civilians as well as Kurdish fighters and Syrian government troops. Human Rights Watch has warned that the strikes are exacerbating a humanitarian crisis by disrupting power, fuel and aid.

In the most recent development, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin flew to Turkey this week for talks on the situation in Syria.

Here's a look at what various foreign powers and groups embroiled in the Syria conflict stand to gain or lose:

### **WHAT TURKEY WANTS**

Turkey sees the Kurdish forces along its border with Syria as a threat and has launched three major military incursions since 2016, taking control of large swaths of territory.

Erdogan hopes to relocate many of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey to northern Syria and has begun building housing units there. The plan could address growing anti-refugee sentiment in Turkey and bolster Erdogan's support ahead of next year's elections, while diluting historically Kurdish-majority areas by resettling non-Kurdish Syrian refugees there.

Erdogan has also touted plans to create a 30-kilometer (19-mile) security corridor in areas currently under Kurdish control. A planned Turkish invasion earlier this year was halted amid opposition by the U.S. and Russia.

### **THE KURDISH RESPONSE**

Kurdish groups are pressing the U.S. and Russia, both of which have military posts in northern Syria, to once again prevent Turkey from carrying out its threats.

The Kurds are worried that West will stand aside this time to appease Ankara in exchange for approval of Sweden and Finland joining NATO.

"This silence toward Turkey's brutality will encourage Turkey to carry out a ground operation," said Badran Jia Kurd, deputy co-chair of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.

Kurdish groups, which fought against the Islamic State group alongside a U.S.-led coalition and now guard thousands of captured IS fighters and family members, warn that a Turkish escalation would threaten efforts to stamp out the extremist group.

In recent weeks, officials from the U.S. and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said they had stopped or scaled back joint patrols against IS because of the airstrikes, although patrols have since resumed.

### **THE ROLE OF THE SYRIAN INSURGENTS**

The so-called Syrian National Army, a coalition of Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups with tens of thousands of fighters, would likely provide foot soldiers for any future ground offensive. In previous incursions, including the 2018 offensive on the town of Afrin, the SNA was accused of committing atrocities against Kurds and displacing tens of thousands from their homes.

Several officials from the SNA did not respond to calls and text messages by The Associated Press. One official who answered said they were ordered by Turkish authorities not to speak about plans for a new incursion.

### **THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT'S STANCE?**

The Syrian government has opposed past Turkish incursions but also sees the SDF as a secessionist force and a Trojan horse for the U.S., which has imposed paralyzing sanctions on the government of Bashar Assad.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 35 of 85

Damascus and Ankara have recently been moving to improve relations after 11 years of tension triggered by Turkey's backing of opposition fighters in Syria's civil war. Damascus has kept relatively quiet about the killing of Syrian soldiers in the recent Turkish strikes.

## WILL THE UNITED STATES GET INVOLVED?

The United States maintains a small military presence in northern Syria, where its strong backing of the SDF has infuriated Turkey.

However, the U.S. at first said little publicly about the Turkish airstrikes, speaking more forcefully only after they hit dangerously close to U.S. troops and led to anti-IS patrols being temporarily halted. U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin last week voiced "strong opposition" to a new offensive.

Asked if the U.S. had any assurances for Kurds worried that the U.S. might abandon them to coax a NATO deal out of Turkey, a senior U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity said only that there had been no changes to U.S. policy in the region.

## WILL RUSSIA BROKER A DEAL?

Russia is the Syrian government's closest ally. Its involvement in Syria's conflict helped turn the tide in favor of Assad.

Although Turkey and Russia support rival sides in the conflict, the two have coordinated closely in Syria's north. In recent months, Russia has pushed for a reconciliation between Damascus and Ankara.

Moscow has voiced concerns over Turkey's recent military actions in northern Syria and has attempted to broker a deal. According to Lebanon-based pan-Arab Al-Mayadeen TV, the chief of Russian forces in Syria, Lt. Gen. Alexander Chaiko, recently suggested to SDF commander Mazloun Abdi that Syrian government forces should deploy in a security strip along the border with Turkey to avoid a Turkish incursion.

## IRAN'S INTERESTS

Iran, a key ally of the Assad government, strongly opposed Turkish plans for a land offensive earlier this year but hasn't commented publicly on the possible new incursion.

Tehran also has a sizable Kurdish minority and has battled a low-level separatist insurgency for decades. Iran has seen sustained protests and a deadly crackdown by security forces since the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman, in the custody of the country's morality police in mid-September.

Iran has blamed much of the unrest on Kurdish opposition groups exiled in neighboring Iraq, charges those groups deny, and has carried out strikes against them. Another Turkish incursion into Syria could provide a model for a wider response if the unrest in Iran's Kurdistan continues to escalate.

## Ukraine utility crews adapt, overcome after Russian strikes

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Over the grinding wail of a chainsaw pruning trees, Oleh Braharnyk recalls how his crew sprang into action in Kyiv a week earlier to repair power lines downed by Russian missiles and keep electricity flowing to his beleaguered fellow Ukrainians.

Braharnyk, an electric company foreman, knows the stakes: Like many others in Ukraine, his family has dealt with daily power outages caused by Russian strikes.

"We, too, sit in the dark," he says, acknowledging that his home gets power for only about half of each day.

In recent months, Russia has rained missiles on Ukraine to try to take out power grid equipment and facilities that keep lights on, space heaters warm and computers running. It's part of Moscow's strategy to cripple the country's infrastructure and freeze Ukraine into submission this winter.

Braharnyk's crew is one of many from energy company DTEK that moves swiftly in Kyiv - occasionally under artillery and rocket fire - to keep the city ticking. Colleagues across Ukraine do the same.

From President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on down, Ukrainian leaders have warned that gas systems, water mains and power stations have become a new front as the war nears the 10-month mark.

About half of Ukraine's energy supply network is still damaged following widespread attacks on Nov. 23, when DTEK declared "the power system failed."

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 36 of 85

During that barrage, six of the company's thermal power plants were shut down, and as many as 70% of residents in Ukraine's capital lost power. The plants were brought back online within 24 hours, although power cuts affect about 30% of Kyiv's residents during the day, dropping as low as 20% at night, DTEK spokeswoman Antonina Antosha said.

DTEK, which works closely with Ukrainian energy company NEC Ukrenergo, says Russian forces have attacked its facilities 17 times since early October, including twice on Monday alone. The company has reported the deaths of more than 106 employees since Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, the vast majority of them members of the military, but says 14 were killed while either off-duty or working.

Three Ukrainian energy workers were killed and 24 injured in the past week, DTEK said.

On Thursday, Braharnyk's crew had little more to worry about than freezing temperatures and piles of snow as they pared back branches near overhead electricity lines that power homes and businesses on much of the left bank of the Dnieper River that cuts through the capital.

That doesn't diminish their constant state of alert. When the missiles started dropping mid-afternoon on Nov. 23, the crew rushed to an unspecified emergency site, assessed the damage, and quickly determined what repairs needed to be done within a span of a few hours. A second "brigade" was then called in to do the actual repair work.

"Three or four lines were snapped," and it required several hours of work to install new ones, Braharnyk said.

The crews can't just rush in. In theory, but not always in practice, de-mining experts are expected to arrive first and give the all-clear that there's no danger from unexploded ordnance. Then, clean-up crews, when needed, clear away debris and fragments from downed lines and blast destruction so trucks and heavy equipment can get through to complete the repairs.

The infrastructure-targeted strikes aren't as perilous as the attacks of the opening phase of the war, when Russian forces advanced to the outskirts of Kyiv and some neighborhoods of the capital before being pushed back. At that time, repair work was done under fire.

"That was much worse," Braharnyk recalled. "These days, it's better because the rockets are being fired from farther away."

Ukraine has adapted. A popular mobile phone app whose name title translates as Air Alarm regularly sounds warnings that Russian strikes are under way, specifying the region.

In light of the new Russian strategy, "when we hear that there is an incoming strike from Russia, we already know they're going to aim at the power supplies, or power lines," Braharnyk said.

DTEK's crews now stay close to their operational base, ready to load up and deploy on a moment's notice. The risks remain real.

"Even now, we're not really confident because no one knows if they will do a double hit when we deploy to repair a site that they've just struck," he said.

The psychological strain also weighs heavy.

"The hardest thing is ... hearing the explosions and the strikes and we don't know what it is exactly: it could be incoming missiles or SWAT teams de-mining fields so other brigades can get through," Braharnyk said.

For the electric company crews, it's about getting the job done, "no matter what's happening around us," he said. "We're just here to fix it."

## Afghan academic rebuilds life in Italy, dreams of returning

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Batool Haidari used to be a prominent professor of sexology at a Kabul university before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. She taught mixed classes of male and female students, and helped patients struggling with gender identity issues.

Her husband owned a carpet factory, and together they did their best to provide a good education for

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 37 of 85

their 18-year-old son and two daughters aged 13 and eight.

That comfortable life came to an abrupt halt on Aug. 15, 2021, when the former insurgents who adhere to a strict interpretation of Islam swept back into power following a costly two-decade U.S.-led campaign to remake the country.

Haidari, 37, was among the many women who fled the Taliban, fearing a return to the practices of their previous rule in the late 1990s, including largely barring girls and women from education and work. She reached Rome at the end of 2021, after a daring escape through Pakistan aided by Italian volunteers who arranged for her and her family to be hosted in the Italian capital's suburbs.

She is among thousands of Afghani women seeking to maintain an active social role in the countries that have taken them in. Haidari and her husband are studying Italian while being financially supported by various associations. She keeps in touch with feminist organizations back home and tries to maintain contact with some of her patients via the internet.

"Being alive is already a form of resistance," she said, adding that she wants her children to contribute to the future of Afghanistan, where she is sure her family will return one day.

"When my son passed the exam to access the faculty of Medicine at a university in Rome, for me it was good news," she said, during a commute to her Italian classes in central Rome. "Because if I came to a European country, it was mainly for the future of my children."

After they overran Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban initially promised to respect women's and minorities' rights. Instead, they gradually imposed a ban on girls' education beyond sixth grade, kept women away from most fields of employment, and forced them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public.

Haidari tried to stay in Kabul with her family after the Taliban took over. She became an outspoken activist of the Afghanistan Women's Political Participation Network to fight for women's education, work and political involvement.

But the risks soon became too high. Haidari was not only an educated female activist, but also a member of the Hazara ethnic group.

The Hazara minority has been a frequent target of violence since the Taliban takeover. Most are Shiite Muslims, despised and targeted by Sunni militants like the Islamic State group, and discriminated against by many in the Sunni majority country.

Haidari received death threats for her research on sensitive issues in Afghan society, and in December 2021 decided to leave. She crossed to Pakistan with her family, and an Italian journalist, Maria Grazia Mazzola, helped her get on a plane from Pakistan to Italy.

"We heard that Taliban were shooting and searching houses very close to their hiding place," Mazzola said. "We were frantically in touch with the Italian embassy in Pakistan, with confidential contacts in Afghanistan, and we decided together that they had to change their hiding place every three days."

The Italian government evacuated more than 5,000 Afghans on military planes right after the Taliban takeover. Later, a network of Italian feminists, Catholic and Evangelical Churches and volunteers like Mazzola kept organizing humanitarian corridors and set up hospitality in Italy throughout the following year.

Mazzola, who works for Italian public RAI TV and is an expert on Islamic fundamentalism, created a network of associations to host 70 Afghans, mostly Hazara women activists and their families.

Now that the refugees are in Italy and gradually getting asylum, Mazzola said, the priority is to secure for them official recognition of their university degrees or other qualifications that will help them find dignified employment.

"A woman like Batool (Haidari) cannot work as a cleaner in a school. It would be a waste for our society too. She is a psychologist and deserves to continue working as such," Mazzola said.

Haidari agreed. While she said she misses the streets and alleys of Kabul, and the easy life she used to have, "most of all I miss the fact that in Afghanistan I was a much more useful person."

## Kentucky remembers tornado victims as rebuilding continues

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — Chris Bullock has a lot to be grateful for as she decorates her new home for Christmas, after spending much of the past year in a camper with her family.

One year ago Saturday, a massive tornado obliterated wide swaths of her Kentucky hometown of Dawson Springs, leaving her homeless after a terrifying night of death and destruction.

Things look much different now.

In August, Bullock and her family moved into their new home, built free of charge by the disaster relief group God's Pit Crew. It sits on the same site where their home of 26 years was wiped out.

"God's sent blessings to us," Bullock said in a phone interview Friday. "Sometimes we feel there's a little guilt, if you will. Why were we spared?"

The holiday season tragedy killed 81 people across Kentucky and turned buildings into mounds of rubble as damage reached into hundreds of millions of dollars. Elsewhere in the state, Mayfield took a direct hit from the swarm of December tornadoes, which left a wide trail of destroyed buildings and shredded trees. In Bowling Green, a tornado wiped out an entire subdivision.

It was part of a massive tornado outbreak across the Midwest and the South.

In Dawson Springs and other Kentucky towns in the path of the storms, homes and businesses have been springing up steadily in recent months. Government assistance, private donations and claims payouts by insurers have poured into the stricken western Kentucky region.

"It's more than encouraging," said Jenny Beshear Sewell, the mayor-elect of Dawson Springs and a cousin of Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear. "In a storybook, it is like the turn to the next chapter. That's how it feels. That's what it looks like."

On Saturday, the governor will lead commemorative events recalling the horrifying opening chapters of the tragedy. The gatherings in Dawson Springs, Mayfield and Marshall County will remember those who died and pay tribute to the rescue workers who pulled people from the wreckage — as well as the volunteers who have pitched in for the massive rebuild.

"Nothing I've ever seen had prepared me for what I saw in first light that day," Beshear said leading up to the anniversary. "As we continue to mourn those we lost, my faith tells me that while we may struggle with the whys — why does it hit us, why do human beings suffer — we see God's presence in the response."

Beshear's family has deep connections to Dawson Springs. The Democratic governor's father, former two-term Gov. Steve Beshear, grew up in the tightknit western Kentucky community.

The devastation sparked an outpouring of love and help that started almost as soon as daylight revealed the scope of the damage. Beshear, who led the state's response, said the effort should restore "everyone's faith in humanity."

A full year later, the help keeps coming.

But plenty of storm victims continue to struggle, including some of Bullock's neighbors who lost homes and loved ones. Others are not nearly as far along in rebuilding. Still, progress is steady, and Bullock said it "warms your heart" to see her neighborhood coming back together.

"For the most part, the same people are in the same spot where they belong, in our opinion," she said. "We are where we belong."

Bullock remembers in detail the harrowing chain of events a year ago.

She rushed to the basement with her husband Barry, 17-year-old son Stevie and miniature poodle Dewey moments before the storm hit.

"They say it was 33 seconds," she said. "It felt like 33 minutes."

Bullock was trapped under a crumbled brick wall in the basement with her son and dog. Her husband pulled them from the rubble with minor injuries. Amid the chaos and destruction, it took relatives about 10 hours to find them. They moved into a camper near the site of their home for six months, waiting for their new house to go up and spending the rest of the time with relatives.

Bullock said she wasn't sure if she would attend the commemorative event in town.

"I feel like I've coped with everything very well, but the closer it gets to tomorrow (Saturday), when it crosses my mind, it kind of takes my breath away a little," she said.

Bullock admitted Christmas brings a mix of feelings amid so much ongoing struggle — "Why are we getting to be in our house for Christmas?" while others aren't — but said she and her husband have always gone all out for the holidays. She said leaning in to do some of the things they enjoy feels a little like taking a stand.

So she went "overboard" stringing Christmas lights on their new home and bought plenty of new decorations, but said it will take time before the display is completely revived.

"I can't make it look like that yet," she said. "It's going to have to wait another year."

## Messi, Argentina advance to semifinals at World Cup

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

LUSAIL, Qatar (AP) — Lionel Messi started the match by delivering another soccer clinic. The Argentina superstar ended it sporting a bloodied top lip, shouting abuse to opponents and even blasting the referee.

And of course there were goals, too, for one of the greats of the game whose bid to win the World Cup for the first time is still on track.

Messi is heading to the semifinals with Argentina after a chaotic penalty-shootout victory over Netherlands that had just about everything on Friday.

Argentina took a 2-0 lead, conceded an equalizer in the 11th minute of second-half stoppage time to send the match to extra time at 2-2, and then won the shootout 4-3 amid a deafening noise inside Lusail Stadium.

Messi, who scored a penalty in regulation time, converted his penalty in the shootout while goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez made two saves to help Argentina secure a semifinal match against Croatia, which beat Brazil earlier Friday.

After Lautaro Martínez scored the clinching penalty, Messi — with his arms outstretched — sprinted toward the goalkeeper, who had fallen to the ground to the side of the goal, and lay on top of him.

"We had to suffer," Messi said, "but we got through."

Messi did, especially, in an often violent match that featured 17 yellow cards — a record for a World Cup match — two of which went to Netherlands defender Denzel Dumfries, leading to him getting sent off after the game.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni called the game "ugly" and Messi was critical of the Spanish referee, Antonio Mateu, saying: "I don't think he was up to the standard. He was very harmful for us."

In a side of Messi rarely seen, he also broke off from his post-match interview on the field to shout abuse at the scorer of the Netherlands' two goals, Wout Weghorst.

"What are you looking at, stupid?" Messi was heard saying.

Messi and his teammates hung around on the field for 20 minutes at the end, taking turns dancing and jumping up and down in front of Argentina's celebrating, scarf-waving fans.

Messi said the late Diego Maradona was looking over the team.

"Diego is watching us from heaven," Messi said of the former Argentina captain and coach who died two years ago. "He is pushing us. I hope it stays like that until the end."

It is only the second time Argentina has reached the last four since 1990. In 2014, Messi was part of the team that lost to Germany in the final and he looks in the mood to get there again in a tournament that he is turning into his own personal highlight reel.

Messi delivered a mesmerizing piece of skill and vision to set up the opening goal for Nahuel Molina in the 35th minute. He twisted free in central midfield and burst forward, unbalancing Netherlands defender Nathan Ake and then delivering a no-look reverse pass for Molina to finish for his first international goal.

His penalty in the 73rd minute, which came after Marcus Acuna was tripped by Dumfries, was his fourth goal of the tournament and took him to 10 overall in the World Cup — tied with Gabriel Batistuta for the most for Argentina. Messi now has 94 goals in his 169 international games.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 40 of 85

His team trailing 2-0, Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal sent on two tall strikers — Weghorst and Luuk De Jong — and even told center back Virgil van Dijk to play up front. The game suddenly changed.

Weghorst glanced in a header from a right-wing cross in the 78th — five minutes after coming on — and then scored the latest second-half goal in a knockout-stage game at a World Cup.

Off a cleverly worked free-kick routine learned by Weghorst at his Turkish club, Besiktas, Teun Koopmeiners feigned to take a shot at goal from the edge of the area but instead played it short and low into the middle of the area. It deceived the Argentine defense as Weghorst took a touch, held off his marker and slotted home a finish on the stretch.

Enzo Fernandez hit the post near the end of extra time and was then the only Argentina player to fail to score in the shootout. Martinez's saves were from attempts by Van Dijk and Steven Berghuis, after which he pulled his shorts high and danced a jig.

The loss ended the 71-year-old Van Gaal's third stint in charge of the Netherlands. He was also the team's coach at the World Cup in 2014 when Argentina beat the Dutch in a penalty shootout in the semifinals.

"Ever since we arrived here," Van Gaal said, "we have been focused on penalties. We thought we were going to win the penalty shootout."

## SUSPENSIONS

Argentina defenders Marcus Acuna and Gonzalo Montiel will miss the semifinals after collecting second yellow cards of the tournament

## Rural voters 'in the trenches' on climate, leery of Biden

By NUHA DOLBY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Drought in California meant Raquel Krach, a rice farmer and graduate student in the Sacramento Valley, planted very little. Using groundwater, she and her husband planted 75 acres this year to maintain their markets. The rest of the 200 acres she typically sows remained empty due to an inadequate water supply.

The 53-year-old Democrat said it's clear to her that climate change is responsible. But she says that notion is a deeply divisive one in her community.

"Our connections to our neighbors are pretty limited because our views are so different. Climate change is normally a topic we don't even broach because our views are so different," Krach said.

The impacts of climate change hit communities across the country, including Krach's, yet voters in rural communities are the least likely to feel Washington is in their corner on the issue. Rural Americans and experts suggest there's a disconnect between the way leaders talk about climate change and the way these communities experience it.

AP VoteCast, a sweeping survey of the 2022 midterm electorate, shows clear differences between urban and rural communities in voter sentiment on President Joe Biden's handling of climate, and whether climate change is impacting their communities.

About half of voters nationwide approve of the president's handling of the issue, despite the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act this summer that meant historic investments aimed at reducing the emissions that cause climate change. While around 6 in 10 urban voters approve, the figure drops to about half for suburbanites and roughly 4 in 10 for rural voters.

The urban-rural divide exists within the Republican Party, showing those differences aren't driven solely by a partisan split between bluer cities and redder countryside. While 27% of urban Republicans approve of Biden's leadership on climate, only 14% of small-town and rural Republicans say the same, VoteCast showed.

Sarah Jaynes, the executive director of the Rural Democracy Initiative, which provides funding to groups that support progressive policies in rural areas, suggested the overarching urban-rural divide has a lot to do with messaging issues.

"People in rural areas and small towns are less likely to think that Democrats are fighting for people like them, so there's a partisan trust issue," Jaynes said. "I think there's an issue where people don't want to



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 41 of 85

signal that they're supporting Democrats in rural communities right now."

VoteCast also shows that despite nationwide climate crises — from hurricanes to wildfires to droughts — there's varying concern among voters about whether climate change is in their backyards. About three-quarters of urban voters are at least somewhat worried about the effects of climate change in their communities, compared to about 6 in 10 suburbanites and about half of small-town and rural voters.

That difference isn't necessarily explained by a lack of belief in climate change within rural communities. A September AP-NORC poll showed majorities across community types say climate change is happening.

"If you're speaking to climate generally, rural people can feel like 'well, do you really care about me? Are you talking about me?'" Jaynes said. "If you ask them 'are you concerned about flooding? Are you concerned about the water crisis? Are you concerned about the impacts of extreme weather?' You're going to hear a lot more positively when you meet them where they are."

In Krach's community, she said "everyone is very clear on that there's no water and that there's a drought. Whether they attribute that to climate change is different."

Nationally, extreme weather has meant agriculture has taken huge hits. Krach's experience isn't unique: ongoing drought in California meant that Colusa and Glenn counties saw their rice acreage drop by at least three-quarters, according to an analysis by UC-Davis agricultural economist Aaron Smith. In Texas, drought and a heat wave meant a whopping near 70% of cotton crops are likely to be abandoned. In Georgia, farmers have started growing citrus, as weather warms up and becomes increasingly untenable for the peach.

Johnathan Hladik, the policy director at the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska, an organization focusing on rural community development, including environmental stewardship, said the nature of much of the work rural people do makes looking at the global scale difficult — like in agriculture.

"Farmers are experiencing climate change in a much different way than many more urban people do. It's in every part of their job. It's almost like it's a day to day battle. You're in the trenches every single day and it's really hard to step back and look at it big-picture-size," he said.

Olivia Staudt, a 20-year-old junior at Iowa State University, grew up on a fourth-generation corn, bean and row crop operation in Marble Rock, Iowa. The Republican said another factor contributing to the divide on climate issues is that some rural people think urban communities assign them disproportionate blame on climate issues without looking in the mirror.

"There always needs to be a scapegoat, and it feels like that's what rural communities are to a lot of these urban areas," Staudt said. "But no one has all the blame or creates all the issues."

Staudt knows first-hand how much farming communities think about natural resources — her family not only uses the land but maintains it for the future, and that connection to the Earth can be farther off for urban residents. When she sees new big developments in cities and smog, paired with a perception of the agriculture sector getting blamed for climate change, it feels off.

The findings are complicated by a lack of knowledge on Biden's climate actions. September's AP-NORC poll found that about 6 in 10 U.S. adults said they knew little to nothing about the Inflation Reduction Act — a law widely heralded as the largest investment in climate spending in history.

The IRA, which Biden signed into law in August, included about \$375 billion in investments in climate over 10 years. Among other things, the legislation provides around \$260 billion in tax credits for renewable energy and offers consumer rebates to households for heat pumps and solar panels, and up to \$7,500 in electric vehicle credits.

Some elements of the law are geared towards the agriculture sector, too. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the law includes \$20 billion to conservation programs run by the department, \$3 billion in relief for distressed USDA borrowers whose operations are at financial risk, and \$2 billion in financial assistance to farmers who have experienced past discrimination in USDA lending programs.

## Sinema party switch highlights 2024 obstacles for Democrats

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Less than three days after Democrats celebrated victory in the final Senate contest of the 2022 midterms, the challenges facing the party heading into the next campaign came into sharp relief.

The decision by Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona to leave the Democratic Party on Friday raised the prospect of a tumultuous — and expensive — three-way race in one of the most politically competitive states in the U.S. It set off a scramble among potential Democratic and Republican candidates to assess whether they could win their party's nomination.

And it prompted difficult questions about whether Democrats might financially and politically support Sinema over their own nominee if she decides to seek reelection in 2024 and is seen as having the best chance of keeping the seat out of GOP hands.

Ultimately, Sinema's move was a sobering reminder that while Democrats won an outright majority in the Senate this week, their grip on the chamber is still tenuous, giving individual members notable sway over the congressional agenda. And it foreshadowed the even more difficult climate ahead as Democrats defend seats in seven states, including Arizona, that former President Donald Trump carried at least once.

In an interview, Sinema was largely dismissive of such considerations, saying she doesn't fit into the traditional party system. She said she won't caucus with Republicans, but declined to say whether she plans to seek a second term in the Senate. Her shift to becoming an independent, however, strongly suggests she's at least trying to preserve the option.

"My decision is 100% based on what I think is right for me and for our state, and to ensure that I am able to continue delivering real results that make a difference in the lives of Arizonans," Sinema said in the interview.

Her move completes a unique evolution that has both delighted and infuriated Democrats. She began her career two decades ago as a member of the Green Party. Running for the Senate as a Democrat in 2018, her victory thrilled the party and cemented Arizona's status as a onetime Republican stronghold that was becoming more competitive.

But she's steadily grown alienated from the party and has been a barrier to some of Democrats' top priorities. She has appeared at points to take particular enjoyment in antagonizing the party's progressive base, whose support will be needed to win a primary in 2024.

She now returns to the position in which she began her political career, as an outsider from both major parties.

"She had a choice: either a tough primary or a tough general, and she chose a tough general," said Daniel Scarpinato, a Republican political consultant and former chief of staff to GOP Gov. Doug Ducey.

Sinema is taking a different route from Jeff Flake, the former Arizona Republican senator who also got crosswise with his party's base and opted not to run rather than change his affiliation or enter a primary he would likely have lost. Sinema ultimately won Flake's seat in 2018, but victory as an independent won't be easy.

"It's really hard to do, because all voters are trained at being partisan," said Chuck Coughlin, a Phoenix-based political consultant who left the GOP after Trump took control of the party. She'll need to convince a sizable number — perhaps a third — of the members of each party to vote for her and win the overwhelming majority of independents, he said.

The field of potential Sinema rivals began to take shape almost immediately. Both parties could face contested primaries, a dynamic that could help Sinema stay above the fray in a state where parties choose their nominees just three months before the general election.

U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego, a progressive Democrat and longtime Sinema antagonist, strongly hinted that he'll run but stopped short of announcing a bid. In an interview, he said that's always been a decision he planned to make in 2023, but the timeline may have moved up.

"I always thought I could win," Gallego said. "I think her potential run as an independent doesn't change that calculus."

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 43 of 85

Rep. Greg Stanton, a former Phoenix mayor, all but confirmed his own interest in the race when he tweeted a screenshot of a poll he'd commissioned for a primary challenge to Sinema.

Sinema's party switch "isn't about a post-partisan epiphany, it's about political preservation," he wrote.

On the Republican side, Pinal County Sheriff Mark Lamb is seriously considering a run, spokesman Corey Vale confirmed. Lamb is perhaps best known for holding a rifle and walking through the desert alongside conservative candidates in their border-security commercials.

Others mentioned as potential candidates include Kari Lake, Blake Masters, Jim Lamon and Karrin Taylor Robson, all Republicans who lost their bids for governor or Senate this year.

Ducey will likely get interest as well, particularly from national donors, though he's consistently said he has no interest in being a senator.

Outside groups affiliated with the Democratic Party invested more than \$33 million to help Sinema win in 2018. Whether they will spend at the same magnitude — or at all — on her behalf in 2024 is an open question. Officials at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and the Senate Majority PAC, a big-spending super PAC aligned with Senate Majority Leader Schumer, declined to comment.

But the \$7.8 million Sinema reported holding in her campaign fund at the end of September is nowhere near enough to mount a competitive campaign as an independent. And she will likely struggle to raise money from Democratic donors who formerly supported her.

Even before Sinema announced she was leaving the Democratic Party, she was hardly a fundraising dynamo. Many in the LGBT community, including major Hollywood financiers who enthusiastically supported Sinema in 2018 as the first openly bisexual woman to run for Senate, have soured on her. Meanwhile, grassroots donors, who often mobilize en masse, chipping in small amounts online to boost their favorite politicians, have never shown much favor toward Sinema, records show.

Instead, Sinema — who likened accepting campaign cash to "bribery" during one of her first campaigns — has come to rely on the finance and business sector as a source of contributions. And she's sown discord along the way.

Last year, as she single-handedly thwarted her party's longtime goal of raising taxes on wealthy investors, she collected nearly \$1 million from private equity professionals, hedge fund managers and venture capitalists whose taxes would have increased under the plan. Concessions she won from Democrats on drug pricing legislation helped make her a top recipient of pharmaceutical industry cash in 2021.

However, unless she draws support from wealthy donors who can pour in unlimited sums, the contributions she has taken in from business and industry figures alone won't likely be enough to win in a pivotal battleground state in which Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly raised and spent roughly \$90 million to secure his election to a full term in November's midterms.

Some Democrats caution activists to stay calm despite their frustration with Sinema ahead of the 2024 campaign.

They note that even Blake Masters, who trailed all other statewide Republicans on the ballot in his losing Senate bid, received 46% of the vote. In a must-win state that's a true tossup, Sinema may still be a more palatable option than surrendering the seat to Republicans following a messy three-way race, they argue.

One group that's seemingly not upset about Sinema's decision: the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"We're excited as ever to work with (Sinema) to advance good policies for Arizona job creators," the state's most influential business group said in a tweet.

## Peru's ex-president faced bigotry for impoverished past

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — When Pedro Castillo won Peru's presidency last year, it was celebrated as a victory by the country's poor — the peasants and Indigenous people who live deep in the Andes and whose struggles had long been ignored.

His supporters hoped Castillo, a populist outsider of humble roots, would redress their plight — or at

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 44 of 85

least end their invisibility.

But during 17 months in office before being ousted and detained Wednesday, supporters instead saw Castillo face the racism and discrimination they often experience. He was mocked for wearing a traditional hat and poncho, ridiculed for his accent and criticized for incorporating Indigenous ceremonies into official events.

Protests against Castillo's government featured a donkey — a symbol of ignorance in Latin America — with a hat similar to his. The attacks were endless, so much so that observers from the Organization of American States documented it during a recent mission to the deeply unequal and divided country.

Castillo, however, squandered the popularity he enjoyed among the poor, along with any opportunity he had to deliver on his promises to improve their lives, when he stunned the nation by ordering Congress dissolved Wednesday, followed by his ouster and arrest on charges of rebellion. His act of political suicide, which recalled some of the darkest days of the nation's anti-democratic past, came hours before Congress was set to start a third impeachment attempt against him.

Now with Castillo in custody and the country being led by his former vice president, Dina Boluarte, it remains to be seen if she, too, will be subjected to the same discrimination.

Boluarte, a lawyer who worked in the state agency that hands out identity documents before becoming vice president, is not part of Peru's political elite either. She was raised in an impoverished town in the Andes, speaks one of the country's Indigenous languages, Quechua, and, a leftist like Castillo, promised to "fight for the nobodies."

The Organization of American States, in a report published last week, noted that in Peru "there are sectors that promote racism and discrimination and do not accept that a person from outside traditional political circles occupy the presidential chair."

"This has resulted in insults toward the image of the president," it said.

After being sworn in as president Wednesday, Boluarte called for a truce with the lawmakers who ousted Castillo on charges of "permanent moral incapacity."

Peru has had six presidents in the last six years. In 2020, it cycled through three in a week.

Castillo, a rural schoolteacher, had never held office before narrowly winning a runoff election in June 2021 after campaigning on promises to nationalize Peru's key mining industry and rewrite the constitution, winning wide support in the impoverished countryside.

Peru is the second-largest copper exporter in the world and mining accounts for almost 10% of its gross domestic product and 60% of its exports. But its economy was crushed by the coronavirus pandemic, increasing poverty and eliminating the gains of a decade.

Castillo defeated by just 44,000 votes one of the most recognizable names among Peru's political class: Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of former strongman Alberto Fujimori, who is serving a 25-year prison sentence for the murder of Peruvians executed during his government by a clandestine military squad.

Keiko Fujimori's supporters have often called Castillo "terroro," or terrorist, a term often used by the right to attack the left, poor and rural residents.

Once in office, Castillo went through more than 70 Cabinet choices, a number of whom have been accused of wrongdoing; faced two impeachment votes, and confronted multiple criminal investigations into accusations ranging from influence peddling to plagiarism.

Omar Coronel, a sociology professor at Peru's Pontific Catholic University, said while the corruption accusations and criticism of Castillo's lack of experience have merit, they were tinged with racism, "a constant in any Peruvian equation."

"One can criticize his political inexperience, his clumsiness, his crimes," Coronel said. But the way in which this was framed, that it was because Castillo was from a rural community with different customs, "is a deeply racist discourse and tremendously hypocritical," because right-wing presidents have also faced corruption allegations.

"Social media networks have been flooded with visceral racism during all these 17 months," Coronel said.

Some of Castillo's remaining supporters have protested and blocked roads across the country since his arrest. They have also gathered outside the detention facility where he and Alberto Fujimori are held.

"They have called him all sorts of discriminatory words," Castillo supporter Fernando Picatoste said Friday outside the prison. "It's a racial issue. In Congress, lawmakers, who supposedly have national representation, ... have the audacity to insult the president."

## Hong Kong jails pro-democracy media tycoon over fraud

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong court sentenced a pro-democracy media tycoon to five years and nine months in prison on Saturday over two fraud charges linked to lease violations, the latest of a series of cases against prominent activists that critics say are aimed at crushing dissent in the city.

Jimmy Lai, who was arrested during a crackdown on the city's pro-democracy movement following widespread protests in 2019 and under the National Security Law imposed by Beijing, was also fined 2 million Hong Kong dollars (\$257,000).

His media company, Next Digital, published the now-defunct pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily. The publication was forced to close following the arrests of its top executives, editors and journalists last year.

In October, Lai was found guilty of fraud for subletting part of the office space to a secretarial firm, which was also controlled by him, between 2016 and 2020. The second fraud count was for letting the same firm use the media outlet's office space in an alleged breach of lease agreements from 1998 to 2015.

The court at that time ruled the moves had violated lease agreements with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corp. and that Lai had hidden the fact that the company was occupying space in the building.

Handing down the sentences on Saturday, Judge Stanley Chan said the violations, which he called "organized and planned," occurred over two decades and that Lai had used his media organization as "an umbrella of protection."

He said Lai did not feel guilty about the moves, so there was no basis for the court to reduce his jail term.

Lai's former colleague Wong Wai-keung, who was convicted on a single charge of fraud over the case, must serve 21 months in jail, Chan added.

Lai's legal team earlier asked the United Nations to investigate his imprisonment and multiple criminal charges as "legal harassment" to punish him for speaking out. The tycoon was previously sentenced to 20 months in jail for his role in unauthorized assemblies.

His national security trial, initially scheduled to begin on Dec. 1, was postponed after Hong Kong leader John Lee asked China to effectively block him from hiring a British defense lawyer. If convicted, Lai faces up to life imprisonment.

The enactment of the security law has led to the arrests of many prominent democracy activists in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. Hong Kong, a former British colony, returned to China's rule in 1997.

It has also damaged faith in the future of the international financial hub, with increasing numbers of young professionals responding to the shrinking freedoms by moving abroad.

## Kari Lake challenges her defeat in Arizona governor's race

By JACQUES BILLEAUD Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Kari Lake, the Republican defeated in Arizona governor's race, is formally challenging her loss to Democrat Katie Hobbs, asking a court to throw out certified election results from the state's most populous county and either declare her the winner or rerun the governor's election in that county.

The lawsuit filed late Friday by Lake centers on long lines and other difficulties that people experienced while voting on Election Day in Maricopa County. The challenge filed in Maricopa County Superior Court also alleges hundreds of thousands of ballots were illegally cast, but there's no evidence that's true.

Lake has refused to acknowledge that she lost to Hobbs by more than 17,000 votes.

The Donald Trump-endorsed gubernatorial candidate has bombarded Maricopa County with complaints, largely related to a problem with printers at some vote centers that led to ballots being printed with markings that were too light to be read by the on-site tabulators.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 46 of 85

Lines backed up in some polling places, fueling Republican suspicions that some supporters were unable to cast a ballot, though there's no evidence it affected the outcome. County officials say everyone was able to vote and all legal ballots were counted.

Lake sued Maricopa County officials and Hobbs in her current role as Arizona's secretary of state.

Sophia Solis, a spokesperson for the secretary of state's office, said Lake's lawsuit was being reviewed but had no other comment on the filing.

Jason Berry, a Maricopa County spokesperson, declined to comment on Lake's request to throw out the county's election results in the governor's race. But he said the county "respects the election contest process and looks forward to sharing facts about the administration of the 2022 general election and our work to ensure every legal voter had an opportunity to cast their ballot."

Hobbs in a post on her Twitter account called the lawsuit "Lake's latest desperate attempt to undermine our democracy and throw out the will of the voters." She posted a statement from her campaign manager that called the lawsuit a "sham" and said her camp remained focused on "getting ready to hit the ground running on Day One of Katie Hobbs' administration."

Lake's lawsuit says Republicans were disproportionately affected by the problems in Maricopa County because they outvoted Democrats on Election Day 3-1. GOP leaders had urged their voters to wait until Election Day to vote.

In late November, Lake filed a public records lawsuit demanding Maricopa County hand over documents related to the election. She was seeking to identify voters who may have had trouble casting a ballot, such as people who checked in at more than one vote center or those who returned a mail ballot and also checked in at a polling place.

During the summer, a federal judge also rejected a request by Lake and Mark Finchem, the defeated Republican candidate for secretary of state, to require hand counting of all ballots during the November election.

The judge has since sanctioned lawyers representing Lake and Finchem, saying they "made false, misleading, and unsupported factual assertions" in their lawsuit. The lawyers told the court that their claims were "legally sound and supported by strong evidence."

Hobbs in her role as secretary of state has petitioned a court to begin an automatic statewide recount required by law in three races decided by less than half a percentage point.

The race for attorney general was one of the closest contests in state history, with Democrat Kris Mayes leading Republican Abe Hamadeh by just 510 votes out of 2.5 million cast.

The races for superintendent of public instruction and a state legislative seat in the Phoenix suburbs will also be recounted, but the margins are much larger.

## Ex-cop who kneeled on George Floyd's back gets 3.5-year term

By STEPHEN GROVES and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The former Minneapolis police officer who kneeled on George Floyd's back while another officer kneeled on the Black man's neck was sentenced Friday to 3 1/2 years in prison.

J. Alexander Kueng pleaded guilty in October to a state count of aiding and abetting second-degree manslaughter. In exchange, a charge of aiding and abetting murder was dropped. Kueng is already serving a federal sentence for violating Floyd's civil rights, and the state and federal sentences will be served at the same time.

Kueng appeared at the hearing via video from a federal prison in Ohio. When given the chance to address the court, he declined.

With credit for time served and different parole guidelines in the state and federal systems, Kueng will likely serve a total of about 2 1/2 years behind bars.

Floyd's family members had the right to make victim impact statements, but none did. Family attorney Ben Crump, who has taken on some of the nation's most high-profile police killings of Black people, said in a statement before the hearing that Kueng's sentencing "delivers yet another piece of justice for the

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 47 of 85

Floyd family. "

"While the family faces yet another holiday season without George, we hope that moments like these continue to bring them a measure of peace, knowing that George's death was not in vain," he said.

Floyd died on May 25, 2020, after former Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes as Floyd repeatedly said he couldn't breathe and eventually went limp. The killing, which was recorded on video by a bystander, sparked worldwide protests as part of a broader reckoning over racial injustice.

Kueng knelt on Floyd's back during the restraint. Then-Officer Thomas Lane held Floyd's legs and Tou Thao, also an officer at the time, kept bystanders from intervening. All of the officers were fired and faced state and federal charges.

As part of his plea agreement, Kueng admitted that he held Floyd's torso, that he knew from his experience and training that restraining a handcuffed person in a prone position created a substantial risk, and that the restraint of Floyd was unreasonable under the circumstances.

Matthew Frank, who led the prosecution for the Minnesota attorney general's office, said repeatedly during the hearing that Floyd was a crime victim and that the prosecution "focused on the officers" who caused his death. He added that the case was not meant to be a broader examination of policing, but added that he hopes it will reaffirm that police officers cannot treat those "who are in crisis as non-people or second-class citizens."

"Mr. Kueng was not simply a bystander that day. He did less than what some of the bystanders attempted to do in helping Mr. Floyd," Frank said.

Kueng's attorney, Thomas Plunkett, on Friday blamed the Minneapolis Police Department's leadership and a lack of training for Floyd's death. He highlighted Kueng's status as a rookie — saying he had only been on the job on his own for three days — and accused department leadership of failing to implement training to encourage officers to intervene when one of their colleagues is doing something wrong.

"On behalf of Mr. Kueng, I'm not calling for justice. I'm calling for progress," he said.

Then-Chief Medaria Arradondo fired Kueng and the three other officers the day after Floyd's killing and later testified at Chauvin's trial that the officers did not follow training. The former head of training for the department has also testified that the officers acted in a way that was inconsistent with department policies.

Kueng's sentencing brings the cases against all of the former officers a step closer to resolution, although the state case against Thao is still pending.

Thao previously told Judge Peter Cahill that it "would be lying" to plead guilty. In October, he agreed to what's called a stipulated evidence trial on the count of aiding and abetting manslaughter. As part of that process, his attorneys and prosecutors are working out agreed-upon evidence in his case and filing written closing arguments. Cahill will then decide whether Thao is guilty or not.

If Thao is convicted, the murder count — which carries a presumptive sentence of 12 1/2 years in prison — will be dropped.

Chauvin, who is white, was convicted of state murder and manslaughter charges last year and is serving 22 1/2 years in the state case. He also pleaded guilty to a federal charge of violating Floyd's civil rights and was sentenced to 21 years. He is serving the sentences concurrently at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tucson, Arizona.

Kueng, Lane and Thao were convicted of federal charges in February: All three were convicted of depriving Floyd of his right to medical care, and Thao and Kueng were also convicted of failing to intervene to stop Chauvin during the killing.

Lane, who is white, is serving his 2 1/2-year federal sentence at a facility in Colorado. He's serving a three-year state sentence at the same time. Kueng, who is Black, was sentenced to three years on the federal counts; Thao, who is Hmong American, got a 3 1/2-year federal sentence.

## Warnings on gay club shooter stir questions about old case

By BRIAN MELLEY, COLLEEN SLEVIN and BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A California woman who warned a judge last year about the danger posed by the suspect in the Colorado Springs gay nightclub shooting said Friday that the deaths could have been prevented if earlier charges against the suspect weren't dismissed.

Jeanie Streltsoff — a relative of alleged shooter Anderson Lee Aldrich — urged Colorado Judge Robin Chittum in a letter last November to incarcerate the suspect following a 2021 standoff with SWAT teams that uncovered a stockpile of more than 100 pounds (45 kilograms) of explosive material, firearms and ammunition.

Aldrich should have been in prison at the time of the shooting and prevented from obtaining weapons, she told The Associated Press on Friday.

"Five people died," Streltsoff said, hushing the final word. "Someone should have done something."

Streltsoff blamed Aldrich's grandmother and mother for dodging subpoenas that would have forced them to testify in the bomb threat case. But documents unsealed Thursday also raised questions about whether authorities were aggressive enough in their pursuit of a conviction or could have sought different charges when it became clear Aldrich's mother, Laura Voepel, and grandparents Jonathan and Pamela Pullen wouldn't testify.

The case was derailed because prosecutors couldn't properly serve subpoenas to the Pullens, who had moved to Florida, and Voepel, who was still in Colorado Springs, and ran out of time under fair trial rules, according to District Attorney Michael Allen and court documents.

George Washington University Law Professor Jonathan Turley said he found the district attorney's explanations of why he dropped the case "incomplete" and was surprised Allen didn't amend the charges to involve the threat to the police and community.

"This was a potential crime that didn't just solely impact the grandparents," Turley said. "This was a three-hour standoff. This was disruptive. The police were threatened."

It's rare for a criminal case to fall apart over a failure to deliver subpoenas to a couple victims or witnesses, Turley said. He also noted that police and prosecutors have enhanced abilities to access property and serve people in criminal cases.

Ian Farrell, an associate professor at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, said he also was surprised the district attorney's office did not amend the charges after failing to subpoena Aldrich's grandparents, noting that prosecutors don't require cooperation from victims to move forward with a case.

If Aldrich was threatening people or non-cooperative with the police, "then you would have the police as witnesses and that would be all they would need," he said.

Aldrich, 22, who is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns according to defense attorneys, was initially charged with kidnapping and other felonies in the 2021 case.

Court documents describe how Aldrich told frightened grandparents about firearms and bomb-making material in their basement, talked of plans to become the "next mass killer," and vowed not to let them interfere with plans to "go out in a blaze." Aldrich livestreamed on Facebook a subsequent confrontation with SWAT teams at the house of mother Laura Voepel.

Former deputy district attorney Mark Waller, who ran against Allen in the last election, said prosecutors should have amended charges to obstruction of justice, given that Aldrich was deemed so dangerous a SWAT team and bomb squad had to be deployed and surrounding homes evacuated.

"They have that video of (Aldrich) saying he's going to blow everything up. They could have easily charged ... obstruction of justice," said Waller. "It could have prevented this whole thing from happening."

A spokesperson for the district attorney's office, Howard Black, said "numerous" attempts were made to serve subpoenas in the case but did not provide further details.

About a week before the case was dismissed, a lawyer for Pamela Pullen asked the court to quash, or reject, a subpoena that had been left in her mailbox. It's not clear when that subpoena had been left for her. Black said it was "just one attempt of many" to subpoena Pullen.

He dismissed the idea prosecutors could have pursued charges for the harm caused to neighbors during



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 49 of 85

the bomb scare, noting that evacuations happen a lot. Prosecutors filed charges based on the evidence they had and what they ethically believed they could prove in court, Black said.

Pullen's attorney in the bomb threat case, Aaron Gaddis, did not immediately respond to a phone message seeking comment. Phone calls to Pamela and Jonathan Pullen have not been returned.

Jonathan Pullen is Streltsoff's brother and Aldrich's step-grandfather. Streltsoff said he is a "gentle soul" who had lived in fear of his grandchild for years.

In the letter Streltsoff and her older brother, Robert Pullen, wrote to the court in November 2021, they detailed multiple instances of Aldrich menacing their brother, who they said "lived in a virtual prison."

Aldrich punched holes in the walls of the grandparents' Colorado home and broke windows, and the grandparents "had to sleep in their bedroom with the door locked" and a bat by the bed, they wrote. They also said Pamela Pullen gave Aldrich \$30,000, used to buy a 3D printer to make gun parts.

Streltsoff said Aldrich was treated with "kid gloves" by their grandmother "no matter what" they did.

During Aldrich's teenage years in San Antonio, the letter said Aldrich attacked Jonathan Pullen and sent him to the emergency room with undisclosed injuries. Jonathan Pullen later lied to police out of fear of Aldrich, according to the letter, which also said the suspect could not get along with classmates as a youth so had been homeschooled.

Streltsoff said Friday from the doorway of her Southern California home that the letter actually underplayed how menacing Aldrich was. She said they had "terrorized my younger brother for years."

She hasn't seen Jonathan Pullen since 2010 and has lost touch with him since the bomb scare. He hasn't returned her recent call and text messages and her other brother hasn't spoken with him.

"No one knows where they are now," Streltsoff said.

Aldrich tried to reclaim guns seized by authorities after the 2021 threat, but they were not returned, according to Allen. But soon after the charges were dropped, Aldrich boasted of having regained firearms and showed former roommate Xavier Kraus two rifles, body armor and incendiary rounds, Kraus told AP.

Aldrich was formally charged Tuesday with 305 criminal counts, including hate crimes and murder, in the Nov. 19 shooting at Club Q, a sanctuary for the LGBTQ community in mostly conservative Colorado Springs.

Investigators say Aldrich entered just before midnight with an AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle and began shooting during a drag queen's birthday celebration. Patrons stopped the killing by wrestling the suspect to the ground and beating Aldrich into submission, witnesses said.

## Neymar ties Pelé's record but loses again at World Cup

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

AL RAYYAN, Qatar (AP) — Neymar walked off the field with teammate Dani Alves by his side, tears still rolling down the Brazil forward's cheeks.

Other players had already tried to console Neymar as he cried while sitting near midfield, head down, hiding his face.

There wasn't much they could say to get the team's biggest star to lift his head up.

Again there was disappointment instead of joy at the end of a World Cup for Neymar. Again he couldn't lead Brazil to a major title.

It was his third failure at a World Cup, and his only triumphs with the national team are the 2013 Confederations Cup and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, when Brazil won its first gold medal in soccer.

Neymar said it wasn't the time to talk about his future with the national team.

"Honestly, I don't know what's going to happen. It's hard to talk about it right now," he said. "It would be too hasty to come here and say that this is it, but I can't guarantee anything. I have to take some time to think about it. I'm not closing any doors to the Seleção, but I'm also not saying 100% that I want to be back."

Neymar scored Friday to move level with Pelé as Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 77 goals, but the Seleção ended up losing to Croatia 4-2 in a penalty shootout in the quarterfinals after the match finished 1-1 after extra time.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 50 of 85

Neymar never had a chance to take a penalty after Rodrygo and Marquinhos missed their spot kicks. "He would have taken the fifth penalty," Brazil coach Tite said. "That's the one with the most pressure, and he would be the player with the most quality and mental preparedness to take the shot."

Neymar scored his goal in extra time with a right-footed shot after getting through the defense and dribbling past the Croatia goalkeeper to match Pelé's record. He entered the tournament two goals shy of the milestone, and scored his 76th in the round of 16 against South Korea after returning from an ankle injury.

The 82-year-old Pelé showed his support to Neymar from his hospital bed in Brazil, where he was improving while being treated for a respiratory infection that was aggravated by COVID-19.

"I saw you grow, I cheered for you every day and I can finally congratulate you for reaching my number of goals with Brazil. We both know that this is more than a figure," he wrote on Instagram. "Our biggest duty as athletes is to inspire. Inspire our teammates of today, the next generations and, above all, everyone who loves our sport."

"Unfortunately, this is not the happiest day for us," Pelé added. "My record was set almost 50 years ago, and nobody had managed to get near it until now. You got there, kid. That shows how great your achievement is."

Brazil was close to returning to the semifinals for the first time since 2014, but instead Neymar looked in anguish from midfield as Croatia substitute Bruno Petkovic equalized in the 117th minute.

Neymar also didn't play in the last four of the tournament that Brazil hosted eight years ago. He suffered a serious back injury in the quarterfinals against Colombia and then saw his teammates lose 7-1 to Germany.

The 30-year-old Neymar scored his 77 goals in 124 matches for Brazil. Pelé's goals came in 92 appearances with the national team between 1957 and 1971.

Ronaldo, a World Cup winner with Brazil in 2002, is third on the list with 62 goals in 98 matches.

Pelé won three World Cups, including when he was 17 years old in the 1958 tournament. He also helped Brazil win the World Cup in 1962 and 1970.

Neymar first played for Brazil as an 18-year-old in 2010. He is the only other Brazil player other than Pelé and Ronaldo to score in three different World Cups.

Neymar damaged ligaments in his ankle in Brazil's opening win against Serbia, and his participation in the rest of the tournament was in doubt because of the injury. He made it back to the starting lineup after missing two group games, and played about 80 minutes in Brazil's 4-1 win over South Korea on Monday.

The forward has had right ankle problems in the past, being among a series of injuries since the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Another right ankle sprain forced him to miss the 2019 Copa América, which Brazil won.

## Trump lawyers in court for sealed hearing in Mar-a-Lago case

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawyers for Donald Trump were in court Friday for sealed arguments as part of the ongoing investigation into the presence of classified information at the former president's Florida estate.

The proceedings were taking place before U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell, the chief judge of the federal court in the District of Columbia. Defense lawyers were seen entering the courtroom around 2 p.m. and left more than an hour later without addressing reporters.

A lawyer for The Associated Press and other news organizations had submitted a letter earlier Friday requesting media access to the hearing, but despite that, it took place entirely behind closed doors.

Court spokeswoman Lisa Klem said in a statement that the hearing concerned "an ongoing and sealed grand jury matter" that remains under seal.

It was not immediately clear what the outcome of the proceedings were. The Washington Post, relying on anonymous sources, reported on Thursday that the Justice Department had earlier asked Howell to hold Trump's office in contempt for failure to fully comply with a May subpoena that sought the return of classified documents in his possession. The department also wants the Trump team to appoint a custodian of records who could attest that all classified documents have been returned, according to the Post.

Lawyers for Trump declined to comment ahead of the hearing. A Justice Department spokesman also

did not return a phone message seeking comment Friday afternoon.

The roughly 100 documents marked as classified that the FBI took from Mar-a-Lago in August were on top of 37 documents bearing classification markings that Trump lawyers retrieved from the home during a June visit. In addition, 15 boxes containing about 184 classified documents were recovered in January by the National Archives and Records Administration.

The possibility that the Justice Department had not yet recovered all classified materials has existed for months.

The FBI's August search of the home came after investigators developed evidence indicating that additional sensitive documents remained there, even though Trump representatives had certified in June that all classified documents requested in a Justice Department subpoena had been located and returned.

The Trump lawyer who made that representation and who was serving as the custodian of his records at the time, Christina Bobb, was interviewed by the FBI in October. She told investigators that she had not drafted the letter but that another Trump lawyer who she said actually prepared it had asked her to sign it in her role as a designated custodian of Trump's records, a person familiar with her account has told AP.

The Post reported earlier this week that two additional documents with classification markings were found during a recent search of a storage unit in West Palm Beach, Florida that was arranged by Trump's lawyers. Those items were then turned over to the FBI.

## Griner swap reveals dilemma US faces in freeing detainees

By REBECCA SANTANA and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Taliban drug lord convicted in a vast heroin trafficking conspiracy. A Russian pilot imprisoned for a scheme to distribute cocaine across the world. And a Russian arms dealer so infamous that he earned the nickname "Merchant of Death."

Those are just some of the convicted felons the United States government has agreed to release in the last year in exchange for securing the release of Americans detained abroad. It's long been conventional wisdom that the U.S. risks incentivizing additional hostage taking by negotiating with adversarial nations and militant groups for the release of American citizens. But the succession of swaps has made clear the Biden administration's willingness to free a convicted criminal once seen as a threat to society if that's what it takes to bring home a U.S. citizen.

The latest swap occurred Thursday when WNBA star Brittney Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist who played pro basketball in Russia and was easily the most prominent American to be held overseas, was freed in exchange for Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.

The exchange drew some criticism, including from Republican lawmakers, and raised concerns that Bout, who was tried and convicted in American courts, was being traded for someone the U.S. regarded as a wrongful detainee convicted in Russia of a relatively minor offense. Administration officials acknowledged that such deals carry a heavy price and cautioned against the perception that they are the new norm, but the reality is that they've been a tool of administrations of both political parties.

The Trump administration, seen as more willing to flout convention in hostage affairs, brought home Navy veteran Michael White in 2020 in an agreement that freed an Iranian American doctor and permitted him to return to Iran.

The Obama administration pardoned or dropped charges against seven Iranians in a prisoner exchange tied to the nuclear deal with Tehran. Three jailed Cubans were sent home in 2014 as Havana released American Alan Gross after five years' imprisonment.

Jon Franks, who's long advised families of American hostages and detainees, said it's not true that the U.S. can just throw its might around and get people released.

"The maximum pressure mantra just doesn't work — and, by the way, I don't think prisoner trades undercut maximum pressure," said Franks, the spokesman for the Bring Our Families Home Campaign.

Griner was arrested at a Moscow airport in February after customs agents said she was carrying vape canisters with cannabis oil. Bout, who was arrested in 2008, was sentenced in 2012 to 25 years in prison on charges that he conspired to sell tens of millions of dollars in weapons that U.S. officials said were to

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 52 of 85

be used against Americans.

The trade highlights a trend in recent years of Americans being detained abroad and held hostage not by terrorist groups but by countries looking to gain leverage over America, said Dani Gilbert, a fellow in U.S. foreign policy and international security at Dartmouth College.

Gilbert said the idea that the U.S. doesn't negotiate for hostages is a "misnomer." She said that really only applies when an American is being held by a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, but otherwise the U.S. has historically done whatever is necessary to bring Americans home.

What is different, she said, is over roughly the last decade there's been a trend of foreign governments as opposed to terrorist groups detaining Americans abroad, often on trumped-up charges. She noted that in July the U.S. introduced a new risk indicator on its travel advisories — a "D" — for countries that tend to wrongfully detain people.

"Currently there are about four dozen Americans who are considered wrongfully detained, which puts them in this category essentially of being held wrongfully or unlawfully by a foreign government, perhaps for leverage," she said. "Those cases have really been on the rise in recent years."

Gilbert said she was nervous that trades like the Griner-Bout deal would encourage other authoritarian leaders to use similar tactics.

During a ceremony Thursday celebrating Griner's release, President Joe Biden urged Americans to take precautions before traveling overseas.

"We also want to prevent any more American families from suffering this pain and separation," he said.

Bout earned the nickname "Merchant of Death" for supposedly supplying weapons for civil wars in South America, the Middle East and Africa.

But Shira A. Scheindlin, the former federal judge who sentenced Bout, said while he had a history as an international arms dealer selling weapons to unsavory characters, at the time of his arrest in a U.S. sting operation he appeared to be largely out of the business.

"We're not talking about someone who at that point in his career was actively dealing arms to terrorists," she said.

Scheindlin said during an interview after Bout was released that she thought that the time he had spent behind bars was adequate punishment. She said she always thought Bout's sentence was too long and she would have given him a lesser one if she hadn't been confined by statutory mandatory minimums.

The attention paid to Griner's case has raised questions about whether her celebrity and the public pressure it generated pushed the Biden administration to make a deal where it hasn't in other cases. Left out of the deal was Paul Whelan, a Michigan corporate security executive who had regularly traveled to Russia until he was arrested in December 2018 in Moscow and convicted of what the U.S. government says are baseless espionage charges.

Jared Genser, a Washington lawyer who represents the family of Siamak Namazi, who has been held in Iran since 2015, said Griner's celebrity undoubtedly gave her supporters access to the highest levels of American power in a way that few others get. That also showed Vladimir Putin how "desperately the president wanted to get" Griner out, Genser said.

Elsewhere in the world, American citizens have been detained for years.

Saudi dissident Ali al-Ahmed, who runs the Washington-based Gulf Institute, has a cousin who was detained in Saudi Arabia in 2019 and was released earlier this year but still can't leave the country. Al-Ahmed works to help other families with loved ones held in the oil-rich Gulf kingdom. He said detainees like his cousin don't have the celebrity of someone like Griner, and he feels not enough attention is being paid by the U.S. government to them.

"They should not favor Americans of certain background over another American," he said. "There has not been equality here."

The family of another prominent American held overseas — Austin Tice — also expressed frustration in a statement Thursday. While they said they were happy that Griner had been released, they were "extremely disappointed" in the U.S. government's lack of progress in Tice's case. Tice went missing in Syria in 2012; Washington maintains Tice is being held by Syrian authorities, which the Syrians deny.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 53 of 85

"If the U.S. government can work with Russia, there is no excuse for not directly engaging Syria," the statement read. "God willing, Austin will not spend another Christmas alone in captivity."

## France to make condoms free for anyone under 25, Macron says

PARIS (AP) — France will make condoms free in pharmacies for anyone up to age 25 in the new year, President Emmanuel Macron announced Friday.

The move comes as the government says sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise among young people, and as this year's exceptional inflation is cutting especially deeply into the budgets of France's poorest.

Girls and women 25 and under already can get free birth control in France as part of government efforts to ensure that young people of all incomes can prevent unwanted pregnancy. Existing measures don't apply to men, however, or specifically address access for transgender or nonbinary people.

Macron had said Thursday that condoms would be free in pharmacies for anyone 18-25 starting Jan. 1. But after a French TV presenter and others challenged him on social networks Friday over why the condom measure did not include minors, the president agreed to expand the program.

"Let's do it," Macron said in a selfie video that he shot from the sidelines of a summit in Spain. He later tweeted: "A lot of minors also have sex ... they need to protect themselves too."

Macron, who was France's youngest-ever president when he was first elected in 2017 at age 39, also promised stepped-up efforts to prevent and test for HIV and other sexually transmitted viruses.

France's state health care system covers some birth control costs but not all, and doctor appointments for low-income patients often require long waits. Abortions in France are available free for everyone.

Several other European countries offer free or subsidized contraception.

## Croatia beats Brazil on penalties in World Cup quarterfinals

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

AL RAYYAN, Qatar (AP) — Neymar is again going home without a World Cup title. Luka Modric's quest continues unabated.

Modric converted one of the penalties as Croatia knocked Brazil out of the World Cup on Friday, beating the five-time champions 4-2 in a shootout to reach the semifinals for the second straight time.

Neymar tied Pele's record for most goals for the national team, giving Brazil the lead in extra time. But he wasn't among the four Brazilian players to take a penalty in the shootout, instead reduced to tears on the field at Education City Stadium while the red-and-white clad Croatians celebrated.

"It feels like a nightmare. It's hard to believe this is happening," said Neymar, who kept his future with the national team open after the defeat.

Brazil coach Tite said he had saved his best player to take the fifth penalty.

"That's the one with the most pressure, and he would be the player with the most quality and mental preparedness to take the shot," Tite said.

Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved the first penalty attempt by Rodrygo and Marquinhos later hit the post. Livakovic had already produced some key stops as the teams drew 0-0 in regulation and 1-1 in extra time.

"We are raised as fighters, giving our best," Livakovic said. "And that's the recipe for success."

Five of Croatia's last six matches at World Cups have gone to extra time, including its penalty shootout win over Japan in the round of 16 in Qatar. The team has been successful in eight of its last 10 knockout matches at the tournament.

Croatia came from behind in every game of the knockout stage in 2018, and again in the two elimination matches it has played in Qatar.

"We have a strong character and we do not give up," Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic said. "We were prepared for everything today. We knew that as the game unfolded, our chances improved."

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 54 of 85

Nikola Vlastic, Lovro Majer and Mislav Orsic also converted their penalties for Croatia, while Casemiro and Pedro scored for Brazil.

Both goals came in the additional 30 minutes, first with Neymar scoring late in the first half of extra time to give Brazil the lead, and then with Bruno Petkovic equalizing in the 117th.

Neymar's goal moved him into a tie with Pelé as Brazil's all-time leading scorer with 77 goals, but the forward again fell short of winning a major title with Brazil and had to be consoled by veteran defender Dani Alves as he cried after the match.

Croatia will next face Argentina on Tuesday to try to return to the World Cup final four years after losing the title to France. The Argentines beat the Netherlands in a shootout.

Brazil was looking to reach the semifinals for the first time since 2014. The team hadn't made it that far since hosting the tournament eight years ago, when the Selecao was embarrassed by Germany 7-1.

Brazil was trying to defeat a European opponent in the knockout stage of the World Cup for the first time since the 2002 final against Germany, when the team won for the last time.

Neither Neymar nor Modric could do much to give their teams significant chances early on, as both teams played cautiously in attack and defense. Brazil was better after halftime and came closer to scoring.

Neymar, starting for the second game in a row after recovering from an ankle injury sustained in Brazil's opening match, had some of his team's best opportunities, including a couple close-range attempts saved by Livakovic.

"He was the difference on very crucial moments," Dalic said of his goalkeeper. "He was there to save us."

Neymar scored his milestone goal after dribbling past Livakovic inside the area and sending a shot into the top of the net. Brazil was a few minutes from victory when Petkovic scored with a left-footed shot that deflected off Marquinhos before getting past Brazil goalkeeper Alisson Becker. It was Croatia's only attempt on target, against 11 by Brazil.

"It's hard to find the words. We are upset," Casemiro said. "Especially because of how it happened, we had it in our hands. It's tough. We have to lift our heads and try to move on."

## TITE'S DEPARTURE

It was Brazil's last match under Tite, who had said before the World Cup began that he was not going to stay with the national team.

"It's the end of a cycle," Tite said. "The loss hurts, but I'm at peace with myself right now."

## Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema switches to independent

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona announced Friday she has registered as an independent, a renegade move that could bolster her political brand but won't upend the Democrats' narrow Senate majority. She says she will not caucus with Republicans.

Sinema, who faces reelection in 2024, has been a vibrant yet often unpredictable force in the Senate, tending toward the state's independent streak and frustrating Democratic colleagues at times with her overtures to Republicans and opposition to Democratic priorities.

"I just don't fit well into a traditional party system," Sinema she said in an interview Friday.

In the interview, Sinema said she hasn't decided whether she will run for reelection. But she said this was the time to be "true to myself and true to the values of the Arizonans I represent."

"I don't expect anything to change for me," she said. "This will just be a further affirmation of my style of working across all the political boundaries with anyone to try and get something done."

While unusual for a sitting senator to switch party affiliation, Sinema's decision may well have more impact on her own political livelihood than the operations of the Senate. She plans to continue her committee positions through the Democrats. Her move comes just days after Democrats had expanded their majority to 51-49 for the new year, following the party's runoff election win in Georgia.

In a statement, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Sinema had informed him of her decision and asked to keep her committee assignments — effectively keeping her in the Democratic fold.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 55 of 85

"Kyrsten is independent; that's how she's always been," Schumer said. "I believe she's a good and effective senator and am looking forward to a productive session in the new Democratic majority Senate."

The Democrats "will maintain our new majority on committees, exercise our subpoena power and be able to clear nominees without discharge votes," he said.

In case of tie votes, Vice President Kamala Harris will continue to provide the winning vote for Democrats. Sinema, who has modeled her political approach on the maverick style of the late Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona, will join a small but influential group of independent senators aligned with the Democrats — Sen. Angus King of Maine and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

At the White House, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre praised Sinema as a "key partner" in passing some of President Joe Biden's priorities and said the switch "does not change the new Democratic majority control of the Senate. ... We have every reason to expect that we will continue to work successfully with her." Sinema informed the White House on Thursday afternoon about her plans to formally leave the Democratic Party, according to a person familiar with the discussion and granted anonymity to disclose a private conversation.

Sinema has been at the center of many deals brokered during this session of Congress — from a big, bipartisan infrastructure package Biden signed into law to the landmark bill approved this week to legally protect same-sex marriages.

The move to forgo a political party will scramble the Senate election landscape for 2024 as Democrats already face a tough path to maintaining Senate control. Her switch risks splitting the Democratic vote in Arizona between her and the eventual Democratic nominee, giving Republicans a solid opening.

A splintered ballot could help Republican recruiting efforts as they seek to perform better than their losses in the recent midterm elections. A weak GOP field contributed to Democratic Sen. Mark Kelly's reelection in Arizona last month.

A political action committee, Primary Sinema, that is raising money to support a potential challenger, said the money it has already raised will now be used to back "a real Democrat" in 2024.

Abandoning the Democratic Party is a striking evolution for a politician who began her career as a Green Party member and antiwar activist known as a "Prada socialist." The shift has been particularly vexing for progressive activists who now see her as one of their chief antagonists.

In a video explaining her decision, she said: "Showing up to work with the title of independent is a reflection of who I've always been."

The first-term Sinema wrote Friday in *The Arizona Republic* that she came into office pledging "I would not demonize people I disagreed with, engage in name-calling, or get distracted by political drama. I promised I would never bend to party pressure."

She wrote that her approach is "has upset partisans in both parties" but "has delivered lasting results for Arizona."

Ahead of the 2024 elections, Sinema is likely to be matched against a well-funded primary challenger after angering much of the Democratic base by blocking or watering down progressive priorities such as a minimum wage increase and Biden's big social spending initiatives.

Sinema's most prominent potential primary challenger is Rep. Ruben Gallego, who has a long history of feuding with her.

The senator wrote that she was joining "the growing numbers of Arizonans who reject party politics by declaring my independence from the broken partisan system in Washington."

Sinema bemoaned "the national parties' rigid partisanship" and said "pressures in both parties pull leaders to the edges — allowing the loudest, most extreme voices to determine their respective parties' priorities, and expecting the rest of us to fall in line."

"In catering to the fringes, neither party has demonstrated much tolerance for diversity of thought. Bipartisan compromise is seen as a rarely acceptable last resort, rather than the best way to achieve lasting progress," she wrote.

Along with West Virginia's Joe Manchin, she has been one of two moderate Democrats in the 50-50

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 56 of 85

Senate, and her willingness to buck the rest of her party has at times limited the ambitions of Biden and Schumer.

Sinema is a staunch defender of the filibuster, a Senate rule effectively requiring 60 votes to pass most legislation in the 100-member Senate. Many Democrats, including Biden, say the filibuster leads to gridlock by giving a minority of lawmakers the ability to veto.

Last January, leaders of the Arizona Democratic Party voted to censure Sinema, citing "her failure to do whatever it takes to ensure the health of our democracy" — namely her refusal to go along with fellow Democrats to alter the Senate rule so they could overcome Republican opposition to a voting rights bill.

While that rebuke was symbolic, it came only a few years since Sinema was heralded for bringing the Arizona Senate seat back into the Democratic fold for the first time in a generation. The move also previewed the persistent opposition that Sinema was likely face within her own party in 2024.

## **NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week**

The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

---

All votes counted in Maricopa County, despite online claims

CLAIM: Uncounted ballots that got mixed with counted ballots at voting sites in Arizona's Maricopa County were not included in the final midterm election results.

THE FACTS: While such ballots were mixed at two separate voting centers on Election Day, they were properly vetted and accurately tabulated, officials said. During November's midterm elections, a printing malfunction caused tabulation machines at dozens of voting sites in Maricopa County to reject ballots on Election Day. Poll workers advised voters whose ballots were rejected to put them in a secure drop box referred to as "door 3" or "box 3" to be counted later at the county's central tabulation facility. And while poll workers were trained to keep such yet-to-be-counted votes separate from those tabulated on-site, the ballots were "returned together," Megan Gilbertson, a spokesperson for the Maricopa County Elections Department, wrote in an email to The Associated Press. As the state certified its results this week, posts continued to circulate on social media falsely claiming that those ballots were never counted in the final results, with users citing a video of a self-described poll observer speaking at a Nov. 28 Maricopa County Board of Supervisors meeting. The woman in the video said that such ballots were combined at her voting site located "off of Camelback and 7th street." "They commingled the un-tabulated ballots of drawer 3 with the tabulated ballots," the woman says in the clip, referring to box 3. "There is no way to ever sort that and track that. Those are lost votes. Those are lost voices." But, as the county explained in the days after the election, there is a way to sort and track such ballots, and the votes were counted in the final results. Additionally, such ballot mixing only occurred at two voting locations: Desert Hills Community Church in North Phoenix and the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS in Gilbert, according to Gilbertson. There is no record of such ballot mixing occurring at other voting centers, and the county never received a report of the issue occurring at the voting site described by the woman, Gilbertson told the AP by phone on Wednesday. An attempt to reach the woman who made the claim during the Nov. 28 meeting was unsuccessful. At the sites where mixing did occur, affected ballots were isolated and audited to make sure no votes were missed or double counted, Gilbertson wrote in an email this week. That process, called audit reconciliation, involves checking that the total number of ballots from a given vote center matches with the number of voters who checked-in at the site. Observers from both political parties were present. All Election Day ballots are required to undergo the process. "We have redundancies in place that help us ensure each legal ballot is only counted once," Gilbertson wrote. "This process ensures that no ballot was double counted and that all ballots cast at the Vote Center were counted." In a November report responding to questions from the Arizona Attorney General's Office, the Maricopa County Elections Department



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 57 of 85

similarly asserted it “retabulated the entire batch of ballots” from the two affected voting centers to ensure the accuracy of the count. Gilbertson said in the days after the election that similar mistakes have been made before, and the process to address it has been in place for decades, the AP reported. “Every single polling location in Maricopa County has a reconciliation audit that’s completed for every single election,” said Tammy Patrick, a former federal compliance officer for the county election department. “It’s been that way literally for 30 years or more.”

— Associated Press writer Josh Kelety in Phoenix contributed this report.

---

Patent application doesn’t show COVID test was developed in 2015

CLAIM: A COVID-19 test patent application is dated 2020 but was actually filed in 2015.

THE FACTS: The patent application, for a system to determine if someone has a viral infection such as COVID-19, notes that a related provisional patent application was filed in 2015. But while the earlier provisional application is related to the technology in the 2020 application, it made no mention of COVID-19. Social media users are sharing the inaccurate claim through a meme, which implies that COVID-19 was actually known years before it emerged in late 2019. The meme also suggests such information is being censored on social media. “The patent of the covid testkit is hold by Richard A. Rothchild,” a meme shared on Instagram reads, incorrectly spelling the last name of the inventor, Rothschild. “It’s dated in 2020 but was filled 10/13/2015 and it’s called US2020279585(A1).” But the patent application in question was filed in May 2020 and describes a method of using biometric data to “to determine whether the user is suffering from a viral infection, such as COVID-19.” Under a section titled “Related U.S. Application Data,” the application makes note of a provisional application filed on Oct. 13, 2015. What that means, though, is that the patent is related to the provisional application that was filed years ago. They are not one in the same. A provisional application is essentially a placeholder for an intention to file a formal patent application, said Jonathan D’Silva, an assistant professor of clinical law and director of the Intellectual Property Law Clinic at Penn State University. Inventors may file a provisional application for different reasons, such as raising money or publicly disclosing their idea as they work on it, he said. The provisional application in 2015 was for a “System and Method for Using, Processing, and Displaying Biometric Data.” The 2020 patent application, meanwhile, was a “continuation-in-part” of a previous patent application, which means that new material was added, D’Silva said. In this case, the new material included the references to COVID-19. “Generally, you don’t have to guess what was in these other patent applications,” he said, since they’re publicly available. And in the earlier parent applications, “there was no mention of COVID-19.”

— Associated Press writer Angelo Fichera in Philadelphia contributed this report.

---

Post distorts facts on registered voters in Arizona

CLAIM: Arizona has 9,871,525 registered voters but its population is 7,270,000.

THE FACTS: The state had about 4 million registered voters, which is millions less than its population of about 7 million people. A popular Instagram post is using the erroneous claim to suggest potential election fraud in the state, which has been home to midterm election controversy. “9,871,525 is the number of registered voters in AZ according to FB,” the post reads, “AZ population is 7,270,000.” A caption with the post reads, “ballot harvesting?” — the pejorative term for ballot collection. The laws around dropping off ballots for other voters varies by state and in Arizona, only caregivers, family members or household members can drop off a ballot for someone else. But the post’s claim about registered voters in Arizona is false. Arizona actually logged 4,143,929 voters for the Nov. 8 midterm elections, according to data from the Arizona Secretary of State’s office. The total population in Arizona was 7,276,316, according to a July 2021 estimate by the U.S. Census Bureau.

— Angelo Fichera

---

Fabricated tweets originated from account impersonating Hallie Biden

CLAIM: President Joe Biden’s daughter-in-law Hallie Biden tweeted that former President Donald Trump

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 58 of 85

won the 2020 election. She also tweeted that on election night, first lady Jill Biden phoned election workers to stop counting ballots and “rush in fake ballots.”

THE FACTS: The account that made these tweets is “fraudulent,” said the Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children, whose board Hallie Biden chairs. President Joe Biden defeated Trump in the 2020 presidential election, earning 306 electoral votes to Trump’s 232, and there was no evidence of widespread fraud. The fabricated tweets attributed to Hallie Biden — the widow of the president’s deceased son Beau Biden — resurfaced after circulating in past months. The fake tweets claim that on election night in 2020, Jill Biden was on the phone with “state legislators and the people who tabulate the vote” to stop the count and execute a deal to “rush in fake ballots.” “President Trump won that election and my entire family knows it,” one of the fabricated tweets reads. “Ms. Hallie Biden does not have a Twitter account,” the foundation said in an emailed statement. “Any account bearing her name is fraudulent.” An internet archive search for the Twitter account that posted the tweets, @HallieBiden, shows that it was suspended for violating the platform’s rules between late August and early September 2022. The platform had a policy against impersonation, which it has continued to prioritize under new ownership. Archived versions of the account show that it posted numerous false and unverified claims about the election being stolen and about Presidents Biden and Obama and their families.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report.

Traffic plan in Oxfordshire, England, isn’t a ‘climate lockdown’

CLAIM: The county of Oxfordshire, England, which includes the city of Oxford, is imposing a “climate lockdown” that will confine residents to their neighborhoods.

THE FACTS: Oxfordshire has approved a plan to put “traffic filters” on some main roads, restricting drivers’ access during daytime hours and freeing up space for buses, cyclists and pedestrians. But car owners can apply for daylong permits to bypass the new rules, and many other vehicles are exempt. All parts of the county will remain accessible by car, officials said. Last week, local leaders in Oxfordshire voted to try a new traffic reduction system in an effort to reduce congestion in the county’s namesake city. Some on social media have since likened the scheme to stringent government COVID-19 containment policies. “UK. - Oxfordshire Council, part of the 15 minute city club, has passed a plan to trial a Climate lockdown,” tweeted one user, alongside a screenshot of an article warning that “residents will be confined to their local neighbourhood.” The plan “would control movements in a gated city, allowing only 100 car journeys in & out per car & monitoring all movements,” the tweet continued. But Oxfordshire’s “traffic filters” will not block access to any part of the city of Oxford or the rest of the county, let alone lock people in their neighborhoods, the county government told The Associated Press. “Everywhere in the city will still be accessible by car,” Paul Smith, spokesperson for the Oxfordshire County Council, wrote in an email. “Nobody will need permission from the county council to drive or leave their home.” The “traffic filters” are license plate recognition cameras, not physical barriers. From 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., drivers in private cars will be automatically fined if they cross through the filters without a permit. Motorists who live in Oxford will be able to apply for 100 daylong permits to drive through the filters per year. The “15 minute city club” referenced by one of the misleading tweets is an unrelated urban planning framework under which city residents would ideally be able to reach essential services within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from their home. Officials with the city of Oxford have separately proposed pursuing these goals. But some on social media have incorrectly linked the two, suggesting the traffic rules will also bar residents from leaving their neighborhoods. The city and county emphasized in a joint statement that the traffic restrictions will not “be used to confine people” to a given area. “Everyone can go through all the filters at any time by bus, bike, taxi, scooter or walking,” the statement added. Many vehicles, like vans and motorcycles, are exempt from the new rules. Disabled drivers and first responders will likewise not be affected. Drivers who lack a permit will also still be able to access all of the city without being fined. They “might just need to use a different route or drive through the ring road to avoid the traffic filters,” Smith wrote.

— Associated Press writer Graph Massara in San Francisco contributed this report.

## Griner in 'good spirits' in US after Russian prisoner swap

By LEKAN OYEKANMI and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Brittney Griner returned to the United States Friday and was reunited with her wife nearly 10 months after her detention in Russia made the basketball star the most high-profile American jailed abroad and set off a political firestorm.

Griner's status as an openly gay Black woman, her prominence in women's basketball and her imprisonment in a country where authorities have been hostile to the LGBTQ community heightened concerns for her and brought tremendous attention to the case. Russia's invasion of Ukraine after her arrest complicated matters further.

The deal that brought home Griner, 32, in exchange for notorious arms dealer Viktor Bout achieved a top goal for President Joe Biden. But the U.S. failed to win freedom for another American, Paul Whelan, who has been jailed for nearly four years.

Asked if more such swaps could happen, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that "everything is possible," noting that "compromises have been found" to clear the way for Thursday's exchange.

Biden's authorization to release Bout, the Russian felon once nicknamed "the Merchant of Death," underscored the heightened urgency that his administration faced to get Griner home, particularly after the recent resolution of her criminal case on drug charges and her subsequent transfer to a penal colony.

Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and Phoenix Mercury pro basketball star, was seen getting off a plane that landed Friday at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas.

"So happy to have Brittney back on U.S. soil. Welcome home BG!" tweeted Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs.

"We're just so happy to have her back," Vanessa Nygaard, head coach of the Mercury, said in an interview outside of the team's Phoenix stadium.

"We are looking eagerly forward to welcoming her back to our community," said Nygaard, adding that she hadn't yet spoken with Griner.

Biden spoke by phone with Griner, who was reunited with her wife, Cherelle. U.S. officials who met her upon arrival said she was in "very good spirits" and appeared to be in good health, according to White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, who noted that she would be offered specialized medical services and counseling.

The WNBA star, who also played pro basketball in Russia, was arrested at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport in February after Russian authorities said she was carrying vape canisters with cannabis oil. The U.S. State Department declared Griner to be "wrongfully detained" — a charge that Russia has sharply rejected.

Griner pleaded guilty in July but still faced trial because admitting guilt in Russia's judicial system does not automatically end a case. She was sentenced to nine years.

She acknowledged in court that she possessed canisters with cannabis oil but said she had no criminal intent and accidentally packed them. Her defense team presented written statements that she had been prescribed cannabis to treat pain.

The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed Thursday's swap, saying in a statement carried by Russian news agencies that the exchange took place in Abu Dhabi and Bout had been flown home.

In releasing Bout, the U.S. freed a former Soviet Army lieutenant colonel whom the Justice Department once described as one of the world's most prolific arms dealers. He was arrested in Thailand in 2008 and extradited to the U.S. in 2010.

Bout was serving a 25-year sentence on charges that he conspired to sell tens of millions of dollars in weapons that U.S. officials said were to be used against Americans.

## New Peru president appears with military to cement power

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and FRANKLIN BRICEÑO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peru's first female president appeared in a military ceremony on national television on Friday in her first official event as head of state, an attempt to cement her hold on power and buck

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 60 of 85

the national trend of early presidential departures.

In an indication of continued political rancor, some politicians already were calling for early elections, and more protests were planned.

Dina Boluarte was elevated from vice president to replace ousted leftist Pedro Castillo as the country's leader Wednesday. She has said she should be allowed to hold the office for the remaining 3 1/2 years of his term.

Boularte addressed members of the armed forces during a ceremony marking a historic battle. Boularte, flanked by the leaders of the judiciary and Congress, sat among lawmakers who had tried to remove Castillo from office.

"Our nation is strong and secure thanks to the armed forces, the navy, the air force, and the army of Peru," Boularte said before hundreds of members of the armed forces in Peru's capital. "They give us the guarantee that we live in order, respecting the constitution, the rule of law, the balance of powers."

After being sworn in as president Wednesday, Boluarte called for a truce with legislators who dismissed Castillo for "permanent moral incapacity," a clause of the constitution that experts say is so vague that it allows the removal of a president for almost any reason. It was also used to oust President Martín Vizcarra, who governed from 2018-2020.

Peru has had six presidents in the last six years. Boluarte is a 60-year-old lawyer and political neophyte.

She quickly began to show herself in public working as Peru's new head of state. She met with groups of conservative and liberal lawmakers at the presidential palace. Before that, she danced an Andean dance after watching a Roman Catholic procession of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception.

Analysts predicted a tough road for the new president.

A Boluarte government "is going to be very complicated, if not impossible," said Jorge Aragón, a political science professor at Peru's Pontifical Catholic University.

Former President Ollanta Humala, who governed from 2011-2016, noted that the new leader was not involved in politics or government before becoming vice president.

"She does not have the tools to govern," Humala told N. television. He predicted that any truce with Congress "will last a month or perhaps more, but then the great problems of the country come upon her."

The governor of the Cusco region, Jean Paul Benavente, demanded that the new president call an early vote, saying that would offer a "solution to the political crisis of the country."

In the streets, small demonstrations by Castillo supporters continued in the capital and others parts of Peru, including Tacabamba, the district capital closest to Castillo's rural home. Protesters demanded that the ousted leader walk free, rejected Boluarte as president and called for Congress to be closed.

In Lima, protesters trying to reach the Congress building have clashed with police, who used sticks and tear gas to push them back, and more protests were planned for Friday.

"The only thing left is the people. We have no authorities, we have nothing," said Juana Ponce, one of the protesters this week. "It is a national shame. All these corrupt congressmen have sold out. They have betrayed our president, Pedro Castillo."

## 'Aftersun,' 'Banshees' lead AP's best films of 2022

By JAKE COYLE and LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writers

The Associated Press' Film Writers Jake Coyle and Lindsey Bahr's picks for the best movies of 2022:

JAKE COYLE:

1. "Aftersun": Rarely does such a delicately crafted tale pack such a wallop. Charlotte Wells' breathtaking feature debut, starring newcomer Frankie Corio and Paul Mescal as an 11-year-old girl and her father on vacation in Turkey, is such a keenly observed accumulation of detail and feeling that you hardly notice the undertow of heartache that will, in the end, absolutely floor you.

2. "Belle": Though it was a hit in Japan, it was easy to miss Mamoru Hosoda's glorious anime back in January, when it arrived in North American theaters. It's a dazzling blend of "Beauty and the Beast," a girl's wrenching battle with grief and self-doubt, and possibly the best movie ever made about the Internet. It's

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 61 of 85

a lot, maybe too much, but "Belle" reaches the most beautiful of climaxes.

3. "The Banshees of Inisherin": Martin McDonagh's latest is a lean fable that throbs with existential conundrum. It plays out between a quizzical Colin Farrell, a doom-laden Brendan Gleeson, an exasperated Kerry Condon and a much-cherished donkey. What else could you possibly need?

4. "Decision to Leave": The Korean master Park Chan-wook marries a police procedural and romance, and the twisty noirish results are at turns delightful and devastating.

5. "Descendant": Margaret Brown's expansive, ruminative documentary reverberates with history and stories passed down through time. The central incident is the discovery in Mobile, Alabama, of the Clotilda, the last known slave ship to arrive on U.S. shores. But Brown's roaming, wide-lens film is most powerful for the way it captures the community of Clotilda descendants — a contemplative and compelling cast of characters — as they weigh slavery's present-day legacy.

6. "No Bears": Jafar Panahi may be the most vital and courageous filmmaker in the world right now. The Iranian writer-director has been banned from making movies or traveling since he was arrested in 2010 for supporting protesters. Yet Panahi has, ingeniously, continued to find ways to make thoughtful, playful, defiant films that reflect his predicament while slyly capturing the Iranian society around him. "No Bears," which dramatizes Panahi making a film along the Turkish border, is one of his best. It's grown only more piercing since Panahi was jailed on a six-year prison sentence earlier this year. In one bleakly stirring moment, Panahi stands on a darkened borderland, contemplating fleeing.

7. "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and "Nope": In a movie world where spectacles often come with little within, both of these films were absolutely brimming with ideas and images. You could call the Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's film and Jordan Peele's latest opus overstuffed. But their sheer cinematic abundance made them nourishing, vibrant exceptions. Much the same could be said of James Cameron's equally visionary "Avatar: The Way of Water."

8. "Lingui, the Sacred Bonds": Chadian filmmaker Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's film is one of the year's most tender mother-daughter portraits. Rihane Khali Alio and Achouackh Abakar Souleymane star in this extraordinarily vivid tale, set in the outskirts of present-day N'Djamena, of abortion, motherhood and female solidarity.

9. "The Fabelmans": Steven Spielberg's natural mode as a filmmaker might not be introspective. He's not historically been one to phone home. And while that awkwardness can sometimes be felt in his movie memoir, there are many scenes here unlike anything he's ever shot before, and among his very best.

10. "Kimi": A great benefit of the so-called "pandemic movies" is that they were made fast, loose and of-their-moment. This year, many filmmakers, maybe as a result of all that time shut-in, released inward-looking films. Often better were the ones that more directly dealt with the pandemic reality around us. Steven Soderbergh's fleet-footed thriller starring Zoë Kravitz as an agoraphobic tech contractor deftly channeled the times into a riveting little pop gem.

Also: "Compartment No. 6," "Till," "One Fine Morning," "The Cathedral," "The Woman King," "Saint Omer," "Apollo 10 1/2," "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery," "Emily the Criminal," "Bones and All"

LINDSEY BAHR:

1. "The Banshees of Inisherin": Martin McDonagh's film is a sharp, funny and utterly devastating work about the end of a friendship on a small Irish island. Colin Farrell uses his wonderful brows (and acting chops) to ensure ultimate heartbreak as his world and sense of self crumbles and rots. But it's the ensemble, including Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon, Barry Keoghan and on down, who imbue this deceptively simple set-up with gravity and depth.

2. "Tár": Todd Field's brilliant, restless "Tár" reminded me how much I love movies (and tricked me into believing that I was some kind of scholar of classical music for a few hours). Cate Blanchett is transcendent in bringing this flawed genius to life, challenging the audience to consider big questions about power, status and art. It is demanding but immensely rewarding cinema that is not easily defined, which is perhaps why audiences aren't taking a chance on it in theaters (which is a mistake).

3. "Women Talking": Sarah Polley's film hasn't even been released to the general public and it's already considered "divisive," which is one of the best reasons to seek it out. Aren't you curious which side you'll

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 62 of 85

be on? I'm one who was spellbound by her heady, spiritual vision of a group of abused women in an isolated religious colony questioning their reality and wondering if life could somehow be different than what they know.

4. "Aftersun": In a year full of autobiographical films from very famous names, it was the one from the unknown that made the biggest impression. You don't have to know anything about Charlotte Wells to get wrapped up in "Aftersun," an inspired and fully realized memory piece about an ordinary vacation some 20 years prior that will leave you in pieces (which is somehow possible even when the "Macarena" is also stuck in your head).

5. "Saint Omer": A young woman is on trial for the death of her 15-month-old daughter in this haunting French courtroom drama, a tremendous debut feature from documentarian Alice Diop, that upends your notions of what the genre can be in its examination of trauma, the immigrant experience and expectations of motherhood.

6. "Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris": This is the kind of romantic confection that's a bit of an outlier on a list like this, but that's why it's here. Anthony Fabian's film about an English housecleaner and war widow (Lesley Manville) in the 1950s who saves up to travel to Paris to buy a couture Christian Dior gown is a balm -- heartwarming without being schlocky, reverential of high fashion artistry but critical of its exclusionary ways and just a supreme delight.

7. "Kimi": Sorry "Top Gun: Maverick," you were very entertaining too, but Steven Soderbergh's "Kimi" was my favorite popcorn experience of the year — a taut, paranoid thriller with a modern, Alexa/Siri-inspired spin on the overheard crime scenario of "Blow Up," with a sharp performance from Zoe Kravitz, who can even make an agoraphobic shut in extremely cool.

8. "Murina": There is rot beneath the punishingly beautiful, sun-soaked Adriatic setting of Croatian filmmaker Antoneta Alamat Kusijanovic's sublimely menacing debut feature about a 17-year-old girl who is starting to question the ingrained misogyny around her. The family dynamics are as rocky and dangerous as the picturesque backdrop.

9. "Corsage": Beauty, waistslines, aging, celebrity, duty and desire haunt Empress Elisabeth of Austria in Marie Kreutzer's intricate and interpretive portrait of dynamic mind and soul that's been stifled by her position and myriad traumas. Vicky Krieps is perfect as the deliriously subversive "Sissi."

10. "White Noise": The supermarket dance to LCD Soundsystem's "New Body Rhumba" might not come until the very end of Noah Baumbach's Don DeLillo adaptation but there is a dazzling rhythm to the entire epic, from the controlled chaos of the overlapping dialogue to the hectic choreography of a family making breakfast. But maybe the most surprising thing is that behind all the wit, the style, the commentary on American society and the banal and the profound in the everyday, there is a real emotional weight too.

Also: "Happening," "The Eternal Daughter," "Avatar: The Way of Water," "Fire of Love," "Catherine Called Birdy," "EO," "Bodies Bodies Bodies," "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed," "Cyrano."

## Fight to curb food waste increasingly turns to science

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

Hate mealy apples and soggy french fries? Science can help.

Restaurants, grocers, farmers and food companies are increasingly turning to chemistry and physics to tackle the problem of food waste.

Some are testing spray-on peels or chemically enhanced sachets that can slow the ripening process in fruit. Others are developing digital sensors that can tell — more precisely than a label — when meat is safe to consume. And packets affixed to the top of a takeout box use thermodynamics to keep fries crispy.

Experts say growing awareness of food waste and its incredible cost — both in dollars and in environmental impact — has led to an uptick in efforts to mitigate it. U.S. food waste startups raised \$4.8 billion in 2021, 30% more than they raised in 2020, according to ReFed, a group that studies food waste.

"This has suddenly become a big interest," said Elizabeth Mitchum, director of the Postharvest Technology Center at the University of California, Davis, who has worked in the field for three decades. "Even

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 63 of 85

companies that have been around for a while are now talking about what they do through that lens.”

In 2019, around 35% of the 229 million tons of food available in the U.S. — worth around \$418 billion — went unsold or uneaten, according to ReFed. Food waste is the largest category of material placed in municipal landfills, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which notes that rotting food releases methane, a problematic greenhouse gas.

ReFed estimates 500,000 pounds (225,000 kilograms) of food could be diverted from landfills annually with high-tech packaging.

Among the products in development are a sensor by Stockholm-based Innoscentia that can determine whether meat is safe depending on the buildup of microbes in its packaging. And Ryp Labs, based in the U.S. and Belgium, is working on a produce sticker that would release a vapor to slow ripening.

SavrPak was founded in 2020 by Bill Birgen, an aerospace engineer who was tired of the soggy food in his lunchbox. He developed a plant-based packet — made with food-safe materials approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration — that can fit inside a takeout container and absorb condensation, helping keep the food inside hotter and crispier.

Nashville, Tennessee-based hot-chicken chain Hattie B’s was skeptical. But after testing SavrPaks using humidity sensors, it now uses the packs when it’s catering fried foods and is working with SavrPak to integrate the packs into regular takeout containers.

Brian Morris, Hattie B’s vice president of culinary learning and development, said each SavrPak costs the company less than \$1 but ensures a better meal.

“When it comes to fried chicken, we kind of lose control from the point when it leaves our place,” Morris said. “We don’t want the experience to go down the drain.”

But cost can still be a barrier for some companies and consumers. Kroger, the nation’s largest grocery chain, ended its multiyear partnership with Goleta, California-based Apeel Sciences this year because it found consumers weren’t willing to pay more for produce brushed or sprayed with Apeel’s edible coating to keep moisture in and oxygen out, thus extending the time that produce stays fresh.

Apeel says treated avocados can last a few extra days, while citrus fruit lasts for several weeks. The coating is made of purified mono- and diglycerides, emulsifiers that are common food additives.

Kroger wouldn’t say how much more Apeel products cost. Apeel also wouldn’t reveal the average price premium for produce treated with its coating since it varies by food distributor and grocer. But Apeel says its research shows customers are willing to pay more for produce that lasts longer. Apeel also says it continues to talk to Kroger about other future technology.

There is another big hurdle to coming up with innovations to preserve food: Every food product has its own biological makeup and handling requirements.

“There is no one major change that can improve the situation,” said Randy Beaudry, a professor in the horticulture department at Michigan State University’s school of agriculture.

Beaudry said the complexity has caused some projects to fail. He remembers working with one large packaging company on a container designed to prevent fungus in tomatoes. For the science to work, the tomatoes had to be screened for size and then oriented stem-up in each container. Eventually the project was scrapped.

Beaudry said it’s also hard to sort out which technology works best, since startups don’t always share data or formulations with outside researchers.

Some companies find it better to rely on proven technology — but in new ways. Chicago-based Hazel Technologies, which was founded in 2015, sells 1-methylcyclopropene, or 1-MCP, a gas that has been used for decades to delay the ripening process in fruit. The compound — considered non-toxic by the EPA — is typically pumped into sealed storage rooms to inhibit the production of ethylene, a plant hormone.

But Hazel’s real breakthrough is a sachet the size of a sugar packet that can slowly release 1-MCP into a box of produce.

Mike Mazie, the facilities and storage manager at BelleHarvest, a large apple packing facility in Belding, Michigan, ordered around 3,000 sachets this year. He used them for surplus bins that couldn’t fit into the sealed rooms required for gas.

"If you can get another week out of a bushel of apples, why wouldn't you?" he said. "It absolutely makes a difference."

The science is promising but it's only part of the solution, said Yvette Cabrera, the director of food waste for the Natural Resources Defense Council. Most food waste happens at the residential level, she said; lowering portion sizes, buying smaller quantities of food at a time or improving the accuracy of date labels could have even more impact than technology.

"Overall as a society, we don't value food as it should be valued," Cabrera said.

## AP Investigation: Prison boss beat inmates, climbed ranks

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

The prison staff didn't know much about the new acting warden. Then, they say, he made a bizarre and startling confession: Years ago, he beat inmates — and got away with it.

Thomas Ray Hinkle, a high-ranking federal Bureau of Prisons official, was sent to restore order and trust at a women's prison wracked by a deplorable scandal. Instead, workers say, he left the federal lockup in Dublin, California, even more broken.

Staff saw Hinkle as a bully and regarded his presence there — just after allegations that the previous warden and other employees sexually assaulted inmates — as hypocrisy from an agency that was publicly pledging to end its abusive, corrupt culture.

So at a staff meeting in March, they confronted the then-director of the Bureau of Prisons and asked: Why, instead of firing Hinkle years ago, was the agency keen to keep promoting him?

"That's something we've got to look into," Michael Carvajal responded, according to people in the room.

Three months later, the Bureau of Prisons promoted Hinkle again, putting him in charge of 20 federal prisons and 21,000 inmates from Utah to Hawaii as acting western regional director. Among them: Dublin.

### MULTIPLE ALLEGATIONS

An Associated Press investigation has found that the Bureau of Prisons has repeatedly promoted Hinkle despite numerous red flags, rewarding him again and again over a three-decade career while others who assaulted inmates lost their jobs and went to prison.

The agency's new leader defends Hinkle, saying he's a changed man and a model employee — standing by him even as she promises to work with the Justice Department and Congress to root out staff misconduct. And Hinkle, responding to questions from the AP, acknowledged that he assaulted inmates in the 1990s but said he regrets that behavior and now speaks openly about it "to teach others how to avoid making the same mistakes."

Among the AP's findings:

— At least three inmates, all Black, have accused Hinkle of beating them while he was a correctional officer at a Florence, Colorado federal penitentiary in 1995 and 1996. The allegations were documented in court documents and formal complaints to prison officials. In recent years, colleagues say, Hinkle has talked about beating inmates while a member of a violent, racist gang of guards called "The Cowboys."

— One inmate said he felt terrified as Hinkle and another guard dragged him up a stairway and slammed him into walls. Another said Hinkle was among guards who threw him to a concrete floor, spat on him and used racist language toward him. A third said Hinkle slapped him and held him down while another guard sexually assaulted him.

— The Bureau of Prisons and Justice Department knew about allegations against Hinkle in 1996 but promoted him anyway. The agency promoted Hinkle least nine times after the alleged beatings, culminating in June with his promotion to acting regional director.

— At least 11 guards connected to "The Cowboys" were charged with federal crimes, but not Hinkle. Three were convicted and imprisoned. Four were acquitted; four pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate. Hinkle was promoted twice before the criminal investigation was over.

— In 2007, while a lieutenant at a Houston federal jail, Hinkle was arrested for public intoxication at a music festival after police say he got drunk, flashed his Bureau of Prisons ID card and refused orders to



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 65 of 85

leave. After the case was dropped, the agency promoted Hinkle.

— Hinkle has also come under fire as a senior agency leader. The Justice Department rebuked him in March after he was accused of attempting to silence a whistleblower, and the Bureau of Prisons said it was taking corrective action after he impeded a member of Congress' investigation and sent all-staff emails criticizing her and the agency. Three months later, he was promoted to acting regional director.

— The Bureau of Prisons, already under intense scrutiny from Congress for myriad crises and dysfunction, did not publicize Hinkle's promotion. Instead, the agency left his predecessor's name and bio on its website and refused requests for basic information about him.

The AP has spent months investigating Hinkle, obtaining more than 1,600 pages of court records and agency reports from the National Archives and Records Administration, reviewing thousands of pages of documents from related criminal cases and appeals, and interviewing dozens of people. Many spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing retaliation or because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Together, they show that while the Bureau of Prisons has vowed to change its toxic culture in the wake of Dublin and other scandals — a promise recently reiterated by the agency's new director, Colette Peters — it has continued to elevate a man involved in one of the darkest, most abusive periods in its history.

## 'WE ARE ALL HUMAN'

The extent of Hinkle's alleged misconduct and his subsequent rise to the upper ranks of the Bureau of Prisons has never been revealed. The AP's findings raise serious questions about the agency's standards, its selection and vetting of candidates for top-tier positions, and its explicit commitment to rooting out abuse.

"As a minimum, the music festival incident, handling of the whistleblower, and the congressional investigation exhibit his extremely poor judgment," said Allan Turner, a former federal prison warden who reviewed the AP's findings.

"This should have been a red flag for any promotion board and is certainly not the appropriate level of judgment expected of someone serving in a leadership role in a correctional institution or in a region," said Turner, a research professor emeritus in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

This story is part of an ongoing AP investigation that has uncovered deep, previously unreported flaws within the Bureau of Prisons, the Justice Department's largest law enforcement agency with more than 30,000 employees, 158,000 inmates and an annual budget of about \$8 billion.

AP reporting has revealed rampant sexual abuse and other criminal conduct by staff, dozens of escapes, deaths and severe staffing shortages that have hampered responses to emergencies.

In response to detailed questions from the AP, Hinkle conceded that he beat inmates as a correctional officer but said he has made significant changes to his life since then, including seeking professional treatment and quitting alcohol. He said he was disciplined — a two-week suspension for failing to report abuse of an inmate — and that he cooperated fully with investigators.

"With the support of my friends, family, and colleagues, and through professional help, I have made the most of my opportunity for a second chance to serve the Bureau of Prisons honorably over the past 12 years," Hinkle said.

"I cannot speak to why some are dredging up history from so many years ago, but my distant past does not reflect who I am today," Hinkle added. He "vehemently and categorically" denied using racial slurs, targeting whistleblowers and any recent allegations of misconduct.

"My story I share with my fellow staff has more to do with hope and change after getting help and not self-medicating with alcohol," Hinkle said. "We are all human and make mistakes. There is no shame in admitting our problems and seeking help."

The Bureau of Prisons responded to detailed questions about Hinkle with a statement from Peters defending him and the agency's decisions to promote him.

"Mr. Hinkle has openly acknowledged his past mistakes, gone through the employee discipline program, sought professional help and reframed his experiences as learning opportunities for others," Peters said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 66 of 85

"Today, I am confident he has grown into an effective supervisor for our agency."

At the same time, Peters said she remains committed to working within the agency and the Justice Department and with Congress "to root out staff misconduct and other concerns."

The AP also filed requests with the Bureau of Prisons under the Freedom of Information Act for background information on Hinkle, including his job history, work assignments and official photograph. The agency claimed it had "no public records responsive" to AP's request.

The agency also denied a request for Hinkle's disciplinary records, saying that "even to acknowledge the existence of such records ... would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

## 'ONE OF THE ORIGINAL COWBOYS'

Hinkle showed no privacy concerns when he stood up in front of his boss, wardens and union brass and told them what he had done.

It was 2020. The new regional director, Melissa Rios, was holding court at regional headquarters in Stockton, California. Suddenly here was Hinkle, her deputy, talking at length about how he brutalized inmates long ago.

"I am one of the original Cowboys from Florence," Hinkle said, according to people who were there. He also said, according to them: "We were abusing inmates" and "we were assaulting them."

Around the room, people looked at each other, puzzled. Was it intended as a cautionary tale? Or was he bragging?

Fresh from the Marine Corps, Hinkle was among the first wave of correctional officers hired to staff the federal penitentiary in Florence, Colorado. The prison, opened in 1993, was part of a cluster built in the high desert 110 miles (175 kilometers) south of Denver to relieve overcrowding elsewhere. Next door, an even higher-security prison was springing up: the super-max "Alcatraz of the Rockies" for terrorists, mob bosses, drug lords and other dangerous felons.

The federal inmate population had tripled since 1980, fueled by a surge in violent crime and mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. Within the Florence penitentiary's freshly poured walls, "The Cowboys" were taking over.

One guard told a grand jury that the prison's captain had given a "green light" for "The Cowboys" to attack inmates. In particular, "The Cowboys" ran roughshod over the special housing unit or SHU (pronounced "shoe") — a prison within the prison for inmates with disciplinary problems.

They'd walk around wearing "Cowboys" baseball caps and leave a "Cowboys" medallion as a calling card. They'd throw a ball painted with "Cowboy Love" into a cell, wait until an inmate picked it up and then rush in and jump him.

They'd meet during off hours to talk about beatings. They'd stress secrecy, bribe inmates with cigarettes to stay quiet, and repeat slogans like "you lie 'till you die."

In all, prosecutors said, "The Cowboys" beat more than two dozen prisoners — many of them Black — in less than three years.

## BEATINGS, NO CONSEQUENCES

Hinkle was accused of assaulting at least three inmates. The allegations were detailed in court actions and formal complaints to agency officials. Two said Hinkle beat them as he and other guards brought them to the penitentiary's special housing unit on Oct. 29, 1995, after a violent uprising at Florence's neighboring medium-security prison.

Both men said they were in full restraints — handcuffs, chains, and shackles — and unable to protect themselves from guards wearing helmets, elbow pads and knee pads.

Marion Bryant Jr. alleged in a lawsuit, later settled by the Bureau of Prisons for \$7,500, that Hinkle and other guards dragged him up a flight of stairs and slammed him into walls in a dark hallway. He said guards held his arms, tripped him, kicked his groin and taunted him with racial slurs.

"We'll kill you if you f--- with staff," they said, according to Bryant.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 67 of 85

Bryant said Hinkle and another officer then carried him down some stairs, dragged him down a hall and threw him on a cell floor, where Hinkle removed his restraints and his clothing.

"I'm terrified. I don't know what's going to happen to me," Bryant testified in a 2000 deposition.

Bryant, a former University of Utah linebacker, said in court documents that he sustained bruised ribs, a busted lip and injuries to his left shoulder but wasn't seen by prison medical staff for more than a week.

Norman McCrary accused Hinkle and three other guards of slamming him to a concrete floor, spitting on him, and calling him a "f----- n-----."

Bryant and McCrary, both in for drug offenses, were among two dozen inmates taken to the SHU in the wake of the uprising.

Bryant was accused of breaking off a table leg in the melee and swinging it at a prison worker "in a threatening manner." He denied the allegation but later pleaded guilty to assaulting a correctional officer, adding two years to his sentence. Bryant said he was held in the special housing unit for six months after his alleged beating.

Hinkle was accused by a colleague in court proceedings of assaulting a third inmate, Reginald McCoy, around the same time. McCoy, 52, told the AP that Hinkle was among four guards who slapped him and held him down while a guard fondled his genitals.

McCoy, who also goes by the name Kojovi Muhammad and is serving a life sentence for cocaine distribution, said another guard punched him in the jaw, causing him to spit up blood and knocking his teeth out of place. He pretended to be unconscious until they left.

One guard told a grand jury investigating "The Cowboys" in 2000 that McCoy was sent to the special housing unit for allegedly following a female employee around, and that once he was in a holding cell, Hinkle and other guards assaulted him.

Prosecutors listed McCoy's assault among dozens of acts in the indictment of seven members of the "The Cowboys." They did not mention Hinkle, who wasn't charged.

Bureau of Prisons policy bars workers from using "brutality, physical violence, or intimidation toward inmates, or use any force beyond what is reasonably necessary to subdue an inmate," with punishment ranging from reprimand to firing.

Bryant tried to fight back through the legal system. Within weeks of his alleged beating, he filed a staff assault complaint through the prison's administrative remedy process and later added a tort claim seeking \$2 million. The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division closed its investigation in February 1997, saying there was "insufficient medical evidence" and "insufficient eyewitness corroboration."

The Bureau of Prisons also denied Bryant's tort claim, writing that its investigation "does not reveal evidence to show that you suffered any actual personal injury as a result of negligence, omission, wrongful acts, or improper conduct on the part of Bureau of Prisons staff."

Bryant filed a prisoner's civil rights lawsuit against Hinkle and other officers in April 1997. The Bureau of Prisons settled with Bryant in 2003, the same year he was released from prison, but fought until after his death in 2015 to keep the terms secret.

## A SECOND CHANCE AND MORE TROUBLE

Within a year of the Justice Department closing its investigation into Bryant and McCrary's allegations, the Bureau of Prisons promoted Hinkle out of Florence.

By February 1998, he was a senior officer specialist at a low-security prison at the federal prison complex in Beaumont, Texas, northeast of Houston. The position, which was to be awarded through a competitive selection process, put Hinkle one rung below management.

Bryant had just filed his lawsuit, and the FBI investigation into "The Cowboys" was ongoing. Two years later, though, the Bureau of Prisons promoted Hinkle into management as a lieutenant at its Houston jail.

But in October 2007, Hinkle was arrested for public intoxication after authorities say he refused to leave an all-day music festival when security ejected him for not having a ticket.

"Some punk inside made me f----- leave," Hinkle told a sheriff's deputy, according to an arrest report obtained by the AP through an open records request from the Montgomery County, Texas sheriff's office.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 68 of 85

It was around 9 p.m. at the annual Buzzfest festival, featuring The Smashing Pumpkins and other alt-rock favorites, in the Houston suburb of The Woodlands. Hinkle, then 41, flashed his Bureau of Prisons ID and told the sheriff's deputy that "he was an officer just like" him.

In that moment, though, the deputy saw Hinkle — his breath smelling of booze, defying orders to leave — as a "danger to himself and others" and told him he was under arrest for public intoxication. As the sheriff's deputy turned him around to handcuff him, Hinkle stiffened his body and resisted, according to the arrest report. Several other officers had to help.

After 16 months, prosecutors dropped the case just before trial, sparing Hinkle the maximum penalty — a \$500 fine — and, more importantly, the prospect of a criminal record.

Hinkle's lawyer in the case, Earl Musick, said Hinkle had misplaced his ticket after entering. Musick said he found several witnesses who would've testified that Hinkle wasn't intoxicated. Prosecutors decided to withdraw the case after they had trouble finding witnesses to support the allegations, Musick said.

"He was completely innocent of that," Musick said. "They got pissed off at him for some reason and hung that charge on him."

Hinkle stayed in Houston, where he'd bought a house and remarried, until 2012 — nearly 12 years after he'd arrived. It was his longest gap between promotions.

Then, the Bureau of Prisons promoted him again and again in rapid succession.

— In 2013, Hinkle was made deputy captain of the federal prison complex in Forrest City, Arkansas. A year later, he was the captain of the federal prison complex in Beaumont, Texas.

— In 2016, the agency promoted Hinkle to assistant administrator of the correctional programs division at its Washington, D.C. headquarters, giving him a hand in setting policies and overseeing operations at all 122 federal prison facilities.

— In 2018, the Bureau of Prisons sent Hinkle to help run its newest and one of its most dangerous facilities, making him associate warden — second-in-command — at the federal penitentiary in Thomson, Illinois. Among his duties: Overseeing staff sexual abuse training and compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Then, in January 2020, the agency sent Hinkle west as deputy regional director.

## 'MESS UP, MOVE UP'?

Hinkle's rise is a stark example of what Bureau of Prisons employees call the agency's "mess up, move up" policy — its tendency to promote and transfer troubled workers instead of firing them.

Hinkle had never worked in the western region before and had never been a warden, often a prerequisite for a top regional post. And yet there he was, appointed to help run one-fifth of the nation's federal lockups and given a \$40,000 raise. This year, Hinkle is on pace to make \$176,300, according to government data.

Employees say Hinkle has been a foul-mouthed bully who leads through fear and intimidation. Inmates allege in court filings that, on his watch, they've been subjected to "Cowboys"-style violence from correctional officer "goon squads" roughing them up after a hunger strike at an Oregon federal prison.

Hinkle has been accused of targeting employee whistleblowers; questioning the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic as it raged in federal prisons; defending the ex-Dublin warden charged with sexually abusing inmates; and, in an ad hoc security policy, female workers say he ordered them to take off their bras when they arrived for work.

"I've never heard one positive thing about the guy," said Aaron McGlothlin, president of the union at the federal prison in Mendota, California. "Everybody says the same thing," he says — that Hinkle is "narcissistic" and "arrogant."

McGlothlin said Hinkle sent a lieutenant to videotape union members protesting understaffing last year outside the Mendota prison. Union leaders at another federal prison, in Herlong, California, said Hinkle threatened to discipline them for insubordination after they spoke up about staffing shortages.

Union representatives have complained repeatedly to the Bureau of Prisons and Justice Department about Hinkle. They've written to Attorney General Merrick Garland and his top deputy, Lisa Monaco, pleading for

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 69 of 85

his removal, and they've sought help from members of Congress.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., had her own hostile encounter with Hinkle when she visited Dublin in February. Her assessment: "He's a thug."

Speier said Hinkle was dismissive of Dublin's sexual-abuse crisis — worrying more about the prison's reputation than the inmates — and tried to block her from speaking one-on-one with women who reported abuse.

"The lens through which he looked at the issue wasn't that this was some horrible cultural rot — it was that it was an embarrassment," Speier said. "I think he's risen through the ranks by being part of the team... He came off as arrogant. He just really didn't get it."

The Bureau of Prisons made Hinkle acting warden at Dublin in January after former warden Ray Garcia and several other workers were arrested for sexually abusing inmates. Garcia was convicted Thursday after a week-long trial.

Hinkle told Dublin staff that he was there to help the prison "regain its reputation," but employees say his two months in charge left the facility even more tattered. They say Hinkle attempted to silence an employee whistleblower and even threatened to close the prison if workers kept speaking up about misconduct.

Employees say Hinkle met alone with a female worker who filed a harassment complaint against a prison manager, a violation of established protocols that gave the appearance he was trying to keep her quiet. Afterward, the woman said she felt blindsided and was reluctant to proceed.

The episode led to rare public condemnation from the Justice Department, which said in a March statement: "These allegations, if true, are abhorrent."

Employees say Hinkle also showed little sense of the crisis that brought him to Dublin, wrongly claiming to workers that what Garcia was accused of was consensual sex — even though the law, which he oversaw training on at Thomson, is clear that no such thing exists between inmates and prison workers.

Hinkle left Dublin at the end of February, returning to his deputy regional director duties while a new, permanent warden took over. A week later, Carvajal was at the prison, pledging to look into employees' concerns about how Hinkle kept getting promoted instead of fired.

Nevertheless, on June 10, Carvajal sent a memo to Bureau of Prisons staff announcing that he was promoting Hinkle to acting western regional director indefinitely. Rios, the regional director, was on leave for a family emergency and not expected back, but the agency said she returned in late September, bumping Hinkle back to deputy regional director.

And that's where he remains, at least for now. Under Justice Department policy, Hinkle must retire next May when he turns 57. That, said Hinkle, is precisely what he plans to do.

## Putin says more US-Russian prisoner exchanges are possible

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that more U.S.-Russian prisoner exchanges are possible if Moscow and Washington find a compromise.

Putin spoke a day after Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout was swapped for WNBA star and two-time Olympian Brittney Griner.

Asked after a summit in Kyrgyzstan whether other prisoners could be swapped, Putin replied that "everything is possible," noting that "compromises have been found" that cleared the way for Thursday's exchange of Griner for Bout.

"We aren't refusing to continue this work in the future," the Russian leader said, making his first comments about the closely watched trade.

Despite negotiating for Griner's release, the most high-profile American jailed abroad, the U.S. failed to win freedom for another American, Paul Whelan. The Michigan corporate security executive has been imprisoned in Russia since December 2018 on espionage charges that his family and the U.S. government have said are baseless.

U.S. officials said they did not see an immediate path to bringing about Whelan's release, saying Russia has treated his case differently because of the "sham espionage" charges against him. Still, they said

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 70 of 85

they believe communication channels with the Russians remain open for negotiations about his freedom. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said: "We registered what Mr. Putin said, let's see what he actually does."

Putin said the U.S.-Russia talks that resulted in Thursday's exchange didn't touch on other subjects. "Whether this could set stage for a dialogue with the U.S. is a separate issue," he said. "We didn't set the task to move from those talks to something else, but they do create a certain atmosphere."

On a similar note, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was Russian and U.S. intelligence agencies that agreed to exchange Bout for Griner and their contacts were focused exclusively on hammering out its specifics.

"It has no impact on the overall state of bilateral ties that looks sad," Peskov said in televised remarks. Peskov said that "special services may continue their work if necessary," and also noted the role of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in helping broker the swap.

Bout, dubbed the "Merchant of Death" who provided arms for some of the world's worst conflicts and spent over 14 years behind bars in the U.S., was seen in Russia as unjustly imprisoned after an overly aggressive U.S. sting operation.

Russian state media hailed his release, carrying footage of him talking to his family from a private jet following a swap at Abu Dhabi's airport and then embracing his wife and his mother on a snowy tarmac in Moscow.

Speaking in an interview for RT channel with Maria Butina, who also served 18 months in a U.S. prison after being convicted of acting as an unregistered foreign agent in the United States, Bout said he was still struggling to control his emotions after his imprisonment.

He charged that the West's long-held objective was to destroy Russia. "The West believes that it has failed to finish us off when the Soviet Union began to collapse," Bout said. "And our efforts to live independently, be an independent power, is a shock to them."

## Helping Ukraine is 'self-preservation,' finance chief says

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Ukraine's finance minister says crucial Western financial support is "not charity" but "self-preservation" in the fight to defend democracy as his country deals with growing costs to repair electrical and heating infrastructure wrecked by Russian attacks.

Serhiy Marchenko also told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday from Kyiv that he believes European Union officials will sort out a dispute with Hungary that has blocked a key 18 billion-euro (\$18.97 billion) aid package, which would cover much of Ukraine's looming budget gap.

Marchenko said financial support for Ukraine is tiny compared to what developed countries spent to combat emergencies like the global financial crisis of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic. And that the money bolsters freedom and security far beyond his country's struggle, he added.

"It's not charity to support Ukraine," Marchenko said. "We are trying to protect freedom and democracy of all (the) civilized world."

He said the damage from Russian missile attacks on civilian infrastructure such as power stations would cost 0.5% of annual economic output next year, adding to the burden as Ukraine tries to cover a budget deficit equivalent to \$38 billion. The World Bank put Ukraine's gross domestic product at just over \$200 billion in 2021, so the damage could amount to roughly \$1 billion.

Ukraine needs outside financing to cover the budget deficit caused by the war. Cash or loans help it avoid printing money at the central bank to cover basic needs like paying people's pensions, a practice that risks fueling already painful inflation.

Proposed EU loans worth 18 billion euros, along with major U.S. support and possible help from the International Monetary Fund, would cover a large part of Ukraine's budget shortfall. But the European package has been blocked by Hungary over disputes with Brussels, which is concerned about democratic backsliding and possible mismanagement of EU money in Budapest.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 71 of 85

"Of course, it's worried us and we're worried that it can block or postpone the money flow for Ukraine," Marchenko said. "But I believe that the wisdom" of EU officials "can solve all issues, and they will together join Ukraine's efforts for independence."

He praised what he called continuing strong support from Western governments, citing the U.S. in particular for its "predictability."

Total aid committed to Ukraine reached 113 billion euros (\$119 billion) as of this week, according to data compiled by the Ukraine Support Tracker at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

"Now is not the time to postpone any support, to just be tired of Ukraine and Ukraine's problems ... because the next time, you realized that without Ukraine, Russia will come closer to the European border," Marchenko said.

"It's about self-preservation, it's self-protection — this should be in the minds of EU citizens," he added.

Ukraine has made gains on the battlefield but has been struggling with Russian attacks on critical infrastructure, leaving millions of Ukrainians without regular access to heat, electricity and water in sub-freezing temperatures, U.N. officials say.

Donors are scrambling to get generators, insulation, medical supplies and cash into the country as winter looms. The U.N. Development Program and World Bank are working to assess damage and fill requests for power transformers and substations to restore Ukraine's electrical grid.

On top of people losing power and heat, Marchenko noted how the number of Ukrainians living in poverty has been "increasing drastically." Inflation was above 26% as of October and could rise to 28% by year's end, he said.

The government is working to increase pensions for some, while Western donations go toward social and humanitarian aid.

"All possible resources which we can use, we will use to help our people to survive in this condition," he said. "But again, people understand why they are suffering" — to live in an independent country.

Marchenko said the war would leave behind Ukraine's earlier reputation for corruption and political influence by prominent business figures dubbed oligarchs.

Ukraine improved its score on Transparency International's corruption perceptions index in recent years but still ranked 122 out of 180 countries before the war.

Now, "there is no time for oligarchs. There is no time for corruption in Ukraine," Marchenko said. "Half our budget is military expenditure, so half is totally social and humanitarian expenditures," leaving "no room" for misconduct.

"And I would prefer that this myth or this story about Ukraine's corruption will evaporate after the war," he said.

Marchenko's stance on corruption was echoed by Torbjorn Becker, director of the Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics, during an online book launch Thursday for "Rebuilding Ukraine: Principles and Policies" by the Paris- and London-based Centre for Economic Policy Research.

"If a country is not spending money wisely when it's being attacked by a neighbor like Russia, we know that they would have lost the war by now," Becker said.

"So the fact that Ukraine is still there and defending its territory is one of the testaments that corruption should not be our focus now when we are talking about support to Ukraine," he added.

## Oldest DNA reveals life in Greenland 2 million years ago

By MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Scientists discovered the oldest known DNA and used it to reveal what life was like 2 million years ago in the northern tip of Greenland. Today, it's a barren Arctic desert, but back then it was a lush landscape of trees and vegetation with an array of animals, even the now extinct mastodon.

"The study opens the door into a past that has basically been lost," said lead author Kurt Kjær, a geologist and glacier expert at the University of Copenhagen.

With animal fossils hard to come by, the researchers extracted environmental DNA, also known as eDNA,

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 72 of 85

from soil samples. This is the genetic material that organisms shed into their surroundings — for example, through hair, waste, spit or decomposing carcasses.

Studying really old DNA can be a challenge because the genetic material breaks down over time, leaving scientists with only tiny fragments.

But with the latest technology, researchers were able to get genetic information out of the small, damaged bits of DNA, explained senior author Eske Willerslev, a geneticist at the University of Cambridge. In their study, published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*, they compared the DNA to that of different species, looking for matches.

The samples came from a sediment deposit called the Kap København formation in Peary Land. Today, the area is a polar desert, Kjær said.

But millions of years ago, this region was undergoing a period of intense climate change that sent temperatures up, Willerslev said. Sediment likely built up for tens of thousands of years at the site before the climate cooled and cemented the finds into permafrost.

The cold environment would help preserve the delicate bits of DNA — until scientists came along and drilled the samples out, beginning in 2006.

During the region's warm period, when average temperatures were 20 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit (11 to 19 degrees Celsius) higher than today, the area was filled with an unusual array of plant and animal life, the researchers reported. The DNA fragments suggest a mix of Arctic plants, like birch trees and willow shrubs, with ones that usually prefer warmer climates, like firs and cedars.

The DNA also showed traces of animals including geese, hares, reindeer and lemmings. Previously, a dung beetle and some hare remains had been the only signs of animal life at the site, Willerslev said.

One big surprise was finding DNA from the mastodon, an extinct species that looks like a mix between an elephant and a mammoth, Kjær said.

Many mastodon fossils have previously been found from temperate forests in North America. That's an ocean away from Greenland, and much farther south, Willerslev said.

"I wouldn't have, in a million years, expected to find mastodons in northern Greenland," said Love Dalen, a researcher in evolutionary genomics at Stockholm University who was not involved in the study.

Because the sediment built up in the mouth of a fjord, researchers were also able to get clues about marine life from this time period. The DNA suggests horseshoe crabs and green algae lived in the area — meaning the nearby waters were likely much warmer back then, Kjær said.

By pulling dozens of species out of just a few sediment samples, the study highlights some of eDNA's advantages, said Benjamin Vernot, an ancient DNA researcher at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology who was not involved in the study.

"You really get a broader picture of the ecosystem at a particular time," Vernot said. "You don't have to go and find this piece of wood to study this plant, and this bone to study this mammoth."

Based on the data available, it's hard to say for sure whether these species truly lived side by side, or if the DNA was mixed together from different parts of the landscape, said Laura Epp, an eDNA expert at Germany's University of Konstanz who was not involved in the study.

But Epp said this kind of DNA research is valuable to show "hidden diversity" in ancient landscapes.

Willerslev believes that because these plants and animals survived during a time of dramatic climate change, their DNA could offer a "genetic roadmap" to help us adapt to current warming.

Stockholm University's Dalen expects ancient DNA research to keep pushing deeper into the past. He worked on the study that previously held the "oldest DNA" record, from a mammoth tooth around a million years old.

"I wouldn't be surprised if you can go at least one or perhaps a few million years further back, assuming you can find the right samples," Dalen said.

## Club shooter's 2021 bomb case dropped, family uncooperative

By COLLEEN SLEVIN, JIM MUSTIAN, MIKE BALSAMO, BERNARD CONDON and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 73 of 85

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — The Colorado Springs gay nightclub shooter had charges dropped in a 2021 bomb threat case after family members who were terrorized in the incident refused to cooperate, according to the district attorney and unsealed court documents.

The charges were dropped despite authorities a finding a tub with more than 100 pounds (45 kilograms) of explosive materials and later receiving warnings from other relatives that suspect Anderson Lee Aldrich was sure to hurt or murder a set of grandparents if freed, according to the documents, which were unsealed Thursday.

In a letter last November to state District Court Judge Robin Chittum, the relatives painted a picture of an isolated, violent person who did not have a job and was given \$30,000 that was spent largely on the purchase of 3D printers to make guns. Chittum is the same judge who ruled to unseal the case Thursday.

Aldrich tried to reclaim guns seized after the threat, but authorities did not return the weapons, El Paso County District Attorney Michael Allen said. The case included allegations that Aldrich threatened to kill the grandparents in a chilling confrontation during which the suspect described plans to become the “next mass killer” more than a year before the nightclub attack that killed five people.

The suspect’s mother and the grandparents derailed that earlier case by evading prosecutors’ efforts to serve them with a subpoena, leading to a dismissal of the charges after defense attorneys said speedy trial rules were at risk, Allen said.

Testifying at a hearing two months after the threat, the suspect’s mother and grandmother described Aldrich in court as a “loving” and “sweet” young person who did not deserve to be jailed, the prosecutor said.

The former district attorney who was replaced by Allen told The Associated Press he faced many cases in which people dodged subpoenas, but the inability to serve Aldrich’s family seemed extraordinary.

“I don’t know that they were hiding, but if that was the case, shame on them,” Dan May said of the suspect’s family. “This is an extreme example of apparent manipulation that has resulted in something horrible.”

Aldrich’s attorney, public defender Joseph Archambault, had argued against the document release, saying Aldrich’s right to a fair trial was paramount.

“This will make sure there is no presumption of innocence,” Archambault said.

The grandmother’s in-laws wrote to the court in November 2021 saying Aldrich was a continuing danger and should remain incarcerated. The letter also said police tried to hold Aldrich for 72 hours after a prior response to the home, but the grandmother intervened.

“We believe that my brother, and his wife, would undergo bodily harm or more if Anderson were released. Besides being incarcerated, we believe Anderson needs therapy and counseling,” Robert Pullen and Jeanie Streltsoff wrote. They said Aldrich had punched holes in the walls of the grandparents’ Colorado home and broken windows and that the grandparents “had to sleep in their bedroom with the door locked” and a bat by the bed.

During Aldrich’s teenage years in San Antonio, the letter said, Aldrich attacked the grandfather and sent him to the emergency room with undisclosed injuries. The grandfather later lied to police out of fear of Aldrich, according to the letter, which said the suspect could not get along with classmates as a youth so had been homeschooled.

The judge’s order came after news organizations, including the AP, sought to unseal the documents, and two days after the AP published portions of the documents that were verified with a law enforcement official.

Aldrich, 22, was arrested in June 2021 on allegations of making a threat that led to the evacuation of about 10 homes. The documents describe how Aldrich told the frightened grandparents about firearms and bomb-making material in the grandparents’ basement and vowed not to let them interfere with plans for Aldrich to be “the next mass killer” and “go out in a blaze.”

Aldrich — who uses they/them pronouns and is nonbinary, according to their attorneys — holed up in their mother’s home in a standoff with SWAT teams and warned about having armor-piercing rounds and a determination to “go to the end.” Investigators later searched the mother’s and grandparents’ houses

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 74 of 85

and found and seized handguns, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, body armor, magazines, a gas mask and a 12-gallon tub with explosive chemicals.

The tub had bags with an estimated 113 pounds (51 kilograms) of ammonium nitrate and packets of aluminum powder that are explosive when combined, the documents show.

The bags were labeled "Tannerite," a brand of legal exploding targets used for sighting rifles, documents show. The unregulated material has been used in bombings and attacks, including in 2016 with bombs placed in New York City and New Jersey. The Las Vegas gunman who killed 58 people in 2017 suspect had 50 pounds (23 kilograms) of Tannerite in his car.

A sheriff's report said there had been prior calls to law enforcement referring to Aldrich's "escalating homicidal behavior" but did not elaborate. A sheriff's office spokesperson did not immediately provide more information.

The grandparents' call to 911 led to the suspect's arrest, and Aldrich was booked into jail on suspicion of felony menacing and kidnapping. But after their bond was set at \$1 million, Aldrich's mother and grandparents sought to lower the bond, which was reduced to \$100,000 with conditions including therapy.

The case was dropped when attempts to serve the family members with subpoenas to testify against Aldrich failed, according to Allen. Both grandparents moved out of state, complicating the subpoena process, Allen said.

Grandmother Pamela Pullen said through an attorney that there was a subpoena in her mailbox, but it was never handed to her personally or served properly, documents show.

"At the end of the day, they weren't going to testify against Andy," Xavier Kraus, a former friend and neighbor of Aldrich, told the AP.

Kraus said he had text messages from Aldrich's mother saying she and the suspect were "hiding from somebody." He later found out the family had been dodging subpoenas. Aldrich's "words were, 'They got nothing. There's no evidence,'" Kraus said.

A protective order against the suspect that was in place until July 5 prevented Aldrich from possessing firearms, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office said.

Soon after the charges were dropped, Aldrich began boasting that they had regained access to firearms, Kraus said, adding that Aldrich had shown him two assault-style rifles, body armor and incendiary rounds.

Aldrich "was really excited about it," Kraus said, and slept with a rifle nearby under a blanket.

Relatives of Aldrich's grandmother said after the suspect's 2021 arrest that she had recently given Aldrich \$30,000, "much of which went to his purchase of two 3D printers — on which he was making guns," according to documents in the case.

Aldrich's statements in the bomb case raised questions about whether authorities could have used Colorado's "red flag" law to seize weapons from the suspect.

El Paso County Sheriff Bill Elder released a statement Thursday saying there was no need to ask for a red flag order because Aldrich's weapons had already been seized as part of the arrest and Aldrich couldn't buy new ones.

The sheriff also rejected the idea that he could have asked for a red flag order after the case was dismissed. The bombing case was too old to argue there was danger in the near future, Elder said, and the evidence was sealed a month after the dismissal and could not be used.

"There was no legal mechanism" to take guns following the case dismissal, the sheriff said.

Under Colorado law, records are automatically sealed when a case is dropped and defendants are not prosecuted, as happened in Aldrich's 2021 case. Once sealed, officials cannot acknowledge that the records exist, and the process to unseal the documents initially happens behind closed doors with no docket to follow and an unnamed judge.

Chittum said the "profound" public interest in the case outweighed Aldrich's privacy rights. The judge added that scrutiny of judicial cases is "foundational to our system of government."

During Thursday's hearing, Aldrich sat at the defense table looking straight ahead or down at times and did not appear to show any reaction when their mother's lawyer asked that the case remain sealed.

Aldrich was formally charged Tuesday with 305 criminal counts, including hate crimes and murder, in the

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 75 of 85

Nov. 19 shooting at Club Q, a sanctuary for the LGBTQ community in mostly conservative Colorado Springs.

Investigators say Aldrich entered just before midnight with an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle and began shooting during a drag queen's birthday celebration. Patrons stopped the killing by wrestling the suspect to the ground and beating Aldrich into submission, witnesses said.

Seventeen people suffered gunshot wounds but survived, authorities said.

## Lawsuit against doctor who defied Texas abortion law tossed

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Lawyers for a doctor who intentionally defied a Texas abortion law that the lawyers called a "bounty-hunting scheme" say a court has dismissed a test of whether members of the public can sue providers who violate the restrictions for at least \$10,000 in damages.

Dr. Alan Braid published an opinion piece in the Washington Post last year revealing that he intentionally violated the Texas law shortly after it took effect in September 2021. The law bans abortions after roughly the sixth week of pregnancy and is only enforced through lawsuits filed by private citizens — although Texas subsequently banned abortions entirely after the fall of *Roe v. Wade*.

Even though Texas now has a broader abortion ban, the Center for Reproductive Rights, which represents Braid, said the decision Thursday by a San Antonio court is still significant because it rejected that people with no connection to an abortion can sue. The dismissal was announced from the bench, and no formal written opinion had been published as of Friday morning.

"When I provided my patient with the care she needed last year, I was doing my duty as a physician," Braid said in a statement. "It is heartbreaking that Texans still can't get essential health care in their home state and that providers are left afraid to do their jobs."

The lawsuit brought against Braid after he announced he had defied the Texas law was filed by Felipe N. Gomez, of Chicago, who asked the court to declare the law unconstitutional. He has said that he wasn't aware he could claim at least \$10,000 in damages if he won his lawsuit, and that if he had received any money, he likely would have donated it to an abortion rights group or to the patients of the doctor he sued.

Gomez said he was waiting to see the court's ruling but has already filed a notice of appeal.

Braid has closed his clinics in Texas and Oklahoma, where abortion is also outlawed. He has since opened other clinics in Illinois and New Mexico.

## How senators 'defied political gravity' on same-sex marriage

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin was on the Senate floor, but her mind was on the other side of the Capitol.

The House was voting that July afternoon on Democratic legislation to protect same-sex and interracial marriages in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the federal right to an abortion. And it was suddenly winning more Republican votes than Baldwin — or anyone else — had expected.

Baldwin, who became the first openly gay senator when she was elected a decade ago, said she was "overjoyed" as she saw the votes coming in. She excitedly walked over to Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, who was also on the Senate floor and had been one of the first Republican senators to come out in favor of same-sex marriage.

"Did you see this?" Baldwin asked, showing Portman a list of Republicans who had voted for the House bill — almost four dozen.

Portman, who had worked with her on the issue in the past, was immediately on board. "Count me in," he told her.

Along with Maine Sen. Susan Collins, who eventually led the bipartisan effort with Baldwin, the senators teamed up with Sens. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., and Thom Tillis, R-N.C., to try to find the additional Republican votes necessary to pass the Senate.

It was a monthslong effort, building on a decadeslong push, in which they implored their colleagues senator to senator, tweaked the bill to make it more appealing — without changing what it would do —

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 76 of 85

and enlisted key outside allies to help. They convinced skeptical Republicans that it was a personal, not political, effort for the Democrats and that “the sky is not going to fall,” Baldwin said.

Collins, who has a long record of working on gay rights issues, said the GOP support in the House was a turning point. “It both surprised and heartened me,” she said, “because it suggested we could get the bill through both the House and the Senate and signed before the end of the year.”

In the end, they “defied political gravity,” as Baldwin puts it, and passed the Respect for Marriage Act through the Senate. When the final vote was called, they had 12 Republican supporters — two more than they needed to break the filibuster in the 50-50 Senate and pass the bill. The House gave it final passage on Thursday and sent the bill to President Joe Biden for his signature.

Along the way, the five senators — Democrats Baldwin and Sinema and Republicans Collins, Portman and Tillis — found that attitudes have changed in the decade since most Republicans were openly campaigning against gay marriage. Not only because of the 2015 Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, but because increasing numbers of people — daughters, sons, friends, staffers — were openly gay and in relationships and marriages.

“If you look at the arc of visibility around the LGBTQ community, there’s more and more people who are married to a same-sex partner and maybe raising a family with their same-sex partner,” said Baldwin, who has been working on gay rights issues since she entered politics almost 40 years ago. “And in some ways, you don’t want to do harm, right? And recognize how important the certainty is for these families. And I think that made a huge difference in our ability to get to a super-majority in the Senate.”

Still, most Republicans weren’t inclined to vote for the bill. Supporters had to find at least seven more Republicans to get to yes.

In the first weeks after the House vote, the five senators went to work to find those votes. Baldwin, who had advised House lawmakers to keep the bill simple and straightforward, says “the ink wasn’t even dry on the ledger yet” when she took the list of House supporters and started to talk to members from those same states, noting that their home-state colleagues across the Capitol had supported the bill and could give them “political cover,” she says.

But in talking to Republicans, they quickly found that the biggest concern was religious liberty, and whether the bill would penalize private institutions or groups that did not want to perform same-sex marriages or provide services to same-sex couples. So they started crafting an amendment to address it.

“As we talked to senators we found a real openness to the bill, but concerns about religious liberty and consciousness protections,” Collins said. She said they started reaching out to some religious groups, asking what they would like to see in the bill if they were going to support it.

A main concern was that a church or organization could have its tax-exempt status revoked if it didn’t perform a same-sex marriage. “That was a huge issue,” Collins said.

The bill, which requires states to legally recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, would not have done that. But Collins said the senators “wanted to make sure it was crystal clear” in the amendment that churches would not be in any way penalized or required to perform marriages. So they added language affirming the rights of religious institutions and groups while keeping the original language in the bill intact.

By November, dozens of religious groups supported the bill, including the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, a member of the Latter-day Saints church and one of the 12 senators who eventually supported the legislation, was involved in those early talks.

“I would not have been able to support the bill were it not for the religious liberty provisions that were added, and I pointed that out to them as they were looking to collect 11 or 12 votes,” Romney said after the Senate vote.

According to Portman, Romney also pushed for a series of findings at the beginning of the bill that stated that “beliefs about the role of gender in marriage are held by reasonable and sincere people based on decent and honorable religious or philosophical premises.”

Tim Schultz, the president of the advocacy group 1st Amendment Partnership, directed a coalition of

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 77 of 85

religious groups supporting the bill. He says that it was clear after the first House vote that the senators and progressive advocacy groups were serious about addressing the concerns and getting the bill done, and not using it as a political wedge issue. "They didn't want a show vote in the Senate," Schultz says.

As the senators organized inside, groups of influential Republicans who were supportive organized on the outside. Key to that effort were Ken Mehlman, a former Republican National Committee chairman and campaign manager for former President George W. Bush's 2004 campaign, and a group that he is funding, Centerline.

Focusing on senators in nine states, the group conducted state polls, drove local press coverage, organized telephone campaigns and put together more than 70 meetings with senators and staff. The group circulated a list of 430 prominent Republicans and conservatives who supported the legislation, including former senators and Cabinet officials.

Mehlman says the campaign was based on data and polling showing an increasing support for gay marriage. More than two-thirds of the public now supports the unions.

"Center-right voters are supportive of the freedom to marry, and those numbers have increased in recent years," Mehlman says. "Voters are supportive and often ahead of politicians on these questions."

But even as the supporters mobilized, it wasn't clear if the senators had the votes. Baldwin says that many Republicans she was talking to were skeptical of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's motivations so close to the midterm elections.

So Baldwin and the other senators met with Schumer in mid-September and told him they needed to delay a vote until after the election. It was "disappointing," she says, and she knew she and Schumer would get pushback from groups that wanted them to force the question on the floor. But she argued it was the right thing to do, and Schumer agreed. "I'm trusting your counts," she says he told her.

When the Senate returned after the election, with Senate Democrats having won a majority, Schumer announced they would hold an immediate vote on the marriage bill. By then, Baldwin and the others felt more sure of a win — and on Nov. 16, twelve Republicans voted yes in a key procedural vote to move forward.

In addition to Collins, Romney, Portman and Tillis, Republicans supporting the legislation were Richard Burr of North Carolina, Todd Young of Indiana, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Joni Ernst of Iowa, Roy Blunt of Missouri, Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming and Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska.

After that vote, as the Senate left town for Thanksgiving, some conservative groups mobilized against the bill. On Nov. 23, the Heritage Foundation announced a new \$1.3 million ad campaign.

"Liberals are hurrying to cram in their far left agenda, and a few Republican senators are helping them," the ad said.

But supporters held firm despite the pressure, and the bill passed the Senate on Nov. 30. As the roll was called, Baldwin teared up, hugging Schumer and others.

"The thing that gets me so choked up is all the times somebody comes up and says this matters to me," Baldwin said afterward, through tears.

Looking back on her four decades of advocacy — she was elected to local office in the mid-1980s, after she had already come out as gay — she says she always thought she would live to see marriage equality.

"I'm not surprised that we won that in the courts," she says. "But protecting it in the legislative body is a big deal."

## How senators 'defied political gravity' on same-sex marriage

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin was on the Senate floor, but her mind was on the other side of the Capitol.

The House was voting that July afternoon on Democratic legislation to protect same-sex and interracial marriages in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the federal right to an abortion. And it was suddenly winning more Republican votes than Baldwin — or anyone else — had expected.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 78 of 85

Baldwin, who became the first openly gay senator when she was elected a decade ago, said she was "overjoyed" as she saw the votes coming in. She excitedly walked over to Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, who was also on the Senate floor and had been one of the first Republican senators to come out in favor of same-sex marriage.

"Did you see this?" Baldwin asked, showing Portman a list of Republicans who had voted for the House bill — almost four dozen.

Portman, who had worked with her on the issue in the past, was immediately on board. "Count me in," he told her.

Along with Maine Sen. Susan Collins, who eventually led the bipartisan effort with Baldwin, the senators teamed up with Sens. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., and Thom Tillis, R-N.C., to try to find the additional Republican votes necessary to pass the Senate.

It was a monthslong effort, building on a decadeslong push, in which they implored their colleagues senator to senator. They tweaked the bill to make it more appealing — without changing what it would do — and enlisted key outside allies to help. They convinced skeptical Republicans that it was a personal, not political, effort for the Democrats and that "the sky is not going to fall," Baldwin said.

Collins, who has a long record of working on gay rights issues, said the GOP support in the House was a turning point. "It suggested we could get the bill through both the House and the Senate and signed before the end of the year," she said.

In the end, they "defied political gravity," as Baldwin puts it, and passed the Respect for Marriage Act through the Senate. When the final vote was called, they had twelve Republican supporters — two more than they needed to break the filibuster in the 50-50 Senate and pass the bill. The House passed it on Thursday and sent the bill to President Joe Biden for his signature.

Along the way, the five senators — Democrats Baldwin and Sinema and Republicans Collins, Portman and Tillis — found that attitudes have changed in the decade since most Republicans were openly campaigning against gay marriage.

Still, most Republicans weren't inclined to vote for the bill. Supporters had to find at least seven more Republicans to get to yes.

Baldwin, who had advised House lawmakers to keep the bill simple and straightforward, says "the ink wasn't even dry on the ledger yet" when she took the list of House supporters and started to talk to senators from those same states.

But the five senators quickly found that the biggest concern was religious liberty, and whether the bill would penalize private institutions or groups that did not want to perform same-sex marriages or provide services to same-sex couples. So they started crafting an amendment to address it.

"As we talked to senators we found a real openness to the bill, but concerns about religious liberty and consciousness protections," Collins said. She said they started reaching out to some religious groups.

A main concern was that a church or organization could have its tax-exempt status revoked if it didn't perform a same-sex marriage. "That was a huge issue," Collins said.

The bill, which requires states to legally recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states, would not have done that. But Collins said the senators "wanted to make sure it was crystal clear" in the amendment.

As the senators organized inside, groups of influential Republicans organized on the outside. Key to that effort were Ken Mehlman, campaign manager for former President George W. Bush's 2004 campaign, and a group that he is funding, Centerline.

Focusing on nine states, the group conducted polls, drove local press coverage, organized telephone campaigns and put together more than 70 meetings with senators and staff. The group circulated a list of 430 prominent Republicans and conservatives who supported the legislation, including former senators and Cabinet officials.

Mehlman says the campaign was based on data and polling showing an increasing support for gay marriage. More than two-thirds of the public now supports the unions.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 79 of 85

"Center-right voters are supportive of the freedom to marry, and those numbers have increased in recent years," Mehlman says.

But even as the supporters mobilized, it wasn't clear if the senators had the votes. Baldwin says that many Republicans she was talking to were skeptical of Democrats' motivations so close to the midterm elections.

So Baldwin and the other senators met with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in mid-September and told him they needed to delay a vote until after the election. It was "disappointing," she says, and she knew she and Schumer would get pushback from groups that wanted them to force the question on the floor. But she argued it was the right thing to do, and Schumer agreed. "I'm trusting your counts," she says he told her.

When the Senate returned after the election, with Democrats having won a majority, Schumer announced they would hold an immediate vote on the marriage bill. By then, Baldwin and the others felt more sure of a win — and on Nov. 16, twelve Republicans voted yes in a key procedural vote to move forward.

After that vote, as the Senate left town for Thanksgiving, some conservative groups mobilized against the bill. On Nov. 23, the Heritage Foundation announced a new \$1.3 million ad campaign.

But supporters held firm despite the pressure, and the bill passed the Senate on Nov. 30. As the roll was called, Baldwin teared up, hugging Schumer and others.

"The thing that gets me so choked up is all the times somebody comes up and says this matters to me," Baldwin said afterward, through tears.

"I'm not surprised that we won that in the courts," she says. "But protecting it in the legislative body is a big deal."

## Review: Del Toro takes his 'Pinocchio' to very dark places

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

Let's face it, "Pinocchio" has always been an odd choice for a children's morality tale.

Of course, lying is wrong. But that's not the only message the story sends. Even the classic 1940 Disney version — lighter and more kid-friendly than the 1883 Collodi tale — still sends the message that if you're not "good," you don't deserve to be human.

"A boy who won't be good might just as well be made of wood," the beneficent Blue Fairy admonishes Pinocchio in that film. Really? What happened to the idea that "to err is human?" Not to mention second chances, or learning curves? And what does "good" mean, anyway? Have they heard of value relativism? But we digress.

Because now comes Guillermo del Toro, with his blazing creative talent, to really stir things up. And boy, this is not your Disney "Pinocchio" — not the 1940 classic nor the remake of a few months ago. How will your kid feel about fascist salutes (or you about explaining them?) A guy named Mussolini? Bombs falling from the sky? A father handing a gun to his son and saying "Shoot the puppet?" (Yes, sweet Pinocchio — THAT puppet.)

Of course, del Toro, whose take on "Pinocchio" is so distinct that the movie is called "Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio," has just the visual command you'd expect, partnering with co-director Mark Gustafson in this gorgeous stop motion project with a starry voice cast (including three Oscar winners — Christoph Waltz, Cate Blanchett and Tilda Swinton.) The movie often looks stunningly beautiful, in color and texture. And you'll want to get on a plane right now and find the Italian village where Geppetto lives, with cobblestoned alleyways framed by snow-capped mountains jutting out in the mist.

Pinocchio, too, is way more interesting-looking than the blue-eyed, bow-tie wearing puppet we're used to. He's a lanky masterpiece in striated pine, with wooden curls, too, and something about him is heart-breakingly lovable. Maybe it's because he makes mistake after mistake. And to err is ... oh, never mind.

We first meet Geppetto (David Bradley) as the happy father to a real son, Carlo. "All they needed was each other's company," says the narrator, namely Sebastian J. Cricket, voiced by Ewan McGregor. They spend their evenings reading stories by the fire, and Carlo accompanies Geppetto to his job restoring a huge Jesus altarpiece in the church. It's there that tragedy strikes one day; a warplane drops a bomb onto

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 80 of 85

the church, killing Carlo. Geppetto withdraws to drinking and mourning.

In grief, Geppetto cuts down a pine tree and makes a puppet. In the night, the Wood Sprite (Swinton, not to be confused with her sister, Death, also Swinton) comes to visit. As in other versions, she asks the cricket to watch over Pinocchio and serve as his conscience.

Geppetto brings the puppet to church, but he's greeted with hostility: "Where are his strings? Who controls him?" At home, Pinocchio wonders why everyone loves the wooden Jesus but not him. A fascist town leader pronounces Pinocchio a "dissident" and "independent thinker." Not as a compliment.

Like in other versions, Pinocchio gets caught up with a money-hungry impresario, Count Volpe (Waltz) who puts him in a puppet show. Unlike other versions, one audience member happens to be Il Duce (Mussolini.) Also unlike other versions, he orders Pinocchio shot. Pinocchio also gets hit by a truck. Luckily, Swinton's Death keeps sending him back to life.

If this seems a bit unsavory for the younger kids, you ain't seen nothin' yet — Pinocchio ends up at a fascist military camp, where the boys are set against each other in deadly war games. Compared to this section, the time he and Geppetto later spend in the belly of a whale seems rather quaint.

Did we mention that this movie is a musical? Freud would probably say there's a reason we forgot — the songs, some catchier than others, often seem to be dropped soon after they're started, petering out softly as we move to something else. The musical element is best used in the theater scenes where Pinocchio is forced by Volpe to perform. And kids will definitely enjoy the song where Pinocchio boldly (and dangerously) goads the visiting Mussolini with lyrics about poops and farts.

But "Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio" is clearly not aimed solely at kids, but rather is banking on the fact that adults, too, will be drawn to the striking visuals and mature themes at play.

Those themes include parenting. For much of the movie Geppetto wishes Pinocchio would be just like Carlo, his human son. But gradually the old man realizes he doesn't need to replace Carlo — Pinocchio is just fine, and he doesn't need to become human to be loved.

Del Toro is also making clear references to the danger of groupthink. Indeed, he seems to have chosen the background of fascism to point out that the narrowminded townspeople who suspect Pinocchio because he's different are the real puppets, not Pinocchio.

"Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio," a Netflix release, has been rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America "for dark thematic material, violence, peril, some rude humor and brief smoking." Running time: 114 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

## China struggles with COVID infections after controls ease

By JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A rash of COVID-19 cases in schools and businesses were reported Friday in areas across China after the ruling Communist Party loosened anti-virus rules as it tries to reverse a deepening economic slump.

While official data showed a fall in new cases, they no longer cover large parts of the population after the government on Wednesday ended mandatory testing for many people. That was part of dramatic changes aimed at gradually emerging from "zero COVID" restrictions that have confined millions of people to their homes and sparked protests and demands for President Xi Jinping to resign.

"There's very few people coming in because there's so many cases," said Gang Xueping, a waitress in a Beijing restaurant. "The country's just opened up. The first one or two months is definitely going to be serious. Nobody's used to this yet."

In other cities, social media users said coworkers or classmates were ill and some businesses had closed due to a lack of staff. It wasn't clear from those accounts, many of which couldn't be independently confirmed, how far above the official figure the total case numbers might be.

"I'm really speechless. Half of the company's people are out sick, but they still won't let us all stay home," said a post signed Tunnel Mouth on the popular Sina Weibo platform. The user gave no name and didn't respond to questions sent through the account, which said the user was in Beijing.



# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 81 of 85

The reports echo the experience of the United States, Europe and other countries that have struggled with outbreaks while trying to restore business activity. But they are a jarring change for China, where "zero COVID," which aims to isolate every case, disrupted daily life and depressed economic activity but kept infection rates low.

Xi's government began to loosen controls Nov. 11 after promising to reduce their cost and disruption. Imports tumbled 10.9% from a year ago in November in a sign of weak demand. Auto sales fell 26.5% in October.

"Relaxing COVID controls will lead to greater outbreaks," Neil Thomas and Laura Gloudeman of Eurasia Group said in a report. "But Beijing is unlikely to return to the extended blanket lockdowns that crashed the economy earlier this year."

The changes suggest the ruling party is easing off its goal of preventing virus transmission, the basis of "zero COVID," but officials say that strategy still is in effect.

Restrictions probably must stay in place at least through mid-2023, public health experts and economists say. They say millions of elderly people need to be vaccinated, which will take months, and hospitals need to be strengthened to cope with a surge in cases. Officials announced a vaccination campaign last week.

On Friday, the government reported 16,797 new cases, including 13,160 without symptoms. That was down about one-fifth from the previous day and less than half of last week's daily peak above 40,000.

More changes announced Wednesday allow people with mild COVID-19 cases to isolate at home instead of going to a quarantine center that some complained were crowded and unsanitary. That addressed a major irritant for the public.

A requirement for subway riders, supermarket shoppers and others to show negative virus tests also was dropped, though they still are needed for schools and hospitals.

A post signed Where Dreams Begin Under Starlight by a user in Dazhou, a southwestern city in Sichuan province, said all but five students in a public school class of 46 were infected.

"It's really amazing that the school insists students go to school," the user wrote. The user, contacted through the account, declined to give a name or other details.

The requirement for hundreds of millions of people to be tested as often as once a day in some areas over the past two years helped the government spot infections with no symptoms. Ending that approach reduces the cost of monitoring employees and customers at offices, shops and other businesses. But it increases the risk they might spread the virus.

This week's changes follow protests that erupted Nov. 25 in Shanghai, Beijing and other cities against the human cost of "zero COVID."

It isn't clear whether any of the changes were a response to the protests, which died out following a security crackdown.

The ruling party's Politburo on Wednesday declared stabilizing weak economic growth its priority, though leaders have said local officials still are expected to protect the public.

"The re-pivot to growth and the exit from zero COVID are clear from the top level," said Larry Hu and Yuxiao Zhang of Macquarie Group, an Australian bank, in a report. However, they warned, "uncertainties remain high," including "how disruptive the exit of zero COVID could be."

Party leaders stopped talking about the official 5.5% annual growth target after the economy shrank by 2.6% from the previous quarter in the three months ending in June. That was after Shanghai and other industrial centers shut down for up to two months to fight outbreaks.

Private sector economists have cut forecasts of annual growth to as low as below 3%, which would be less than half of last year's 8.1% and among the weakest in decades.

Social media posts suggested some cities might have outbreaks that weren't reflected in official figures.

Posts dated Thursday by 18 people who said they were in Baoding, a city of 11 million southwest of Beijing, reported they tested positive using home kits or had fevers, sore throats and headaches. Meanwhile, the Baoding city government reported no new cases since Tuesday.

Drugstores were mobbed by customers who bought medications to treat sore throats and headaches

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 82 of 85

after rules were dropped that required pharmacists to report those purchases, prompting fears a customer might be forced into a quarantine center.

Also Friday, the market regulator announced prices of some medicines including Lianhua Qingwen, a traditional flu treatment, rose as much as 500% over the past month. It said sellers might be punished for price gouging.

Lines formed outside hospitals, though it wasn't clear how many people wanted treatment for COVID-19 symptoms.

People waited four to five hours to get into the fever clinic of Chaoyang Hospital in Beijing, according to a woman who answered the phone there and would give only her surname, Sun. She said no virus test was required but patients had to show a smartphone "health code" app that tracks their vaccine status and whether they have been to areas deemed at high risk of infection.

Hong Kong, which enforces its own anti-virus strategy, has faced a similar rise in cases as the southern Chinese city tries to revive its struggling economy by loosening controls on travel and the opening hours of restaurants and pubs.

Hong Kong reported 75,000 new cases over the past week, up about 25% from the previous week. But those don't include an unknown number of people who stay at home with COVID-19 symptoms and never report to the government.

## **New abnormal: Climate disaster damage 'down' to \$268 billion**

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

This past year has seen a horrific flood that submerged one-third of Pakistan, one of the three costliest U.S. hurricanes on record, devastating droughts in Europe and China, a drought-triggered famine in Africa and deadly heat waves all over.

Yet this wasn't climate change at its worst.

With all that death and destruction in 2022, climate-related disaster damages are down from 2021, according to insurance and catastrophe giant Swiss Re. That's the state of climate change in the 2020s that \$268 billion in global disaster costs is a 12% drop from the previous year, where damage passed \$300 billion.

The number of U.S. weather disasters that caused at least \$1 billion in damage is only at 15 through October and will likely end the year with 16 or 17, down from 22 and 20 in the last two years, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. But because of Hurricane Ian, overall damage amounts are probably going to end up in the top three in American history.

Weather disasters, many but not all of them turbocharged by human-caused climate change, are happening so frequently that this year's onslaught, which 20 years ago would have smashed records by far, now in some financial measures seems a bit of a break from recent years.

Welcome to the new abnormal.

"We've almost gotten used to extremes. And this year compared to many years in the past would be considered a pretty intense year, but compared to maybe the most extreme years, like a 2017, 2020 and 2021, it does look like ... a slight adjustment down," said NOAA applied meteorologist and economist Adam Smith, who calculates the billion dollar disasters for the agency. "We're just getting used to it but that's not a good way to move into the future."

Wildfires in the United States weren't as costly this year as the last couple years, but the Western drought was more damaging than previous years, he said. America's billion dollar disasters in 2022 seemed to hit every possible category except winter storms: hurricanes, floods, droughts, wildfires, heat waves, hail storms and even a derecho.

When it comes to 2022's financial damages globally and the United States, Ian, which walloped Florida, was the big dog, even though Pakistan's flooding was more massive and deadly. In terms of just looking at dollars not people, Ian's damages eclipsed the drought-triggered African famine that affected more people. It also overshadowed river levels in China and Europe that dropped to levels so low it caused power and industrial problems and the heat waves in Europe, India and North America that were deadly

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 83 of 85

and record-breaking.

Smith said NOAA hasn't finished calculating the damages from Ian yet, but there's a good chance it will have more than \$100 billion in damage, pushing past 2012's Superstorm Sandy that swamped New York and New Jersey, ranking only behind 2005's Katrina and 2017's Harvey for damaging hurricanes.

In the 1980s, the United States would average a billion-dollar weather disaster every 82 days. Now it's every 18 days, Smith said. That's not inflation because damages are adjusted to factor that out, he said. It's nastier weather and more development, people and buildings in harm's way, he said.

Globally "if you zoom in the last six years, 2017 to 2022, this has been particularly bad" especially compared to the five years before, said Martin Bertogg, Swiss Re's head of catastrophic peril.

"It felt like a regime change, some people called it a new normal," Bertogg said. But he thinks it was more getting back, after a brief respite, to a long-term trend of disaster costs steadily rising 5% to 7% a year.

U.S. climate envoy John Kerry said the increasing number of disasters makes the case for reducing emissions.

"You're spending money now because we're not doing the things we ought to be doing," Kerry said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We'll be spending a hell of a lot more under much more stringent circumstances than we are today if we don't move faster."

Not every year has to be a whopper. The U.S. got a break in 2019 when there were "only" 14 billion-dollar disasters, NOAA's Smith said.

"A growing body of evidence indicates that climate change is increasing the variability as well as the average" of weather disasters, said Stanford University environment director Chris Field, who led a United Nations 2012 report on extreme weather. "What this means is that in some years we get hit harder than others. In other years we get hit like never before."

"The important thing is that the trend in disasters is increasing," Field said. "And it will continue to increase until we halt the warming."

Looking at damages, mostly insured losses, can give a skewed picture because how much a disaster cost depends greatly on how wealthy the area that the disaster hit, less so than the scale of the disaster itself, said Debarati Guha-Sapir, who runs the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

And even more important, these figures are about dollars, not people, and that distorts the true picture, said Guha-Sapir and University of Washington health and climate professor Kristie Ebi.

"What is insured is a small fraction of total infrastructure and the people killed in Pakistan," which lowers the damage amount despite 1,700 people killed, Ebi said.

The flood in Pakistan, which submerged one-third of a country that's bigger than Texas, was not the only thing that hit that developing country.

"Pakistan just couldn't catch a break this year. A January snowstorm killed 23 followed by a lethal spring heatwave, then devastating floods from June-October took over 1,700 lives and untold livelihoods," said Jennifer Francis, a climate scientist at the Woodwell climate Research Center in Cape Cod. "Many other surprising, less publicized, and alarming events wreaked havoc on local communities, such as the sudden collapse of the lucrative snow crab fishery in the Bering Sea, rapid demise of European glaciers, inundation of several coastal villages in Alaska by ex-tropical cyclone Merbok."

"Additional heat in the atmosphere is sucking moisture out of soils, exacerbating drought and heatwaves," Francis said. "Evaporation from oceans and land also increases the amount of moisture in the air, which provides more fuel for storms and heavier downpours."

Swiss Re's Bertogg said although climate change is at work he estimates two-thirds, perhaps more, of the rise in damages is due to more people and things in harm's way.

Urbanization across the globe puts more people in dense environments, which increases damage when disaster hits, Bertogg said. Then add urban sprawl that takes those cities and makes them geographically bigger and thus more vulnerable, he said. A good example of that is how wildfires started damaging more homes in California as more homes got built in rural areas, he said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 84 of 85

Plus more construction is being built on the coast and along waterways making them more vulnerable to storms and flooding, with flooding as "the biggest threat for the global economy," Bertogg said.

But NOAA's Smith keeps searching for a little silver lining in storm clouds: "I just hope the trends get a little bit less profound and less stressful for society. We all need a break."

## Today in History: December 10, Mandela is mourned

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 10, the 344th day of 2022. There are 21 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 10, 2013, South Africa held a memorial service for Nelson Mandela, during which U.S. President Barack Obama energized tens of thousands of spectators and nearly 100 visiting heads of state with a plea for the world to emulate "the last great liberator of the 20th century." (The ceremony was marred by the presence of a sign-language interpreter who deaf advocates said was an impostor waving his arms around meaninglessly.)

On this date:

In 1817, Mississippi was admitted as the 20th state of the Union.

In 1861, the Confederacy admitted Kentucky as it recognized a pro-Southern shadow state government that was acting without the authority of the pro-Union government in Frankfort.

In 1898, a treaty was signed in Paris officially ending the Spanish-American War.

In 1958, the first domestic passenger jet flight took place in the U.S. as a National Airlines Boeing 707 flew 111 passengers from New York to Miami in about 2 1/2 hours.

In 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. received his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, saying he accepted it "with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind."

In 1967, singer Otis Redding, 26, and six others were killed when their plane crashed into Wisconsin's Lake Monona; trumpeter Ben Cauley, a member of the group the Bar-Kays, was the only survivor.

In 1994, Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin received the Nobel Peace Prize, pledging to pursue their mission of healing the anguished Middle East.

In 1996, South African President Nelson Mandela signed the country's new constitution into law during a ceremony in Sharpeville.

In 2005, actor-comedian Richard Pryor died in Encino, California, at age 65.

In 2006, former Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet died at age 91.

In 2007, former Vice President Al Gore accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with a call for humanity to rise up against a looming climate crisis and stop waging war on the environment.

In 2019, House Democrats announced two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, declaring that he "betrayed the nation" with his actions toward Ukraine and an obstruction of Congress' investigation; Trump responded with a tweet of "WITCH HUNT!" At an evening rally in Pennsylvania, Trump mocked the impeachment effort and predicted it would lead to his reelection in 2020.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama told auto workers in Michigan that he would not compromise on his demand that tax rates go up for the top 2 percent of American earners to help reduce the deficit. A judge announced that former International Monetary Fund leader Dominique Strauss-Kahn and a New York City hotel maid had signed a settlement of her sexual-assault lawsuit stemming from a May 2011 encounter. Marijuana for recreational use became legal in Colorado.

Five years ago: Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz suffered a torn ACL during the team's win over the Rams; backup Nick Foles rallied the Eagles to a victory that secured the NFC East title. (Foles and the Eagles would go on to win the Super Bowl.) Wearing a face mask, actor Rob Lowe live-streamed the evacuation of his family from one of the homes threatened by a massive Southern California wildfire.

One year ago: Tornadoes slammed into Kentucky, Arkansas and three neighboring states, killing more than 90 people, including 81 in Kentucky. Bob Dole was mourned at Washington National Cathedral and

# Groton Daily Independent

**Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 155 ~ 85 of 85**

the World War II monument he helped create as leaders from both parties saluted the Republican Kansas senator's ability to practice bare-knuckle politics without compromising his civility. The Supreme Court left in place Texas' ban on most abortions. The government reported that prices for U.S. consumers jumped 6.8% in November compared with a year earlier as Americans faced their highest annual inflation rate since 1982. Reigning world chess champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway successfully defended his title in Dubai. Michael Nesmith, the wool-hatted, guitar-strumming member of the 1960s, made-for-television rock band The Monkees, died at 78.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Fionnula Flanagan is 81. Actor-singer Gloria Loring is 76. Pop-funk musician Walter "Clyde" Orange (The Commodores) is 76. Country singer Johnny Rodriguez is 71. Actor Susan Dey is 70. Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich is 66. Jazz musician Paul Hardcastle is 65. Actor John York (TV: "General Hospital") is 64. Actor-director Kenneth Branagh (BRAH'-nah) is 62. Actor Nia Peeples is 61. TV chef Bobby Flay is 58. Rock singer-musician J Mascis is 57. Rock musician Scot Alexander (Dishwalla) is 51. Actor-comedian Arden Myrin is 49. Rock musician Meg White (The White Stripes) is 48. Actor Emmanuelle Chriqui is 47. Actor Gavin Houston is 45. Actor Alano Miller is 43. Violinist Sarah Chang is 42. Actor Patrick John Flueger is 39. Country singer Meghan Linsey is 37. Actor Raven-Symone is 37. Actor/singer Teyana Taylor is 32. Actor Kiki Layne is 31. NFL quarterback Joe Burrow is 26.